

2 men of banned outfit killed

BANNU (INP): Two members of banned TTP Gul Bahadur group were killed in firing of armed men here on Monday, police said. Armed men of rival group sprayed bullets at opponents in Janikhel area of Bannu. Two members of the defunct organization TTP Gul Bahadur were killed in the firing and assailants fled the scene. The bodies were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case into the incident started investigation.



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FAISALABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar distributing cheques of Rs. 2 million each among the members of Christian community whose houses were destroyed in mob violence.

Imaan Mazari, Wazir remanded for three days

ISLAMABAD (INP): An Islamabad anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday granted police three-day physical remand of human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and former lawmaker Ali Wazir in a sedition case.

Wazir was arrested on Saturday, while Imaan was picked up from her home in the early hours of Sunday. On Saturday, two first information reports (FIR) were registered against the two at Islamabad's Tarnol police station and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station.

The arrests were made two days after a public meeting, organised by the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM). Wazir, a PTM member, and Imaan had both addressed the rally. Videos circulating on social media showed speakers criticising the military establishment over enforced disappearances.

On Sunday, the two were presented in the court of Judicial Magistrate Ihtasham Alam Khan. According to the detailed court order, the investigating officer (IO) requested a 10-day physical remand in the sedition case, registered under Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997. The judge had granted one day's remand and ordered police to present the two before an anti-terrorism court on Monday (today).

Subsequently, the two were produced by police in the court of ATC judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain earlier today. Before the hearing began, Imaan embraced her mother Shireen Mazari and became teary eyed.

Imaan's legal team, including Zainab Janjua and Mirza Asim Baig, were present for today's hearing.



Taking the rostrum, Janjua argued that police had already been given one-day remand of her client. "Police have not yet found anything," she said, adding that officials had also not investigated anything related to Imaan. "Imaan Mazari is not running away. She is here," she argued. The counsel also pointed out that officials had seized Imaan's mobile phone and laptop, adding that two cases of a similar nature had been registered against her client.

The lawyer insisted that it was not necessary for her client to remain in police custody and asked the court to remand her in judicial custody. "What are the allegations against Imaan Mazari?" the judge asked. At this, Prosecutor Raja Naveed said that a rally was held in Islamabad where anti-state speeches were made.

The prosecutor also pointed out that a similar case had been registered against Imaan in 2022. He said that officials had not seized more evidence from the suspect and also had to conduct her photogrammetric test and voice matching test as he urged the court to grant police physical custody. He stated that officials also had to trace more suspects through Imaan and Wazir.

However, Janjua interjected and wondered why officials had not presented evidence against his client. "Why hasn't the photogrammetric test or voice matching test been done as yet?" she asked. "Her speech is there on social media. Her laptop and mobile phone are also with the police," the lawyer pointed out. "What will you achieve by keeping her in [police] custody?" she asked, adding that officials wanted to prove that Imaan was a "terrorist".

The lawyer also pointed out that Imaan was taken into custody while she was in her sleeping suit and was also brought to court in the same. "The police have perhaps forgotten that they also have mothers and sisters at home," the lawyer said. Imaan's legal team then sought permission from the court to meet their client. "She fainted yesterday. We were unable to meet her at the police station," the lawyer said. "Imaan Mazari wants accountability of institutions for which she is being called a terrorist," she said. However, prosecutor Naveed said that to criticise the head of the institution was to criticise the institution itself. He then sought 10-day physical remand of both Imaan and Wazir.

Aneeq calls for expansion of 'Road to Makkah' project

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed has called for the extension of the 'Road to Makkah' project to multiple airports across Pakistan.

The minister made the appeal on Monday during a joint press conference held alongside Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah expressing that the 'Road to Makkah' initiative, which streamlines the pilgrimage process for Pakistani pilgrims, had proven highly advantageous for those embarking on the Hajj journey.

Minister Aneeq also advocated for exempting individuals aged 65 and above from mandatory biometric verification for the pilgrimage. He highlighted that this requirement had been causing inconvenience for senior citizens due to issues related to fingerprint recognition. Furthermore, he suggested exploring alternative locations for the Pakistan House in Madina, which had been dismantled to

make way for the expansion of Haram Sharif.

Speaking of the efforts by the Saudi government to provide modern amenities for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, Minister Aneeq praised the superior facilities available to religious visitors. He emphasized Pakistan's prominent role as a top contributor to Umrah pilgrims worldwide. He underscored the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, considering the visit of the Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah to be an honor for the nation. He attributed the visit to the strong affection held by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for Pakistan.

Both Minister Aneeq Ahmed and his Saudi counterpart, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, stressed the importance of enhancing facilities for Pakistani pilgrims during their stay in Mina and Arafat. Dr. Al-Rabiah highlighted the crucial discussions that took place during the visit and expressed admiration for the close bond shared between the Pakistani people and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

Recognizing Saudi Arabia's commitment to offering essential services to Pakistani pilgrims, he emphasized the significance of evaluating the quality of facilities provided during the pilgrimage. He also announced Saudi Arabia's intention to reduce Hajj expenses and extend the visa duration for Umrah pilgrims to 90 days. Additionally, he revealed plans to introduce approximately 100 new historical sites in Makkah and Madinah, enhancing the overall pilgrim experience.

Dr. Al-Rabiah expressed optimism regarding the collaborative efforts between Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and their Saudi counterparts. He conveyed the joint commitment of both nations to ensuring the successful implementation of agreements, including an increase in flight options between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. A bilateral agreement was signed earlier, with officials from both nations expressing confidence that the agreement's outcomes would soon be disclosed to the public.

Caretaker govt to fully support ECP, says Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that the caretaker federal government would provide full support to the Election Commission of Pakistan, commission and provinces in conducting transparent, free, and impartial general elections.

During a telephonic conversation with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, he said that the caretaker set up would perform their duties according to the constitution and would not tolerate any discrimination against anyone. "Conducting transparent elections is our common responsibility," Murtaza Solangi said adding the federal and provincial governments would perform this joint responsibility under the constitution.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori congratulated Murtaza Solangi on assuming charge as the caretaker federal minister for information and broadcasting. The minister said that soon he would visit Karachi.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqir reiterated their determination to fully support the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in conducting the general elections in a transparent manner.

During a telephonic conversation Murtaza Solangi congratulated Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqir on taking charge as caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh. The minister also discussed with the Caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh the case of slain journalist Jan Muhammad Maher. The caretaker Sindh CM informed the caretaker information minister about the progress made in the case of the slain journalist.

Indian Army firing martyrs three women

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Indian Army on Monday resorted to unprovoked firing in Nikial Sector, targeting innocent civilians that resulted in the Shahadat of an old aged (60 years) individual named Ghias, a resident of Village Oli, District Kotli and traumatized three women while cutting grass in the fields.

The ISPR in a news release said, "This blatant Indian aggression is a clear violation of existing Ceasefire Understandings. Pakistan desires peace and tranquility at its borders, however, all necessary measures will be taken to protect the life and property of our citizens." It added that any misadventure against the people of Pakistan would be befittingly responded to at the time and place of our choosing.

The Frontier Post

3 killed in Shangla accident F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A traffic accident occurred in Shangla on Tuesday, resulting in loss of three lives and 17 persons were reported injured including women and children. The accident was reportedly caused by a passenger van brake failure. The incident unfolded when the driver lost control due to brake failure. The impact of the incident proved fatal, claiming the lives of three individuals on the spot initially.

PM reiterates govt's resolve to protect minorities

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Monday assured all the minority communities in the country that the government was committed to protect their lives and properties, and the perpetrators of heinous attacks against them would be brought to justice.

Addressing a gathering of the Christian community members, he said, "We are the followers of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Founder of the Nation, and it is also binding upon us under the Constitution, which encourages us to respond to such atrocities."

The prime minister said that they would never condone the persecutors of minorities, and stressed that if anyone caused harm to the minorities, the law of the country would take its course by ensuring that such like incidents should not happen in future. The entire society and the government would not cower down before the dark forces but would stand shoulder to shoulder with the victim communities, he said, adding that they would become voice of the voiceless with the tangible and meaningful support.

"Our actions will speak louder than our speeches," PM Kakar said. The prime minister arrived here to express solidarity with the victim families of Christian community. Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman and Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, caretaker federal ministers, senior officials and members of the Christian community were present on the occasion.

PM Kakar further said that the minorities in Pakistan were struggling for the protection of the rights of their communities across the region, adding that the people who had attacked the Christian community in the area were the enemies of humanity. He said that they were assuring them of the government's support not out of any compulsion, but due to their conviction.

The incident that occurred in the area alluded to a pervasive issue in the society which had been experiencing extremism, radicalism and aggressive behaviour, and manifested that such behaviour did not belong to any religion, sect or group rather indicated an innate human behaviour which spread like a cancerous disease, he opined. The prime minister regretted the unfortunate incident that occurred after the caretaker government took oath.

Referring to Islamic history, he said that under the Quaid's vision, it

Kakar distributes cheques among Jaranwala incident affectees

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday distributed cheques of financial assistance among the Christian families, affected due to the Jaranwala incident.

At a ceremony held at the Canal Road Jaranwala, he gave away cheques to members of 25 affected families, and a Christian girl, who had complained that her dowry was burnt in riots. Those who received the included Abid Masih, Shafqat Hayat, Marthan Anayat, Elyas Masih, Irshad Masih, Zeeshan Masih, Shehzad Masih, Nadeem Masih, Parvaiz Masih, Rizwan Masih, Abid Masih, Sarfraz Masih, Rauf Masih, Faiz Masih, Shah Zaib Masih, Shafiq Masih, Javaid Jan, Robin Gosh, Siraj Masih, Shehzad Anjum, Ahsan Afzal, Sehat Masih, Nisar Masih and Babar Masih.

Premier thanks KSA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Monday thanked the Saudi leadership for making excellent arrangements for Hujjaj from all over the world during the Hajj season, particularly for the Pakistani pilgrims. He expressed the hope that Pakistani Hajj and Umrah pilgrims would continue to receive special treatment from the Saudi side. The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Minister of Hajj & Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al Rabiah who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of bilateral relations with the Kingdom and lauded the vision of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, adding that Pakistan would always remain a trusted partner of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Minister is leading a high-level delegation with members from the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs, interior, Saudi civil aviation authority, communication, tourism, etc.

The visit is the first by a Minister of Hajj and Umrah to Pakistan. The caretaker prime minister also thanked Saudi Arabia for its serious interest in investment opportunities in Pakistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The Saudi minister thanked the prime minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and members of his delegation. He said Saudi Arabia would extend all possible facilitation to Pakistani pilgrims, adding that in addition to religious visits, the delegation would also try to promote Saudi tourism to Pakistan.

was their utmost responsibility, to protect the minorities. It was the duty of Muslims to protect the honour, life and properties of the Christian community, he added. The prime minister said a society could thrive under rule of law, and become stable on the basis of one principle, the sense of justice among the masses, which ensured a society and state to survive.

He also expressed his gratitude to the upcoming Chief Justice of Pakistan, the caretaker chief minister and the military leadership for their support to the victims and reiterated that there would be no compromise on the minorities' rights. The prime minister warned that no one could predict the future, but in case, any miscreant or group that harboured evil designs against the minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, or others, would find the authority of the government on the side of the affected

segments, shielding them against any harm.

Recalling the Christian community members' contributions in the society, the prime minister also recollected his early education imparted by the Christian teachers. The caretaker prime minister said white was not only a colour of the National Flag, but it showed the perfection of the country in which the minorities filled that beauty of harmony and unity.

He further assured that they would resist the majoritarianism and such like agenda at the domestic, regional and global levels. Speaking on the the occasion, the Punjab governor said that such incidents should be curbed and let not recur, adding the places of worship were worth respected and the regard for all communities should be maintained. The chief minister, on the occasion, said that the main culprits were already in the custody.

President's Sectt seeks Secretary replacement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi a day after denial of his signing Official Secrets Act and the Pakistan Army Act, said the services of Secretary Waqar Ahmed were "no more required".

The president in a statement posted on X on Monday said, "In view of the definite statement of yesterday, President's Secretariat has written a letter to Principal Secretary to Prime Minister that the services of Mr Waqar Ahmed, Secretary to President, are no more required and are surrendered to the Establishment Division, immediately."

"It has also been desired that Ms Humaira Ahmed, a BPS-22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, may be posted as Secretary to the President," the statement added. Earlier on Sunday, President Alvi created a stir by claiming that he had not signed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill and the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill — a day after they became acts of parliament, as he "disagreed with these laws".

In a post on social media platform X, Alvi said: "As God is my witness, I did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Amendment Bill, 2023 as I disagreed with these laws." The president said he asked his staff to return the bills unsigned within the stipulated time to make 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 affected," the president said.

Economic, cultural ties with KSA to be strengthened further: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said that Pakistan is desirous to further strengthening bilateral relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in diverse fields, particularly economy, investment, and culture.

While talking to Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, who along with a delegation called on him here on Monday, the president said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Saudi Arabia, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people ties.

The president welcoming the delegation, reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the existing economic partnership with the Kingdom for the mutual benefit of both the brotherly countries. He underscored the need to expand bilateral trade as great opportunities existed for investment in Pakistan in different sectors such as IT, renewable energy, industrial and infrastructure development, and the hospitality sectors.

President Alvi thanked the Saudi government for making excellent arrange-

ments for the Hajj this year. He expressed the hope that the Saudi government would expedite the purchase of Pakistan House inside Markaziah in Madina from the compensation amount of two Pakistan Houses demolished in Madina.

Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated Saudi Arabia and its leadership for its steadfast support for important Muslim causes, especially the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, Palestine, and Afghanistan through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and expressed the hope that it would continue to play its important role. He lauded the leadership of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the normalization of relations with Iran, saying that the leadership of the Saudi Crown Prince in the Muslim World was much appreciated.

The visiting Saudi minister said that relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were very strong that needed to be further enhanced for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah said the Kingdom would continue to provide good facilities to the pilgrims for Hajj and Umrah.

President Alvi also asked the visiting dignitary to communicate his warm regards to the Saudi King and Crown Prince/Prime Minister of the Kingdom. He also thanked the Saudi government for its continued support and financial assistance to Pakistan.

Qureshi sent on four-day remand

ISLAMABAD (PPT): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was on Monday given in the custody of FIA for four-day physical remand in a cipher case.

A special court established in Islamabad granted the remand as this court would hear the cases filed under the Official Secrets Act. On Saturday, the FIA arrested the former minister in connection with the cipher case and produced him before the special court today (Tuesday).

The anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge, Abul Hasnat, heard the case registered against Qureshi under the Official Secrets Act. The FIA prosecutor sought 13-days physical remand of Qureshi, for the recovery of the alleged misplaced cipher, however, Shoaib Shaheen, counsel of Qureshi opposed the FIA's request. After hearing the arguments, first the court reserved the verdict for some times and then ordered the FIA officials to present Qureshi before the court on August 25 (Friday).

Prior to start the in-camera proceedings, the judge ordered expelling of unauthorised persons from the courtroom. "It is a matter of the Official Secrets Act, irrelevant people should leave," the judge said. A heavy contingent of Islamabad police was deployed outside the courtroom. The PTI lawyers including Shoaib Shaheen, Intizar Panjtoha, Gohar Ali and Ali Bukhari remained present inside the courtroom, while the junior lawyers of the PTI were ordered to leave.

Dr. Fakhre Alam takes charges as Chief Secretary

KARACHI (APP): Dr. Mohammed Fakhre Alam Irfan, a (BS-22) officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, has taken the charge as the Chief Secretary (CS) Sindh here on Monday. Secretary Services Ghulam Ali Birimani and Secretary General Administration Mohammed Ali Khoso gave briefing to the CS.

Previously, Dr. Mohammed Fakhre Alam Irfan was performing his duties as the Federal Secretary of Housing and Works Division.

Dr. Alam has become 59th CS of Sindh.

PHA launches anti-dengue campaign

LAHORE (APP): The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) on Monday launched dengue awareness campaign and started spray against dengue in all parks.

On the directives of Director General PHA Mohammad Tahir Wattoo, the teams distributed pamphlets among the citizen visiting different parks of the provincial capital. Teams also sprayed in washrooms, workshops, nurseries and other places of the PHA, to kill dengue mosquitoes and its larvae, besides clearing the clogged drains.

According to a spokesman for the PHA, in the first phase, teams would use anti-dengue spray in greenbelts of the city while people would be guided to prevent from dengue attack.

New Sindh Police chief stresses for IT based policing

KARACHI (APP): Newly appointed Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar on Monday emphasized the need for information technologies-based policing to improve department response time to public service. "It is an era of modern technology so overall affairs of all the departments/units of Sindh Police Department should be taken towards IT," he said while chairing an introductory meeting with the officers of the department at the Central Police Office (CPO) here.

Riffat Mukhtar said that successful and effective policing, long term and short-term planning must be done. He said as a force we have to deliver services to the people.

Alhamra executive director removed

LAHORE (APP): On the orders of Caretaker Minister for Information and Culture Amir Mir, Saleem Sagar, the executive director of Alhamra Arts Council Lahore, has been removed from his position, and instructed to report to the Service and General Administration Department.

Saleem Sagar, who had assumed the position few months ago, was facing allegations of ineffectiveness and corruption, according to the Punjab government handout.

Sindh Govt decides to take action against dacoits, street criminals

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Cabinet in its maiden meeting on Monday decided to take strict measures for controlling law & order, particularly action against dacoits in the Katcha area and street criminals in Karachi.

Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar presided over the cabinet's introductory meeting, which was attended by caretaker ministers Brig (ret'd) Haris Nawaz, Younus Dhaga, Mubeen Juamni, Dr Saad khalid, Dr Junaid Shah, Mrs Rana Hussain, Ishwar Lal, Arshad Wali Muhammad, Omar Soomro and Khuda Bux Marri. At the outset, the caretaker chief minister said he had an agenda for good governance and service to the people of Sindh, besides supporting the Election Commission of Pakistan for carrying out its work. Justice Baqar said in the aftermath of the floods, poverty had increased manifold in the province and concrete measures were needed to tackle it.

He said the caretaker government was apolitical. "We are not here to raise fingers of accusation against others, but we will try to improve the governance to serve the people and support the Election Commission of Pakistan in their assignment," he added.

Justice Baqar said there was a need of promoting enter-faith harmony in the province. The people of different faiths and beliefs had lived together there, but anti-state elements were trying to create law and order by igniting religious hatred and "we must stop it".

As it was pointed out that the dacoits had developed the sway in the Katcha

area, the cabinet decided to launch an operation against the criminals. The home minister was directed to chalk out a plan in consultation with the police and other law enforcement agencies so that a well-coordinated clean-up operation against the dacoits could be launched.

The cabinet members observed that due to some ongoing development works in the city traffic jam issues cropped up during the peak hours, therefore the traffic police was directed to manage traffic flow properly. The cabinet after a thorough discussion decided to expedite work on the ongoing development schemes, and to accelerate work on the foreign-funded projects so that they could be completed well in time.

It was pointed out that the people from far-flung areas visited government offices in Karachi and in their respective districts where their problems were not being resolved. The chief minister directed all the ministers, particularly of the Revenue, Local Government, Police, and Health to direct their respective departments to make their offices functional and public-oriented everywhere.

The cabinet expressed satisfaction that Sindh had become polio free from the last two years but the virus was still alive in different areas. The Health Minister was urged to take necessary measures to make this province free from the crippling disease of polio.

The chief minister directed all the caretaker ministers to prepare presentations of their respective departments for him so that decisions could be taken for public interest accordingly.

Record development works done at Gorakh Hill Station

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Chairman Gorakh Hills Authority and former MNA Sardar Rafiq Ahmad Jamali has said that important steps have been taken to provide the best facilities for the entertainment and safety of tourists visiting the Gorakh Hills Station. Sharing the details of the Development works at Gorakh, Sardar Rafiq Ahmed Jamali said that rupees three billion were released during last nine years to the Gorakh Hill Authority, from which 35 km, 18 foot wide road has been widened/reconstructed from Wahi Pandhi to the 35 km point at a cost of 1000 million for safe journey of the tourist.

He said that 16 furnished duplex family resorts with 2 rooms along with lounge, terrace and viewpoints each have been completed along with 8 room fully furnished tourist hostel, a huge Event Area, restaurant, tuck shop, PD rest house, fiberglass rest house, Mosque, various viewpoints with connecting internal roads, cricket ground, children's play area with swings and props etc, solar electric system for all

huts, resorts and the restaurant, solar light poles, Bar BQ spot, mobile toilets, dispensary with doctor's bungalow and residential quarters for employees have also been constructed.

He further informed that 8 reservoir water tanks with pumping stations have also been for conveyance of water 5000-6000 feet above.

Also Lavatories and other facilities like shades, Paver Block, RCC Road and tracks have been built to cater to various needs of the tourists. Apart from this, a canteen has also been built at the 35 km point, Sardar Rafiq Ahmad Jamali further added that the work on some components is still on-going, like Circuit House, Bar BQ Point, Zoo and some family resorts.

He said a proposal to build dams and the remaining portion of the road bypassing the dreaded Khawal Luk has also been proposed and the PC-1 of the same is with the P&D Board awaiting for approval. He further reaffirmed his commitment to make Gorakh Hill Station the top tourist attraction and destination of the people of all Pakistan, especially Sindh.

PFA unearths fake beverages unit, disposes of spurious drinks

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Monday unearthed a fake beverages manufacturing unit producing carbonated drinks of different popular brands in Jameel Town.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that the raiding team disposed of 18,800 litre spurious drinks; 1,250kg sugar and 130kg prohibited ingredients besides confiscating 17 cylinders, filling machines, compressors, stove, empty bottles, lids and fake labelling.

Meanwhile, PFA also lodged a first information report (FIR) against the adulteration mafia on account of adulteration and forgery in the nearest police station while handing an accused over to police after apprehended during the raid.

He said that fabricated fizzy drinks were being prepared with hazardous chemicals, loose non-food grade colours,

artificial sweeteners, unclean tap water, and other harmful ingredients while it was preserved in prohibited drums. Non-food-grade plastic bottles and fake labelling were also being used for packing purpose, he added. The director general further said that fake beverages were to be supplied to the different local shops and hotels in Lahore. The use of spurious drinks causes health problems for consumers' especially senior citizens and children, he said.

Moreover, he said that the adulteration mafia would be dealt with an iron hand and all-out efforts would be made for sustainable law of the PFA in the province. He added that PFA is utilizing all available resources to root out the menace of fake beverages from Punjab.

He said that citizens can complain regarding food safety issues, adulteration mafia and unhygienic food points on the 1223 helpline number of PFA, website or PFA Facebook account.



LAHORE: Students are attending class on the first day after summer vacations.

CM chairs 7th meeting of cabinet standing committee

LAHORE (APP): The 7th meeting of the cabinet standing committee on finance & development was convened under the chair of the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Monday.

The meeting decided in principle to give a special package to the heirs of employees, who had passed away during service. In addition, the CM ordered that financial aid to employees' families should be provided within 10 days positively.

The committee granted approval for rehabilitation and expansion of Gatwala Road, originating from the Nishat Abad overhead bridge in Faisalabad. A decision was reached to collaborate with the French Development Agency (AFD) to enhance the efficiency of the Water and Sewerage Authorities (WASAs) in Lahore and Faisalabad.

A decision was made to incorporate the acquisition of snow blowers for the Murree roads into the annual development programme.

Concurrently, the green light was given for comprehensive restoration of historically significant gates in Lahore, ensuring their return to their original condition. Moreover, funding was allocated for modernisation of the Lahore Zoo.

Funds were allocated to adorn the shrine of Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar, and the project was included in the Annual Development Programme. Under the aegis of the Prime Minister's National Programme, in-principle approval was granted for conversion of agricultural tube-wells to solar power in Punjab. The committee's consent was extended to include the Flood Protection Sector Project-III in the Annual Development Programme for fiscal year 2023-24. Re-issuance of funds was approved for small dams in Chakwal and other locations under the Public Sector Development Programme. Provincial ministers SM Tanvir, Mansoor Qadir, and Amir Mir, along with the chief secretary,

chairman Planing & Development, ACS (Home), administrative secretaries, and others attended the meeting.

Caretaker CM seeks plan for quality medicines' provision: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has sought a comprehensive plan for provision of quality medicines in hospitals.

According to official sources here on Monday, the CM had ordered for ensuring provision of quality medicines in hospitals besides evolving transparent mechanism for purchase of drugs. He said that swift and fool-proof system should be made for storing and ensuring availability of medicines in hospitals. A recommendation to set up special committee for purchase of medicine was also under consideration. CM Mohsin Naqvi said that quality medicines were right of every citizen for ensuring proper treatment. He said that management skills for storage and purchase of medicine was very much needed.

88 vehicles fined over no parking

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) on Monday issued 88 challan tickets to vehicles and motorcycles for violating no parking in the garrison city. The tickets were issued following the directions of the Chief Traffic Officer to ensure a smooth flow of traffic in the city.

According to the CTP spokesperson, the grand operation against encroachments was launched on various thoroughfares in the city including Raja Bazaar under the supervision of the CTO. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimur Khan has issued orders to take strict action against the encroachment mafia, violators of no parking, and those obstructing the flow of traffic in Rawalpindi district. He said the encroachments and no parking violations cause traffic jams and affect the beauty of the city. During the operation, different thoroughfares were cleared from the encroachment mafia and pushcarts were seized.

CTO Taimur Khan said that in order to further improve the flow of traffic in the Rawalpindi district, indiscriminate action was taken against illegal parking, no parking, and encroachment mafia.

The operations would continue on a daily basis for which the respective circle in-charges would provide full support. After the anti-encroachment operation, check and balance would also be kept so that the violators did not cross their limits again, the CTO said.

Two members of inter-provincial drugs gang held

KARACHI (APP): Sir Syed police station with the assistance of an intelligence agency arrested two alleged drug peddlers and recovered hashish from their possession. According to a spokesman for District Central Police on Monday, two identified as Abdul Rehman and Saeed Khan were members of an inter-provincial drug racket. The police recovered 4kg of hashish from their possession. Arrested both belong to KP and were supplying drugs in parts of Karachi. A case had been registered and further investigation was underway.

Chairman SHEC inaugurates digital research lab at KU DPA

KARACHI (APP): Professor Dr Tariq Rafi while addressing the lab's inaugural ceremony informed the audience that the provincial HEC was providing full support so that the international ranking of our universities could be improved globally. He shared that the provincial government had increased the allocated budget of the SHEC to Rs24 billion per annum to facilitate varsities of Sindh.

He believed the governments should not interfere in the matters of the universities and should give more autonomous status and power to the higher education institutes of the province. Dr Tariq Rafi advised that universities should adopt the self-accountability approach and work hard to improve their international ranking.

He further said to improve the ranking of universities, we have to pay special attention to the teaching and research quality and hoped that it would help in improving the global ranking of our universities.

APNS felicitates Solangi

F.P. Report ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on Monday formally congratulated Murtaza Solangi on his appointment as Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

"On behalf of the office bearers and members of the executive committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, I would like to welcome and congratulate you on your appointment as

caretaker Minister for Information," said APNS Secretary General Sarmad Ali in a letter. The body expressed the hope that the issues faced by the print media would be resolved during Murtaza Solangi's tenure as minister.

It also believed that the minister would play his role in strengthening the caretaker government's relation with media. "I would also like to note with pleasure that a prominent person of

media fraternity has been appointed as caretaker Minister for Information and hope that under your stewardship the issues pertaining to the Print Media which are still lying unattended would be addressed," Sarmad Ali noted.

The APNS assured the minister of its full cooperation and expressed its desire to work with the minister in the interest of the media and the country.

Pak-Russia relations termed crucial for global stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan, Mr. Danila Ganich Monday termed mutual relations between Russia and Pakistan as crucial for both countries' national interests and global stability. He was addressing the opening ceremony of the Open Education Center at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) yesterday.

This center aims to teach the Russian language to Pakistani students at the Allama Iqbal Open University. Speaking on the occasion, the ambassador said that the Open Education Center of the Russian Ministry of Education will play a significant role in strengthening Pakistan-Russia relations. The Russian Ambassador emphasized the need to strengthen the relationship between universities and achieve common goals.

Vice Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated that Russia and Pakistan have had strong relations for 75 years which

needs to be further enhanced through academic collaboration. Deputy Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, Denis E. Gribov, Deputy Executive Director of Russian Geographical Society, Mr. Sergey V. Korylyanov, Pakistan's Counselor to the Russian Federation, Zafar Yab Khan, President of the Ural Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Andrey A. Besedin, addressed the ceremony

online and congratulated Vice Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Rector USPU, Prof. Svetlana A. Miniurova on setting up the "Open Education Center" in Allama Iqbal Open University. They acknowledged the collaboration between the universities and highlighted that this platform will lead to exploring more avenues of partnership to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.



LAHORE: A young man selling beautiful fancy bright decorated lightning lamps on his rickshaw.



Ulemas condemn violence against minorities; demand strict action



PESHAWAR (APP): The Ulemas and Mashaiks from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Monday strongly con-

demned the Jaranwala tragedy and termed it a conspiracy to defame Islam. In a joint press conference here, Chief Khatib Maulana Tayyab Qureshi expressed condolences with the affected families and demanded strict action against the culprits. He said that no one could be allowed to interfere in matters of religion and as per the constitution of the country, the minorities were fully protected and secured in Pakistan. The Maulana said that Pakistanis always stood by the minorities whenever such incidents happened before, adding that desecration of Quran was condemnable but there was law in the country. Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz urged the government to ensure religious tolerance in the society. The Bishop called for taking effective measures to stop such incidents in future.

‘6 to 7m people suffer from diabetes in KP’

PESHAWAR (APP): In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an estimated 6 to 7 million people suffer from diabetes, with an equivalent number having symptoms but remaining undiagnosed. This alarming statistic was revealed by Prof. Dr. A.H. Aamir, Head of the Department of Diabetes and Endocrinology at Hayatabad Medical Complex, during a one-day Master Training (Training of Trainers) session aimed at enhancing doctors' capabilities in managing diabetes. The training, organized under the Extension of D-TALK and Insulin for Life project by the Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, took place on Monday in Peshawar in which Director Curative DGHS-KP Dr Saeeda and Deputy Director Dr Abbass Khan participated as guests. Dr. Aamir highlighted the prevalence of diabetes in Pakistan, where between 16 to 20 percent of the population is affected. Many diabetic patients face serious complications, including kidney failure, vision problems, and chronic pain. Dr. A.H. Aamir, also the Director of the Extension of D-TALK and Insulin for Life project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasized that the primary goal of this training is to make the doctors capable in remote districts to provide comprehensive care to diabetic patients within their respective district hospitals, reducing the need for them to travel to Peshawar for treatment. He pointed out the significant patient load at Hayatabad Medical Complex, Lady Reading Hospital, and Khyber Teaching Hospital in Peshawar, emphasizing that such training programs aim to bring high-quality diabetes care to people's doorsteps. Dr. Aamir further added that the D-TALK project offers free insulin medication, screening, retinopathy checks, awareness campaigns, and advocacy in 24 centers across 21 districts in the province. Additionally, he noted that they provide free insulin for children born with type 1 diabetes at LRH Hospital in Peshawar. During the event, Dr. Ibrar Ahmad, President of the Pakistan Endocrine Society and Assistant Professor at LRH, provided insights into diabetes treatment and oral medication, while Dr. Prof Hussain Afridi discussed diabetes diagnosis, classification, and treatment targets. Dr. Shasta Kanwal shared knowledge about insulin initiation and intensification. The training saw active participation from medical officers and specialists from various districts.



PESHAWAR: Laborers busy in packing sacks of Gur at Gur Mandi.

PESCO notifies power suspension schedule

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Electrical Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified power suspension schedule of various grid stations of the province due to maintenance work on August 22 (Tuesday) as follows: 132 KV Jamrud Grid Station from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., affecting consumers of 11 KV Gull Abad feeders. 132 KV Warsak Power House from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., affecting consumer of 132 KV New Warsk, Peshawar Cantt, Regi Model Town, Jamrud, and Sakhi Chashma Grid connected 11 KV feeders. 132 KV Peshawar University Grid Station from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., affecting consumers of 11 KV Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taja Abad, Tajabad 2, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1, HBK, Regi, DHA, Askari 6, Abdulrazak, Pawakay and Commercial Baling feeders. 132 KV Mansehra Grid Station from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., affecting consumers of 11 KV Ghazikot, Ahsan Shaheed, City 1,2, Qalandar Abad, Attar Shesha, Shaheen Shaheed, Lasin Nawab, Muradpur, Khaki and Shankiyari feeders.



PESHAWAR: Beggar woman alongwith her child sitting on pedestrian bridge stairs while asking for some mercy.

FATA Tribunal re-starts cases hearing

PESHAWAR (APP): On the order of the Peshawar High Court, the FATA Tribunal has started hearing cases after restoration, said an official document of the Home Department. It said that Peshawar High Court referred back 11 pending cases to FATA Tribunal, including the cases against Dr. Shakeel Afridi. FATA Tribunal was abolished in 2019 on the merger of erstwhile FATA into KP followed by the abolishment of FCR. The document said that after the dissolution of the FATA Tribunal, all the cases were transferred to other courts which increased the burden of cases on existing courts. It said that the notification for restoration of the FATA Tribunal was issued last month by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government. The FATA Tribunal consists of Chairman Zakir Hussain and two members Khalilullah Khalil and Kafaitullah, said the document.

AC, Deputy Secretary sent to jail

PESHAWAR (APP): Judge of Accountability Court Younis Khan here on Monday sent Additional Commissioner (AC) Kohat and Deputy Secretary Auqaf to jail on seven-day physical remand in a corruption reference. Both the Additional Commissioner Hidayatullah and Deputy Secretary Sher Afzal were held by NAB-KP on their alleged involvement in awarding illegal lease of the land of Auqaf Department to their blue-eyed. Addl Commissioner Kohat Hidayatullah was the Deputy Secretary of Auqaf Department at that time, said a NAB official adding that more arrests were also expected in the case.

EVAWG KP flays incident

PESHAWAR (APP): End Violence Against Women and Girls Alliance (EVAWG/ KP) and Child Rights Movement KP is deeply saddened by the tragic death of 10-years-old Fatima Farriro in Ranipur, Sindh. According to a press release issued here on Monday, EVAWG KP and CRM vehemently condemn the individuals involved in this atrocity. Both Alliances urged the department concerned to ensure a transparent and swift investigation to bring the culprits to justice. Three killed PESHAWAR (APP): Atleast three persons were killed while 17 others sustained injuries in a road accident that occurred in Shangla district due to passenger van brake failure here on Monday. According to details, the incident unfolded when the driver lost control due to brake failure. Rescue and emergency teams were immediately reached the incident place and shifted the bodies and injured to nearby hospital.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of Bannu lead by former caretaker provincial finance minister Hamid Shah meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Governor's House.

DC directs completion of delimitations within time

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting regarding finalization of delimitations after 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 in the provincial metropolis was held here with the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahad in the chair on Monday. Besides, the Additional Deputy Commissioners, Sania Safi and Naveed Akbar, Assistant Commissioners, Zahid Younas and Marvi Malik Sher, Additional Assistant Commissioners, the officers of the Election Commission of Pakistan, Bureau of Statistics, Local Govt, Town Municipal Administrations and others attended the meeting. During the meeting, the directives of the ECP regarding delimitations of constituencies and code of conduct were discussed in detail. On this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar directed for strict implementation of the directives and code of conduct of the ECP regarding delimitation of the constituencies and completion of the process within the stipulated time period.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali listening people problems at his office.

City Traffic Police educates citizens on road safety

PESHAWAR (APP): The education teams of City Traffic Police Peshawar have been informing citizens about helmets and seat belts. Following the instructions of Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan, SP Education Shazia Shahid and the education teams have directed citizens to ensure the use of seat belts on busy roads of the city. Similarly, citizens, especially motorcyclists, have been informed about helmet usage and its benefits. Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan has emphasized that citizens must ensure the use of seat belts and helmets while traveling to prevent casualties in case of accidents. He mentioned that adhering to traffic rules will not only maintain traffic flow and reduce accidents but also allow citizens to reach their destinations on time. Violating traffic rules not only disrupts traffic but also displays irresponsible behavior, affecting fellow citizens. He further pointed out that these violations can lead to tragic consequences, affecting precious lives. He urged citizens to contribute to the improvement of the city's traffic system by abiding by traffic rules and cooperating with City Traffic Police Peshawar. He stressed that citizens should comply with traffic laws to ensure the safety of their journeys.



PESHAWAR: Blacksmiths making water storage drums at his workplace near Sheikhabad.

15-year old dispute over chromite mine resolved peacefully

PESHAWAR (APP): A 15-year old dispute at a chromite mine in tribal district Mohmand was peacefully resolved under the alternate dispute resolution mechanism on Monday. The rival parties have thanked the district administration and members of the reconciliatory committee (Jirga) for resolution of the dispute within a period of three months. A dispute over the ownership and demarcation of a chromite mine was going on between two parties of Haji Mir Rehman and Ghafoor since 15 years in Shati Mina area of Tehsil Ambar of Lower Ehaka Gawand. For the purpose of the resolution of the dispute, the Assistant Commissioner Lower Mohmand, Saddam Hussain Memon had constituted a reconciliatory committee comprising of Haji Sahib Khan, Haji Rafi Ullah and Malik Abdul Majeed under the ADR law. The members of the jirga after three months of hectic negotiations finally settled the dispute. AC Lower Mohmand, Saddam Hussain Memon has paid tribute to the efforts of Jirga members and said that the people should resolve their mutual disputes through ADR. While in Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Musa Khel, Barkhan, Zhob, Kalat and Khuzdar, rain/wind-thundershower is expected on August 25 and 26.

CTP fined 6,555 bike riders in three days

PESHAWAR (APP): The City traffic police (CTP) issued challan tickets to as many as 6,555 motorbike riders during the last three-day over violation of traffic rules and for not using safety helmets. According to CTP spokesman 16 motorcycles were also confiscated due to non-registration, adding that such actions against motorcycle riders would continue without discrimination. He said that as per the directives of Chief Traffic Officer, Qamar Hayat Khan the CTP officials were taking actions against violators of traffic rules on a daily basis with no leniency.

Rains forecasts from 23rd

PESHAWAR (APP): For the heat-stricken people bearing hot and humid weather conditions for the last few days, the Pakistan Meteorological Department Monday given a good news of more monsoon rains in various parts of the country from August 23-27 with occasional gaps. The rains although will provide relief to the people by reducing the intensity of heat but will increase water flow in local streams and nullahs and may cause urban flooding and landslides in vulnerable areas. The moderate monsoon currents from Arabian Sea are likely to penetrate in upper parts of the country from August 22 (evening or night). A westerly wave was also likely to enter in these areas on August 23. Under the influence of these systems, rain/wind-thundershower with few moderate to heavy falls is expected in Kashmir, (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Haripur, Kohat, Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera from August 23-27 with occasional gaps. Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in Kurram, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Karak, Waziristan, Mianwali, Sargodha, Khushab, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Bhakkar from August 24 to 26 with occasional gaps.



In brief

Body of abducted trade found

FAISALABAD (INP): Body of a kidnapped trader was found from Eidgah road graveyard in Faisalabad on Monday, police said. According to details, Shahid s/o Tanveer hailing from Masoodabad was abducted two days earlier while on the way to home from his grocery store. The police after registering a case into the incident had started efforts to rescue the kidnap victim. However, body of Shahid was recovered from Eidgah road graveyard after spotted by local residents.

2 robbers killed in encounter

SADIQABAD (INP): Two robbers were killed in exchange of fire with police during attempt to flee after committing a robbery here in the wee hours of Monday. According to details, robbers injured two people during a dacoity attempt in suburbs of Sadiqabad and were fleeing when police approached them. Upon chase, the robbers started firing at police and in retaliatory firing of police both robbers were killed on the spot. Police said that the killed robbers were wanted in various cases of murder, kidnapping and robberies. The bodies were shifted to hospital and police was making efforts to arrest their other accomplices.

Robbers gun down tourist

MANSEHRA (INP): Armed robbers gunned down a tourist during a robbery attempt near Babusar Top on Kaghan-Skardu road, police said on Monday. According to details, robbers had set up picket to loot the tourists travelling to Gilgit Baltistan through Babusar Pass route. Driver of a vehicle carrying tourists hailing from Punjab upon sight of picket tried to reverse the vehicle and attempted to flee after which robbers started firing at vehicle bearing registration No. BRV-406. As a result of firing, Prof Muhammad Rasheed hailing from Melsi district Vehari was killed on the spot while others escaped narrowly. The body was shifted to RHQ Hospital Chilas through ambulance of Tourist Police Dimer. The police after registering a case into the incident have started an investigation. The Manshera Police clarified that it has taken all measures for protection of lives and property of travelers including tourists and the incident took place 15 kilometer away from jurisdiction of district Manshera.

Illegal weapons recovered

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Local police claimed to have recovered weapons during a raid conducted against illegal arms here on Monday. SHO of Rangpur police station arrested the accused including Mohammad Saleem and Muhammad Shahid before recovering two pistols with bullets from their possession. The activity was initiated at the direction of District Police Officer (DPI) Hussain Haider. The accused were sent behind bars after registering for FIR. Police authorities were determined to continue uninterrupted action against the criminal.

WASA on illegal connections

FAISALABAD (INP): The Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) has announced disconnecting all illegal water supply and sewerage connections in its east and west zones. A spokesman said here on Monday that Managing Director WASA Aamir Aziz had constituted special squads for east and west zones which would take necessary steps for detecting illegal connections in addition to detaching them on priority basis.



MULTAN: Students going back to school after summer vacations.

Residents demand stoppage of forests, mountains demarcation

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Elders and political figures from various districts of Malakand division demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and administration to stop the demarcation of forests, mountains and streams without taking local communities into confidence. The demand was made during a grand jirga held at the Chakdara, which was attended by former lawmakers, area elders and social activists from Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Shangla, Buner and Mansehra districts.

The gathering was addressed by former provincial ministers Shah raz Khan, advocate Muzafar Syed, Brigadier (retired) Muhammad Saleem Khan, president Olasi Jirga Upper Dir Malik Badshah Muhammad, Zulfiqar Abbasi, Malik Abdul Ghaffar, president Adenzai Qaumi Jirga Khurshid Ali Khan, Malik Sher Bahadar and others.

The speakers expressed strong reservation over the demarcation of forests, mountains and streams in different districts of Malakand division. They said that local communities and tribes owned those forests and mountains for centuries. The speakers were of the view that the government and its administration

wanted to deprive local communities of their right to ownership under the guise of billion tree tsunami and implementation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa forests (amendment) act, 2022. They said the local tribes would resist any such move from the government and would go to any extent. Rejecting the Pakistan Survey, 2014, the speakers said the local owners would never let the government to deprive them of their property ownership right.

The speakers said that over ten million people lived in parts of Malakand division and they would jointly resist the government. They said that the centuries-old forests in Swat, Dir and Hazara were owned and managed by local population for decades. They said that locals were being barred to construct houses on their lands in Swat that was an injustice.

Most of the speakers suggested that the government should hold talks with forest owners and local communities before starting demarcation of forest lands in Malakand division. They said that a competent committee representing local communities would also be formed to hold negotiation with the government in that regard. The jirga also agreed to launch a mass awareness campaign in

all districts of Malakand decision so that the peaceful environment could not be sabotaged. The jirga also demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to implement a call attention notice No. 941 presented in the assembly on May 20, 2017 under which the ownership right of local communities had been accepted.

Meanwhile the JI former parliamentary leader in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly Inayatullah Khan told on contact that people of Malakand had serious forest-related issues and the caretaker government should take them on board before taking control of their forests and mountains.

A senior officer of the forest department while requesting not to be named told this reporter on contact that the department had initiated the demarcation process of forests in Swat, Shangla and Buner. He said that some of the forests did not belong to local tribes but the government was the real owner of those forest lands. Commenting on the jirga's proceeding, the official said that local politicians tried to make it a political issue. He said that several state-owned forests had been grabbed by local population and the state had the right to get its ownership.

AWP hold protest against unrest, inflation

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Awami Workers Party (AWP) held a protest demonstration in front of the press club holding placards and banners against unrest and inflation in the city.

Kamal Jatilat, Zahid Sheikh and others while speaking said that the rulers have pledged the country's sovereignty and public resources to the IMF while all the previous governments have completely failed to provide the people with complete facilities. Instead of giving any relief, the burden of inflation has been placed on the people, due to which the lower class is being forced to commit suicide due to severe anxiety.

A situation of decay has arisen after the increase in petrol prices, the prices of common food items have started to skyrocket, flour, dal, ghee, rice and various common household items are disappearing. The people are suffering from serious problems due to the increase of inflation.

Students protested against school's condition: The buildings of many primary and secondary schools in the native village of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in Larkana district are collapsing due to the use of poor materials, which may endanger the lives of students.

On which the students of

all the schools held a protest in front of the Larkana Press Club due to the non-repair of the poor buildings of the schools. While due to the poor condition of the schools, pieces of the walls are falling in the classrooms every day, while in the Government Primary School, Kosar Mill, Domki Mohalla School of Larkana City, many students have also been injured due to pieces falling from the roof of the classrooms.

Appealing to the authorities, they demanded that the dilapidated school buildings should be rebuilt as soon as possible so that the first chaos among the students and teachers could end.

Domki seeks utilisation of admn secretaries' experience

QUETTA (PPI): Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki, has said that a conception prevailed that development funds were not used in Balochistan, adding he would strive to remove that conception during interim period of the provincial government.

These views were expressed by him during his introductory meeting with the administrative secretaries of the province here on Monday. "Purpose of today's meeting is to convey the guidelines of interim government to the administrative secretaries besides introduction", said Domki, adding that conducting fair and transparent

election was his foremost priority, adding that good governance was inevitable to be improved in order to conduct election impartially.

He said that guidelines issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan had been provided to all the provincial departments for implementation in its true letter and spirit. "Strikes do not suit officers, therefore, officers of Balochistan Civil Service (BCS) and Balochistan Secretariat Service (BSS) ought to have shown patience and tolerance", said he, adding that the issue between BCS and BSS cadres of the province would be resolved after reviewing the point of

view of both BCS and BSS cadres. "Being son of the soil, I know problems of Balochistan", remarked Domki, adding, "In my view, law and order situation, education, health and non-availability of pure drinking water were the biggest problems".

All administrative secretaries were experienced and professional, adding he wished the experience and professionalism of administrative secretaries were utilised for the progress and development of the province. Administrative secretaries on the occasion gave detailed briefings about the performance of their respective departments.

Steps being taken to improve sewerage system

DG KHAN (INP): Deputy Commissioner Shahid Zaman Lak said Monday that significant steps were being taken to improve the sewerage system and address public complaints.

He expressed these views while visiting Shah Sikandar Road, and directed the

immediate improvement of drainage water and enhancing the number of suction machines to remove garbage and silt from sewerage lines.

In case of damaged pipelines, the officials were instructed to replace these with new pipes. The work should be expedited in con-

sideration of citizens' convenience. Ensure the smooth flow of traffic, he instructed.

The deputy commissioner also visited a private construction company plant near the tractor factory as the company was working on different uplift projects in the city.

Police busts three street's criminal gangs

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Police bust three gangs allegedly involved in street's crimes including mobile snatching while recovered 37 mobile-phones are recovered from their possession in Pabbi circle, on Monday.

This was disclosed by Superintendent of Police Kamal Hussain while addressing media personnel and added that mobile-phones have been hand-over to owner in this regard a ceremony was held. He argued that anti-snatching teams have deployed across Nowshera on directive of district police officer to eliminate the menace from society. The culprits were identified as Rizwan, Shehryar, Bilal, Zahid, Rab Nawaz, Masood alias Sheena and Younas while police has initiated further interrogation in this regard.

Secretary visits headworks

F.P. Report

MULTAN: In view of the flood situation in the Sutlej river as a result of India's water aggression, the Secretary of Irrigation Department South Punjab Ejaz Khalique Razaqi visited Sulaimanki Headworks, on Monday.

Chief Engineers of Bahawalpur and Sahiwal Irrigation Departments were also accompanied with him. Ejaz Khalique Razaqi reviewed the water situation at the headworks and inspected the flood fighting arrangements and breaching section. Talking on this occasion, Secretary Irrigation said that Sutlej River was facing a high level of flood.

Secretary directed authorities to establish active information system with district administration for an early evacuation of people from the flood affected area. Ejaz Khalique Razaqi instructed the officers and staff of the Irrigation dept to remain alert to deal with any emergency and the safety of river embankments is monitored.

Inflation made lives of poor's unbearable: Mayor

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mayor Mardan Hamayatullah Mayar stated in the City Local Council meeting that inflation is affecting the common people, making their lives unbearable, particularly for the poor, due to the increase in prices. Mayor Mayar expressed these views during his address to the City Local Council, where elected members, government officials, and media representatives were present.

Mayor Mayar condemned the recent incident in Jaranwala and demanded action against those involved, aiming to mitigate the losses suffered by affected minorities. He emphasized that Pakistan's laws and constitution guarantee the rights of all citizens, and neither the law nor Islamic teachings permit the discrimination and violation of rights of minorities. He highlighted

Islam's message of peace and brotherhood, emphasizing the protection of minority rights.

The importance of thoughtful consideration, respect for the law, and the eradication of hatred, pride, and envy among individuals. He added that rising inflation has exacerbated difficulties for the poor, leading to increased crime rates and affecting overall peace and security.

The Mayor also called for the establishment of a consultative team and a modern traffic management system in the city. He pointed out that freedom of expression is limited, youth were not being allowed to celebrate the country's independence in Mardan. Over 46 individuals were detained on the spot which is contrary to the constitutionally protected freedom of expression.

During the council meeting, Ashok Kumar thanked

Mayor Mayar for addressing the concerns of minorities and expressed that many of their issues have been resolved through the system of jirgas. He called for collective action against these problems as a nation.

Chairman Akbar Ali Shah discussed the issue of restricted access to rescue services in Sawalder, while Mayor Mayar requested clarification from District Emergency Officer Imran Khan Yusufzai, who was present at the meeting. In the meeting, the City Local Council condemned the incident in Jaranwala, expressed sympathy with the affected individuals, and unanimously approved measures for the restoration of religious places and houses, reduction in unnecessary expenses for the distressed public due to inflation, and the implementation of decisions to improve the traffic system."

Civil society hold protest in solidarity with Christians

F.P. Report

KHYBER: Members of the Christian community and members of civil society staged a protest rally at Baga Chowk, Landi Kotal against Jaranwal, Faisalabad, Punjab mishap and demanded an end of violence against minorities.

It is to be mentioned here that on August 16, 2023, an armed mob attacked at least two churches, the Salvation Army Church and the Saint Paul Catholic Church in Jaranwala city of Punjab, following claims of alleged blasphemy by two Christian's residents. The angry mob also stormed the houses of Christians there,

damaging their properties and setting some on fire.

Former minority Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wilsom Wazir who led the protest speaking on occasion condemned the violence happen and said the government should provide justice to the effectees. We respect all the divine Holy Books and the Messengers of the God and could not even think of blasphemy, he said, adding but ironically few people utilize the blasphemous law in their own interest that needs to be reviewed.

He went on like other communities in Pakistan; the Christians had also rendered services for the coun-

try and asked for compensation of the Christians who lost their properties and renovation of churches that were set ablaze during the aggression. He demanded of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Army Chief and other concerned officials to make judicial inquiry of the incident, award punishment to the culprits and ensure Christians safety.

While carrying banners inscribed with slogans like "stop looting houses of Christians", "stop set on fire churches", scores of local Christians participated in the rally and chanted slogans emphasizing the alleged injustice done to their community in Jaranwala, Punjab.



MULTAN: Bishop of the Catholic Church Yousaf Sohan addressing a press conference regarding Jaranwala incident at press club.

Admn dislocating Gujjar clan in name of settlement: GQM

F.P. Report

CHAKDARA: Gujjar Qaumi Movement (GQM) chief Haji Zarin Khan Gujjar has said the Malakand district administration wants to dislocate the Gujjar clan from their lands in the garb of the land settlement process.

Talking to local journalists, Haji Zarin Khan expressed strong reservations over the ongoing land settlement process in the district. The Movement's central general secretary, Muhammad Ishaq Gujjar, and the GQM-nominated candidate for PK 14 Adenzai, advocate Imran Khan, were also present on the occasion.

Haji Zarin said the Malakand administration, on the dictation of local landlords and 'khans, had been trying to dislocate the Gujjars from their lands under the land settlement procedure, which would be resisted at any cost. The GQM chief said the Gujjar living in parts of Malakand division owned their properties and lands for centuries, and no one could dislocate them.

The speaker complained that educated Gujjars had been ignored in government jobs while local 'khans' and landlords wanted to grab the lands owned by Gujjars. He demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government and commissioner Malakand division that they take notice of the

matter and avoid the land settlement without taking the Gujjars into confidence.

The GQM leaders threatened to launch a country-wide protest if their demand was not accepted and said the government would be responsible if any unpleasant incident took place.

MS DHQ rejects rumours: The district headquarters hospital Timergara medical superintendent, Dr Ali Asghar, rejected the reports that the facility had refused to conduct a postmortem of a married woman brought to the hospital here the other day. Talking to local journalists, the MS said the body was brought to the DHQ hospital in Timergara for autopsy, where a preliminary postmortem was conducted by a three-member team of lady doctors.

He said the body was then referred to the Saidu Sharif teaching hospital in Swat as police had sought forensic verification, which the DHQ hospital in Timergara was lacking. The MS said that the hospital had never refused to conduct the postmortem.

The uncle of the deceased lady, Ghulam Sarwar, had sought an autopsy as he feared his niece had been murdered. He told local journalists here the other day that they received a phone call from the in-laws of his married niece saying that she had committed suicide at her home. He blamed the hos-

pital staff for refusing to conduct the postmortem of the deceased.

One killed in road mishap: A passerby identified as Muhammad Ajab, 20, was killed while three others were injured when a car hit them at Walai Kandao in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station, residents and police said. They said the Rescue 1122 emergency team rushed to the site and shifted the injured to the DHQ hospital in Timergara. The injured included Numan, 20, a resident of Kandaro; Ahmad Jan, 34, a resident of Munda; and Najibullah, 26, a resident of Kandaro. The Balambat police registered a case and started investigations.

Two killed

SARGODHA (INP): A woman and her four-year-old grandson were killed while two others sustained injuries in an accident in jurisdiction of Phularwan police station here on Monday.

According to the police, Nadeem with Iqbal, Kausar Bibi and Sufiyan on a bike were going to Sargodha city when a recklessly driven car hit it.

Resultantly, Kausar Bibi and Sufiyan died on the spot while Nadeem and Iqbal received injuries. Rescue 112 team and police reached the spot and shifted the injured to anearby hospital.



Russian space craft smashes into Moon



MOSCOW (Agencies): The Kremlin's first mission to the Moon for nearly 50 years has crashed into the surface, destroying Vladimir Putin's ambitions of winning a new space race, Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, said that it lost contact with the uncrewed Luna-25 as it was orbiting the Moon ahead of a planned landing.

The failure of Luna-25 is a major blow to the prestige of the Russian space programme and also to the Kremlin, which had wanted to use it to promote Russia as a global technological superpower. A successful mission by Luna-25 would have paved the way for further Russian missions to the Moon. The crash also undermines plans to join China to build a Moon base by the mid-2030s. "At around 2.57pm Moscow time, communication with Luna-25 was interrupted," it said. "The device switched to an unplanned orbit and ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the surface of the Moon."

Analysts said that instead of showing off Russia's cutting-edge technology, the failure of the mission highlighted how Russian ingenuity and technological innovation have fallen behind rivals since the 1950s and 1960s, when it scored several Space Race victories over the US, including putting the first dog and man into space. "Luna-25 was supposed to show how developed and modern Russia was. Rather it has had the opposite effect," said Stephen Hall, a lecturer in Russian politics at the University of Bath. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik-2 into Space with Laika, a mongrel Moscow street dog aboard, and in 1961 its Vostok-1 space rocket made Yuri Gagarin the first man in Space. Luna-25 blasted off to space on Aug 11 to much excitement about the prowess of Russian technology and talk about Russia leading a new space race to find water on the Moon for the first time. The Kremlin had insisted that Luna-25 was shown on TV blasting off from its

launch site in Russia's far east next to a giant V, a pro-war symbol. Luna-25 was supposed to land on the Moon's south pole next week and then spend a year searching for water and collecting rock samples. Abbas Gallyamov, a former Kremlin speech writer who has now quit Russia, said that the crash had shown up Russian officials boasting of their Moon mission.

He said that the project had been planned for 18 years and had received the personal backing of Vladimir Putin. "Modern Russia has failed to carry out a single interplanetary mission," he said. Western space agencies dropped their cooperation with Roscosmos after the Kremlin invaded Ukraine in February last year. The launch of Luna-25 was supposed to show that Russian technology could thrive without their help. Roscosmos, which had warned that Luna-25 was experiencing an "abnormal situation" before admitting that it had crashed, said it would launch an investigation into the failure of the mission. The Soviet Union used the Space Race during the Cold War to promote itself as technologically more advanced than its US rival, but now the Kremlin will have to watch as India beats it to the Moon in search of water. "Enthusiasts of human progress are sad because of the crash of Luna-25," said Sergei Markov, a former adviser to the Kremlin. "We wish success to the Indian space explorers!" Indian officials said that their Chandrayaan-3 mission, launched on July 24 was closing in on the Moon and would land on Aug 23. If it is successful, India will become the fourth country to land a mission on the Moon after the US, still the only country to land men on the Moon, Russia and China. China and the US are both expected to launch Moon missions soon. The Kremlin's last successful mission to the Moon was Luna-24 in 1976, although it has regularly sent missions to the International Space Station.

Egyptian journalist detained

CAIRO (AP): Egyptian authorities briefly detained a journalist working for a fact-checking platform following its coverage of a plane that was seized in Zambia along with its cargo after making a stop in Cairo, the outlet said. Security forces arrested Karim Asaad from his home in al-Shorouk neighborhood in eastern Cairo, the platform, Matsda2sh, or Don't Believe, said in a statement.

The platform accused security forces of assaulting Asaad's wife and threatening their child while detaining the journalist. The platform said security forces asked Asaad about its extensive coverage of a mysterious plane intercepted in Zambia earlier this month after making a stop in Cairo. The Egyptian Press Syndicate's Freedoms Committee urged authorities to reveal Asaad's whereabouts, investigate allegations of assaults against him and his wife and called for his release, in a statement. The outlet reported that Asaad was released and returned to his home. There was no immediate comment from the government either on his detention or his release.

Zambian authorities said they found over \$5 million in cash and more than 100 kilograms of suspected gold mixed with zinc, copper, and nickel on board the aircraft. Zambian authorities said six Egyptians were detained along with four from Zambia, Netherlands, Spain and Latvia in relation to the mysterious plane. Matsda2sh is a social media platform that focuses on debunking misinformation. The platform says its journalists are "independent" and "hide their identities" for safety reasons. It recently responded to questions about its funding, following its work on the seized plane, saying they do not receive any grants from governments. Egypt is one of the world's top jailers of journalists, along with Turkey and China, according to media watchdogs. Authorities have for years targeted journalists as part of a crackdown on dissent and government critics.

Japan, Iran leaders to meet in Sept

TOKYO (Reuters): Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will meet in New York in September to discuss Iran's nuclear programme among other issues, Kyodo news agency said, quoting unnamed Iranian diplomatic sources. Iran aims to promote relations with Japan, traditionally a friendly nation, to avoid international isolation as Iran's talks with the United States and Europe over their nuclear deal have stalled, Kyodo said.

No comment was immediately available from Japan's foreign ministry. Kishida and Raisi also met last September when they visited New York for the UN General Assembly. Indirect talks between Washington and Tehran to revive the nuclear agreement have been stalled since last September, although the two are trying to ease tensions. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week that he would welcome any Iranian steps to de-escalate its "growing nuclear threat". Kishida and Raisi are also expected to discuss Iran's alleged provision of armed drones to Russia, which has invaded Ukraine, according to the Kyodo report.

Sudan conflict: Black market AK-47s flood Sudan's capital

KHARTOUM (BBC): The price of an AK-47 assault rifle, one of the most-recognisable weapons of war, has fallen over the last few months by 50% on the black market in Sudan's capital, Khartoum - now costing only around \$830 (£650). A long-time arms dealer attributed the sharp drop in price to the fact that the black market has become saturated with the Russian-invented Kalashnikov - colloquially known as "the Clash" - after Sudan plunged into a civil war in April.

Battles between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rage daily on the streets of Khartoum and the two other cities - Bahri and Omdurman - that make up the greater capital. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the man - who buys and sells weapons as a full-time business of sorts - said that although some of his suppliers are retired army officers, most are from the ranks of the RSF. Supply outstripped demand, especially after what locals refer to as the Battle of Bahri, fought in mid-July, around three months into the conflict that has devastated Sudan.

Corpses of soldiers lay strewn on the streets of Bahri, with government forces having suffered heavy losses at the hands of the paramilitaries, who are in control of much of the city - as well as Khartoum and Omdurman. "Many soldiers got captured and many more were killed, so our suppliers have plenty of arms," said the dealer. This means that he no longer has to rely on "the Clash" being smuggled in via the Sahara Desert from Libya, which he describes as an "open arms market" - a sign of the extent to which lawlessness and instability has engulfed the North African state since the overthrow and killing of long-serving ruler

Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

In the past the smuggled weapons used to be sold mainly to rebels and militiamen involved in long-running conflicts in Sudan, or neighbouring states like Chad. But now fighters pick up the weapons of killed or captured enemies from the battlefields of greater Khartoum, and sell them via intermediaries to dealers who, in turn, have found a new group of buyers - some residents of the capital worried about the war, lawlessness and dangers on their doorsteps. Having learned of dealers though word of mouth, residents call them up to place an order. The dealers deliver the AK-47 rifle to their homes, and give them a quick demonstration of how to use a weapon they had never imagined they would own. Ammunition is sold separately - by dealers hanging around Omdurman's main market called Souq Omdurman. A 55-year-old father of six said he bought an AK-47 rifle because of rising crime, and "potential attacks from other people in Khartoum". "They might just attack you, for whatever reason. It might turn into an ethnic war. You never know. That is our main fear," he added.

Sudan descended into a civil war in mid-April after a fall out between the army chief, Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF commander, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti. The two staged a coup in October 2021, but then got involved in a power struggle that saw their men take up arms against each other in a war that shows no sign of ending. The arms dealer said that in far greater demand than AK-47 rifles are pistols, which are easier to use and to carry. Residents are snapping them up because the collapse of government - including the police force,

prison service and judiciary - has led to crime getting out of control. Hardened criminals are now on the streets, following a mass break-out from Khartoum's biggest prison early in the war. Crime has also soared because the conflict has forced many businesses to shut, having a knock-on effect on unemployment, while the cost of living has risen because of the scarcity of basic food items. Though people are struggling financially, a significant number of residents are buying weapons as safety is of paramount importance - especially as homes are being looted and women are being raped. The arms dealer said he has dropped the price of pistols four-fold, from 800,000 Sudanese pounds (\$1,330) to 200,000 Sudanese pounds. "What used to make them [pistols] expensive was the licence. Now you don't need to get one. You just buy it and use it," the dealer said, adding that he made a good profit because sales were higher than ever before.

While owners of AK-47 rifles keep the weapon at home, pistol-owners carry it with them when they go out - whether it is to the fuel station or market. The threat posed by criminals is highlighted by the plight of a 24-year-old man who got married just a few years ago, and has a one-year-old child. As he walked to a market in Omdurman, he was confronted by a gang, which robbed him of his cash and shot him in the spine. With the only functioning hospital in the city unable to treat him, he was taken on a dangerous road journey to a hospital in River Nile State, about 200km (124 miles) away. The bullet was removed, but the shooting left him paralysed - a painful reminder of a war that has ruined the lives of millions of people.

Niger coup leader promises to handover power in three years

NIAMEY (BBC): Niger's coup leader has promised to return the West African nation to civilian rule within three years. Gen Abdourahamane Tchiani made the announcement after meeting mediators from the West African regional bloc Ecowas in the capital, Niamey.

Ecowas has threatened military action to reverse last month's overthrow of President Mohamed Bazoum if talks fail. The junta head said that Niger did not want a war but would defend itself against any foreign intervention. "If an attack were to be undertaken against us, it will not be the walk in the park some people seem to think," he warned in his televised address. Gen Tchiani also reiterated criticism of what he called the "illegal and inhumane" sanctions imposed by Ecowas on the landlocked country.

This has included cutting electricity, resulting in blackouts in Niamey and other major cities, as well as blocking crucial imports. Lorry drivers have been stuck for weeks waiting to bring in supplies, forcing up food prices. "Sanctions are not conceived with the aim of finding a solution but to bring us to our knees and humiliate us," Gen Tchiani said. Thousands of men came to a stadium in Niamey to register for a volunteer force in case of invasion - although overcrowding prevented the registration process starting, the Reuters news agency reports.

Ecowas rejected the three-year timeframe after talks. "Ecowas is not accepting any prolonged transition again in the region. They just have to get ready to hand over in the shortest possible time," Abdel-Fatau Musah, the bloc's commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, told the BBC. He said the "military aspect is

very much on". He added: "The earlier they give power back to civilians and concentrate on their primary responsibility that is defending the territorial integrity of Niger, the better for them."

Regional efforts to reverse the coup have been backed by the US and France, which both have military bases in Niger. These bases are part of efforts to tackle jihadist groups in the wider Sahel region. The junta leader, who headed the presidential guard before seizing power on 26 July, said military intervention could worsen the Islamist insurgencies linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. "They seem ignorant to the fact that it is in large part thanks to the professionalism and valour of the defence and security forces of Niger that Niger has remained a barrier preventing terrorist hordes from destabilising the

whole region," he said. The coup mirrors similar recent takeovers in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali.

And the influence of Russia in the wider Sahel region is also growing through its mercenary group Wagner. Gen Tchiani did not give details about the handover of power, but said the principles for the transition would be decided within 30 days at a "dialogue" hosted by the coup leaders. Their delegation was led by former Nigerian military leader Gen Abdulsalami Abubakar and also included Nigeria's most senior Muslim leader, the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III. He wields huge influence in Niger, part of which used to be in the Sokoto Caliphate, a powerful kingdom before colonial rule. Meeting was the first between leaders of the junta and Ecowas.

A tanker believed to hold sanctioned Iran oil starts offloading near Texas

DUBAI (AP): An oil tanker long suspected of carrying sanctioned Iranian crude oil offloaded its cargo near Texas, tracking data showed, even as Tehran has threatened to target shipping in the Persian Gulf over it.

Ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Marshall Islands-flagged Suez Rajan began the hours-long ship-to-ship transfer of its oil to another tanker, the MR Euphrates, near Galveston, some 70 kilometers (45 miles) southeast of Houston. The fate of the

cargo aboard the Suez Rajan has become mired in the wider tensions between the US and the Islamic Republic, even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran. Iran has been trying to evade sanctions and continue selling its oil abroad, while the US and its allies have been seizing cargoes since 2019 after the country's nuclear deal allowing the trade collapsed.

Already, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard

has warned that those involved in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo "should expect to be struck back." The US Navy has increased its presence steadily in recent weeks in the Mideast, sending the troop-and-aircraft-carrying USS Bataan through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days and considering putting armed personnel on commercial ships traveling through the strait to stop Iran from seizing additional ships. The Los Angeles-based private equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, which owned

the vessel up until late May, repeatedly declined to comment publicly. Greek firm Empire Navigation, which operates the vessel, did not respond to requests for comment. An email sent to Alma Maritime Ltd., the ship's new owner, bounced back and a telephone number listed in its name rang unanswered. The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Khargh Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Persian Gulf.

Zimbabwe election: Chicken and chips put a taste for democracy to the test

HARARE (BBC): Free fried chicken and an endorsement from an unbeaten former world boxing champion have formed part of the intriguing choreography of election campaigning in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, finger-licking crowds and cheers for US boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr have not distracted from fundamental concerns about the polls themselves and fears of vote rigging in the first election since the death of Robert Mugabe, the man who dominated Zimbabwean politics for decades before being ousted by his deputy, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, in 2017. Vote will see President Mnangagwa, the candidate of the ruling Zanu-PF party, being challenged by Nelson Chamisa of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) and nine other contenders. A small online civic society group says it is gearing up to do what it can to protect the vote, which sees 6.62 million registered

voters also choosing MPs and local councillors. Team Pachedu will be using an app called Mandla, meaning strength, to help monitor "hotspots" it feels Zanu-PF "takes advantage of" - a reference to a belief that the ruling party's long stay in power has been the result of rigging.

"It is a strategy to track election results data as they come out of the polling stations, to see if they will tally with official results," Team Pachedu's co-ordinator Tafadzwa Sambiri told the BBC. The group is mostly made up of Zimbabwean activists based outside the country. Zanu-PF has persistently dismissed allegations that it steals elections. "We as government have an obligation to be seen to be clean about this election," party spokesman Chris Mutsvangwa told the media recently. "The president is working hard... reaching out for each vote." Mr Mnangagwa is anxious to get an

international stamp of approval so Zimbabwe's foreign debt can be restructured and potentially open up fresh lines of credit frozen more than 20 years ago. The ruling party itself has deep pockets. This was on display during the campaign, with the party dishing out fried chicken and chip meals from a popular fast food outlet and loaves of bread in packaging printed with "VoteED" - a reference to the president's initials.

Tens of thousands have flocked to the meetings lining up alongside trucks to receive the food. Zanu-PF, which has been in power since independence in 1980, denies that it is trying to buy votes, maintaining it is showing "respect for people" who have travelled from afar on buses by giving them food and water. Last month, Mayweather flew into the country aboard a private jet and at the behest of prominent gold dealer Scott Sakupwanya, an aspiring Zanu-PF

MP for Mabvuku - an opposition stronghold in the capital, Harare. After conducting some boxing drills in the constituency, Mayweather hosted a business dinner and then met Mr Mnangagwa at State House, where the two, in matching scarfs in the colours of the Zimbabwean flag, swapped presents, and he urged voters to back the president.

But behind such razzmatazz, human rights groups report that threats, intimidation and violence are on the rise. Zimbabwe Peace Project recorded 84 violations in the first two weeks of August, including the death of an opposition CCC supporter during an ambush by alleged ruling party activists. Director Jestina Mukoko told the BBC that the main incidents had been arson, assaults, kidnapping threats and intimidation - all related to the elections and mainly perpetrated by Zanu-PF. State institutions had been complicit, with police violently

breaking up and banning rallies, she said. The police blame the opposition for conducting rallies outside agreed times and changing their routes - and say those linked to the death of the CCC supporter have been arrested.

Zanu-PF distanced itself from the violence, with Mr Mutsvangwa saying: "A criminal who breaks law and order does not belong to a party. He is a criminal." Mr Chamisa has decided to take part in the election despite reservations about its fairness. He points out that promised reforms have not been implemented, including an audited voters' roll checked and signed off by all parties and equal access to state media. The Media Monitoring Project reports that Zanu-PF has had 62% of coverage, compared to 16% for CCC. Monitors describe this as one of Zimbabwe's most litigious elections with more than 100 court cases related to the disqualification of mainly opposition

candidates. Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Douglas Mwonozora has urged the other opposition leaders to follow his lead and boycott the "sham" polls, decrying a predestined outcome. The party is still taking part in the parliamentary vote, although 87 of its candidates have been disqualified from running following a payment dispute with Zec.

Mr Mwonozora also accuses the electoral body of recently amending the law relating to postal voting, and changing boundaries at the last minute, meaning voters may not know their assigned polling station have changed. Freeman Chari, co-ordinator of an activist monitoring group CredibleVote, says research has revealed glaring anomalies in the voters' roll with "millions of people shifted from their traditional voting areas in opposition strongholds".

The Frontier Post**JALIL AFRIDI***Managing Editor*

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

Continuation of chaos

A recent statement issued by the President Dr Arif Alvi on social media platform X, formerly known as twitter has ignited another crisis during which the President swore that he did not sign the Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 because he disagreed with those legislations. According to the President he advised his staff to return the bills unsigned within stipulated time to make them ineffective. Dr. Alvi further said that he confirmed from his staff many times whether proposed law drafts have been returned and Presidency staff assured him that. According to the President he later found that his staff undermined his will and command. Dr. Alvi assured the public of his helplessness by saying that Allah knows all and will forgive, but he asks forgiveness from those who will be affected.

The President's revelation about an important and highly controversial issue at the social media platform has sent shockwaves across the socio-political spectrum in the country and arised countless questions regarding the state of governmental affairs, the political conspiracies that are being hatched in the power corridors, and their legal, constitutional, and socio-political effects on the country. President's open message ran a high voltage current in the caretaker government, and compelled the Law Minister and information Minister to put forward their official stance before the nation about the issue. According to the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Presidency has returned over a dozen bills for parliament's reconsideration without signing them in the last week but those particular two bills, the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 and Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023 were not included in them. The Law Minister asserted that nothing available in the constitution to return the bills without signature or without recommendation or amendments. The Law Minister expressed serious concerns over the manner the Presidency dealt with two particular legislation, whose example could not be found in the country's history.

Realistically, the conduct of the President Dr Arif Alvi as well as the caretaker setup was not officially mandated and inline with the constitution. The President should first officially highlight the issue with the government by ordering or suggesting the government to initiate an inquiry into the matter to ascertain the facts before announcing this corrigendum on social media. Meanwhile, cursing the government officials for delinquency or declaring gross violation a decree of the God had not ever been a legacy of the top public representative nor it well aligned with the prestige and decorum of the office of the President. Similarly, the caretaker government has not so far officially ordered an inquiry to digout facts behind this fiasco that could lead to another constitutional and political crisis at a later stage any time in the future. Historically, Pakistani leaders and civic groups had always made mockery of the constitution and bargained national prestige and interests to secure their politics, to retain or attain high positions or achieve their political agenda throughout the past. Hence, the prevailing political quandary is another manifestation of short sightedness and astigmatism of our leaders, who failed to rule the country through political wisdom and often seek assistance from judiciary or from military junta to create a level playing field for them in national politics.

In fact, the state of Pakistan has been plunged into an unceasing political tussle, an antagonism and strange personal rivalry of politicians that sensitive state affairs became tools for the leaders to achieve their political manifesto by twisting, tempering and forging national laws and using official portfolios for personal or political use. A chaos prevails everywhere, a new political drama begins after one comes to an end in the country. The foreign enemies both in the East and the West and their touts within the country are currently celebrating the political unrest, economic depletion and moral decayness of the Pakistani nation.

Undoubtedly, All state organs failed in the performance of their official obligations because of political interference, and biases of the bureaucrats. Presently, all eyes are set on the Supreme Court to rescue the nation out of the current predicament. The current situation merits extreme care and a meticulous response from the caretaker government and other state institutions including judiciary to thoroughly investigate the issue, identify loopholes in the system, alongwith the recognition of the wrongdoers whatsoever who is. All stakeholders should rely on the supreme court, while the Apex court must conclude all facts and fiction through a comprehensive inquiry by an independent powerful judicial commission. So, the nation could be aware of the dereliction of the government servants as well as dilapidation of its politicians, and no transgressor could ever dare a malefaction with the nation in the future.

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Historic alliance brings US, Japan and Korea together

Dr. Amal Mudallali

THE "historic" trilateral American-Japanese-South Korean summit held at Camp David on Friday has been hailed as a crowning achievement for President Joe Biden, as he continues to weave a web of multilateral alliances in the Indo-Pacific to encircle China, while saying at the same time that this is not about China.

Bringing Japan and Korea together and making them partners, despite their historic baggage of tension and grievances borne of war and occupation, is considered a resounding success for the American president. It opens up a "new era" of cooperation among the three countries, as he put it. If the American pivot to the Asia-Pacific needed a milestone, this is by far its crown jewel, because America believes its strength is its alliances. But this is not all. Politico reported, after the trilateral summit, that Biden will next month "sign a strategic partnership deal with Vietnam, China's neighbor to the south, in the latest bid to counter China in the region." President Biden will reportedly visit Vietnam in mid-September. He is also going to India for the G20 Summit next month.

This new trilateral alliance joins two more alliances the US has established in the Indo-Pacific region: AUKUS with Australia, the UK and Japan, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, known as the Quad, with India, Australia and Japan. These are in addition to the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity of 14 countries. This must be a strategic nightmare if you are sitting in China. To have these two powers, Japan and South Korea, which are among Beijing's biggest trading partners, enter a trilateral alliance with the US is a cause of great concern for China.

The White House went to great lengths to deny that this new alliance was against China. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan underscored that this "summit today, this

partnership is not against anyone. It is for something," and it is not new. But "what is new is that we are now stitching all of that work together to try to enhance regional stability and security," he said. A Chinese newspaper described the summit as an effort to create a NATO-like presence in Asia, according to The New York Times. Sullivan denied that, saying "it's explicitly not a NATO for the Pacific. We have said that. We will continue to underscore that and so will both Japan and Korea." Other American officials repeated that this summit and the trilateral alliance are not against China.

But American Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel was more blunt. He said America's message in the region is: "We are a permanent pacific power and presence, and you can bet long on America." While it was not in this summit's pronouncements, China has been a Biden administration priority since day one. In fact, "out-competing China" is the most prominent component of the most recent American National Security Strategy, which identified China as "the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do it." This strategy laid out what the US perceives as China's ambitions to increase its sphere of influence in the region, where it is "investing in and modernizing a military" that is "increasingly capable in the Indo-Pacific, and growing in strength and reach globally - all while seeking to erode US alliances in the region and around the world."

The trilateral alliance summit produced a flurry of statements, a fact sheet, a "Commitment to Consult" and the "Camp David Principles," which outline the objectives and goals of this "new era of trilateral partnership." The Camp David Principles affirmed the commitment of the leaders to a "free and

open Indo-Pacific, and vowed to oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion." To allay the concerns of other allies in the region, the statement assured them that this new alliance would not replace the regional cooperation mechanism that unites them as a group. The purpose of the trilateral security cooperation, the statement said, "is and will remain to promote and enhance peace and stability throughout the region. Our commitment to the region includes our unwavering support for (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) centrality and unity and the ASEAN-led regional architecture." The leaders also sent a message to North Korea when they asserted their unity "in our commitment to the complete denunciation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions." But at the same time, they said they "remain committed to dialogue with DPRK with no preconditions." They also reaffirmed the "importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as an indispensable element of security and prosperity in the international community."

In the Commitment to Consult document, the three countries committed their governments to "consult trilaterally with each other, in an expeditious manner, to coordinate our responses to regional challenges, provocations, and threats affecting our collective interests and security." They vowed, through these consultations, to "share information, align our messaging, and coordinate response actions." They also committed to "retain the freedom to take all appropriate actions to uphold our security interests and sovereignty." They vowed to cooperate on a wide range of issues, from security cooperation to technology, economic and financial stability, climate change, and supply chains. But not a word on who they are aligned against.

The American president and his administration were very keen on presenting this as an alliance for "decades and decades," as Biden said, and they took many steps to "institutionalize" it and make sure it outlives any elections or any American president's term in office, or any leadership change in Japan and Korea. They made sure to put a structure in place that "has a tailwind behind it that will propel it forward and be very difficult to knock it off course," Sullivan said. Public opinion in Korea has been very critical of a closer relationship with Japan and of the trilateral alliance, with weekly demonstrations criticizing President Yoon Suk Yeol, according to the American media. To guard against any fallout resulting from political change in any of the three countries, the leaders vowed to hold "trilateral meetings between our leaders, foreign ministers, defense ministers, and national security advisers at least annually," and "hold the first trilateral meeting between our finance ministers as well as launch a new commerce and industry ministers track that will meet annually." They will also "launch an annual Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue to coordinate implementation of our Indo-Pacific approaches and to continually identify new areas for common action."

The future agenda for the trilateral alliance is impressive, but it is its implementation that will matter. White House Indo-Pacific Coordinator Kurt Campbell, speaking at the Brookings Institution, hoped that this trilateral alliance would be embedded in "our national psyche in a bipartisan way." The current domestic American political landscape does not lend itself to strong bipartisan support on many issues, but China is different and the White House might get the support it needs. The real test is whether this trilateral alliance will survive the politics in these three countries, with their strong institutionalized foundations. Time will tell.

World must be wary as cyberattacks are on the rise

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

CYBERATTACKS are one of the biggest threats facing governmental organizations, corporations, private companies and individuals. They can even have both direct and indirect implications for global security and vital national interests.

A cyberattack - which is a malicious and intentional attempt to steal data or expose, disrupt, destroy or obtain unauthorized access to the information system of an institution or an individual - can be carried out for many reasons, including extortion and financial gain. For example, in April 2021, a \$5 million Bitcoin payment was made to hackers who were capable of tapping into the American Colonial Pipeline by accessing a virtual private network that did not have multifactor authentication. Cybercrimes have significantly increased in recent years, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Since COVID-19, the FBI has reported a 300 percent increase in cybercrimes, as online activities have risen and the world has become more digitally connected. According to Cybersecurity Ventures, "if it were measured as a country, then cybercrime - which is predicted to inflict damages totaling \$8 trillion globally in 2023 - would be the world's third-largest economy after the US and China."

Cybersecurity Ventures expects global cybercrime costs to reach \$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, up from \$3 trillion in 2015. This represents "the greatest transfer of economic wealth in history, risks the incentives for innovation and investment, is exponentially larger than the damage inflicted from natural disasters in a year, and will be more profitable than the global trade of all major illegal drugs combined." Attackers use various tactics, such as malware attacks and social engineering scams. Social engineering scams are one of the most widespread methods used by cybercriminals. Instead of manipulating technology, this tactic relies on exploiting human error, as well as psychologically manipulating or tricking someone into directly or indirectly giving away sensitive personal information. This can include scareware, which can, for example, scare an individual into acting fast in order to get rid of a computer virus, phishing attempt or domain name system spoof, where server data is tampered with in order to redirect the user to fake websites. Attackers also disguise themselves as a friend, relative or business in an attempt to have the individual click on an infected link or share personal information.

People should be aware of the exposure they may have to third party contractors. Cybercriminals can get access to information through third parties that might have less protection for their security systems. For instance, in 2021, the personal records of millions of users on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn were breached due to a misconfigured database run by a third party contractor, the Chinese social media management company SocialArks. As a result, it is important to regularly practice "cyber hygiene" in order to keep oneself safe. Always be aware of the lat-

est tactics used by cybercriminals and hackers in order to stay ahead of the threats, protect one's private information online and on all devices, and stay up to date when it comes to the latest software, operating systems and security protections. Other cyber hygiene steps individuals can take include using multifactor authentication and a VPN, thinking twice before clicking on a link, using stronger passwords, avoiding unprotected Wi-Fi networks and being careful about fake websites and links.

On a wider scale, we should not underestimate the damage that cyberattacks can cause to a whole nation or government. For example, cyberwarfare could have consequences at least as severe as military actions. Cyberattacks can take control of or disrupt an entire nation's infrastructure, including public services, hospitals, transportation, the internet, municipal or governmental institutions, and the energy sector. They can steal people's private information, take control of another country's missiles and drones, and even its military's intelligence, command, control and communications. Cyberattacks can be sponsored by a rival government, which may view a virtual war as an attractive alternative to a physical war because it provides the benefit of anonymity, making it extremely difficult to hold the responsible party accountable. Cyberattacks are also considered to be less costly. The cyber capabilities of some nonstate actors are advancing at a pace that needs to be addressed by regional and global powers because it is a matter of national security.

The increasing dangers of this modern-day threat have been highlighted by several high-level officials. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg last year warned that cyberattacks "can be as damaging and as dangerous" as an armed attack and are "as serious as any other attack on a NATO ally." And Daniel Coats, who served as the US director of national intelligence, previously stressed at a hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: "We face a complex, volatile and challenging threat environment ... Our adversaries, as well as the other malign actors, are using cyber and other instruments of power to shape societies and markets, international rules and institutions, and international hotspots to their advantage." One of the most effective ways to counter the rising cyberwarfare threat is for governments to send a strong message to those who are responsible. If they remain silent, the perpetrators will be emboldened and empowered to target more governments with their cyberattacks. Organizations and individuals who are behind cyberattacks or their financing must be targeted and sanctioned as well.

In a nutshell, cyberattacks have escalated to a record level as the world becomes more digitally connected. It is important for governmental organizations, private companies and individuals to be proactive, practice cyber hygiene regularly and be aware of the tactics used by cybercriminals in order to stay ahead of the threat.

Claims of human rights violation in Xinjiang baseless

Liang Yuchun

CANADA'S corporate watchdog initiated an investigation into Ralph Lauren's Canadian division on Tuesday, based on allegations that the fashion powerhouse has engaged in the use of "forced labor" from China's Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. This development comes in the wake of similar probes targeting Nike Canada and Canadian mining company Dynasty Gold, which were initiated by the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise last month.

Nevertheless, Canada's recent action appears to be nothing more than a manipulative tactic, aimed at exploiting the Xinjiang issue in order to impede the region's progress and tarnish China's reputation. There is no discrimination against any ethnic minority group in Xinjiang. This fact is substantiated by the robust protection of equal labor rights

for all ethnic groups in the region.

The rule of law is the most effective guarantee for human rights. In Xinjiang, the principle of governance is based on law, which China has upheld while making significant progress in legal and regulatory development, especially since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. As a result, a three-tier legal framework has been established to ensure that all ethnic groups enjoy equal labor rights. At the national level, the first tier consists of laws that safeguard labor rights, such as the Labor Law, the Law on Promotion of Employment and the Labor Contract Law. Article 3 of the Labor Law stipulates that laborers shall have equal right to employment and choice of occupation, the right to remuneration for labor, to rest and avail of leave, to occupational safety and health protection, to training in vocational skills,

to social insurance and welfare, to submission of labor disputes for settlement, and other rights relating to labor as stipulated by law. Article 12 of the same law says that laborers, regardless of their ethnic group, race, sex or religion, shall not be discriminated against in employment. Similarly, Article 3 of the Law on Promotion of Employment states that workers shall enjoy the right to employment on an equal footing and to opt for the job of their liking on their own initiative in accordance with law. And in seeking employment, the workers shall not be subject to discrimination because of their ethnic background, race, gender, religion and economic status.

The second tier comprises administrative regulations formulated by the State Council, China's Cabinet, to safeguard labor rights, including the Regulations on Paid Annual Leave of

Employees, the Regulations on the Implementation of the Labor Contract Law and the Regulations on Labor Security Supervision. Article 2 of the Regulations on Paid Annual Leave of Employees states that employees of government departments, social organizations, enterprises, public institutions, private non-enterprise units and individually owned commercial and industrial businesses who have been working for a consecutive period of more than one year shall be entitled to paid annual leave. And employers and employing enterprises shall ensure that their employees get annual leave, with employees availing of annual leave being entitled to the same wage as normal working days. The third tier consists of local regulations formulated by China's autonomous regions in accordance with their local conditions to safeguard labor rights, including the regula-

tions on guaranteeing the labor rights and interests of workers, the interim regulations on labor safety, and the measures for labor security supervision in the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. These laws and regulations constitute a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of labor rights, and cover different aspects of labor rights while providing a solid legal basis for safeguarding the labor rights of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang has established a robust mechanism for protecting labor rights. The mechanism ensures the implementation of labor rights laws and regulations, which protect the equal labor rights of workers from all ethnic groups. Xinjiang has mandated that State-owned enterprises, private enterprises and public institutions must not impose discriminatory or restrictive conditions based on ethnicity, gender, and religious belief in the recruitment process. This

shows there is no discrimination against minority workers in employment in Xinjiang, and the equal employment and labor rights of workers from all ethnic groups are fully protected. In Xinjiang, Party and government organizations, as well as public institutions have implemented preferential policies for candidates from ethnic minority groups in the recruitment of civil servants and staff members.

These facts cannot be distorted, and lies will eventually be exposed. The protection of equal labor rights of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang is an undeniable fact, and reflects the significant progress China has made in protecting human rights in Xinjiang. It is committed to respecting, guaranteeing and promoting equal rights for all ethnic groups. As a result, the sense of dignity, achievement, security and happiness all ethnic groups feel will continue to increase.

The China Daily

US border policies in spotlight as illegal immigrant numbers surge

Dalia Al-Aqidi

IN the early days of his presidency, Joe Biden made a swift and momentous decision that continues to feed the ongoing immigration crisis. One of his initial actions in the White House was the termination of the Migrant Protection Protocols, often referred to as the "Remain in Mexico" program. While the program was effective, its discontinuation brought about significant consequences.

The essence of Remain in Mexico lay in its approach to handling apprehended illegal aliens at the US-Mexico border. Under this policy, individuals seeking asylum were required to stay in Mexico while awaiting the resolution of their removal cases. This approach had been regarded as a success, as it managed to curb the influx of unauthorized entries and address specific concerns related to border security.

However, Biden's policy shift brought about a fundamental transformation. The decision to end the program meant that apprehended individuals were no longer required to remain in Mexico while their cases were pending. Instead, they were released into the US, sparking concerns about the potential repercussions on border control, national security and immigration processing.

A significant development occurred when a federal judge mandated the Biden administration to revive the Remain in Mexico program. Nevertheless, the actual implementation of this court order seemed to be an uphill battle, as only a limited number of migrants were placed back into the program. This scenario further fueled debates about the administration's commitment to the rule of law and the enforcement of immigration policies.

The apex of this narrative was reached in June 2022, when the Supreme Court issued a ruling permitting the Biden administration to

legally rescind the Remain in Mexico policy. While upholding the president's authority, this verdict has been met with varying reactions. Supporters of the decision emphasize the need for flexibility and humanitarian considerations in immigration policies. At the same time, critics argue that this stance might inadvertently encourage unauthorized border crossings and potentially exacerbate the existing challenges. Indeed, the sequence of events unfolded exactly as described. This sequence of actions and their outcomes highlights the intricate and evolving nature of Biden's immigration policy decisions and their impact.

Furthermore, compounding these changes, on the very first day of the new administration, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf implemented a 100-day pause on deportations of illegal immigrants. This decision was accompanied by the establishment of fresh interim enforcement priorities, effectively signaling a shift away from deportations for the mere act of being an undocumented immigrant. The rapid and profound changes in deportation policy, enforcement criteria and procedural requirements have had far-reaching consequences, culminating in one of the most significant crises in the US today. This crisis casts a dark shadow over major metropolises and smaller urban centers alike, affecting communities of all sizes, particularly those governed by the Democratic Party.

The ramifications of these shifts have become acutely apparent in the streets of cities across the nation, where the impact has been felt at various levels. Law enforcement agencies, local authorities and communities found themselves grappling with the repercussions of altered immigration enforcement strategies. The fallout of these

changes has been manifested in increased strain on public resources, heightened security concerns and complex social dynamics. Since Biden assumed the role of president on Jan. 20, 2021, an estimated 5.6 million illegal immigrants have entered the US through its northern and southern borders. Despite Democratic claims of prioritizing humanitarian concerns, the party's actions do not align with these professed values. The apparent lack of comprehensive care for these illegal immigrants, many of whom find themselves homeless and in gravely dangerous situations, raises doubts about how their well-being is being addressed or even considered. Led by progressive politicians who pretend to advocate for the rights and dignity of immigrants, the Democratic Party has nothing in mind other than numbers. Each immigrant will be a potential voter. That is how they plan to change the political demographics.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams last month made a significant announcement that underscored the pressing challenges his city is facing. With an intake of approximately 90,000 migrants since April of last year, Adams revealed that New York had reached its capacity to accommodate additional arrivals. This declaration, emanating from the leader of the most populous American city, reflects the gravity of the situation. The Democratic mayor emphasized the stark reality by stating that the city could no longer accommodate further migrants due to space limitations. He proposed a policy change to address the evolving situation: single adult migrants would be limited to a 60-day stay in the city's shelters.

Currently, a staggering 105,800 individuals reside in New York's shelters, a record high. Among these individuals, more than 54,000 are

asylum seekers, underlining the multifaceted nature of the challenge facing the city due to the Biden administration's immigration policies. The dynamics at play in New York City summarize the complexities inherent in managing large-scale immigration movements. Adams' announcement reflects the need for careful considerations that balance humanitarian concerns with practical capacity limitations.

The repercussions of the influx of migrants extend beyond New York City, with other urban centers grappling with similar challenges. The associated costs, both financial and social, have proven to be substantial. Chicago, for instance, has not been immune to the challenges that accompany an increased migrant population. Reports of illegal immigrants in a high-capacity shelter engaging in disruptive behaviors such as loitering, late-night parties, prostitution, littering and even conflicts with community members have generated concerns among locals. These occurrences shed light on the complex dynamics that arise when a country adopts open-border policies.

In Massachusetts, a state known for its liberal stance and sanctuary policies concerning illegal immigration, the situation mirrors other regions. Emergency shelters are becoming overwhelmed as the demand for temporary housing continues to surge. Open-border policies without stringent controls present a formidable challenge to any responsible nation's commitment to safeguarding its citizens and maintaining national security.

Progressive politicians are motivated by political gains rather than the overall welfare of the nation, while the taxpayers are footing the bill. However, the upcoming 2024 election offers Americans a significant opportunity to voice their opinions on how they want to shape the nation's policies.

Arab News

Right now, the US is letting Russia win in Africa - again

David A. Andelman

THE United States needs to get way more proactive way more quickly in what is rapidly morphing into a huge crisis in the heart of Africa. Two weeks ago, a military junta suddenly deposed Niger's pro-American, democratically elected president. The outcome of this coup could set the direction for years to come in a region that is home to critical raw materials, a base for jihadists driven from the Middle East and a source of strategic benefits for Russia.

This latest challenge to democracy in Africa presents an opportunity for Russia to expand its control over the region via its Wagner mercenary group. Despite the strained state of the relationship between Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Wagner's inroads are still seen as a benefit to Russia. Already at least one leader of the Niger junta has met with Wagner representatives in neighboring Mali, where Wagner has developed a firm presence.

The takeover of Niger threatens to leave Russia with an all-but-complete stranglehold over the Sahel, an almost 1.2 million square mile belt of countries with more than 80 million people stretching from one coast of Africa to the other. Wagner's Sahel interventions include the Central African Republic and Sudan, and it is burrowing into Burkina Faso as well. Given the stakes, the initial responses by those who support Niger's ousted president have been ill-considered and anemic. The Western-oriented, 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) set last Sunday as the deadline for the junta to relinquish power and return Mohamed Bazoum to the presidency or face an invasion by combined ECOWAS armies. But the Wagner-supported ruling juntas in two of Niger's neighbors immediately pledged to join with Niger's military in fending off any such invasion, calling it a "declaration of war" against them.

The ECOWAS deadline passed Sunday night, and the threat proved utterly meaningless. In place of an invasion merely came a pledge to pursue diplomacy as "the best way forward" by the coalition's chairman, Nigerian president Bola Tinubu. Among the ECOWAS, Tinubu runs the dominant nation in size and population and has the largest standing

army - but he ran into domestic opposition when he raised the prospect of military action in Niger. Following hours of deliberation on Thursday, ECOWAS's leaders announced they were now activating a standby military force, but that diplomacy remained their preferred means of resolving the crisis.

The US, for its part, didn't know the coup was coming, according to The Wall Street Journal. The US has spent some \$500 million training and equipping Niger's armed forces, especially its special forces, but none stepped in to halt the action. There were rumors that Bazoum had been weighing whether to fire the head of his presidential guard, who then led the takeover. While Bazoum's election had been held with few irregularities, according to an African Union observer delegation, he failed to carry the capital, Niamey, which helps to explain the large pro-junta demonstrations there since the coup occurred. The stakes here for the US and the West are enormous - both in terms of Niger and the broader Sahel region. As the Global Terrorism Index's 2023 edition points out, the Sahel is now the "epicentre of terrorism," with the Sahel accounting for more terrorism deaths in 2022 than South Asia, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa combined. Terror-related deaths in the Sahel constituted 43% of the global total of 6,700 in 2022, a shocking increase from 2007 when they were just 1%.

Moreover, nearly 3,000 troops from four NATO nations - the US, France, Italy and Germany - are stationed in Niger and may be seriously at risk if challenged by junta forces, especially if they are backed by the Russian paramilitary Wagner Group. A massive US drone base targeting jihadi forces and built at a cost of \$110 million is also at risk.

All have been grounded since Niger's junta declared the entire country a no-fly zone. And then there are the natural resources in Niger, which is the world's seventh-largest producer of uranium, key to nuclear capabilities. A final challenge is the 2.7 million migrants displaced during and after coups in the Sahel, with the exodus from Niger only just beginning. But the most immediate concern for the US is the likelihood of Wagner adding

another African notch in its belt. Pro-junta crowds in the streets of Niamey have been chanting their praise for Putin. It should be clear, though, just what Wagner is prepared to do for any country that welcomes it. In the Central African Republic, for instance, the presidential spokesperson said last month that Wagner forces would oversee a "referendum" at the end of July, allowing the country's president, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, to potentially stay in power for life.

Not something likely to be resolved, it must be said, by anodyne diplomatic solutions. Yet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's main public course of action has been to hold several phone conversations with the ousted president in his presidential residence where he and his family are under house arrest. The State Department's second-ranking diplomat, Victoria Nuland, braved a no-fly zone to meet for more than two hours of "extremely frank and at times quite difficult" conversations in the capital, Niamey, with a few members of the junta. But she was refused an audience with both the detained president and the junta leader, promptly bolting for the airport after the meeting had concluded. The US has taken a first step in demonstrating its opposition to the coup by pausing some aid programs, but it's falling short of France. A major player in the Sahel stretching back to its colonial rule, France has suspended all budgetary aid and development assistance to Niger as well as two neighboring nations, Mali and Burkina Faso, that pledged armed intervention on behalf of Niger's junta.

Given all this, the US needs to do much more. At a minimum, it needs to back any moves made by other West African nations to remove the junta and restore the democratically elected government, including supporting any military action other African democracies may be prepared to take. The US can certainly do this with rhetoric, along with a potential combination of money, weapons, or intelligence.

Above all, the US must remain laser-focused on keeping its drone base and Niger's uranium deposits from falling into Russian hands. Bazoum might not be a perfect partner for the West, but Niger is better under his stewardship than are its neighbors under Wagner-backed regimes.

CNN

Lai could lead Taiwan into disaster

Qi Dongtao

BEIJING has repeatedly warned that any declaration of "Taiwan independence" would lead to reunification of the island with the motherland by force. Given this fact, one wonders how the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which advocates such independence, garners significant support from voters on the island. Do the Taiwan residents not fear being caught in the crossfire?

In fact, it's not that Taiwan residents are unafraid of any conflict, but rather, they do not believe that the DPP leaders will pursue a formal declaration of independence. Consequently, they perceive that even if the DPP is in power, it will not declare outright independence for the island, thereby giving no reason for Beijing to use force. However, the situation is more complex than it seems. China's Anti-Secession Law, specifically Article 8, outlines three conditions in which the Chinese mainland could resort to non-peaceful means to realize reunification, namely: if the island's secessionist forces act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or if major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or if the possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted.

Under the leadership of

Lai Ching-te, the first two conditions may seem unlikely, but the third - the complete loss of the potential for peaceful reunification - is becoming increasingly evident. This trend has been discernible since Tsai Ing-wen took office as the leader of the island's authorities in 2016, leading mainland residents to question the feasibility of a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan question and growing support among them for more assertive approaches. The likelihood of peaceful reunification will in all probability further diminish should Lai become the leader of the island, eventually leading to a point where the mainland perceives adhering to its preference for peaceful reunification as being untenable. Similarly, the United States' support for the DPP and its continual undermining of the one-China principle are accelerating the disappearance of the possibility of peaceful reunification, and pushing Beijing toward the use of force to realize reunification.

The "Indo-Pacific" region remains a strategic focus for the US, and it is repeatedly playing the "Taiwan card" as part of its strategy for the region. Among its moves, the US military is supporting the DPP developing "asymmetric warfare capabilities" for the island to deter the mainland. The US government has also been aiding the

Tsai authorities in trying to ensure the island's "international participation", raising its "international image" and visibility to give the impression it is an independent country. It has also increased arms sales to Taiwan, and sent warships through the Taiwan Strait to show support for the island. On the surface, the US efforts are to deter Beijing from resorting to military force, but they are likely to have the opposite effect, leading the central government to believe that the possibility of peaceful reunification has been completely lost.

It is also possible that the US' strategic objective is calculated to precipitate Beijing into using force, so that it can replicate the Ukraine conflict model in the Taiwan Strait, supporting Taiwan in a "proxy war" while also rallying allies to impose sanctions against the authorities on the Chinese mainland, disrupting the process of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

This possibility should not be taken lightly and guarded against. The central government needs to expose the US' strategic manipulations and delusions regarding Taiwan, demonstrate its strategic patience and confidence, and emphasize that the pace and steps to resolve the Taiwan question are firmly in the hands of forces opposed to "Taiwan independence" on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The Guardian

De-escalation moving too slowly in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Yasar Yakis

ACCORDING to the terms of the ceasefire agreement brokered in November 2020 by Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Lachin Corridor in Nagorno-Karabakh had to be transferred to Azerbaijan in August 2022. The corridor links Armenia to Azerbaijan's autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Article 6 of the ceasefire agreement provided that Armenia would return the Lachin District of Azerbaijan by Dec. 1, 2020. It was also agreed that, within the next three years - from December 2020 to December 2023 - a plan would be outlined for the construction of a new route to connect Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia that would avoid the Azerbaijani district of Lachin. Stepanakert, the capital of the break-away Republic of Artsakh, has yet to fulfill this promise. Furthermore, the Republic of Azerbaijan was to guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving in both directions along the Lachin Corridor.

A two-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia resurged in September last year. A precarious atmosphere continues to prevail. This short conflagration caused a total of 280 deaths across the two sides. Azerbaijan acknowledged 80 fatalities among its troops and the Armenian prime minister admitted the death of 280 combatants. Azerbaijan claimed that Armenian forces had staged "large-scale subversive acts," using "saboteurs" who planted landmines. Journalists, politicians and political analysts have scrutinized these allegations and considered them to be unfounded or unverifiable. On July 11 this year, Baku complained that unauthorized goods were being smuggled into Nagorno-Karabakh in the vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Last year's fighting ended with Azerbaijani troops taking control of strategic positions deep inside Armenia, with at least 7,600 civilians displaced from Armenian provinces. A ceasefire was again brokered between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Russia, which has always been the game-maker in Azeri-Armenian conflicts, could not play the role of mediator in the implementation of this ceasefire because it was too busy with the Ukrainian crisis.

There are too many international actors that want to get involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis. The EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization - the former Soviet Union's version of NATO - are among them. Some of them are self-appointed. Karabakh Armenians want to involve as many parties as possible in this already complicated issue, while Azerbaijan regards the Nagorno-Karabakh issue as a domestic question. Despite the several advantages that Azerbaijan holds in the present truce between Baku and Yerevan, it has not diverged from any of the conditions of the agreement brokered in November 2020.

Armenia occupied Nagorno-Karabakh for 40 years and the OSCE's Minsk Group did nothing to liberate the Azerbaijani enclave from the Armenian occupation. Azerbaijan does not want to face a situation of frozen conflict for another 30 years, as it did in Nagorno-Karabakh between 1990 and 2020. If a new conflagration erupts, there is only a slim chance that the Karabakh Armenians will gain more territory. The process of normalization between Azerbaijan and Armenia has to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion before it returns to being a frozen conflict. The Ukrainian crisis may push the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis to the second row, but both Azerbaijan and Armenia have the advantage to solve it at once.

The CSTO, NATO's counterpart in the post-Soviet geography, could play a mediating role in Nagorno-Karabakh, but neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia trust this organization. Baku will not use the advantageous position that it holds at present in order to settle for good in the Armenian territories it controls. It will probably use this position of strength in order to persuade Armenia to come to a fair solution.

All interested countries seem to be mobilized to seek a solution that would satisfy Armenia's maximalist aspirations. Another question is whether the EU should deploy monitors in a conflict in which a CSTO country - Armenia - is involved. Furthermore, Armenia is not ready to

accept a peacekeeping mission composed of Russian soldiers. So, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has to be handled with the utmost care. Almost all contacts by Western organizations regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh issue are conducted through Armenian channels, while the conflict zone is part of an autonomous Azerbaijani territory and nobody contests this, which is ironic. The most reasonable solution would be for Azerbaijan and Armenia to get together and solve their problems without the involvement of third parties, because these third parties each have their own interests.

The Armenian population has difficulties in admitting that Nagorno-Karabakh is Azerbaijani territory that enjoys many rights except sovereignty. Diaspora Armenians, mainland Armenians, the EU and countries like France mislead the Karabakh Armenians into asking for more rights than they are entitled to under international law. Azerbaijan is an oil-rich country. It is planning to send oil to European countries to make up for the shortfall created by Russia's withdrawal from the European oil market. Armenians are skilled people. Therefore, if peace prevails in Azerbaijan, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh may contribute to Azerbaijan's economy. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan are leaders who are determined to persuade their respective electorates to live together in peace and draw benefits from the immense oil revenues of Azerbaijan.

Simon Tisdall

Joe Biden aims for a Middle East hat-trick. He's delusional and out of time

IT'S uncanny, the way America's declining influence across the Middle East seems to be tracking the previous, humbling retreat of the British empire from the same area. It's as if the countries of the region, having ditched one overweening imperium, are now rejecting another.

Slowly but surely, ruling regimes and authoritarian leaders are asserting their independence and freedom of action - some democratically, most not - while courting new allies. This reflects in turn a fundamental shift towards a multipolar world, where solo superpowers no longer dominate. In Saudi Arabia and the UAE, ruthless royals inculcate a homogeneous national identity and project power abroad through financial clout, oil and sport. Trading on their strategic importance, they reject the status of western protectorate conferred by the US and, before that, by Britain.

In Israel, hardline Jewish nationalists and religious extremists battle to define the future character of the state in defiance of Washington's wishes, echoing the violent end days of the British mandate. In Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, heir to another vanquished empire, sets west against east and vice versa, alternately playing kiss-me-quick with the US, Nato, the EU, Russia and China.

Since taking office in 2021, US president Joe Biden, mindful of recent, scarring American calamities and preoccupied by China and Ukraine, has mostly steered clear of continuing crises in the West Bank, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and Sudan. His one big Middle East pledge - to salvage the Iran nuclear

pact wrecked by Donald Trump - remains unfulfilled. In 1956 the invasion of Egypt fatally undermined Britain as dominant regional power. Is an irrelevant America approaching its own Suez-like turning point? Unsurprisingly, given his lifelong belief in American pre-eminence, but perhaps unwisely given the tenor of the times, Biden's answer is no. Instead he's belatedly launched an ambitious push to re-establish US regional leadership. Partly, it's to counter the influence of Beijing and Moscow, partly to remind unbiddable local allies who underwrites their security and prosperity. Making a point, Biden sent 3,000 extra troops to the Gulf this month, ostensibly to deter Iran but also to show who's boss.

Political calculations are in play, too. Facing re-election next year, Biden hopes to score an improbable hat-trick. The prize is diplomacy's equivalent of the triple crown: a US working "understanding" with Iran, a historic Saudi Arabia-Israel peace deal and a breakthrough on Palestinian statehood. Take Iran first. Talks in Qatar on releasing imprisoned Americans in exchange for unfreezing \$6bn in Iranian assets made significant progress this month. The two sides are also reportedly discussing an end to Iranian military drone sales to Russia. It's suggested the ultimate aim is an informal bilateral deal halting Tehran's alleged weapons-related nuclear programmes in return for the full lifting of US sanctions - which is what Iran's unpopular, economically embattled

regime craves most. Talks continue. The second, linked part of this Middle East makeover involves Iran's old enemy, the Saudis. The US has been rattled by Chinese mediation between Tehran and Riyadh and Saudi collaboration with Moscow. Biden wants to get the de facto Saudi leader, Mohammed bin Salman, back on side - and secure an Abraham accords-style normalisation of relations with Israel. To this end, he is reportedly dangling a security pact and US support for a Saudi civil nuclear power programme that could potentially match Iran's, despite obvious proliferation concerns. Such thinking rings alarm bells in Jerusalem. No problem, says Joe. Saudi-Israeli normalisation could include US defence guarantees and advanced weaponry for both. And it would have the added benefit, for him, of sidelining an unfortunate China.

Why should the US help and defend a Saudi regime that scorns its democratic and human rights values? After the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Biden vowed to make the kingdom a global "pariah". The answer is that normalisation would represent a big pre-election win for the president, especially when linked to the third leg of his plan: advancing Palestinian statehood. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's domestically besieged prime minister, badly needs a Saudi deal. The Saudis want one, too, but insist, on paper at least, on tangible progress towards a Palestinian state. Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners oppose any concessions, he's barely on speaking



100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange loses 770 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday shed 770.54 points, a negative change of 1.60 per cent, closing at 47,447.96 points against 48,218.50 points the previous trading day.

A total of 211,230,785 shares were traded during the day as compared to 254,814,045 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs7.076 billion against Rs10.414 billion on the last trading day. As many as 323 companies transacted their shares

in the stock market; 50 of them recorded gains and 253 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 51,424,053 shares at Rs1.27 per share; K-Electric Ltd with 8,423,086 shares at Rs2.23 per share and Oil and Gas Dev with 7,312,226 shares at Rs96.44 per share.

Mehmood Tex witnessed a maximum increase of Rs42.95 per share price, closing at Rs734.95, where-

as the runner-up was Sanofi-Aventis with an Rs20.00 rise in its per share price to Rs820.00.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs200.00 per share closing at Rs7,200.00; followed by Rafhan Maize with Rs137.50 decline to close at Rs8,450.00.

Gold rates up by Rs3,100 to Rs229,900 per tola: The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs3,100 and was sold at Rs229,900 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs226,800 on the previous

day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs2,658 to Rs197,102 from Rs194,444 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 180,677 from Rs178,240, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and 10 grams silver remained constant at Rs2,800 and Rs2,400.54 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$2 to \$1,891 from \$1,889, the Association reported.

SMEDA to develop separate Credit Risk Assessment System

LAHORE (APP): Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has launched an initiative to develop a separate Credit Risk Assessment System (CRAS) for easy disbursement of loans to the manufacturing SMEs in the country.

SMEDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Farhan Aziz Khawaja told the media here Monday that the initiative had been taken through a PSDP-funded project: "The Research, Regulatory Insight & Advocacy Assistance for SMEs" (RRI&A) under the federal Ministry of Industries & Production (MoIP).

The CEO said that SMEs in Pakistan face significant hurdles in obtaining finance. Challenges encompass limited data transparency, complex paper-

work, cumbersome bank protocols, SMEs' creditability and readiness, high interest rates, and insufficient collateral, he added and informed that the core aim of SMEDA initiative is to establish a reliable Credit Risk Assessment Model that can enable financial institutions in accurately appraising the creditworthiness of Manufacturing SMEs by pinpointing predictive cues and information channels to enhance current credit risk evaluation processes and tools.

He hoped that emerging model will help establish a comprehensive framework guiding well-judged lending choices made by financial institutions. The initiative will provide a complete system for scrutinizing established credit risk assessment models, such as Credit Scoring and Credit

Rating Models, to gauge the suitability of credits for Manufacturing SMEs.

In this regard global best practices would also be reviewed to provide the financial institutions with a robust toolset for evaluating Manufacturing SMEs' credit risks and feeling comfortable to issue required loans, CEO SMEDA added.

He elaborated that the new assessment system would be able to address the distinct characteristics of each category of manufacturing SMEs to enhance their positioning and perception among lending institutions.

The intended model shall select predictive indicators, taking into account factors such as business and credit risk, cash flow, industry benchmarks, and economic indicators, he

said adding that through collaboration with regulators, banks, fintech companies, and credit bureaus, the Model would support well-informed lending decisions to amplify financial accessibility and growth of SMEs.

Through this initiative, SMEDA remains committed to SME development through evidence-based policies and innovative initiatives, advancing economic growth and SME prosperity in Pakistan, CEO SMEDA said.

It is notable that in this regard a Request for Proposal (RFP) has also been issued to the financial experts and Consulting Firms to develop comprehensive and innovative model, specifically tailored to address the unique challenges of Manufacturing SMEs.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in unloading potatoes bags on delivery track at vegetables market.

Tokyo shares close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares ended a three-day losing streak to close higher on Monday, with bargain-hunting supporting the market.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 0.37 percent, or 114.88 points, to end at 31,565.64, while the broader Topix index added 0.19 percent, or 4.20 points, to 2,241.49.

"The Japanese market rebounded after falling for three straight days, helped by a positive reaction to a pause in the rise of the US interest rates," Iwai Cosmo Securities said in a note.

Looking ahead, US-based chip giant Nvidia's earnings on Wednesday will be a key marker for equities, as will a speech by US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell, National Australia Bank senior analyst Tapas Strickland said in a note.

Strickland added "markets will still be fixated" on news on China, where authorities are struggling to get a grip on the economy as its post-Covid recovery falters.

In Tokyo trading, TEPCO, which operates the Fukushima nuclear power plant, jumped 4.15 percent to 607 yen.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was scheduled to meet the head of the national fisheries co-op federation later in the day, before the mooted release of treated water from the nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean.

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing rose 1.31 percent to 33,070 yen, while SoftBank Group climbed 1.15 percent to 6,568 yen.

Drug maker Eisai advanced 1.11 percent to 9,345 yen as reports said its Alzheimer's treatment jointly developed by Biogen would be discussed at a health ministry panel on Monday.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, MSC Cape-town and Kaisa-I, carrying Container and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile two more ships, edible oil carrier 'Ocean Pioneer' and Gas carrier 'Fuwaairit' also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Meratus Jayawijaya, MSC Cape-town, and SC-Taipei sailed out to sea on Monday, while two more ships, Fairchem Thresher and Hafnia Caterina are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

A cargo volume of 70,961 tonnes, comprising 55,149 tones of imports Cargo and 15,812 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 831 Containers (163 TEUs Imports and 668 TEUs export) was handled during the last 24 hours.

There are ten ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Chem-Saipah, Ullswater, and Fuwaairit & two more ships, MSC Marina and Lana are expected to take berths at Liquid Terminal, SSGC Terminal, Elengy Terminal, and Container Terminal respectively on Monday, while two more container ships, Maersk Pittsburgh and MASC Tianping are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

CPEC pivotal for uplift of marginalised areas: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI)

President Moazzam Ghurki said here on Monday that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative was significant for Pakistan as it would lead to rapid economic growth of the country and also enhance regional security.

Chairing a meeting at the PCJCCI Secretariat here, he labeled CPEC as a "model of collaboration, partnership, connectivity and shared prosperity" promising high levels of industrial and agriculture cooperation. He talked about the significance of SEZs in enhancing B2B collaboration, while the government was working to ensure smooth transition towards second phase of CPEC which will lead to socioeconomic uplift of marginalised areas.

He added that according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report, the global economy probably shrank by 4.3 per cent

in 2020 due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and financial crisis. The challenges for Pakistan are multiple as they struggle to eliminate poverty, bring economic growth due to hike in inflation rate. CPEC is now the principal vehicle for the pursuit of bilateral ties at renewed and heightened ebb of engagement.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong said that China's next transformation is well under way and a "New Economy" is emerging, all set to make global impact through innovations and economic initiatives leveraging its demographic and economic diversity. In order to accrue the benefits of this transformation, Team CPEC has to now mobilize all resources for accomplishing the daunting task of timely implementation of CPEC projects in Pakistan, which would further lead towards a true inclusive growth.

This time the focus of CPEC would be on populating the priority SEZs through industrial cooperation

which is entering vital stage with immediate steps required to encourage private sector participation and creating enabling environment reducing risks and promoting complementary policies.

Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, stressed that in the second phase of CPEC, the government is gearing up to lift marginalized areas of Pakistan and promising greater regional integration.

It was suggested that continuity of policies, productivity of labor, and cost of land and provision of utilities are the key bottlenecks which are being addressed through various initiatives of the government.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI added that of course, there are many challenges ahead and in the face of such challenges, we will need to work together in partnership and across a range of fronts through a pragmatic joint action plan that will require hard work.

ICCI, NICAT ink MoU to promote innovators

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish collaboration to promote youth innovation and entrepreneurship programmes.

The MoU was signed during a visit of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI along with a delegation to NICAT. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI MoU Committee and Imran Jattala, Project Director NICAT signed it in a ceremony held at NICAT, said a press release issued here on Monday.

As per MoU, NICAT will support ICCI for incubation and entrepreneurship programs and will collaborate with ICCI to engage Pakistan's youth in innovation and entrepreneurship programs to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

NICAT will display the ICCI logo on its promotional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Similarly, ICCI will work with NICAT in the incubation and entrepreneurship programs and startup challenges.

ICCI will display the NICAT logo on its promotional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said that Pakistan needs innovators and entrepreneurs to drive the economy and hoped that the MoU would be helpful in realizing such goals.

He said that the market

size of the global aerospace and defense industry is US\$697 billion, with commercial aerospace at \$298 billion.

He said, therefore, Pakistan has great potential to capture a better share of this huge market by developing a pool of aerospace innovators and entrepreneurs. He lauded the efforts of NICAT for empowering Pakistani talent.

Ayub Ghauri, President, National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies highlighted the contribution of his institution for economic transformation by bringing together investors, innovators, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and talented youth of Pakistan.

He hoped that NICAT's collaboration with ICCI would produce beneficial outcomes for the economy.

Most markets sink as China rate cut

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most Asian markets fell Monday as China's decision to cut interest rates again failed to reassure investors, who are growing increasingly worried about the outlook for the world's number two economy.

Sentiment has been hammered this month by a string of weak data out of Beijing indicating the post-Covid recovery has run off track. Speculation that the Federal Reserve could tighten monetary policy further and keep rates elevated for some time has added to the gloom as it tries to bring inflation down to its two percent target.

Wall Street provided a tepid lead, while focus turns to a symposium of top central bankers and business leaders at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, later in the week, with dealers hoping for some guidance on rates.

"From recent commentaries, it appears that cen-

tral bankers will keep the flexibility to hike rates further, while clearly avoiding committing to cut rates soon," said Redmond Wong at Saxo. While the Fed and others contemplate more increases, the People's Bank of China on Monday announced another cut in bid to kickstart the sputtering economy.

The decision to lower the one-year loan prime rate, which serves as a benchmark for corporate loans, comes after a reduction in June and leaves it at a historic low. However, it stood pat on the five-year LPR, which is used to price mortgages and the reductions were smaller than forecasters had predicted.

The announcement did little to soothe worried investors, who are calling for leaders to unveil more concrete measures to boost growth. A series of pledges to reinvigorate the economy have been made but

with very little detail. In early trade, Hong Kong led losses, extending a sell-off to a seventh straight day and leaving it more than 20 percent down from its January high. Shanghai was also in the red along with Sydney, Singapore and Wellington, though Tokyo, Seoul and Jakarta rose.

The Jackson Hole gathering is now firmly in traders' sights with Fed chief Jerome Powell due to speak, along with European Central Bank boss Christine Lagarde. The meet comes as markets price in expectations that borrowing costs will be kept high for some time with officials aiming to tame inflation and keep it down.

"We could see ourselves in this 5+ percent benchmark risk-free rate environment for the foreseeable period of time -- perhaps into mid-2024 or beyond," said Jerome Schneider at Pacific Investment Management Co.

Discovery Garden project: Falaknaz Group initiates construction work

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Falaknaz Group has been associated with the real estate industry since 1975. The purpose of Falaknaz Group is to enhance the quality of life and equip projects with modern amenities. The Discovery Garden holds great importance in Falaknaz projects.

Falaknaz Group has initiated the construction work for their Discovery Garden project. In an event held as part of this initiative, special guests including the CEO of Falaknaz Group, Muhammad Riyaz, Chief Operating Officer Muhammad Aqeel, Group Director Fayyaz Elias, and CEO of Discovery Garden, Shakil Elias, addressed the audience and provided details about the project.



This event took place at a local hotel in Islamabad

and was attended by all the business individuals associ-

ated with the real estate sector."

LIPTON empowers communities with Supreme 'Apna Trike' project

F.P. Report

KARACHI: LIPTON Teas & Infusions Pakistan is delighted to announce its pioneering collaboration with Bulls-eye Pakistan and Al Mustafa in the transformative Supreme "Apna Trike" Project. This groundbreaking initiative aims to create sustainable employment opportunities while introducing Supreme Tea to underserved communities in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. Future include extending the program to more cities across the nation.

The Supreme "Apna Trike" Project is designed with a dual focus:

Creating Sustainable Employment: Through the Apna Trikes project, purpose-built trikes will be provided to deserving individuals, empowering them to start their own trike selling businesses. Lipton's investment in the initiative will enable these young entrepreneurs to sell Supreme Tea alongside complimentary snacks, earning and repaying through easy installments over a 5-year period. This unique model encourages

skill development and fosters valuable entrepreneurial acumen.

Generating Trial for Supreme Tea: The project's innovative approach seeks to introduce Supreme Tea to communities through the sale of hot teacups. With each trike expected to serve an average of 124 cups per day, the initiative promises to make Supreme Tea a delightful and accessible experience for countless individuals.

Expressing her excitement about the collaboration, Farheen Salman, President BSPAN & General Manager Pakistan, LIPTON Teas & Infusions, said, "We are thrilled to join hands with Bulls-eye Pakistan and Al Mustafa for the Supreme 'Apna Trike' Project. By empowering deserving youth and providing them with a platform to thrive, we are not only creating opportunities but also bringing a delightful tea experience to communities in need. This project showcases our commitment to Pakistan's growth and prosperity, especially during these challenging times of rising inflation."

Ahmed Raza Tayyab,

Secretary General Al-Mustafa Welfare Society, emphasized their dedication to empowering individuals, stating,

"Everybody deserves the chance to flourish. Over the last 36 years, we have transformed the lives of millions of people through various projects. Together with LIPTON and Bulls-eye, we believe in empowering the youth to be catalysts for positive change, and the Supreme 'Apna Trike' Project exemplifies that commitment."

Shoaib Qureshi, MD Bulls-eye, echoed the same sentiment and said, "The Supreme 'Apna Trike' Project not only provides sustainable livelihoods to people but also genuinely promotes the brand idea of "Apna pan". "We are eager to support the transformational journey of these young entrepreneurs and their families."

The Supreme "Apna Trike" Project is set to uplift communities, foster economic resilience, and create a better future for Pakistan. With a shared vision of empowering deserving youth and driving positive change, LIPTON Teas & Infusions Pak-

istan, Bulls-eye Pakistan, and Al Mustafa are determined to make this project a resounding success.

LIPTON Teas & Infusions Pakistan is a leading tea brand that has been synonymous with quality and taste for generations. With a commitment to sourcing and delivering the finest teas from around the world, LIPTON aims to provide a delightful tea experience to its consumers.

Bulls-eye Communities is a socially responsible marketing organization committed to supporting projects that bring positive changes to communities. With much focus on sustainable solutions and innovative approaches and a strong belief in the idea of doing genuine good, Bulls-eye aims to create lasting impacts in various spheres of Pakistan society.

Al Mustafa Welfare Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to uplifting the lives of underprivileged individuals and communities in Pakistan. With a wide range of projects and initiatives, Al Mustafa strives to provide essential support and assistance to those in need.



In brief

Hassan bags C'ship trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hassan Hadi Khan has clinched the 35th Pakistan Scrabble Championship trophy at Generation's school Katrachi, Karachi. Hassan dominated the championship right from the start and remained on top right through the 27 games, said a press release issued here on Sunday. Hassan was declared the winner with two games to go. The defending champion Wasim Khatri did his best to stop Hassan but he couldn't come up with a game to stop the rampaging challenger. Hassan won 24 of the 27 games to take the title with a big margin. Wasim finished with 19 wins from games while the reigning world youth champion Ali Salman finished 3rd with 17 wins.

Gauff beats Muchova

CINCINNATI (Agencies): American teenager Coco Gauff claimed the biggest title of her career with a straight-set win over Karolina Muchova in the Cincinnati Open final. Gauff followed up her shock win over top seed Iga Swiatek in the semi-final with a 6-3 6-4 victory over her Czech opponent in Sunday's final. It is the 19-year-old's fifth career title and her third of 2023 after wins in Washington DC and Auckland. Victory gives Gauff a huge boost before the US Open which starts on 28 August. The American also becomes the first teenager to win three WTA titles in one year since Bianca Andreescu in 2019. Seventh seed Gauff broke her opponent - who she was facing for the first time - three times in the first set and confidently served out the opener to love in her first WTA 1000 final appearance. Muchova, whose is set to enter the top 10 for the first time, struggled for consistency and a missed backhand in the fifth game of the second set gave Gauff the break. Although the American failed to convert three match-point chances while serving at 5-2, she made amends in her next service game to seal victory. "This is unbelievable, especially after everything I went through in the summer in Europe," Gauff said, reflecting on her struggles earlier this season including a first-round exit at Wimbledon.

India must prioritise 2 key areas prior to WC

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India wicket-keeper Dinesh Karthik has identified two areas his side must focus on during the upcoming Asia Cup if they are to prosper at this year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup. While India travel to the 16th edition of the Asia Cup in Pakistan and Sri Lanka later this month among the favourites to claim the title, there are still some question marks surrounding the make-up of their best side that Karthik believes they need to fix prior to the World Cup on home soil. The India top-order looks set in stone - with skipper Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli likely to occupy the top three spots in the batting order - but Karthik is concerned by the make-up of the middle-order and just who fits in best to hold the crucial position as fourth seamer. Karthik thinks India should use their Asia Cup campaign to make sure they have these important positions nailed down prior to the start of the 50-over World Cup on October 5. "There are two areas (India must identify at the Asia Cup)," Karthik said during a Cricket World Cup commercial shoot with Emirates.

Pak vs Afg ODI series

Babar asks his team to give 100%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The final phase of Pakistan's preparations for the mighty cricket season begins on Tuesday as Babar Azam's team plays Afghanistan at Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium Hambantota, Sri Lanka in the first of the three One-Day Internationals.

Pakistan enter the series at the back of some brilliant results - they swept Sri Lanka in the two-Test series just last month and defeated New Zealand 4-1 at home in One-Day Internationals in April-May.

With the Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023 beginning just four days after the third and final match in Colombo and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup immediately following up, these three matches against Afghanistan come with an opportunity for Pakistan to fine-tune their combinations.

"It is great to be together as one unit again as we enjoy each other's company a lot," Babar told PCB Digital on the eve of the first ODI against Afghanistan. "We have a few new faces in the side and I wish them good luck

for the challenges ahead.

Most of the boys have been playing cricket in different leagues, but when you don the Pakistan star, it is a different feeling altogether. We enter this series with good momentum following our Test series win here and we are eager to build on it. As a captain, I am very excited for the cricket ahead."

Pakistan have recently enjoyed outstanding results in ODIs. Since the start of 2022, Pakistan's win/loss ratio of 3.250 - with 13 wins in 17 matches - has been the best across all teams. In May, they, for the first time in history, topped the ICC rankings for ODI sides. They have another go at surmounting the table if they maintain an impeccable record against Afghanistan.

The dressing room is buzzing with confidence with each player raring to grab opportunity whenever it arrives. Though the end goal is to be the best side in the World Cup, the team, Babar said, is taking one challenge at a time.

"We are focused in our preparations as we have big events in the

Asia Cup and the World Cup coming up," said Babar, under whose captaincy Pakistan have won 17 out of 26 ODIs. "But, at the same time, we want to take one series at the time ... It is always beneficial for a team to get such a series ahead of major events.

That we are playing in Asian conditions will definitely provide us an edge and help us get in the rhythm. The Afghanistan team is on the rise and they have some good bowlers. The fans will get to see some exciting cricket."

Pakistan included all-rounder Faheem Ashraf, uncapped batter Tayyab Tahir and middle-order batter Saud Shakeel in the squad for the Afghanistan series. The three players have been rewarded for their impressive performances recently and their presence further boosts an already solid squad.

"We have had some good additions in the squad," the number one ranked ODI batter said. "Faheem has been in and out of the side but he has performed well recently. We have included him because of his all-round

abilities and believe that his presence will strengthen the side.

"Tayyab Tahir had a good [Emerging Teams] Asia Cup and he performed well here in Sri Lanka and everyone saw how Saud Shakeel played Tests here. I am especially impressed by how Saud has transformed into a modern-day batter in such a quick time. This is a great sign for Pakistan cricket that he groomed himself according to the demands of the team, and whenever anyone does that, I get very happy."

Though Pakistan have never been defeated by Afghanistan in the format, this series promises to test them as the latter enter this series with a 2-1 win over Bangladesh in Bangladesh. But the players, Babar revealed, are taking this challenge as an opportunity to deliver match-winning performances.

"Every player has a hunger [to perform] in this team. Every player wants to give match-winning performances. Recently we have had different player of the match award winners, which is a good sign for any team.

Zaka Ashraf meets Pakistan team in Hambantota

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf, had a meeting with the Pakistan men's cricket team before their first One-Day International against Afghanistan in Hambantota on Monday.

On this occasion, Chairman Management Committee PCB addressed the team, stating, "I have great hope that with your efforts and hard work, Pakistan will win the Asia Cup. After securing victory, I am sure you will carry this momentum and confidence in the World Cup, bringing the World Cup trophy back home."

"This team under our great captain [Babar Azam] is performing really well. He has a talented team, and they are all performing in their respective roles. We have world-class batters and bowlers on the side. We have a good combination and I don't find any reason why we should not win this trophy."

He also stated that former cricketers from Pakistan and around the world were backing Pakistan as favourites for the Asia Cup because of their current form. He further told the players, "All of you are capable enough to beat. We have won the World Cup before and secured the Asia Cup twice. There is no reason to believe we cannot do it again. Show your best performance on the field. Best wishes are with you."

Pakistan will play a three-match ODI series against Afghanistan with the first match set to be played on 22 August. The series will conclude on 26 August before the team travels back to Pakistan to take play the opening match of the Asia Cup against Nepal on August 30.

Pakistan defeat India in IBSA World Games

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan blind cricket team defeated arch-rivals India by 18 runs in their opening match of the IBSA World Games in Birmingham, United Kingdom late Sunday.

According to information made available here by the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council, India won the toss and decided to field first.

Pakistan scored 187 runs for the loss of six wickets in the allotted 20 overs. Debutant Mohammad Salman was the top scorer with 50 runs, while skipper Nisar Ali made 46. Ajay Reddy was the leading wicket taker for India with four scalps for 17 runs.

India in reply made 169 for the loss of nine wick-

ets. Sunil made 65 runs, while Durga scored 40 runs for them. Pakistan's Matiullah took two wickets for 27 runs.

The 2023 World Games is the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment, with more than 1250 competitors from 70 nations.

The games, staged every four years, are the pinnacle of the international sporting calendar outside the Paralympic Games.

The sports taking place during the 2023 World Games include archery, chess, cricket, blind football, partially sighted football, women's football, goalball, judo, powerlifting, showdown, ten-pin bowling and tennis.

Greenwood to leave Man Utd after abuse allegations

MANCHESTER (Agencies): Manchester United and Mason Greenwood have mutually agreed for the forward to leave Old Trafford after he faced abuse allegations, the club announced Monday.

The 21-year-old forward has been suspended by the Premier League giants since January 30, 2022, over allegations relating to a young woman after images and videos were posted online, although a criminal case was discontinued.

Prosecutors said in February they were dropping charges, including attempted rape and sexual assault, against Greenwood, after the withdrawal of key witnesses and new evidence coming to light.

Nevertheless United, in a lengthy statement, said Monday: "All those involved, including Mason, recognise the difficulties with him recommencing his career at Manchester United.

"It has therefore been mutually agreed that it would be most appropriate for him to do so away from Old Trafford, and we will now work with Mason to achieve that outcome."

Greenwood, whose contract runs until June 2025, said: "I did not do the things I was accused of, and in February I was cleared of all charges.

"However, I fully accept I made mistakes in my relationship, and I take my share of responsibility for the situations which led to the social media post."

He added: "Today's decision has been part of a collaborative process between Manchester United, my family and me.

"The best decision for us all, is for me to continue my football career away from Old Trafford, where my presence will not be a distraction for the club.

"I thank the club for their support since I joined aged seven. There will always be a part of me which is United."



HAMBANTOTA: Hashmatullah Shahidi and Babar Azam pose with the trophy as the two teams get into ODI mode, Afghanistan vs Pakistan.

India announce squad for 2023 Asia Cup

NEW DELHI (AP): Batters Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul were named in India's 17-man squad on Monday for the Asia Cup after recovering from injury.

India will play all its games in the Asia Cup, which starts on Aug. 30, in Sri Lanka after refusing to travel to Pakistan due to political tensions between the two countries.

Pakistan will host four matches, including one in the Super 4, while nine games will be played in Sri Lanka, including the final on Sept. 17.

India's squad does not feature an off-break bowler while the selectors dropped leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and included Kuldeep Yadav as the only wrist spinner.

Rahul and Iyer have

gone through rehabilitation for several weeks following thigh and back injuries respectively.

Rahul, who also keeps wicket, hasn't played competitively since May while Iyer has been out of international cricket since March.

Uncapped left-handed batter Tilak Varma was rewarded on Monday for his impressive displays against the West Indies in the recent Twenty20 series.

"In the West Indies we saw some real promise in terms of not just performances but temperament," chief selector Ajit Agarkar said about Varma. "It gives us an opportunity to take him with the team, give him some more exposure.

"Fortunately we can take 17, it'll be 15 at the World Cup. So, when the time comes we'll take that decision, but at the moment it at least gives the coach and captain an opportunity to have him with the squad."

The selectors preferred Ishan Kishan as the second wicketkeeper and left out Sanju Samson, who will travel as a reserve.

Squad: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami, Ishan Kishan, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Prasidh Krishna. Reserve: Sanju Samson.

PSG goalie Sergio Rico discharged from hospital

PARIS (Agencies): Paris Saint-Germain on Friday announced that goalkeeper Sergio Rico was discharged from hospital. The 29-year-old player had been hospitalized since May 28 due to a head injury after falling from a horse during his pilgrimage of El Rocío in Huelva city, southwestern Spain. "I'm feeling pretty good," Rico said. "I need to take it easy for a few more months and continue to recover at home. Everything is under control and we have to follow the doctors' instructions, which is the most important thing." Rico helped Sevilla win three UEFA Europa League titles from 2014 to 2016 before moving to PSG. He won three French Ligue 1 titles with Paris in 2020, 2022, and 2023, as well as two French Cups in 2020 and 2021.

Novak Djokovic defeats Carlos Alcaraz to win Cincinnati Open

CINCINNATI (Agencies): Novak Djokovic avenged his Wimbledon final defeat to Carlos Alcaraz by beating the Spaniard in just under four hours to win the Cincinnati Open.

The Serb survived match point in the second set before going on to win 5-7 7-6 (9-7) 7-6 (7-4). Top seed Alcaraz beat Djokovic in five sets in last month's Wimbledon final.

"The feeling that I have on the court reminds me a little bit of when I was facing [Rafael] Nadal when we were at our prime," Djokovic said.

"I don't think I've played too many matches like this in my life."

Djokovic compared the draining win to his Australian Open final victory in 2012, when he defeated Nadal in five hours and 53 minutes.

"Each point is a battle. Each point is a hustle. You've got to basically earn every single point, every single shot, regardless of the conditions. It's amazing to be able to experience that with him on the court," Djokovic added.

Despite the defeat, Alcaraz will keep the



world number one ranking for his US Open title defence.

However, Djokovic will return to the top of the rankings if he wins just one match at Flushing Meadows.

The world number two moved ahead of Nadal in the all-time men's major list after winning his 23rd Grand Slam title at June's French Open, where he overcame Alcaraz in the semi-finals. Djokovic and Nadal have faced each other 59 times over the past 17 years, while Alcaraz has played just four matches against Djokovic and is tied with

the 36-year-old at 2-2.

"It's amazing playing against you, sharing the court with you, learning from you," said the 20-year-old Alcaraz, who was tearful after the defeat in Ohio on Sunday. "This match was really close, but I learned a lot from a champion like you. So congratulations to you and your team."

After missing out on match point in the second-set tie-break, Alcaraz found himself 5-3 down in the third, but he saved two match points to pull back to 5-4 before breaking Djokovic's serve to level the set.

However, Djokovic went 5-4 up on Alcaraz's serve in the tie-break before winning the next two points to claim victory in three hours and 49 minutes - the longest best-of-three-sets final in ATP Tour history. "This rivalry just gets better," Djokovic said. "It gets better and better. [He's an] amazing player. Tons of respect for him. For such a young player to show so much poise in important moments is impressive."

"Obviously, three sets today, but almost four hours. You just have to put your hats down to a guy like that. He plays so maturely, handles the pressure so well for a 20-year-old."

"We cannot forget how young he is. That's something that is so impressive about him." Both players now head to New York for the US Open where Alcaraz will attempt to defend a Grand Slam for the first time, while Djokovic, bidding for a 24th Grand Slam win, returns after missing last year's tournament because of his Covid vaccination status.

Spanish football boss apologises for kissing World Cup star

MADRID (Agencies): Luis Rubiales, the president of the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) on Monday apologised for kissing star player Jenni Hermoso on the lips after Spain won the Women's World Cup. Rubiales, 45, kissed Hermoso on the lips after she collected her medal, provoking an immediate global reaction.

"Certainly I made a mistake and I have to acknowledge that," Rubiales said in a video posted on social media by Spanish television. "It was done without any ill intention in a moment of the highest exuberance. Here we saw it as natural and normal but outside it has caused a commotion." "I have no choice but to apologise and to learn from this... and when representing the federation take more care," he said, adding that he thought the furor was "idiotic".

Earlier Spain's sports minister on Monday had demanded that Rubiales apologise. "I think it is unacceptable to kiss a player on the lips to congratulate her," acting minister Miquel Iceta told Spanish public radio. "The first thing he has to do is to give explanations and make apologies, it is the logical and reasonable thing to do," Iceta said.

The minister added that while the 1-0 victory over England on Sunday in Sydney was "a moment of intense emotions", public officials "have to be extremely careful because we are giving

a message to society and the message is equal rights, it is respect".

- 'Spontaneous' -

Rubiales on Monday stressed that he had a "magnificent relationship" with Hermoso. On Sunday, the player posted a video on Instagram showing the celebrations in the changing room in which she responded to teasing from team-mates by saying: "I didn't like it, eh!" while laughing.

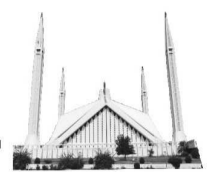
Later on Sunday the RFEF released their own quotes from Hermoso.

"It was a totally spontaneous mutual gesture because of the immense joy that winning a World Cup brings," Hermoso was quoted as saying.

"The president and I have a great relationship. His behaviour with all of us has been outstanding and it was a natural gesture of affection and gratitude.

"A gesture of friendship and gratitude cannot be gone over so much, we have won a World Cup and we are not going to deviate from what is important."

Spain's preparations for the World Cup were thrown into disarray last September when 15 players sent an email to the RFEF saying they did not want to be considered for selection. Their protest was aimed chiefly at coach Jorge Vilda and his methods, including complaints that he was too strict. Rubiales supported Vilda and only three of the 15 were recalled for the World Cup.



In brief

Sanjrani condemns Quran desecration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday strongly condemned the recent distressing incident involving the desecration of the Holy Quran in The Hague. The incident, characterized as an act of deliberate Islamophobia, has deeply affected the hearts of Muslims worldwide, undermining the shared pursuit of peaceful coexistence and interfaith harmony, Sanjrani said in a message issued by his office. He emphasized the need to distinguish between freedom of expression and the incitement of hatred, particularly on religious grounds. He highlighted that international law mandated the prevention of such deliberate provocations that erode mutual respect and breed discord among communities. The chairman underscored the importance of recognizing March 15 as the United Nations' International Day to Combat Islamophobia, urging global efforts to cultivate an environment of tolerance, understanding, and compassion. Chairman Senate's underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering a world where diversity is celebrated, and religious sentiments are respected. The condemnation echoed the sentiments of millions of Pakistanis and Muslims worldwide who seek to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, he added.

Police arrest 11 gamblers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district police arrested 11 gamblers and recovered Rs 18,400 stake money, four mobile phones, and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Monday. He informed that Waris Khan police conducted a raid and arrested 11 gamblers namely Majid, Daniel, Moheed Khan, Jameel, Ramzan, Shah Nawaz, Waqas, Kashif, Bahadur Ali, Adil and, Shehreyar who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. A case has been registered against them while further investigation is under process. Superintendent of Police, Rawal Faisal Saleem said that gambling was the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes did not deserve any concession.

400 liter of petrol seized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested accused who was illegally selling petrol and recovered 400 liters of petrol from his possession during a raid here on Monday. Rawat police during an operation held Fida and recovered 400 liters of petrol from his custody. Police have registered a case against him and started an investigation. SP Saddar Nabil Khokhar commended the police team and said that such law breakers who endanger the lives of citizens cannot escape from the grip of the law.

3 stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested the accused involved in motorcycle theft and recovered three stolen motorcycles from his possession during the crackdown here on Monday. According to a police spokesman, Race Course police held Basit involved in motorcycle theft and recovered stolen motorcycles from his custody. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Potohar Waqas Khan appreciated the performance of the police team and said that the safety of citizens' lives and property is the first priority, operations against organized and active gangs are being accelerated, he added.



ISLAMABAD: National Coordinator, NACTA, Muhammad Tahir Rai called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

HEC sends off 141 students to study in Hungary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan on Monday hosted a send-off ceremony for the 141 students awarded under the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme for the academic year 2023-2024.

The event was attended by Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman HEC, Dr. Peter Dely, Charge d'Affaires here at the Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad, Dr. Shaista Sohail, Executive Director HEC and Mrs. Ayesha Ikram, DG (Scholarships) HEC. This group of scholars forms the 8th cohort of the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme, which was launched in Pakistan in 2015.

Since its inception, a total of 1029 Pakistani students have been granted fully funded scholarships for Bachelor's, Master's, One-Tier Master's, and PhD studies across disciplines including Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Engineering and

Technology, Health Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. During his address, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed stressed HEC's commitment to nurturing education as a cornerstone of sustainable development and a vital stride towards building a knowledge-based economy. He underlined that the achievement of a knowledge economy is intrinsically tied to creating opportunities for such scholarship programmes.

The chairman commended the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme role in providing Pakistani youth with the opportunity to pursue higher education and research in Hungary's esteemed higher education institutions and empowering them to not only contribute to national development but also to play a part in the broader vision of a knowledge economy. Dr. Ahmed congratulated this year's scholarship recipients and offered valuable advice to the scholars, encouraging cultural sensitivity, fostering compatible friendships,

and reminding them of their role as ambassadors for their homeland on the international stage.

He expressed gratitude to the Hungarian Embassy for their invaluable support in executing the scholarships. Dr. P  ter Dely congratulated the scholarship recipients, assuring them that their stay in Hungary will be an experience of a lifetime. He expressed his pleasure on the growing bilateral relations between the two countries.

He pinned high hopes on scholars to evolve as ambassadors of goodwill and further strengthen the ties between Pakistan and Hungary through their experiences. Dr. Shaista Sohail highlighted the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme as a symbol of Pakistan-Hungary bilateral cooperation. She outlined the programme's journey, beginning with the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in December 2015, which facilitated 80 annual scholarships over three years.

ANF seizes 620 kg drugs, 1193 kg prohibited chemical

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 23 operations across the country managed to recover 620 kg drugs and 1193 kg prohibited chemical besides netting 30 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 620 kg drugs including 575 kg hashish, 38 kg opium, 5.5 kg Ice drug and 2 kg heroin were recovered during the operations.

The spokesman further informed that in an operation conducted near Mandi Mor Pirwadhai, Rawalpindi, two accused residents of Peshawar were arrested with 36 kg opium, 32.4 kg hashish and 2 kg heroin. In another raid, 36 kg hashish was recovered from bus intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the

operation, two accused residents of Quetta and Shangla were arrested.

In third operation, over 2.5 kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Saudi Arabia-bound passenger resident of Toba Tek Singh, going on flight number FZ-332, netted at Jinnah International Airport. In fourth operation conducted near Al-Asif Square Karachi, 173 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle.

Two accused residents of Karachi were also arrested during the operation.

The spokesman said that in an operation at Allama Iqbal International Airport, over 2.6 kg Ice drug was recovered from a passenger resident of Gujranwala.

The accused was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-767.

The force in a raid on

drug manufacturing factory in Gali Abdul Raheem area of Chaman managed to recover 480 liters of hydrochloric acid.

Three accused residents of Chaman and an Afghan national working in the factory were arrested.

In another operation, a resident of Qilla Abdullah was arrested from a passenger bus intercepted near Gadani on RCD highway.

The accused was trying to smuggle 42 kg hashish from Quetta to Karachi.

713 liters prohibited chemical concealed for smuggling in a deserted area of Khan Gali, Chaman was recovered.

Several other operations were conducted and drugs were recovered. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

PMD forecasts rains with occasional gaps from Aug 23-27

ISLAMABAD (APP): For the heat-stricken people bearing hot and humid weather conditions for the last few days, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Monday given a good news of more monsoon rains in various parts of the country from August 23-27 with occasional gaps.

The rains although will provide relief to the people by reducing the intensity of heat but will increase water flow in local streams and nullahs and may cause urban flooding and landslides in vulnerable areas.

The moderate monsoon currents from Arabian Sea are likely to penetrate in upper parts of the country from August 22 (evening or night). A westerly wave was also likely to enter in these areas on August 23.

Under the influence of these systems, rain/wind-thundershower with few moderate to heavy falls is expected in Kashmir,

(Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Haripur, Kohat, Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera from August 23-27 with occasional gaps.

Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in Kurram, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Karak, Waziristan, Mianwali, Sargodha, Khushab, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Bhakkar from August 24 to 26 with occasional gaps. While in Dera Ghazi

Khan, Rajanpur, Musa Khel, Barkhan, Zhob, Kalat and Khuzdar, rain/wind-thundershower is expected on August 25 and 26.

About the impacts, the PMD indicated that moderate to heavy falls might increase the water flows in local Nullahs/streams of Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Mardan, Nowshera, Swabi, Galliat, Murree, Rawalpindi, Islamabad from August 23-25 and hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan and adjoining areas of northeast Balochistan on August 25 and 26. Moderate to heavy rains may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore from August 23-26 and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the wet spell.

Jamal for facilitating children with local literature, storytelling to promote reading

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Monday stressed the importance of facilitating children with local literature and storytelling to arise their interest in reading to enhance their intellectual caliber as juvenile literature played crucial part in education providing both knowledge and entertainment.

The Minister made these remarks during his visit to National Library of Pakistan (NLP) and Department of Museum and Archeology (DOAM) to review the working and performance of the attached departments of the division. On the occasion, Director General NLP Asif Iqbal Khan gave a detailed overview of history, functioning, performance and future plans of the NLP.

Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah underscored that proper ramps should be established for the facilitation of differently-abled person at National Library. He said that his division would adopt all measures to equip the library with modern facilities.

Later, the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presided over a meeting to review the progress on various projects of DOAM.

Secretary National Heritage and Culture, Humaira Ahmed and other senior officials were also present in the meeting.

The Director General DOAM Dr.

Azeem Khan briefed the Federal Minister about all matters pertaining to DOAM, archeological sites, various projects, initiatives and current matters. Federal Minister Jamal Shah said that Takht-e-Bahi which is an ancient Buddhist monastery and one of the most important world heritage site which is extremely important for its integrity, unique state of conservation; and also for its antiquity.

The Minister said that he would specially consult with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for a joint venture program for the promotion and preservation of Takht-e-Bahi site. He said that he would also hold a meeting with Capital Development Authority (CDA) for the cultural sites being maintained by the civic body.

He said that all the cultural and archeological sites should be maintained and preserved by National Heritage and Culture Division.

Jamal Shah said that the promotion of national heritage and culture among the people can only prevent the society from social ills, hatred and intolerance and bring peace and stability.

The DOAM officials informed the meeting that 38 Archeological sites and monuments have been identified in Islamabad Capital Territory. Later, the minister also visited Islamabad Museum at Sir Syed Memorial.

10 touts rounded up from excise office

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area Awaad Irshad Bhatti on Monday arrested 10 agents and touts from the Excise and Taxation Office Islamabad.

The district administration has launched a crackdown against touts following public complaints against fake agents who mint money from visitors in lieu of services regarding vehicle registration, token tax, and others.

According to ICT spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, the apprehended were subsequently handed over to the police for further legal action.

He said DC Memon has emphasized that the department should enhance service delivery to discourage the presence of such mafia.

He urged individuals to approach the designated counters with their complete documentation. In case of any visitors were advised to seek assistance from the Director of Excise or the Focal Person for Excise and Taxation at the Assistant Commissioner's office in the Industrial Area.

'President's tweet has opened a Pandora's box'

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Awami Muslim League chief and former federal interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday that President Arif Alvi's tweet has kicked up a constitutional and legal storm. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), Rashid said the president's tweet had opened a Pandora's box and muddled the political arena. He said Alvi's tweet had created a big constitutional and legal issue.

The political, constitutional, legal and parliamentary history of Pakistan was witnessing such a crisis for the first time, he claimed.

He said it was not known when the new assembly would be formed, but until its formation, the bill would remain stuck.

First, he said the news emerged that the bill was signed, however, yesterday the caretaker law minister said it was yet to be signed. The former minister said now let's see how the political wind blows and what would be the result of this constitutional crisis.

Korean embassy holds '2023 K-POP 2023 Festival' at PNCA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Korean embassy organized the '2023 K-POP Festival' here at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) last week where young K-POP fans presented exhilarating performances. The festival was attended by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Park Kijun, the Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture Ahtisham Hussain, representatives from different Korean companies, and a large number of people, students and K-POP fans.

Director of the King Sejong Institute Dr Atif Faraz, Assistant Professor at the National Council of Arts Saima Sallahuddin, and Associate Professor at

National Council of Arts Ayesha Durrani were the judges for the 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan.

The K-POP Festival had two categories Vocal and Dance. The performers from both categories performed exceptionally well and were well aware of the Korean K-POP culture. Ambassador Park Kijun appreciated the performances of all the participants, mentioning that the 2023 K-POP Festival had a special significance this time as this year marked the 40th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Korea and Pakistan. The envoy mentioned that it was indeed incredible how culture and music could connect different people from

all across the globe, adding culture was one of the many unifying factors between the people of Pakistan and Korea.

Park Kijun further laid emphasis on the fact that such festivals should be held frequently as they enhance people-to-people interactions and further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

The ambassador shared he was pretty hopeful and optimistic in regard to the future of the bilateral ties between Korea and Pakistan. The winners from both the Vocal and Dance categories were encouraged by gift prizes. The attendees also received gift hampers from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi conducted a surprise visit to Islamabad Model School F-6/3.

Six shamans arrested

BADGHIS (Agencies): Six shamans have been arrested by authorities in north-west Badghis province, officials said Monday. Ahmad Jan Hanzala, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said the shaman's had been working to break up families, in an un-Islamic practice. He said books, amulets and documents had been seized from the individuals, which showed they had split couples. Hanzala said that the arrested individuals were referred for prosecution.

Substandard food seized

KABUL (Agencies): The Kabul Municipality Control Board seized 3,645 kilograms of substandard food from the 12th police district of Kabul. The items, which included pasta, dairy products, canned goods, snacks, sweets, and various cleaning and personal care products, were expired or of poor quality. The board also confiscated some loudspeakers that caused noise pollution. The collected materials were taken to a designated place for disposal.

US stopping countries from returning Afghan aircraft, says official

KABUL (TOLONews): The Deputy Defense Minister, Mohammad Qassim Farsad, said that the neighboring countries of Afghanistan are not returning aircrafts that were taken there during the collapse of the former government. He said their failure to do so is due to pressure by the US.

Speaking at a press conference reporting on the annual activities of the Defense Ministry, he said that the number of these aircraft is 60. "Their numbers could be around 60 aircraft and they are currently in one or two countries. We have officially asked them for their return, but they don't act because of US pressure,"

Farsad said.

Speaking at the same conference, the chief of army staff, Fasihuddin Fitrat, said that the attacks by the Daesh group have dropped to zero.

He said that the Islamic Emirate forces have conducted raids across the country within the past year that resulted in seizing a great number of weapons and ammunition. "In the major cities, the Mujahideen were more careful about the Daesh group. Their attacks have almost dropped to zero," he said.

Eanayatullah Khwarzmi, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said that 50 seminars have been constructed in military

bases in various provinces.

"We have repaired nearly 50,000 vehicles since the Islamic Emirate came to power," he said.

The Chief of Army Staff of the Islamic Emirate's Defense Ministry, in response to the accusations of Pakistani officials, said that instead of criticizing Afghanistan, they should focus on their own land and that these criticisms show Pakistan's inability to provide security in its own land.

Fasihuddin Fitrat added in the annual report of the ministry that people who cause insecurity in Pakistan exist inside that country, and Pakistan and other countries should look for their enemies "on their own soil."

No other entity right to interfere in media work

KABUL (TOLONews): The Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, Hayatullah Mahajar Farahi, said that no other entity but the culture ministry has the right to interfere in media work.

Speaking at a press conference in Herat, Farahi said that some journalists have been detained on charges of working with the media that is against the Islamic Emirate.

"We have finalized the law of the media and we will send it to the leadership and after approval of the Islamic Emirate leader, it will become effective," he said.

"Without the Ministry of Information and Culture, no one has the right to interfere in the work of the media and if there is any problem, we have a commission of media law violation that will address the problem," he said.

This comes as earlier as Reporters Sans Borders reported that "nine journalists have been arbitrarily



arrested" by Islamic Emirate security forces in the past ten days in Afghanistan in a "crackdown without precedent this year."

"The Ministry has always said that no one has the right to interfere in media work. So, they should stick to it," said Mohsin Karimi, a journalist.

"I call on other organizations to not interfere in the work of the media and journalists. The detention of journalists has recently increased," said Abdul

Karim Azim, a journalist.

Earlier, the Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the detentions of the journalists was not due to their career.

"The detention of the journalists has not had any link with their career in journalism. The allegations about them are something outside of their career. After they give some explanation, their issue will be solved and we will try to release them," he said then.

Embassy pledges to provide better services

KABUL (Agencies): The Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Tehran, Mawlawi Fazl Mohammad Haqqani pledged to provide better services for Afghan immigrants living in neighboring Iran.

According to a statement released by the Afghan embassy in Tehran, Mawlawi Fazl Mohammad Haqqani met with Seyed Rasool Mousavi, the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Representative for Western Asia.

Multiple issues were addressed at this conference, including the pressing issues of Afghan immigrants in the host country and the objectives of the Afghan embassy in Tehran to provide improved services.

It is worth noting that the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently announced a drop in the cost of passports in order to make it simpler for Afghans living abroad to afford the service.

Traffic accident kills one, injures 11

GHZNI (Khaama Press): At least one person was dead, and 11 were injured in a traffic accident in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan, officials said on Monday.

On Sunday evening, a tragic collision between two vehicles occurred on the Ghazni-Bamyan highways within the Qarabagh district of Ghazni province. The incident led to losing one traveller's life while leaving 11 others injured.

According to the provincial police spokesperson, Abukhalid Sarhadi, among the injured individuals, some are currently in critical condition. Meanwhile, all the injured were taken to the nearby hospital for medical treatment.

Earlier on Friday, a traffic accident in Badakhshan province killed one person and injured four others.

"In the Yawan District of Badakhshan province, a car flipped due to reckless driving on Friday evening. One person was killed on the spot, and four others were injured in the incident, according to Yar Mohammad, a traffic police officer."

Experts have highlighted that the increasing frequency of accidents within the country can be ascribed to various factors. These include reckless driving behaviours, worsening road infrastructure, traffic congestion on highways, inadequate compliance with traffic regulations, and the abundance of aged and potentially hazardous vehicles traversing the roadways.

Over the last three months, the country has sadly lost nearly 400 lives in road accidents.

IOM resumes activities in Kandahar

KABUL (Agencies): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has restarted its operations in Kandahar province, according to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

The IOM office in Spin Boldak, a border town with Pakistan, had been closed for two months due to some reasons.

The ministry said that after several meetings with the local authorities, the IOM was able to resume its work.

The IOM provides assistance to returning refugees and displaced people in the region.

The IOM representative promised to help the families who had returned during the closure of the office.

The ministry and the IOM agreed to coordinate and cooperate to solve the problems and provide services to the newcomers.

Formulating plan for girls' schooling: Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): A committee of the Ministry of Higher Education said it is working on a plan to reopen universities for girls and will share it with the public if finalized.

Lutfullah Khairkhwa, the deputy minister of Higher Education, said during the annual reporting of the ministry that the finalization time for the plan is not clear.

The Ministry of Higher Education in the past year has started 3 Ph.D. programs and 15 master's programs, and now there are 9 Ph.D. programs and 40 master's programs in Afghanistan, he said.

Khairkhwa gave statistics that 118,000 new students were recruited to universities in the last year and more than 400,000 students are studying in the country's universities.

The deputy minister of Higher Education said that about 200 to 250 professors from various universities have left the country.

Meanwhile, Hafiz



Hamed Hasib, the financial

and administrative deputy of the higher education ministry said in the annual report of the ministry that 658 religious scholars have been recruited to teach Islamic subjects in universities, and nearly 90 scholars have been invited to specialized Islamic pro-

grams.

According to the Ministry of Education, in the past year more than 1 million new students were registered in schools, of which "more than 500,000 of them are girls," presumably referring to girls under grade 7.

Kiramattullah Akhound-

zada, an official of the Education Ministry, in the annual report of the ministry, said that a total of 10,189,634 students, including more than 4 million girls, are registered with them. According to the ministry, there are 18,010 schools in Afghanistan now.

38 aid workers killed in two years in Afghanistan, says OCHA

KABUL (TOLONews): The OCHA humanitarian coordinator for Afghanistan, claimed that 38 workers were killed during the last two years.

Daniel Endres said that most of them were polio vaccinators and deminers in Afghanistan.

"We salute their courage and celebrate their dedication to serving humanity we also take a moment to pause to recognize those humanitarian workers who have lost their lives and were injured, abducted,

arrested or remain in captivity or detention... 38 workers were killed during the last two years many of whom were polio vaccinators and deminers." Said Daniel Endres.

"The Taliban government, which is currently in power, has a legal obligation to ensure the safety of aid workers and those who are engaged in distributing aid to the people of Afghanistan," said Asadullah Nadim, a military analyst.

Despite the lack of funding for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, last year UN employees provided humanitarian aid to more than 26 million people in 401 districts of Afghanistan.

"Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan reached more than 29 million people in need of assistance," said Daniel Endres.

Meanwhile, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate rejected the comments of the coordinator of humanitarian aid and said that the aid workers in Afghanistan have the support of the Islamic Emirate.

"The Western institutions are all coordinated in presenting Afghanistan as an unsafe region and have started and are continuing their propaganda. This is not true; the Afghans are witnessing, and we are also witnessing that the aid workers were not harmed," said Zabiullah Mujahid.

In February 2022, eight health workers—including four women—were shot and killed in separate attacks by unidentified gunmen in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Takhar.

Health ministry to build public clinics in 300 districts

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) says it plans to build public clinics in 300 districts of the country so that at least the people of Afghanistan have access to basic health services.

Qalandar Ebad, acting minister of health, said during an accountability report that health services are difficult in remote parts of the country and the Islamic Emirate will provide health services for the people in a better way considering the facilities.

"Health services in the provinces and the suburban areas are greatly affected, especially at the district level, and nearly 300 districts do not have clinics and hospitals," said Ebad.

He also added that in order to provide better health services, they have signed memorandums of understanding with national and international institutions, adding that over the past year, more than 39,000 drug addicts have been treated.



He said that a 4.2 billion AFN budget was allocated for them and they were able to issue licenses for 685 private health centers and for 6,000 health personnel.

"The normal budget of 3.6 billion afghanis was allocated to us, of which 55% has been used and 45% is left," said Ebad.

"We were allocated 576 million afghanis for the

development budget, of which we used 52%, and in 1401, we were allocated 4.2 billion afghanis, of which we used 54 percent," he added.

Health officials also said that two cases of polio have been recorded in the country, and that 1.3 million malnourished children have been treated in the past year.

According to them, cur-

rently more than 4,000 hospitals are operating throughout the country.

Over the past year, 15,000 tons of low-quality and outdated materials have been collected by this ministry, and all the usurped government lands have also been reclaimed. According to health officials, more than 22% of the ministry's employees are women.

Iran admits drought in Afghanistan is 'serious'

KABUL (Agencies): Iran's minister of energy has said that following the inspection of Deh Rawood hydrometric station in Helmand province, it was found that the drought situation in Afghanistan is 'serious'.

"Recently, our colleagues visited Deh Rawood hydrometric station in Helmand. This visit showed that the drought in

Afghanistan is also serious," Ali Akbar Mehrabian said as quoted by ISNA news agency.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's special representative for Afghanistan affairs, also announced that the amount of water at Deh Rawood hydrometric station was lower than the monthly amount of a normal water year.

Tensions between Iran and the Islamic Emirate escalated in recent months after Tehran accused Kabul of restricting the flow of water.

Recently, Abdul Kabir, political deputy of IEA's PM, said that "the water issue with Iran has been resolved, with great happiness, with talks, instead of war."

Customs tax on coal exports dropped to \$30



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum wrote in a statement that in accordance with the decree of the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, the ministry has reduced the export customs duty of one ton of coal from 45 to 30 dollars.

According to the spokesman for the MoMP, Homayoun Afghan, the "royalty tariff" of each ton of coal exported has also been reduced from 2,500 Af\$ to 2,200 Af\$.

"Considering the inter-

national prices of the coal, and to bring facilities for the traders and to encourage them, the leadership of the Islamic Emirate had reduced the royalty of coal from 2,500 Af\$ to 2,200 Af\$," he said.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said that due to an increase in tariffs, the exports of Afghanistan to Pakistan has significantly increased.

"The reduction in taxes will bring changes in the

export of coal. Currently, Pakistan imports coal from African countries, this move will boost the market of Afghanistan's coal. This can also help with the transit of coal, and we can export coal to other countries as well," said Mohammad Younus Momand, deputy head of ACCI.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) said that nearly 500,000 tons of coal have been exported abroad within the first four months of the current solar year.

More than 2,000 Afghan refugees return home from Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the de facto administration said that over 2,000 Afghan refugees returned home from Iran.

The ministry said on Monday that 2,482 Afghan refugees returned home via the Islam Qala border in Herat province, Afghanistan.

According to the official in Islam Qala in Herat province, out of the 2,482 Afghan refugees, 872 have been referred to the IMO office for essential aid.

The ministry has yet to indicate whether the return of refugees is voluntary or if they were compelled to come to the country.

Moreover, the ministry announced on Sunday that 37 Afghan refugees had been repatriated to the country. These refugees have spent varying periods, ranging from one to six months, in confinement within Pakistani prisons.

Many Afghan immigrants in Pakistan and Iran were previously subjected to arrests and physical abuse by officials in these countries.



This mistreatment was primarily attributed to their inability to provide valid legal residence documents.

However, despite the dire humanitarian crisis and rising poverty in Afghanistan, increased migration

from the country has been accompanied by unemployment and housing issues in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. These challenges have prompted some immigrants to return to Afghanistan voluntarily.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi welcoming Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, who called him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Sutlej flood inundates many villages

OKARA (PPI): The raging Sutlej inundated many villages, destroying standing crops in a large area, as the river, which is still in a high flood, breached embankments at multiple locations, forcing the people to leave their homes for safety, according to a report on Monday.

With no ways and means available to stop the flood-water, several localities in the rural areas are now disconnected with the rest of the country except through boats. The affected people are trying to repair the damaged riverbanks and build new temporary dykes on their own to save their homes and livestock by diverting the water flow.

Baba Farid Pull, Ferozepur Chishtian, Babiana, Pir Ghani, Shahu Baloch, Baqar Key, Mari Anb, Kot Bakhsha and Bhaini Noor Jahannian are among the most affected areas, some of which had experienced floods just last month. On the other hand, state-run schools have been closed in different areas – including Tabi Lal Beg, Noor Arth, Jalal Jammu and Salam Rath – for an indefinite period. These facilities are now serving as

relief camps for the uprooted families.

It is expected the water level at Head Sulemanki will reach 200,000 cusecs from the current level of 144,135 cusecs on Monday (today) with a same water discharge being maintained by the authorities. Okara Deputy Commissioner Zeeshan Hanif is leading the relief efforts in the area with the district administration officials, rescue workers and the military personnel involved in evacuating and rescuing the people.

And in Kasur, the army personnel are busy shifting thousands of affected people from Ganda Singh Wala, Dhoh Sarri, Attari, Ghati Kalangar, Juma Wala, Kamalpura and other rural areas. A total of 16 tonnes of food items have so far been distributed among the families leaving their homes, which include flour, rice, pulses, ghee, milk and other necessary commodities at Talwar Pull, Thathi Bakhshi and Najabat. Meanwhile, health services are also being provided to the people with waterborne diseases always being the main threat in case of floods.

Meanwhile, the large-

scale rescue and evacuation efforts continued in the recent flood-affected areas in parts of Punjab, following the high-level floods in the Sutlej River at two points.

According to the details, large-scale relief activities by Pakistan Army are underway in the recent flood-affected areas of Punjab including, Ganda Singhwala, Dhap Sri, Attari, Ghati Kalangar, Aulake, Jamiwala, Kamalpura, Bakarke and Najabat.

Pakistan Army rescue teams engaged in the rescue and transfer activities with the help of boats, while 16 tons of free of cost ration was also distributed to thousand of affected families by the army rescue teams.

Ration packs containing essential food items including flour, lentils, rice, ghee and milk, the distribution is still in process at several locations including Talwar Pull, Thathi Bakhshi and Najabat. The rescue teams also arranged the necessary medical assistance for the flood victims. Moreover, the relief operations will continue until the flood situation improves and normal life is restored.

Ex-SAPM Fahad meets Bilawal



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister Fahad Haroon meets with chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto and discussed current political scenario, on Monday.

Former SAPM lauded Bilawal Bhutto Zardari role as Foreign Minister for upholding Pakistan's cause at every forum despite global diplomatic crisis due to polarization. He added that PPP's chairman has served the nation in difficult times.

PPP's chairman hopeful for success in upcoming election due to their public interest policies as well as for general election to held in in constitutional time-frame. Both politicians discussed political situations as well as media related issues in detail.

Shehryar's release challenged

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The district magistrate Islamabad has challenged the release of PTI leader Shehryar Afridi. Last week, a single bench of Justice Babar Sattar of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) suspended PTI leader Shehryar Afridi's arrest warrants under maintenance of public order (MPO) and ordered his immediate release.

The district magistrate in his intra-court appeal in IHC stated that the decision of the single-bench in Shehryar Afridi's case is a "violation" of law, as the bench did not apply 'judicial mind' while announcing the verdict. The plaintiff has requested to nullify the decision of single-bench in the Shehryar Afridi case.

Afridi was first arrested on May 16 from his Islamabad residence under Section 3 of the MPO Ordinance, 1960. He was rearrested on May 30 under the same section soon after his release from prison. On August 3, Afridi was granted bail by the Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench but was later picked up by the police soon after his release from Adiala jail.

Toshakhana case

SC to take up Imran's plea tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will take up Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's petition challenging the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) decision on the Toshakhana case on Wednesday (August 23).

Apart from CJP Bandial, the bench will comprise Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. They will hear the plea filed by the PTI chairman on August 5 challenging the IHC's decision that declared the sessions court's maintainability verdict in the Toshakhana case against the PTI chief "void".

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq gave the court's ruling on eight petitions of the PTI chairman after arguments by both parties — which were completed. The court, however, rejected the former prime minister's request to transfer the case to another court and said that Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar would hear the case.

On October 21, 2022, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) maintained that the former prime minister made "false statements and incorrect declarations" about the gifts and disqualified him under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution. Subsequently, the election watchdog moved the sessions court to the federal capital. It sought criminal proceedings against the PTI chief for allegedly misleading the ECP regarding gifts received from foreign dignitaries while he was in office.

The PTI chief was indicted in the case on May 10, while his petition to

declare the case inadmissible was rejected by the court. On July 4, the IHC overturned the same ruling and directed the sessions court to hear the petitioner and decide the matter within seven days. On July 8, ADSJ Humayun Dilawar declared the Toshakhana case against Khan as maintainable, which was again challenged in the IHC.

Meanwhile, the trial continued at the court and a day after the IHC verdict PTI Chairman Imran Khan was arrested from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore soon after being convicted in the Toshakhana case. The sessions court in the federal capital convicted the former prime minister for corrupt practices related to the state gift depository — allegations which he denies.

The 70-year-old cricketer-turned-politician was accused of misusing his premiership to buy and sell gifts in state possession that were received during visits abroad and worth more than 140 million Pakistani rupees (\$635,000). Rejecting Khan's petition seeking inadmissibility of the case, Additional and Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar sentenced the former prime minister to three-year imprisonment. "Charges of misdeclaration of assets have been proven against PTI chairman," Judge Dilawar mentioned in his judgment.

He then handed Khan three years in jail along with a fine of Rs100,000, while issuing an arrest warrant for his immediate arrest. Established in 1974, Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats and officials by

heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries as a goodwill gesture. It has valuables ranging from bulletproof cars, gold-plated souvenirs and expensive paintings to watches, ornaments, rugs and swords.

Meanwhile, CJP Bandial has also constituted a three-member bench — comprising himself, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Shahid Waheed — to hear pleas filed on the Jaranwala incident. The bench will take up the case on August 22 and notices have been issued to all the parties in the case.

Later, it was learnt the Supreme Court has deferred the hearing on the issue as the Human Rights Cell has not received the police report on the incident. "I was told by the Supreme Court that the case is scheduled for hearing tomorrow [Tuesday] but if was informed later that the Human Rights Cell report on the incident has not yet been received which is why the hearing will not be held," petitioner Samuel Pyare told media.

On August 16, a crowd vandalised several churches and set scores of houses on fire in Jaranwala town of the industrial district of Faisalabad after clerics made announcements in mosques inciting the mob to attack the Christian community under allegations of blasphemy. Paramilitary troops were called in to handle the violence and bring the situation under control, according to a government order. The attack sparked outrage on social media and among political and religious figures in Pakistan, who condemned the incident, saying that there was no room for such extreme behaviour.

Rabbani for possibility of Senate inquiry against Alvi

ISLAMABAD (Agencies):

Senator Raza Rabbani on Monday expressed the possibility of an inquiry led by the Senate into President Arif Alvi's statement that officials at the presidency "undermined" his command.

The former Senate chairman pointed out that if an inquiry is initiated, the president will have to appear before a committee of the upper house since he is a part of the parliament under Article 50 of the Constitution. The controversy erupted after President Alvi made a startling revelation on Sunday, saying he had refused to sign into law two bills that would give authorities more power to prosecute people for acts against the state and military, a move the law ministry said was unconstitutional.

"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," the president said on his personal social media account — a move that triggered a

debate on the interpretation of Article 75.

He said he had asked his staff to return the bills unsigned to the legislature within the stipulated time to make them ineffective.

"However I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and command," the president added. Speaking on the matter at the Sindh High Court today, Rabbani — himself a legal expert — said that Alvi's tweet was inappropriate.

"The president is the head of the state, he could have returned the bills constitutionally under Article 75, the way he sent other bills." "Neither did he want to sign the bills nor did he want to give his observation on them. What's this?" The veteran politician said that the president is part of the parliament under Article 50 of the Constitution and should appear before a Senate committee.

The officers involved in this should appear there, he said, adding this committee should investigate and dig out the real facts. "If it is proved that the president

has made a false statement, then action can be initiated against him according to the law." When asked about the status of these bills, Rabbani responded, "It is not yet clear whether the president has signed them or not. On the one hand, he is saying that he did not sign and at the same time he is also apologising to those who would be affected."

Article 75 of the Constitution is very clear in this matter, he said. "Anything can happen during the current circumstances, said the PPP leader when asked what if the president says that he did not post the statement on X, formerly Twitter. Rabbani added that Alvi's term is ending on September 9 and an inquiry can be launched against him by the Senate. "If the Senate body comes to a conclusion that President Alvi made a false statement then action should be taken against him." However, the issue of the president's impeachment is different, but the Senate can conduct an inquiry, he said.

Special court set up in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): A special court has been established under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) on Monday.

The additional charge of the court has been handed over to the Anti-Terrorism Court Judge, Abul Hasnat who would hear the cases filed under the OSA. This is the first exclusive court for OSA cases established in Islamabad. According to the law, hearing of the cases under the OSA will be held in camera. Sources said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who was arrested in the cipher case, would be produced in the court after some time.

Elahi declared guilty of corruption

LAHORE (INP): The inquiry report of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) issued on Monday declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Central President and former Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi of alleged corruption in award of contracts.

The NAB report released here stated that the PTI leader approved 116 development schemes for Gujarat in collaboration with his close aides. The former chief minister was also involved in misuse of the authority and office, the report added. The NAB accused him of using his influence to award contracts of schemes to his favourite contractors.

The report stated that Parvez Elahi awarded contracts through his frontmen and received bribe and kickbacks. The report said the ex-chief minister issued funds in advance to receive kickbacks. He diverted funds allocated for other schemes to his approved plans. He misused his position as the head of the province and received kickbacks, the report added.

UK child-killer nurse facing life sentence

LONDON (Agencies): A British nurse will be sentenced on Monday for murdering seven newborn babies and attempting to kill six others while they were in her care. Lucy Letby, 33, was convicted of killing five baby boys and two baby girls, making her the UK's most prolific child serial killer in modern history.

She was arrested following a string of baby deaths at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between June 2015 and June 2016. The prosecution said Letby attacked her young and often prematurely born victims by either injecting them with air, overfeeding them with milk or poisoning them with insulin.

Following a trial that started in October, a jury at Manchester Crown Court ended more than 100 hours of deliberations on Friday. The jury cleared Letby of two counts of attempted murder and were unable to reach decisions on six other counts of attempted murder. But the multiple guilty verdicts for murder mean Letby faces the prospect of never being released from

prison.

Letby fought back tears in the dock as the jury returned their first guilty decisions earlier in August. But she was not in court for the final verdicts and was absent from court at the start of her sentencing on Monday. Letby's absence means she will not hear the families' victim impact statements about how her crimes affected them.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said it was "cowardly" that people who commit such horrendous crimes do not face their victims". The leader of the main opposition Labour party, former chief prosecutor Keir Starmer, promised to close the "shamefully exploited loophole" if elected to government. The judge is expected to pass the sentence on Monday afternoon.

The families of Letby's victims said in a joint statement last week that while "justice has been served" it "will not take away from the extreme hurt, anger and distress that we've all had to experience". They added that it was a "bittersweet result" since some families did not receive the verdicts they had expected. The first babies Letby was accused

of attacking were twins. A baby boy, referred to as child A, was just a day old when he died in early June 2015, while his elder sister survived a murder attempt.

After the death of two triplet brothers within 24 hours of each other in June 2016, Letby was removed from the neonatal unit and placed on clerical duties. Two years later, in July 2018, she was arrested for the first time. On her third arrest in November 2020, Letby was formally charged and placed in custody. Letby's motives remain unclear. During the trial, the prosecution described Letby as a "calculating" woman, who "gaslighted" her colleagues into believing the rise in baby deaths was "just a run of bad luck".

The jury was told that Letby was on shift when each of the babies collapsed. Some of the newborns were attacked just as their parents left their cots. The court heard that Letby took an unusual interest in the families of her victims, making searches for them on social media. She also sent a sympathy card to the grieving parents of a child she was later found guilty of murdering.

properties of all minority communities in the country, and bringing the perpetrators of heinous attacks of Jarawanla to justice.

AH Hilali, former Chairman, Political Science Department, University of Peshawar said that Jarawanla's gory incident was highly condemnable and was an attempt to disrupt interfaith harmony ahead of the general election. He said intolerance was emerged as a serious challenge in Pakistan posing serious threat to social and cultural values, democracy, and the country's vital interests.

Since its inception, he said Pakistan had been confronting various challenges including growing political, societal, and religious intolerance mainly due to the fractured governance structure built around many fault lines that often ignited political and economic crises owing to the derailment of the democratic system on several occasions in the past. The recent surge in political and religious intolerance and wrangles

between political parties and workers for powers were spoiling the country's development and investment process besides hampering economic rehabilitation efforts.

Ejaz Khan, former Chairman International Relations Department, University of Peshawar said that Jarawanla incident has showed rising intolerance crept into the society after the brutal assassination of the first prime minister of Pakistan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan on October 16, 1951. He said the assassination of twice-elected prime minister, Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007 and killing of Governor Punjab Salman Taseer on January 4, 2011 and others politicians and civil society members testified the growing intolerance, societal intolerance and religious extremism.

The Afghan war had also given space to Kalashnikov and drug culture due to the migration of over four million Afghan refugees in the wake of the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 which led to disruption in the

peaceful atmosphere, which cast negative effects on the society's social fabric. He said Islamophobia was emerged as a serious challenge in world and collective efforts at global level was required to address it before making life difficult for people in countries with low literacy rate.

The visit of caretaker Prime Minister Kakar, designate Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister, Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Maulana Taghr Ashrafi and others to Jarawanla have showed that such gory incidents were not acceptable to people of Pakistan. Maulana Tayyab Qureshi, Chief Khateeb of KP while condemning Jarawanla incident said the main reason for rising intolerance in Pakistani society is socio economic imbalances, unemployment, and delay in justice.

He said Hijratul Wida was a complete charter of human rights in which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) emphasized upon justice, patience, tolerance, and equality besides interfaith

harmony. He said the Holy Prophet (PBUH) also declared killing and taking one's property unjustly was Haram besides attaching the highest importance to the protection of life, honor, and wealth of all people.

Professor Dr Khalid Mufti, former principal Khyber Medical College Peshawar said that intolerance was mainly a psychological and cognitive behavior issue and mostly its victims were the unemployed youth. He said intolerance, religious extremism, and hate-based actions were detrimental to interfaith harmony, democracy, economic sovereignty, and freedom of speech. Dr Mufti underlined the need for starting of a grand dialogue among followers of all faiths after Jarawanla ransacking incident. The speakers said that Prime Minister's Anwaarul Haq Kakar visit to Jarawanla where he expressed solidarity with the victim families of Christian community showed that people and government of Pakistan were standing with the affected families.