

Chairlift owner, operator held

BATTAGRAM (PPI): The KP police on Wednesday arrested the owner and operator of a Battagram chairlift which stranded high over a remote ravine. Eight people, including schoolchildren who got trapped in a disabled cable car dangling high above a valley in Pakistan's Battagram, returned safely to the ground Tuesday after military commandos using staged a daring and delicate rescue using helicopters and a makeshift chairlift.

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KARACHI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing a press conference along with Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori and others.

Sehat Card: KP CM takes notice

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has taken notice of the suspension of free treatment facilities under the Sehat Card scheme, and directed the concerned authorities to take steps on priority basis for the restoration of free treatment facilities under the scheme, said an official handout issued here on Wednesday.

He further directed that arrangements should be made for immediate payment of dues to the implementing partner i.e. State Life Insurance Company for the purpose. On the directives of the Chief Minister, the quarters concerned approached the management of State Life Insurance Company and assured them that their dues would be cleared within a week. Resultantly, the company has directed all empanelled hospitals to immediately resume the free treatment facilities under Sehat Card Scheme. The insurance company has, in writing, informed the high ups of the Sehat Card scheme in this regard.

Sharjeel calls on Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The former Provincial Minister for Information and Transport, Sharjeel Inam Memon, held a meeting with Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, at Bilawal House in Karachi.

The meeting involved discussions about the political situation in Sindh and various other issues. Sharjeel Inam Memon provided a briefing to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari about his constituency during the meeting.

Moonis involved in graft: NAB

LAHORE (INP): The National Accountability Bureau report of the inquiry against PTI leader Moonis Elahi in a case of receiving kickbacks and corruption in awarding government contracts has come to the fore.

In the same case, Moonis's father and PTI President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi is also being investigated. The report about Moonis's inquiry says that he has been found involved in corruption and money laundering. He received kickbacks through his frontman Azmat Hayat and secretary Sohail Asghar in the form of contracts.

The report says that there was a significant increase in Moonis's assets as soon as his father Parvez Elahi assumed the Punjab chief minister's position. It further says that Moonis received kickbacks in the form of contracts through Azmat Hayat and Sohail Asghar. He deposited huge domestic and foreign currency in his bank accounts since July 2022.

President invites CEC to fix date for election

Election Commission decides to consult all political parties including PTI for polls schedule

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi has invited Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja to discuss the date for general elections. President Alvi has invited the CEC in a letter for meeting to decide the date of general elections.

In the letter President wrote that he dissolved the National Assembly on August 09 on the advice of the prime minister. "President is bound to give the date of general elections, being held within 90 days after dissolution of the assembly under Article 48-V," the President wrote in the letter. The Chief Election Commissioner being invited for a meeting on the date for general election today or tomorrow (Thursday), President Arif Alvi wrote.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has recently announced that general elections are not possible within 90 days after dissolution of the assemblies. The ECP has decided to hold the upcoming general election on the Census 2023. The ECP stated that the commission is bound to carry out the delimitation process after approval of the census results by the Council of Common Interests. "The first publication of delimitations will be on October 9 and the final will be on December 14," the ECP announced.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to consult all major political parties, including the PTI, about upcoming general elections and its date. The elections are expected early next year. Sources said the ECP would consult all political parties separately regarding the elections schedule and its date. During the consultation, the electoral watchdog will also talk about a road map of the upcoming general elections. Similarly, the commission will also consult over the issues of constituencies' delimitations and voter lists as well. The process of consulting the political parties will be initiated in next few days, sources added.

The said the PML-N, the PPP, the PTI, the MQM, the JI, the ANP, the JUIF and all other major political parties will be taken onboard. Meanwhile the mock exercise of the new Result Compilation System (RCS) has also been conducted which satisfied the ECP. Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja presided over a meeting of the commission in which a briefing on the RCS was given. During a briefing it was stated that the RCS allows the presiding officer to forward the results right away to returning

officer via an app. Similarly, the ROs will also be equipped to compile inconclusive results with the help of RCS. According to the election authority's Media Coordination and Outreach Wing.

The regular mock exercises of RCS had been performed and its entire steps were inspected. In recent years, the commission has come up with some systems in relation to dealing with election results, which include result transmission and management systems. Moreover, the ECP revised the task pertaining to the National Assembly constituencies delimitation and four provincial assemblies following the first-ever digital census in 2023.

Accordingly, the commission forwarded essential communications to the provincial governments and the statistics department as well. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Tuesday reiterated that the interim government would ensure holding of the upcoming general elections in the most transparent and impartial manner, accepted to all.

Talking to media after visiting Mazar-e-Quaid to pay tribute and offer Fateha, the prime minister said that the caretaker government would function in the limited time frame only to ensure the election process. They would play their part in this regard by holding transparent and impartial polls, so that Pakistan could move through its constitutional transitional period, he added.

On the occasion, the prime minister was accompanied by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retired) Maqbool Baqir and the members of his cabinet. It was the maiden visit of the caretaker prime minister to Karachi after assuming his office. The prime minister said that he along with his few cabinet members came here to pay homage to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and reaffirm to work for the progress and prosperity of the country by highlighting the social contract under which a separate state came into being.

Referring to an address of the founder of the nation on August 11, 1947 before the Constituent Assembly, he said it focused on rights of the minorities and equality among individuals. Prime Minister Kakar expressed the optimism that the people of the country would excel in different fields on the basis of their talents and it was the future of the country. Earlier, the prime minister laid a floral wreath at the grave of the founder of the nation and offered Fateha. He also penned down his expressions in the visitors' book.

Wagner boss Prigozhin killed in plane crash

MOSCOW

(Agencies): Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was listed as a passenger on a private jet that crashed on Wednesday evening north of Moscow with no survivors, the Russian authorities said. There was no confirmation that Prigozhin was physically on board and Reuters could not immediately confirm that he was on the aircraft, which crashed north of Moscow.

"An investigation has been launched into an Embraer plane crash that occurred tonight in the Tver region. According to the passenger list, the name and surname of Yevgeny Prigozhin is among them," Rosaviatsia, Russia's aviation agency, was cited as saying by the state TASS news agency.

Russia's emergency situations ministry said in a statement that a private Embraer Legacy aircraft travelling from Moscow to St Petersburg had crashed near the village of Kuzhenkino in the Tver Region. It said that 10 peo-



ple were on board, including three crew members. According to preliminary information, everyone on board was killed, it said. Prigozhin, 62, spearheaded a mutiny against Russia's top army brass on June 23-24 which President Vladimir Putin said could have tipped Russia into civil war. The mutiny was ended by negotiations and an apparent Kremlin deal which saw Prigozhin agree to relocate to neighbouring Belarus. But he had appeared to move freely inside Russia after the deal nonetheless. Prigozhin, who had sought to topple Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, chief of the general staff, on Monday posted a video address that he sug-

gested was shot in Africa.

Prigozhin turned that moment of triumph into an opportunity just days later to accuse Russia's military top brass of being responsible for the failures in Ukraine, something only a select few can do publicly without drawing retribution from the Kremlin. The running feud with the defence ministry reached new heights on Saturday when the Wagner leader claimed his fighters had crossed from Ukraine into the Russian border city of Rostov-on-Don – and that they would fight anyone who tried to stop them.

The Wagner chief has also questioned the official Kremlin version of why Russia invaded Ukraine. "The defence ministry is trying to deceive society and the president and tell us a story about how there was crazy aggression from Ukraine and that they were planning to attack us with the whole of NATO," Prigozhin said in a video clip released on Telegram by his press service on Friday.

Terrorists, abettors to be hunted down until surrender: Gen Asim

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has said that terrorists, their affiliates and abettors — working on the behest of a hostile agenda to destabilise Pakistan — will be hunted down until their surrender to the state, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday.

The army chief made these remarks during his interaction with officers and troops deployed in the Sherwangi area near Asman Manza in South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) today, where six brave soldiers had embraced martyrdom a day earlier while fighting gallantly against terrorists, the military's media wing added.

The COAS appreciated the troops' unflinching resolve in fighting the menace of terrorism. "Shuhada are our pride and their sacrifices will not go in vain till the return of complete peace and stability in Pakistan."

During the visit, Gen Munir was also given a detailed briefing on the prevailing security situation including ongoing intelligence and counter-terrorism operations. Earlier upon arrival, the COAS was received by Commander Peshawar Corps, the ISPR added.

Terrorist killed in Ladha

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: One terrorist killed during exchange of fire took place between security forces and terrorists in general area Ladha, South Waziristan District, said ISPR on Wednesday.

Security forces effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultant-ly one terrorist was sent to hell. Weapon and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorist, who remained actively involved in various terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

Rupee slumps to new record low

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani rupee remained under pressure and slumped to a new record low against the US dollar in the interbank market on Wednesday, extending losses for the fourth consecutive session.

According to the data extracted from the forex dealers, the greenback surpassed its previous best of Rs298.93 on May 11 against the local currency and it seemed it will top the psychological barrier of Rs300 soon. The Pakistani rupee lost 49 paises in the morning session and was currently being traded at Rs250.

On Tuesday, the Pakistani rupee fell to a new record low against the US dollar as it had settled for the day at Rs299.01. Money traders opined that the demand was much higher than the supply of dollars. It's driving the rate to historic low, they added. There were also reports that some banks were making money by providing importers with dollars and some importers, having 50 to 100 containers in backlog, were paying up to Rs500,000 per container to banks to get dollars and get their containers released.

Bankers reportedly said that up to \$5 billion could be required to clear the backlog and this would be reflected in the import bill for the coming months. The import bill in July was \$4.219 billion compared to \$3.177 billion in June, reflecting an increase of \$1.042 billion.

We will fight extremism: PM

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Wednesday categorically said that Pakistan would never surrender to radicalization, extremism and intolerance but rather would fight without falling prey to war fatigue.

"Those who think we will fall prey to war fatigue should clear their misunderstanding. This war is not fought by individuals... This war is fought by nation... Surrendering is not an option. We will fight no matter what," he said during a press conference during his visit here.

Referring to the martyrdom of soldiers in South Waziristan on Tuesday, he said that Pakistan was not a power that would return 5,000 kilometers away from here. "This is our home. We are here. We will run our home in our own way," he said.

The prime minister said those trying to undermine the morale of the Pakistani nation should clear their misunderstanding as Pakistan would never forget the sacrifices of its martyrs. He said Pakistan was not fighting this war on alms but rather spending our own taxpayers' money. He said the Pakistani soldiers were not rendering sacrifices in return for the salaries.

"Their service is not in return for salaries, rather respect and dignity is their salary. Salary is just meant to suffice their needs. The nation pays them in the form of respect," he remarked. Prime Minister Kakar said that those who were trying to create chaos in the name of religion were actually miscalculating and misreading. "This is a clear message. They can fight for a limited time, but not for long. They are miscalculating and misreading whom they are faced with. We are not afraid of suicide attackers," he said.

Referring to the rescue operation of trapped eight passengers of a cable car in Battagram, the prime minister said the country's infrastructure was becoming a threat to human lives. "We were overwhelmingly over the moon as we heard the rescue of the last kid... We will celebrate it as it gave us an opportunity to unify us," he commented and appreciated the rescuers for the way they rescued the kids and children for the way they controlled their nerves in a heroic way. He said the defense

institutions did not only face challenges on external fronts but also take a lead role in crisis management. The prime minister also asked the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and other relevant departments to improve their performance.

Kakar for collective efforts to take forward economic journey, transform nation: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has called for collective efforts to transform the 250 million nation of Pakistan through collective efforts by taking forward the economic journey.

He addressing the members of the business community during his visit, assured them that the government would do the maximum possible for the uplift of the business community as they were the engine of economic growth. He said the \$6 trillion natural deposits in Balochistan did not reflect in the condition of the people living there.

The nation living on the Indus Basin facing food insecurity manifested the collective incompetence, he added. The prime minister said the caretaker government would resolve all of the issues confronting the business community within its capacity.

He said the caretaker government had a very limited mandate to assist in elections, run day-to-day governance issues, and follow the international commitment till the new parliament. He said the caretaker setup was becoming a source of peaceful transition. Calling Karachi, Karachiites and the business community a "grace of the nation", the prime minister said Pakistan could not survive sans their contribution.

Prime Minister Anwaar said the provision of low-cost electricity was inevitable for industrialization as the existing reserves of natural gas were insufficient to support the industry's needs. Emphasizing the need for skilled human resources, the prime minister also mentioned the issues of structural challenges and business attitudes facing the goods and services sector.

He said it would take some time to transform old business practices into corporate culture. "I want to reassure you that

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Govt has no role in fixing election date: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the date for the upcoming general election would be announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), which was constitutionally responsible to conduct the polls in the country.

The minister, in an interview with the CNN, clarified that the Caretaker government had no role in fixing the election date, as it was solely within the purview of the ECP. Solangi said there might be a "slight delay" in the elections as the new census had been notified. "Once the census is notified, the Election Commission of Pakistan—a constitutional body responsible for conducting elections—needs four months to complete the delimitation exercise." Subsequently, a constitu-

tionally mandated 54-day period was allocated for political parties to conduct election campaigns, he added.

As regard the Tuesday's chairlift incident, the Information Minister commended the joint effort of the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force for successfully rescuing all individuals who were stranded on the chairlift in the remote and rugged valley of Hindkush and Korakram mountain ranges in Battagram, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The operation was carried out with meticulous coordination, ensuring the safety of the trapped passengers, he said while sharing insights on the rescue operation. Highlighting the challenges in dissemination of information due to the remote nature of the area, he said the district administration, on receiving the news, approached the

provincial and regional administrations that subsequently alerted the federal authorities.

Solangi detailed the comprehensive rescue mission, which involved deploying helicopters from the Pakistan Army and Air Force, along with a Commanding Officer from the SSG and his troops who led the efforts on the ground. He said an extensive inspection of all chairlifts and cable cars in the region had already been initiated by the provincial authorities.

The Hazara region had 70 cable cars, including 11 in the specific region where the incident took place. The minister said the remote area, affected by both climate change and seismic activity, had witnessed natural disasters, including a significant earthquake in 2005 and severe flooding in 2010 that destroyed infrastructure of the area.

Trial court hastened Toshakhana verdict: CJP

ISLAMABAD (INP):

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Wednesday said the Supreme Court would wait for the Islamabad High Court's order on PTI Chairman Imran Khan's appeal against his conviction and sentence in the Toshakhana case before "interfering" in the matter.

However, the top judge observed: "Prima facie, there are shortcomings in the trial court verdict." On August 5, a trial court in Islamabad found the PTI chief guilty of "corrupt practices" in a case pertaining to concealing details of state gifts and sentenced him to three years in prison. The verdict also means that he stood disqualified from contesting general elections for five years.

Subsequently, Imran approached the IHC against his conviction and sentence. A day earlier, the high court adjourned the case till tomorrow (Aug 24). A three-member SC bench, comprising CJP

Bandial, Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, took up a petition filed by Imran today challenging the IHC's order of remanding the Toshakhana case to Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Humayun Dilawar who convicted the former prime minister.

During the hearing, the top court heard arguments by PTI lawyer Latif Khosa and Election Commission of Pakista's (ECP) counsel Amjad Pervaiz. After hearing both sides, the CJP said, "We will not interfere in the Toshakhana case today ... we will look at the IHC hearing tomorrow and then resume the proceedings."

At the outset of the hearing, Imran's lawyer Latif Khosa said the PTI chief had filed three petitions against IHC orders in the apex court. He recalled that Imran was elected as a member of the National Assembly from Mianwali during the 2018 elections. "The Election Act tells

every members of the NA to submit details of their assets," the lawyer said, adding that six MNAs had submitted a reference to the speaker seeking the PTI chief's disqualification.

The MNA, Khosa continued, had accused Imran of submitting an incorrect declaration of his assets. The speaker had then sent the reference to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under Section 137 of the Election Act. Here, Justice Naqvi asked the lawyer to read out the said section of the act, which pertains to the submission of a statement of assets and liabilities.

Continuing his arguments, Khosa contended that the ECP could only conduct an inquiry within 120 days. "Can one member [of the NA] send a reference against another member?" Justice Naqvi asked, to which the lawyer replied that no one could send a reference and the

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Condolence reference held at Khushal Khan Khattak University

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak organized a solemn Condolence Reference to pay reverence to the departed soul of its esteemed staff member, Muhammad Tufail. Mr. Tufail who tragically met a fatal accident recently.

The University staff, especially the Class IV employees, took the initiative to organize a Quran Khwani for the departed soul of Muhammad Tufail. The event was attended by numerous members of the university, including faculty and administrative staff. The atmosphere was one of solemn reflection and unity as the attendees gathered to offer prayers and express their condolences.

Notable participants included Dr. Siraj ud Din, Head of the Department of Management Sciences, and Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Head of the Department of Communication and Media Studies. Both HoDs spoke fondly of Muhammad Tufail's contributions to the university and the positive impact he had on those who had the privilege to work alongside him. His dedication and commitment to his work were remembered with great respect.

The Condolence Reference also saw the presence of Director QEC (Quality Enhancement Cell) Muhammad Shah Din, who shared his thoughts on the valuable role played by Muhammad Tufail during his time at the university. The event provided an opportunity for colleagues and friends to remember him and offer their prayers for his eternal peace. Muhammad Tufail's memory will continue to inspire and remind us of the importance of coming together in times of adversity.

Appointment of BOD

F.P. Report

KARACHI: This refers to a news item published by a section of media. In this regard, it is regretted that selective and out of context information has been provided. SNGPL's view point on the same is as follows: The BOD had already completed its term on July 5, 2023. This fact was admitted by the former Chairperson before the High Court during the hearing of her Petition.

The present appointment of the Chairman and independent directors of SNGPL has been done by the Cabinet i.e. the Federal Government. It is noteworthy that the Federal Cabinet's decision to appoint the Chairman and independent directors has not been challenged by the former Chairperson in her Petition before the High Court. None of the other Independent Directors has challenged that decision either. It is pertinent that under section 15(2) and 10(2a) of the SOE Act 2023, the Federal Government is fully empowered to appoint the Chairman and Independent Directors respectively. Under law, the appointing authority also has the power of removal. Hence, the appointment of the Chairman and the independent directors has been made strictly in accordance with law. SECP communication of 22.08.2023 is also being duly responded separately.

Nation united against terrorism, extremism: Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaz Bugti on Wednesday said that the entire nation was united against the menace of terrorism and extremism.

National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) Inspector General Tahir Ray briefed the minister on his visit to the authority's headquarter.

The minister reviewing the National Action Plan said that the terrorism would be completely eliminated from the society and Pakistan would be made peaceful country for all. He said Pakistan's narrative against terrorism and extremism provided complete guideline which needed to be promoted further.

He said NACTA would make effective and workable policy to counter terrorism and the policy would be shared with all other departments for effective coordination. The minister reiterated zero tolerance against terrorism and extremism, adding the law enforcement agencies were taking effective measures to curb the menace from the society.

The government would provide all resources and facilities to law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism; he

said adding that the nation paid tributes to the sacrifice of martyrs which would not go in vain. He condemned the recent terrorism activities in the country and said that state would ensure peaceful environment for the people by uprooting terrorism from the country. The masses if provided peaceful environment could play their role in better way for development of the country, he said adding that the government provide copies of national narrative against terrorism to the educational institutes to sensitize the students in that regard. The government would counter narrative of terrorist organizations and would grab their space in the national media, he said. The minister further said, no power on the earth could weaken the power of Pakistan as the country came into existence forever.

The government would assist the police to eliminate hideouts of dacoits of Kacha area in Sindh province, he vowed adding that the area alongside river belts would be made secure and peaceful.

The minister lauded the performance of NACTA and showed interest in its revamping.

Wasi Shah visit PTDC Head Office

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Renowned poet, media person, columnist and recently appointed Minister for State on Tourism and Chairman of PTDC Board of Directors, Mr. Wasi Shah, paid a visit to the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Head Office.



On his arrival he was welcomed by the Managing Director of PTDC, Mr. Aftab ur Rehman Rana. Later MD PTDC gave him a comprehensive briefing on the functions, operations, and role of PTDC as a national tourism organisation.

During his comments, honourable minister, appreciated efforts of PTDC team for the promotion of tourism and developing effective coordination with provincial tourism departments and private sector within their limited resources. He also articulated that tourism fundamentally revolves around the presentation of our cultural

richness and national heritage. He additionally affirmed his commitment to fully leverage his capabilities in order to enhance the tourism sector of Pakistan.

In his capacity as Minister for state on Tourism and Chairman of PTDC, he also conveyed his deep condolences and apprehensions regarding the unfortunate demise of Mohammed Hassan, a 27-year-old porter from Pakistan. Hassan lost his life due to an unfortunate slip and fall along a precarious

trail in the treacherous stretch of K2, commonly referred to as the bottleneck. The State Minister conveyed his intention to visit Mohammed Hassan's family and extend support to his family in their time of need. He also proposed to initiate a special training program for high altitude porters to promote work safety among them.

He further added that as part of the interim government, we are here to deal the day to day affairs of the interim government.



ISLAMABAD: Abdul Karim Jamali, CEO QESCO, Quetta calling on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.

Finance minister reviews construction of 2.1m houses

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Planning and Development Mohammad Younus Dagha, presided over a meeting to review the construction of 2.1 million houses for flood victims in the province.

The meeting was held at Sindh Secretariat Tughlaq House in the office of the Planning and Development department on Wednesday. Chairman Planning and Development Board Syed Hasan Naqvi, Chief Executive Officer Sindh People's Housing Scheme for Flood Affected People Khalid Mehmood Sheikh, and other officers briefed the minister. On this occasion, Younus Dagha said that the construction of 2.1 million houses for the flood victims is a big project. The Sindh government is committed to the timely

construction of flood-affected houses, he added.

He said that the verification process of 500,000 flood-affected houses has been completed and funds should be released immediately for their construction. The work of verification of the rest of the damaged houses should also be completed as soon as possible, he said.

On this occasion, it was informed in the briefing that Rs 3,00,000 will be given to the residents of each affected house and the process of payment for the affected houses should be completed within a fixed period of six months.

On this occasion, Muhammad Younus Dagha directed that the report of the construction work done in the period of six months of payment should be submitted step by step.

He said that transparency and quality should be ensured in all payments and construction work.

The provincial caretaker minister directed the officers to take steps to complete the documentation process in a timely manner from the respective deputy commissioners to provide ownership rights to the residents of the affected houses and ensure effective supervision with the help of the relevant NGOs to support the quality construction of the houses.

Younus Dagha said that providing houses to flood victims is one of the top priorities of the Sindh government. He directed that the construction work of the houses of the flood victims should be completed on a speedy basis so that relief can be given to those who lost their homes due to the flood.

Secretary Information inaugurates Tree Plantation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Secretary Information Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon said that trees play an important role in our lives and environment, this he said while inaugurating the tree plantation campaign organized by Faizan Global Relief Foundation - an NGO in collaboration with the Information Department held at barrack 95-96 of Information Department on Tuesday. Secretary Information said that trees provide us oxygen, clean air, food, medicine, and a habitat for wildlife and also

play a crucial role in regulating the climate, preventing soil erosion, and protecting biodiversity.

On this occasion, Director General Public Relations (DGPR) Sawai Khan Chhalgri said that trees pave the way to have a close contact and relation with the nature and nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive, and even spiritual satisfaction, he applauded the efforts of FGFRF delegation includes Haji Yaqoob Attari, Muhammad Hanif Qadri, Faizan Attari and thanked them for their collaboration for the tree plan-

tation drive, which was inaugurated on Tuesday.

On this occasion, Secretary Information Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon, Director General Public Relations Sawai Khan Chhalgri and Directors Muhammad Yousif Kaboro, Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, Hizbullah Memon, Muhammad Ali Riaz Memon, Akhtar Ali Surhio, Syed Mohammad Hassan Naqvi, Imtiaz Ali Joyo, Faisal Farooqui, Fida Hussain Baladi, also Senior Deputy Directors Sarwar Samejo and Sahib Khan Bhand and others planted sampling of different varieties in various directirates of the department.

PM&DC opens portal for fee submission for MDCAT registration

F.P. Report

KARACHI: As per directions from the Prime Minister the PM&DC has extended the date of MDCAT 2023 and rescheduled it on September 10 (Sunday) this year. Therefore, keeping in view the larger interest of the students and allowing the remaining students who were not able to complete their MDCAT registration due to fee non-submission, are again being given limited time by the Council to complete their applications.

Till the last date of submission of the application of MDCAT, 202336 candidates submitted their applications for the registrations wherein, 189261 candidates were able to successfully complete the registration for the examination. It was observed by the PM&DC Council that almost 9000 candidates submitted forms of MDCAT but they failed to complete their registration due to nonpayment of their fee due to any reason.

Therefore, the PM&DC after receiving several requests from candidates through

its helpline the matter was placed before the President of PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj. In order to facilitate the students, he allowed to open the portal for submission of pending fees for MDCAT registration so maximum candidates could take part in the MDCAT exam.

The students who have successfully submitted their registration forms for the upcoming MDCAT-2023 but whose payments/status were delayed can submit their already generated challans or download a fresh challan form (with a late registration fee through Debit/ Credit card or through Challan form) to get themselves registered for MDCAT 2023. This option will only be open for a limited period of 48 hours from 23rd to 24th August 2023 (02 Days) only. This option will be provided across the country and will be available for one time only. This decision was made by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council after receiving multiple requests from the students on the PM&DC helpline to extend the fee submission date of MDCAT-2023.

Lost & Found

I have lost my DHA, 1 Canal Plot documents No. B/RES/6021 Phase-1, DHAP Plot and 4 Marla commercial file documents No. 119, H/Com/5091 Phase-1, DHAP. If anyone finds please return it to Abdul Wahid Safi Son of Fazal Rehman, Danish Abad Peshawar.

Lost & Found

I have lost Matric original certificate under roll # 53798 year 2001 Peshawar Board and F.Sc original certificate under roll # 41530 year 2003 Kohat Board, MBA original degree under roll # 1522 year 2009 Kohat University. If anyone finds please return it to Muhammad Iqbal S/o Noor Muhammad R/o Malang Abad Jungle Khail Kohat.

CS orders expediting anti-dengue activities

LAHORE (APP): In the wake of increase in dengue cases in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan and Faisalabad, Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman ordered the authorities to expedite anti-dengue activities in all these four high-risk districts.

He issued these orders while presiding over a meeting on dengue control at the Civil Secretariat here on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary said that effective measures should be taken to control dengue in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan and Faisalabad. He directed that monitoring and surveillance be improved in high-risk districts and special attention be paid to clinical management of

dengue patients for keeping the mortality rate to a minimum. He said that the best facilities should be provided in the hospitals for the treatment of dengue patients.

The Chief Secretary said that joint efforts should be continued to eradicate dengue. He also gave instructions to ensure case response as per SOPs. He said that administrative officers should continue to visit DHQ and THQ hospi-

tals regularly to improve the quality of health facilities. Secretary Health Ali Jan gave a detailed briefing at the meeting. He said that 660 confirmed cases of dengue have been reported this year and an alert has been issued after a rapid increase in dengue cases in Faisalabad. He said that in August, 102 confirmed cases of dengue have been reported in Lahore, 60 in Rawalpindi, 47 in Multan and 28 in Faisalabad.



LAHORE: An elderly vendor selling hand fans to customers on his bicycle to earn livelihood in Provincial Capital.



پیشواں یونیورسٹی

نیشنل ٹرانسمیشن اینڈ ڈسٹری بیوٹن کمپنی لمیٹڈ


نوٹس برائے نئی ڈسٹری بیوٹن کمپنی اور آؤڈ

برخاس دام کوڈ ریجنل سطح کیا جاتا ہے کہ INTDC، اضلاع 220 کے دی گئے نیشنل ٹورڈ تھا۔ میں واقع خوشی اور ڈنگا باغ (تقریباً 250 خوشی اور 200 آؤڈ کے پورے) دو سال کیلئے (2024 سے 2025 تک) کیلئے پوز پر چاہتا ہوں۔ جس کیلئے مورخہ 26 ستمبر 2023 پر درج ذیل دن 11 بجے سرعام ہوں گی۔ خواہشمند حضرات کوئی بھی بڑھ چڑھ کر حصہ لے سکتے ہیں۔ کیلئے مدت 2 سال ہے۔ چندیہ چندیہ شراٹکا درج ذیل ہیں۔

- 1- تمام شراٹکا اور نیلا کی کٹنی کا فیصلہ کسی بھی عدالت میں فیصلہ میں کیا جائے گا۔
- 2- نیلا کی کٹنی کا فیصلہ کسی بھی عدالت میں فیصلہ میں کیا جائے گا۔ اور حالات کے پیش نظر ان شراٹکا میں تبدیلی کسی بھی وقت کی جاسکتی ہے جس کی پابندی کامیاب بولی دہندہ پر لازم ہوگا۔
- 3- تمام بولی دہندگان بولی سے 1 گھنٹہ قبل تک 25000 روپے کا ضمانت (قابل واپسی) بصورت ضمانت وراثت یا نقد رقم کرنا چاہیں گے اور شراٹکا پر دستخط کر کے بولی میں شریک ہو جائیں گے۔
- 4- مقررہ وقت سے کم بولی یا کسی بھی قسم کا پاپل ہونے پر بولی کی جاسکتی ہے۔
- 5- کامیاب بولی دہندہ کو ذرا نیلا (کامیاب پیشکش) کا 1/4 حصہ موقع پر جمع کرنا ہوگا۔ اور باقی رقم مجوزہ اٹھارہ فی صدی بنیادی طور پر 21 دن کے اندر جمع کرنا ہوگی۔ موقع پر نیلا کی اجراء محاذ حکام کی منظوری کے بعد ہوگا۔
- 6- کامیاب بولی دہندہ کو اپنا اور مزاد میں کا پاپل کسٹمرس سرٹیفیکٹ قبضہ لینے سے پہلے جمع کرنا ہوگا۔
- 7- گروڈیشن کی نیلا کوئی بھی دہندہ نہیں کیا جائے گا۔
- 8- جب بھی INTDC، اضلاع کی ضرورت ہو اس کی کوٹیشن کر کے اس زمین کو غلامی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔
- 9- تمام شراٹکا اور درجہ معلومات دفتر پر دستی سے دوران اوقات (پریٹا مور 9:00 بجے تا 17:00 بجے) حاصل کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

ایگزیکٹو ڈائریکٹر 220 کے دی گئے نیشنل ٹورڈ تھا۔ چکدرہ

ایڈریس: 0308-3008525 PID(L) 667



PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (CAA)

TENDER NOTICE

1. Applications are invited for tenders in sealed cover by Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority duly supported With documentary evidence from contractors having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in Category C-6 or above for the work mention below:

Name of Work	Tender Fee
CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL ABLUTION PLACE IN CAA MASJID AT BKIP PESHAWAR	Rs. 3000/-

2. Bidding document, for above mentioned work on single stage-single envelop bidding process, will be issued to those contractors/firms having valid PEC certificate in category C-6 or above with specialization code CE-10.

3. The firm shall have valid registration with FBR having active NTN certificate. The firm shall also submit declaration as sole proprietor/partnership deed and copy of CNIC of owner(s) / proprietor.

4. Tender documents shall only be issued to authorized representative of the contractor/ firm/ company having valid and genuine proof of authorization of the firm/company which he represents against a written application on letterhead of firm.

5. Tender documents will not be issued to those firms/contractors whose past performance with PCAA at any airport/location is found unsatisfactory or currently under litigation/debarment/blacklisting process with PCAA.

6. Tenders will be received in the office of the **DIVISIONAL ENGINEER ES (CIVIL) BKIP PESHAWAR AIRPORT ON 09-09-2023 ON 11.00 A.M AND WILL BE OPENED ON THE SAME DAY AT 11.30 A.M.**

7. Earnest money amounting to Rs. 200,000/- (Two Hundred Thousand) shall be deposited in the shape of Call Deposit/ Bank Draft prepared in favour of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority.

8. Tenders can be purchased from the office of the undersigned on payment of prescribed tender Fee (Non-refundable) as mentioned against above work.

10. No tender document shall be issued by post or on the opening date of tenders.

11. The authority may reject all the tenders as per PPRA rule in vogue.

12. Tenders are also available at PPRA Website www.ppra.org.pk and CAA Website www.caapakistan.com.pk.

13. **"WARNING"** Pay orders/Bank Drafts or any other financial instruments to be submitted by bidders and Contractors as Tender Cost, Earnest money /Bd Security and Bank Guarantees. If found fake or dishonoured by issuing bank/financial institution at any pre/post contract stage of the case, would call for blacklisting and legal action as per law of the land."

DIVISIONAL ENGINEER ES (CIVIL)
BKIP PESHAWAR
www.caapakistan.com.pk

PID(K)582/23



Governor highlights sacrifices of tribal people — assures cooperation in addressing problems

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday highlighted the sacrifices of tribal people for country's sovereignty and said that peace is a prerequisite for development and prosperity of an area.

He was talking to a 45-member delegation of tribal elders of Tehsil Shagai, South Waziristan. The delegation was led by former member provincial assembly, Adnan Wazir and Chairman Tehsil Wana, Moulana Saleh.

The delegation apprised KP Governor about their problems and said that Shagai was given tehsil sta-

tus in 2012 but proper notification has not been issued yet. They urged governor to play his role and said that it would help addressing concerns of people living in that area.

They also highlighted issues including establishment of NADRA Office in the area, rehabilitation of infrastructure, black topping of roads in Mantoai and Santoi, construction of hospital in Shagai and completion of projects relating to water supply and sanitation.

Speaking on the occasion, governor assured his cooperation to resolve these problems and said that

development of tribal areas is among topmost priorities of government.

He said that availability of all the needed basic amenities would be ensured to tribal people and added that funds would be released to local government representatives aiming initiation of developmental work at grass root level.

Haji Ghulam Ali said that NADRA officials would be contacted to provide mobile registration van for Shagai till establishment of proper NADRA office in that area.

He also urged tribal elders to focus education of

their children including girls and added that students of merged districts were being provided scholarships to get higher education and to play due role in development of their areas.

Later, KP Governor also chaired a meeting to decide matters about land demarcation between Agriculture University Peshawar and University of Engineering and Technology Mardan.

The meeting was also attended by Vice Chancellor Agriculture University, Professor Dr. Bakhat Jehan and Professor Dr. Imran Khan of Engineering University.



PESHAWAR: Residents of Shahi Bala holds placards during a protest in favour of their demands. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

PHC orders DG GDA, DC Abbottabad to submit comments

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Kamran Hayat and Justice Fazal Subhan suspended Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad's orders regarding stopping construction works on a hotel at Nathiagali, on Wednesday.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai and Qasim Wadud advocates argued that applicant Haroon Nathiagali Private Limited is constructing a 5-star hotel on 22 Kanal at the site old hotel which was demolished for the purpose.

The counsel further argued that the hotel will provide standard facilities to travellers and will boost tourism in the premises while added that DC Abbottabad has imposed Section-144 on construction at Galyat, which will cause pollution in the area.

DC can't impose section 144 on construction and issued orders beyond his jurisdiction which is unconstitutional and illegal, the counsel argued.

They further argued that the petitioner has invested Rs5 billion in the project despite the lowest investment in the country and

highest unemployment while adding that the act will hurt investors.

The counsel further argued that snowfall season is heading which will cause stoppage to construction works and may cost the petitioner further while arguing that No Objection Certificates are issued by concerned departments in this regard.

PHC has suspended Section-144 orders while directed DC Abbottabad and Director General (DG) Galyat Development Authority (GDA) to submit comments while adjourned further hearing.

JAC observes protest in favor of their demands

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Joint Action Committee (JAC) started symbolic strike by wearing black ribbons against failure in provision of increments for University of Peshawar (UOP)'s employees, on Wednesday.

JAC argued that if their demands wouldn't fulfilled then they will be compelled to close the university from September while claimed that 30% to 35% increments have been granted to public servants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but UOP's employees are still receiving salaries of 2021.

The employees are facing financial stress due to high inflation with static salaries and demanded provision of 15% DRA allowance as well as provision of 30% & 35% allowance for 2023 while condemned deduction from house subsidy and requisition, JAC argued.

JAC has blamed provincial government and Vice Chancellor UOP Dr. Muhammad Idress for the crisis while demanded provision of announced increments otherwise they will be compel to close the varsity from September in favor of their demands.



PESHAWAR: Provincial president All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran Alhaj Malik Abdullah addressing participants during a protest camp. — F.P. photo

Commissioner directs grand anti-encroachment operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair on Wednesday directed a grand anti-encroachment operation in bazaars of Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera districts.

He directed the assistance commissioners to pay visits to bazaars in their vicinities in the garb of an ordinary citizen along with officials of Revenue Department and mark the encroached structures for removal through a grand operation.

The Commissioner said that structures raised against the approved building maps should also be erased.

He was presiding over a meeting that was attended by the deputy commissioners, additional commissioners and relevant officers of

all the five districts of the Peshawar division.

At the meeting, the deputy commissioners apprised the commissioner regarding their monthly performance.

The commissioner on the occasion issued strict directives for action against the encroachers and initiating a grand operation in this regard.

The commissioner also directed for streamlining the affairs of Patwar Khanas. He directed the deputy commissioners to remove all illegal speed breakers in their respective jurisdictions.

The commissioner directed the participants to remove all air-polluting stone crushing plants in their areas and keep a strict check on prices of the

daily-use items. The deputy commissioners were directed to expedite the drive for price checking and attend the khuli kachehri themselves to address grievances of the general public on urgent basis.

The Commissioner further directed the meeting to ensure maintenance of the law and order besides taking action against the Patwaris indulged in corrupt practices.

He said all the deputy commissioners should pay surprise visits to Patwar Khanas after receiving public complaints and take stern legal action against the corrupt Patwaris.

The Commissioner also ordered disposal of the court cases on an early basis and collection of dues from the defaulters.

Governor lauds operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday extended commendations to all rescue agencies, including the Pakistan Army, to rescue trapped children in a chair lift in Batagram.

In a statement issued here the Governor said that chair lift incident was a tragic occurrence, the Pakistan Army and rescue agencies successfully managed the rescue operation.

Haji Ghulam Ali expressed gratitude for the cooperation of the local people in the Batagram chair lift rescue operation, congratulated to the rescued individuals and their families who were safely evacuated from the chair lift.

With joint and timely efforts from the Pakistan Army, provincial government, rescue agencies, local administration, and the local people, a total of 8 precious human lives were saved during the rescue operation, Haji Ghulam Ali added.

Traders meet DC, discuss issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Core Committee of the Traders Alliance Federation met with Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahad and discussed matters relating to traders community.

A detailed discussion was held on the problems faced by the traders community of Peshawar and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar said that he is working on Price Control Extortion calls & cleaning of restaurants as well.

During the meeting former minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President of Markezi Tanzeem Malik Mehr Elahi, former vice chairman Cantt Board Major Arshad, Chief Traders Alliance Ghulam Bilal Javed, Babai Tajran Ameen Hussain Babar, Vice Chairman Sarhad Chamber Car Dealers Standing Committee Haji Ehsan, Ex-Member cantt Board Ghulam Hussain Chand and Shehzad participated.

Umar secures 572 marks in 9th



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Umar of Warsak Model School has obtained 572 marks out of 600 in result of Grade 9 recently announced by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Peshawar.

Muhammad Umar associated his success with hard work of his teachers and prayers of parents as well as support from friends.

He hoped to improve his secure in Grade 10 to further increase his marks with the help and hard work of teachers.



PESHAWAR: A young vendor displaying pressure horns to attract customers at his shop in Shoba Bazaar.

NOC made mandatory for operating chairlifts

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has said that it will be mandatory for all the operators of chairlifts in the province to seek No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the district administration for running and operating the lifts after the Battagram accident.

KP government has also decided to inspect the chairlifts across the province

after the Battagram chairlift accident and issued directions to the deputy commissioners of all the districts to immediately check and examine the chairlifts at all commercial, domestic and recreational places.

The provincial government has asked that the chairlifts being operated over rivers, streams and nullahs should be thoroughly checked. Their

design, capacity and safety measures should also be inspected.

According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, it will be mandatory to get NOC from the district administration for running chairlifts.

The provincial government has directed the DCs of all the districts to submit the report regarding chairlifts within a week.

12 held in police crackdown

PESHAWAR (INP): The district police in Peshawar have arrested at least 12 accused involved in street crimes and motorcycle snatching.

The arrests were made in two separate operations conducted by the police in Peshawar Cantt Division and Pishthakhara area.

In the first operation, the police arrested three accused identified as Yusuf, Manzoor and Hameed. The accused were arrested on the complaint of a citizen who had his motorcycle snatched at gunpoint.

The police said that the accused have confessed to committing several street crimes and motorcycle snatchings in the area. Seven snatched motorcycles were also recovered from their possession.

In the second operation, the police arrested nine accused identified as Arbab Fayyaz, Zafar, Mansoor, Munisif, Saeed, Shah Sawar, Haider and Rambel. The accused were arrested from different parts of Pishthakhara area.

The police said that the accused were involved in

various street crimes, including robbery, snatching and theft.

Stolen items, bikes, narcotics and illegal weapons were also recovered from their possession.

The police said that the crackdown against street criminals will continue and more arrests are expected in the coming days.

The arrests have been welcomed by the people of Peshawar, who have long been complaining about the increasing incidents of street crime in the city.

84 bakers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar has arrested 84 bakers (nanbais) for selling under-weight roti during a crackdown on profiteers here on Wednesday.

The profiteering bakers were arrested during inspection of the weight of the roti carried out on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) in various bazaars of Cantonment, University Road, Hayatabad, Kohat Road, Ring Road, Faqirabad, Charsadda Road and other localities of the district.

During the inspection weight of the roti of 84 bakers was found less than the officially fixed one and arrested.

Deputy Commissioner has directed all administrative officers to conduct consecutive inspection of bazaars in the areas of their jurisdiction and take action against the sellers of under-weight roti.

Controversy over two crucial bills: Country couldn't afford any constitutional crisis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faiq Shah while commenting on controversy on two crucial bills, said that the country couldn't afford any constitutional crisis under the prevailing circumstances.

Shah in a statement here on Wednesday said President of Pakistan Arif Alvi's tweet has stirred up commotion in the country.

He stressed this crucial issue should be resolved with mutual consensus.

The political, constitutional, legal and parliamentary history of Pakistan is witnessing such a crisis for

the first time, he claimed.

Expressing grave concern over rising power tariffs, Shah said the caretaker government endorsed policies of the previous coalition government by taking anti-masses initiatives.

He said the right to life has been snatched from poor people while the situation is going from bad to worse with each passing day.

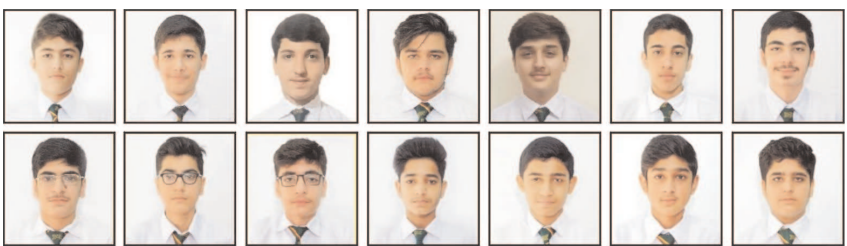
Faiq said prices have touched a new peak and the purchasing power of the common man is rapidly dying. He added no one is paying heed to miseries of inflation-stricken people.

The party chief condemned adopting the policy of political vendetta.

He said timely elections are imperative to end the political, economic and constitutional crisis. Commenting on the unfortunate chairlift incident that occurred in Battagram KP district, Shah lauded teamwork for successful chairlift rescue operation.

Shah expressed his gratitude to the officers and personnel of the Pakistan Army, PAF, rescue departments, district administration and all related organizations who participated in the rescue operation. He also paid tribute to the volunteers who arrived on an emergency basis from local and other areas and participated in the rescue operation.

Edward College School performs brilliantly in results



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Edward College School performed brilliantly in matriculation results, 2023. Muhammad Mubeen Alam stood 1st in Peshawar Board with

1018 marks, Muhammad Awais Khan stood 2nd with 1003 marks, Ahmed Noor and Rooh Ullah secured the 3rd position with 968 marks.

On this occasion, Principal Mrs. Sara Siral

congratulated the staff for their excellent results and said that no success is possible without struggle, including exams. She also congratulate to the parents and teachers and the school administration.



In brief

Four killed in Lakki Marwat F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Four people lost their lives, while six others including a child, suffered injuries in three shooting incidents in Lakki Marwat district on Wednesday, police said. In the first incident, two groups traded fire following a monetary dispute as a result four people were killed and three others injured in Landaiwa Mela. In the second incident, a youth and a passerby child were injured in Nawar Khel area. In another incident, Gull Saeed was injured following a property dispute in Wandah Haji Gull. The bodies and the injured were shifted to local hospitals for legal formalities.

Couple slaughtered in Kharian

KHARIAN (INP): Two including husband and wife were slaughtered over second marriage row, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in Saddar police station jurisdiction near Charanwala Farm, district Kharian where nine suspects slaughtered Jabbar and his wife. The deceased who entered in second marriage hailed from Chinot and they were working as labour at the farm. The police after registering a case against four nominated and five unknown culprits have started raids for their arrests.

Three killed in violent incidents

FAISALABAD (INP): Three people were killed in separate incidents while body of a youth was found in different localities of Faisalabad on Wednesday, police said. According to details, unidentified motorcyclists gunned down a youth Muhammad Zuner s/o Muhammad Akram in Chak No 116 GB of Jaranwala. Body of a 20-year-old unidentified youth was recovered from canal near Sikandarpur bridge Sahianwala. A 40-year-old man identified as Muhammad Shakeel s/o Fazl Karim who had come to Green Town to meet a relative was killed by unknown accused. In Gulshan Town area Saddar police station jurisdiction, 65-year-old Zafar Hussain s/o Anwar committed suicide over poor economic condition and domestic disputes by hanging him down the roof. The bodies were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations started investigations.

Urs commences

MULTAN (INP): The three-day 784th annual Urs celebrations of the revered saint of sub-continent Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya commenced, here on Wednesday. The ceremonies of the Urs started after the tomb was given bath by Makhdoom Zain Hussain Qureshi, his uncle Mureed Hussain Qureshi and other members of the family. In the absence of the caretaker Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the bath ceremony took an unexpected turn as controversy surfaced between Mureed Hussain Qureshi and Makhdoom Zain Qureshi in the matter pertaining to bathing of the tomb. Makhdoom Zain has started the bath ceremony before arrival of his uncle Mureed Hussain Qureshi. Meanwhile, Mureed Hussain Qureshi arrived at the tomb and expressed displeasure stating "This is my grandfather's grave and how could bath ceremony begin sans me". Mureed Hussain Qureshi took the matters into his own hand and also conducted the ceremonial bathing of the shrine.



HYDERABAD: A view of graves in Lalulashari graveyard submerged with knee deep sewerage water showing negligence of civic bodies.

Battagram incident Chairlifts a mean for communication

Khawaja Wajih-u-Din

It was a great sigh of relief when we heard the news that many human lives have been saved in Battagram. Having served in the area and the adjoining district of Kohistan I know it personally that this was not the first time that such nearly fatal accident occurred in the area involving chairlifts. "Ally", where the incident took place, is one of the most neglected areas in the province. At the same time I can say it with surety that if developed ally has the potential to beat many tourist attractions.

As I have served in Battagram and dealt with such cases therefore I have firsthand knowledge of the area. I remember a case where about 17 people were killed in such an accident and many injured. The matter was unfortunately compromised. There were other cases too of such nature.

Having lived in Battagram and Kohistan I came to know that people use such chairlifts as a matter of routine, out of necessity, because there are no other means of communication. Roads are almost non-existent. Bridges which are a basic requirement for people of hilly areas are not available. Even after more than 70 years of indepen-

ence these areas remain backward with the basic human facility lacking.

Forests which were an asset of that area are depleting day by day. These should be saved to avoid natural calamities. Including soil erosion. Battagram and the adjoining areas was one of the areas affected by the earthquake of October 8, 2005 when more than 4,500 people were killed and approximately 35,000 were injured only in Battagram.

Many residents of the area were rendered homeless and without shelter. Since October 8, 2005, the NGOs and the governmental organization Trying to play their part in the rehabilitation but much more is required to be done.

We need to provide basic facilities to the people of the area. We need to develop Battagram Kohistan and torghar They are not only rich in minerals also its natural resources need to be utilized for the betterment of the country. According to a report titled, "Mineral Deposits of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA (Pakistan)" Kohistan contains anomalous traces of copper, lead, zinc, antimony and gold. I saw minerals like copper in raw form on the roadside in abundance. On inquiry I was told that they are taken to our neighboring country where they are processed. Which indeed is a very sorry state

of affairs.

Agriculture, horticulture sector of the area has the ability to generate revenues. They are not only rich in minerals but also have a lot of water and fish. With proper storage facilities for water and small dams it can not only provide much required electricity, but also business to the locals of the area to cater for their financial needs. With proper planning and investment it can serve as a Goldmine for Pakistan.

The historical significance of the area cannot be denied. Locals of the area would tell you stories about syed Ahmed shaheed baralvi. The people of the area are simple, loving and full of life. You can get the best white honey from Ally.

Unfortunately, till today we have just cut the trees that are available in abundance in those areas. The forests require to be protected by taking practical measures. We have to develop those areas in the larger interest of our beloved country. It will not only develop tourism but we're also on much required foreign exchange for our country. It is time to pay attention to the neglected areas of the country. At the end I would hope that government should announce a reward for those heroes who have saved the precious lives. Hats off to the small boys.

Eco-tourism promotion initiatives in Swat reviewed

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Director General (DG) Upper Swat Development Authority (USDA) Asif Shahab held a meeting with Commissioner Malakand Shahid Ullah Khan in his office, on Wednesday. During the meeting, a comprehensive overview was provided on the initiatives taken to bolster eco-tourism in Swat.

DG Asif Shahab delivered an elaborate presentation to Commissioner Shahidullah Khan, shedding light on various tourism-related endeavors, encroachment issues, parking facilities, and other amenities in the newly established tourist destinations within Swat. He expressed concerns over the rampant unlawful taxation and increasing encroachments in these tourist spots, which have not only hindered the growth of tourism but also inflicted irreparable harm to the natural environment due to irresponsible human activities.

DG Shahab highlighted that countries worldwide, similar to Upper Swat Development Authority, are actively collaborating with the Tourism Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to develop projects aimed at safeguarding ecosystems while fostering tourism.

Commissioner Shahid Ullah Khan praised the proactive measures taken by the Upper Swat Development Authority to inaugurate fresh tourist attractions. He reiterated the commitment to combat encroachments across Malakand Division, includ-

ing the tourist sites in Swat, safeguarding the region's natural beauty.

Commissioner warned that strict actions would be taken against any attempts to defile these treasures, emphasizing that the administration would respond promptly to any damage caused by irresponsible actions. He underscored that Swat and Malakand Division are invaluable gifts of nature, attracting millions of tourists from around the world. As tourism flourishes, it will contribute to the region's economic growth. Together, these efforts aim to not only enhance the tourist experience but also preserve the natural splendor of Swat for generations to come.

Ban imposed on use of chainsaw, logging in protected areas: District Magistrate, Irfanullah Wazir under section 144 has imposed ban on cutting of trees and use of chainsaw in protected areas of the district.

The decision to this effect has been taken after witnessing illegal logging in protected areas that often leads to imbalances of ecosystem and natural calamities in addition. The ban has been imposed for a period of two months hence forthwith and violators would be prosecuted under section 188 of CrPC, said an official statement issued here Wednesday.

Three illegal chairlifts sealed in Swat: The administration in Swat on Wednesday sealed three chairlifts operating illegally in different areas of the valley. The action came a day after Pakistan Army's SS

commandos carried out a daring rescue operation to save seven students and a local resident in Battagram district, after their cable car stuck in midair after its two of the three cables snapped.

The Swat administration sealed the three illegal chairlifts in Matta area which were launched by local residents without getting any permission or no-objection certificate (NOC) from the authorities. The Swat assistant commissioner sealed the chairlifts, also known as dolly, to avoid any untoward incident.

Police arrests one operating Tor Gul page F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police has arrested an anonymous suspect who was spreading propaganda against innocent citizens and state institutions through social media in the premises of Rustam police station, on Wednesday.

According to details, the arrested accused used to send a fake ID called Turgal from his mobile phone through a messenger by creating negative and defamatory posts against ordinary citizens, social, political, journalistic community, medical staff of Rustam Hospital and government people, which Torgul later used to share with fake id.

According to the details, Rustam police station arrested the anonymous accused Ali Sher, a resident of Rustam, Tashkand Tor Gul, who was throwing people's honor in the air through social media.

Unemployment in Pakistan Aiman

UNEMPLOYMENT is a critical problem in Pakistan. Many people in the country are unable to find jobs. Unemployment occurs when the people are willing and able to work but cannot find jobs.

Unemployment has severe consequences for an individual and their families. When the people are unable to find job, they resort to suicide. The people struggle for their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes and healthcare which are getting worse day by day. It also has negative impacts and psychological impacts and it causes feelings of worthlessness, frustration and despair in the coming generation. Some of the youth of Pakistan burnt their degrees due to not finding jobs. Unemployment also gives birth to many crimes such as drug addiction, robbery and many other types of crime.

In conclusion, unemployment is a significant problem in Pakistan. It affects not only individuals but also hampers the overall economic development of a country. To address this issue, the government prioritize job creation by investing in the education and training sector as per student potential.

The writer is student of B.S. 2nd Semester at University of Peshawar.

Residents lauded role of NICVD F.P. Report

LARKANA: Residents lauded role of National Institute of Cardiac and Vascular Diseases (NICVD) for serving humanity with quality treatment at Larkana.

According to details, NICVD established in Larkana to provide facilities to patients suffering from heart diseases in every city in Pakistan, operations are also being done for patients suffering from heart diseases, while angiography, angioplasty are also done. Patients suffering from heart diseases are being treated immediately, after which the number of deaths of patients suffering from heart diseases is decreasing.

Dr. Fayyaz Hussain Shah, in-charge of NICVD Center Larkana further said while talking to media personnel and added that in this center of ours, patients from different areas of the country including Quetta, Jafarabad, Aosta

Mohammad of Balochistan are provided with immediate medical facilities and they are blessed with healing, while a doctor is also present for heart bypass operation. Dr. Fayyaz Mujtabi Shah, in-charge doctor of NICVD Center Larkana and cardiologist Dr. Fayyaz Mujtaba Shah added that 250 successful heart bypass operations have been performed during the last two years and heart attack through angiography in this center.

The only treatment is done so that the patient does not die and the death rate of patients admitted to the center has decreased in time, are also done and patients suffering from heart diseases are also treated free of cost.

Police reforms underway to cop challenges: IGP

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan on Wednesday said that reforms were underway in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police to enable it to deal with the challenges of the modern era. He was talking to mediapersons after the inauguration of new building of the Baghdad police post/choki in Mardan.

"Modern scientific instruments are being provided to investigation staff to make the investigation process more efficient," he added. Regional Police Officer Mohammad Sulaiman, DPO Mardan Najibur Rehman, SP City

Inam Jan, SP Fayyaz Khan and other senior officials were also present on this occasion.

IG Police inspected various parts of the police post and appreciated the quality of construction work. This police Choki, consisting of 13 Marla of land, has cost 50 lakh 66 thousand rupees, which includes Hawalat log room, two barracks, in-charge room, kot and two washrooms.

He said that Mardan had been divided into three divisions to make the police monitoring system effective in view of the increasing population of Mardan and appointed SP level officers in two of them while another SP will be appointed soon.

He said that the launch of command and control system here will help in crime control and early tracing of incidents.

IG said that reward and punishment system in the police is much more effective than other departments because the police is directly related to the people, so the bad elements come to the fore and immediate action is taken against them. The department is also being equipped with modern equipment and technology to improve the investigation system of the police which will surely speed up the process of crime detection as well as help in controlling the crime.

Depts asked to pay outstanding dues to federal depts

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has urged the provincial governments to pay outstanding dues to the federal government agencies/departments so that they could overcome their financial constraints.

The Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan arrived in Bahawalpur where he presided over a meeting of heads of the federal government agencies/departments including WAPDA, Sui Gas Limited, Postal Services, FIA and others at South Punjab Secretariat in Bahawalpur. Later, he also talked with media persons at the South Punjab Secretariat.

He told the meeting of the head of the government departments functioning in Bahawalpur and media persons that the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat had disposed of over 134,000 applications seeking justice and relief in issues pertaining to the federal government agencies/departments including WAPDA, Sui Southern Gas Limited, Sui Northern Gas Limited, Pakistan Railways, Postal Services, Estate Life Insurance and others. "We are satisfied that 90 percent of decisions giving by the Office of Federal



Ombudsman in filed applications have been implemented and the applicants were provided with relief," he said.

He said that the Federal Ombudsman had played a pivotal role in provision of relief to tens of thousands of the applicants including widows, orphans and other poor people who could not even afford expenditures to file petitions with courts. "People filing their applications with the Office of Federal Ombudsman have been provided with relief free of cost," he said.

He said that more applications filed with the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat pertaining to alleged over billing by power companies and sui gas companies, pension and insurance. He said that he himself monitored implementation of decisions giving by the Office of Federal Ombudsman in order to ensure provision of relief to people.

He said that the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat received hundreds of application on daily basis and added that he and the advi-

sors to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat monitored the implementation of the decisions giving by the Office of the Federal Ombudsman. He said that he was informed that a large number of people have filed their applications with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) against cyber crimes. He urged FIA to accelerate their process to control cyber crimes.

He said that during hearings, he was informed by the focal persons of the federal government agencies/departments that the provincial governments had to pay outstanding dues to them. He urged the provincial governments to ensure payment of outstanding dues to the federal government agencies/departments so that they could overcome their financial issues. "The payment of the outstanding dues to the federal government departments by the provincial government would help in payment of pensions and dues of the employees besides resolving other issues," he said.



QUETTA: Activities of Labours Qumi Movement Balochistan holding a protest rally for acceptance of their demands.

Citizens face difficulty in getting birth certificates

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Residents of village council Khema Kandaro have complained that they are facing difficulty in getting their computerized certificates from the village council office due to the failure of Nadra's civil registration management system (CRMS) for the last month.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara here on Wednesday, the residents said that despite repeated requests to the Nadra officials, the CRMS system was not made functional for the last month. They said local citizens found it hard to get computerized death, birth, marriage, and divorce certificates.

"Three weeks ago I have submitted an application for getting birth certificates of my children and I visit the council office daily but I did not receive certificates for my children", Anwar Khan, a resident of Balambat said.

"The Nadra officials were contacted again and again to remove the flaws but to no avail", secretary village council Muhammad Bakht Musa Khan said.

He said the Nadra official replied that his request for removing the fault had been forwarded to Peshawar to further send it to the Islamabad office. Sources said that some officials of Nadra Timergara office had been transferred and the replacement was not

being made; that was why the CRMS system could not be monitored by the Nadra officials due to lack of staff.

The citizens demanded of the Assistant Director Local Government and Rural Development department and the concerned Nadra high ups to take notice of the issue as the residents were faced with immense difficulties in getting computerized death, birth, marriage and divorce certificates specially students of colleges, universities and the poor women trying to get birth certificates for their children which was a prerequisite for making Form B for their kids to be eligible for the government's BISP programme.



Thousands of discouraged migrants are stranded in Niger

NIAMEY, Niger (AP): After three months of crossing the desert and then watching other migrants die at sea in his failed attempt to reach Europe, Sahr John Yambasu gave up on getting across the Mediterranean and decided to go back home. The 29-year-old from Sierra Leone reached Niger in June on his return journey, but United Nations officials said he had to wait for packed migrant centers to empty before he could be repatriated.

Then mutinous soldiers toppled Niger's president a few weeks later, bringing regional tensions and the shuttering of the borders. Yambasu was trapped. He is one of nearly 7,000 discouraged migrants trying to get home elsewhere in Africa that the UN estimates have been stranded in Niger since late July when members of the presidential guard overthrew the country's democratically elected president, Mohamad Bazoum. Niger's junta closed its airspace and regional countries closed border crossings as part of economic and travel sanctions, making it hard for people to leave. Niger is an important route both for Africans trying to reach Libya as a jumping off spot to cross the Mediterranean to Europe and those who are returning to their homes with help from the United Nations.

Yambasu and others like him are unsure when they will be able to leave. "I feel sad because it's a country that I don't belong to. It's not easy," Yambasu said. Recounting his story, he said he left Sierra Leone in June because of political unrest and was hoping to reach Germany. He got rides across the region until arriving in Libya, where he boarded a boat with some 200 other migrants. The boat spent days at sea, with some people dying onboard before it was intercepted by Libya's coast guard and taken back to Libya.

That was enough for him and he headed for home. Helped by aid groups, he made it as far as Niger but has been unable to go farther.

UN officials estimate about 1,800 in Yambasu's predicament are living on Niger's streets because centers run by the International Organization for Migration are too crowded to take in more. The centers hold about 5,000



people trying to get home. The UN agency had been assisting approximately 1,250 people a month return to their countries this year. But the closure of borders and airspace has forced it to temporarily suspend returns and its centers are now jammed at 14% over capacity, said Paola Pace, acting interim chief of mission for the agency in Niger. "This situation poses challenges for migrants as migrants staying in these centers may experience heightened stress and uncertainty with limited prospects for voluntary return and already crowded facilities," she said. Pace worries the stall in the transiting of Africans seeking to get home could increase exploitation of vulnerable people by traffickers and smugglers who normally focus on individuals trying to migrate to Europe.

The shelters are helping people who are making their way home, rather than would-be migrants heading to Europe - a northern flow that has seen more than 100,000 cross the central Mediterranean to Italy so far this year, according to Italy's interior ministry. COOPI, an Italian aid group that provides shelter for migrants in Niger's northern town of Assamakka near the border with Algeria, said that since the coup an additional 1,300 people have entered its center trying to return home. COOPI assists the UN in hosting people, but has warned that it will run out of food and water if the borders don't open soon.

Not only are migrants unable to

leave but aid groups are unable to bring in food and medical supplies. Morena Zucchelli, head of mission for COOPI in Niger, said it has only enough food stocks to last until the end of August and its funding will run out at the end of September.

"If the situation doesn't change ... we can't guarantee things will continue running," she said. Before the coup, Niger worked with the European Union in trying to slow the flow of migrants north to Libya and Algeria. The EU had been scheduled to provide more than \$200 million to Niger to help it address security, socio-economic and migration challenges. It's unclear how cooperative the new military leaders will be with the EU, which has now frozen assistance to Niger. Anitta Hipper, a spokeswoman for the European Commission, could not say whether cooperation on migration had been suspended, saying only that the EU would continue to "monitor and evaluate the situation."

Momo Kmlubah is another of those trying to get back home, for him in Liberia. He says many of them have nowhere to turn for help. He says UN officials have told him to be patient. The 36-year-old has been sleeping on the pavement in Niger's capital, Niamey, with his two daughters and wife since June and they beg for food. "Our children don't have food to eat. I feel confused when I wake up in the morning," Kmlubah said.

Kenyan officials looking at how to help Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): A team of Kenyan officials is in Haiti to explore how best to help the troubled Caribbean nation fight the scourge of gang violence, following up on Nairobi's offer to lead a multinational force in the task. The force is meant to assist Haiti's understaffed and under-resourced police department, with only about 10,000 officers for the nation's more than 11 million people.

Earlier this month, the United States said it would introduce a UN Security Council resolution that would authorize Kenya to lead a multinational police force and provide 1,000 officers. No timetable for the resolution has been given. The first meeting between Haitian officials and the 10-member Kenyan team took place, according to a government stated issued late that night. "We are here to assess the needs of the National Police of Haiti, better understand the situation and do our best to help the Haitian people," said George Orina, with Kenya's ministry of foreign affairs. Before arriving in Haiti, the Kenyan delegation met with countries and groups in New York that are trying to decide how best to help Haiti. From January 1 until Aug. 15, more than 2,400 people in Haiti were reported killed, more than 950 kidnapped and another 902 injured, according to the most recent UN statistics. Gangs are now estimated to control up to 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince, with more than 200,000 people displaced after gangs pillaged and burned their homes.

The Kenyan officials said the countries they met with understand "the Haitian demands and the urgent need to put an end to a situation which is paralyzing the functioning of the country and putting the future of its citizens in danger." The Kenyan's fact-finding trip to Haiti wraps up on Wednesday. Kenya's government first said in late July that it could send 1,000 police officers to train Haiti's National Police, "restore normalcy" and protect strategic installations. The request for the immediate deployment of a foreign armed force was first made by Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry in October.

Russia may annex Georgian breakaway regions

MOSCOW (Reuters): The deputy chair of the Russian security council Dmitry Medvedev said Moscow may annex Georgia's breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

"The idea of joining Russia is still popular in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," Medvedev, a former Russian president, wrote in an article published early on Wednesday by Argumenty I Fakty newspaper.

"It could quite possibly be implemented if there are good reasons for that," said Medvedev, who has cast himself as one of Russia's most hawkish political voices since its forces invaded Ukraine starting in February 2022. Georgia lost control over the regions after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moscow recognised their independence in 2008, following Georgia's attempt to regain control of South Ossetia by force that led to a Russian counter-attack.

Although Russian relations with Georgia have improved since then, Medvedev accused the West of creating tensions around the country by discussing its possible admission by NATO. "We will not wait if our concerns become closer to reality," Medvedev said in the article that marked the 15th anniversary of the independence recognition, referring to a possible annexation. Georgian officials have repeatedly said they are committed to joining the US-led military alliance that would preserve the territorial integrity of the country. Russia declared the annexations four provinces of Ukraine in September last year, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, but none of the annexations are recognised internationally.

37 Senegalese survivors of a migration attempt to Spain return home

DAKAR, Senegal (AP): A few dozen survivors of a deadly sea attempt to migrate to Europe reunited with their tearful families in Senegal, a week after they were found adrift off the Atlantic archipelago of Cape Verde. A boat carrying more than 100 people is believed to have set off from Senegal toward Spain's Canary Islands on July 10 but never reached its destination. More than 60 migrants are feared dead from the ill-fated voyage.

Last week, a Spanish fishing vessel rescued 38 people who were brought to Cape Verde before being returned to Senegal. Senegalese officials said a military plane repatriated 37 men, including five minors and a citizen from neighboring Guinea-Bissau, from Cape Verde's Sal Island. Associated Press journalists saw some of the survivors getting carried into ambulances at the airport in Senegal's capital, Dakar. One survivor remained hospitalized in the Cape Verdean capital of Praia, according to the local Red Cross. The migration route from West Africa to Spain is one of the world's most dangerous, yet the number of migrants leaving from Senegal on rickety wooden boats has surged over

the past year. The boats try to reach Spain's Canary Islands, an archipelago off the northwest coast of Africa that has been used as a stepping stone to continental Europe. In the first six months of 2023, nearly 800 people have died or gone missing in the Atlantic trying to reach the Canary Islands, according to Spanish rights group Walking Borders.

Worsening youth unemployment, political unrest, violence by armed groups and climate change push migrants across West Africa to risk their lives on overcrowded boats. Family members from Fass Boye, a coastal fishing town in Senegal where many of the migrants had left from, made the three-hour drive south to a military airstrip in Dakar to welcome their surviving relatives. Some were brought to greet their families at the airport on a government-chartered bus.

Abdoulaye Gote Kangui was in the western city of Touba when his son More called him from a borrowed phone at the hospital in Cape Verde to tell him that he was still alive. When he got the call, Kangui scrambled to top up the credit on his phone. Still, the reunification was shadowed by the loss of more than 60 people

who are missing and presumed dead. Among them was 18-year-old Papa Sow. More's adoptive brother, who made a last-minute decision to join him on the journey. "It's God's will. Whether you accept it or not," Kangui said. Annette Seck, minister for Senegalese living abroad, said in a news conference that the remains of seven people found on the boat were buried on-site in Cape Verde. She thanked Cape Verde authorities for coming to the migrants' aid and offered her condolences to bereaved Senegalese families.

Fishermen and farmers in Fass Boye blame a lack of employment prospects for pushing young men to risk their lives on the deadly migration journey. Head fisherman Cheikh Seck said that profits have nosedived since the Senegalese government began selling contracts to foreign companies, who use larger boats and more expensive machinery to deplete the fish stock at alarming rates. According to Seck, at least 20 large fishing boats called pirogues full of hopeful migrants have left the town over the last two decades. For Fass Boye, the dangerous sea crossings have never ended in a tragedy like this, he said.

US passports for travel to North Korea banned

WASHINGTON (AP): The Biden administration is extending for another year a ban on the use of US passports for travel to North Korea, the State Department said. The ban was imposed in 2017 and has been renewed every year since. The latest extension comes as tensions with North Korea are rising over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the uncertain status of Travis King, a US service member who last month entered the country through its heavily armed border.

"The Department of State has determined there continues to be serious risk to US citizens and nationals of arrest and long-term detention constituting imminent danger to their physical safety," the department said in a notice to be published in the Federal Register on Wednesday that was signed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The ban makes it illegal to use a

US passport for travel to, from or through North Korea, unless it has been specifically validated in the case of a compelling national interest. It will remain in place until Aug. 31, 2024, unless it is extended or rescinded. The ban was first imposed during the Trump administration by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in 2017 after the death of American student Otto Warmbier, who suffered grievous injuries while in North Korean custody. Warmbier was part of a group tour of North Korea and was leaving the country in January 2016 when he was arrested for allegedly stealing a propaganda poster. He was later convicted of subversion and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Warmbier died in a Cincinnati hospital six days after his return to the US. Humanitarian groups have expressed concern about the impact the initial ban and its extensions have

had on providing relief to isolated North Korea, which is one of the world's neediest countries. There is no indication that King used a US passport to enter North Korea when he crossed the border in July. The US is seeking his return but has had limited success in querying North Korean officials about his case.

Last week, North Korea offered its first official confirmation of King's presence in the country, releasing a statement on Aug. 16 through its state media attributing statements to the Army private that criticized the United States. There was no immediate verification that King actually made any of the comments. He had served in South Korea and sprinted into North Korea while on a civilian tour of a border village on July 18, and became the first American confirmed to be detained in the North in nearly five years.

Justin Trudeau thanks Canadians for support

TORONTO (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau thanked Canadians for their support in his first public remarks about his family since he and his wife, Sophie, announced they are separating after 18 years of marriage. The two announced the decision in statements posted on Instagram early this month, adding they would vacation as a family. As Trudeau returned from vacation, he was asked about how he was doing.

"First I want to thank all the people who have reached out over the past few number of weeks with warm wishes, with personal messages, with personal stories that have been just wonderful and positive," Trudeau said at a news conference in Cornwall on Prince Edward Island. It

was his first press conference since the announcement.

"I got 10 days with the family to focus on the kids, to focus on being together and moving forward," he said. Trudeau, the 51-year-old scion of one of Canada's most famous politicians, was sworn into office in 2015. Sophie Trudeau is a former model and TV host. The couple were married in 2005. Together, they brought star power to the prime minister's office and appeared in the pages of Vogue magazine. They have three children, 15-year-old Xavier, 14-year-old Ella-Grace and 9-year-old Hadrien. "I really, really, want to thank Canadians for having been so incredibly gracious and incredibly generous in respecting our privacy and

our space. It really makes things easier," Trudeau said.

Sophie Trudeau has played a less visible role in recent years, rarely traveling with the prime minister on official trips. The two were seen together publicly at Canada Day events in Ottawa last month. Justin Trudeau and Sophie Gregoire met as children when she was a classmate of his youngest brother, Michel, and they reconnected as adults when they co-hosted a 2003 charity gala. Trudeau is the second prime minister to announce a separation while in office. His father, Pierre Trudeau, and mother, Margaret Trudeau, separated in 1977 and divorced in 1984 during the elder Trudeau's final year in the prime minister's office.

Canada considering foreign student visa cap to address housing shortage

OTTAWA (Reuters): The Canadian government, under pressure over the rising cost of housing, could consider capping foreign student visas, which have rocketed in recent years, new Housing Minister Sean Fraser said.

Official data show there were more than 800,000 foreign students with active visas in 2022, up from 275,000 in 2012. Canada is a popular destination for international students since it is relatively easy to obtain a work permit. Fraser, who was immigration minister before tak-

ing up his job last month, said the sharp rise in the number of students was putting pronounced pressure on some housing markets.

Asked whether a cap could be imposed on the number of foreign students, he said, "I think that is one of the options that we ought to consider." The government has not yet made a decision, he added. "We've got temporary immigration programs that were never designed to see such explosive growth in such a short period of time," Fraser told reporters

on the sidelines of a cabinet retreat in the Atlantic province of Prince Edward Island. The official opposition Conservative Party, ahead in the polls of a federal election which must be held by October 2025, say the Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is not doing enough to tackle the housing issue. Canada, which has a population of around 39.5 million people, plans to take in a record 500,000 new permanent residents in 2025. Fraser said limiting the number of newcomers was not the answer.

Netherlands to supply Kyiv with a chargers for demining

KYIV (Reuters): The Netherlands will send Ukraine a thousand chargers for remote demining, Dutch Defence Minister Kajsa Ollongren said on a visit to Kyiv. The announcement coincides with heavily mined Russian defence lines slowing down a Ukrainian counteroffensive to recapture territory seized by Russia since its forces invaded in February 2022.

"There is a decision to provide about a thousand portable chargers for remote demining that can make passageways in engineered barriers," Ollongren was quoted as saying on the Ukrainian defence ministry website at a meeting with Ukrainian minister Oleksiy Reznikov. "Now, as I know, you are facing the problem of extremely dense mining of territories," she said. Earlier, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that helping Ukraine to get across a massive land mine belt can become a joint effort by Germany and other partners.

NZ heading toward change in government

WELLINGTON (Reuters): New Zealand looks to be heading towards a change of government after an October election, according to a new poll showing the opposition National Party and likely coalition partner ACT holding 50% of the vote. The latest 1News Verian poll published forecasts a centre-right bloc of the National Party and the ACT party winning 65 seats.

The centre-left bloc, combining the ruling Labour Party and Greens, were at 52 seats, well below the numbers needed to remain in power. Labour, with just 29% support, is now at its lowest level in six years. Parties need 61 seats for a majority in New Zealand's 120-seat House of Representatives. Less than two months out from the election, the gap for preferred prime minister is also narrowing. Current Prime Minister Chris Hipkins is registering 21% support, down 3 points, while National leader Christopher Luxon is at 20%, unchanged. The poll put minor party New Zealand First at 4%, still below the threshold of being able to get back into parliament without a candidate being elected.

N Korea's Kim lambasts premier over flooding

SEOUL (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un severely rebuked his premier and other senior officials over what he called their irresponsible response to recent flooding of farmlands along the country's western coast, state media reported. Summer floods in North Korea often cause serious damage to farmlands due to poor drainage and deforestation. Observers say Kim's lambasting of top officials likely aims to shift blame to them for the country's economic hardships and food insecurity, or could set the stage for a reshuffling of senior leadership.

Kim visited a western coastal tideland where seawater recently destroyed the embankment, flooding more than 270 hectares of rice paddies. After inspecting the situation, Kim accused officials of "very irresponsible neglect of duties," according to the official Korean Central News Agency. Kim criticized Premier Kim Tok

Hun for showing "the attitude of an onlooker," KCNA said. He berated the vice premier for failing to perform his duties faithfully, and he accused the director of the tideland reclamation bureau of concealing fuel oil that was supposed to be used for construction projects. "In recent years the administrative and economic discipline of Kim Tok Hun's Cabinet has become seriously out of order, and consequently, the idlers are spoiling all the state economic work with an irresponsible work manner," Kim Jong Un said, according to KCNA.

Kim called the recent flooding a man-made disaster, citing a botched construction project that was supposed to improve drainage in the area. Kim said the project went forward even though a substantial leak was discovered. He ordered stern disciplinary steps for those responsible for the flooding damage. North Korea watchers say Kim Jong

Un's moves are unusually strong given there were no reports of human casualties. They say Kim could use the flooding as a chance to reshuffle top officials in a bid to reinforce public confidence in his government as he struggles to revive an economy reeling from COVID-19. "Kim Jong Un appears to be searching for extreme steps to divert public complaints that have been heightened due to worsened public livelihoods and economic situations," said Tae Yongho, a South Korean lawmaker, who served as a minister at the North Korean Embassy in London before his defection in 2016. Outside experts believe North Korea's current food shortages and economic troubles have deepened due to draconian pandemic curbs, UN sanctions and North Korea's own mismanagement. But there are no signs of an imminent famine or major public unrest that could threaten Kim's grip on his 26 million people.

Russia's moving tactical N-weapons to Belarus

WARSAW (AP): Poland's President Andrzej Duda confirmed that Russia has begun shifting some short-range nuclear weapons to neighboring Belarus, a move that he said will change the security architecture of the region and the entire NATO military alliance.

Both Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko said last month that Moscow had already shipped some of its tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus after announcing the plan in March. The US and NATO haven't confirmed the move. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg denounced Moscow's rhetoric as "dangerous and reckless," but said in July that the alliance hadn't seen any change in Russia's nuclear posture.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended for use on the battlefield and have a short range and a low yield compared with much more powerful nuclear warheads fitted to long-range missiles. Russia said it would maintain control over those it sends to Belarus. Officials in

Moscow and Minsk have said that the warheads could be carried by Belarusian Su-25 ground attack jets or fitted to short-range Iskander missiles. Duda made his comments at a joint news conference with visiting Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. "I was telling President (de Sousa) about the implementation of the declarations by Vladimir Putin that Russia's tactical nuclear weapons will be moved to the territory of Belarus," Duda said. "Indeed, this process is taking place, we are seeing that."

Duda gave no details, but said that in an "obvious way it is changing the architecture of security in our part of Europe." "It is changing the architecture of security in our immediate neighborhood, but also of the eastern flank of NATO, at the same time. So in fact it is changing the situation for all of the alliance," he said. Lukashenko said that hosting Russian nuclear weapons in his country is meant to deter aggression by NATO member Poland, even though Warsaw has made no such threats.

Poland is offering neighbor Ukraine military, humanitarian and political backing in its struggle against Russia's invasion and is taking part in international sanctions on Russia and Belarus. Duda also hailed the recent approval by the US State Department of the potential sale of 96 Boeing AH-64 Apache helicopters to Poland that would lead to a huge boost in Poland's and NATO's defense potential and was a sign of special relations between Washington and Warsaw.

De Sousa pledged continuing support for Ukraine's struggle and for other countries in the region, saying the situation on Europe's eastern borders is as important to Portugal as that in its own neighborhood. "We are united, we stand in solidarity, without any hesitations and I have duly taken note of the Polish concerns over what may be understood as the need to be closely watching any moves that may question the eastern borders of the European Union or of NATO," de Sousa said. "We are vigilant, we stand in solidarity and we are operational," de Sousa said.

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Incessant political dilemma

PAKISTAN People's Party (PPP) Senator Taj Haider has expressed concern over the digital census saying that his party's central election cell has received disturbing reports about the undercount of the population from sources located in different provinces. Senator claimed that the Initial computations in the province of Sindh revealed that the damage done to the province of Sindh as a result of the so-called 'Digital Census' is far bigger than what was initially feared and warned against.

Days after the Council of Common Interest (CCI) unanimously approved the result of the first-ever digital census in the country, the selfish politicians came up with new assumptions and self-fabricated assessments to undermine the months-long process, create new tension and push the Pakistani nation into another quandary only to rejuvenate their diminishing politics. Pakistan sat for an early and detailed enumeration of the population and seventh national census in the country after a prolonged dispute over the 2017 national headcount that attracted reservations on ethnic and political grounds from multiple political groups including the PPP, MQM Pakistan and others. The MQM-P and the PPP refused to accept the census results and complained that the population of Urdu-speaking Mahajirs and Sindhis respectively had been projected less in the mega city of Karachi, Hyderabad and other population centres in Sindh. The issue led to an early and unscheduled headcount in 2023 to resolve the dispute and end persistent political altercation in the country.

Presently, the country has completed the first-ever digital headcount in South Asia and the nation is all set for a nationwide election in the country. As, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced the fresh delimitation to hold the next general election, the political groups started lobbying to dispute the latest census and contend the fresh delimitation of constituencies to manipulate the situation to their advantage in the future. Realistically, Pakistani politicians and civic groups intend to move things in their desired direction using political pressure, coercion and blackmail of the national institutions to get a level playing field that paves the way for their success in the electoral contest. This kind of politics has taken root in the country and continuously weakens the national institutions, causing political instability and chaos in the country.

Historically, there has been a migration of population from rural areas to major cities including Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad over the past decades. Whereas, Karachi remained the top destination of economic migrants from remote areas and other provinces including GB and Azad Kashmir besides a large number of illegal migrants from other countries in the region. However, a majority of the people who reach there in search of livelihood are temporary residents and unregistered voters at those destinations. Thus, despite the expansion of the sizes of the cities and the increase in the number of inhabitants, those demographic changes could not affect the much-registered voter list in those regions. Hence, political groups exploit such technical and legal issues to their advantage, which dispute the national institutions, pollute the political environment and cause unpleasant situations in society.

Realistically, Pakistani Political groups always groomed their politics over public issues instead of competing with each other in national policy domain and constitutional matters. The world nations progressed rapidly by assimilating the latest technological advancements and modern innovations but our leaders consider Computer technology, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Digital Census poisonous for the nation and insist on sticking with the old-age methodologies that sufficiently fulfil their political needs. The nation was utterly annoyed by selfish politics, and worn-out political tactics that failed to bring any socio-economic change in our national life. The current situation predicts that the Pakistani nation could not attain its rightful status in the community of nations until and unless our political leaders and civic groups abandon self-centred politics, ethnic biases and mockery of the law that polarized the nation and weakened the democracy throughout the past.

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BRICS expansion could be a bad idea. Here's why

Ahmadi Ali

AS leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa meet for their annual BRICS summit starting on Tuesday, there is little doubt that the grouping has taken on new importance amid intensifying great power competition. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the West's increasingly aggressive sanctions campaign against both Russia and China serve as the context in which the global diplomatic community will be watching the conclave in Johannesburg.

Indeed, the war in Ukraine has already cast its shadow on the meeting. Russian President Vladimir Putin attending only virtually to avoid South Africa any embarrassment: The African nation is a member of the International Criminal Court, which has issued a warrant for Putin's arrest on charges related to the conflict, and would legally be required to take the Russian leader into custody if he were to visit the country. Yet with the possibility of any such drama now ruled out, two more substantive and interrelated developments will hold centre stage at the summit.

China and Russia have expressed interest in expanding the group in an effort to grant it greater weight in international affairs. Over 40 countries have expressed interest in joining the BRICS group with 22 formally requesting membership. These include Arab allies of the United States such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, and rivals such as Iran. The list also includes countries from Africa, South America and Asia. The second issue is de-dollarisation. China and Russia seem intent on using a larger BRICS forum as a focal point of their efforts to cut their dependence - and that of the global economy - on the US currency that has dominated cross-border invoicing and settlements since World War II. Beijing and Moscow are already conducting most of their trade in local currencies, especially the Chinese Yuan. Russia has pitched for a new BRICS currency, perhaps backed by gold, that would be used as an international medium of exchange between the members instead of the dollar.

For Russia and China, de-dollarisation has taken on fresh importance as they've increasingly come under sanctions from the

West. Fear of how American and Western economic statecraft can damage their economies and limit their national security autonomy is a major issue of debate in both Moscow and Beijing. But while South Africa, Brazil and India have better relations with the West, they too see lesser reliance on the dollar as being a positive for their economic growth and trade potential. Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva recently stated that "[e]very night I ask myself why all countries have to base their trade on the dollar".

Beijing and Moscow are already conducting most of their trade in local currencies, especially the Chinese Yuan. Russia has pitched for a new BRICS currency, perhaps backed by gold, that would be used as an international medium of exchange between the members instead of the dollar. For Russia and China, de-dollarisation has taken on fresh importance as they've increasingly come under sanctions from the West. Fear of how American and Western economic statecraft can damage their economies and limit their national security autonomy is a major issue of debate in both Moscow and Beijing.

To them, de-dollarisation is less about overthrowing King Dollar from atop the hierarchy of reserve currencies and more about carving out a separate method to transact between member states without the need for the dollar, the Western-based SWIFT messaging system and the services of New York banks. That being said, BRICS in its current form already represents 26 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 16 percent of global trade. So a successful effort in this regard is likely to have ripple effects. But will this new currency gambit work? There is too little known about the plan to reach definite conclusions. The BRICS track record on de-dollarisation has been mixed. China and Russia have successfully reduced their dependence on the dollar for cross-border trade. On the other hand, the New Development Bank, established by BRICS in large part to

facilitate the de-dollarisation of state lending is largely dependent on the dollar and is now struggling to raise that currency due to having Russia as a founding member. Its chief financial officer recently acknowledged that "You cannot step outside of the dollar universe and operate in a parallel universe."

The existing dollar hegemony is backed by an intensive network effect and a convenience factor. The stability of the dollar and deep dollar-denominated markets allow for predictability, ease of use and

to hurt. India and China are strategic rivals that don't see eye to eye on many issues. During last month's SCO summit, India refused to sign on to a key economic document because it included Chinese diplomatic language like references to Beijing's Global Development Initiative. India has broadly aligned itself with Western interests against China. The availability of Western economic support and access to technology has increased significantly and West-India relations are experiencing a new era. This has significant economic benefits for India that make

Modi very sensitive about being seen as empowering a counterbalance to the G7.

Brazil is being led by a left-wing president who is worried about alienating Washington as a business partner and is knowledgeable of how the US tends to take an aggressive posture against South American leaders who question its hegemony in the region. South Africa is concerned that enhancing BRICS membership will further reduce its influence in the bloc. Officials in Pretoria are already concerned that other BRICS countries are far more influential in the group as its economic and social progress has stalled in recent years. South Africa is also very concerned about having to take sides in the emerging new Cold War between the US and China - though it is under a significant amount of pressure on South Africa to align itself with the West.

This is what has fuelled demands by India, Brazil and South Africa for stricter rules to determine whether an aspiring member should be allowed to join or even become an observer. India, in particular, has argued that democracies be the focus of membership considerations. Such differences have undermined the work of other major global balancing organisations like the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation, G77 and the Non-Aligned Movement, too.

The ascension of various other countries such as Argentina, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, with their own complex foreign policy preferences, would not be seen favourably by Washington. But a rapidly expanded BRICS won't necessarily be more powerful. Indeed, it could make the organisation more incoherent and unable to reach a clear consensus on anything of importance.

Aljazeera

Time for Assad to finally embrace a political solution to Syria crisis

Osama Al-Sharif

THE eruption of protests in two Syrian government-held provinces, Suwayda and Deraa, last week is threatening to get out of control days after President Bashar Assad doubled public sector wages and pensions, triggering a new wave of inflation, and coinciding with a decision to lift fuel subsidies. The Syrian lira has tumbled further against the US dollar in recent days. Protesters in the mainly ethnic Druze province of Suwayda were joined by religious clerics and even local Baath Party officials. In some areas, protesters burned tires, blocked roads and chanted anti-government slogans.

A general strike was observed while placards were raised condemning the government's failure to provide essential services, resolve bread shortages and curb inflation. The civil unrest spread to more than 40 locations in the province and, on Monday, similar protests took place in the Deraa countryside. Video clips shared on social media showed protesters calling for the downfall of the regime. The fear now is that other cities and provinces could join the unrest at a time when the economy is in freefall.

Twelve years after the eruption of the Syrian uprising, which quickly turned into a bloody and protracted civil war, it now looks like the regime has come full circle. The fact that the protests began in Suwayda, where the minority Druze community sided largely with the regime during the civil war, should worry Assad. The Druze had formed armed militias to protect citizens from Daesh and other extremist groups. These militias, known as the Druze Popular Committees, worked alongside government forces. They reportedly engaged in fierce battles to repel attacks and protect their territory in places like Suwayda and Jabal Al-Druze. As a result, most of Suwayda remained in government hands during the conflict and was spared the unrest seen in other parts of the war-torn country. But the Druze elders were not comfortable with pro-Iranian militias, which were dispatched by Tehran to defend the regime, being positioned so close to their community. The deployment of Syrian forces along the border with Jordan has complicated matters, as some officers, including those close to Assad, are allegedly involved in narcotics smuggling.

The lira's decline against the US dollar has accelerated this year. The exchange rate shot up from 7,000 liras to the dollar at the beginning of 2023 to 15,000 liras a few days ago. At the start of the conflict in 2011, the dollar was trading at 47 liras. Despite the regime's decisive victory against armed groups in 2018, it has failed to improve the lives of people under its control. The UN estimates that 90 percent of Syrians in government-held areas live in poverty and that more than half of the country's population -

some 12 million people - struggle to put food on the table. The economic cost of the war has been devastating. It is estimated that the war has caused immense economic losses, including the destruction of infrastructure, loss of human capital, disruption of trade and commerce, and a declining gross domestic product. According to a 2017 report by the World Bank, Syria's GDP contracted by more than 60 percent between 2011 and 2016. Furthermore, the cost of physical infrastructure damage alone has been estimated to be well over \$200 billion. Not a single cent has been spent on reconstruction and millions of Syrian refugees and displaced persons are unable to return to their homes. There is no doubt that Western sanctions have crippled the ability of the Syrian government to maintain the provision of basic services. Also, the US and Turkish military presence in parts of Syria has added to the regime's woes. But other factors have made things worse for ordinary citizens, such as official corruption and mismanagement of the public sector. The devastating earthquake that hit north-western Syria in February made things worse.

But there are other issues that Assad has failed to address: reconciliation and the launch of a political process to bring the country together. Almost four months since Syria regained its seat in the Arab League and Assad attended the organization's Jeddah summit, the normalization process is yet to deliver an end to the Syrian debacle. The restoration of ties between Damascus and several Arab capitals was supposed to be reciprocated by a meaningful gesture by Assad to present a political solution to end the 12-year civil war. He has not done so and, judging by his latest media statements, he remains as reluctant to cough up political concessions as he was in 2011. But this new challenge should come as a wake-up call. The worsening economic conditions will continue to pressure middle and low-income households in government-held areas. The 2018 victory was over armed groups, but now ordinary citizens are taking to the streets. High fuel prices, electricity cuts, inflation, lawlessness in Deraa and other parts, and bread shortages are pushing civilians to the edge. Assad and his Iranian and Russian backers cannot provide a solution. The regime also risks an open war with Israel as it allows Iran to send weapons to its proxies in Lebanon and Syria.

An end can only come if Assad decides to engage his Arab counterparts and embrace a genuine political solution to the Syrian crisis. That would prepare the ground for a process of reconstruction to begin, thus alleviating the economic crunch his government is facing. It would also allow Assad's Arab allies to put pressure on the West to adopt a new approach to Syria, rather than the one in place that has only hurt ordinary Syrians.

The Telegraph

Mass immigration is ruining America

James Massa

TWO US Congresswomen - one Republican, one Democrat - recently introduced a bill that would grant most illegal immigrants a reprieve from deportation and eventually offer them a path to citizenship, while also implementing token border security measures. They dubbed it the "Dignity Act."

But there's nothing dignified about offering the same old failed proposals that have broken our immigration system almost beyond repair. Americans have been waiting for "comprehensive immigration reform" since 1986, when President Ronald Reagan granted amnesty to most illegal immigrants in the country - roughly 3 million at the time - in exchange for lawmakers' promises to secure the border and penalise employers who knowingly hire unauthorized workers. Congress quickly reneged on those promises. Four decades and eight amnesties

later, the border has never been less secure, with employers continuing to hire illegal workers with near impunity. In such circumstances, it's no surprise that the illegal immigrant population has ballooned to roughly 12 million. Better immigration policy is possible and very much needed. Yet both political parties have failed to deliver reforms that promote economic fairness for American workers, especially the most vulnerable in our society, while safeguarding our natural resources for future generations. Voters across all demographic and ideological lines recognise the system is not working - satisfaction with the current levels of immigration in America has slumped to the lowest levels in a decade - and broadly support such an approach.

Legal immigration into the United States, which has its share of loopholes and issues to address, has accelerated over the last four

decades. Since 1990, when Congress raised immigration levels, the United States has admitted around one million legal immigrants annually. That annual number is double any level recommended by congressionally appointed panels, and doesn't even include millions of additional guest workers, visa overstayers, or illegal border crossers. Federal law enforcement officers have already encountered 1.6 million illegal immigrants at the southern border this fiscal year, on pace to surpass last year's record 2.4 million. According to the Center for Immigration Studies, the foreign-born population could reach 51.7 million by the end of President Biden's first term - constituting 15.5 per cent of the total US population, making it the largest share in history. The sheer scale of this influx has harmed American workers, especially those with lower

levels of education. There are now around 50 million people in the United States between the ages of 18 and 64 who are not working. Some don't want to work. Others don't have to work. But many find it impossible to obtain work at fair wages in reasonable conditions due to economic migrants.

It is distressing to constantly hear that tens of millions of Americans are too lazy to work or too incompetent to hire. Even more troubling is the argument that the solution to this problem is to bring in tens of millions more foreign workers. The reality is that many US employers simply refuse to recruit, train, and retain available and willing Americans. Too many businesses have become reliant on cheaper, unprotected, more compliant foreign workers. What is happening to those Americans who are brushed aside and become merely a data point in

monthly reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics? The ongoing tragedies include drug addiction, suicides, and violent crime plaguing our communities. Policymakers must consider the effects of having so many Americans out of work, and how immigration, both legal and illegal, has contributed to those outcomes. America has long welcomed newcomers and most Americans support continued, legal, permanent immigration - but within sustainable parameters.

Stopping the recent surges of illegal immigration and reducing numerical levels of legal immigration held widespread support from leadership of both parties. Presidents Clinton and Obama spoke in favour of it. Senator Bernie Sanders called the idea that the United States should admit as many foreign workers as employers demanded a "Koch brothers proposal" as recently as 2015. President Trump endorsed Senator

Tom Cotton's RAISE Act, which would have roughly halved legal immigration by ending chain migration. Unfortunately, the current administration has shown no interest in limiting immigration. Politicians on both sides of the aisle running on platforms of curbing migration have made inroads with hispanic voters, and black voters share many of those same concerns. As my colleague Andre Barnes has noted, predominantly black communities on Chicago's South Side have warned that local politicians' plans to house migrants in their neighborhoods will negatively impact residents' access to jobs and community resources. Democrats and Republicans must recommit themselves to stopping illegal immigration and reducing annual immigration to reasonable levels. The party that supports sensible immigration reform will win the battle for American workers.

Israeli Supreme Court’s ‘turkeys voting for Christmas’ dilemma

ISRAEL'S political situation is entering a phase that is both farcical and tragic. Next month, the Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, which rules on the legality of decisions by state authorities, will convene to hear petitions on the law to abolish the reasonableness standard - a central element of the Netanyahu government's plan to compromise the power of the country's judiciary, which was approved last month by the Knesset.

Very sensibly, Supreme Court President Esther Hayut has announced that all 15 Supreme Court justices will decide on this case, which will present them with a "turkeys voting for Christmas" dilemma. They have to decide whether or not to approve the Knesset's vote and, by doing so, leave themselves largely powerless in the face of a corrupt government. Whatever their decision, it will have serious consequences. It is the first time in this court's history that all 15 justices will hear a petition, which tells us about the gravity Justice Hayut attaches to this issue and her court's need to garner public support. It seems reasonable to suppose that the justices will send the bill back to the Knesset on the grounds that this is exactly why the reasonableness standard exists - to ensure that the government behaves reasonably and plausibly, not arbitrarily.

In the earliest days of the current coalition, this power in the hands of the highest court in the country proved its importance when the High Court of Justice disqualified Shas party chairman Aryeh Deri from taking the posts of both health minister and interior minister due to his convictions for tax evasion, corruption

as a public official, bribery and fraud, not to mention his broken promise to quit politics as part of a plea bargain that possibly spared him a jail sentence. By preventing a persistent offender who had shown no shred of remorse from holding high office, the Supreme Court proved to be a bulwark of justice. It is this reasonableness standard that has spared the country, at least for now, from this crooked politician's return to the Cabinet. It is not that most politicians do not understand what is reasonable and what is unreasonable, but that, on some occasions, although persistently in the case of the current Israeli government, they insist on having their way despite their actions being illegal, immoral and corrupt - all the hallmarks of bad governance - as long as their thirst for power, money and veneration is quenched. This is the definition of unreasonable behavior in a public office. And if there is no branch of government with the power to check this behavior, the path to authoritarianism and completely arbitrary governance is left wide open.

But it will not stop there. For, without the Reasonableness Act, who will block Benjamin Netanyahu from sacking Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara after the prime minister's closest political allies have put a target on her back for being "too independent" in upholding a law? The Cabinet will instead appoint one of their cronies who will allow nepotistic appointments, ones that serve the politicians but hardly the public. What should worry anyone who values Israel's democracy - a liberal democracy that upholds the rule of law - is that the prime minister

has so far refused to commit himself to respecting the High Court ruling should it decide to strike down the removal of the reasonableness standard. Netanyahu, being Netanyahu, is evasive and likes to use doublespeak in the spirit of George Orwell's dystopian masterpiece "1984."

His loyal sycophants, and those in his coalition who venomously hate the judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, are making no secret of their wish to weaken the highest court in the country. They audaciously claim that this is in the interests of the country, the democratic system and, above all, the people. Netanyahu and Justice Minister Yariv Levin, who know better and are therefore the true villains in this story, are in the full-on mode of deceiving their own supporters and inciting against those who oppose them. Israel's prime minister is steering clear of his country's press and TV and prefers to address the international media, particularly that of the US, because he believes he can better manipulate it. And, in any case, the audience there can have little to no impact on events in Israel. Many are unaware of the nuances of Israel's checks and balances system, where there is only one elected chamber, and, due to its parliamentary system, the government enjoys the support of the majority in the legislature. Hence, the judiciary is the only true defender of the democratic system, with a tail wind from civil society and ordinary citizens.

In Netanyahu's case, it is the dark cloud of his corruption trial that makes him a dangerous enemy of the judiciary, as there is an obvious conflict of interests when the defendant in a criminal

case attempts to destroy the independence of the judiciary. Despite signing an agreement with previous Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit that requires him to avoid involvement in legislation that could affect the outcome of his trial, his fingerprints are all over the current judicial coup. Of course, he should have done the decent thing and suspended himself for the duration of his trial, but that is a very naive thought for anyone who has watched how Netanyahu has operated for the last 25 years. When the Supreme Court announces its decision next month, the battle lines between the government and the pro-democracy forces will become even clearer. For both sides, it might prove to be a hill to die on. If the justices were to refrain from striking down the legislation to make them subservient to the government, it would open the floodgates for corrupt and inappropriate appointments to senior positions throughout the civil service, including the police and the armed forces. And this would be followed by more legislation that would further weaken the judiciary and make it the government's rubber stamp. If this happens, we can expect the protest movement to step up a gear, with a high likelihood of national strikes and more reservists refusing to volunteer for the military, while mass rallies across the country would gather momentum. But if the justices should strike down the removal of the reasonableness standard, Netanyahu's poisonous regime would go full throttle on delegitimizing the court and the protesters. Whatever happens, you can expect one of the hottest autumns in Israel's history - and one that will not be entirely due to global warming.

I have been reluctant to write yet another Donald Trump-related piece considering the general fatigue with his farcical politics. But America is leaving me and countless others no choice but to pay attention, as the former US president's shenanigans have once again taken over the American election cycle.

Despite his three indictments, he remains popular, dominating his Republican rivals on the eve of the first presidential primary debate this week and raising the stakes in yet another consequential election for America and the world. According to the latest surveys, he holds decisive advantage across nearly all demographic groups, regions and ideological wings of the party. His popularity among Republican voters has steadily increased from 43 percent in January to 53 percent this month.

His mostly white conservative supporters are driven by a deep-seated anger, suspicion and resentment of the Democrats and their social liberalism and liberal internationalism. They do not seem moved by Trump's political follies and legal woes. If anything, they see his indictments - which include trying to defraud the US government in order to remain in office despite losing the 2020 election - as part of a conspiracy by the Democrat-controlled deep state. Short of a major surprise, Trump is destined to win the Republican nomination by the middle of next year and face President Joe Biden at the polls at the year's end.

The election is for the incumbent to lose. Aside from leading in the national vote count, he shows better ratings in the battleground states he won in 2020, like Georgia and Arizona; he could also hope to flip swing states he lost, like North Carolina. But there are a variety of factors that could put Biden at a disadvantage, including his advanced age. In recent months, his fitness for office has been repeatedly questioned. Indeed, the prospect of Trump's return to the White House at the helm of the world's superpower is very real and it is generating deep anxiety and freneticism, notably among liberals in the US, Europe and beyond. They fear a bitter, vengeful Trump, in denial over his defeat in the last elections, could lash out and do just about anything with the incredible powers of the American presidency.

Trump is surely watching what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing since his return to the premiership in Israel, in terms of "judicial reforms" that grant him greater authority to do away with his own indictment by an Israeli court. In fact, various media outlets are reporting that the former president is planning to do what it takes to solidify his power once he is back in the White House, including limiting the independence of federal

Marwan Bishara

agencies, deploying the military domestically, and cracking down on his detractors. Trump appears ready to render the United States less liberal and more autocratic, as Netanyahu is doing now with Israel. The strong checks and balances of the American constitutional democracy may not withstand the vicious assault by Trump and his white nationalist and evangelical conservative allies. He would also find sympathetic ears in the US Supreme Court that has been dominated by conservatives, three of whom were appointed by him. That being said, the international ramification of a Trump 2.0 may be more dramatic than the domestic ones. If he returns to the White House, he would find it less constraining to

alternative to America's strategic umbrella. European centrists and liberals are also worried that a Trump victory in 2024 would create a domino effect across the West, strengthening populist right-wing leaders in Hungary, Poland and Italy, and encouraging more far-right electoral victories in France and Germany.

If all of this were to happen, it would weaken America's own foreign policy push, especially its response to rising China, which is perhaps the only major foreign policy issue aside from Israel - on which Trump and Biden agree. An emboldened Russia, a weakened NATO, and a divided West, would not help Trump's haughty attempts at curbing Chinese economic and strategic influence. Beijing likely does not mind seeing

As president, Trump would also act swiftly on the Russia-Ukraine war. He has already claimed that he can resolve the conflict in "24 hours". Some have speculated that this means he would cut US military aid to Ukraine in order to facilitate a quick end of war in Russia's favour. The prospect of this scenario has irked Washington's European allies, who have been highly supportive of the US efforts against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

effect change in foreign policy than domestic policy. Indeed, he would have greater authority as the leader of a superpower to change the world for the worse, than he would have to change America to his liking.

Just as he reversed much of what his predecessor, President Barack Obama, achieved globally, whether on climate change, trade, nuclear proliferation, Russia, Europe or the Middle East, Trump would also seek to erase Biden's progress on these and other policies. Under a second Trump presidency, it would be impossible to reach another nuclear deal with Iran, or a more urgent accord on climate change. There would also likely be major cuts in public spending on social protections and renewable energy expansion.

As president, Trump would also act swiftly on the Russia-Ukraine war. He has already claimed that he can resolve the conflict in "24 hours". Some have speculated that this means he would cut US military aid to Ukraine in order to facilitate a quick end of war in Russia's favour. The prospect of this scenario has irked Washington's European allies, who have been highly supportive of the US efforts against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They fear that appeasing Russia would weaken NATO, embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin, and force them to search for immediate, radical and costly European

Trump return to the White House, not only because he is a divisive illiberal populist leader, who is ready to abandon US global responsibilities and replace its assertive leadership with pompous bombast, but also because he wouldn't or couldn't use the democratic pretext to advance US interests over other more autocratic nations.

Trump has threatened that if he were to become president again, he would give the Chinese government "48 hours" to abandon its "spy base" in Cuba or face severe economic sanctions. But such bombast has not worked in the past, neither against China, which has grown more powerful militarily and strategically during the Trump years, nor against smaller powers like North Korea or Iran, both of which have expanded their nuclear programmes during his tenure. If anything, Trump's bravado has failed even against Bashar al-Assad's Syria. Biden's foreign policy hasn't been exactly successful or responsible either; his foreign policy has been imperialist, interventionist and hypocritical. But Trump's alternatives are worse than Biden's globalist prerogatives. They come in the form of reckless America-first hypernationalism, vulgar racism, apathy towards the environment and the climate crisis, total disregard for multilateralism and universal values, and overall, a dark vision of the world. A Trumpian world, in which no sane person would want to live in.

How Washington views the war in Afghanistan two years on

Kerry Boyd Anderson

TWO years after the US and its allies withdrew from Afghanistan, partisan political views in Washington have hardened, while foreign policy experts are starting more comprehensive reviews of the entire war.

The American public strongly supported pulling out of Afghanistan but was disappointed in how the war ended. Polling at the time of the withdrawal showed that a strong majority of Americans wanted to end the war and believed that the US had failed to achieve its goals in Afghanistan. Polling also found that a slight majority disapproved of President Joe Biden's handling of the withdrawal, while the event marked a notable decline in his approval ratings. The partisan political narratives have changed little. Republican leaders and commentators argue that Biden is solely responsible for the chaotic and deadly nature of the withdrawal, while ignoring the reality that Biden inherited limited options from the Trump administration. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives has held hearings to highlight the tragedy of the withdrawal and place blame on the Biden administration. Afghanistan is unlikely to be a major point in the presidential election, but Republicans will try to use it against Biden.

On the Democratic side, there is a mix of blaming the Trump administration and simply hoping to move on. In April, the White House produced a report that largely blamed the Trump administration for its 2020 deal with the Taliban, its drawdown of troop

numbers and a lack of planning for an intended withdrawal. Democratic leaders acknowledge that Biden made some errors but blame the Trump administration for the most important mistakes. With political perspectives set in stone, the discussion among foreign policy experts is more interesting. Within think tanks and among experts with experience shaping and implementing Afghanistan policy throughout multiple presidential administrations, there is a more thoughtful review occurring. A year ago, the focus in Washington was primarily on reviewing the last two years of the war, especially the Trump deal with the Taliban and then the final withdrawal under Biden. Now, two years after the withdrawal, there appears to be more space for broader, nuanced discussion about the entire 20 years of US combat in Afghanistan.

The US' war in Afghanistan covered two decades, including two Republican and two Democratic presidential administrations. Among those administrations, Congress, the federal bureaucracy, the US military and Afghan leaders, there is plenty of blame to go around. While politicians engage in finger-pointing, foreign policy experts are trying to take a big-picture look at what happened and to identify lessons. This work is just beginning. In December 2021, Congress established a bipartisan Afghanistan War Commission to conduct a review of US policy toward Afghanistan during the full 20 years of war. For this commission

and other experts, there is plenty of material already available for study and further documents and testimony will emerge. There is a general consensus that the war was a failure and that the withdrawal was a debacle. The questions are more about why and how.

The expert discussion about the war is starting to take shape. Many experts - including some Republicans and even some who worked in the Trump administration - believe that the US gave up most of its leverage in return for very little in the 2020 deal with the Taliban. While it was obvious that the US wanted out of the war, better diplomacy could have contributed to a preferable conclusion. Previous administrations also bear some responsibility for missing opportunities to negotiate with the Taliban from a position of strength. The 2003 invasion of Iraq made Afghanistan a secondary priority for Washington, diverting many resources. The Obama administration recognized that and tried to correct course, but much of the damage was already done, and the Obama administration made its own mistakes.

Other critiques fall under the general category of failing to understand Afghanistan and adapt to the country's realities. For example, building a centralized Afghan military with good equipment but lacking in other fundamental areas was a mistake. The influx of foreign aid often was not wisely distributed. Corruption was a massive problem that absorbed significant amounts of aid. US policy also suffered from unclear and

frequently changing goals. Was the US in Afghanistan solely to defeat Al-Qaeda? To defeat all terrorists? To ensure that the Taliban could never regain power? To conduct nation-building? To ensure stability? Leaders and policymakers often lacked clear answers to these questions and failed to clearly communicate their goals to the American public in honest and straightforward ways. While much of the power and thus responsibility was held by presidential administrations, Congress also failed to provide sufficient oversight - at least oversight that put the nation's interests ahead of scoring partisan PR points.

There were other mistakes, including those related to military operations and political organization. These include losing Afghan support through the collateral damage of war. The US and its allies had some achievements. Afghan women gained far more rights and there were other significant economic and humanitarian successes. For many Afghans in cities, particularly Kabul, life improved. The desperate desire of so many Afghans to flee in August 2021 demonstrated what they expected from life under the Taliban.

Americans will probably never reach a full consensus on what went wrong in Afghanistan. Scholars, policymakers and citizens still debate what went wrong in the war in Vietnam, why the US invaded Iraq, and so on. A consensus on Afghanistan will likely be elusive, but the coming years will produce improved understanding and perhaps some useful lessons.

Unlocking the opportunities for increased intra-BRICS trade

Mogobo David Magabe

WHEN Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa, he remarked that "South Africa cannot be seen to be an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty." This statement has become a driving force in our economic diplomacy and our focus on improving not only south-south relations but essentially in improving lives in the Global South, which has been negatively impacted by the economic policies of colonialism.

This year, South Africa took up the chair of the BRICS grouping at a time of momentous shifts in global geopolitics, under the theme "BRICS and AFRICA: Partnerships for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism." This strikes at the heart of the BRICS Business Council's founding principles, which are to advance our collective economic interests and ensure sustained and perpetual growth for all our nations. It is also an extension of the critical work that was started by China in 2022, when the focus was on ushering in a new era for global development.

Together, the core members have forged a comprehensive strategic partnership that seeks to unlock funding to address immediate imperatives such as building

infrastructure, growing regional value chains and localizing production. As chair, South Africa's program has been designed to be anchored in the characteristics of this theme. It includes: Developing a partnership toward an equitable and just transition; transforming education and skills development for the future; unlocking opportunities through the African Continental Free Trade Area; strengthening post-pandemic socioeconomic recovery and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and enhancing multilateralism, working toward real reform of global governance institutions and strengthening the meaningful participation of women in peace processes.

While the economic agenda is at the heart of the BRICS partnership, the core members are also committed to a transformative agenda that seeks to realize a more equitable, balanced and representative global governance system. The obstacles we are facing include growing unilateralism, geopolitical rivalries, violations of international law and the application of double standards. There has also been a proliferation of alternate forums outside of established multilateral processes where decisions are taken by the

few, thereby disenfranchising the many.

The five core members of BRICS contribute 31.5 percent of global gross domestic product, while the G7 contributes 30 percent. BRICS is expected to contribute more than 50 percent of global GDP by 2030 and this may happen even sooner with enlargement of the grouping. Interest in joining BRICS has surged. While several more nations have shown an interest, 23 have formally applied. These are Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Nigeria, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Thailand, the UAE, Venezuela and Vietnam.

The collective successes shared in the past decade speak for themselves. BRICS continues to assume an anchor role in the Global South and is now recognized as one of the world's leading trade blocs. With China and India in the lead, BRICS has seen its economic influence as a driver of global growth, trade and investment increase over the past two decades. However, we still have to contend with a volatile global climate and a slow pace of socioeconomic recovery for some economies, such as South Africa's.

Ukraine’s army is running out of men to recruit

Rober Clark

THE war in Ukraine is now one of attrition, fought on terms that increasingly favour Moscow. Kyiv has dealt admirably with shortages of Western equipment so far, but a shortage of manpower - which it is already having to confront - may prove fatal.

Broadly speaking, Kyiv's highly anticipated counter-offensive has gathered much-needed momentum in recent weeks, with hard-fought gains around the strategically important village of Robotyne. If this falls, the road to the Azov sea will be in sight. If Ukrainian forces can reach the coast, they will split the land-bridge connecting Russia with Crimea, potentially routing Moscow's troops.

Ukraine's forces, however, are not just fighting massed defences and artillery fire. They are also fighting against time. Having first penetrated the formidable Russian minefields four weeks ago, Kyiv is desperate to exploit its early successes before mounting casualties and autumn rains destroy its fighting capability. The summer has been wet, and the autumn months traditionally bring heavy rains

which turn the soft ground of eastern Europe into a thick mud as tanks, armour and artillery churn the battlefield. This can all but halt meaningful advances, locking armies into place and buying the Russians time to add to the deeply dug trench networks and multi-layered minefields that have made retaking lost territory such hard going.

Perhaps more important, however, is the heavy toll the fighting is taking on the people of Ukraine. The Russian armed forces began the war with an official strength of one million, and a true strength estimated by some analysts at between 700,000 and 800,000. A further two million men - former conscripts and contract servicemen - were available in the reserves, and some seven million men of conscription age (18-26) left to draw on, even before the Kremlin raised the age limit to 31.

Ukraine, meanwhile, had a pre-war population of 44 million. By the end of the first year of the war, some six million had fled abroad. The armed forces number around 200,000 active personnel, roughly the same again in reserve, and can draw on another 1.5 million

fighting-age males. It's a brutal but simple calculation: Kyiv is running out of men. US sources have calculated that its armed forces have lost as many as 70,000 killed in action, with another 100,000 injured. While Russian casualties are higher still, the ratio nevertheless favours Moscow, as Ukraine struggles to replace soldiers in the face of a seemingly endless supply of conscripts.

Volunteers are no longer coming forward in numbers sufficient to keep the army at fighting strength: those most willing to fight signed up years ago. The latest recruitment slogan is "It's OK to be afraid", but there are still many attempting to dodge being drafted to fight on the front lines. For all the difficulties the Kremlin has faced in its forced conscriptions, it still has hundreds of thousands of men to draw upon. This is a resource Ukraine simply cannot match, and one that the West cannot supply.

For Vladimir Putin, victory may at last be in sight as Western support begins to waver. If Kyiv cannot break through the Russian lines now, it may never be able to. If it runs out of willing men to recruit, the West cannot help.



MoU signed between SCCI, Gomal University

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In order to build up industry academia linkages, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan here on Wednesday.

According to details, the MoU was signed by SCCI's acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi and Director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), Gomal University DIKhan Dr. Barkat Ali Khan during

a ceremony held here today at the chambers house.

Abidur Rehman, Personal Secretary to Vice Chancellor, Gomal University DIKhan and SCCI's Secretary General Sajjad Aziz were also present on the occasion.

In his remarks during the meeting, Ijaz Afridi informed that the chamber has so far signed MoUs with more than 16 public and private universities throughout the province, aiming to build up industry and academia linkages.

He said the MoU with

Gomal University DIKhan was part of these series of agreements, which would help to strengthen collaboration between the institutions in future.

Ijaz Afridi elaborated that the MoU aims at equipping graduates and young students' technical skills besides completion of their academic career so that it will enable them to get instant employment opportunities in markets.

The SCCI's acting chief stressed the need to provide a proper platform to youth for utilization of their abilities

efficiently and continue playing a role in the country's economic prosperity and progress.

Sajjad Aziz, Secretary General briefed the visiting officials of Gomal University DIKhan regarding the chamber's importance, origin, functions and other key role in providing services and facilities to the business community.

Earlier, Dr Barkat Ali Khan in the meeting briefed about ORIC, administrative and academic matters of Gomal University DIKhan in a comprehensive manner.



PESHAWAR: President SCCI Ijaz Khan Afridi and Director ORIC Gomal University Dr Barkat Ali Khan exchanging documents after signing MoU.

PSX's 100-index witnesses mixed trend

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday witnessed mixed trend as it witnessed nominal change of 0.73 points, closing at 47,418.63 points against 47,417.90 points the previous trading day.

A total of 188,680,077 shares were traded during the day as compared to 185,753,898 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs8,794 billion against Rs6,223 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 324 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 106 of them recorded gains and 189 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 20,986,139 shares at Rs1.27 per share; Oil and Gas Dev with 16,050,104 shares at Rs100.06 per share and JS Bank Ltd with 12,258,500 shares at Rs5.92 per share.

Gadood Textile witnessed a maximum increase of Rs14.99 per share price, closing at Rs214.99, where-

as the runner-up was Mari Petroleum with an Rs9.80 rise in its per share price to Rs1,636.96.

Allawasaya Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs130.00 per share closing at Rs1,670.00; followed by Pak Services with Rs40.28 decline to close at Rs648.72.

Rupee sheds 63 paise against US Dollar

Pakistani rupee on Wednesday witnessed 63 paise devaluation against the US dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs299.63 against the previous day's closing of Rs299.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs313 and Rs316 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs2.10 to close at Rs324.29 against the last day's closing of Rs326.39, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs2.06, whereas a decrease of Rs2.32 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the

British Pound, which traded at Rs380.02 as compared to the last closing of Rs382.34.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 17 paise and 16 paise to close at Rs81.57 and Rs79.71 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs1,900 to Rs232,600 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,900 and was sold at Rs232,600 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs234,500 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1,629 to Rs199,417 from Rs201,046 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs182,799 from Rs184,292, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$3 to \$1,904 from \$1,901, the Association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Maersk Pittsburgh, MSC Tianping and UACC Manama, carrying Containers and Soya bean oil, berthed at Container Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal, respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Sea Bulk and Marangas Asclepius with Canola seeds and LNG are also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours.

A total of 08 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, TTC Vidyut and Fuwairit sailed out to sea on Wednesday morning, while five more ships, Maersk Pittsburgh, MSC Tianping, African Nighthawk, Ullswater and Kaisa-I are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo throughput during last 24 hours stood at 96,675 tonnes, comprising 68,506 tonnes imports Cargo and 28,169 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,350 Containers (2,100 TEUs Imports and 1,250 TEUs export) was handled at the port.

There are eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Jigjiga and Marangas Asclepius & two more ships, Central Park and MSC Santa Maria scheduled to load/offload General cargo, LNG, Chemicals and Containers are expected to take berths at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Gasport Terminal, Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Wednesday, while two more container ships, Cosco America and Vancouver are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

China, Africa trade sees steady growth

BEIJING (APP): China's trade with Africa reported steady growth in the first seven months of the year, official data showed Wednesday. Trade between China and Africa rose 7.4 percent year on year to 1.14 trillion yuan (about 158.36 billion US dollars) during the January-July period, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

China has remained Africa's largest trading partner over the past decade, with bilateral trade totaling 1.87 trillion yuan in 2022, up 14.8 percent year on year.

In the first seven months, the country's exports to Africa grew 20 percent year on year to 709.59 trillion yuan, while imports reached 426.65 billion yuan, customs data showed.

Exports of ships and automobiles surged 81.3 percent and 26.1 percent from a year ago, respectively, while that of mechanical and electrical products expanded 32.5 percent, contributing 50.1 percent to bilateral trade volume.

China has been the largest export destination for Africa, with crude oil, metal ore and ore sand, and agricultural produce as the main export goods, according to the customs authorities.

Among all African economies, South Africa was China's largest trading partner, followed by Nigeria and Angola in the first seven months.

Data showed that China-South Africa trade stood at 226.15 billion yuan in the first seven months of 2023, rising 10.5 percent year on year and accounting for 19.9 percent of China's trade with African countries.

Gold records gains above \$1,900

ISLAMABAD (INP): Gold prices gained on Wednesday after a slight pullback in US dollar and Treasury yields underpinned bullion above a key \$1,900 level as investors await clues from major central bankers on the interest rate trajectory.

Spot gold firmed 0.3% to \$1,902.63 per ounce, drifting further away from the five-month lows hit last week. The US gold futures rose 0.3% to \$1,931.70.

The dollar index was below the two-month highs, while a rally that took US Treasury yields to nearly 16-year highs took a pause, giving some respite to the non-yielding gold.

The annual Jackson Hole Symposium in Wyoming later this week will be mon-

itored for any hints on how high can interest rates go, with a particular focus on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's speech on Friday.

"Powell's comments are expected to provide hints on the Fed's thinking about the 2% inflation target and whether that target needs to be reviewed against the current backdrop of still elevated core inflation," said Harshal Barot, a senior consultant at Metals Focus.

"If he does hint about a higher target, that could mean interest rates may not need to move any higher from here."

The Fed must be open to the possibility that the economy will begin to reaccelerate rather than slow,

with potential implications for their inflation fight, Richmond Fed President Thomas Barkin said on Tuesday.

Recent robust US economic data has raised bets the Fed will keep rates higher for longer, reducing appetite for gold as reflected in holdings of bullion-backed exchange traded funds (ETF).

SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed ETF, said holdings fell 0.5% on Tuesday, sliding back to their lowest levels since mid-January 2020.

In other metals, spot silver gained 0.8% to \$23.58 per ounce and platinum added 0.5% to \$923.71. Palladium was up 0.4% at \$1,265.80.

DGTO office stops all chamber polls proceedings

LAHORE (APP): Director General Trade Organizations (DGTO) Office has suspended all the actions under Trade Organizations Act 2013 and Trade Organizations Rules 2013.

According to the spokesperson of the chambers and trade organizations were conducted under sub-section 1 of section 11 of the Trade Organizations Act, 2013, while the elections of the executive committee of the election Commission, Provisional Voters List, Final Voters List, Nomination for Executive Committee, Nomination for Officials and Post-Election Complaints.

It has also been clarified that the Islamabad High Court has granted a Stay Order on the order issued by the Director General of Trade Organizations on July 7, 2023 regarding the Chambers and Trade

Organizations Election 2023-24 and the date of the next hearing has been fixed on October 5, 2023.

According to the spokesperson, the elections of the office-bearers of the chambers and trade organizations were conducted under sub-section 1 of section 11 of the Trade Organizations Act, 2013, while the elections of the executive committee of the election Commission, Provisional Voters List, Final Voters List, Nomination for Executive Committee, Nomination for Officials and Post-Election Complaints.

However, after the order of the Islamabad High Court, the Director General of Trade Organizations has suspended all the actions under the Trade Organizations Act 2013 and Trade Organizations Rules 2013 and now it is not possible for the Chambers and Chambers

of Commerce to hold elections in 2023.

The loopholes have also been pointed out in the Trade Organizations Rules, stating that the rotation clause has been omitted in Rule 21(13) of the amended Trade Organizations Rules, 2013.

Its trade organizations, excluding FPCCI, have remained unchanged for two years.

The Director General Trade Organizations (DGTO) has given suggestions in this regard that either executive committee members of trade organizations, excluding FPCCI, should be extended for one year till the election for the entire executive committee is not held in the year 2024 or the affairs of the Executive Committee may be run with 50% of the members.

Charting a proactive future: HOH partners with Healthx to revolutionize corporate wellness

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A revolutionary era in corporate wellness dawned as Healthx, a prominent multinational healthcare management company, announces a strategic alliance with the esteemed House of Habib (HOH).

Revered for its profound legacy and significant contributions to Pakistan's business landscape, House of Habib takes the helm in prioritizing the health and well-being of its valued workforce, comprising 14,000 employees, with a sweeping impact on the lives of approximately 70,000 individuals across the organization.

At the heart of this momentous partnership lies a pioneering vision, one that heralds a proactive, data-driven, cost-efficient and "phygital" (A hybrid of physical and digital) approach to healthcare - leaving the traditional ways behind.

Embracing evidence-based medicine as its guiding principle, the alliance aims to gradually reduce the disease burden experienced across House of Habib's diverse entities, which include prestigious businesses such as Thal



Engineering, Indus Motor Company, and Shabbir Tiles & Ceramics Limited, among others.

This is a one-of-a-kind endeavor to improve employee well-being as well as save costs on healthcare expenditures like never before, through Healthx's internationally tested, proactive healthcare model.

Khaqan Sikander, CEO of Healthx, stated, "Healthcare should not have to be a zero-sum game, where patients have to suffer for providers to thrive. With data-driven, technology-powered but human centered healthcare delivery systems, we must reinvent ourselves towards

models that are incentivized on keeping people healthy. House of Habib, being one of the largest employers in the country has a history of positively disrupting many industries and today is taking a pioneering step towards transforming the domain of corporate health & wellness."

Echoing his sentiments, Naila Kassim, Group Director HR of House of Habib, added, "Embracing innovation and prioritizing people are the fundamental pillars of House of Habib's values. Our partnership with Healthx Pakistan signifies our commitment to digitizing healthcare and our

employees' wellbeing. By combining advanced technology with our people-centric approach, we ensure our workforce has access to efficient healthcare solutions. We believe a healthy workforce drives a successful organization, and this collaboration paves the way for enhanced digital healthcare for our employees."

Healthx Pakistan is a multinational healthcare management company with operations in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

House of Habib is a leading business conglomerate with a remarkable 120-year legacy in the sub-continent and Pakistan's business landscape.

PPL funds E-Skills IT training for students



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), a leading National E&P Company and one of the largest corporate donors has recently funded a 6-month E-Skills IT residential training programme at Akhuwat which leads towards national or international certification.

Founded in 2001, Akhuwat is a non-profit organization that focuses on supporting the deserving through interest-free micro finance, free-of-cost quality education and healthcare

and other socioeconomic measures.

MD and CEO PPL Mr. Imran Abbasi presented the donation cheque of Rs. 10 million to Chief Operating Officer, Akhuwat, Mr. Rehan Hussain at PPL Head Office on August 23.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Abbasi highlighted that PPL, through its Corporate Social Responsibility programme, remains committed to investing in capacity building of country's youth, particularly the deserving. This initiative by Akhuwat is aligned

with the company's focus of provision of Vocation Skills to underprivileged and empowering them for sustainable livelihood generation.

The 6-month residential programme will cater to 25 students who will be selected for training from PPL's production area communities.

Earlier, PPL donated Rs. 6 million for a science laboratory at Akhuwat College in Kasur to facilitate hands-on science-based teaching and learning and for free-of-cost quality education to deserving youth.

US, UK and China top three destinations of Pak exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first month of the current financial year 2023-24, followed by the United Kingdom (UK) and China.

Total exports to the US during July 2023 were recorded at US \$432.803 million against the exports of US \$499.686 million during July 2022, showing a decline of 13.38 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by the UK, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$169.789 million against the exports of US \$160.114 million last year, showing an increase of 6.04 percent.

China was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$147.385 million during the month under review against the exports of US \$174.056 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to UAE stood at US \$134.002 million against US \$109.772 million last year, showing an increase of 22.07 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$121.175 million against US \$1137.026 million last year, data said.

During July 2023, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$106.080 million against \$114.886 million whereas the exports

to Italy stood at \$96.274 million against \$105.300 million.

Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$119.583 million against the exports of US \$92.327 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$42.173 million against \$ 31.757 million last year.

The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$50.731 million against US \$71.147 million.

Similarly, the exports to France during the month under review were recorded at US \$46.076 million against US \$43.074 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$54.000 million against US \$65.549 million.



In brief

Hamza grab bronze

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Hamza Saeed has bagged a bronze medal in the World Taekwondo Octagon (Octagon) Diamond Games 2023 at Chuncheon, Korea. According to details, Hamza Saeed defeated Mohammad Ashraf of Afghanistan by 2-1 in the quarter-final of the event. Meanwhile, Ryong Woo Li of Korea won 2-0 against Hamza Saeed in the semifinal of the event. Pakistan's Aqdasullah Qadeer and Naila also won bronze medals in Poomsae Event of World Taekwondo Beach Championship G-2.

Serena gives birth to second child

NEW YORK (Agencies): Serena Williams has given birth to a baby girl, she posted Tuesday on Instagram, almost exactly a year after her last match as a tennis star. Adira River Ohanian is the second child — and second daughter — for the 41-year-old Williams and her husband, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian. Their first, Olympia, was born in 2017. Williams, who won 23 Grand Slam singles titles during a career that transcended her sport, revealed at the Met Gala in May that she was pregnant. When she told the world in August 2022 she was preparing to close her playing career, Williams cited a desire to grow her family as one of the main reasons for walking away from tennis. "Believe me," Williams wrote last year in an essay for Vogue magazine, "I never wanted to have to choose between tennis and a family. I don't think it's fair. If I were a guy I wouldn't be writing this because I'd be out there playing and winning while my wife was doing the physical labor of expanding our family." The 2022 U.S. Open was her last tournament. She reached the third round in New York by beating second-seeded Anett Kontaveit before losing to Ajla Tomljanovic on Sept. 3.

League matches of 4 clubs postponed

ANKARA (APP): Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has announced they decided to postpone the league matches of Galatasaray, Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Adana Demirspor. The TFF postponed the Trendyol Super Lig week 3 games of four clubs as for the upcoming playoff matches of Galatasaray in the UEFA Champions League and Besiktas, Fenerbahce and Adana Demirspor in the UEFA Europa Conference League, the statement read. Istanbulspor vs Galatasaray, Fenerbahce vs Baskasehir and Yukatel Adana Demirspor vs Besiktas matches have been postponed to a later date, the statement added. The Federation wished success to all four clubs in the upcoming playoff round matches. Galatasaray, the only Turkish representative in the Champions League this season, will be hosted Wednesday by Norway's Molde, while Fenerbahce will take on Dutch club Twente, Besiktas will face Ukrainian side Dynamo Kyiv and Adana Demirspor will face Greek club Olympiacos in Conference League playoffs.

Pakistan defeat Australia in IBSA World Games to advance to final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan blind cricket team on Wednesday advanced to the final of the ongoing International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) World Blind Games with a convincing six-wicket win against Australia.

Batting first Australia scored 107 runs in the allotted 20 overs, according to information received here.

Australia's opening pair of M Cameron and M McCarthy provided a decent start to their team, with a superb 53-run stand.

Muhammad Salman provided a much-needed breakthrough to Pakistan by dis-

missing skipper McCarthy, who scored 19 off 27 balls. But Cameron stood his ground firm and kept the scoreboard ticking while losing partners at the other end. He scored 41 off 47 balls.

Besides the openers, none of the Australian batters could make it to the double figures. Matiullah, Israr Hassan and Fakhar Abbas claimed two wickets each for Pakistan, while Muhammad Salman and Muhammad Asif grabbed one wicket apiece.

Chasing 108, Pakistan comfortably recorded their third consecutive win in the tournament for the loss of

just three wickets and 33 balls to spare. Mohsin Khan led Pakistan's run chase with a 35-ball 37, hitting a boundary, while Matiullah remained unbeaten on 23.

Moain Aslam (15) and Zafar Iqbal (12) were the other main contributors.

The third consecutive win steered the Pakistan team to the final. In their last group match, they will take on face England on Thursday.

Pakistan launched their World Blind Games campaign with an 18-run victory over traditional rivals India before registering a seven-wicket against Bangladesh on Tuesday.

Pakistan's Bakhtawar all set to make history at IBSA World Games



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's visually impaired woman archer Dr Bakhtawar Khalid Kayani is all set to make history as she competes at the IBSA World Games in Birmingham on Thursday.

"I am the only woman archer from Pakistan as well as from the whole of Asia to compete in archery discipline," Bakhtawar told APP on

the phone.

The 30-year-old Bakhtawar, a V-2 archer said she was proud to get the opportunity to carry Pakistan's flag at the prestigious Games. "It's a dream that comes true to represent my country at such a high level," she said.

She said that she had been training hard for the event and would be trying

her best to make a respectable finish. "I am eager to showcase my skills. I will be trying to live up to the expectations," she added.

The 2023 World Games is the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment. Around 1250 competitors from 70 nations are featured in the games. The games staged every four years are the pinnacle of the international sporting calendar outside the Paralympic Games.

The sports during the 2023 World Games include archery, chess, cricket, blind football, partially sighted football, women's football, goalball, judo, powerlifting, showdown, tenpin bowling, and tennis. Pakistan's men's blind cricket team is also scheduled to feature in the Games.

PFF names 23-member squad for SAFF U-16 championship

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) on Wednesday, announced a 23-member squad for the SAFF U-16 Championship 2023 to be held in Bhutan next month.

The Green Shirts will kick off their campaign against home side Bhutan on September 1 at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu. While, in their second game, they will face Maldives at the same venue on September 3. Pakistan Squad for SAFF Under-16 Championship

Defenders: Abdul Rahman, Mohammad

Hasnain Saleem, Najeem Khan, Sameer Ahmed, Obaidullah Khan, Majid Ali, Syed Mohammad Abis Raza, and Umar Javed.

Midfielders: Abdul Samad, Mohammad Faraz, Farhad, Haroon Rashid, Hikmatullah, Khabib Khan, M. Shahab Ahmed and Muhammad Khan.

Forwards: Abdul Ghani, Hasnain Wali Raza, Subhan Karim and Syed Kabir Ali Shah.

Goalkeepers: Adil Ali Khan, Balach Khan and Ghulam Abbas.

The 2023 SAFF U-16 Championship is the 8th edition of the tournament

and will be played from September 1 to September 10 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

India are the current champions as well as the most successful team in the tournament's history, having won the tournament in 2022, 2019, 2017 and 2013.

Meanwhile, Pakistan have won the inaugural edition of SAFF U-16 championship in 2011.

The first edition of the SAFF U-16 championship took place in Nepal in August 2011. The competition was launched under the leadership of SAFF President Kazi Salahuddin who was elected in 2009.

Five Pakistan athletes to feature in wall climbing in Asian Games

ISLAMABAD (APP): A five-member Pakistan team will participate in the wall climbing event of the Asian Games, taking place in Hangzhou, China from next month. "The team is comprised of three men and two women climbers," Karrar Haidri, secretary Alpine Club of Pakistan told APP on Wednesday. "The men's team includes Abu Zar Faiz, Zaheer Ahmed, and Fazal Wadood, while the women's team members are Iqra Jillani and Eman Janat," he said. Rehmatullah and Najeeb Khan will be accompanying the climbers as officials. Sport climbing made its debut in Asian Games at Jakarta-Palembang 2018. It is set to make a second appearance on the programme at the 10th edition of the Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China. The third Chinese city to host the Games after Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010, Hangzhou will welcome 10,000 athletes across 42 different sports from September 23-October 8.

Hafeez's brilliant batting leads Chargers to victory

LAUDERHILL (INP): Fidel Edwards picked up fantastic bowling figures of 3/5 as the Texas Chargers took down the New Jersey Triton's by 8 wickets in the US Masters T10 League. The Chargers restricted the Triton's to 57/9 before chasing down their total in just 4 overs.

Mohammad Hafeez put the Chargers in the driver's seat with three sixes and a four, however, he was bowled out by Liam Plunkett in the second over. Thereafter, Ben Dunk ensured that the momentum stayed on Texas Chargers' side with two fours and a six in the next over.

Dunk brought the equation down to 10 runs off 43 balls before departing in the third over, after which, Mukhtar Ahmed and Thisara Perera took the Chargers over the line with 6 overs to spare.

Earlier in the day, the Texas Chargers won the toss and put the New

Jersey Triton's into bat. Fidel Edwards got the Chargers off to a fantastic start after dismissing Naman Ojha and Yusuf Pathan in successive deliveries in the first over. Thereafter, Ehsan Adil also joined the party, dismissing Jesse Ryder and Chris Barnwell in the fourth over. The Triton's were reeling at 17/4.

Peter Trego and Danza Hyatt tried to get their innings going with a few boundaries, but even they fell in quick succession, leaving the Triton's at 41/6. The Triton's couldn't find a way to string partnerships as the Chargers restricted them to 57/9 in their 10 overs.

Brief Scores: Texas Chargers 60/2 (Mohammad Hafeez 27, Ben Dunk 15, RP Singh 1/18)

New Jersey Triton's 57/9 (Peter Trego 13, Danza Hyatt 10, Fidel Edwards 3/5) by 8 wickets.



NEW YORK: Nuria Brancaccio in action against Laura Siegemund of Germany during the first qualifications round ahead of the US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

Haris, Imam, Rizwan gain in ICC Rankings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's trio of Haris Rauf, Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Rizwan have progressed in the latest ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings after downing Afghanistan by 142 runs in their opening fixture of a three-match series in Sri Lanka.

Fast bowler Haris Rauf sealed a career-best 36th position in the latest rankings. Rauf's haul of five for 18 in Hambantota that helped dismiss Afghanistan for just 59 in 19.2 overs in reply to Pakistan's total of 201 and lifted him seven places and past his previous best 42nd position attained in May this year, said a press release.

Afghanistan spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, who had enjoyed a career-best ranking of second in the past, advanced three places to third position after returning figures of three for 33.

Meanwhile, Pakistan opener Imam-ul-Haq, who top-scored in the match with 61 runs, gained one slot up to reach third position in the batting rankings while Mohammad Rizwan

progressed three places to 58th position.

In this week's T20I rankings update, that takes into account performances in the three-match United Arab Emirates versus New Zealand series and the first two matches of the series between Ireland and India, New Zealand batter Mark Chapman advanced eight places to 24th position after aggregating 129 runs.

Vriitya Anand of the UAE gained five places to reach 56th position among batters while left-arm spinner Aayan Afzal Khan was up 62 places to 116th in the bowling rankings.

India captain Jaspreet Bumrah and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi prospered after bagging two wickets each in the two matches. Bumrah moved from 91st to 84th position while Bishnoi went up from 82nd to 65th.

Ireland batter Andrew Balbirnie was up four places to 61st position after scoring 72 in the second match against India while Curtis Campher was up 10 places to 70th.

Haris Rauf advances in ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan fast bowler Haris Rauf has moved up to occupy a career-best 36th position in the ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings after ripping through Afghanistan's batting line-up in their opening fixture of a three-match series being played in Sri Lanka.

Rauf's haul of five for 18 in Hambantota that helped dismiss Afghanistan for just 59 in 19.2 overs in reply to Pakistan's total of 201, has lifted him seven places and past his previous best 42nd position attained in May this year, said the information made available here on Wednesday by the ICC.

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Danish Atlas nominated for Tamghba Imtiaz

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar's athlete Danish Atlas Khan, who won 35 gold medals, 20 silver and 16 bronze medals in squash for Pakistan, has been nominated for the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, which is a great honor not only for Peshawar but also for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Danish Atlas Khan has played five times in the Asian Squash Championship, winning a gold medal in 2010 at the age of sixteen, 2015 Chicago Open, 2009 British Junior Final, 2012 World Junior Championship, and two bronze medals in 2011 besides winning Asian Junior Championship in 2012. From 2004 to 2012, he was No.1 in Junior Pakistan ranking, former world number three in junior, while he was number one in senior Pakistan from 2012 to 2016.

Talking to media men, Danish Atlas Khan expressed the hope that he would win more honors for the country and nation in the coming time. He said that his father Atlas Khan worked hard with him for which he got the reward and he will continue to work hard in the future. He will leave for America to participate in squash competitions very soon. He said, all those who work hard with him on the part of the Pakistan Tennis Federation and all the coaches.

ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 warm-up matches confirmed

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The official warm-up fixtures for all 10 teams at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 have been announced.

The matches will be held from 29 September to 3 October across three venues in India - Guwahati, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Fans can buy tickets for the warm-up matches from 25 August. More information is available here.

As at previous ICC Cricket World Cup events, warm-up fixtures will be 50 overs per side, but will not carry ODI status as teams will be allowed to field all members of their 15-player squad in these matches.

The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 begins on 5 October when defending champions England face New Zealand in Ahmedabad, which will also be the venue for the final on 19 November.

ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 warm-up fixtures (All matches start at 14h00 IST):

Friday 29 September: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka, Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati South Africa v Afghanistan, Greenfield International Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram New Zealand v Pakistan, Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad. Saturday 30 September:

India v England, Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati Australia v Netherlands, Greenfield International Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram

Monday 2 October: England v Bangladesh, Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati New Zealand v South Africa, Greenfield International Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram

Tuesday 3 October: Afghanistan v Sri Lanka, Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati India v Netherlands, Greenfield International Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram Pakistan v Australia, Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad.

NBA fines Harden \$100,000 over trade and strike row

NEW YORK (Agencies): James Harden has been fined \$100,000 by the NBA for saying he would not play for the Philadelphia 76ers while president Daryl Morey was in charge.

The guard called Morey a "liar" in an interview after reports the 76ers had ended talks about trading him.

Harden, 33, was reportedly keen to join the LA Clippers before talks faltered.

The NBA said the fine was for saying "he would not perform the services called for under his player contract unless traded to another team".

In response, the National Basketball Players Association said: "We respectfully disagree with the league's decision to discipline James Harden for recent comments he made, which we believe do not violate the rule against public trade demands."

"We intend to file a grievance and have the matter heard by our

Arbitrator."

The fine relates to comments made by Harden on 14 and 17 August, when he in effect threatened to strike by refusing to play for the 76ers over their refusal to trade him.

The NBA added: "The league's investigation, which included an interview of Harden, confirmed that these comments referenced Harden's belief that the 76ers would not accommodate his request to be traded."

Harden made the controversial comments about Morey on 14 August during a promotional event in China. He said: "Daryl Morey is a liar, and I will never be a part of an organisation that he's a part of. Let me say that again: Daryl Morey is a liar, and I will never be a part of an organisation that he's a part of."

Harden said in subsequent media interviews that Morey had gone back on a promise to trade him quick-

ly earlier in the off-season.

According to ESPN, talks between the 76ers and the Clippers broke down because of the demands set by his current team, who are expecting the player to return for a training camp in September.

Harden was named the NBA's most valuable player (MVP) in 2018 while playing for the Houston Rockets, where Morey was general manager.

The pair's relationship was a key factor in Harden moving to Philadelphia in a trade which sent Ben Simmons to the Brooklyn Nets.

Harden helped the 76ers, alongside reigning NBA MVP Joel Embiid, to last season's Eastern Conference semi-finals, where they lost to rivals Boston Celtics after blowing a 3-2 lead in the series.

The regular season starts on 24 October, with the 76ers playing the Celtics in their first pre-season game on 8 October.



In brief

15 more dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 15 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 116. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Wednesday said that, among the new cases, six patients had arrived from Chaklala Cantonment, five from Potohar town urban area, three from Municipal Corporation, and one from Rawalpindi Cantonment area. He said 35 patients were admitted to City's allied hospitals, out of which 24 were confirmed cases while 77 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 82 FIRs, issued tickets to 23, sealed 14 premises, and a fine of Rs 100,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. The health officer said that dengue cases were being reported across the district while the health authority along with allied departments was making efforts to control the spread of the disease.

7,359 screened for Hepatitis

RAWALPINDI (APP): Around 7,359 persons had been screened for Hepatitis B and C during the second phase of the Local Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention (LHEAP) drive. According to District Health Authority spokesman, as many as 7,359 people had been screened for HBV and HCV in four Union Councils (UCs) - 10,11,14 and 15 of the city out of which 142 tested positive for HCV and 33 HBV from August 1 to date. He informed that 1,975 people had been immunized against the HBV while two pregnant women were also diagnosed with Hepatitis positive out of total 126 newly detected positive patients. He said that 20 health teams, five in each UCs were participating in the drive to vaccinate around 100,000 population against the deadly disease. The spokesman urged the residents to come forward and screened themselves for Hepatitis free of cost.

Fire erupts in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): A startling incident unfolded as four buses parked at the NATCO office on the back side of Sabzi Mandi police station Islamabad were engulfed in flames at 7:40 am on Tuesday and no loss of life fortunately occurred due to swift action by the police and fire brigade. A police spokesman said that swift action by the local police and fire brigade managed to douse the fire, preventing any loss of life. He said that three old defunct buses were completely damaged while one bus was partially burnt. Local law enforcement and fire brigade units sprang into action within minutes of receiving the emergency call. Firefighters battled the inferno with high-pressure hoses, successfully gaining control of the flames in a short period.

Two street criminals arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Wednesday arrested two street criminals and bike lifters and recovered Rs 110,000, two motorcycles, six mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Airport police arrested two members of a gang including Hamza, ring-leader and Danish, wanted in various cases.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah directed all the cultural and literary organizations of National Heritage and Culture Division to plan special programs to pay tribute to National heroes on Pakistan Defence Day to be observed on September 6.

Madad Ali Sindhi terms education as only way to combat challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi Wednesday termed education as the only way to combat the present-day challenges being faced by the country. Addressing the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) Part-I and II Annual Examination Result Declaration ceremony held at the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), the minister said that the country can achieve stability only by promoting education.

He emphasized ensuring transparency in the compilation of results so that bright and capable students can come forward and contribute to national development.

Madad Ali Sindhi congratulated the girl students who bagged top positions in the exams and advised the boy students to do more hard work to excel in their academic pursuits next year. The federal minister said that his ministry will devise a roadmap for the promotion of education and elevating its standard which is unfortunately deteriorating with the passage of time.

Chairman FBISE, Qaiser Alam highlighted the steps taken by FBISE to improve its working and appreciated the efforts of its staff towards the preparation of results ensuring com-

plete transparency. He also congratulated the position holder students for their hard work and commitment and advised others not to lose hope and pay more attention to their studies to achieve good positions. According to the HSSC Part-I and II 1st Annual Examination results announced during the ceremony, a total of 88381 candidates enrolled in HSSC Part-I exam and 86495 in the Part-II exam out of which 54049 and 71518 could pass the exams respectively with the overall pass percentage of 61.82 and 83.86.

According to the HSSC-I result notification, a total of 84944 regular candidates took part in the exams out of which 53313 could pass the exam against 736 private candidates out of 2507 who appeared in the exam.

As per the HSSC-II result notification, a total of 73803 regular candidates appeared in the exam out of which 63780 could pass against the 7738 private candidates out of the total 11578 who appeared in the exams. The girls bagged all the top positions in the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) Part-II 1st Annual Examination.

In the pre-medical group, Eishal Shahnoor Fatima from Punjab College Campus of Hill House Boarding School, H-11/4, Islamabad secured first position with 1075 marks while Haniya Usman from

Army Public School and College (Girls), Rawalpindi Cantt obtained second position with 1072 marks and Rida Malik from Army Public School and College Girls Pasban, Rawalpindi Cantonment stood third with 1066 marks.

In the Pre-Engineering Group, Ushba Fatima from Army Public School, Rawalpindi Cantt secured first position with 1069 marks, Ayesha Zafar from Army Public School and College, Rawalpindi Cantonment second with 1059 marks, and Zoya Ahmad from Army Public School and College for Girls, Rawalpindi got third position with 1054 marks.

In the Science General group, Hira Arif from KRL Model College for Girls, Kahuta, Rawalpindi bagged the first position with 1045 marks, Mahnoor Tarar from Army Public School and College, Askari-XIV, Rawalpindi second with 1044 marks and Ummara Amin from Islamabad Model College for Girls, I-8/4, Islamabad stood third with 1038 marks. In the Commerce group, Hamda Ashfaq and Gulshan Fatima from Punjab College, Attack Refinery Road, Rawalpindi secured first position with 1064 and 1031 marks respectively while the third position was obtained by Imaan Khan from Punjab College of Information Technology, Islamabad with 1030 marks.

Jaranwala tragedy Religious scholars, political leaders unite in Islamabad Declaration

ISLAMABAD (APP): The religious scholars representing various schools of thought and political leaders on Wednesday announced the 'Islamabad Declaration' to foster both interfaith and intra-faith harmony in response to the recent Jaranwala tragedy.

The joint conference took place at the 'Our Lady of Fatima Church' in the federal capital, where leaders from different backgrounds unequivocally condemned the appalling incident that occurred in Jaranwala and called for swift trials and exemplary punishment for those allegedly responsible for this inhumane act, underscoring their commitment to justice.

The collective leadership also issued a demand for the government to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation into the incident emphasizing to make its findings public, and to ensure transparency and accountability.

Expressing appreciation for the federal and Punjab governments, the leaders acknowledged the compensation provided to the victims' families whose homes were demolished and the allocation of funds for the rehabilitation of religious sites belong-

ing to the Christian community in the affected region.

Commending these steps, the leaders urged the relevant authorities to expedite the entire process to provide a sigh of relief to the affected community.

They were of the view that addressing the grievances of the affected individuals would contribute to the collective healing process. The religious and political leaders extended their gratitude to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Kakar and nominated Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa for their visit to the site of the incident, along with Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir's statement expressing deep concern over the disgraceful events in Jaranwala. Leading the presser, Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi clarified that the unfortunate incident in Jaranwala was not directed towards the Christian community, but rather was an incident involving Pakistan as a whole. "The incident, which resulted in the destruction of dowries of young girls, deeply affected all of us as these girls are our daughters."

Young students engaged for unveiling transformative power of recycling waste

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Urbanism (IoU) has organized an insightful and impactful Twitter Space unfolded on International Youth Day, bringing together a panel of passionate voices to discuss the profound potential of recycling waste and the pivotal role of youth in shaping a sustainable future. With a fervent focus on waste transformation and environmental stewardship, the event showcased the incredible possibilities that lie within recycling while emphasizing the urgent need for youth engagement.

The Twitter Space, a collaborative endeavor by the IoU and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (hbs), proved an unequivocal triumph, harnessing the participation of individuals from diverse strata of society. The event commenced with a resounding declaration: "There is nothing as waste in Nature!" This powerful statement set the tone for a vibrant dialogue among the participants, each hailing from diverse backgrounds and experiences, a news release said. Senior

Environmental Journalist, Zofeen Ebrahim kicked off the conversation with an array of perspectives on waste, reminding the audience that waste is a multifaceted concept. From being seen as an opportunity for profitable ventures to recognizing its potential as a resource, the dialogue sparked a dynamic exchange on waste's redefined significance. Plastic recycling emerged as a central point, with the consensus that plastic should be cyclically used to combat its adverse environmental impacts.

Project Manager of Lahore Waste Management Company, Ali Niazi chimed in to spotlight waste's latent potential, equating it to an asset that demands exploration. However, he underscored that the road to effective waste management is riddled with challenges, particularly in both developed and developing countries where funds and resources are limited. Niazi emphasized the essential practice of source segregation, urging responsible waste disposal and management at the point of origin.

Islamabad Police issues new safety guidelines for inter-district travelers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police have introduced a set of fresh safety guidelines for protecting passengers traveling inter-district and ensuring safe travel for them.

The SSPCTD, along with the Chief Traffic Officer and Zonal DPOs would ensure the implementation of these guidelines for the safety of travelers which have been introduced after a recent accident on a motorway leaving around 18 persons unidentified.

As a part of these measures, detailed information regarding passengers and their destinations will be

systematically collected from the respective bus station managers. A comprehensive daily log of passenger data will be maintained, aiding in the efficient tracking and management of travelers. Stricter enforcement of parking regulations at bus stands will be implemented, ensuring orderliness and safety for all.

The allocation of specific areas within bus stands will be done to facilitate organized passenger boarding and disembarking. An advanced geographical tagging system will be employed to register all existing bus stands within the Geographic Information

System (GIS), improving their traceability. The information of all passengers will be centrally recorded and managed through the Hotel Eye system, enhancing overall safety and security.

To monitor and maintain traffic arrangements effectively, the Safe City surveillance system will be utilized at bus stands. "These guidelines reflect the Islamabad Police's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of travelers, ultimately aiming to mitigate risks associated with inter-district journeys and ensuring a safer travel experience for all," a police spokesperson added.

Railways to procure 230 passengers coaches, 820 High Capacity Wagons

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is set to procure 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) aiming help to improve the speed of the trains and ensure adherence to fixed timings. "Out of the total, around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h," said an official in the Ministry of Railways.

He said, "Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work on the railway track, improving the speed of the locomotives to carry passengers to their respective destinations on time."

The infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I), and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped, he added. The official noted that the length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project of up-gradation of ML-I under the China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said the rolling stock being procured under this project would be capable to run at a speed of 160 km/h whereas the department had a dedicated fleet of 55 diesel-electric locomotives of 4000-4500 HP for

freight operation to cater maximum haulage at higher speed.

"The Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) system is installed on 48 stations of ML-I, to improve signaling and interlocking for higher speed and safety of train operation," the official added.

To a question, he said Pakistan Railways was a big organization comprising of around 63,000 employees and its network was spread throughout the country. The official said the employees were well cared for owing to having several welfare activities, including healthcare facilities through an intensive network of hospitals, dispensaries, and child healthcare units.

He said that provision of government accommodation according to entitlement and priority list, staff benevolent funds, benefits and incentives provided through Prime Minister's Family Assistance Package policy for deceased employees' families were part of these facilities. While the other facilities included benefits and incentives provided through policy for disabled employees' families, monthly grants to widows scale-wise, the establishment of primary and high schools, industrial schools to teach handicrafts, sports activities, pick and drop facility for schools/offices, installation of water filters plants, a special provision of five medical seats in Riphah Islamic Universities with the reduction of 50 percent in admission and tuition fees.

Girls grab all top positions in HSSC Part-II exam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Maintaining the previous trends, girls bagged all the top positions in the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) Part-II 1st Annual Examination as per the declaration of the result by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) on Wednesday.

In the pre-medical group, Eishal Shahnoor Fatima from Punjab College Campus of Hill House Boarding School, H-11/4, Islamabad secured first position with 1075 marks while Haniya Usman from Army Public School and College (Girls), Rawalpindi Cantt obtained second position with 1072 marks and Rida Malik from Army Public School and College Girls Pasban, Rawalpindi Cantonment stood third with 1066 marks.

In the Pre-Engineering Group, Ushba Fatima from Army Public School, Rawalpindi Cantt secured first position with 1069 marks, Ayesha Zafar from Army Public School and College, Rawalpindi Cantonment second with 1059 marks, and Zoya Ahmad from Army Public School and College for Girls, Rawalpindi got third position with 1054 marks.

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School and College, Askari-XIV, Rawalpindi second with 1044 marks and Ummara Amin from Islamabad Model College for Girls, I-8/4, Islamabad stood third with 1038 marks. In the Commerce group, Hamda Ashfaq and Gulshan Fatima from Punjab College, Attack Refinery Road, Rawalpindi secured first position with 1064 and 1031 marks respectively while the third position was obtained by Imaan Khan from Punjab College of Information Technology, Islamabad with 1030 marks. In the Humanities group, Hafiza Tanzeela Sehar from Askaria College (Girls Wing), Rawalpindi bagged the first position with 1018 marks, and Aafaf Tahir from Pakistan International School (Pakistan Section), Saudi Arabia got second position with 1003 marks.

The third position was obtained by Saleeha Nawaz from Fauji Foundation College for Girls, Rawalpindi with 1000 marks.

According to the HSSC Part-I and II 1st Annual Examination results announced here in a ceremony, a total of 88381 candidates enrolled in HSSC Part-I exam and 86495 in the Part-II exam out of which 54049 and 71518 could pass the exams respectively with the overall pass percentage of 61.82 and 83.86.

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of which 53313 could pass the exam against 736 private candidates out of 2507 who appeared in the exam.

As per the HSSC-II result notification, a total of 73803 regular candidates appeared in the exam out of which 63780 could pass against the 7738 private candidates out of the total 11578 who appeared in the exams. The result has already been conveyed through SMS to all the candidates, who have provided their cellular phone numbers in their admission forms.

The result will also be available on SMS unified code 5050, for which the candidates are required to send SMS in the format FB<space>[roll number]. The results cards of regular candidates are being dispatched to their respective institutions and those of Ex/Private candidates within the country are being sent to the addresses given by them in their admission forms and those of overseas candidates are being sent to heads of institutions from where they appeared.

All those candidates whose result has been withheld for fee/eligibility are advised in their own interest to resolve these discrepancies immediately enabling the board to declare their result. This year 28 unfair means cases were reported in HSSC Part-I and 27 in Part II. All the cases have been decided by adopting a judicious procedure and allowing personal hearings to all the concerned.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi press the button to announce result during Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Result Declaration ceremony of HSSC Part I & II, 1st Annual Exam 2023.

Ex-king's Mercedes-Benz wins

KABUL (Agencies): A spectacular Mercedes-Benz 540 K Special Roadster, first owned by Afghanistan's former king Zahir Shah won the coveted title of 'Best of Show' at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance car show in the US. This 540 K Special Roadster was ordered in May 1937 by Mohammed Zahir Shah, then king of Afghanistan. It was delivered in September and owned by the king until he gifted it to his son-in-law in the UK in 1950.

SC clears 150,000 cases

KABUL (Agencies): Officials of the Supreme Court said in their government accountability report to the nation that in the past year almost 150,000 cases were solved by this institution, of which 120,000 cases were handled by the Primary Courts, and 22,000 cases by the Appellate Courts. According to Abdul Malik Haqqani, the administrative deputy of the Supreme Court, in the past year, 2,874 cases related to women's rights have been resolved.

Passport distribution for Afghan citizens begins

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the beginning of the process of distributing passports to Afghan immigrants in Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. Officials of the ministry said that they are trying to resume this process in Uzbekistan and China in order to solve the challenges of immigrants. "You know that Afghans in foreign countries face various problems, the most important of which is the problem of passports or documents. In the short

term, we were able to activate the system in Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, and in the near future we will activate the system in Uzbekistan and then in China," said Mohammad Shoaib Baryali, an official of the Foreign Ministry. Meanwhile, some Afghan refugees in Iran expressed their satisfaction with the passport distribution process at the Afghan consulate in this country. "They said that they are happy that electronic passports have started to work, although it has been

reduced from 30 dollars to 20 dollars, and we ask for it to be reduced more. People are really having problems with these 20 dollars," said Latifa Stanikzai, an Afghan refugee in Iran. Some immigrant rights activists in Iran consider the start of this process a good move for Afghan immigrants. "Immigrants face various challenges, especially Afghan students who were prevented from continuing their education, and also businessmen and travelers who intend to travel to other places," said Asifa

Stanikzai, an immigrant rights activist. "The Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan should provide permanent passport distribution facilities services to the people," said Mohammad Khan Mohammadzai, an immigrant rights activist. Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nearly 1,000 passports are printed for consulates every day, and in the past year, they have distributed 300,000 passports to Afghan immigrants in other countries.

No journalists killed in past year in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Information and Culture Khairullah Khairkhwah said during the ministry's accountability program that not a single journalist was killed or injured in Afghanistan over the past year, and that the ministry is committed to solving the problems of journalists across Afghanistan. "We have not had a case of a journalist being killed or injured in the past year, and this is good news," said Khairkhwah. However, in response to the imprisonment of eight journalists in five provinces of the country, he said that the arrest of these people has nothing to do with their work as journalists. He also said in the past year, the ministry's Culture and Arts Department has surveyed 100 historical places in 16 provinces of the country. In an op-ed published by UK's newspaper, Mark Malloch Brown, a former UN deputy secretary-general, said some 28.8 million Afghans require immediate assistance, up from 18.4 million in August 2021; 6 million are one step from famine. He added that women and girls have been doubly hit by both the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's rollback of their rights — including to work and learn — and wider crises of poverty and hunger that harm them the most. "Once more Afghanistan is isolated: denied diplomatic recognition, aid drying up, sanctioned and its assets frozen. In the US and Britain, many are all too keen to brush the policy failures the country represents under the proverbial

Ex-UN official: West must stop playing 'Great Game' in Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): The West must stop pursuing "Great Game" politics and for once put the people of Afghanistan first, a former senior UN official has said. In an op-ed published by UK's newspaper, Mark Malloch Brown, a former UN deputy secretary-general, said some 28.8 million Afghans require immediate assistance, up from 18.4 million in August 2021; 6 million are one step from famine. He added that women and girls have been doubly hit by both the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's rollback of their rights — including to work and learn — and wider crises of poverty and hunger that harm them the most. "Once more Afghanistan is isolated: denied diplomatic recognition, aid drying up, sanctioned and its assets frozen. In the US and Britain, many are all too keen to brush the policy failures the country represents under the proverbial

carpet; best forgotten before the next elections," Brown said. He said that this is also part of a longer cycle of geopolitical and regional competition that has consistently failed to put the Afghan people first. "Whether the policy has been proxy war or neglect, invasion or sponsorship of insurgents, surge or draw-down, outsiders have consistently ill-served the country's people in a way that has typically led to the next chapter in the tragedy," Brown said. He said that prioritizing ordinary Afghans involves dealing with the IEA, even if that means making nominal concessions to it. "A contact group of Western powers, Afghanistan's neighbors, the Taliban (IEA) and ideally Afghan civil society might thus pursue goals including a more humane counter-narcotics strategy, improved flows of aid, especially

to women and girls, and much greater clarity on sanctions to encourage foreign investment in areas such as irrigation. It might engage with Afghan actors beyond the Taliban, sowing the seeds of a more inclusive polity," he said. Brown said that all parties have a vital interest in preventing the country from plunging over the edge. "Famine, state failure and even new conflict in Afghanistan would further destabilize Pakistan and the wider region, and make further refugees flee the country. Afghans now make up the largest cohort attempting to cross the English Channel." "This presents Western and other leaders with a simple choice: keep pursuing 'Great Game' politics or for once put the people of Afghanistan first. More than 30 years of the former have got us where we are. A new approach is long overdue," he added.

Two years of education denied: Afghanistan girls forced into seminaries and marriages

KABUL (Khaama Press): It has been two years since the de facto administration took control of Afghanistan, and various segments of society continue grappling with this political shift's impact. However, what the young female students endure goes beyond mere deprivation — it is a profound and unjust cruelty. Following the transition from the republican system to the establishment of the Taliban regime on August 15, 2021, schools ceased admitting girls beyond the sixth grade, and their expected reopening within these two years remains indefinitely deferred. The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan led to the closure of schools and universities. Also, it resulted in the displacement of numerous women from government and non-government positions, causing them to lose their jobs. Farzanah, an 11th-grade student, speaking to the Khaama Press News Agency, said: "I have been living at home for two years, and I have fallen behind in my studies. I dreamed of becoming a successful doctor, but now I can only attend a religious



school." This student strongly asserts that women possess equal rights to pursue education and employment in society, just like men. However, the unfortunate reality is that the lack of opportunities for girls has led some of them into situations like arranged marriages and enrollment in religious schools. Women's rights activists view these practices as hazardous and limiting the progress of women's rights. Julia Parsi, a civil activist in Afghanistan's women's movement, highlights the grim reality: "Afghan girls suffer from poor mental and emotional well-being due to rampant forced marriages. Tragically, instances of girls taking their own lives

are being reported across various provinces." Ms Parsi asserts that the Taliban government is actively attempting to exclude women from social and economic spheres. It is important to note that the recent decision of the caretaker administration in Afghanistan resulted in the closure of women's beauty salons across the country which more than 60,000 women lost their jobs. Leila Basim, a women's rights activist and protester, asserts that barring girls from education for two years severely harms women. Ms Basim further highlights that Afghanistan's ruling ideology opposes women's progress and aims to exclude them from soci-

ety. Haider Bar, Human Rights Watch's women's division head, tells Associated Press that Afghan women's lives have drastically transformed under Taliban rule in the past two years. She added that the situation in Afghanistan remains dire, with ongoing concerning developments. Every week, the Taliban introduces new policies, including the recent closure of women's hair salons. Despite claims by Taliban officials that women's rights are upheld within Islamic laws, the reality does not align. Discussions about reopening schools and universities have spanned two years without materializing. This denial of education has sparked global outrage. The United Nations has labelled it "cruel," while Human Rights Council experts have condemned it as "gender apartheid."

Supreme leader of IEA releases decree

KABUL (Agencies): Based on a new decree from the Amir-ul -Momineen Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, some crucial measures have been approved for boosting trade, increasing exports and creating sustainable relations with the region and the rest of the world. The directives of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Emirate are as follow: Given the commercial and economic interests of the country, relevant ministries and departments of the Islamic Emirate are obliged to provide the necessary facilities for commercial activities in ports, crossing points and highways. Officials and employees of concerned ministries and departments in the capital and provinces are obliged to adopt a positive engagement policy with private sector activists and respond to their requests on a timely manner, in accordance with the legislative documents of the country. The ministries and departments of the Islamic Emirate are obliged to use domestic products, if possible, for the purpose of promotion of domestic industries and self-sufficiency.

Herat residents irked by prolonged power outages

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of western Herat province are complaining about hours-long electricity outages in this hot summer. Syed Hujatullah, a resident of 3rd police district of Herat city, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the power utility should properly provide electricity to all areas of the city. Mohammad Qasim, a resident of the 4th police district of Herat city, said electricity was suspended for up to four hours during day and night, causing them a lot of problems. Safiullah, another resident, told Pajhwok the power utility was duty-bound to solve the electricity shortage problem in the province. According to him, people face many problems in the absence of electricity including lack of drinking water. "Power outages have increased these days and we ask the power utility to solve this problem as soon as possible so that people avoid problems," he added. Pajhwok tried to contact Da Afghanistan Barishna Shirkat (DABS) officials for comment, but did not succeed. However, the local administration acknowledged the problem, blaming it on warm weather and high use of electricity by the city dwellers. Nisar Ahmad Elyas, the governor's spokesman, asked residents to save electricity. Elyas added that the government was obliged to respond to people's requests to solve the electricity problem as soon as possible. Electricity in Herat is mostly imported from Iran and Turkmenistan. According to DABS, Herat needs 300 megawatts of electricity and currently 70 percent of the electricity is maintained and there is a shortage of 30 percent. Masoud Yasini, an expert on economic affairs in Herat, said people should make proper use of water heaters installed at homes.

Arrest of Iranian reporter sparks reactions

KABUL (TOLONews): In a statement, the Afghanistan Journalists Center expressed concern over the arrest of Mohammad Hossein Velayati, an Iranian photojournalist, and asked the authorities of the Islamic Emirate to release this photojournalist. The organization also called for an end to the practice of "arresting and harassing" journalists in Afghanistan. Based on information from the Afghanistan Journalists Center, at least 11 journalists have been arrested in different regions of the country in the past two weeks, including nine people who are still in prison. The information from the Afghan Journalists' Center indicates that at least four other journalists who were arrested in recent months are also in prison, and the total number of journalists and media workers currently imprisoned in the country is 13. Meanwhile, Iran Ambassador to Kabul Hassan Kazemi Qomi, in a conversation with the Iranian media, also demanded the release of the photographer and journalist of the country from the prison of the Islamic Emirate in Kabul. Qomi said that the Iranian authorities in Kabul are following up on the

matter and he hopes that the dialogue for the release of this Iranian journalist will reach a conclusion. However, the Islamic Emirate has not yet made any comment about the arrest of the Iranian journalist. Yesterday, Tasnim news agency, an Iranian "semi-official" news outlet, announced on social media the arrest of its photographer and editor by the Islamic Emirate. Tasnim news agency said the Iranian photojournalist was arrested by the Islamic Emirate this week while returning to Iran at the Kabul airport "without any clear reason".

Education denied to 80% of school-aged girls

KABUL (Khaama Press): According to a recent report by Care International, a staggering 80 per cent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women are currently being denied access to education in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the sole country globally to enforce a ban on girls' and women's education, resulting in a substantial economic toll of approximately \$5.4 billion. "Currently, 80 per cent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women — 2.5 million people are out of school," the report reads. A disheartening reality emerges from Afghanistan, where over 700 days have elapsed since schools were shuttered for female students beyond the sixth grade. The persistent closure has left these students uncertain, with their educational future in the balance. In this prolonged period

of educational standstill, the plight of these young women underscores the deep-seated challenges that Afghan society faces. The lack of clarity surrounding the resumption of their studies not only hampers individual growth but also perpetuates a cycle of gender inequality and impedes the nation's progress. Since the Taliban assumed control over Afghanistan in August 2021, there has been a disheartening series of actions targeting women's rights. The initial move involved the prohibition of girls progressing beyond the sixth grade in schools, and an even more restrictive measure followed this in December 2022, which effectively halted women's access to higher education at universities. Compounding these restrictions, another distressing development

emerged as the Taliban authorities forbade women from engaging with international aid agencies, including organizations like the United Nations. Recently, this trend of regressive policies escalated as the operation of women's beauty salons was abruptly halted across the country. This decision resulted in the termination of over 60,000 employment opportunities for women. Despite the vehement criticism voiced by both international and domestic entities, the Taliban leadership appears steadfast in their persistence to curtail women's rights, whether it pertains to education or employment opportunities. This stance has drawn widespread condemnation, emphasizing the urgent need for Sustained advocacy and efforts to restore Afghan women's rights.

UN applauds Afghan women entrepreneurs' economic activities

KABUL (Khaama Press): On World Entrepreneurs Day, the UN expressed its support for Afghan women entrepreneurs throughout Afghanistan. The organization praised their efforts in job creation and contribution to economic growth. "On World Entrepreneurs Day, we praise the amazing Afghan women entrepreneurs we work with nationwide. We proudly support them and their drive to innovate, create jobs, participate and contribute to economic growth against all odds," said UN Women Afghanistan on its social media platform X. Amidst daunting challenges, women entrepreneurs have become the bedrock of the economy. These women have excelled across diverse domains, from modest handicraft ventures to expansive cross-sector enterprises. Their businesses create local jobs and promote self-sustainability, bolstering the nation's economic resilience. The United Nations' acknowledgement of their contributions underscores their far-reaching influence. Nonetheless, Afghan women entrepreneurs have voiced their concerns, expressing that the UN's



support for them is lacking. "The United Nations only has luxury offices, which costs a huge amount per month, but unfortunately, it does not support women in the slightest, and in such a situation, I personally, as an entrepreneur, expect the United Nations to cooperate with Afghan women entrepreneurs," according to Nafisa Danesh, a member of the Women's Chamber of Commerce. According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce data, government support drives thousands of women entrepreneurs to invest across diverse sectors.

The Women's Chamber of Commerce boasts 560 members. Nationally, approximately 8,000 Afghan women are actively engaged in diverse business sectors, primarily focusing on handicrafts, agriculture, ealth, services, food, industry, and mining, as stated by the MoIC spokesperson Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzada. "The presence of women in the investment and economic fields of the country can increase the food security of families and limit the scope of poverty in the country," Akhundzada added. Since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, they

have implemented repressive measures restricting women to their homes and enforcing stringent policies. Recent statistics indicate that around 60,000 women have already lost their jobs due to the Taliban's recent edict, which prohibits the operation of women's beauty salons. Moreover, girls and women, including secondary schools and universities, are prohibited from pursuing education. Additionally, women are denied opportunities to work with aid agencies and are barred from involvement with United Nations organizations.



KARACHI: Traders chanting slogans as they protest against rising inflation in Provincial Capital.

President for exploring new horizons with export compatible products

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed upon the business and industrialist communities to explore new avenues in the global market by introducing innovative value addition goods to supplement country's exports, besides enhancing their outreach in the world.

The president was addressing 2nd Achievement Recognition Ceremony of Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) which was arranged at the Aiwane Sadr to award the best performing businessmen and women.

The president opined that there was no doubt that the government was facilitating the businessmen and traders, but it was the prime onus on traders that they should navigate through all hurdles and carve a path for the growth of their export business.

He said that due to environmental changes, the world was looking for organic foods and in this arena, the country's exporters could find advantageous leeway, besides, the designers jewellery was another category in which the women could showcase

their goods to the world.

The president while appreciating the inclusion of women in the industry and business sectors, underlined the need for encouraging and supporting the females to join these sectors by creating a conducive environment. The president further maintained that different countries of the world made progress on the basis of intellectual development, adding an economy could prosper if the system survived the fast paced global changes.

He said from the history it was evident that traders always carved their path with innovative ideas. Pakistani IT freelancers were among the top global ranking due to their dependence on their abilities, he said, adding that exporters and traders should take a leaf out of their book to boost their business. Citing the Netherlands, the president said that it had become the world's second largest food exporter.

"The world is ready to purchase and the need is to invest in these areas," he added. The president also stressed upon the industrialists to employ the disable persons under 4 percent allocated quota, so that they could become self dependence and a

contribute as useful members of the society. Under the Islamic teachings, the well to do business people should provide jobs opportunities to the destitute and deprived segments of society as such noble deeds could become a source for flourishing of their businesses, he observed.

The president said that banks had also provided loans facilities to women entrepreneurs on a very affordable rates, but regretted that such a facility was not fully availed. Speaking on the occasion, President SCCI Sajid Hussain Tarrar said that businessmen and industrialists were not only contributing towards the country's economy with exports, but also providing jobs to manpower. He said with worth \$230 million exports annually, the SCCI was a glaring example of one of the major contributors in the country's economy.

SCCI office bearers, Chaudhry Aamir Atta Bajwa and Mian Tariq Yaqoob, in their remarks, stressed upon continuation of economic policies with better decisions. Earlier, the president gave away awards among the top industrialists, traders and exporters.

Constitutional timeframe for elections

PHC orders CEC, Secy ECP for comments

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Secretary Election Commission and all provincial members to submit a reply regarding the delimitation of constituencies across Pakistan as well as the holding of general election while adjourned further hearing till 11th September, on Wednesday.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Dr. Khursheed Iqbal heard writ petition filed Nadeem Ahmad Advocate against Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) notification issued on 17th August regarding the delimitation of constituencies under the new census.

The counsel Ali Azeem Advocate argued that ECP notification stated that the commission along with Statistic Bureau of Pakistan and other relevant departments will ensure delimitation which will be completed on 4th December.

The delimitation procedure will cause delay in general elections from 90 days which is constitutional obligation and Supreme Court of Pakistan has declared in election for Punjab's Assembly case that ECP shouldn't take any move may cause delay in holding polls as per stipulated timeframe, the counsel argued.

The counsel further argued that ECP's notification is illegal because the process will cause delay in holding of general election, however, Justice Arshad Ali inquired about submission of identical case before SCP.

The counsel informed that a petition has been filed before SCP in this regard but number isn't allotted to the case, however, Assistant Attorney General Iltaf Ahmad informed that three different cases are submitted before Apex Court but he didn't have the record of the cases.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Dr.

Khursheed Iqbal ordered respondents to submit comments as well as directed petitioner to submit record of cases filed at SCP while adjourned further hearing till 11th September.

The similar PHC bench has disposed-off writ petition of former Member Provincial Assembly Mujahid Khan following the submission record of cases registered against him. Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad Chamkani and counsel for petitioner Shah Faisal Ottomankhel appeared before PHC while the petitioner seeking record of cases registered against former MPA.

Additional Advocate General informed that two First Information Reports are registered against former MPA Mujahid Khan by Anti-corruption and added that applicant is absconder in the cases while argued that the now counsel should disclose petitioner's place after provision of record while PHC has disposed-of the writ in this regard.

Trial court hastened

(Continued from Page 1)

ECP too could only conduct an inquiry within a fixed time. "Action can be taken within 120 days after submission of financial statements," he highlighted, adding that only the NA speaker could send a reference to the ECP, not a member.

The reference against the PTI chief, Khosa continued, was sent after 120 days. At that, Justice Mandokhel interjected that the petitioner's case was against the IHC order and not the legality of the reference against Imran. "Who can be remanded now that the trial court case is over?" the judge asked. "How will this case impact the main appeal against the conviction?"

In his response, Khosa said the court would have to "rewind the hands of the clock back to the previous position". However, the CJP remarked, "A building constructed on faulty foundation cannot be demolished every time." He also asked if the petitioner's argument was that the ECP's complaint in the trial court — filed on Oct 21 — was not maintainable.

"Our stance is that the Toshakhana complaint should have first been sent to the magistrate," Khosa pointed out. "According to you, the magistrate conducts the initial inquiry and then the sessions court holds the trial," the chief justice asked. At this, Justice Mandokhel explained that the law states a magistrate would review the complaint and then send it to the sessions court.

Imran's appeal, instituted through Advocate Khawaja Haris Ahmed, requests the apex court to suspend the proceedings before the trial court hearing the Toshakhana case. The appeal contended that IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, while remanding the case to the trial judge, misconstrued the submission made on behalf of the

counsel to remand the case to any trial judge other than ASJ Humayun Dilawar.

"Yet the high court remanded the case back to the trial court without affording the counsel to separately submit arguments on merits regarding the application for the transfer of the case. "Moreover, the high court also erred in law while remanding the case regarding challenge to the jurisdiction of ASI to proceed with the complaint on merits for the decision afresh on the grounds that the decisions earlier rendered by the trial court was 'curious and shoddy' since it did not address the essential arguments of the petitioner's counsel," the appeal argued.

It added: "The manner in which the high court passed the judgement was in breach of the fundamental rights of the petitioner since the record showed the high court order was not passed with due application of the mind. The petition also sought transfer of the case on the basis of alleged bias; primarily, on the grounds that the charge was framed against the petitioner in haste and improper fashion and also the contentions of the petitioner in various applications have not been decided correctly.

Meanwhile, Imran, through his lawyer, filed a fresh petition in the SC earlier in the morning seeking the transfer of all cases in which he is involved before the IHC to the high courts in Lahore or Peshawar. The petitioner claimed that the IHC CJ was biased against him and was trying to keep him behind bars to prevent him from contesting the upcoming general elections. The case, filed by ruling party lawmakers, is based on a criminal complaint filed by the ECP.

The case alleges that Imran had "deliberately concealed" details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana — a repository where presents handed to government officials from

foreign officials are kept — during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.

Imran has faced a number of legal issues over his retention of gifts. The issue also led to his disqualification by the ECP. On Oct 21, 2022, the ECP concluded that the former premier had indeed made "false statements and incorrect declarations" regarding the gifts. The watchdog's order had said Imran stood disqualified under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution.

Subsequently, the ECP had approached the Islamabad sessions court with a copy of the complaint, seeking proceedings against Imran under criminal law for allegedly misleading officials about the gifts he received from foreign dignitaries during his tenure as the prime minister. On May 10, Imran was indicted in the case. However, on July 4, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had stayed the proceeding and directed ADSJ Dilawar to re-examine the matter in seven days, keeping in view eight legal questions he framed to decide the maintainability of the Toshakhana reference.

The questions had included whether the complaint was filed on behalf of the ECP by a duly authorised person, whether the ECP's decision of Oct 21, 2022, was a valid authorisation to any officer of ECP to file a complaint, and whether the question of authorisation was a question of fact and evidence and could be ratified subsequently during the course of proceedings. Finally, on July 9, ADSJ Dilawar while ruling that the reference was maintainable, revived the stalled proceedings and summoned the witnesses for testimony.

IHC accepts plea seeking removal of Judge Asim

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has accepted an application seeking removal of Civil Judge Asim Hafeez whose wife is the main accused in housemaid Rizwana torture case. IHC Chief Justice, Justice Aamer Farooq on Wednesday conducted proceedings on the petition filed by President Civil Society, Islamabad chapter, Abdullah Malik.

Accepting the plea for hearing, the court issued notices to the Federal Government and Advocate General Office. During the hearing, CJ Farooq called Deputy Attorney General Ahsan Raza and the state attorney to the rostrum. The judge remarked that though the matter of removing a civil judge is an administrative affair, we could look at the judicial side too.

We have received a detailed application in this regard, the CJ said adding that the Federation must look into the cases of torture on children and child labour. He said before this case, several other cases including the little Tayyaba torture case came to light. Saying this, the judge issued notices to the Federation and AG office.

The state counsel requested the court to provide him with a copy of the application so that he court prepare his arguments. Later, the Islamabad High Court adjourned the case for an indefinite period of time. Civil Judge Asim Hafeez's wife Sonia Asim is currently on judicial remand in the Rizwana torture case. And the Lahore High Court has made Civil Judge Asim an OSD following his wife's trial.

Court approves Awan's bail

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Prominent lawyer and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Babar Awan on Wednesday approached an accountability court seeking protective bail in the National Crime Agency (NCA) £190 million scandal.

Accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir heard the case and approved interim bail of Awan in the NCA case till September 5. The accountability court stopped NAB from arresting PTI leader till Sept 5 and issued a notice to the anti-graft watchdog.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched an investigation against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi and others for the alleged gain of hundreds of canals of land in the name of Al Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer. As per the charges, the former prime minister and others accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion — 190 million pounds at the time — sent by Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the government. The PTI chief registered Trust for Al-Qadir University Project on Dec 26, 2019.

Floods: 100,000 people evacuated in Punjab

KASUR (PPI): Around 100,000 people have been evacuated from flooded villages in Pakistan's Punjab province, emergency services said on Wednesday. Several hundred villages and thousands of acres of cropland in the central province were inundated when the Sutlej River burst its banks on Sunday.

The head of Punjab's government, Mohsin Naqvi, said that monsoon rains had prompted authorities in India to release excess reservoir water into the Sutlej River, causing flooding downstream on the Pakistani side of the border. "The flood waters came a couple of days ago and all our houses were submerged. We walked all the way here on foot with great difficulty," 29-year-old Kashif Mehmood, who fled with his wife and three children to a relief camp, told media on Tuesday.

The summer monsoon brings South Asia 70-80 percent of its annual rainfall between June and September every year. It is vital for the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security in a region of around two billion people — but it also brings landslides and floods that lead to frequent evacuations.

"We have rescued 100,000 people and transferred them to safer places," Farooq Ahmad, spokesman for the Punjab emergency services, told media on Wednesday. More than 175 people have died in Pakistan in rain-related incidents since the monsoon season began in late June, mainly due to electrocution and buildings collapsing, emergency services have reported.

"There is five or six feet (1.5-1.8 metres) of water accumulated over the roads. The only route that could have been used to come and go is now under water. This 15- or 16-kilometre route is now being covered by boat so that we can rescue people," Muhammad Amin, a local doctor volunteering at a relief camp, told media on Tuesday. The Punjab disaster management agency warned that forecasted monsoon rains could exacerbate the flooding in the coming days.

Pakistan is still recovering from the devastating floods that inundated nearly one-third of the country in 2022, affecting more than 33 million people. Scientists have said climate change is making seasonal rains heavier and more unpredictable. Pakistan,

which has the world's fifth-largest population, is responsible for less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to officials, but is highly vulnerable to extreme weather exacerbated by global warming.

Flood submerges more villages in Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar: Big flood torrents have caused destruction in more villages of Arifwala, Pakpattan and Bahawalnagar.

Floodwater inundated more villages in Arifwala. Water torrents have submerged several kilometers area in Arifwala. Scenes of destruction could be witnessed in a vast vicinity of the district. Land connection of many areas was cut off from other areas due to damaged and flooded roads. Crops standing over thousands of acres of land was destroyed by floodwater. Thousands of people were being shifted to safer places.

Meanwhile in Pakpattan, the Sutlej water continued playing havoc. The floodwater devastated dozens of villages submerging hundreds of houses under water. Residents of the area were shifting their families and belongings to avoid loss. District administration had set up shanty towns for the flood victims along the river. Six shanty towns had been set up for the displaced families. However, the shanty towns looked deserted due to lack of facilities for the flood victims. People claimed these shanty towns were made only for photo sessions.

In Manchanabad, Sutlej River had high flood level at the Baba Farid Bridge. Land connection of more than 150 settlements was cut off from other areas due to flood torrents. Fields and passageways were seen submerged under 7-8 feet floodwater. People were trapped in their houses. An emergency rescue operation was underway in the area.

On the other hand, the water level in Sutlej River at Bhokan Pattan was continuously rising. After 35 years, a big flood torrent was passing through Bhokan Pattan area of Bahawalnagar. The water level at Head Sulaimanki was 1,55,330 cusecs. Breaches in the protective dykes and rapid flow of water have inundated several villages of Chavika, Mari Mian Sahib and Santhika. Residents were moving from affected areas to safer places.

Saudi Arabia storm brings lightning, fierce winds to Makkah

MAKKAH (Agencies): Fierce storms closed schools on Wednesday in Saudi Arabia's Makkah region, home to Islam's holiest site, the Grand Mosque, which was lashed by heavy rains and wind overnight, witnesses said.

As pilgrims tried to circumambulate the Kaaba, the giant black cube towards which all Muslims pray, a bolt of lightning struck the iconic Fairmont Makkah Clock Royal Tower hotel, illuminating the night sky. The storm brought gale-force winds exceeding 80 kilometres per hour, Hussein al-Qahtani, spokesman for the National Centre for Meteorology, told AFP.

The conditions were similar to a 2015 storm that felled a crane at the Grand Mosque, killing more than 100 people and injuring hundreds more, Qahtani said. No casualties were reported in storm. Makkah resident Abu Mayyada told AFP he was out buying cigarettes and petrol when "everything went black in front of me" as the worst of the storm hit.

"Suddenly I lost control over the vehicle. I couldn't see anything so I started listening to the [Holy] Quran on the radio. I didn't understand what was happening," he said. The Makkah neighbourhood of Al-Kakkiah recorded 45 millimetres of rain within 24 hours, the meteorology centre shared in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Footage shared with AFP by Makkah residents showed pilgrims outside the Grand Mosque who were toppled over by the wind, which also sent crowd barriers sliding across the rain-slicked floor. "The scene was very scary," said Makkah resident Mohammed, who was grocery shopping at the height of the storm. "Everything happened within a few minutes, when it started raining in a crazy way."

JIT to get Bushra Bibi's audios forensic tested

ISLAMABAD (INP): A Joint Investigation Team (JIT) has decided to send two audio recordings for forensic test reportedly of former first lady Bushra Bibi after her denial that the voice is not her's, it is learnt.

The JIT of the capital police is investigating the Toshakhana case registered against the former prime minister and his wife Bushra Bibi. Last week, when Bushra Bibi appeared before the JIT, two audios were played before her and she denied that it was her voice, claiming that it had been fabricated.

Both the audios had gone viral on social media. In one of the audios the ex-first lady is allegedly heard rebuking the person on the other end for taking photographs of items sent to Banigala from Toshakhana. In the other audio, she was talking to former special assistant to the prime minister Zulfikar Bukhari about the watch which is at the center of the Toshakhana controversy. It may be recalled that Bushra Bibi appeared before the JIT on Aug 15 and was questioned for 20 minutes. The JIT asked 20 questions and she answered all of them.

We will fight extremism

(Continued from Page 1)

we will transform. We will bring optimism. We will do it collectively. Let's start listening to each other. We will listen to you and you should listen to the state," he asked the business community. Rubbishing the notions of brain drain, the prime minister said in the past, India also faced the same issue but the same people returned to their homeland as an asset.

Exemplifying the remarkable distinction achieved by the doctors of Pakistani origin in the United States, he said the overseas Pakistanis always rescued the country whenever it faced the crisis of foreign exchange. He advised businessmen to adopt the best business practices without giving up the larger good for petty interests. "Let us discover the Pakistani dream. Let us discover the Pakistani branding," he remarked. He called for devising a mechanism for tax reforms, low-cost power, foreign exchange issues, and international agreements and assured the government would make all-out efforts to do the doable.

The prime minister lauded the services of Saylani Foundation for carrying out the responsibilities of food and human resources which otherwise was the responsibility of the state. "If Saylani can do it, why can't the state of Pakistan do it with huge machinery?" he questioned.

Premier for making climate change part of every discourse: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq urged all the political parties and intelligentsia to take climate change as a national cause and make it part of every discourse.

"The climate change advocacy should be taken

as a national cause. I request all the political parties, intelligentsia and civil society to make the climate change part of every discourse," the prime minister said addressing the launching ceremony of the tree plantation drive here. He said Pakistan faced the consequences in the form of floods last year despite just one percent of its contribution towards the mismanagement of climate change.

He said it was high time the country contributed to mitigating the ills done to climate change and urged the global community to play its part by providing the required support in resources and attention. He said unfortunately Islamic beliefs had been confined to just worship which, otherwise, was just one aspect. Islam also preached human rights as well as the protection of natural habitats, he added.

Calling the abuse of natural habitat a denial of blessing and a crime, he viewed that intervention and rearrangement of climate change disturbed the Nature's soul which resulting in natural calamities like floods and tsunamis. "The natural disasters are the expression of the Nature's discomfort," he remarked.

PM assures resolution of issues facing Karachi business community: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar assured that the interim government would make maximum efforts to address the issues faced by the business community of Karachi.

The prime minister, talking to the businessmen coming from the small and medium enterprises, said keeping in view the limited time and mandate, the caretaker government would put in all-out efforts to

make a beginning for a new Karachi and Pakistan. He said Karachi, once a "romance" and vacation destination for the people of Balochistan lost its grandeur and suffered from economic and social issues. He said the Sindh capital used to be home to multiple ethnicities and cultures representing the whole of Pakistan. He said the interim government would strive to revive the Pakistan which Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal had dreamed of.

He said considering the poor treatment of minorities in the neighboring country, the people of Pakistan should be thankful for the foresightedness of Quaid-e-Azam who had struggled for a separate homeland. The prime minister said mutual respect, observance of rights and obedience of the Quranic teachings could help resolve almost 92% of the issues confronting the country. He assured the business community that the Sindh chief secretary and other government machinery would keep them on board for formulating a mechanism to resolve their issues.

PPP delegation calls on prime minister: A delegation comprising the leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here. The members of the delegation apprised the prime minister of the problems confronting Sindh particularly Karachi.

The delegation consisted of Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Qaim Ali Shah, Syed Murad Ali Shah and Saeed Ghani. The prime minister assured the delegation that his government would utilise maximum resources for early resolution of the issues.