

PTI leader Iftikhar held
ISLAMABAD (PPI): Senior PTI leader Dr Iftikhar Durrani was arrested by police from his residence in Islamabad during the wee hours of Thursday. The police raided the house of Iftikhar Durrani, who had served as special assistant to prime minister during PTI government, and took him into custody without any resistance. After arresting Iftikhar Durrani, the police party has shifted him to an undisclosed location.

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PPP allotted Sword symbol
ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday allotted Pakistan People's Party (PPP) the Sword symbol for next general elections. PPP General Secretary Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari appeared before the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the allotment of the election symbol. Upon Bukhari's request, the ECP allotted the symbol to the PPP.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launching Prime Minister Digital Youth Hub.

PM launches Digital Youth Hub

— says health insurance for journalists, artists a step forward to equitable Pakistan

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday launched a Digital Youth Hub portal to provide integrated and one-stop guidance on the youth-related initiatives launched by the government.

In his address, the prime minister congratulated the youth on the launch of the facility and assured that the government was expanding Youth Program across the country as laptops and business loans were being disbursed across the country. He told the gathering that Rs 30 billion had already been disbursed by the banks to youth in the form of business loans. He said Rs 80 billion had been specified for youth-related initiatives including IT programs, freelancing, IT incubators and others, besides another Rs 5 billion allocated for sports projects.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said he had replicated his idea of an Endowment Fund at the federal level as an Education Endowment Fund had been set up with Rs5 billion funding. He said the facilities like laptops and other funding initiatives were only meant for the high achievers of the public sector universities. The prime minister asked the youngsters to register themselves at the portal to avail the available facilities.

The prime minister thanked SAPM Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Lt General Senator Abdul Qayyum, vice-chancellors, and members of the Youth Parliament for their efforts to uplift youth. He assured the participants of continuing his efforts to empower youth to make Pakistan a great country. The prime minister told the Azerbaijan Ambassador, also attending the ceremony, that a horticultural delegation from his country had visited

ed Islamabad and shared experiences with the CDA which would be replicated in Islamabad.

As the prime minister asked youth representatives to express their emotions, Abdul Hakeem of Youth Parliament and Muhammad Shehzad of Pakistan Youth Council arose to laud the leadership of the prime minister for steering the country out of economic crisis within 15 months period. They spoke against the efforts to fan polarisation in society and urged the youth to utilise their energies for productive causes. Both of the youth leaders assured the prime minister of their role in the country's development and resolved to fully back the government in any cause of nation-building. Special Assistant to PM Shaza Fatima Khawaja told the gathering that the government had allocated Rs 5 billion for skill development and as much amount for sports-related programs.

She said the Digital Youth Hub was the culmination of all of the prime minister's initiatives for the youth he had taken during last few months which were actually the manifestation of Shehbaz Speed. She said the Portal was the one-stop shop and mobile application providing guidance on all initiatives like laptops, scholarships, and loans. In his address, Senator Abdul Qayyum said the youth of Pakistan were enlightened and read out Quaid-e-Azam's sayings apprising youth of their responsibilities for national development. He said the country could never achieve progress without skill-training its youth. He said in its respective tenures, the PML-N government built efficient infrastructure and also forged friendly ties with the international world.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the introduc-

tion of a health insurance facility for journalists and artists was a step forward to achieving the milestone of an equitable Pakistan as dreamt by Quaid-e-Azam.

He was addressing the ceremony of agreement signing between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and State Life Insurance Corporation for providing health insurance cards to journalists, media workers, and artists as well as technical workers associated with the film industry. The prime minister said the agreement was of utmost importance as it addressed the media men and artists who worked hard, even sometimes during tough working conditions, but remained deprived of basic amenities in their lives.

However, the government would provide them with health insurance coverage through budgetary allocations under the PM Program. Calling her a "moving spirit" the prime minister appreciated the key role of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyu Aurangzeb to launch the said insurance facility. He recalled that during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, health insurance card was launched on a massive scale, and at that time, the Punjab government also implemented his vision.

He said the health insurance card was a gift for the downtrodden people who could not afford costly medical treatments. The prime minister said no one would have objected to the previous government's health insurance facility if it was not meant to patronise the private hospitals. He said the across-the-board facility was misused as even some greedy healthy people misused that card to mint money, in

(Continued on Back Page)

Stopping of heroine trade US fails to acknowledge faulty policies

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The US State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller simply said "we typically don't comment on law enforcement matters" when *The Frontier Post* asked that on one hand the State Department had said more than twenty years ago that notorious Afghan warlord, Rashid Dostum was the biggest Heroine dealer in the world and then few years later, when the US had occupied Afghanistan, the same Rashid Dostum managed to be the Defence Minister of the country.

Matthew Miller did inform that every year the US government gives more than four million dollars to Pakistan and Afghanistan to combat the menace of narcotics trade. The *Frontier Post* brought on record that in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, Federal Ministers are nominated and

arrested for Heroin trade and few months later those same individuals are released and are made ministers again. The *Frontier Post* had asked Matthew Miller if the US had any regrets or sees any failures with regard to its past policies in controlling the Heroine trade from Afghanistan and through Pakistan.

It is pertinent to mention here that in yesterday's press briefing, *The Frontier Post* had asked Matthew Miller about the amount of responsibility the US takes for the deaths caused by Heroine users in past two decades when the US had occupied Afghanistan and it is Afghanistan which has been producing the largest amount of Heroine in the world since last more than two decades. In his reply, Matthew Miller had replied by saying that the responsibility lies on drug traffickers and not the US government.

The Frontier Post also

brought on record with Matthew Miller that Mr John Kirby was asked a similar question by *The Frontier Post* some eight years ago when the US was still the occupying force in

vided the US. It is also pertinent to mention here that Mr John Kirby had replied at that time that US was assisting the local farmers in Afghanistan to find alternative means of income. It is

Collective cause, global efforts essential to combat drug trafficking
(Editorial on Page 6)

Afghanistan and Mr John Kirby was the US State Department Spokesperson at that time and now he is serving as the Spokesperson of the National Security. It is pertinent to mention here that more than eight years ago *The Frontier Post* had asked that why the US is unable to stop Heroine trade from Afghanistan and that it was through Heroine trade that more than eight billion dollars were coming to Afghanistan each year through illegal sources and that these figures were pro-

important to mention that no alternative crop comes near the price which the Afghan farmers receive for their Opium crop and it is Opium that is used to produce Heroine.

The Frontier Post will continue to report on the half hearted efforts by several nations in combatting Heroine trade since past two decades and will play its constructive role in getting the society rid of Heroine menace, which each year causes deaths of thousands in almost every country in the world.

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Iranian Consul General shows interest as CPEC partner

PESHAWAR (APP): Iranian Consul General in Peshawar, Ali Banafsha Khawar, while reaffirming Iran's unwavering commitment to regional peace and stability, has emphasized Iran's keen interest in becoming an active participant in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, underscoring the importance of cooperation among regional nations for mutual progress and prosperity.

The Iranian Consul General expressed these views during a conversation with media persons during his visit to Peshawar Press Club on Thursday.

During the visit, the

Iranian diplomat participated in a Meet the Press event alongside esteemed members of the PPC.

The gathering facilitated open discussions on various subjects, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Iran-Pakistan trade relations, and fostering people-to-people contact between the two neighboring nations.

During the event, the Consul General while responding to different questions on the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project stated that Iran had completed its part of the pipeline and now it was incumbent on Pakistan to fulfill its commitments to

ensure the project's success and benefits for both nations.

President of the Peshawar Press Club, Arshad Aziz Malik, and other esteemed members warmly welcomed the Iranian Consul General at the event.

The exchange allowed for candid and constructive discussions aimed at further enhancing bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan.

Additionally, Shabbir Hussain Imam, a member of the press club, took the opportunity to brief the Consul General on the PPC Library, named in honor of Syed Abul Hassan Jafri, a

local journalist who also served in Iranian Consulate.

Mr. Ali Banafsha Khawar emphasized the need for continuous updates to enrich the knowledge resources available at the library and enhance its role as an essential hub for intellectual growth and understanding.

The event served as a platform for fostering greater understanding and cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, promoting peaceful regional development and further strengthening the ties between the two nations.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting regarding 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 in KP.

Industrialists hail issuance of notification for setting up police station in Peshawar's estate

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Industrialists praised the Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur for issuance of a notification for establishment of a police station at Industrial Estate Hayatabad Peshawar, which, according to them, was a long-standing demand.

According to a statement issued here on Thursday, by president of Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP), in which he lauded the IGP KP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur for issuance of a notification to establish a police station and steps to ensure safety and security

in the estate.

The president in the statement said industrialists held a meeting with IGP KP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur in which the provincial police chief promised that prompt steps would be taken to establish a police station.

IAP chief said IGP has issued a formal notification two days ago regarding establishment of a police station in Industrial Estate Hayatabad Peshawar by following his commitment, which is highly appreciable.

The association president elaborated in his statement that the matter relating to setting up of a police station was taken up with government, police depart-

ment and relevant authorities several occasions since last a decade.

But, he said the incumbent provincial police chief in first meeting with industrialists made a promise to take steps on a fast-track basis for establishment of a police station.

He said the police chief has ensured practical implementation of his commitment, which was highly commendable.

According to the statement, the IAP chief said during their meeting with IGP KP, the provincial police chief said that the business community was the backbone for the national economy, and it is

highly important to ensure their safety and security.

Praising the issuance of notification for setting up a dedicated police station, the IAP president said industrialists had never seen such an IGP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which ensured implementation of his promise in a few days.

"We all thankful to IGP KP for fulfilling the long-standing demand".

We highly proud that there was appointed such a committed provincial police chief and business community expressed a complete satisfaction about performance of police chief and department, the statement concluded.



PESHAWAR: Director Forests Syed Husnain Shah cutting a ribbon to inaugurate newly installed FM-101 transmitter of two kilowatt at Radio Pakistan.

IWA announces strike from Monday for appointment of DG Info & PR

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Information Welfare Association (IWA) announced strike from Monday in favor of their demands including promotions of Directorate General Information and Public

Relation employment and for didn't appointing Director General from the cadre Officers.

IWA condemned Secretary Information attitude toward Directorate employees by dropping promotion cases for several

times.

IWA claimed that competent authorities creating hurdles in appointment of Director General from Directorate of Information and Public Relation.

IWA cabinet called meeting of general today

(on Thursday) to discuss the issue and pave plan for strike in favor of their demands.

IWA committed to mobilize all stakeholders including journalist community to uphold their grievances at every forum.

PESCO restores electricity supply to various feeders: Spokesman

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) here on Thursday said that electricity supply to various districts of the province was restored which was affected due to strong winds and rain storm.

The spokesman of PESCO said that the elec-

tricity supply was disconnected from various feeders in Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Pabi, Tangi and other areas including Swat due to rains and strong winds.

He said that most of the feeders were tripped due to rain and strong wind, adding that the field staff

was put on high alert by PESCO chief Arif Mahmood Saduzai.

The field staff started the power restoration work as soon as the rain stopped and the power supply from several feeders was restored by this morning.

The repair work on the remaining feeders is in

progress and will be fully restored soon, the spokesman said and advised the PESCO consumers to contact PESCO Helpline 118 in case of any complaint.



PESHAWAR: Provincial president PPP's Women Wing Senator Rubina Khalid wearing a muffler to a woman after joining PPP. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



PESHAWAR: Former provincial minister Sher Azam Khan Wazir talking with an injured of Bajaur blast during his visit to hospital.

14 cases of Congo virus reported

PESHAWAR (INP): Fourteen cases of Congo virus have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during current year.

According to a report issued by Provincial Health Department, four people died in Congo this year and among the dead people two belonged to KP and two to Afghanistan.

Civil society kauds KP govt's supportive measures for NPOs registration extension

PESHAWAR (APP): Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Coalition wholeheartedly appreciates the thoughtful and supportive step taken by the Home & Tribal Affairs Department of KP to grant a six-month grace period (180 days) for the registration of NPOs (Non profit Organisations) under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Charities Act 2019.

The decision that superseded the earlier notification that called for legal action against non-compliant NGOs, is an act of great understanding and facilitation, says CSOs in a press statement issued here on Thursday.

The realization of the challenges faced by NPOs and the subsequent allowance of ample time for compliance reveals the government's flexible approach and eagerness to work in harmony with civil society organizations, it added.

It reflects the respect and support for the vital contributions these organizations make towards social cohesion and community development, underlining the essential partnership between government and civil society.

The civil society organizations value the commitment of the KP Government to create an

environment where civil society can prosper, despite the global challenges posed by financial crimes such as money laundering and terrorism financing.

This decision balances the need for robust regulatory frameworks and the preservation of civic spaces, fostering trust and collaboration, the statement continued.

The extended timeline for registration will enable NPOs to better understand the Act's provisions, organize their operations in compliance with the law, and continue their valuable work unhindered. This is a significant step towards

building a cooperative relationship between the government and civil society, fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

Qamar Naseem program Manager Blue Veins and a civil society activist said "This facilitative gesture by the Home Department and Charity Commission is a clear indication of their commitment to nurturing a healthy, supportive environment for NPOs. It underscores the importance of our collaborative efforts towards social development and financial security."

Yar Mohammad Shaheen Coordinator District

Coordination Council (DCC) an Umbrella of NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Department said this decision is an affirmation of the government's understanding of our role and the challenges we face.

It allows us to work towards our shared goals of a robust, financially secure society that values civic engagement."

We look forward to continuing working in partnership with the government, and we appreciate the enabling environment that they have fostered through their understanding and supportive actions.

Ist phase of 10 BTAP extended upto July 2024, 700m saplings planted

PESHAWAR (APP): The first phase of 10 billion trees afforestation project (10BTAP 2019-23) has been extended upto July 2024 by the government in order to achieve the set plantation target of 10 billion saplings in the country.

Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Deputy Project Director, 10 BTAP KP Forest Department while confirming extension of the mega project started in all provinces, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan in September 2018 after successful completion of its first phase (2013-19) with an aim to counterbalance the effects of climate change and global warming.

He said that approximately 700 million

saplings against a set plantation target of 10 billion were planted during the last four years under the 10 billion trees afforestation project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that remaining 300 million saplings would be planted in the extended year with the help of forest enclosures, farms forestry and the general public.

Ibrahim Khan said total financial share of KP in 10 BTAP was Rs27 billion out of which Rs12 billion were released including six billion each under Public Sector Development Program of the Federal Government and Annual Development Program of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

10 BTAP was launched by the Government of Pakistan with the total cost of 125.1843 billion on September 2, 2018 during Plant for Pakistan Day by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan. The project is being implemented across Pakistan by the Ministry of Climate Change along with Provincial and territorial Forest departments, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

He said its overall objective was to revive forest and wildlife resources and improve the overall conservation of existing protected areas besides encouraging ecotourism, community engagement and job creation in Pakistan.

He said that 500 million saplings would be achieved through forest enclosures and 500 million through farm forestry and the general public under 10 BTAP.

"Pakistan is losing about 27,000 hectares of forests per year mainly in private and community-owned natural forests of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan owing to rapid population growth, high demands of wood and socioeconomic imbalances," according to National Forest Policy 2015.

The shrinking of forests in watershed areas are making an adverse impact on agriculture productivity, quality of water at out-

lets and biodiversity besides causing catastrophic floods in downstream areas mostly in KP and Punjab due to erratic rainfalls and fast melting of glaciers and snow melting in high alpine zones during summer.

"Pakistan is among 10 most vulnerable countries affected by climate change and plantation was the only cost efficient option to counter climate change and global warming besides greenhouse gas emissions," Ibrahim Khan said.

The negative effects of deforestation and climate change could be seen from 2010 and 2022 devastated flood, which had brought havoc to humans, proper-

ties, agriculture and economy in most parts of the country especially in KP.

The worst drought during 1999-2003, cyclones in Karachi and Gwadar coasts in 2008 and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GOLFs) including Atabad Lake in Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral and July 28, 2021 flash flood in Islamabad necessitated large-scale plantations.

Ibrahim Khan said the government while taking cognizance of an increased deforestation and climate change's damages, had launched Green Growth Initiative (GGI) in KP focusing on six key sectors including forestry, protected areas and national parks, clean energy, cli-

mate resilience, water and sanitation and waste management which are producing positive results.

He said a monsoon plantation was underway in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under which 1.5 million saplings would be planted with assistance of national building departments, NGOs, educational institutions, farmers and the general public.

He said that 180,000 saplings would be planted through farm forestry, mass plantation and rehabilitation of existing forests during the ongoing monsoon season.

Ibrahim said all arrangements for distribution of plants among farmers, departments and the gener-

al public were completed to make the monsoon campaign a success.

He said special focus was being given to bring infertile lands, open fields, gardens, 'watercourses' banks and other areas under forestry cover.

Advising people to plant maximum saplings as they can during monsoon season afforestation campaign, the official said that if every person plants two plants and properly looks after them then 880 million saplings would be planted in one day.

He said tree plantation was continued charity that would not only benefit people today but the upcoming generation would largely benefit from it.



In brief

Two men crushed to death

SARGODHA (INP): Two men were crushed to death as a speeding mini coaster hit with motorcycle at Sargodha Jhang road near 84 chak under the jurisdiction of factory area police station, here on Thursday. Police said that two men namely as Irfan (30) and Muhammad Amir (32) were heading to Sargodha on their motorcycle when a speeding mini coaster crushed them. Police and Rescue 1122 teams reached the spot, shifted the bodies to Faisal Masood Teaching hospital Sargodha.

Body of boy found in canal

FAISALABAD (INP): The body of a boy was found from Rakha Branch Canal in the area of Madina Town police station, here on Thursday. According to Rescue 1122 spokesman, some passersby spotted corpse of a 12-year-old boy floating on surface of water in Rakha Branch Canal near Kashmir bridge. A Rescue-1122 team rushed to the spot and fished out the corpse, who was identified as Zain Ali. Marks of injuries were found on the body, which was handed over to Madina Town police.

Petrol pumps inspected

F.P. Report

HANGU: Assistant Commissioner to Hangu Nawab Gul Thursday inspected various petrol pumps in Hangu district in which the gauge cleanliness rate etc. was checked. Action was taken against them according to the law for poor cleaning and low gauge on the pumps and imposed a fine on them. He gave strict instructions to the pump owners regarding cleanliness and low gauge. Similarly, Assistant Commissioner Tal Muhammad Arshad Afridi visited Sarozai Chapri and Darsmand BHUs and inspected staff attendance, cleanliness, availability of medicines. He noted the problems and assured to solve them and also directed the concerned staff to ensure maximum facilities to the patients.

Deaf and dumb girl raped

NAROWAL (PPI): A deaf and dumb girl was allegedly raped in her house in Bhola Bajwa, a village in the suburbs of Narowal, police said Thursday. The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Narowal Saddr police station. "My deaf, mute and mentally challenged daughter Atiya was raped by Karamat Ali, a resident of the same village," Shehnaz Bibi, mother of the affected girl, said. "When I went to the room, Karamat Ali, son of Lal Din, was raping my daughter," she alleged. "Narowal Saddr police have registered a case on our complaint, but they have not arrested the accused yet," she added. "We are receiving threats of murder and serious consequences from the accused," she maintained and appealed to the prime minister and the Punjab chief minister for justice. "The accused has been arrested. We are investigating the case. Soon his arrest will be made public," the SHO said.

11,401 people rescued in July

FAISALABAD (INP): The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue-1122) rescued 11,401 people in Faisalabad in July 2023, according to a spokesperson for the service. Zahid Latif said that the rescuers received 10,832 emergency calls during the month, including 242 calls about road traffic accidents, 6,702 about medical emergencies.



BANNU: Police officials donating blood during Shuhada Week.

Motorcyclist killed, youth found dead

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A youth identified as Syed Hassan 30 s/o Ghafoor Jan, a resident of Talash was killed when his motorcycle met a road accident at Nasaf in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here on Thursday, residents and police said. They said the Rescue 1122 medical team rushed to the site and shifted the body to the tehsil headquarters hospital Talash from where it was handed over to the heirs.

Meanwhile another youth Adnan Shah s/o Abdul Qayyum, a resident of Koto Samarbagh who went missing the other day, was found dead in the Mayar Jandol stream here on Thursday. The Mayor station house officer along with his team reached the site on getting information about the presence of a dead body. The body was shifted to the nearby Mayar hospital. According to police the victim had drowned in a ditch while taking a bath. The family has no enmity with anyone.

The Rescue 1122 fire-fighters extinguished the fire within an hour when fire broke out due to unknown reasons in some of the shops at Kumbar

bazaar here on Wednesday night. The shops' owner Nawab Zada claimed the fire had destroyed many items stored at the shops. Rescue 1122 prevented the adjacent shops, residents said.

Complaint: One Muhammad Ishaq s/o Jan, an Afghan refugee, residing at Shingrai Timergara on Thursday complained that some known persons including Hubab Khan, Muhibullah, Malak Saad, Zaid, Abu Bakar and others had killed his British nationality holder brother Shams ur Rehman at Khaima in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station on July 15 due to unknown reasons.

The Afghan national said that an FIR against the incident had been registered at the Balambat police station. He said that one of the accused Muhibullah had gone into hiding while the others had been arrested. He said the accused party was threatening his family with dire consequences. He appealed to the inspector general of police and other concerned officials to take notice of the matter and provide security to his family.

Power tariff: The Lower Dir chapter of Jamaat-i-Islami on

Thursday rejected the current increase in power tariff and threatened to bring consumers onto the roads if the government failed to review the decision. The JI district secretary information Shuiab Ahmad while talking to local journalists at Timergara, said the record inflation and skyrocketing prices of daily use commodities had already broken the back of poor people. Expressing grave concerns over the prices of fuel, gas and electricity, he said the people were unable to afford the current increase. He said the government had also included fuel price adjustment, TV and Radio fee in utility bills that was a sheer injustice and violation of law.

Market checking: The newly posted assistant commissioner Timergara Dr Nida Iqbal on Thursday paid surprise visits to different filling stations, Dar ul Aman, butchers' shops and hotels and checked the prices, quality and quantity of different items including gauge of petrol and diesel, meat, breads and other eatables. The AC asked the SHO Timergara to register cases against the violators whose names were sent to him.

Cops, youth donated blood

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police officers and youths donated their blood for the memory of the police martyrs and to reward them. It is being celebrated with great devotion and respect, in this regard District Police Officer Najib ur Rahman inaugurated the Blood Donation Camp under the auspices of "Umeed Ki Kiran" Foundation in Police Lines. President Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zahir Shah, SP Investigation Muhammad Sulaiman, SP Operation Rukhanzeb and political and social personalities including youths, business community, police hospital doctors staff and people belonging to different schools of thought participated in the blood donation camp including SP Operation Rukhanzeb and other police officers. And the young men donated their blood.

District DPO Mardan while expressing his thoughts on this occasion said that the purpose of blood donation is to pay tribute to the police martyrs and to remind them of their eternal sacrifice while Mardan can save the lives of the needy by donating blood. The police effort will be involved, we are proud of our martyrs and their families. The police department will always stand with the families and children of our martyrs.

Youth killed, 11 injured

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): A youth was killed while 11 others including women were injured in separate road accidents in different localities of Sheikhupura on Thursday, rescue sources said.

According to details, an over speeding tractor trolley and a motorcycle collided head-on at Lahore Road near Housing Colony resultantly one youth identified as Waseem 20, was killed on the spot while Allah Rakha 20, was critically injured. Driver of an over speeding passenger bus lost control over steering and it turned turtle near Narang Mandi area.

As a result of accident, 10 people including Manzoor, Ehtisham, Muhammad Sarwar, Abid Rasheed, Irfan, Shahid Ashraf, Muhammad Miskeen, Muhammad Saeed, Rehana Bibi and Abida Bibi were injured. The body and injured of both accidents were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at concerned police stations started investigations.

Man killed

NASIRABAD (INP): One person was killed and another injured in separate incidents in different localities of Nasirabad on Thursday, police said. According to details, in armed clash between two groups of Jakhrani tribe over ejecting flood water in Sherani area, a man identified as Dabu was killed.

Fazl, KP Governor visits Bajaur

— handed over compensation cheques for Bajaur blast victims

F.P. Report

KHAR: Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Thursday visited District Bajaur and met with the families of Bajaur blast victims in Jirga Hall Khar.

On the occasion, KP Governor gave cheques of Rs two million each for families of martyrs and Rs. 700,000 to thousands for those injured in the blast. The cheques were handed over to Senator Abdur Rsheed and Deputy Commissioner Bajaur, Anwar-ul-Haq,

Member National Assembly, Moulana Jamal-ud-din, Former Governor KP, Engineer Shoukat Ullah, Regional Police Officer Malakand, Nasir Satti and local elders were also present on the occasion. JUI Chief and KP Governor met with families of victims and prayed for eternal peace of departed souls and early recovery of the injured.

Addressing the families of victims, Governor said that heirs of martyrs would be provided all the needed help and assistance. He said that health authorities have been directed to provide

best healthcare facilities to injured and added we share the grief of victim families in this time of distress. He said that whole nation is grieving over the losses in Bajaur blast.

He said that these inhuman acts and barbarism is prohibited by all the religions of world and those involved in the incident have nothing to do with norms of humanity and any religion. He said nation would not budge from its resolve and those who are hatching conspiracies to start chaos in the country would fail and bite the dust.

PML-N pursuing a talent-encouraging policy

DERA GHAZI KHAN (INP): Former Federal minister and PML-N Punjab general secretary Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari said on Wednesday that youth was the real engine of growth and PML-N was pursuing a talent-encouraging policy to harness their enormous potential to propel economic development.

He was speaking at a ceremony for the distribution of laptop computers among talented students at Ghazi University here. Securing the future of the younger generation was the top most priority of the government, Leghari said adding that youth were the real asset of the country. Bringing transparency and merit in projects was the hallmark of the PML-N government.

Sardar Awais said, younger generation should play an active role

in the national development process but added that they can do it better when they are properly educated and trained. Societies always need talented individuals to prosper and move forward, he said.

Leghari said that Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif was distributing 100000 laptop computers among talented students on merit under his education-friendly policies.

It will help them move forward. He said that positive politics should prevail in the country and added that his father, late former president Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari rendered numerous sacrifices for the cause of democracy and decency in politics.

His father also suffered jail hardships, he added. He said, DG Khan was an important city of south Punjab and it's talented

youth would emerge as engineers, doctors, poets, writers and sportsmen. Former MPA Syed Abdul Aleem Shah said that most of the mega development projects were initiated by the PML-N government including new educational institutions and upgradation of older ones.

Vice Chancellor Ghazi University Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamran said that laptop computer was a learning and earning machine and students can brighten their future by using it positively. Awais Leghari distributed laptop computers among 25 talented students on the occasion. Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani, Sardar Ammar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr. Allah Bakhsh Gulshan, Dr. Saqib Bashir, Prof. Muhammad Shoaib Raza, Dr. Muhammad Ali Tatar, Dr. Zia and other were present.



QUETTA: The funeral prayer of Haroon Raisani were offered at Kanak, Mastung.

FIPV campaign to be conducted in Khyber

F.P. Report

KHYBER: All arrangements have been finalized to carry out Fractional Inactivated Polio Vaccine (FIPV) for the first time to be commenced from Aug 7, 2023 to Aug 13 here in Khyber.

The health department official said that besides Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), a fractional dose of inactivated poliovirus vaccine will be administered in the upcoming campaign to give a crushing blow to the virus of the crippling disease, Polio.

He maintained that FIPV will be executed intradermally through a special injecting gun, approved by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The official went on that children aging from four months to five years would be vaccinated with the FIPV in their right hands.

In Khyber, the health department has constituted 965 teams to immunize 228000 children below five years against polio and the anti-polio drive will be conducted across the district.

District Health Officer Dr Zafar asked the media personnel to play their role in educating people about the usefulness of anti-polio vaccine for kids' health. He also urged the parents to vaccinate their children against the crippling disease. It is to be mentioned here that the particular FIPV campaign has been decided to start in Khyber and Peshawar after polio virus was found in environmental samples of the two districts.

Walk for highlighting importance of breast feeding arranged

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: In order to highlight the importance of breast feeding, a walk was held in front of District Health Office Kohat led by the District Health Officer Dr. Fazal Maula and attended by District Nutrition Coordinator Mukhtiar Deen, LHW Coordinator Dr. Mohabbat Bangash, large number of women workers and members of civil society. The participants carried placards and banners inscribed with slogans regarding the benefits of breast milk.

A one-day seminar was also held on the benefits of mother's milk organized by the Department of Health Nutrition International with the support of UNICEF. DHO Dr. Fazal Mulla,

District Khatib Mufti Shafiullah, District Nutrition Coordinator Mukhtiar Deen, LHW Coordinator Dr. Tufail Afridi, EPI Coordinator Dr. Mohabbat and a large number of women participated in the one-day seminar of the Health Department. The Speakers said that nature has collected all the nutrients in mother's milk in line with the health of a child.

They said that canned milk can never be a substitute for mother's milk. Healthy children are our better future. Society is our better future. Children who drink mother's milk have more mental capacity than other children. The speakers said that canned and Children who drink bottle milk are suffering from weak mind and other problems. They were of the

view that the child should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, after which other foods should be introduced slowly. Mother's milk is the best source of growth.

Drug peddler arrested

D I KHAN (INP): Dera police arrested a drug peddler during actions in the limits of Yarik police station on Thursday.

According to the details, the SHO Yarik police station Zeshan Iqbal along with his team arrested drug peddler Din Muhammad s/o Pir Muhammad resident of Paniala and recovered 900 grams of Hashish and 250 grams of Heroin from his possession. Police registered the case against the arrested accused.



HYDERABAD: A passenger train on the way passing through Kotri Railway Bridge.



Canada's PM Justin Trudeau and his wife announce separation



OTTAWA (Agencies): Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife, Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, have announced their separation after 18 years of marriage. In statements posted on Instagram, the couple said they made the decision after "many meaningful and difficult conversations" and requested privacy.

"As always, we remain a close family with deep love and respect for each other and for everything we have built and will continue to build," they said. A statement from the prime minister's office said the couple have signed a legal separation agreement. Trudeau, the 51-year-old scion of one of Canada's most famous politicians, was sworn into office in 2015. Gregoire Trudeau is a former model and TV host. The couple were married in May 2005 and have three children, aged 15, 14 and nine.

An official familiar with the matter told the Reuters news agency that the couple would have joint custody of their children. Trudeau and the children will continue to live at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa, the prime minister's official residence, where he has lived since 2015. Gregoire Trudeau will be moving into separate accommodation in Ottawa but plans to spend plenty of time with the children in Rideau Cottage to ensure they have as normal an upbringing as possible, the source said. "They remain a close family, and Sophie and the prime minister are focused on raising their kids in a safe, loving and collaborative environment," the statement from Trudeau's office said. "The family will be together on vacation,

beginning next week." 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.

They married two years later. Vogue magazine ran a glowing profile of the two in its January 2016 issue, complete with photos of them embracing. A long piece in the magazine about Trudeau said he "shocks some with his public displays of affection toward his wife". In the early years after Trudeau took office, he and Gregoire Trudeau were often seen together at social functions and on foreign trips. Trudeau, though, made it clear even before he became prime minister that the two had faced challenges, writing in his autobiography Common Ground in 2014 that "our marriage isn't perfect, and we have had difficult ups and downs". In recent years, Gregoire Trudeau has curtailed joint appearances with her husband and signs of stress were clear. The two were seen together publicly at Canada Day events in Ottawa last month. On their wedding anniversary last year, she said in a social media post that "we have navigated through sunny days, heavy storms, and everything in between and it ain't over". She went on: "Long-term relationships are challenging in so many ways." Trudeau is the second prime minister to announce a separation while in office. His father, Pierre Trudeau, and mother, Margaret Trudeau, separated in 1979 and divorced in 1984 during the elder Trudeau's final year in the prime minister's office.

Iran's navy unveils new vessels equipped with missiles

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran's Revolutionary Guards' navy has unveiled new vessels equipped with 600-km range missiles at a time of rising tensions with the US in the Gulf, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported. The announcement was made during a military exercise off the coast of Abu Musa island, one of three Gulf islands under Iranian control but disputed by the United Arab Emirates.

The news agency gave no details about the missiles but cited a commander on the need to defend the islands. "The islands of the Persian Gulf are part of Iran's honour and we will defend them," Revolutionary Guards' Navy Commander Alireza Tangsiri said, adding that Gulf security needed to be provided by regional countries. "The Persian Gulf belongs to all of the region's countries ... These states must be very prudent and prevent themselves from falling into the conspiracies and divisive plans of extra-regional countries," he added. Last month, the United States sent additional F-35 and F-16 fighter jets, along with a warship to the Middle East, in a bid to monitor waterways in the region following Iran's seizure of commercial shipping vessels in recent months.

Whale found in Peru may be heaviest animal ever

PERU (Agencies): Scientists in Peru have announced a new contender for the heaviest animal in Earth's history. While today's blue whale has long held the title, researchers said that fossils of a creature unearthed in Peru called Perucetus colossus could tip the scales. The early whale, which lived about 38-40 million years ago during the Eocene epoch, was built somewhat like a manatee and was likely about 20 metres (66ft) long.

It weighed up to 340 metric tonnes, a mass that would exceed any other known animal including today's blue whale and the largest dinosaurs. Its scientific name means "colossal Peruvian whale".

"The main feature of this animal is certainly the extreme weight, which suggests that evolution can generate organisms that have characteristics that go beyond our imagination," said palaeontologist Giovanni Bianucci of the University of Pisa in Italy, lead author of the research published in the journal Nature. The minimum mass estimate for Perucetus was 85 tonnes, with an average estimate of 180 tonnes. The biggest-known blue whale weighed around 190 tonnes, though it was longer than Perucetus at 33.5 metres (110ft). Argentinosaurus, a long-necked, four-legged herbivore that lived about 95 million years ago in Argentina and was ranked in a study published in May as the most massive dinosaur, was estimated at about 76 tonnes. The partial skeleton of Perucetus was discovered more than a decade ago by Mario Urbina from the University of San Marcos' Natural History Museum in Lima. An international team spent years digging them out from the side of a steep, rocky slope in the Ica desert, a region in Peru that was once underwater and is known for its rich marine fossils. The results: 13 vertebrae from the whale's backbone, four ribs and a hip bone.

The bones, unusually voluminous, were extremely dense and compact. Those super-dense bones suggest that the whale may have spent its time in shallow, coastal waters, the authors said. Other coastal dwellers, like manatees and dugongs, known as sireni-ans, have heavy bones to help them stay close to the seafloor. No cranial or tooth remains were found, making interpretation of its diet and lifestyle tougher. The researchers suspect Perucetus lived like sireni-ans - not an active predator but an animal that fed near the bottom of shallow coastal waters.

US wants Kenya to lead a force in Haiti with 1,000 police

NAIROBI (AP): As the US government was considering Kenya to lead a multinational force in Haiti, it was also openly warning Kenyan police officers against violent abuses. Now 1,000 of those officers might head to Haiti to take on gang warfare. It's a challenging turn for a police force long accused by rights watchdogs of killings and torture, including gunning down civilians during Kenya's COVID-19 curfew. One local group confirmed that officers fatally shot more than 30 people in July, all of them in Kenya's poorest neighborhoods, during opposition-called protests over the rising cost of living.

"We are saddened by the loss of life and concerned by high levels of violence, including the use of live rounds" during those protests, the US said in a joint statement with 11 other nations in mid-July. Now the US, as this month's president of the United Nations Security Council, is preparing to put forward a resolution to authorize a mission in Haiti led by Kenyan police, who have relatively little overseas experience in such large numbers and don't speak French, which is used in Haiti. "This is not a traditional peacekeeping force," the US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said. For more than nine months, the UN had appealed unsuccessfully for a country to lead an effort to restore order to the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Kenya's interest was announced, with its foreign minister saying his government has "accepted to positively consider" leading a force in Haiti and sending 1,000 police officers to train the Haitian National Police, "restore normalcy" and protect strategic installations.

"Kenya stands with persons of African descent across the world," Alfred Mutua said. A ministry spokesman didn't respond to questions about the force or what Kenya would receive in return. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken praised Kenya for simply considering to serve, a sign of the difficulty in mus-

tering international forces for Haiti, where deadly gang violence has exploded since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise. Some organizations that have long tracked alleged police misconduct in Kenya are worried. "We had some consultations with Kenyan (civil society organizations) last week and there was general consensus that Kenya should not be seen to be exporting its abusive police to other parts of the world," Otsieno Namwaya, Kenya researcher with Human Rights Watch, told The Associated Press.

Kenya's security forces have a yearslong presence in neighboring Somalia to counter Islamic extremists - a deadly threat that some Kenyans say should keep police at home - and troops have been in restive eastern Congo since last year. Past UN peacekeeping deployments include Sierra Leone. But while other African nations including Rwanda, Ghana and Egypt have thousands of personnel in UN peacekeeping missions, Kenya currently has less than 450, according to UN data. Just 32 are police officers. The US has a total of 35 personnel in UN peacekeeping missions. "I have no knowledge of any complaints raised by the UN during those deployments, hence no concern on my end," the executive director of the watchdog Independent Medico-Legal Unit, Peter Kiama, told the AP. "Remember, the major challenges regarding policing practices in Kenya include political interference with police command and independence, inadequate political will to reform the institution, culture of internal impunity and criminality, and inadequate internal and external accountability." With the Haiti deployment, Kenyan police would likely be in charge instead of answering to a UN force commander as in traditional peacekeeping missions.

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry said he spoke with Kenyan President William Ruto to thank Kenyans for the "demonstration of fraternal solidarity," Kenya plans to send a task

force in the coming weeks to assess the mission's operational requirements. At home, Kenya's police force has received millions of dollars in training and support from the US, European Union and other partners in recent years, with the US focusing on "promoting police accountability and professionalism." But last week, Kenya's National Assembly saw a shouted debate, along with demands for a moment of silence, over police actions during the recent protests. "The kind of brutality that has been meted out on innocent and unarmed civilians in the last couple of months has been unprecedented," minority leader Opiyo Wandayi said. "Those youth that you are killing require jobs, not bullets." Kenya's leading opposition party has threatened to gather evidence to submit to the International Criminal Court. In response, Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki said police have remained "neutral, impartial and professional." The ministry referred questions about alleged abuses to the police, who haven't responded.

Ruto, elected president a year ago, at first praised police for their conduct during the protests, but later warned officers against extrajudicial killings as a public outcry grew. Problems with Kenya's police force have long been acknowledged, even by officials.

The National Police Service "does not have a 'shoot to kill' policy," its inspector general, Hilary Mutyambai, said in a submission to a parliamentary inquiry on extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances released in late 2021. But the government-created Independent Policing Oversight Authority told the inquiry it had received 95 cases of alleged deaths due to police action in the previous seven months alone, noting "continuous abuse of force and firearms occasioning deaths." A commissioner with the authority said last month that police weren't even reporting deaths to the body as required, which is illegal.

Climate change made July hotter for 4 of 5 humans on Earth

NEW YORK (AP): Human-caused global warming made July hotter for four out of five people on Earth, with more than 2 billion people feeling climate change-boosted warmth daily, according to a flash study. More than 6.5 billion people, or 81% of the world's population, sweated through at least one day where climate change had a significant effect on the average daily temperature, according to a new report issued by Climate Central, a science nonprofit that has figured a way to calculate how much climate change has affected daily weather.

"We really are experiencing climate change just about everywhere," said Climate Central Vice President for Science Andrew Pershing. Researchers looked at 4,711 cities and found climate change fingerprints in 4,019 of them for July, which other scientists said is the hottest month on record. The new study calculated that the burning of coal, oil and natural gas had made it three times more likely to be hotter on at least one day

in those cities. In the US, where the climate effect was largest in Florida, more than 244 million people felt greater heat due to climate change during July. For 2 billion people, in a mostly tropical belt across the globe, climate change made it three times more likely to be hotter every single day of July. Those include the million-person cities of Mecca, Saudi Arabia and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The day with the most widespread climate-change effect was July 10, when 3.5 billion people experienced extreme heat that had global warming's fingerprints, according to the report. That's different than the hottest day globally, which was July 7, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer. The study is not peer-reviewed, the gold standard for science, because the month just ended. It is based on peer-reviewed climate fingerprinting methods that are used by other groups and are considered technically valid by the National Academy of Sciences. Two outside climate scientists told The Associated Press

that they found the study to be credible.

More than a year ago Climate Central developed a measurement tool called the Climate Shift Index. It calculates the effect, if any, of climate change on temperatures across the globe in real time, using European and US forecasts, observations and computer simulations. To find if there is an effect, the scientists compare recorded temperatures to a simulated world with no warming from climate change and it's about 2 degrees (1.2 degrees Celsius) cooler to find out the chances that the heat was natural. "By now, we should all be used to individual heat waves being connected to global warming," said Princeton University climate scientist Gabriel Vecchi, who wasn't part of the study. "Unfortunately, this month, as this study elegantly shows, has given the vast majority of people on this planet a taste of global warming's impact on extreme heat." In the United States, 22 US cities had at least 20 days when climate change tripled the

likelihood of extra heat, including Miami, Houston, Phoenix, Tampa, Las Vegas and Austin. The US city most affected by climate change in July was Cape Coral, Florida, which saw fossil fuels make hotter temperatures 4.6 times more likely for the month and had 29 out of 31 days where there was a significant climate change fingerprint. The farther north in the United States, the less of a climate effect was seen in July. Researchers found no significant effect in places like North Dakota and South Dakota, Wyoming, northern California, upstate New York and parts of Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Heat waves in the US Southwest, the Mediterranean and even China have gotten special analysis by World Weather Attribution finding a climate change signal, but places like the Caribbean and Middle East are having huge climate change signals and not getting the attention, Pershing said. Unlike the other study, this one looked at the entire globe.

Maliens who thrived fear economic fallout from its departure

BAMAKO, Mali (AP): Nearly 10 years ago, Mariame Coulibaly Sangare lost everything when armed violence in northern Mali forced her to flee her home. Desperate for money, she saw an opportunity with the arrival of a new United Nations peacekeeping mission in the West African nation's capital, Bamako.

Sangare left her previous job of trading animal skins to open a restaurant across the street from the mission's headquarters. Selling rice dishes to UN workers earned the 58-year-old enough money to help support her family. But after Mali's military junta ordered the mission to leave the country, the mother of 14 worries her reliable income will be gone along with the peacekeepers. "I don't have anything else except this restaurant," she said.

In June, the junta said the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali had failed after a decade to stem a jihadi insurgency linked to

al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, and its 15,000 international troops were no longer welcome. Experts say the peacekeepers' withdrawal could further destabilize the country and the broader Sahel region of Africa. The first peacekeepers to leave - a 460-strong battalion of Egyptian troops - left the city of Gao in northeastern Mali, the UN mission said on its website. The Egyptian peacekeepers secured safe passage for aid workers and civilians along a key corridor in rural eastern Mali, a road pockmarked with improvised explosive devices laid by armed groups. But amid safety concerns and regional turmoil stemming from an ongoing military coup in neighboring Niger, some Malians also fear the immediate economic fallout. About 900 Malian civilians are directly employed by the UN mission, according to the operation's website. But the mission, known as MINUSMA for short, generates thousands of jobs when support and service

enterprises are factored in, according to the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental organization and think tank. "If the Malian authorities fail to make investments to compensate for the UN mission's departure, Bamako's relations with populations in the north could become strained," the group headquartered in Belgium said. The UN mission is required to create a withdrawal plan by mid-August. A draft obtained by The Associated Press suggests bases in 14 locations across Mali will be packed up, region by region, until the MINUSMA headquarters in the capital closes in December.

The UN mission will continue to pay its Malian staff members until the end of the year, when it has pledged to leave, according to Fatoumata Kaba, a spokesperson for MINUSMA. However, others who work on limited UN contracts, as well as shopkeepers and restaurants that serve the mission, can expect to lose that source of income. The loss will be especially acute in northern conflict-riddled regions like Kidal, Timbuktu, Menaka, and Gao, where UN bases employed hundreds of Malian contractors to cook meals, do maintenance work, and to build landing strips and living quarters. "In large parts of northern Mali, there's often not many economic opportunities, so contracts in support of the mission actually go a long way," Arthur Boutellis, a senior adviser at the International Peace Institute, an independent think tank based in New York, said.

According to the World Bank, an additional 375,000 Malians fell into extreme poverty between 2019 and 2021, in part due to stagnating wages and rising inflation. Nearly half of the country's 22.5 million people live below the national poverty line. The problem is worse in rural areas, where subsistence farming - many peoples' only real option for making money - is threatened by armed conflict and climate change.

Most oil removed from decaying tanker off Yemen: UN

SANAA (AFP): Most of the oil on board a rusting supertanker off war-torn Yemen has been moved to a replacement vessel in a bid to avert a catastrophic spill, the United Nations has said. The transfer of 1.14 million barrels of Marib light crude from the 47-year-old FSO Safer to the new vessel started last week.

"More than half the oil aboard the decaying FSO Safer has been transferred to the replacement vessel Yemen in the past seven days," the UN resident coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, said on social media. Gressly had previously said the entire transfer would take less

than three weeks. The UN Development Programme project manager for the Safer, Mohammed Mudawi, said more than 636,000 barrels of oil had been pumped to the replacement tanker. "We reached the 55 percent mark today," Mudawi told AFP. The UN hopes the \$143 million operation -- for which it is still \$20 million short -- will eliminate the risk of an environmental disaster that it estimates would cost \$20 billion to clean up.

Because of the Safer's position in the Red Sea, a spill would also cost billions of dollars per day in shipping disruptions through the Bab al-Mandab

Strait to the Suez Canal, while devastating ecosystems, coastal fishing communities and lifeline ports. The Safer, a floating storage and offloading facility, has been moored around 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the port of Hodeida since the 1980s. It has not been serviced since war broke out eight years ago between rebels, who control the capital Sanaa and the waters where the Safer is positioned, and a Saudi-led coalition backing the internationally recognised government. The ageing vessel, with its corroding hull, is carrying four times as much oil as was spilled in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska.

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Collective cause, global efforts essential to combat drug trafficking

RECENTLY, the Frontier Post raised the issue of poppy cultivation and heroin trade/trafficking from Afghanistan through Pakistan and other routes to the rest of the world, at the US State Department and recalled the failures of the successive US administrations and their regional partnering nations in combating this menace in the past decades. The State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller shed away the responsibility by opting not to commit on the law enforcement matters. The Frontier Post quoted the designation of the

notorious Afghan war lord Abdul Rasheed Dostum by the United States as the world's biggest heroin dealer and after ward alliance with Dostum's paramilitary troops for toppling Taliban regime and appointing him as the Commander in Chief of the Afghan National Army. However, US Diplomat tactfully eluded the brainstorming analysis by the Frontier Post while throwing the ball in the Pentagon and DEA's court who deal in defence and anti-Narcotics domains respectively.

Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade that involves the cultivation of drug crops including poppy, and marijuana, production, distribution and sale of drug substances across the world. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, the global heroin market deals in around 430-450 tons of toxic material on an annual basis. Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic yield about 50 tons of opium while the rest of the 380 tons of heroin and morphine exclusively produced in Afghanistan. The majority of the drug produced in Afghanistan is being smuggled through Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian Republics to Russia and Western Europe through land and Sea routes by the global networks of drug traffickers. Meanwhile, the corrupt elements in the LEAs and Security Agencies of those nations play an important in mobilisation of this billions of dollars of illegal business in the world. Columbia is the world's largest producer of cocaine which gave rise to organized crimes, violence and political uncertainty in majority of the nations in Latin America and other adjoining territories.

Presently, drug production and trafficking has shaped into an alternative economy while the nexus of global drug traffickers, transnational criminal networks and terrorist groups has caused a grave challenge to the civilized world. As of today, organized criminal gangs and terrorist groups are involved in drug trafficking and use this lucrative business for funds generation for use in other operations including illegal buying of firearms, terrorism financing, bribe payment to government officials/ public leaders to accomplish their illegal activities, to achieve strategic and political objectives. Historically, Afghan warlords and Taliban used drug money and exertion on poppy cultivation and drug refineries for enhancement of their strategic objectives during the war in Afghanistan, while this dirty business caused countless social, economic and security challenges in Pakistan, Central Asia, Europe and rest of the world.

The US State Department and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in collaboration with UN Office on Drug and Crimes and their regional partners in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America has been combating drug trafficking, and illicit funds including money laundering and Terrorism Financing through collective efforts and coordinated actions to completely wiped out those organized crimes from the society. The US government funds its global partners and supports them through capacity building, training and provision of latest equipment to effectively overcome this challenge while the American Drug Enforcement Agency and Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force has had close liaison and cooperation at the government level throughout in the past. The US government had initiated multiple programs to stop poppy cultivation in war-hit Afghanistan, and significant success had been achieved in the areas controlled by the Afghan government, however all those successes were reversed after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Currently, the drug trafficking and the risks for the use of drug has increased many folds because of prevailing security vacuum in Afghanistan in the post US-era. The drug traffickers thrive amid lawlessness, no economic activity and lack of resources, poverty and unemployment, whereas foreign sanctions and global isolation again pushed the drug ridden Afghan nation toward poppy cultivation and heroin production. In fact, drug production and drug addiction is not only a law and order issue but it has broader social, financial and political aspects in the contemporary world. The politico-crime nexus has made this phenomenon more gruesome and troubling, because the global powers and world's Intelligence Agencies use this business in furtherance of their strategic/ political purposes.

Historically, the civil society and media had been at the forefront in the global efforts to combat drug production, drug trafficking as well as drug addiction over the past decades, while the Frontier Post also an important part of those collective efforts and played a crucial role in the ongoing crusade against the toxic business by sensitising the world government about their official and moral obligations for the sole cause of a drug free world. At the onset of all odds and opposition, the Frontier Post will continue to play a constructive role by reporting the cursory efforts of the world nations which continuously undermines the global fight against drug trade which cost thousands of innocent lives each year in the world, until and unless it entirely wiped out from this universe.

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Uxbridge was not just an anti-green protest: It was the sour spirit of Brexit revived

Aditya Chakraborty

YOU can still see the precise moment this summer when politics slid off-script and in a new direction. It occurs in a video that opens in an old gym, where a returning officer is enjoying his big moment. Uxbridge in July, and the drama over who succeeds Boris Johnson as local MP is reaching its climax. The mood is less election night, more exhausted carnival: centre stage stands Count Binface; up front is the Monster Raving Lunatic, almost hidden under his stetson - and here comes Laurence Fox, braced to lose yet another deposit.

Off to one side stand the two main men. They make an odd pairing: Labour's Danny Beales, young, slim and stiff-backed, side by side with his Tory rival, Steve Tuckwell, who is some 20 years older. Both look queasy as the officer reads the numbers. By a tiny margin, the reds have lost. A government on death row, Johnson in disgrace, the buoyancy of Keir Starmer: none of it has been enough. Triumphant, the new Conservative MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip takes the mic. "The pundits expected Labour to win big here but our community came together," begins Tuckwell, wearing the mahogany tan of someone who has pounded streets all summer. "This wasn't the campaign Labour expected."

I'll say. According to the bookies, Starmer's team went in to this election with odds that would be the envy of Pyongyang. Now the party is still in bitter recrimination and the newspapers have given full ventilation to the leadership's explanation of what went awry. Suitably briefed, the same press that called Uxbridge wrong are now convinced they know what happened: this was the revolt of the drivers, protesting a daily charge of £12.50 on those with older, more polluting motors. By extending the ultra low emission zone (Ulez) from inner London to its suburbs, the capital's mayor, Sadiq Khan, lost his own party that crucial poll.

Before, the issue was

barely on the radar; now it is all-important. For this piece, the Guardian tallied up mentions of Ulez in the national press: over the first six months of this year it made a total of 405 appearances. In just 11 days after the result, it came up 332 times, including in many columns sneering at environmental policies and talking reverently of "motorists" as if they were some endangered native tribe. No wonder Rishi Sunak began this week dressing up as the motorists' friend, before retreating to his chopper. But why have the papers focused on Labour's alibi for why they lost, rather than ask the Tories how, despite everything, they won? Why is the gospel delivered from Westminster, while the view from the ground goes ignored? For this piece, I spoke to local activists on the Tory and Labour sides, and the story they tell is very different from that spun by the party bosses. Ulez features heavily, to be sure - but so does a disaffection with mainstream politics that smells very similar to the odour that permeated the Brexit referendum. The key divide in this story is between Westminster and local politics. Time and again, Tory activists began the account of their victory with the freedom to choose their candidate. How they got so much say in a closely watched byelection still mystifies them ("Maybe CCHQ [Conservative campaign headquarters] thought the seat was already lost," says one). However, in Tuckwell, they picked neither a star performer nor a political veteran - but someone born and bred in the area, who has raised a family there and even led a local scout troop.

Labour's story is the exact opposite, as Norrette Moore will tell you. A member of the party since Tony Blair was prime minister, she has written two detailed, careful pieces about how the entire campaign was rigged by bureaucrats in Westminster. Before she and other local members had even been told about the selection last November, she says the

party insiders had briefed journalists, while would-be candidates from outside the area already had their websites up. Rather than let the local party pick through the applicants, the bureaucrats presented members with a list. They then dissolved the entire selection committee - apparently because local members organising a Christmas food bank had sent an email thanking one of the hopeful applicants. Instead, Labour managers imposed Danny Beales, who had been born locally but lived and built a political career in central London. Among Uxbridge members, he'd been picked by only one ward out of seven. "Command and control" is how a mayoral adviser in Greater Manchester this week referred to Starmer's management style. It certainly applies to Uxbridge - and to many constituencies besides, where the party's top bureaucrats gift safe seats to their favourites from London - even if that means blocking or barring the local person who would otherwise get through. In Sedgefield, the chair of the local party was blocked - leading to 13 local party officers quitting. A former Labour councillor from Haringey, partly responsible for the disastrous Haringey Development Vehicle, was chosen. In Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire, it will be a councillor from Lewisham. Norwich North will be represented by a red rosette from Southwark.

Nadine Dorries' seat of Mid Bedfordshire will be contested by a Bank of England worker from Walthamstow.

South Thanet.

Wycombe, Stevenage, Northampton North ... the list stretches on and on. Parachutes for the boys and girls!

For the Tories in Uxbridge, their thirtysomething opponent from inner London was a gift. Their leaflets pretended the byelection was "Camden Danny" v "Hillingdon Steve". Labour's propaganda depicted their man in a suit stood outside public buildings - all stats and antiseptic.

The Tories showed Tuckwell in stonewashed blue jeans having a pint in a local beer garden. As part of the same strategy, they didn't just attack Ulez, they forged it into a weapon of cultural mistrust: your rights, their diktat. Barely mentioning Sunak, their leaflets read as if Khan ran the country, snatching away police stations and hospitals. "These people from Hackney and Lewisham have a one-size-fits-all mindset," is how local Tory chair Richard Mills explains the thinking. "They live in £1.5m homes and think they know what's best for outer London." Mills works in finance, which makes his class politics as convincing as Sunak pulling a pint. If you think this sounds like the resentful anti-politics of Brexit, then you're right. The borough of Hillingdon, in which Uxbridge sits, is after all one of the few outposts of London that in 2016 voted to leave. And just as the EU referendum was never really about Europe, so this referendum on Ulez (as Tuckwell himself dubbed it) wasn't about green policies. It was a revival of that same chip-piness about an out-of-touch politico-managerial elite - only this time not in Brussels but in zone 2. At just the point when the state is at its biggest in 70 years, the Tories in Uxbridge tapped into an anti-politician message.

Labour meanwhile continued to ignore its local members. Moore and others were invited to join a WhatsApp group to discuss Beales' run. But she says she couldn't post anything in it - that was the sole prerogative of the admins - so she left. How much input did local members have in their own election? "As far as I'm aware, none," she says. "We were just fodder." The morning of the result, and just a few hours after that video, Moore WhatsApped a Labour colleague. "Sad day," she began and listed everything her side had had going for it: the Tories in meltdown, Labour throwing money and activists at the seat ... even the gloriously warm sunshine. "By rights it should be a landslide."

Austerity or solidarity - which side of the EU will dominate?

Antara Haldar

THIS year marks the 30th anniversary of the EU's founding. When the Maastricht Treaty took effect in 1993, Europeans embarked on a historically unique experiment in supranational governance and shared sovereignty. The EU's single market allows for the free movement of goods, services and capital among 27 member states; and, critically, its Schengen Area means open borders between member states (and free movement rights even in non-Schengen member states), granting more than 400 million people an unprecedented form of citizenship that transcends national territories. While free trade is an old idea, the free movement of people on this scale is entirely novel.

But to what extent is the EU more than just a glorified trade bloc? It is instructive to consider two recent occasions when Europeans confronted divorce: Greece's debt crisis and Brexit, each of which illuminated the conflicting forces struggling for control of the continent. In the Greek case, the EU played the role of the villainous oppressor, wielding the threat of a breakup to exact concessions from a member state. In the UK's case, Brussels was the hero, stoically enduring an act of betrayal as it stood up for the principles of multilateralism and openness. Which of these episodes comes closer to capturing the EU's core character?

At times, Europe's guiding philosophy seems to be based on "home economics." Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel invoked the image of the thrifty Swabian housewife to justify her hard-line position during the Greek crisis, with the policy the EU ended up adopting on that occasion having about as much of a scientific basis as an old wives' tale. Recall that Greece's debt troubles were part of a series of rapidly falling dominoes. Following the 2008 global financial crisis, Greece could no longer wobble over its mountain of debt, so it sought assistance from the EU and the International Monetary Fund, the world's lender of last resort. While no one denies that Greece's finances were a mess, many believe that the "troika" (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF) erred by demanding penance for past mistakes, rather than laying the groundwork for a better economic future.

Greece, they insisted, would receive bailouts only if it adopted severe austerity measures, including budget cuts, tax increases, forced privatizations and a slew of probusiness reforms. As Yanis Varoufakis, Greece's finance minister at the time, noted, the troika's fixation on atonement, rather than recovery, had led it to subject Greece to "fiscal waterboarding." The EU came across as a vindictive bully, eager to inflict unnecessary pain and suffering on a hapless

population. By refusing to forgive some of Greece's debt, it seemed to have embraced the Darwinian argument that Europe would be strengthened if its weakest economic links were eliminated (an outcome that was only narrowly averted). Chief among those advocating this harsh approach was Germany, which should have been acutely aware of what can happen when a country is made to suffer national humiliation. Echoing German talking points, the EU insisted that rigid fiscal discipline must be upheld, regardless of "soft" considerations like the foreseeable immiseration of the Greek people.

In the case of Brexit, the UK's status as the EU's second-largest economy led it to succumb to hubris. A narrow majority of Britons rejected the economic logic of remaining in the EU and focused instead on all the problems supposedly caused by immigration (such as shortages of primary school places and available doctors). For those supporting Leave, the benefits of barrier-free trade did not justify the perceived costs of barrier-free migration within the EU. When the UK invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union and initiated the divorce proceedings, the EU came together as a community. In other words, the EU's stance was an inversion of its position during the Greek crisis. After 2016, it stayed true to its original mandate of securing peace and prosperity among former enemies, vindicating its selection for the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize.

But the alacrity with which Europe was willing to inflict suffering on Greece and ignore its people's voice had been a filip to opportunistic euroskeptics in Britain. Why should the UK care about a project that allows the strong to bully the weak? After 2009-10, Greece and other southern member states became - on the basis of the flimsiest of economic theories - what Paul Krugman of The New York Times called "Austeria." The UK's own woeful experience with austerity after 2010 arguably played a large role in the success of the Brexit referendum. The European project's uniqueness lies in its ambition to forge a new type of bond between people and place, based on the "idea of Europe." In their own way, the Greek and British experiences each show that this idea cannot be based on transactional logic alone. Previous experiments with austerity in the 1930s ultimately tore the continent apart. If the EU intends to stick around for another 30 years, it will have to decide once and for all whether it wants austerity or solidarity - a choice reflected in the intensifying debate over the European Commission's proposed reform of the bloc's fiscal rules. If it chooses the former, it will vindicate those who believe that the European project has only ever been a marriage of convenience.

Arab News

Migration policies likely to remain a political football in the UK

Mohamed Chebaro

THE news that the UK government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is planning to house migrants in tents to help deal with any surge in small boats crossings this summer is no doubt alarming and points to its continued absence of stable planning policies. Instead, the Conservative government seems to be resorting to half-baked, makeshift options that will ultimately fail to meet its own objective of containing the crisis, while showing that Britain is ready to break its own rules and laws regarding helping those most in need.

Media reports have indicated that the UK's interior ministry has purchased tents that will be able to house up to 2,000 migrants on disused military sites at the end of August, in anticipation of a larger number of arrivals of migrants in small boats on the shores of southeast England. During the same period last year, the government was seen as being

underprepared and overwhelmed by the number of arrivals. It was also criticized for rushing to pay for hotel rooms to house them, costing taxpayers huge sums. The tent plan has provoked disquiet within government ranks, as The Times newspaper reported that some officials had compared their use with concentration camps. This coincides with the anticipated opening of a newly moored barge, the Bibby Stockholm, which is capable of housing up to 500 migrants at a Dorset port. Home Office officials were expecting the first 50 migrants to be housed on this week.

What is not news in this context, however, is that the UK's immigration system is in tatters, as it has been for many years, and is in urgent need of fixing. Preparedness is surely important at all times, but what is clear is that the government might have been putting its money into the wrong places, such as handing a private firm a £1.6

billion (\$2 billion) contract to manage the Bibby Stockholm, alongside other asylum accommodation and travel services. In March, London also signed a deal under which it will give France almost £500 million over three years to help stop migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, hire 500 more French officers to patrol the shores and build a new detention center for refugees that will not be ready before 2026. And the Conservative government under Boris Johnson signed a deal in April 2022 with Rwanda, worth in excess of £140 million in a five-year trial, that could see asylum seekers sent to the East African country on a one-way ticket to claim asylum there. However, the UK is yet to send any migrants due to the policy being challenged in the courts. More than 45,000 people crossed the Channel in small boats last year to gain access to the UK,

despite all the efforts of the French and British authorities to deter them. That number is expected to increase this year, with the peak expected between August and October, prior to the weather turning and making the crossing more treacherous.

Meanwhile, more than 160,000 asylum seekers remain in limbo in the UK, waiting for their applications to be processed. This is where the bottleneck exists and it has, over the years, encouraged more to make the journey, as applicants are generally accepted in the end, even if they have spent months if not years waiting to be vetted and processed, with the system moving at a slow, grinding pace. The Refugee Council claims that the UK's asylum system is strictly controlled and complex, working against the odds with people who lack the necessary evidence on which to base their claim. But despite those challenges, 76 percent of the ini-

tial decisions in the year to June 2022 granted asylum or other forms of protection. Though the government has often promised more funding and more case workers, the variety of individual cases has made it nearly impossible to speed up the process. Linguistic and other cultural handicaps often related to countries torn by instability, wars and sometimes corruption make authenticating people's stories and their routes difficult. The UK spends in excess of £3 billion a year on asylum, with almost £7 million a day spent on hotel rooms to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers. The new plans would certainly add to the bill and they also show that this government is ready to throw money at the problem in the hope that it will go away, without working to overhaul its rules or provide safe routes for people in need of protection.

The steps to symbolically deter would-be asylum seekers from paying people

smugglers to help them reach British shores will not echo with people who have already been living in the open for months, like those stranded in Tunisia, or those awaiting the chance to cross the Mediterranean from Libya, some of whom will be Britain and France's problem tomorrow.

The UK's interior minister is hoping to tell the world that "Britain is not a soft touch" by broadcasting images of barges and tents awaiting refugees. However, what this government, or any other one, must do is work to reform the asylum system and stop using it to score political points. It needs to close any loopholes that exist to stop those who seek to take advantage of the system. The British government led by the Conservative Party risks further sinking the UK's reputation by resorting to housing migrants in tents and floating barges and sending some illegal arrivals to Rwanda.

Russia must stop using food as a weapon

ON July 17, nearly one year after it was signed in Istanbul, Russia decided to not renew the Black Sea Grain Initiative that allowed Ukraine to export agricultural goods to global markets. As underlined by the secretary-general of the UN, this initiative had been "a beacon of hope in a world that desperately needs it."

Before Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine - a critical global food supplier - a fifth of the world's barley came from Ukraine, as well as a sixth of its maize and an eighth of its wheat. After Russia invaded Ukraine, attacking grain fields and silos and blocking Ukrainian ports, global food prices spiked to record levels and endangered much-needed food supply for many importer countries. The grain initiative aimed to reestablish a vital route for agricultural exports from Ukraine and to lower global food prices.

Despite many challenges, it achieved its key purpose. The export of almost 33 million tons of grains and food from Ukraine to 45 different countries played an instrumental role in reducing global food prices by some 25 percent from the record high reached shortly after Russia's attack. As public trade data shows, more than half of the grain, including two-thirds of the wheat, went to developing countries. In addition, the initiative ensured continued access to grain for the World Food Program. In 2023, Ukraine supplied 80 percent of the wheat procured to support humanitarian operations in the most food-insecure countries, such as Afghanistan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Without the Black Sea route, the World Food Program will have to get its grain elsewhere, at higher prices and with a longer lead time, at a time when the world is facing

an unprecedented food crisis.

Russia's decision was taken despite the UN secretary-general's renewed proposals to work to address its concerns. In order to shift blame, Russia claims that its own agricultural exports were not sufficiently facilitated. This is not

have no impact on global food security. There are no sanctions on Russian exports of food and fertilizer to third countries and the EU has provided extensive guidance to economic operators, clarifying that these transfers to third countries are permitted. We have also worked

The UN has worked relentlessly to clarify regulatory frameworks and engage with the private sector to find dedicated solutions across the banking and insurance sectors. These efforts have been conducted in close collaboration with the EU and its partners. Contrary to the lies spread by Russia, the EU has indeed ensured that our sanctions have no impact on global food security. There are no sanctions on Russian exports of food and fertilizer to third countries and the EU has provided extensive guidance to economic operators, clarifying that these transfers to third countries are permitted.

borne out by publicly available trade data, which shows that Russia's agricultural exports are thriving. Moscow also gained important benefits from its memorandum of understanding with the UN on fertilizer exports, which had been brokered in parallel to the grain deal. The UN has worked relentlessly to clarify regulatory frameworks and engage with the private sector to find dedicated solutions across the banking and insurance sectors.

These efforts have been conducted in close collaboration with the EU and its partners. Contrary to the lies spread by Russia, the EU has indeed ensured that our sanctions

with the UN to allow related payments.

Despite these well-known and verifiable facts, Russia decided to pull out of the grain initiative, using food as a weapon and endangering the global food supply. Hours after withdrawing, Russia also started to destroy Ukraine's grain storage facilities and port infrastructure with daily targeted attacks, not only in the Black Sea itself but also on the Danube. As an immediate reaction, wholesale wheat and maize prices saw their biggest price increase since the start of Russia's war of aggression. The increased food price volatility is likely to persist as long as Russia puts global

food supply under deliberate stress, aggravating the worldwide cost-of-living crisis - and most acutely for food-insecure people in import-dependent countries. This is unacceptable and should be resolutely condemned. As the world deals with disrupted supplies and higher prices, Russia is now approaching vulnerable countries, notably in Africa, with bilateral offers of limited grain shipments, pretending to solve a problem it created itself. This is a cynical policy of deliberately using food as a weapon.

In response to Russia's irresponsible actions, the EU is active along three main lines. First, we will continue to support the tireless efforts of the UN and Türkiye to resume the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Second, we continue to strengthen our "Solidarity Lanes" as alternative routes for Ukrainian agricultural exports to reach global markets through the EU. These lanes have allowed the export of more than 41 million tons of Ukraine's agricultural goods so far, and we are increasing this as much as possible to mitigate the consequences of Russia's termination of the grain deal.

Third, we have increased our financial support to countries and people most in need, providing 18 billion (\$19.75 billion) to address food security until 2024. We call on the international community and all countries to step up their own assistance in support of global food security. We ask all our partners to urge Russia to return to negotiations, as the African Union already has, as well as to refrain from targeting Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure. With a clear and unified voice, we can get Russia to resume its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The world has a shared interest in the responsible stewardship of global food security. We owe it to the people most in need.

At Russia-Africa Summit, Russia's dual Africa strategy was on full display

ANALYZING Russia's Mali strategy, researchers Maxime Audinet and Emmanuel Dreyfus described it as a two-sided presence, featuring official and unofficial sides. This dual nature of Russia's Mali engagements can be found also in other Russian engagements in the continent and was overtly on display in St. Petersburg during the 2023 Russia-Africa Summit and its accompanying public forum.

Russia's African engagements consist of an official side, characterized by trade and investment, diplomatic relations, public diplomacy, and UN initiatives, among other forms of engagement. The other side is the unofficial or covert element. This is where the Prigozhins and Malofeyevs come into play, as well as state-controlled media RT and Sputnik and Russia's intelligence agencies. The 2023 Russia-Africa Summit pretended to be all about the presentable public face of Russia-Africa ties, but the hidden "dark" side of Russia's foreign policy was well represented as well. On the official side, the aims were rather diffuse, featuring a catch-all agenda from business to culture. Still, some points featured more heavily. The summit and forum official partners heavily feature agricultural, mining, and technology companies, as well as educational institutions. Unable to compete with China, the US and Europe in other areas, Russia has made these areas into some of the niches where it can remain competitive on the continent. Russia's exit from the grain deal made connectivity, logistics and agriculture urgent topics for many of the participants.

The substance of speeches from Russian officials - Putin included - was rather grim; a changing and chaotic world order was described, where Africa and Russia are under attack from the West on all fronts. In this scenario, Russia and Africa are meant to cooperate - like they allegedly did during the Cold War - to thwart the West's aggressive policies and create a truly multipolar world. These are all well-established tropes in Russia's Africa diplomacy. The outcome of the summit evinced many of the contradictions of Russia's African diplomacy. Putin has insisted that the conference included representatives from nearly all countries of Africa, and that it was the fault of Western pressure that no more than 17 heads of state attended. Some deals were closed between Russian and African companies, and there also were some agreements signed between Russian government bodies and African counterparts.

Despite its weight on the continent's affairs, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was seldom discussed in public. The topic of the African peace proposal was touched upon by Putin, but generally the Russian speakers succeeded at separating peace in Europe from the Kremlin's vision of international security. Namely, Putin claims that Russia helps Africa strengthen its sovereignty, which is the guarantee for the security of that continent. This rhetoric renders Africa a passive recipient of Russia's help, and not a potential source of solutions for Russia, much less an equal partner.

Ivan U. Klyszcz

ty. Namely, Putin claims that Russia helps Africa strengthen its sovereignty, which is the guarantee for the security of that continent. This rhetoric renders Africa a passive recipient of Russia's help, and not a potential source of solutions for Russia, much less an equal partner. Other contradictions were visible as well. For years, the African Union (AU) has condemned the new juntas in West Africa and has advocated for a return to civilian rule in Burkina Faso and Mali. By engaging the juntas in areas such as defense and security, Russia is going against the AU on this point. The contradiction is not lost on the Kremlin, as the summit organizers made sure to leave a spot empty in the group picture between Putin and coup leader Ibrahim Traoré. The unofficial side is absent from the plenary sessions - or barely hinted at - and rather reserved for chats in the corridor and meetings at the sidelines. Putin's message to the public forum attendees in fact stresses the informal discussions and encounters one commonly seeks out from these events. Indeed, the summit featured a variety of individuals well known to be relays of Russian influence abroad.

Making headlines again was Yevgeny Prigozhin. Unlike the 2019 summit, Prigozhin made an appearance in St. Petersburg during the conference, meeting a member of the Central African Republic delegation. Also, Viktor Bout - who has already hinted before at returning to "business" - was present at the forum at a panel about logistics. Konstantin Malofeyev and his organizations featured at a panel on "Russophilia." Karina Kadyrova - Ramzan Kadyrov's daughter - was present as well, in a panel chaired by war criminal Maria Lvova-Belova.

Yevgeny Primakov's tenure at Russia House (also called Rossotrudnichestvo) also reflects well the dual nature of Russia's Africa policy. Officially, Rossotrudnichestvo is a cultural cooperation agency of the Russian government, operating along the lines of the Alliance Française or the Goethe-Institut. However, its activities cross the boundary between the two sides of Russia's dual approach, often acting as a relay of Russian influence and wartime propaganda, including in Africa. Since 2022, Primakov has pushed his organization into a large expansion in Africa. Many of these figures have well-trodden paths in Africa, but their influence inside Russia itself is secondary. The main actors of the "power vertical" - other than Putin - were absent or discreet at the summit, not to take away attention from the official side and the summitry. At the same time, Mikhail Kovalchuk was present at the forum. Due to his vast wealth and media influence, his brother Yuri Kovalchuk is considered by some to be the second most powerful indi-

vidual in Russia. Mikhail's presence, as well as of members of his Kurchatov Institute, suggests that the Kovalchukis were interested in this event.

Already well present in the continent, Russian intelligence had opportunities to connect with their counterparts at the summit. For instance, the leader of the intelligence community of the Republic of Congo, Jean-Dominique Okemba - cousin of long-time ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso - was present at the summit and even spoke at the public forum. On the Russian side, as another example, figures such as Malofeyev and Prigozhin are well-known to have contacts with Russia's intelligence. What are the implications for the African states involved? We can think of the countries represented at the summit as divided between those with governments dependent on Russia and those that are hedging with Russia's offer. In the case of the former, these are the juntas and other isolated regimes, whose survival in power depends on the weapons, money and security services afforded by Moscow. In the latter, these are those eager to receive international attention in the face of the unfolding climate catastrophe and looming hunger, many countries are choosing to engage Russia despite its criminal war of aggression. These two groups have - in this very general and simple scheme - different outcomes. Those dependent on Russia showed themselves to be loyal to Moscow. The embattled Touadéra - heavily enmeshed in the Wagner network - and the Mali junta in particular find in Russia their only interlocutor to avoid isolation. Both CAR and Mali were well-represented at the summit. The Burkina Faso junta might be considering a similar path.

For everyone else, Russia's credibility as a viable partner is ever in question. Russia's trade with Africa has grown since 2000 but remains marginal and lopsided, with Moscow seldom buying products from the continent. On grains, the UN chief Antonio Guterres asserted that the donations mentioned by Putin cannot replace the grain deal. The Kremlin can only dismiss the African peace proposal for so long before alienating the governments invested in the success of that initiative. Many specific outcomes are yet to be seen, such as the attempt at reviving relations with Mozambique or the possibility of mining operations in South Sudan. On July 25, the expectation was that the summit will result in a Russia-Africa action plan for the 2023-2026 period. Ultimately, the summit failed to confirm Russia's role in Africa as a key player in the continent's affairs. Under Putin, and especially since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has become more of a problem than a solution for Africa.

The Moscow Times

America's only hope is for Trump to withdraw from the election race

DONALD Trump's pursuit of the 2024 Republican presidential nomination will damage both the party and America, particularly if he succeeds. Neutral observers might think the growing mountain of legal challenges - criminal and civil - including the one filed on Tuesday in Washington, would give Trump pause, notwithstanding his current opinion-poll lead in the Republican race. And everyone not named Trump recognises the enormous risks if he becomes the first convicted felon nominated for the presidency, or worse yet elected president.

For Trump, however, staying in the race increases his chances to get the nomination and secure funding to pay his rising legal bills. If he wins next year's general elections, as is entirely possible, he will be able to terminate the pending federal investigations and prosecutions (although not the New York and Georgia criminal proceedings) or pardon himself if already convicted.

This growing disjunction between the national interest and Trump's personal political and economic interest is nothing new. Unfortunately, however, there is surely little doubt he will seek to maximise his personal well-being over the country's. America is in uncharted waters.

For any normal person, the burden of defending against criminal

indictments, as well as civil lawsuits (which could significantly damage his personal finances), would be more than enough to reorient his priorities away from politics. The time involved to prepare for multiple trials and the magnitude of the legal jeopardy Trump faces should impel him to put other matters aside to concentrate on his serious risk of criminal convictions and substantial civil damages.

But Trump is an aberration. Ironically, he seems to think his best strategy is to use politics as his legal defence. His lawyers will presumably argue at every opportunity that pre-trial proceedings and the trials themselves should be delayed and delayed again, to somewhere past election day. They will file every conceivable pre-trial motion and take every appeal permissible, which follows a long history of Trump's approach to litigation. Moreover, given this strategy and his already extraordinarily high legal fees - estimated at roughly \$567million (£447million) since departing the White House - he may need the presidential campaign to help finance his legal defence. His outlays include legal fees paid on behalf of aides, which in many cases raise ethical issues. Prosecutors have questioned whether lawyers representing witnesses whose interests may be adverse to Trump's can properly

accept compensation from his entities.

If Trump's delay strategy prevails, once inaugurated he can dismiss the federal special counsel and order the cases dismissed, which is within the executive branch's prerogative. The two state cases are a different matter, and would remain pending against Trump, though he will certainly argue that they should be stayed during his presidency. If the state prosecutions proceed, however, and Trump is found guilty in one or both, it would be very Trumpian to refuse, as president, to accept the verdicts, expecting to skate free yet again. The US would face an unprecedented constitutional crisis. The overall effect of this abnormal turmoil on America's confidence in the integrity of its law enforcement and government generally makes predictions hazardous. The vital question is just how deeply divisive and debilitating the consequences would be, and how long-lasting.

Internationally, America's adversaries would swiftly take full advantage of Trump's vulnerability and his propensity to commingle national interests with his personal interests. For Trump, obstruction of justice seems to be a way of life, with everything seen through the prism: "How does this benefit Donald Trump?" Trump is already making clear that his governing

agenda will be retribution against his political enemies. He recently asserted, erroneously, not to mention almost sacrilegiously, that "I am being indicted for you", having proclaimed earlier, "I am your justice. And for those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution." Since Trump undoubtedly sees himself as the most "wronged and betrayed" person of all, his intentions couldn't be clearer or more dangerous.

Polls show that Americans do not want a repeat of 2020's Biden-versus-Trump race; a majority want Trump to drop out. If someone with a rare gift of persuasion could talk sense to Trump, and persuade him to withdraw, any number of pretexts could be found to mask the real reason. Perhaps there could be "health" issues, or he could argue no one should be president in their 80s, thereby also throwing shade on Biden. And Biden may yet decide to withdraw, which could lessen the zeal of Trump supporters who want a grudge rematch against the man they think stole the 2020 election. The only real solution lies in one or more of the criminal trials taking place before November 2024, which is still possible. If Trump is found guilty of one or more felonies, that may be sufficient to awaken enough of his supporters to abandon him, thereby derailing his campaign before he derails the country.

The Telegraph

Turkiye hopes to negotiate a new Black Sea grain deal

RUSSIA last month announced that it had brought an end to the Black Sea Grain Initiative and that vessels leaving Ukrainian harbors would be considered a military target. This deal was an agreement between Russia, Ukraine and Türkiye, with the participation of the UN.

Everything started with Russia's insistence on making its conditions prevail. In this deal, most of the trump cards are in Russia's hands. To demonstrate that Moscow had the means to prevail, it bombed the port of Odesa for three consecutive nights, destroying 60,000 tons of grain. And an Iranian-manufactured drone hit Reni, a Ukrainian harbor located just 300 meters from the Romanian border. All these attacks indicate that the war is steadily expanding in all directions. Furthermore, in an environment of shortages of many things, it is a pity to waste such a big quantity of food.

With a view to gaining the hearts of the peoples of the least-developed African countries, Russian President Vladimir Putin promised last week - either as a grant or as a commercial deal - to provide them with the grain that they cannot now get from Ukraine. He said that, this year, Russia was expecting a record harvest and therefore its withdrawal from the grain deal would not negatively affect these countries. Putin reiterated that he would maintain Russia's supply of grain, food, fertilizer and other materials to these African countries, pointing out that

it sent 11.5 million tons of grain to them in 2022 and 10 million tons in the first half of 2023. Russia announced that the security guarantees it previously gave in the Black Sea have now become invalid. Such a statement makes the Black Sea an unstable area.

With Russia putting an end to the grain deal, it has also put an end to a deal in which Türkiye was an important player. Türkiye's conditional approval of Sweden's NATO membership must have irritated Russia, therefore Ankara may be forced to pay a price for its decision. All these indications mean that the risks of an escalation in the Black Sea are real. The introduction of cluster munitions has become another complicating factor in the Ukrainian war. This munition was banned in 2010 by a UN convention because of the effect it has on civilians. Some 110 countries have since joined the convention. Russia has used cluster bombs extensively in Ukraine. Now, the US has decided to send cluster ammunition to Kyiv. This will greatly increase the number of casualties.

US National Security Council Spokesperson Adam Hodge claimed that Washington had obtained information that Russia was laying additional mines around Ukrainian ports. He further claimed that Russia was preparing for potential attacks on cargo ships sailing in the Black Sea. If these rumors turn out to be true, it would mean that there may be a military escalation in the Black Sea. As the

country that has the longest coastline on the Black Sea - with the exception of occupied Ukrainian shores - Türkiye will be facing the biggest risks. Furthermore, Ankara, being the custodian of the Turkish Straits, may be exposed to additional risks.

Although the US and the EU countries claim there are only selective sanctions imposed on Russian goods, Moscow complains that international insurance companies refuse to insure Russian ships and that they are not allowed to use the harbors of other countries. It also complains that Russian banks are not allowed to use the international transfer system known as SWIFT and that there are restrictions imposed on the import to Russia of agricultural equipment and spare parts. Russia complains that it is being strangled to a large extent. Russia also claims that the grain corridor was originally designed for poor countries, but that it has now been transformed into an ordinary commercial mechanism, mostly used by Western countries. According to the official Turkish statistics, 40 percent of the grain goes to European countries, 30 percent to Asia, 13 percent to Türkiye, 12 percent to Africa and 5 percent to the Middle East. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan contacted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who told him that Türkiye should take the lead in unlocking the impasse. For his part, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan contacted his Russian

counterpart Sergei Lavrov with a view to reinstating the deal, but so far no progress has been made. Russia persistently complains that it is prevented from selling its grain and fertilizer.

If the deal is not renewed, the biggest loser will be Ukraine. The next biggest loser will be Russia. However, the economy of the latter is bigger and it has alternative export routes to Asian countries. All sides will be winning if the grain deal is resumed and all sides will be losing in case a new deal is not done. In his talks with Fidan, Lavrov provided several reasons why Russia withdrew from the grain deal. Fidan is working hard to bring Russia back to the negotiating table. Russia's continued blocking of the grain deal is likely to affect 400 million people. There are other routes for exporting Ukrainian grain to the world's markets, through Romania, Slovakia or Poland, but the costs of using this land corridor are much higher. The best solution would be a deal to use the Turkish Straits.

In a meeting held in St. Petersburg at the end of last week, Putin disclosed that an industrial zone would be established on the outskirts of the Egyptian harbor of Port Said and that it would become Russia's window to Africa. As this will be a separate arrangement, the Turkish Straits will again become part of this Africa-related deal. We will see whether Russia will be able to isolate Ukraine. The countries of the Black Sea region need each other in order to make an arrangement that every single country will benefit from.

The world knows Putin is too scared to use nuclear weapons

WHILE Vladimir Putin generally refrains from clear nuclear threats, his henchmen are far less subtle. Dmitry Medvedev, a former Russian president and current Deputy Security Council Chief, has threatened Ukraine and its Western supporters with nuclear weapons nearly sixty times since last February.

At 57, Medvedev holds an important role in Russia's strategic communications, laser-focused on nuclear propaganda. His job is to say what Putin can't; to remind the world who has the largest nuclear arsenal in the world - and where it can be used. The problem is that now nobody takes him seriously. "Red line" after "red line" has been crossed by the West, with no response. The nuclear blackmail has stopped working. In fact, it's become a semi-useful indicator about the state of Russia. Medvedev's threats usually follow Russian military failures, and follow the lines of "if we're about to lose a war, then we have a red button we can press". Sure enough, last weekend as the counter-offensive gathered strength, Medvedev popped up to act as harbinger of the Apocalypse on his telegram channel, calling the

Svitlana Morenets

Russian army the only force keeping "global nuclear fire from flaring up".

In the early days of the full-scale invasion, the West took this seriously: would helping Ukraine mean risking a nuclear war? But it didn't take much imagination to see an alternative horror: if Kyiv fell then the Baltic states would be next in line and we'd end up risking nuclear war anyway. Appearing an aggressor can be the most provocative act of all. The West found its courage and faced Russia down. And what happened? Western weapons poured into the battlefield; Ukraine hopes to join Nato when the war ends; and the only change in Russian nuclear posture has been the alleged transfer of tactical nuclear warheads to Belarus.

But Russia already has the ability to launch a nuclear strike anywhere it really wants to, so there was no military logic in rebasing the missiles to Belarus. The value was purely psychological; Moscow is attempting to persuade the West that further military and financial support for Ukraine will lead to escalation and increase the threat to Ukraine's territory through

missile launches, including those with nuclear warheads. "Nuclear weapons have already been used - we know by whom and where - which means there is no taboo!", said Medvedev in July. But the fact that Moscow has decided to put the "nuclear argument" on the table only shows that its conventional army has been shown up and Putin currently has no other ways to increase pressure on Ukraine and its allies. Ashamed to make threats directly, he hands the job to Medvedev, who does not seem to do it very well - his nuclear bluster rarely makes it to the Western headlines. He now inspires more ridicule than fear. Just as North Korea's regular threats to attack America are now seen as part of a deranged everyday vocabulary. Ukrainian officials, meanwhile, ignore him, other than to recommend he drinks less vodka before opening Telegram.

Putin's attempt to conquer Ukraine has proved the greatest disaster of his presidency. He can't secure a military victory. He knows Ukraine won't surrender in negotiations. And he knows nuclear war would be the end of his regime, and his life. As this war has shown, Putin is ready to sacrifice anyone, but not himself.



Pakistan Stock Exchange loses 153 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange on Thursday witnessed bearish trend and lost 153.37 points, a negative change of 0.31 percent, closing at 48,611.18 points against 48,764.55 points the previous trading day.

A total of 526,039,924 shares were traded during the day as compared to 556,141,485 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19.032 billion against Rs 19.989 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 367 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 129 of them recorded gains and 216 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Cnergyco PK with 33,210,716 shares

at Rs 3.67 per share; K-Electric with 25,427,937 shares at Rs.2.35 per share and Oil and Gas Dev with 24,521,243 shares at Rs 104.26 per share.

Raffan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 201.03 per share price, closing at Rs8,999.00 whereas the runner-up was Sanofi-Aventis with an Rs 50.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 800.00.

Allawasaya Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 144.00 per share closing at Rs 1,880.00, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs 80.00 decline to close at Rs 7,070.00.

Rupee gains Rs 2.18 against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Thursday was strengthened by Rs 2.18 against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 287.20 against the previous day's

closing of Rs 289.38.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 290 and Rs 293 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 4.18 to close at Rs 313.53 against the last day's closing of Rs 317.71, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost 03 paisa to close at Rs 2, whereas a decrease of Rs 5.53 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 364.53 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 370.06.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 59 and 57 paisa to close at Rs 78.19 and Rs 76.55 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs2,800 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.2,800 and was sold at Rs.220,200 on Thursday against its sale at Rs.223,000 on the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also decreased by Rs2,401 to Rs 188,786 from Rs191,187 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold dipped to Rs173,054 from Rs. 175,254.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2750 and that of ten gram by Rs.48.86 to Rs.2,357.68.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$15 to \$1,936 from \$1,951, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Muhammad Zaka Ashraf meeting on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.

Dar reiterates govt support to promote sports activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday reiterated government's support and cooperation to encourage sports activities, especially Cricket which is becoming more popular among youth.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headed by Chairman Muhammad Zaka Ashraf that called on the minister here. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha and senior officers from Finance and PCB team also attended the meeting.

The minister also extended full cooperation of the government to make the Asia Cup 2023 event successful, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

On the occasion, Chairman PCB, Muhammad Zaka Ashraf apprised the Finance Minister of matters related to PCB and hosting of Men's One-Day International (ODI) Asia Cup-2023, jointly by Pakistan and Sri Lanka in August-September, 2023.

Trade bodies urged to play role for tax expansion

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) urged the masses to play their vital role for tax net expansion and also urged the trade and industrial associations to educate their members about benefits of becoming taxpayers by filing returns.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said the withholding tax rates were very high for the non-filer as compared to the filer and now it was not feasible for the masses to remain out of the tax net. He said the systems of tax return authorities were integrated and it was not possible for anyone to hide his assets or capital for a long period.

He said it would be better for the masses to file their returns before the action by the government.

In a letter written to the heads of trade and industrial associations, the president said the broadening of the tax base had become crucial for survival of national economy.

A reasonable proportion of tax revenue to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio is the key for running the administrative affairs of the country, ranging from defence to development and security to social welfare.

The LCCI president said the legal framework had placed a strong emphasis on the accuracy and transparency of documentation, making it crucial for businesses to maintain record.

He said failing to disclose assets in the wealth declaration statement, the assets could be owned by the government and the government may at any point claim them under Pakistan's Benami law.

"In view of the above, the associations are requested to play their due role in educating the members about benefits of becoming taxpayers by filing returns", Kashif Anwar wrote in the letter.

Turkish delegation to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday said a high level Turkish furniture delegation will soon visit Pakistan to further explore the possibilities of collaboration for joint ventures and investment.

After his return from a week-long tour of Turkey he held a series of fruitful meetings with Turkish furniture manufacturers and invited them to Pakistan, said a news release issued here. He said both the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries were significant players in the global market.

Collaboration between the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries could lead to exciting opportunities for both countries. It could involve sharing expertise, technology, and design ideas, resulting in the production of unique and high-quality furniture products, he remarked.

This partnership may also facilitate access to each other's markets, potentially increasing trade and economic benefits for both nations.

He said their visit will be an exciting opportunity for both countries businesses to strengthen their ties and explore potential investment and joint ven-

tures in the furniture industry.

It could lead to beneficial collaborations and economic growth for both countries. He said the Turkish furniture industry has been known for its craftsmanship, innovation, and the use of high-quality materials.

Turkiye strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East can help Pakistan be a hub for furniture exports.

Pakistan has been exporting its furniture products to various countries, and the industry has seen increased recognition on the international stage.

Meher Kashif emphasises importance of economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday emphasized the importance of economy and democracy for Pakistan's development.

In his presidential address at a round table conference on "Democracy and Economy," he said a strong economy fosters growth, job opportunities, and improved living standards while democracy ensures a representative government that upholds the rule of law, protects human rights, and encourages people participation in decision-making.

He said the synergy between a stable economy and a functioning democra-

cy is vital for Pakistan's progress and sustainable development, said a news release issued here.

However, it was important to recognize that specific challenges and priorities may evolve over time, and continued efforts are needed to strike a balance between these two pillars.

A healthy economy with opportunities for growth and prosperity can strengthen democratic institutions, he remarked.

He said a robust economy can lead to improved living standards, reduced poverty, and increased access to education and healthcare.

This, in turn, fosters a more engaged and

informed citizenry, which is essential for a vibrant democracy, he added.

Balancing the economy and democracy is an ongoing process that requires careful consideration, public discourse, and a commitment to uphold democratic principles while promoting sustainable economic growth, he added.

Meher Kashif Younis said economy and democracy are closely intertwined concepts. In a democratic system, the economy plays a crucial role in shaping people's lives, opportunities, and overall well-being.

Conversely, democratic governance influences economic policies and decisions, he added.

Services' trade deficit narrows by 87 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The services' trade deficit shrank by 87.68 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported.

The services trade deficit was recorded at \$719.45 million during July-June (2022-23) against the deficit of \$5,840.11 million during July-June (2021-22).

The exports of services during the period increased by 2.78 percent going up from \$7,102.35 million in 2021-22 to \$7,300.13 million during fiscal year 2022-23, according to PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports declined from \$12,942.46 million to \$8,019.58 million in FY2023, showing negative growth of 38.04 percent.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the export of services decreased by 13.99 percent by declining from 664.02 million in June 2022 to \$571.10 million in June 2023.

The services imports also increased by 50.71 percent, from \$1,328.89 million to \$655.06 million.

On a month-on-month basis, the export of services dip by 5.91 percent in June 2023 when compared to the exports of 606.99 million in May 2023.

The imports of services also went down by 27.47 percent in June 2023 compared to imports of \$903.09 million in May 2023, PBS reported.

It is pertinent to mention

here that the merchandise trade deficit witnessed a decline of 41.16 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding month of last year.

The trade deficit during the month under review was recorded at \$1.607 billion against the deficit of \$2.731 billion in July 2022, a decline of 41.16 percent.

The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.057 billion against \$2.250 billion last year, showing a decline of 8.57 percent.

On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 26.44 percent falling from \$4.981 billion last year to \$3.664 billion during July 2023.

6th China-Arab States Expo to take place in NW China

BEIJING (APP): The sixth China-Arab States Expo will take place in Yinchuan, the capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, in September, the country's commerce ministry announced.

Starting from Sept. 21, the four-day biennial event will draw the participation of representatives from 14 governments, 13 international and regional organizations as well as foreign institutions in China, and over 60 foreign business

associations and enterprises, officials revealed at a press conference.

First held in 2013, the China-Arab States Expo has become an important platform for China and Arab states to promote pragmatic cooperation and advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, Vice Minister of Commerce Li Fei told the briefing.

Over the past ten years, the China-Arab States Expo has attracted over 400,000 participants and 6,000

enterprises from 112 countries and regions, who signed more than 1,200 cooperation projects in areas such as modern agriculture, high technologies and biomedicine, according to Li.

China is now the Arab states' largest trading partner. China-Arab trade volume almost doubled from the 2012 level to 431.4 billion US dollars last year. In the first half of this year, trade between China and the Arab states reached 199.9 billion dollars.

UAE working to sign agreement with Pakistan, says UAE Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was working to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Pakistan that would create many new opportunities for the entrepreneurs of both countries to promote bilateral trade and exports.

This was said by Rashid Abdul Rehman Al Ali, Deputy Head of Mission of UAE Embassy while addressing the business community during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI).

He said that he was quite optimistic about the eco-

nomie future of Pakistan as FDI from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and China was coming to Pakistan.

He termed the holding of the first-ever Pakistan Minerals Summit a positive development for the country.

He said that UAE wanted to further promote investment with Pakistan with a focus on agriculture, textiles, marble & tiles, gemstone, mining, and petroleum.

He stressed further strengthening government-to-government and business-to-business relations between the two countries to explore new avenues of business matchmaking.

He said that Pakistan was most the favorable country for tourism and an improved tourism infrastructure would attract more tourists.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said that Pakistan and UAE enjoyed cordial relations, which were based on common foundations of history, religion and culture. He said that UAE has always helped Pakistan in difficult times, which showed its sincerity with our country.

He said that UAE was one of the major trading partners of Pakistan with a bilateral trade of over USD

10 billion and added that there was great potential to further increase this figure by regular exchange of trade delegations.

He said that UAE's investors should invest in Pakistan's tourism sector to further upgrade its infrastructure.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President of ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI would like to organize a Pak-UAE business forum in the ICCI auditorium in collaboration with UAE Embassy.

The UAE DHM assured his cooperation to hold the said event in a successful manner.

Corporate farming to attract investment in agriculture sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Kissan Ittehad Khalid Mehmood Khokhar Wednesday said that corporate farming will attract about Rs100 billion investment in the agriculture sector within three years and help to achieve self-sufficiency in staple food crop production, besides attaining food safety and security in the country.

Addressing a press conference, he dismissed all the misconceptions being created by some elements regarding corporate farming in the country in which they claimed that initiation of corporate farming would deprive the small farmers of their cultivable lands.

He said that under corporate farming the farmer's clusters would be estab-

lished to start collaborative farming to enhance the output of all major and minor crops by adopting modern and innovative cultivation technologies and they would be enabled for purchasing of latest tools including tractors, combine harvesters and land levellers.

The farmers would be given their due right through future market practice as it was protecting farmers' rights around the world, he said adding that they would also provide proper seeds and other agriculture inputs to enhance their farm income to alleviate poverty in the country.

The agriculture sector development was vital for economic development in the country, he said adding

that coordinated efforts by all the national institutions were required to uplift local agriculture sector in order to achieve food safety and security.

He said that Pakistan was endowed with huge natural resources and it was need of time to exploit these reserves to achieve sustainable agricultural growth, economic development, and social prosperity. He stressed the need to utilize about 15 million acres of cultivable lands to get rid of the dependency on imported food grains like wheat, sugar, and pulses.

The agriculture sector development was also vital for exports promotions as out of the total \$31 billion in exports, over \$25 billion was comprised of textiles,

\$2 billion rice and \$2 billion on other agricultural products, he said adding that the corporate farming would help in producing exportable surpluses of crops including rice, wheat, maize and others.

President Kissan Ittehad also urged the government to take immediate measures to ensure minimum support prices of different crops including cotton to protect the farmers from exploitation and ensure a proper rate of return of their produce.

He urged the government to take steps for the revival of farming communities, which were affected due to recent torrential rains and flooding in some districts of the Punjab Province.

1.4m bales of cotton arrival recorded at ginneries till 1st Aug in Pakistan

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 1.4 million (1,428,638) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till Aug 1, 2023 with major contribution of over one million bales recorded from Sindh owing to early picking and its Sanghar district alone attracting more than half of the total arrivals so far.

According to a fortnightly report of Pakistan Cotton

Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Thursday, Punjab ginning factories recorded cotton arrival figure of 388,568 bales while arrivals to ginneries in Sindh recorded at one million plus (1,040,070) bales including 721,149 reaching ginneries in Sanghar district alone. Arrivals in Baluchistan were recorded at 41,100 bales.

Out of the total arrivals, seed cotton converted into

bales was recorded at 1.3 million (1,327,847) bales including 955,278 bales in Sindh and 372,569 bales in Punjab.

Exporters have bought 7500 bales of cotton in total and that too in Punjab while textile mills bought total over 1.2 million (1,284,819) bales including 346,438 bales in Punjab and 938, 381 bales in Sindh bringing total sold out bales figure to 1,292,319 bales.

Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has not yet started procuring cotton, says the report. The stock of unginned Phutti was recorded at 100,791 bales and unsold bales at 35,528 bales bringing the total unsold stock with ginneries at 136,319 bales. Total 368 ginning factories were operational in the country, 70 more than the previous fortnight, including 182 in Punjab and 186 in Sindh.

Adidas books profit as it sells off Kanye inventory

FRANKFURT, Germany (AFP/APP): Adidas said Thursday it booked a profit in the second quarter, showing tentative signs of recovery as it sells off its huge inventory of rapper Kanye West's Yeezy merchandise.

The German sportswear giant reported a net profit of 84 million euros (\$92 million) from April to June, following two consecutive quarters of losses.

But this was still substantially lower than in the same period a year earlier.

Adidas has endured a period of chaos since October last year when it ended its lucrative tie-up with rapper West -- now known formally as Ye --

after he made a series of antisemitic outbursts.

The group ended production of the highly successful Yeezy line designed with West, and was saddled with a vast stock of surplus trainers. Adidas also faced problems in China, long one of its key markets.

But there were improvements on both these fronts in the second quarter.

Adidas's first sell-off of Yeezy shoes, launched in late May, generated about 400 million euros in sales.

"The sale of the first part of the Yeezy inventory did of course help both our top and bottom line in the quarter," said CEO Bjorn Gulden in a statement.

"We will continue to carefully sell off more of the existing Yeezy inventory. This is much better than destroying and writing off the inventory."

It allows Adidas to make "substantial donations" to NGOs while "of course also helping both our cash flow and general financial strength," Gulden added.

Adidas is giving cash to organisations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Philonise and Keeta Floyd Institute for Social Change.

Philonise Floyd is the brother of George Floyd, a Black American murdered by a white police officer who pinned him to the

ground by kneeling on his neck for nearly 10 minutes.

Adidas set aside 110 million euros in the second quarter for donations to charities, of which 10 million has already been disbursed.

The company is launching a second sell-off of Yeezy stock this month but does not expect it to be as profitable as the first, which was offering more expensive products.

Adidas already announced last week that the sale of the merchandise, along with business going a bit better than expected, would help it post a lower annual loss than earlier pencilled in.



In brief

Malaysia beat Pakistan

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): In a thrilling encounter at the ongoing Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai, Malaysia emerged victorious Thursday with a resounding 3-1 win against Pakistan. The match showcased high-intensity action and skillful performances from both teams, but Malaysia's clinical finishing proved to be the decisive factor. Ferhan's remarkable form took centre stage as he notched two goals in quick succession for Malaysia, finding the back of the net in the 28th and 29th minutes of the match. These early goals set the tone for the game and put Pakistan on the back foot. Not to be outdone, Shelor Silorius added to Malaysia's lead, scoring another goal in the 44th minute. Despite several counterattacks by Pakistan, Malaysia's resilient defence held firm, denying their opponents any significant breakthroughs. In the 55th minute, Pakistan managed to find the back of the net with a goal from Abdul Rahman. However, the lone goal was not enough to mount a comeback against Malaysia's well-organized gameplay. Looking ahead in the tournament, Pakistan will face Korea in their second match on August 4, followed by clashes against Japan, China, and their traditional rivals, India. The team will be eager to bounce back from this defeat and secure victories in the upcoming matches.

Andy Murray beats Brandon

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Andy Murray won his first singles match since Wimbledon by beating American Brandon Nakashima 7-6 (7-5) 6-4 in the Citi Open second round. The 36-year-old Briton, who lost to Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round at Wimbledon last month, received a first-round bye in Washington. Murray, 36, will play Taylor Fritz, who beat fellow American Zachary Svajda 6-3 6-3, in the last 16 on Thursday. "I did well. I hit the ball well from the beginning," said Scot Murray. "Brandon serves well, especially his second serve. I was struggling to create many opportunities on return. "But I was just a little bit more solid than him at the end of the tie-break. He made a few mistakes; I put enough balls back in play. "The courts and the balls are extremely slow here, so you're having to work really hard in all of the games. It's not easy to finish points. It was a good one to get through." British number two Dan Evans beat France's Gregoire Barrere 2-6 6-0 6-3, but Liam Brady lost 6-4 6-2 against the Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor. Evans, 33, will face Russia's Alexander Shevchenko in the last 16. American Chris Eubanks, who reached the quarter-finals on his Wimbledon debut last month, beat Japan's Sho Shimabukuro 6-3 6-4 to set up a meeting with Australian Jordan Thompson. Norrie knocked out in Mexico British number one and world number 13 Cameron Norrie suffered a shock defeat by Aleksandar Kovacevic in the last 16 of the Los Cabos Open in Mexico. American Kovacevic, ranked 116 places below Norrie, won 5-7 7-6 (9-7) 6-4 in three hours. Norrie won his maiden ATP singles title at the Los Cabos Open in 2021 but has struggled since beating Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz to win the Rio Open in February.

Security concerns to be raised with ICC, says minister on cricket team's travel to India for World Cup

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Inter-provincial Coordination Minister Ehsan-ur-Rehman Mazari on Thursday said Pakistan had security concerns regarding the national cricket team's travel to India for this year's 50-over World Cup, adding that the matter would be raised with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The decision was taken by a committee — which was set up by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last month — chaired by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

"We have demanded that the ICC should pro-

vide us a guarantee for security," Mazari told private channel. He said the government also had some reservations regarding some World Cup venues and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) would put these concerns in front of the ICC for a review.

Pakistan and India have played each other only in multi-team events at neutral venues over the last decade as bilateral cricket remains stalled between the South Asian neighbours due to soured political relations.

In June, the ICC revealed the much-awaited World Cup fixtures, with Pakistan scheduled to play

arch-rivals India in a marquee clash in Ahmedabad in mid-October. The schedule for the tournament was released nearly two weeks after the draft schedule of matches was shared with the cricket boards of all participating teams.

However, immediately after the announcement, the PCB stated that it would still need government clearance for any tour to India, including World Cup match venues.

"The PCB requires the government of Pakistan's clearance for any tour to India, including the match venues," PCB Communications Director

Samui Ul Hasan had said in a statement.

"We are liaising with our government for guidance. This position is consistent with what we had told the ICC a couple of weeks ago when they shared with us the draft schedule and sought our feedback," he had added.

If Pakistan are given the green signal to play in Ahmedabad, that would see them locking horns against India in front of 132,000 spectators at the Narendra Modi Stadium, the world's largest cricketing venue.

The World Cup is set to be played from Oct 5 to Nov 19.

Former PCB Chairman Ijaz Butt passes away

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan wicketkeeper and PCB chairman Ijaz Butt has died at the age of 85 in Lahore.

In 2008, he was appointed chairman of the PCB by then-president Asif Ali Zardari. He held that position through one of the most chaotic and tumultuous periods in Pakistan's cricketing history. Just five months into his tenure, there was a terror attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team and match officials that claimed the lives of eight people and stopped international cricket in Pakistan for the best part of a decade. It was followed by angry accusations of lax security by ICC match referee Chris Broad which Butt dismissed as "lies".

The Pakistan captaincy changed hands several times during his tenure, with Shoaib Malik famously described as "aloof and a loner" in a report, days after he was sacked. After a disastrous tour of Australia, the PCB hit back with huge sanctions against its own players. Mohammad Yousuf and Yousuf Khan were



banned "indefinitely" in 2010. Malik and Naved-ul-Hasan were handed one-year bans, while Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal and Umar Akmal were put on six-month probations. Yousuf and Yousuf were back playing Test cricket a few months later.

Butt would also have to content with the fallout from the spot-fixing scandal that saw three Pakistan players - captain Salman Butt, and bowlers Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Amir - caught agreeing to bowl no-balls in a Test at Lord's in exchange for money. The three players were banned, and relations between the PCB and England turned especially frosty, which Butt played a part in con-

tributing to on at least one occasion.

Butt was replaced by Zaka Ashraf, who is also the current PCB chairman, in 2011. He played eight Tests for Pakistan, making his debut in Karachi against West Indies in 1959 as a wicketkeeper-batter. His last match came at The Oval against England in 1962. He was the manager of the Pakistan team for a tour of Australia in 1982 and headed the selection committee a couple of times. He also served as the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan - the precursor to the PCB - from 1984-88.

PCB management committee chairperson Ashraf said: "On behalf of the PCB, I want to express my deepest condolences on the sad demise of Mr Ijaz Butt.

"I had the privilege of knowing him personally and I have nothing but utmost respect for Mr Butt. I offer my deepest condolences to Ijaz Butt's family and friends, and assure them that he will always be remembered for the contributions he made to Pakistan cricket."

Germany exit in World Cup 'disaster' as debutants Morocco advance



BRISBANE: Germany players look dejected after the team's elimination from the tournament during the FIFA Women's World Cup.

BRISBANE (Agencies): A Women's World Cup full of shocks had its biggest yet when Germany were dumped out in the group phase on Thursday following a stalemate with South Korea, with debutants Morocco progressing instead.

out of the competition at a first hurdle. Colombia topped Group H despite losing and will face Jamaica in the last 16. Morocco progressed into the knockouts also with two wins and a defeat -- that being a 6-0 thrashing by Germany --

Coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said: "If you want to see it as a disaster in sporting terms, then it's hard to argue against it."

The 2003 and 2007 winners came into the game in front of just under 39,000 in Brisbane knowing that a win over South Korea would put them in the last 16. But they started badly, conceding to a smart Cho So-hyun finish after just six minutes and looking shaky at the back early on. Colin Bell's South Korea looked nothing like the team that lost 2-0 to Colombia and 1-0 to Morocco.

Germany equalised just before half-time with a Popp header but for all their possession, last year's European finalists failed to get the second goal they desperately needed.

Popp hit the bar and thought she had won it in the second half with another fierce header, but it was ruled out by VAR for off-side. Sydney Lohmann's effort went just over deep in stoppage time and Germany now needed a favour from Colombia.

A draw would have been enough for Germany had Morocco not sprung a surprise of their own in Perth.

and meet France next.

Germany were third and condemned to an early flight home. "To be honest, it's still hard to understand," skipper Alexandra Popp, who scored the German goal and was their chief threat throughout, told German TV network ZDF.

"I still can't quite understand what happened here."



PERTH: Morocco players celebrate advancing to the knock out stage after the 1-0 victory.

Germany's 1-1 draw with the Koreans coupled with Morocco's surprise 1-0 victory over Colombia saw the European side suffer their earliest exit in Women's World Cup history.

The two-time former champions and one of the pre-tournament favourites follow Brazil, Italy and Olympic champions Canada

Promising Muhammad Nouman eyeing Int'l Tennis League

PESHAWAR (APP): Muhammad Nouman, a budding tennis player from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has started preparing for the International Tennis League and is hopeful of getting a prominent position for Pakistan and creating a place in tennis.

Talking to the media during his practice session at the Synthetic Tennis Courts of the Peshawar Sports Complex, Muhammad Nouman said that he is the winning player of the All Pakistan Tennis Tournament and is fully focused on his game by doing his practice, both in the morning and afternoon sessions.

He said that he wants to make his unique place at the international level. Apart from being the winner, he is also the PSB Inter-Provincial Champion and after maintaining his prominence in junior tennis, he has also won titles in various events in senior tennis tournaments including All Pakistan Pakistan Air Force Khyber Cup, and All Pakistan Pakistan Sports Board Tennis Championship.

He has also won the tro-

phy of the All Pakistan ITF Tennis Tournaments in Islamabad, said that he has been consistently achieving a prominent position in junior tennis from 2008 to 2017 and turned to professional tennis.

Nouman has also achieved a prominent position in the All-Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Cup organized by KP Tennis Association. Along with playing tennis, Muhammad Nouman is a pro tennis player. He has performed the coaching duties and was a designated coach of the Tennis Academy Dubai, UAE for one year. Along with this, he is also performing his duties as a Level-I and Level-II qualified coach of Islamabad Tennis Club and Pakistan Tennis Federation.

While getting a prominent position in the Pre-Level-I Green Badge Course of the Pakistan Tennis Federation, he also obtained Level-I Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Certificates. Looking after his commitment in working hard with the upcoming youth at the grassroots level, recently, the Pakistan

Tennis Federation (PTF) awarded him the Advanced Coaching Course Level-II.

Nouman said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and Pakistan in general there is immense talent in the game of tennis and especially the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shoaib Pakistan No. 3. The young champ proved himself and at the number three position behind Pakistan top tennis players Aqeel Khan and Aisam-ul-Haque Qurashi, Barkatullah, Shahid Khan, Hamza Roman, Shayan Afridi, Saqib Umar, Aqil Umar are prominent players who have performed outstandingly in the Pakistan Junior Davis Cup. He met Pakistan No. 1 Aqeel Khan and Aisam-ul-Haque, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Association Dr. Tahir, Senior Vice President Dr. Farhat Abbas, Provincial President DIG Saleem Khan Marwat and former DG Sports Junaid Khan, Afandiyyar Khattak and current DG Sports Capt. (Retd) Khalid Mehmood. While appreciating the work, he said that at pres-

ent, work on tennis courts is going on rapidly in every district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the promotion of tennis in the province.

Tennis courts are being built in the province, due to which the players of the province have a prominent status at the national and international level. "I am fully focused on my performance," Nouman said. He said that trials will be held for the five-member Pakistan team for the upcoming Davis Cup.

He is sure that two or three players will be from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National team for the forthcoming Davis Cup. He said that as coach he is paying full attention to the promotion of tennis at the grass-root level and in the coming time, the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can get a prominent position at the junior level. About his own performance, he said, his main focus is on his tennis as a professional player and for giving his 100 percent in different International Tennis League, he is doing his hard work despite coaching upcoming talent.

World University Games: Pakistan's taekwondo athletes out of medal race

CHENGDU (APP): Pakistan's women taekwondo athletes saw an early exit in the World University Games as they fell to their respective opponents in the round of 16 at Sichuan University's main campus in Chengdu on Thursday.

Pakistan Higher Education Commission had fielded two top-notch twin athletes - Manisha Ali and Maliha Ali in the event. Both the women athletes are students of Lahore Garrison University.

Manisha, who was contesting in women's - 67kg category lost to China Taipei's Chieh-yu

3-16, 3-13, whereas Maliha conceded defeat to China's Zeqi Zhou 0-14, 2-14 in women's - 73kg category.

Talking to APP after the contest, Maliha said that although she could not make it to the next, she was happy to represent Pakistan at the coveted event. "I've learnt a lot. The event is of a very high standard as the best of the best are taking part in it. This event is not less than Olympics," she said.

She said she had been watching the competitions of all the taekwondo athletes in the event to keep abreast with the lat-

est techniques of the game.

Her sister Manisha also echoed the same sentiments. "It was a great event to learn from the world's best athletes.

"Yes, we've lost, but the participation in the event has helped us to identify grey areas in our game. We are determined to perform well in our future assignments," she added.

Around 6,500 athletes (3,512 are men and 2,988 women) from 113 countries and regions are competing in 269 events of 18 sports at World Games, scheduled to conclude on August 8.

PM awards Rs10mn to Squash champion Hamza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday received World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan here and also awarded him a cheque of Rs10 million for his acknowledgment.

Hamza Khan appreciated the prime minister as well as the cooperation he received from the Pakistan Squash Federation.

The prime minister, who also interacted with Hamza's parents in the Pashtu language, congratulated Hamza Khan for winning the World Junior Squash Championship held recently in Australia.

Calling the youth like

Hamza the pride and asset of the nation, the prime minister said Hamza made the whole nation including himself proud by winning such a title after decades.

Recalling his experience of playing squash and calling it the best game, the prime minister expressed the hope that Hamza would continue to work hard to win the senior world title.

He said Hamza was a role model for Pakistan's youth and that he always strived for providing the sports facilities of international facilities to the youth.

He said recently, the government launched national sports initiatives

for the promotion of sports activities in the country and the uplift of the players.

The establishment of the first sports university and providing technical and financial support to train the youth in the sports sector was also part of the very initiative.

The meeting was also attended by Hamza's father Niazullah Khan, his mother. Inter-provincial coordination Minister Ihsanullah Mazari, SAPM Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Secretary Inter-provincial Coordination Hanif Orakzai, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Squash Federation Air Vice Marshal Kazim Hammad.

Zalmi Women Cricket camp and trials organized



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Zalmi Women Cricket Camp and Trials were organized in Islamabad under Zalmi Foundation. The camp was organized in collaboration with Zalmi Foundation, Dukhtar Pakistan, Rawalpindi Women's University. Former Pakistan captain Rashid

Latif took the trials. More than three hundred women cricketers participated in the trials and camp. Twenty women cricketers were

selected after the trials.

Rashid Latif said that the services of Peshawar Zalmi, Zalmi Foundation for the promotion of cricket are noteworthy, Pakistan women cricket will get new talent from Zalmi women cricket camp and trials. Speaker Balochistan Assembly Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani was present on this occasion.

Special guest National Commission for Women Status Nilofar Bakhtiar and Vice Chancellor Dr. Anila Qamar expressed

happiness at Zalmi Cricket Camp.

Chairman Zalmi Foundation Mr. Javed Afridi said that Zalmi foundation has always strived to support women in sports as Zalmi Foundation believes in empowering women through sports and providing them equal opportunities in sports.

He further said we are firm and will continue supporting the daughters of Pakistan and will make them realise their actual role in the field of sports.



In brief

IRSA releases 288,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 288,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 395,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1541.29 feet and was 143.29 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 199,300 cusecs and 155,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1231.90 feet, which was 181.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 72,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 150,500, 257,440, 400,400 and 384,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 43,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 52,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Monsoon tree plantation drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) has launched a monsoon tree plantation drive of 2023. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood inaugurated the campaign by planting a maple leaf tree. Deans, Principal Officers, and faculty members were present at the planting ceremony. On this occasion, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that in view of climate change, plantation has become the most important need of the country and AIU is playing an important role in meeting the need by planting hundreds of saplings not only in the main campus of the university but also in the 54 regional offices of the university throughout the country in both spring and autumn seasons. The monsoon planting campaign will be carried out at the national level, and students will also be mobilized in the campaign through the regional offices. He said that gardeners of the university have provided a conducive learning environment to the students by decorating the university with flowers and plants, for which they deserve appreciation.

15 drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 15 accused besides recovering over four kg charras, 12 bottles of liquor, 10 liters liquor, four 30 bore pistols and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesperson, the Cantt and Rawat police rounded up Gohar Saeed, Shehzad, Faisal, Babar Ali, Muhammad Ali and Ashiq and recovered over four kg of charras. New Town police arrested Faizan and Sultan for having 12 bottles of liquor while Saddar Baroni police netted Muhammad Yasir for carrying 10 liters of liquor. Bani and Naseerabad police held Pervaiz, Shehroz, Atif and Salman on recovery of four 30 bore pistols and ammunition. The spokesman informed that Bani and Pirwadhai police arrested two proclaimed offenders namely Abuzar Ghaffari and Hanif waded in different cases. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar along with SAPM on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar inaugurated the Extended Blocks of Islamabad Bar Council Complex.

Patel inaugurates G-13 community health centre

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel on Thursday inaugurated the state-of-the-art 70-bed community health centre in G-13 sector. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister said that a large number of population will get benefit from this centre.

He said that mother and child healthcare services will also be provided at the

centre besides availability of child specialist and children vaccination facility.

He said that basic blood tests, ultrasound and X-ray facility will also be provided to the patients.

He said that the centre will provide treatment of all primary level diseases to local population.

The minister also launched the 300-bed Federal Government Polyclinic extension project.

Under the project, a hospital will be established in the federal capital which will be completed in three years. The project Federal Government Polyclinic-II will be started at G-11/3 to meet the increasing health needs of citizens.

The minister said that this hospital will ensure medical services to not only people of federal capital but Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir also.

RDA demolishes site office of illegal housing scheme 'Al-Qaim Mension'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) while conducting an operation here on Thursday demolished site office of an illegal housing scheme namely Al-Qaim Mension.

According to RDA spokesman, RDA Enforcement Squad on the directives of the Director General, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, carried out an operation against illegal housing scheme at mouza Adyala on Adyala road and demolished/sealed the site office. He said the Enforcement Squad was taking strict action against illegal housing schemes. Notices were also issued to Aamir Shahzad, the owner of the illegal housing scheme, he informed.

The Squad including Incharge/Assistant Director Building Control, Deputy Incharge, Superintendent Scheme and others took part in the operation.

The owner of the property was running illegal housing schemes' site office in violation of rules, he said adding, First Information Report (FIR) was also lodged against the owner.

Religious leaders call for 'day of mourning' on Friday to condemn Bajaur terror act

ISLAMABAD (APP): Religious leaders from different schools of thought have declared Friday a day of mourning and prayers to honour the victims of the Bajaur terror incident and denounce terrorism that has plagued the nation.

Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman Dr Qibla Ayaz, Pir Naqib-ur-Rehman, Sahibzada Hassan Haseeb-ur-Rehman, Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi, Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq Haqqani, Maulana Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Maulana Muhammad Islam Qadri, Maulana Muhammad Ayub Safdar and others gave a joint call for observance of "day of mourning, condemnation and prayers" on Friday.

They said that sermons should be delivered during Friday congregations at mosques across the country to condemn the menace of terrorism and call for bringing

the perpetrators of the heinous act to justice.

They said a joint declaration would be circulated in all the mosques, urging Imams and Khutaba to condemn terrorism in their Friday sermons, besides demanding early arrest of those responsible for the Bajaur incident, and praying for the salvation of the martyrs and the speedy recovery of the injured. They said the public would be sensitized about the "Pagham-e-Pakistan" that suicide and militant attacks were "Haram" and against the Shariah.

The leaders belonging to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Pakistan Ulema Council, Shia Ulema Council, Wifaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia Pakistan, Muttahida Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith, International Khatm-e-Nabuwat Movement and Muttahida Ulema Council also called for national unity and solidarity as it was the only way to defeat the mindset that justifies terrorism and the shedding of blood of innocent people.

Operational universities without NOCs risking students' future

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday emphasized the paramount importance of fulfilling legal prerequisites and obtaining a 'No Objection Certificate' for the establishment of universities rather than putting the future of students at risk.

Speaking here at National Assembly, the minister stressed the significance of obtaining official approval, specifically the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Higher Education Commission (HEC), prior to granting charter approval.

He expressed concern over several universities operating without the necessary NOC, despite having charter approval. This incongruence has led to the issuance of degrees that lack the HEC's attestation, rendering them essentially void. The minister underscored that degrees from such institutions hold no credibility and leave students, their families, and guardians in a state of distress even after completion of degree despite heavy financial investment. The minister acknowledged instances of student protests

stemming from these irregularities and underscored that the absence of proper procedures within these degree-awarding universities was troubling.

He clarified that while the National Assembly possesses authority to legislate the establishment of universities within the confines of Islamabad Capital Territory, it does not extend to granting approvals for universities in provinces. However, the Assembly can deliberate on legislation pertaining to institutions and new campuses affiliated with Islamabad-based universities. Rana Tanveer Hussain implored a stringent adherence to legal procedures, emphasizing their feasibility. Drawing attention to past practices, he highlighted instances where charter approvals were granted by provincial authorities without requisite HEC clearance, an approach he deemed untenable. He also pointed out that several universities had been granted charters by Punjab during the tenure of former Chief Minister Pervaiz Elhai without obtaining approval from HEC.

The minister recounted

his personal experience with an unauthorized university where notices were disseminated to raise awareness about its illicit operations.

The minister also highlighted the stance taken by the Senate, declaring that university-related bills lacking HEC's NOC would not secure passage. He championed the establishment of universities but stressed that their educational quality and operational standards, including infrastructure and faculty, should be meticulously ensured. Rana Tanveer Hussain substantiated his argument by citing an example of a prestigious London-based institution that was offered extensive land for a medical institution. However, the institution refrained from commencing operations before completion of infrastructure.

While recognizing the National Assembly's recent legislative achievements, the minister acknowledged the prominent focus on university-related bills, resulting in media scrutiny and criticism. He expressed his support for legitimate endeavors but firmly condemned any compromise on the future prospects of the youth.

Ahsan Iqbal unveils ERC to transform education sector, ensure sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday unveiled a momentous Education Research Commission (ERC) to revolutionize the country's education system, ensure inclusive and sustainable national development.

Chairing a maiden meeting of the commission, the minister shed light on the nation's paradoxical history, and said "Pakistan has achieved remarkable milestones, defying global opposition, and asserting itself as a nuclear power. However, we face challenges in our education sector, which is vital for our future growth and prosperity."

Emphasizing the significance of education as a fundamental right and a catalyst for socioeconomic progress, he reiterated that education impacted every citizen and transcended all societal barriers.

He acknowledged the widespread desire for high-quality education and highlighted the need for urgent action to address the persistent shortcomings. In his address, Ahsan Iqbal delved into crucial issues plaguing the education sector, expressing concern over the widening salary gap between public and private school teachers and recognizing the gover-

nance issue that hampered effective education delivery.

The minister called for comprehensive reforms to attract and retain highly qualified teachers, stressing the importance of stability of tenure in improving the quality of education.

Furthermore, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the significance of data-driven decision-making and proposed the establishment of key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the education system's efficiency and effectiveness. "By adopting evidence-based policy frameworks, Pakistan can ensure that every rupee invested in education yields optimal results and positively impacts the nation's future," the minister observed. Addressing the critical role of teacher training in elevating the education system, he announced the establishing a modern teacher training institute. He shared his vision for a state-of-the-art facility that would become a model center of excellence for teachers' training, with the potential to elevate the standard of education across the country.

The minister also spoke about the urgent need for Madrassah (religious seminary) reforms, emphasizing the importance of matriculation equivalence in Madrassah education to pro-

vide students with diversified career opportunities and integrate them into mainstream society.

Ahsan Iqbal unveiled plans to address the challenge of out-of-school children by allocating funds amounting to Rs25 billion, and underscored the importance of early childhood education, stating that a significant portion of these funds should be dedicated to this crucial phase of development.

The Education Research Commission (ERC), comprising experts, policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders, would embark on a comprehensive study to analyze the education system's performance since devolution of the education sector to provinces. The commission's findings would serve as a guiding light to shape evidence-based policies and initiatives aimed at nurturing a knowledgeable, skilled and forward-thinking generation. Ahsan Iqbal called for urgent and collective action, emphasizing the need to expedite efforts during the upcoming caretaker government. He envisaged that the commission's findings and recommendations would provide a ready-made roadmap for the incoming administration, enabling swift and impactful improvements in the education sector.



ISLAMABAD: A view of panaflex displayed in support of Kashmir's right of self-determination to mark the 'Youm-e-Istehsal' on completion of four years since India's illegal and unilateral actions in IIOJK.

Minister distributes possession letters of 800 plots in Green Enclave I

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Maulana Abdul Wasi has distributed possession letters of 800 developed plots of the Bhara Kahu (Green Enclave I) project among the allottees in a ceremony held here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said the future of democracy was bright saying if people give his party a chance by their votes in the general elections then he was ready to serve them again.

Despite adverse conditions, Wasi said his ministry has taken concerted steps to complete the government residential projects in a short period of time.

Meanwhile, Federal Parliamentary Secretary Syed Mahmood Agha said the delay in the 2009 scheme completion was because the land matters were pending in the courts. He said the remaining development works of Green Enclave were underway at a fast pace and would be completed soon. Director General Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) Tariq Rashid said providing

affordable housing facilities to federal government employees was their first priority.

He said providing housing facilities for this limited resource and low-income group in this era of inflation was not just a challenge for us but a great virtue in the presence of Allah.

He said the Minister and Secretary have not only guided us through all this but also became part of our mission. FGEHA has laid the foundation stone for other projects which include both plots and flats. In the past, FGEHA has provided a total of 22,642 residential facilities to its allottees, including 1596 constructed houses in Sector I-8, 400 flats in Karachi, and 1189 flats in Sector G-11, Islamabad.

He said apart from this, residential plots were also included in Sectors G-14, G-13, I-8 and D-12 in Islamabad. FGEHA also laid the foundation stone for other flats projects for its allottees including HF Towers, Chaklala Heights, Skyline Apartments and Lifestyle Residency Lahore.

IEA rejects claims

KABUL (Agencies): The IEA spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said Thursday that neighbor country's officials are making baseless accusations against Afghanistan regarding the country's security situation. He said that IEA does not allow anyone to use the territory of Afghanistan against any other country, if there is any concern related to this, it should be shared with IEA face to face, instead of making useless claims in the media and confusing the public mind.

The Frontier Post

Muharram 16, 1445 — Friday, August 04, 2023

2.5 electoric ID distributed

KABUL (Agencies): The National Statistics and Information Authority in the accountability program of the government to the nation, today, Wednesday said that more than 2.5 million national electronic ID distributed to Afghan citizens in the last year. The head of the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) Dr. Faqeer Mohammad Ziyar, said today, Wednesday that they strive to provide services for 74,500 more citizens after the distribution of ID cards.

Hepatitis caused jaundice cases raised

KABUL (TOLOnews): Habibullah Akhundzada Hamed, deputy minister of health services supply at the Ministry of Public Health, said that cases of jaundice have increased this year in the country.

Akhundzada Hamed said that basic work has not been done to fight jaundice in the country, which can be caused by hepatitis.

"From 2017 to June 2023, 44,647 people were infected with hepatitis B and 21,621 were infected with hepatitis C," said Akhundzada Hamed.

"For hepatitis B and C patients, PCR examinations have been provided in six provinces including Kabul, Kandahar, Paktia, Herat, Balkh, and

Nangarhar," said Bismillah, head of infectious disease control, Ministry of Public Health.

Statistics show that in 2020, 8,155 people, in 2021, 7,655 people, in 2022, 8,343 people, and so far in 2023, 8,779 people have been infected with a form of jaundice.

Agha Mohammad Abid Tutakhil said that in the current year, they provided medical services to 282 people with black jaundice.

Abid Tutakhil emphasized that efforts are being made to eradicate the disease in the country, but the lack of a vaccine for black jaundice is a big concern in the country.

"Currently, 95% of people can be treated with

antiviral drugs, but until now there is no effective vaccine against this disease or hepatitis C," said Agha Mohammad Abid Tutakhil, an official of the Public Health Ministry.

"The price of hepatitis B and hepatitis C drugs has decreased by 90%, and now the cost of treating one hepatitis C is only 60 dollars," said Reza Al-Wadal, a representative of the World Health Organization in Afghanistan.

Based on the information of the Secretary General of the World Health Organization, jaundice kills one million people in the world every year and three million new cases are registered in the world every year.

IEA's FM and Qatar's minister discuss issues

KABUL (Agencies): The Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi met with Qatar's Minister of International Assistance, Mrs. Lolwah Al-Khater, and discussed bilateral relations and Qatar's assistance with Afghanistan.

According to a Foreign Ministry statement, Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi praised Qatar for hosting critical summits on Afghanistan and for its interest in fostering cordial relations with the Afghan people.

Mr. Muttaqi provided detailed information about Afghanistan's current situation and requested assistance from the Qatari government in the treatment of children with heart defects, the provision of improved seeds in the agriculture sector, the training of diplomats and athletes, and the construction of playgrounds in the country.

We admire our relations with Afghanistan, and the recent visit of Qatar's Prime Minister to Afghanistan demonstrates our efforts to expand these ties, said Mrs. Lolwah Al-Khater.

According to Mrs. Lolwah Al-Khater, the Qatar Charity Organization is currently working in many sectors to support Afghans, and the country is committed to assisting in health, education, agriculture, physical training, and other sectors in Afghanistan.

Dr. Mohammad Naeem Wardak, Afghanistan's ambassador to Qatar, presented several issues related to the embassy, and Mrs. Lolwah Al-Khater promised cooperation in addressing them.

Sunflower plantation hike increase in Balkh

BALKH (Agencies): The sunflowers plantation has increased by 30 percent this year, in contrast to the last three years.

The provincial head of agriculture, irrigation, and livestock of Balkh, Mawlawi Shamsuddin Khalid told Bakhtar News Agency that the harvests of sunflower have increased by 30% in contrast to the last three years.

This year about 500 acres of land were planted in many districts of Balkh Balkh, and each acre of land produced 600 kilos of sunflower seeds.

This year's production of sunflower in Balkh reaches 300 thousand kilograms and last year this figure was 210 thousand kilograms he added.

Two farmers, Abdul Saboor and Enayatullah, who are busy growing sunflowers in the Dehdadi district of Balkh, said that planting sunflowers has been developed in Balkh for the past three years, and the yield of this plant has become more fruitful in Balkh compared to previous years.

They said, since the cultivation of the sunflower plant has been developed in Balkh, the results have been positive for the growth of the plant in this province.

Afghanistan-Kazakhstan private sectors sign \$100 million deals



KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce announced on Thursday the signing of contracts worth more than \$100 million between the private sector of Afghanistan and Kazakhstan in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

According to the ministry, a joint meeting was held between Afghanistan's delegation, led by Nouruddin Azizi, acting minister of Industry and Commerce, and Kazakh officials, led by Zhumangarin Serik, the deputy Prime minister and minister of trade and integration.

During the meeting, the two parties talked about facilities in the two countries transit, trade, and banking sectors, as well as modern irrigation management and water conservation technologies. They also discussed the findings of business communication sessions and the development of Kazakh-Afghan exhibitions.

The delegation from Afghanistan visited Kazakhstan for a three-day business forum held on Thursday and will continue till Saturday in the capital of Astana. At the forum, more than 200 delegations and businessmen attended from Afghanistan, including several economic sectors and second-level banks.

In addition, the forum featured an exhibition showcasing products and goods from the country. The Kazakh Ministry of

Foreign Affairs emphasized that trade ties between the two nations are still being developed. Kazakhstan wants its bilateral trade with Afghanistan to multiply over the next few years and surpass the \$988 million mark set last year.

The forum results from improved communication between the two sides following Serik, Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Integration, visit Kabul in April.

Kazakhstan to double wheat supplies to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Kazakhstan's Altyr Astyk Group intends to supply 100,000 tons of soft wheat to Afghanistan between September 2023 and May 2024, the company's CEO, Artur Akhmetov, said in a statement.

"Today, within the framework of the Kazakh-Afghan forum, our company is planning to sign a contract for the supply of soft wheat to Afghanistan for a total of \$23 million. The volume is about 100,000 tons from this year's crop to be delivered

from September to May. We have been the wheat suppliers to Afghanistan for the past five years. However, we plan to double the supplies from 50,000 tonnes we supplied previously," Akhmetov told reporters on the forum's sidelines on Thursday, Interfax reported.

According to the statement, Afghanistan was the company's leading trade partner purchasing wheat and flour.

"We faced certain hurdles during the change of government and had to resolve the logistic and payment issues. Now we can say that it is possible working with these companies. One of our main goals is to keep our presence in the Afghan market and increase our supplies," Akhmetov said.

On the other hand, the deputy prime minister and minister of trade and integration of Kazakhstan, Serik Zhumangarin, said his country aims to increase the supply of flour to Afghanistan.

"Over the four months of this year, over 450,000 tonnes of Kazakh flour worth \$150.8 million were supplied to Afghanistan via Uzbekistan. High transportation tariffs for Kazakh grain through Uzbekistan towards Afghanistan prompt us to find other transportation options to increase our exports and meet the demand in the Afghan market," he said.

Nuruddin Azizi, Afghanistan's acting minister of industry and trade, requested favourable tariffs for Afghan imports and discounts on wheat and flour supply.

Afghan Minister calls for investment in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi, who led a delegation to Kazakhstan, called for improved trade and transit between the countries, and encouraged investment in Afghanistan.

Speaking at a gathering in Astana, Azizi said such "gatherings are good opportunities" for trade.

"I believe these meetings provide a proper opportunity to improve our trade and business engagement," he said.

"In this big exhibition, in addition to the private sector, the senior officials of the Islamic Emirate and friend country Kazakhstan exist," said Tawakul Ahmdayar, general director of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

This comes as traders said there is a need for the removal of banking restrictions and bilateral contracts between the two countries to pave the way for the enhancement of trade.

"The establishment of a joint market between the two countries should be the main discussion between the two countries," said Mabubullah Mohammadi, a trader.

The officials within the ACCI, meanwhile, said that they are trying to get connected to China through Kazakhstan.

Azizi left Kabul for Kazakhstan on Tuesday to attend an exhibition on Thursday, where Afghan traders have 70 stalls.



MoI reports 2,000 security operations in past year

KABUL (TOLOnews): Abdul Mateen Qani, the spokesman of the Ministry of Interior, said in an annual report of the ministry that in the past year, special police units, public security departments, counter-terrorism, and other teams conducted 224 joint operations, 1,345 independent operations, and 443 operations by special police units in different parts of the country.

According to Qani, in these operations around 1,784 suspects were arrested, and 11,640 light and heavy weapons, as well as 1,017 landmines and hand grenades, were seized.

The spokesman of the Ministry of Interior added that in the last 21 months,



20,322 criminal cases were registered in the country, while in the same period in the previous government, 29,669 different criminal cases were registered.

Qani added that in one year about 160 cases of kidnapping were reported to

the police and the police forces conducted 200 operations against kidnappers, and arrested 190 suspects.

He added 13 kidnappers were killed in a clash with the security forces and 44 kidnapped people were released.

Chief of Staff of Armed Forces visits border



BADKHASHAN (Agencies): The Ministry of National Defense says the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces was on a six-day visit to Badakhshan to visit the border districts of the province.

According to the ministry, Qari Fasihuddin Fitrati, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, met with officials and locals during a

trip to the border districts of Wakhan, Ashkashim and Zibak.

In a statement, the ministry said Fitrati praised the army personnel for their tireless efforts to protect the borders and territorial integrity of the country and emphasized the need to ensure border security.

On the other hand, the

army's border officials assured Fitrati that they are ready to serve the army in any situation and will resolutely defend and protect the country's borders.

At the same time, the residents of Wakhan and Pamir districts, welcomed Fitrati and declared their support for the Islamic Emirate.

Iran deports 43,000 Afghan refugees in past month, says Ministry of Refugees Repatriation

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said that 43,000 people have been deported from Iran in the past month.

Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Abdul Rahman Rashid said that officials in the ministry are trying to solve the problems of the country's immigrants in different countries.

"Almost 46,000 people returned voluntarily and more than 43,000 were deported from the Islamic Republic of Iran because they did not have legal documents and documents to live there," said Rashid.

Meanwhile, some citizens who recently returned to the country asked the current government to provide them with work.

Nizamuddin, 42, who returned to the country three days ago from Iran, spoke of the challenges he faces.

"They transferred many people in one car; in one car they carried 35 people and that was so difficult for us," said Nizamuddin.

"In Afghanistan, there is no work, and education is useless here, when you have a master's degree still there is no work for you, people flee from hunger to other countries," said Mohammad Fawad, a deported person.

The commander of the Zabol crossing border in Iran said to Iranian media on Sunday that nearly 5,000 people who do not have legal documents were deported to Afghanistan in the past 24 hours.





ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing a ceremony to recognize the former vice presidents of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PTI regime ruined country, says Marriyum

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that the opponents of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had been donning canisters, buckets and boxes during their appearance in the courts to evade wrath of the public who bore the brunt of their corrupt, incompetent and inefficient four-year rule.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Bara Kahu Bypass Project, the minister said the country plunged into economic quagmire and the economy was on the verge of default by the end of four-year tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. She said the coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had not only saved the country from default, but also charted it on the path of progress and development.

Marriyum said the completion of mega Bara Kahu bypass project in a short span of time under the leadership of PM Shehbaz Sharif was a miracle. On the contrary, the previous government indulged in excessive advertising, even if it installed a hand pump in any area of the country, she added. "Completion of mega development projects like the Bara Kahu bypass in a few months is nothing short of a miracle," she said, adding she had never seen such projects in the history of Islamabad.

The minister said the people of Galiyat, Kashmir, Murree and Hazara would always be grateful to the prime minister who had ensured completion of the project in a short period of only ten months. Thousands of people including patients and youth traveled through the road everyday and they would benefit from the

bypass, she added.

She said her native town was Bhurban, and she had traveled on this road which used to face traffic jams for hours. Marriyum said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had linked all routes within Islamabad and Rawalpindi through metro buses. "Every citizen today travels in the Metro Bus in a dignified way," she said highlighting the vision of the prime minister who took the initiative to connect every route of the service with every sector of Islamabad, besides providing access to the airport.

The minister said many development projects had been launched in the rural areas of Islamabad during the last 15 months, and no such example could be traced in the past. She criticized the last PTI regime which ruined the country by reversing the progress made during the previous tenure of (PML-N) government.

Iran FM calls on PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, underscoring the close brotherly relations, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen the ties with Iran, with particular focus on enhancing economic cooperation.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who called on him here, recalled the joint inauguration, with President Ebrahim Raisi, of the Mand-Pishin border marketplace on May 18 this year.

He stressed that initiatives aimed at economic uplift of the border areas, were a tangible manifestation of the shared priority to collectively work for the betterment of the two peoples.

President for boosting ties with UK, South Korea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its relations with the United Kingdom (UK), the Republic of Korea, and Malawi in the fields of trade, economy, and culture.

The president made these remarks while talking to the High Commissioner-designates of the United Kingdom and Malawi, and the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan. The envoys presented their diplomatic credentials to the president and separately called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Talking to Jane Marriot, the UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan, the president said that Pakistan attached utmost significance to its longstanding ties with the UK, which were grounded in historic connections and enduring people-to-people linkages. He remarked that both countries needed to further expand and promote economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two sides.

Military trial of civilians

Will stop army from resorting to unconstitutional moves: CJ

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial said Thursday the Supreme Court would stop the country's army from resorting to any unconstitutional moves as he heard pleas challenging the trial of civilians in military courts.

A six-member bench, led by the CJP and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik, heard the case. At the end of the hearing on Thursday, the CJP announced the court's resolve to see justice done and said: "The one whose case will abide by the Constitution will be successful."

He then sought assurance from Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan that the military trials would not proceed. He responded that the military's top leadership had assured that it would not.

"There is no attempt to subvert the Constitution and the law," Awan added.

The CJP responded: "We respect those who cooperate with us. We show respect to even those who do not cooperate." The hearing of petitions against military trials of civilians was then adjourned indefinitely. At the outset of Thursday's hearing, petitioner Aitzaz Ahsan requested the court to take notice of the recently-proposed amendments to the Official Secrets Act, 1923.

The Official Secrets Act has been amended, and "intelligence agencies have been empowered to raid and arrest anywhere," pointed out. According to the new law, anyone's house can be entered without a search warrant, he said, adding that the home is a safe space and its sanctity is being violated by amending the law. He suggested that the court make a virtual full court to hear this case.

CJP Bandial inquired whether the amendment had been passed. On being told it was still a bill, he responded: "Let's see how the other two factions of the Parliament react to it." "The chief justice cannot take notice at his discretion, he said. At this, Ahsan urged him to take suo moto notice as the senior-most member of the court.

"You should consult your other judges," he requested. At this the CJP thanked him. Following the arrests made in connection with the violent riots that erupted across the country on May 9, the government announced its decision to hold military court trials of those found guilty of damaging and attacking military installations — a move both the government and the army considered a low blow. In light of this decision, PTI Chairman Imran Khan, Khawaja, legal expert Aitzaz Ahsan, and five civil society members.

KP CM chairs meeting to take detail review of census 2023

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Thursday with the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair. The meeting took a detailed review of the Census, 2023 to the extent of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance Himayatullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Administrative Secretaries of the concerned departments, Provincial Census Commissioner, Director Bureau of Statistics Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The participants were briefed in details about the mechanism and methodology adopted for the Census, 2023 and other related matters. It was told that for the first time in the history of Pakistan.

NA passes Anti-Money Laundering Bill 2023

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The National Assembly on Thursday passed the National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Authority Bill 2023.

It was moved by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar. Taking the floor, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs said this legislation is of immense importance and if enforced and properly implemented, it will make sure that Pakistan does not see the FATF's grey list again. Hina Rabbani Khar said the bill envisages the establishment of a National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Authority. She said the Chairman of the authority will be appointed by the Prime Minister.

PML-N stands strong on timely elections: Javed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Javed Latif on Thursday categorically said that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is against any postponement of elections because it believes that for achieving a fresh mandate on timely elections is also essential for national unity.

Talking to media, he asserted that his party firmly opposes any delay in the upcoming general elections, believing that the elections will undoubtedly benefit the country. While some people claim democracy has weakened in the past 15 months, he countered that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had a deliberate agenda to undermine the democracy. He highlighted PML-N's

commitment to the country by making bold decisions to safeguard the state and preserve democracy. He emphasized that the people place their hopes in former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as the only leader capable of leading the country towards prosperity and progress.

He said Nawaz Sharif was ousted from power by international adversaries, working alongside local collaborators, due to his endeavors in fortifying Pakistan's defense and launching the game-changing China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. Similarly, he contends that former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed through the involvement of international forces and their local agents. According to his remarks, in 2013, the

PML-N took on the responsibility of steering the country in the right direction. He expressed strong confidence, asserting that no external influence could prevent Nawaz Sharif from becoming the country's prime minister for the fourth time, following a resounding victory in the 2023 elections, supported overwhelmingly by the people.

Javed Latif said the conspiracy behind the May 9 and 10 mutiny was orchestrated by PTI in alliance with hostile international forces that oppose the progress and prosperity of the country. Javed Latif expressed his concern over the fact that despite being a proven culprit, Imran Khan was not being punished but instead provided unprecedented privileges not even requested by him.

PM launches Digital Youth Hub

(Continued from Page 1)

connivance with the hospitals. The prime minister shared that in 2003 he suffered a fatal disease and had to spend around Rs8 million at a US hospital which was in no way affordable for the poor.

He said in order to provide equitable health facilities, Nawaz Sharif had established Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute where 1,000 liver and kidney transplant procedures had been completed. The facility provides free treatment to the poor and charges the rich ones to help provide cross-subsidy. He said the Nawaz Sharif-led government also introduced free medicine facilities at hospitals. "This is the human service... This is the equality for which Pakistan was made but this is still a far cry," he remarked.

He also lamented the suspension of free CT scan facilities provided at the district level, while he was Punjab chief minister, as the government had signed an agreement with private companies which installed the machinery and operated it successfully. The prime minister also instructed the SLIC to provide efficient services to health insurance cardholders through hassle-free procedures.

Pak-Iran agree to activate remaining border markets

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have agreed to activate the remaining five border markets by the end of this year. Additionally, both nations pledged to combat Islamophobia, advance peace and stability in Afghanistan, and promote the welfare of the Afghan people. Both countries also decided to repatriate all fishermen detained in Pakistan and Iran, waive fines imposed on them, and release their vessels.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, addressing a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian, emphasized the complete agreement between Pakistan and Iran on matters of mutual interest, recognizing that prosperity and development are interconnected with peace and stability in the neighborhood and the region.

Bhutto Zardari expressed Pakistan's support for greater regional integration based on improved trade and connectivity. To that end, both countries agreed to prioritize the operationalization of the remaining five border markets by the end of this year. He also stressed the importance of advancing



ing peace and stability in Afghanistan, expressing commitment to the well-being of the Afghan people.


Regarding humanitarian concerns, both nations decided to repatriate sentenced prisoners in accordance with existing agreements. They also agreed to waive fines and release the ships of detained fishermen. The exchange of prisoners' lists will facilitate the implementation of these decisions.

He said that the joint inauguration of the Mand-Pishin border market and the Gabd-Polan power project symbolized more than just infrastructure projects, it represented the collective commitment of both nations to finding mutual cooperation for the betterment of their countries. Bhutto Zardari viewed this as the first step in strengthening their

multidimensional cooperation, particularly in the economic field.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Abdollahian signed several crucial documents, including the 2023-2028 five-year trade cooperation plan between Pakistan and Iran, the protocol of bilateral economic consultations, and the joint investment committee (JIC) protocol. These documents are expected to pave the way for a long-term and sustainable economic partnership between the two countries in the coming months and years.

Lastly, Bhutto Zardari expressed gratitude to the Iranian leadership for its unwavering support to the legitimate cause of the Kashmiri people, reaffirming their commitment to countering Islamophobia and promoting unity among Muslims.






GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

TAKES ANOTHER HISTORIC STEP

BY PROVIDING HOMES AND LAND TITLES TO THE DISPLACED FLOOD AFFECTEES


The Government of Sindh remains committed to restoring hope and normalcy in the lives of **2 million** families affected by the devastating floods of 2022. In addition to financial assistance, the government has taken a significant step forward by granting land titles to the beneficiaries.

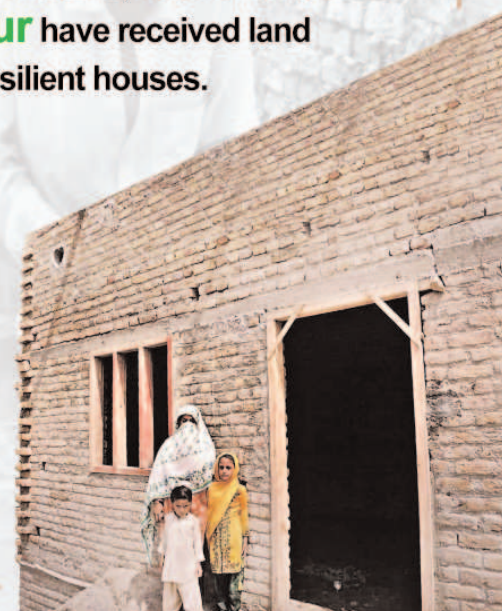
In the first phase of the historic initiative, flood affected families in district Shikarpur have received land titles to their climate resilient houses.

SINDH GOVERNMENT

AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVING ITS PEOPLE



SPHF
Sindh Province Housing Fund for Flood Affected Homes



INF/KRY/3416/2023