

Couple killed in suicide blast

MIRANSHAH (INP): Two including husband and wife were killed in a suicide blast in North Waziristan, police said on Monday. According to DPO, a suicide bomber blew himself near bomb disposal vehicle in Syedagi area of Ghulam Khan. As a result of explosion, two passerby husband and wife were killed on the spot. The security forces cordoned off the area after the incident and launched search operation.

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Constable martyred

PESHAWAR (INP): A police constable was martyred while two were injured when terrorists attacked a police mobile van here in the provincial capital. According to details, terrorists attacked a police mobile van while it was on routine patrolling in Bahaber area of Peshawar. As a result of firing, Constable Yar Muhammad embraced martyrdom while two cops sustained injured.

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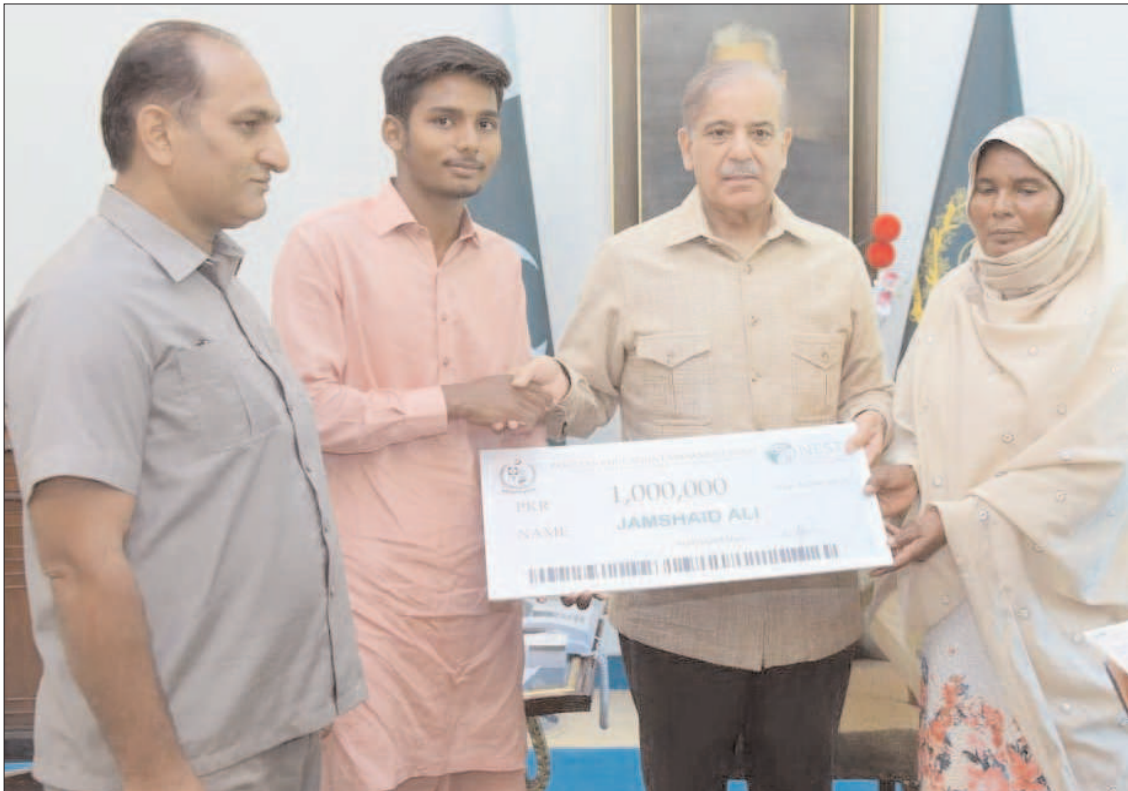
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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presenting cheque of Rs1 million to Jamshed Ali for his performance in matriculation examination 2023 in Gujranwala board.

‘Submit before writ of state or get decimated’, terrorists warned

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Army chief General Asim Munir on Monday said the recent surge in terrorism was a “futile effort” by terrorists to resume talks and warned them to submit to the “writ of state of Pakistan before they are decimated”.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the army chief issued the warning when he met the tribal elders and notables from the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The “interactive session” was held during the chief of army staff’s (COAS) visit to Peshawar. “The surge in terrorism in recent past is a futile effort on the part of terrorists to get the talks re-initiated, however, there is no option for these terrorists except to submit

Munir was quoted by the military’s media wing.

The army chief reiterated the resolve of the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) and other law enforcement agencies in their fight against terrorism. “He [Gen Munir] showed resolve to finish peril of Narco which is becoming a lifeline for these TTP khawaraj,” said the ISPR. Gen Munir also stated that “propaganda by inimical forces” against the armed forces will be dealt with as per the law.

Paying tribute to brave tribesmen, officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army, FC, Levies, Khasadars and police, the COAS vowed that the sacrifices of the martyrs will not go in vain and complete peace will return to Pakistan. The ISPR said that during the session the army chief also lauded the “supreme sac-

ing shoulder to shoulder with the security forces” in the fight against terrorism. “With the unflinching resolve of the nation, Pakistan is successfully countering terrorism to enable a stable and peaceful environment for socioeconomic development in the area,” the army chief told the tribal elders.

Gen Munir reiterated that “terrorism” has no place in Pakistan, adding that Afghan nationals involvement in terrorism in Pakistan was “detrimental to regional peace, stability and deviation from the Doha Peace Agreement” by the Taliban government. “Pakistan has concerns over sanctuaries available to banned outfits and liberty of action they enjoy on Afghan soil. Pakistan will spare no effort to dismantle terrorist networks and protect its citizens at all costs,” he added.

On the other hand, tribal elders assured the army chief that Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and its ideology will never be acceptable to any tribe and they will continue to stand with the state during the thick and thin. Gen Munir assured the tribal elders that the Pakistan Army “will never leave them alone” because they have given “innumerable sacrifices for the peace and prosperity of the motherland”.

“It’s time to develop all tribal areas and concentrate on youth,” the army chief remarked. He also emphasised the potential of newly merged districts and ongoing efforts in uplifting the socio-economic growth under the umbrella of the Special Investment Facilitation Council. “KP province is blessed with huge reserves of mines and minerals, also beautiful areas for tourism which will certainly change the destiny of the area for the good of the people.” Earlier, upon his arrival in Peshawar, the army chief was received by the Peshawar corps commander. Gen Munir also laid a floral wreath at Yaadgar-e-Shuhada at Fort Bala Hisar the Headquarters of Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-North and offered Fateha.



to the writ of state of Pakistan before they are decimated, if they persist on their wrong path,” Gen

rifices of brave and resilient” tribals of Pakistan. He also appreciated their “indomitable resolve for stand-

NA passes bill to amend Official Secrets Act

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The National Assembly on Monday passed Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 with a majority vote, a day after the upper house of parliament green-lighted the legislation after the coalition government removed contentious provisions.

The official secrets bill was re-tabled in the National Assembly earlier today after the legislation with controversial clauses already sailed through the lower house of parliament last week but failed to get Senate’s nod and was referred to the upper house’s standing committee after it drew strong criticism from parliamentarians.

Subsequently, Senate on Sunday passed Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 by a majority vote after the government made changes to the bill, removing a clause that sought to empower intelligence agencies to carry out raids or make arrests without warrants. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, who tabled the bill in the Senate on behalf of Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, informed the senators that the government withdrew the provision to empower intelli-

gence agencies to carry out raids or make arrests without warrants.

“The objection has been removed.. the arrest without warrant clause has been withdrawn,” the minister added. He also emphasised that the revised legislation empowered the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to investigate individuals suspected of violating the Official Secrets Act. He pointed out the word ‘knowingly’ had been added to a clause which in its original form was “a person may be presumed to be in communication with an enemy or a foreign agent, if he has either within or outside Pakistan visited the address”. The main objection, he further said, pertained to the power of the agencies to arrest without a warrant had been withdrawn, adding that certain words on which the members had raised objections had also been removed.

The federal minister, however, contended that the legislation should be seen without prejudice to give protection to the military personnel and intelligence agencies people offering sacrifices in the war zones.

In the same session, the

National Assembly also passed several other legislations including PIA Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Higher Education Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said detailed discussions were held on the Higher Education Commission Bill in the Senate session.

He said the secretary education will represent the areas where is no provincial Higher Education Commission (HEC). “One expert from each of the four provinces will also be its member,” the minister added. Federal Urdu University Arts Sciences, Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2023, National Commission for Minorities Bill 2023, Federal Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Price Control and Prevention of Unjustified Profiteering Amendment Bill, 2023 were also passed by the lower house.

The law minister convinced the minority members for the approval of minorities bill and got it passed with consensus. The National Assembly session has been adjourned till tomorrow (Tuesday) 5pm.

Pakistan’s population surges to 241.49m

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan’s population has surged to 241.49 million in the recent digital census, says a gazette notification issued on Monday.

According to the notification, Punjab has reached the figure of 127.68 million as the most populous province. The population of Sindh province was recorded at 55.69 million. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded its population at 40.85 million individuals, said the notification.

It added that the Balochistan’s population was at 14.89 million people. The census results showed that Islamabad’s population was recorded at 2.36 million. It said Pakistan’s urban population was 93.75 million while 147.74 million people live in rural areas. The population of Lahore was recorded at 22.77 million while Karachi witnessed 22.38 million people. The head count in Peshawar was recorded at 13.51 million while Quetta’s population was recorded at 4.25 million.

The notification showed that Punjab witnessed the growth rate at 2.53 per cent while Sindh’s growth rate was recorded at 2.57 per cent.

Court extends judicial remand of five PTI leaders

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Monday extended the judicial remand of five PTI leaders, including Dr Yasmin Rashid and Khadija Shah in the May 9 arson and vandalism cases.

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore extended the judicial remand of former health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid for 14 days. The court extended the judicial remand of Khadija Shah, daughter of a former finance minister, for 10 days in the case of arson and attack on Askari Tower in Lahore on May 9. The court ordered to produce Khadija Shah again on August 17 next.

ATC admin judge Abbar Gul Khan conducted the hearing and extended the judicial remand of the PTI leader for 14 days in four cases. The cases were registered against her on charges of attack on Askari Tower in Lahore and setting fire to Shadman police station and a PML-N office in Model Town.

The ATC judge also extended the judicial remand of former Punjab governor Omer Sarfaraz Cheema for 14 days. The Punjab ex-governor had been arrested in the Jinnah House attack case registered at Sarwar Road police station. The ATC also extended the judicial remand of PTI leader Ejaz Chaudhry for 14 days. Ejaz Chaudhry had been arrested in the case of vandalism and setting fire to Shadman police station.

The court also extended the judicial remand of PTI leader Mehmoodur Rasheed for the same period in the case of setting fire to Shadman police station and the vehicles of Gulberg police.

Govt stabilizes economy with allies’ support

PM says One window operation facility for Chinese investors to be fully implemented

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said without the support of allies, the government could never have done the difficult task of reviving the country’s economy alone.

Talking to former Prime Minister Senator Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and member National Assembly (NA) Ali Musa Gilani here, Shehbaz Sharif thanked Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for supporting all decisions of the government. During the meeting, Yusuf Raza Gilani paid tributes to the prime minister for improving the country’s economic situation and providing splendid leadership during a difficult time. They also discussed the overall political situation of the country. Earlier, PML-N leader and former mayor Rawalpindi Sardar Naseem called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed the overall political situation in the country.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also assured the Chinese investors to further simplify the procedures for the companies working in Pakistan, especially under the umbrella of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and implement them in letter and spirit.

He said under the CPEC, the two countries were entering into a new era of cooperation, therefore the government was further streamlining and simplifying the procedures to facilitate the Chinese companies and investors working in the country.

PM Shehbaz assured the Chinese investors that the difficult time for them was now over as “We are going to do this under one umbrella as a one window operation and this I mean in letter and spir-

it...not just words but true implementation”.

Addressing an award ceremony here, Shehbaz Sharif said that the Chinese government and companies had contributed towards Pakistan’s industrial promotion in various areas and their contribution had not only led to creating job opportunities and industrial production but also further strengthened the bilateral economic ties.

Earlier the prime minister gave awards to top-performing Chinese companies working especially in projects under CPEC in Pakistan. He said recently the two friendly countries had celebrated a decade of CPEC under Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). He said China had so far invested a valuable \$30 billion under CPEC which had really transformed the economic landscape in Pakistan.

“Now we are entering into the second phase of CPEC in which multiple new areas are being incorporated including the green corridor, Information Technology, and Special Economic Zones. He said the Pakistan government had launched a great initiative “Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)”, which would consist of all main stakeholders including the federal government, all provincial governments, and institutions, particularly Pakistan Army led by General Syed Asim Munir.

He said the Army Chief had personally contributed to this programme in a way that it had no parallel in the past as he was totally dedicated to promoting the cause of Pakistan and the people who had education and talent but no jobs. “The programme SIFC will dovetail with the entire CPEC mechanism and will be a propeller in terms of Pakistan’s industrial agri progress,” he added.

(Continued on Back Page)

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 **Khairpur** have received land titles to their climate resilient houses.

SINDH GOVERNMENT AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVING ITS PEOPLE



INF/KRY/3495/2023



KP Governor urges graduates to embrace hard work and Islamic values

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Monday attended the 4th BS Convocation of the University of Peshawar as a Chief Guest.

The Governor distributed degrees to 500 male and female students completing Bachelor of Science in various disciplines, including Social Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Physical Sciences, Management and Information Sciences, Islamic Studies, Computer Science, and Disaster Management.

He also presented gold medals to 34 students who secured prominent positions. Congratulations to the Governor for his academic achievement, and to

the students, parents, and faculty members who participated in the ceremony. Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, along with faculty members, parents, and students, were also part of the event.

In his address, Governor Ghulam Ali expressed appreciation for the parents who overcome difficulties to educate their children. He emphasized the availability of better facilities for current students and the importance of knowledge and research in the 21st century.

The Governor encouraged students to work diligently in their respective fields and play a role in promoting Islamic values and knowledge while combating the spread of hatred

on social media.

He emphasized the importance of hard work, the promotion of Islamic values and knowledge, and the responsible use of social media to spread love instead of hatred. The Governor also highlighted the need to address issues faced by universities and suggested offering degrees that cater to market demands for employment opportunities.

He highlighted the need to address challenges faced by universities and suggested offering degrees that align with market demand for employment opportunities. He also emphasized the responsibility of individuals to resolve issues and contribute positively to the nation's progress.



PESHAWAR: Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali giving degrees to students during 4th BS Convocation of University of Peshawar.

Implementation of women's rights legislation stressed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Civil Society Members especially organizations working for Women's Rights including Aurat Foundation condemned the hike in gender-based violence and demanded the implementation of domestic violence legislation indiscriminately.

The foundation also demanded to increase the female ratio in Dispute Resolution Councils, which will play an effective role in redressing gender-based violence and implementing women's right legislations. The Aurat Foundation further argued the establishment of DRCs in erstwhile Fata to ensure the protection of women's rights in the tribal districts.

In this regard, Aurat Foundation arranged a seminar for court and crime reports in which the regional Director named Shabeena Ayaz, social worker Saima Munir, Farzana Arshad, Naheed, and Samina Afridi participated. The participants stressed upon implementation of women's rights laws especially the provision of inheritance.

Pesco notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV University Grid Station on 8th and 12th August from 07 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Subsequently, it said consumers of 11 KV Malkandher, Engineering, Regi, Tajabad-2, Tajabad, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad-1, CMB, Abdara, Achini-1, Hassanzai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, Circular Road, DHA, HKB, Askari-6, Commercial Building Abdul Razaq and Pawaka feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Dalazak Grid Station on 8th and 12th August from 07 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Gulbela, OPF, Pakaghulam, Wadpaga-1 & 2, Gulabad, Lakki Star, Duran Pur, BRT, Goloza, Mohammad Zai and Jinnah Collage feeders will face inconvenience.

Hot, humid weather with isolated falls predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted that mainly hot, humid and partly cloudy weather is expected in most parts of the province. However, it said that isolated rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Kohistan, Torghar, Shangla, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mardan and Swabi districts.

During the last 24 hours mainly hot, humid and partly cloudy weather occurred in most districts of the province, while, rain-thunderstorm occurred in Swat, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Buner, Bajaur, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Mardan, Kohat and Khyber districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Malamjaba 46, Kakul 32, Bajaur (Pashat 30, Khaar 06), Dir 21, Saidu Sharif & Takht Bhai (each) 16, Balakot 13, Drosch 05, Risalpur & Mirkhani (each) 04, Buner & Tirah-Khyber 03, Pattan 01 and Kohat Trace. Maximum wind recorded at Mardan 46 km/h.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 37/25, Chitral 36/19, Timergara 34/24, Dir 34/16, Mirkhani 38/17, Kalam 26/14, Drosch 36/20, Saidu Sharif 34/20, Pattan 38/25, Malam Jabba 22/13, Takht Bhai 35/21, Kakul 30/17, Balakot 33/21, Parachinar 27/13, Bannu 39/25, Cherat 30/18, D.I. Khan 41/29.

Consignment of relief items dispatched to merged distts

PESHAWAR (INP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday dispatched another consignment of relief goods to district administrations in Bajaur, South Waziristan, and Malakand in view of monsoon rains.

An official communiqué issued here said that the relief supplies include family-size tents, sandbags, emergency searchlights, kitchen sets, pedestal fans, first-aid boxes, hygiene kits, buckets, mosquito nets, jerry cans, solar lamps, etc.

Director General (DG) of PDMA Jannat Gul Afridi said that the relief goods would be provided immediately to the flood affectees and victims in case of any emergency or calamity.

He said, "The relief goods have already been sent to other districts of the province while focal persons have been deputed for immediate coordination and response in 14 sensitive districts including Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Charsadda, DI Khan, Shangla, Dir Upper, Chitral Upper, Chitral Lower, Kohistan Upper and Kohistan Lower."

He said the permanent political divide with no channel of communication and intolerance in society would further retard the political and economic development besides widening the economic gap between influential and underprivileged class.

He said if the trend of political intolerance, accusations and blame games among politicians continued, then it would be extremely difficult to bring political and economic stability to the country despite holding of general elections.

PMLN Nowshera district President, Sahibzada Hamaza Khan said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was convicted in Toshakhana case and was sentenced three years imprisonment and one lakh rupees fine after he was found guilty of corrupt practices and concealing facts in his nomination papers from ECP.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi meeting officials of Excise Department.

Anti-polio drive kicks off in 17 districts of KP

PESHAWAR (INP): A comprehensive anti-polio campaign has been launched across 17 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), as authorities intensify efforts to shield young lives from the debilitating grip of polio.

The campaign, initiated in collaboration with the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), aims to immunize a staggering 2 million children against the crippling disease.

This critical initiative, spanning areas including Peshawar, Bannu, Charsadda, Hangu, Khyber, and Kohat, will see the deployment of 6,947 dedicated teams, each charged with the task of delivering the lifesaving drops to homes and communities.

Overseeing this monumental effort are 1,598 area in-charges, who will ensure the smooth execution and monitoring of the campaign.

In a move that underscores the gravity of the mission, more than 18,000 vigilant police officers have been strategically positioned to safeguard the dedicated polio vaccination teams.

The paramount concern for the safety and success of the drive has prompted this robust security deployment.

Health officials at the Anti-Polio Emergency Center have underscored the urgency of this initiative, revealing that two cases of polio have already been reported in Bannu earlier this year.

The focus on these high-risk areas is a testament to the dedication and commitment of health workers and authorities to eradicate polio from the region.

Dr. Nasreen Khan, Director of the Anti-Polio Emergency Center,

expressed her optimism about the campaign's impact.

"Every child counts, and this drive reflects our unwavering commitment to ensuring that every child is protected from the dangers of polio. We are leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to reach every doorstep, every child, and provide them with the immunity they deserve."

Amidst the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, health authorities and frontline workers have demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination in their quest to eliminate polio.

The campaign's success hinges on the support and cooperation of parents, caregivers, and communities at large, as they play a pivotal role in ensuring that no child is left vulnerable to this preventable disease.

Process of election to start after dissolution of assemblies

PESHAWAR (APP): Legal and political experts here Monday said that election process would begin after dissolution of the national and provincial assemblies most likely on August 9 and subsequently formation of the caretaker government's set up in the Centre, Sindh and Balochistan.

Asif Yousafzai advocate, a constitutional expert told APP that election commission was legally bound to conduct free, fair and transparent election within 90 days after dissolution of the assemblies while the caretaker government was

responsible to provide all out assistance to the electoral body for smooth conduct of polls in all federating units and Islamabad.

He said it was mandatory for the President and Governors to sign the assemblies' dissolution's advice sent by Prime Minister and Chief Ministers respectively, adding if the advice were not signed then the assemblies would automatically dissolve after 48 hours of the advice like that we have recently seen in Punjab.

Asif Yousafzai said the recent amendments in the

election laws have empowered the ECP to announce date for general elections and conduct elections in a free, fair and transparent manner. He said that four to six months were generally required for new delimitations of constituencies in the wake of digital census.

He urged ECP to clear its position on new delimitation issue and start preparation for general election after the prime minister has publically announced to dissolve the national assembly on August 9, just three days before the lower house of parliament completes its five-year constitutional term.

"It is a free and transparent election that provides legitimacy to an elected government to take decisions in the country's interest as it enjoys overwhelming support from the masses." He said democracy provides an inclusive mechanism for resolution of all socioeconomic and political issues through evolving broad based political reconciliation among all the relevant stakeholders.

He said the permanent political divide with no channel of communication and intolerance in society would further retard the political and economic development besides widening the economic gap between influential and underprivileged class.

He said if the trend of political intolerance, accusations and blame games among politicians continued, then it would be extremely difficult to bring political and economic stability to the country despite holding of general elections.

PMLN Nowshera district President, Sahibzada Hamaza Khan said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was convicted in Toshakhana case and was sentenced three years imprisonment and one lakh rupees fine after he was found guilty of corrupt practices and concealing facts in his nomination papers from ECP.



PESHAWAR: An old farmer busy in routine work in his field.

Senate approves annual budget of universities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The caretaker minister for Law and Higher Education Justice (R) Irshad Qaiser on Monday presided over two separate senate meetings to review and approve annual budgets for the University of Haripur and the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Swat.

In both meetings, the members of the Senate of the respective universities attended.

The senate meeting unanimously approved

annual budget 2023-24 for the University of Haripur.

Provincial Minister of Higher Education Justice (R) Irshad Qaiser appreciated the surplus budget and performance of the University of Haripur.

He emphasised that the university should take more steps to increase its income so that it becomes financially more stable.

The Senate meeting was told that steps are being taken to establish more departments at the university in the future.

Apart from this, the Senate meeting of the Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Swat, was held, in which the members of the Senate participated.

After a detailed review, approval for the budget for the financial year 2023-24 was granted.

While talking in the meeting, the caretaker provincial minister, Justice (R) Irshad Qaiser, directed that further improvement be made in the administrative and educational standards.

Meeting held to eradicate ghost schools in KP



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The high-level first meeting of the Liaison Committee of the Education Department was held under the chairmanship of Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister on Primary and Secondary Education Rehmat Salam Khattak to eradicate ghost schools in the province.

The meeting was also attended by Abdul Akram Additional Secretary

(General), Sheikh Fakhur Alam Communication Specialist, Education Department Chairmen all boards, Tanzila Sabahat MD Private School Regulatory Authority, and Director of Education.

In the meeting, decisive steps were taken to eradicate ghost private schools, illegal admission and enrollment, unregistered schools and illegal publication, to prevent all irregularities and to provide

transparent and fair education system. Decisions were also taken in the meeting regarding many other important issues.

On this occasion, Education Advisor Rehmat Salam Khattak said that no compromise or concession will be made with those who stand in the way of quality education. Follow-up meetings will be held every month to implement these decisions and formulate future strategies.



PESHAWAR: Customer purchasing national flag dresses for children at Qissa Khawani Bazaar in preparations to celebrate Independence Day.

Black Hawk Pvt to establish tourist zone

PESHAWAR (APP): Black Hawk Pvt, an international developing firm is planning to establish a tourist zone in the scenic Kaghan Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In this connection, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Directors of the firm have also held a meeting with the Vice Chairman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BOIT)), officials sources said on Monday.

During meeting, the developer has shared a detail presentation regarding the proposed project with KP-BOIT while, an understanding for facilitation and support was developed by both entities for smooth and successful execution of the project.

In this regard, for further facilitation and guidance, a formal memorandum of understanding

(MoU) would also be signed between both entities in near future.

The same project intends to provide a one stop leisure facility to domestic and foreign tourists that can engaged in a variety of entertainment activities.

The proposed zone is planned to be spread over an area of 350 acres initially, and will eventually expand to 500 acres.

The same project is expected to cost around 3 billion PKR and will generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for around 2000 individuals alongside huge economic activity in the region said the KP-BOIT.

The project will be designed by experts in collaboration with KP-BOIT to maximize its financial and social viability while it will cater the tourists including international

tourists with a vision to provide an eco-friendly tourism destination.

It aims to engage tourists for longer periods of stay by engaging them in a variety of leisure activities including, horse riding, zip line, hanging tracks, tree houses, water and hunting sports etc.

The firm and KP-BOIT have agreed to establish a two-way communication and cooperation mechanism for smooth and hassle-free execution.

Vice Chairman KP-BOIT has appreciated Black Hawk's plan and assured full cooperation and facilitation in matters related to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

He further added that the proposed project will help attract more investments to the region which eventually will result in social and economic prosperity of the region.



In brief

Several students injured in attack

QUETTA (PPI): Several students sustained injuries after unidentified persons barged into "Awami Library Sariah Road, Quetta", on Monday and started beating the students present in the library. According to reports, unidentified persons barged into a private library "Balochistan Awami Library" situated at Sariah Road area of Quetta and started beating students present in the library, resultantlly, several students sustained injuries. Before leaving, attackers warned of dire consequences in case students used the library afresh. The injured students were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Further investigation was being conducted by the authorities of Police Station Sariah, Quetta.

Dealer fined for moving sugar

SIBI (PPI): District administration Sibi on Monday imposed fine on a sugar dealer on the charge of transferring sugar bags to other cities of the province besides requesting the authorities to suspend the No Objection Certificate (NOC) issued in respect of the concerned the sugar dealer. Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner, Sibi, Mansoor Ahmed Qazi, a district administration Sibi team under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Ali Shah Abbasi launched a crackdown against the dealers shifting sugar to other cities of the province. A fine was imposed on a dealer on the charge of transferring sugar bags to other cities apart from soliciting the approval of the higher authorities to cancel No Objection Certificate issued in favour of the concerned sugar dealer of Sibi. Talking to media, Ali Shah Abbasi, Assistant Commissioner, Sibi said that no one would be allowed to transfer or hoard quota of items fixed for the citizens of Sibi city.

Relief goods sent to Bajaur

KHAR (PPI): Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday dispatched another consignment of relief goods to district administrations in Bajaur and Malakand in view of monsoon rains. An official communiqué issued here said that the relief supplies include family-size tents, sandbags, emergency searchlights, kitchen sets, pedestal fans, first-aid boxes, hygiene kits, buckets, mosquito nets, jerry cans, solar lamps, etc. DG of PDMA Jannat Gul Afridi said that the relief goods would be provided immediately to the flood affectees and victims in case of any emergency or calamity. He said, "The relief goods have already been sent to other districts of the province while full persons have been deputed for immediate coordination and response in 14 sensitive districts including Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Charsadda, Dir Upper, Chitral Upper, Chitral Lower, Kohistan Upper and Kohistan Lower."

Preparation for Urs kicks off

F.P. Report

MULTAN: The 784th 3-day Urs Mubarak of Sheikh-ul-Islam Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Multani will start on August 22 (provided the moon rises). On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, the sub-administration has started the arrangements for the Urs Mubarak. Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir it has been said that on the occasion of the Urs of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Multani, ideal arrangements will be made for security and pilgrims.



THATTA: Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah inaugurating International Medical and Technical College LUMHS.

Newly joined members of PML-N welcomed

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Adviser to the Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam has said that he welcomes those who have recently joined the Muslim League-N. He said that now all Pakistanis understand that only Muslim League-N has the ability to get the country out of all crisis.

He further added that the public has seen the true face of Imran and his party on May 9 and 10 when their agenda of anti-nationalism and bloodshed was exposed. The advisor said that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, it is the duty of the youth of the country to work hard to take the country on the path of development and to stay away from the political parties that are misleading them. He further said that interest-free loans are also being given under a scheme approved



by the Prime Minister. He said that if Allah gives us another opportunity in the future, we will distribute laptops amongst all the students and that development and prosperity of the country is the mission of Muslim League-N.

Engineer Amir Muqam inaugurated several projects at various locations in Lower Swat including NADRA Centers at Matta

and Bagh Dheri and road construction projects at Kabal Chowk, in Malam Jabba and Mangala Works at Shangrai. Adviser to the Prime Minister also distributed laptops amongst the students of Swat University in Charbagh under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme and addressed the function organized on the occasion as the chief guest.

JI demands indiscriminate accountability of public office holders

F.P. Report

HAFAIZABAD: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) Emir Siraj-ul-Haq said that accountability of those people who looted the national exchequer including Tosha Khana since 75 years should be made without any discrimination and I will be happy when Asif Ali Zardari and Mian Shabbaz Sharif will also be in jail along with Imran Khan.

While addressing a big gathering at Vaneki Chowk Hafizabad, he said that only one person was tried in the Panama Leaks case amongst 436 thieves and courts were silent about other accused. Everyone from a laborer of President was saying that the condition of the country was spoiled, who had worsened the situation in the country, he questioned.

He said that MLN came into power many times while Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan would not improve the situation. He said that when Yousaf Raza Gilani, Nawaz Sharif, and Imran Khan were expelled from power, they were asking why we were deprived of power and courts were not providing justice to us but I questioned who made the justice system corrupt. He also said that now real revolution was needed in the country and the revolution could occur only with the power of the vote so that we could get rid of economic terrorism of America, the UK and IMF.

The Rulers do not want to hold elections due to fear of the people because they know that when they go to the people to vote, the people will be received them with rotten eggs, he said and added that the rules were making pretend of Census for enhancing period of caretaker setup in the country.

He said that the Interest system also be eliminated in the country, when I was Finance Minister in KPK, we curb inters system in the province as a result of which, the porcine was developed. He regretfully said that the drug mafia, diesel mafia, land mafia, flour mafia, and other corrupt mafias were ruling in the country, today, who invests their money to get elected corrupt people. He also said that Jamaat-e-Islami would fix unemployment allowance for youth and old age allowance for senior citizens to come into power.

Solidarity rally held: Youm-e-Istehsaal was also observed in the district Hafizabad. In this connection, a rally was taken out in favor of oppressed people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir led by Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Umer Farooq Warraich.

Chief Executive Officer Education, Sohail Azhar Khan, ADCR Intiaz Ahmad Baig, ADCG Malik Abbas Zulqarnain Awan, AC Munawar Hussain, other officers and officials of government departments, and a large number of people belonging to different segments of society participated in the rally. Participants of rally were shouting slogans against on sided action taken by Modi-led Indian government on August 5, 2019 and illegal occupation on Jammu and Kashmir.

Anti-polio drive postponed in Khyber district

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Polio campaign to be scheduled to start on Aug 07 2023 has been postponed in Khyber due to police denial to provide security to the polio teams. According to the district police office, two thousand four hundred police officials had been assigned duties to guard the polio workers across the Khyber in the postponed polio drive.

It is worth mentioning here that on Sunday, office bearers of the ex-Fata police committee announced their boycott in protest to protect the polio volunteers in the up-coming polio drive till approval of their demands including granting of proper police structure and incentives being enjoyed by police

force in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Zafer while confirming the news said that all arrangements had been finalized to carry out an anti-polio campaign however because of a police boycott, the drive had been temporarily suspended.

As per Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) without proper security, we cannot dispatch polio teams to carry out the campaign, he added. Head of the former tribal region police committee, Said Jalal said that the police force after consultation boycotted securing polio teams in Khyber, Orkzai, Mohmand, Bajaur, FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, etc., in protest for not materializing their demands, prom-

ised to them. He vowed that till acceptance of their demands they would not give up their agitation. When Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Abdunasir was contacted on the matter he said that due to strike call by the district police and the resultant of non-provision of security cover, they were not in a position to conduct the polio drive keeping in view current law and order situation.

It is to be stated here that for the first time ever the health officials decided to conduct a fractional dose of inactivated poliovirus vaccine besides Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) after a polio virus was found in an environmental sample of district Khyber.

Sindh CM inaugurates Int'l Medical College

F.P. Report

THATTA: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said on Monday that the establishment of Liaquat University of Medical Sciences' International Medical College and Technological College in the historical city of Thatta is the fulfillment of another promise the provincial government of PPP had made.

"This college is bound to open new vistas of medical education and employment in the entire Lar region," he said while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the newly established International Medical and Technological College by LUMS. The ceremony was attended by MPAs Haji Ali Hassan Zardari, Special Assistants to CM Sadiq Memon, Riaz Shah Shirazi, notables- Shafqat Shah Shirazi, VC LUMS Prof. Ikram Ujjain, deans, directors, and faculty members of the university.

Shah said that the establishment of the International College is a milestone to strengthen higher education and healthcare systems. "The concept of the International College is in line with the global economic development based on the 'Knowledge economy'." He gave examples of developed countries like the UK and the USA and said that their economy was largely based on their Higher Educational Institutes.

Murad Shah said that the Institute was not only a landmark in the improvement of higher education in Sindh but also has the potential of considerable contribution towards the economic development of the region. "Our mission is to produce competent and skilled healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses, and technical staff," he said and added that the graduates from this Institute would not only serve locally but also inter-

national graduates join the international job market, which would bring a good name to our province. Shah appreciated the tireless efforts of Vice Chancellor LUMHS and all those who were involved in the planning and execution of this project. Their hard work and dedication made this day a reality.

The CM expressed his gratitude to his party leadership, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for their unwavering support for a stronger and healthier society. Murad Ali Shah said that LUMS International College offers five-year programs such as MBBS, Doctor of Physiotherapy, and Doctor of Pharmacy.

The four-year bachelor programs to be offered include Thatta campus include BS Radiologic Technology (BRT), BS Medical Laboratory Technology (BSMLT), BS Radiologic Technology (BSRT), BS Forensic Science in Forensic Biology (BSFB), BS Forensic Science in Forensic Chemistry & Toxicology, Associate of Applied Sciences in Radiologic Technology (AASRT), Bachelor's Associate Physician (BSAP).

Media talk Talking to the media the chief minister announced a compensation of Rs1 million each for those killed in the Hazara Train accident at Sarhari, near Nawabshah. He also announced compensation for the injured, and severely injured at a rate of Rs200,000 and Rs500,000 each. "It was an unfortunate incident which claimed innocent lives," he said and added he personally went to the site and then visited the injured at the hospital.

To a question, he said that he did not know whether it was a terrorism incident or a technical problem. "Pakistan

Railways is conducting an inquiry and the Railway Minister Khwaja Saad Rafiq has already announced the inquiry," he said. Replying to a question, the chief minister said that the census approved by the CCI would not affect the assembly seats. "Sindh has 61 national assemblies and even after approval of the census the number of seats will remain the same," he said.

Murad Shah brushed aside the impression that the delimitation exercise would take time and general elections would be delayed. "I don't think that it [delimitation] would be a gruesome exercise, I think it would be done well in time and the election would be held within a period of three months," he said.

To a question about the caretaker chief minister, the CM said "Still I am working in the office. "We are going on three months' leave to our people [election] to give them our five years performance," he said and added he was sure the people of the province would again vote PPP to power. Murad Shah said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would be the next prime minister of Pakistan. "We will form a government in Balochistan - in the past, PPP has been forming government in KPK," he recalled and said again PPP would be able to form government there [in KPK].

Shah said that PPP would take a good number of seats from Punjab, that's why he was sure that Chairman Bilawal would be the next prime minister. Replying to a question, the chief minister said that the FWO had constructed Karachi-Thatta dual carriageway, and now the road has developed craters at different spots due to heavy rains. "We have discussed the matter with our partners [FWO] and the road will be repaired," he said.

DC inspects anti-polio drive

F.P. Report

KOHAT: On the first day of the polio campaign in Kohat district, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Azmatullah Wazir along with Dr. Majid inspected the arrangements

for anti-polio drive.

The Deputy Commissioner checked the attendance of polio teams and inquired about the problems of the polio workers. The polio workers apprised the DC about their

problems upon which he issued on-the-spot directives for addressal of the same. He asked the polio workers to discharge their duty with dedication as it was the matter of the future of our generation.



HYDERABAD: Railway workers busy in repairing railway track next to damaged track.

Registration of FIR in adolescence demanded

F.P. Report

LARKANA: An elderly woman from Lahar Colony, a suburb of Larkana, along with her children protested in front of the press club against the alleged abuses of the influential people of the area.

The woman named Shazia Sario said with her elderly lady-in-waiting that Dino, the son of influential Ghazi Chandio, a nearby resident of the neighborhood, accused my son Shah Zeb Sario in his room. A failed attempt was made to commit malpractice, on which we have filed a report at Hydari police station, while the accused is influential and we are also

being threatened to close the police station report, said DIG Police Larkana Division. Mazhar Nawaz Sheikh has been strongly requested to provide protection to influential people.

Residents held protest in favor of their demands: A protest demonstration was held from Media Housing to Hall Town by Badh Taluk Movement against not getting the status of Tehsil to Badh, which has a large population of Larkana district.

While addressing the activists Comrade Aszar Noonari, Zahar Noor Hesbani, Molabakhsh Pahlputto and others said that the government of

Pakistan Peoples Party has assured to give the status of tehsil to Badeh, the largest city of Larkana district for 15 consecutive years, but after such a long period of time, Even after this, she is making fun of the people, while for the last five years, the people of Badeh have been continuously protesting for the status of Tehsil to the city, but the silence of the elected members of the Sindh Assembly is becoming a question mark for the people's government in Sindh.

The biggest injustice of the government is that it is surprising not to give the status of taluka to the big cities of Sindh in terms of population.



Niger coup: Ecowas deadline sparks anxiety in Nigeria

NIAMEY (BBC): Niger's military junta has just hours to restore ousted President Mohamed Bazoum to power or face the possibility of military action from the regional bloc Ecowas. West African leaders gave the coup leaders a week to comply with its demands or it would "take all measures... [which] may include the use of force".

But in Niger's neighbour, Nigeria - where the bulk of the troops are likely to come from - voices against the involvement of the military are growing louder. The two countries also have close ethnic and historical ties. Nigeria's senate urged the government to look at "political and diplomatic options".

And in the northern Nigerian city of Sokoto, bordering Niger, which is home to the army's 8 Division, the anxiety is increasing. It sits on a major junction on the road leading to Niger and is likely to be a mustering point for troops before any military action. The serenity of Sokoto's residential neighbourhoods belies the heightened tension in the city and the wider north-western state. One aspect feeding this is that - according to locals - one in every five residents in Sokoto is from Niger or has connections with the country. Sokoto city's sprawling suburb of Sabon-Gari Girafshi is predominantly inhabited by people from Niger. They fear that military intervention by Ecowas could greatly affect their family members and even jeopardise their own security here in Nigeria.

Fifty-one-year-old jewellery maker Sulaiman Ibrahim lives in one of the fenced and gated compounds. One of his wives and some of his children are in Niger's capital, Niamey, trapped there because of last month's coup. "Now I want to call my wife Fatima to hear from her, because since the day of that coup, I have not heard from her," he tells the BBC, gripping his phone in his left hand. He scrolls through his contacts and dials the wife's number again. Each call returns with the same message: "The number you are calling is not available at this time." "Every time I called, this is what they're telling me, either no service or whatever, I don't know," he says in anguish, unable to hide his concern. "If military action is going to be taken on Niger, this will bring more anxiety. I'm in terrible situation because my family is not with me and I don't have any information about them." He opens the photo app on his phone to show his 18-year-old son and one of his siblings. "Here is my son Mustapha, he's currently in



Niger. This is his younger brother, he's six years old, they're with their mother." Sulaiman is not alone. Daily he meets with other neighbours from Niger to check if anyone has got news from home. Mohamdu Ousman 43, echoed the sentiments of many here that the use of force to restore the ousted president in Niamey could be catastrophic. "For Ecowas to go to Niger with the intention to take back power from the military to civilians, we don't wish for that, God forbid. It's like erasing our history," he told the BBC. Zainab Saidu, 59, hails from the Nigerian city of Dosso, but has lived most of her life in Sokoto after getting married to a Nigerian man. Her youngest son is currently in Niger and she fears for his safety. "I'm disturbed, I swear we're in fear all of us, everyone who is from Niger. Everybody is terrified most especially when we heard that Nigeria [might] go to Niger for a war purpose," she says. West African military chiefs said they had agreed a plan for possible military intervention, but Ecowas continues to push for a diplomatic solution.

In an effort to apply other pressure, the regional bloc has also imposed sanctions on the coup leaders and closed the borders into Niger. In addition, Nigeria has cut electricity supplies to its northern neighbour. But this has meant that those on the Nigerian side of the border are also affected. One border town that is feeling the impact is Illela, about 80km (50 miles) from Sokoto city. It's a commercial hub, but is currently wearing the look of a community under economic stress. At its entrance, there are long lines of stranded vehicles, mainly large lorries with their loads covered with tarpaulin to shelter them from the rain and the sun. Gathered in the shade of the lorries are drivers either sleeping or sitting with their phones or radios, waiting

for news of the latest developments about the border. One of the drivers, Abdullahi, dressed in a T-shirt and faded blue jeans, is holding a sachet of water. "I have been stranded here for the past three days," he says. "I have exhausted myself financially. Now I don't have any money. A friend bought food for me this morning. That's why you see me holding the water. I have been calling my boss to explain my plight and to let me know that the border closure has affected me, but he's not responding to my calls." His colleagues also look tired and resigned. They could face a long wait and the goods that they are carrying could perish, costing the business owners huge sums of money.

Others whose businesses have been seriously hit include Ado Garba Dankwaseri. The 42-year-old often travels into Niger to buy ice blocks to supply to traders in Illela selling water and soft drinks who need to keep things cool. But Ado Garba's business has been hit hard and he is unable to make the trips to Niger for his supplies. "I make 100,000 naira (\$130; £100) a day with my supplies. But right now, I cannot cross the border. There are soldiers, police and custom and immigration officers stationed everywhere. You cross the border at your own peril," the ice trader says. Customs officials met some of the business people in Illela to try to address their concerns and talk about why the closure was necessary. "There's no sacrifice too big as long as they are able to achieve peace and democracy within the sub-region. The community understands the reason behind the border closure," says Bashir Adewale Adeniyi from the customs service. But the patience of people in Illela and elsewhere in Sokoto is being tested - and so far, there has been little obvious sign that Niger's coup leaders are willing to back down.

Conservative groups sue to block Biden plan canceling \$39b in student loans

WASHINGTON (AP): Two conservative groups are asking a federal court to block the Biden administration's plan to cancel \$39 billion in student loans for more than 800,000 borrowers. In a lawsuit filed in Michigan, the groups argue that the administration overstepped its power when it announced the forgiveness in July, just weeks after the Supreme Court struck down a broader cancellation plan pushed by President Joe Biden.

It asks a judge to rule the cancellation illegal and stop the Education Department from carrying it out while the case is decided. The suit was filed by the New Civil Liberties Alliance on behalf of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and the Cato Institute. The Education Department called the suit "a desperate attempt from right wing special interests to keep hundreds of thousands of borrowers in debt." "We are not going to back down or give an inch when it comes to defending working families," the department said in a state-

ment. It's part of a wave of legal challenges Republicans have leveled at the Biden administration's efforts to reduce or eliminate student debt for millions of Americans. Biden has said he will pursue a different cancellation plan after the Supreme Court decision, and his administration is separately unrolling a more generous repayment plan that opponents call a "backdoor attempt" at cancellation. The Biden administration announced July 14 that it would soon forgive loans for 804,000 borrowers enrolled in income-driven repayment plans. The plans have long offered cancellation after borrowers make 20 or 25 years of payments, but "past administrative failures" resulted in inaccurate payments counts that set borrowers back on their progress toward forgiveness, the department said.

The new action was announced as a "one-time adjustment" that would count certain periods of past nonpayment as if borrowers had been making payments

during that time. It moved 804,000 borrowers across the 20- or 25-year mark needed for cancellation, and it moved millions of others closer to that threshold. It's meant to address a practice known as forbearance steering, in which student loan servicers hired by the government wrongly pushed borrowers to go into forbearance - a temporary pause on payments because of hardship - even if they would have been better served by enrolling in one of the income-driven repayment plans. Under the one-time fix, past periods in forbearance were also counted as progress toward Public Service Loan Forgiveness, a program that offers cancellation after 10 years of payments while working in a government or nonprofit job. Biden's action was illegal, the lawsuit says, because it wasn't authorized by Congress and didn't go through a federal rulemaking process that invites public input feedback. "No authority allows the Department to count non-payments as payments," the lawsuit says. It

adds that the action came in "a press release that neither identified the policy's legal authority nor considered its exorbitant price tag."

The conservative groups say Biden's plan undercuts Public Service Loan Forgiveness. The Mackinac Center and Cato Institute say they employ borrowers who are working toward student loan cancellation through the program. They say Biden's action illegally accelerates progress toward relief, diminishing the benefit for nonprofit employers. "This unlawful reduction in the PSLF service requirement injures public service employers that rely on PSLF to recruit and retain college-educated employees," the suit alleges. The Cato Institute previously sued the administration over the cancellation plan that was struck down by the Supreme Court. The Mackinac Center is separately challenging Biden's pause on student loan payments, which is scheduled to end this fall with payments resuming Oct. 1.

At least two killed, dozens missing in shipwrecks off Italy's coast

ROME (Agencies): At least two people have been killed and dozens of others were missing after two shipwrecks off the Italian island of Lampedusa. The Italian coastguard said it had recovered two bodies and rescued 57 people following the sinkings. Around 28 people were reported lost at sea by survivors on one boat, while three were reported missing from the second after both went down in stormy weather, said the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Both were rickety iron boats believed to have set off from Sfax in Tunisia. One was carrying 48 people, the second 42, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. Cultural mediators with the IOM believed there were "at least 30 people missing" after speaking to the sur-

vivors, press officer Flavio Di Giacomo told the AFP news agency. An investigation into the shipwrecks has been opened in Agrigento, on the nearby Italian island of Sicily. More than 2,000 people have arrived in Lampedusa in the last few days after being rescued at sea by Italian patrol boats and NGO groups, as strong winds further complicate the situation around the island. Agrigento's chief of police Emanuele Ricicari said the human traffickers putting migrants and refugees out to sea would have known rough seas were forecast.

"Whoever allowed them, or forced them, to leave with this sea is an unscrupulous criminal lunatic," he told Italian media. "Rough seas are forecast for the next few days. Let's hope they stop.

It's sending them to slaughter with this sea," he said. As the stormy weather continued, fire brigade and alpine rescue teams were preparing to pull to safety some 20 people trapped on a rocky part of Lampedusa's coastline. They have been there after their boat was tossed onto the rocks by strong winds. They have been provided with food, water, clothes and emergency thermal blankets by the Red Cross, but the coastguard has been unable to rescue them by sea due to the high waves. Should the winds not drop, rescuers could begin winching them up the 140-metre (460-foot) high cliff to safety, according to media reports. The Central Mediterranean crossing from North Africa to Europe is the world's deadliest. Over 1,800 peo-

ple have died attempting it so far this year; Di Giacomo said - almost 900 more than last year.

"The truth is that figure is likely to be much higher. Lots of bodies are being found at sea, suggesting there are many shipwrecks we never hear about," he said. The number of bodies found has increased, particularly on the so-called Tunisian route, which has become increasingly dangerous, Di Giacomo said, because of the type of boats used.

Migrants and refugees are being put out to sea by traffickers "in iron boats which cost less than the usual wooden ones, but are utterly unseaworthy, they easily break up and sink", he said. Migrants also often have the engines stolen from their boats at sea, so that traffickers can reuse them.

Minibus plunges down Morocco ravine killing 24

RABAT (BBC): Twenty-four people have died in Morocco after the minibus they were travelling in plunged down a ravine in a mountainous area, authorities say. The bus was taking people to market in central Morocco, when it overturned on a bend, local media say.

The cause of the accident on the road to the town of Demnate, at the foot of the Atlas Mountains, is unknown. It is reported to be one of the country's deadliest accidents. Morocco has a poor road-safety record. A picture of the aftermath shows a battered vehicle on its side at the bottom of a slope. "All the passengers are dead," Youssef Makhloufi, director of the Demnate hospital, is quoted by the AFP news agency as telling Moroccan public broadcaster 2M. Two women and a child were among the victims, 2M said. In 2020, an average of eight people a day died on Morocco's roads, according to the International Transport Forum.

In March this year, 11 people died when their vehicle hit a tree in a rural part of Morocco. A year ago 23 people died when the bus they were in overturned on a bend east of Casablanca, AFP reports. In 2020, Morocco established the National Road Safety Agency to co-ordinate its road-safety strategy.

Libyan governing body's vote to replace its head

CAIRO (AP): One of Libya's top governing bodies elected a new head, in a development that could further fracture the country already split between two rival administrations. Members of the Supreme Council of State, which is separate from both of the governments and is based in the capital of Tripoli, voted for Mohamed Takala to be the body's new leader. Takala would take over from former head Khaled el-Meshri, a powerful figure who had been key in negotiations over the country's election laws. Both the voting and count were live-streamed on local Libyan news channels. The final count was announced in favor of Takala, 67-62. The council did not immediately issue any statements on the outcome of the election. The introduction of a new leader at the helm of a key political institution could add more uncertainty to the country's already deeply divided politics. The international community and the United Nations have repeatedly said that nationwide elections are key to ending the country's decade-long power vacuum.

But for years, rival leaders have failed to agree to a set of election laws that would set the terms of that vote. Libya has been torn by conflict since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. The country was then for years split between rival administrations in the east and west, each supported by different militias and foreign governments. Its is now divided between two administrations, one in Tripoli and one operating in Sirte, and a House of Representatives based in the eastern city of Tobruk. The powerful commander Khalifa Hifter continues to hold sway in the country's eastern region, from its main city of Benghazi. The Tripoli government is headed by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, and the Sirte-based administration, supported by the country's House of Representatives, suspended its former Prime Minister Fathi Bashagha in May.

It's unclear what positions Takala, a politician from the city of Khoms and member of the council since it was formed in 2016, will take on key political issues. But he was congratulated on his victory by Dbeibah. He previously chaired the council's committee for the development of economic and social projects.

Most children in South Asia are exposed to extreme high temperatures, UNICEF says

NEW YORK (Agencies): Nearly half a billion children in South Asia are exposed to extreme high temperatures as life-threatening heat waves caused by the climate crisis become stronger and more frequent, according to the United Nations' children's agency.

In a news release Monday, UNICEF said its analysis of 2020 data showed an estimated 460 million children in countries including Afghanistan, India and Pakistan were exposed to temperatures where 83 or more days in a year exceeded 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) - making South Asia the hardest-hit region for those under age 18. The analysis showed 76% of children in South Asia were exposed to extreme high temperature compared to 32% globally, UNICEF said.

"Countries in the region are not the hottest in the world right now but the heat here brings life-threatening risks for millions of vulnerable children," said Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF regional director for South Asia. "We are particularly concerned about babies, toddlers, malnourished children and pregnant women as they are most vulnerable to heat strokes and other serious effects." Temperatures in some parts of India soared to 47 degrees Celsius (116 Fahrenheit) in June, killing at least 44 people and sickening hundreds with heat-

related illnesses. Some cities in Pakistan also saw similarly high temperatures the same month, raising fears especially for laborers who spend hours toiling outdoors and for poor populations with little to no cooling options.

In parts of the country's southern Sindh province, about 1.8 million people were exposed to temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius (104 F) and higher, UNICEF said, giving rise to short and long-term health risks, including dehydration and organ failure. UNICEF warns the situation is exacerbated for children as they are unable to quickly adapt to such temperature change. The risks can be life threatening - from fainting and poor mental development to neurological dysfunction, seizures and cardiovascular diseases.

Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to heat and can experience preterm births and stillbirths, UNICEF said. Experts say the climate crisis is only going to cause more frequent and longer heat waves in the future, testing the region's ability to adapt. India, the world's most populous nation of 1.4 billion, often experiences heat waves during the summer months of May and June, but in recent years, they have arrived earlier and become more prolonged. In April 2022, India experienced a heat wave that saw tempera-

tures in the capital New Delhi exceed 40 degrees Celsius for seven consecutive days. In some states, the heat closed schools, damaged crops and put pressure on energy supplies, as officials warned residents to remain indoors and keep hydrated.

Experts have also warned the threat facing Afghanistan is particularly stark. Not only is there high potential for record extreme heat, the impacts are compounded by dire social and economic problems. At the same time, extreme weather has had a deadly impact in other parts of the region. Flooding caused by record monsoon rains and melting glaciers in Pakistan submerged a third of the country last year, killing nearly 1,600 people - more than a third of whom were children.

While the water washed away homes and destroyed villages, water-related ailments began infecting children, giving rise to a new disaster in the nation of 230 million. In its report, UNICEF warned that ultimately children, adolescents and women are among those who pay the highest price for extreme weather events. "Young children simply cannot handle the heat," Wijesekera said. "Unless we act now, these children will continue to bear the brunt of more frequent and more severe heat waves in the coming years, for no fault of theirs."

Record floods ravage Slovenia, PM calls it 'worst' disaster in its history

SLOVENIA (Agencies): Slovenia has faced "the biggest natural disaster" in its history, Prime Minister Robert Golob said, after devastating floods caused damage estimated at 500 million euros (\$550m), killed three people and destroyed roads, bridges and houses. Speaking after a meeting of the country's National Security Council, Golob said, "Luckily, last night was easier than the one before", adding that two-thirds of the small Alpine nation's territory had been affected.

The floods were caused by torrential rains, which caused rivers to swell swiftly and burst into houses, fields and towns. Slovenia's weather service said a month's equivalent of rain fell in less than a day. Experts say extreme weather conditions are partly fuelled by climate change. Parts of Europe saw record heat and battled wildfires during the summer. Golob said road and energy infrastructure were hit particularly hard, as well as hundreds of homes and other

buildings. Thousands of people have been forced to evacuate their homes, and many had to be rescued by helicopters or firefighters in boats. Slovenia's army has joined the relief effort, with troops reaching cut-off areas in the north to help. Photos from the scene showed entire villages underwater, outdoor camping sites destroyed, cars stuck in mud and children's toys crammed against fences. The STA news agency reported that main roads in parts of Slovenia also remained partially closed because of the flooding, including the main highway through the country. Dozens of bridges have also collapsed, and the authorities urged people not to go anywhere until damage is fully assessed. After three weather-related deaths were reported, Slovenian media said that one more person was found dead in the capital, Ljubljana. Police are yet to confirm the report.

Several severe storms in Slovenia earlier in the summer blew off roofs and

downed thousands of trees. Storms mark just the latest episode in what has been a summer blighted by extreme heatwaves, flooding and landslides across Europe. Flash floods were reported in Austria, which neighbours Slovenia. About 80 people were forced temporarily to leave their homes in the southern Carinthia province. At least 16 people were killed, and dozens were missing after a landslide at a resort town in northwestern Georgia, Shovi - famed for its vast forests and mineral water springs, officials said.

The landslide occurred in the mountainous northwest of Georgia. "Sixteen bodies have been found in the disaster area, and their identification is under way," said Teimuraz Mghebrishvili from the interior ministry. Images showed rescue workers picking through debris while teams worked to shift the soil. Last month, three people died in Serbia during another deadly storm that tore through the Balkans.

Iran opens registration for candidates in next election

DUBAI (AP): Iran on Monday began registering candidates for parliamentary elections in March, which will be the first since nationwide protests rocked the country last year. Iran has held regular presidential and parliamentary elections since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. But a clerical body vets candidates - disqualifying any seen as disloyal to the Islamic Republic - and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on all major policies.

Iran saw months of nationwide protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was being held by the morality police for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code. The protests escalated into calls for the overthrow of the ruling clerics, marking one of the biggest challenges to their four-decade rule. The protests largely died down after authorities launched a fierce crackdown in which more than 500 protesters were killed and nearly 20,000 were detained. Last month, the morality police returned to the streets in a renewed campaign to force women to wear the mandatory headscarf, known as the hijab. Candidates for the

290-seat parliament have a week to pre-register online, the first step in a months-long process. But each will eventually have to be approved by the Guardian Council, a 12-member clerical body, half of whom are directly appointed by the supreme leader. Over 7,000 candidates were disqualified ahead of the last elections in 2020 - about half of those who had tried to run. The turnout for that election was the lowest since 1979, with just over 42% of eligible voters casting ballots.

Iran has been mired in a severe economic crisis since then-President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from a nuclear deal

with world powers and restored crushing sanctions. The currency's value has plummeted, erasing many Iranians' life savings and driving up prices. With so many struggling to meet basic needs, analysts say there is little energy left over for protests or politics.

Iran's government, which had abided by the 2015 nuclear deal before the US withdrew, is now galloping ahead with its nuclear program. It is openly exceeding the deal's limits on uranium enrichment and stockpiling, and it is building a new nuclear facility so far underground as to likely be impervious to US weapons.

Four Syrian soldiers killed in Israeli missile attack

DAMASCUS (Agencies): An Israeli missile attack near Syria's capital Damascus has killed at least four Syrian soldiers and wounded four others, according to the official SANA news agency. Citing a military source, SANA said the attack took place early on Monday. The Israeli enemy carried out an air attack from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting areas in the vicinity of Damascus," it said.

The attack killed "four soldiers and wounded four others", it added. The agency also reported "some material damage" and said Syrian air defences had intercepted some of the Israeli missiles. There was no immediate comment from Israel. Israel has for years been carrying out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria. Iran's influence has grown in Syria since it began supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that started in 2011.

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Why do train accidents happen so often?

ANOTHER horrific accident of Pakistan Railway train occurred near Nawab Shah, Sindh perishing more than 30 precious human lives and inflicting serious injuries to several dozens people on Sunday. According to the details, the Hazara Express with over 1000 passengers onboard heading to Pakistan's Northern city of Havilan struck into a derailment that not only wrecked the train cars but grossly damaged the railway track. Rescue and Relief activities had almost completed, however the train service between Port city of Karachi and Northern parts of the country could not be restored for hours. Federal Minister for Railway Khawaja Saad Rafique told the media that the train was running at the normal speed of 40-45 km while the Railway track was also in good condition. A thorough probe had been ordered to ascertain the events leading to the accident and the government also announced compensation for the deceased and injured passengers to share their grief and support the families of the victims.

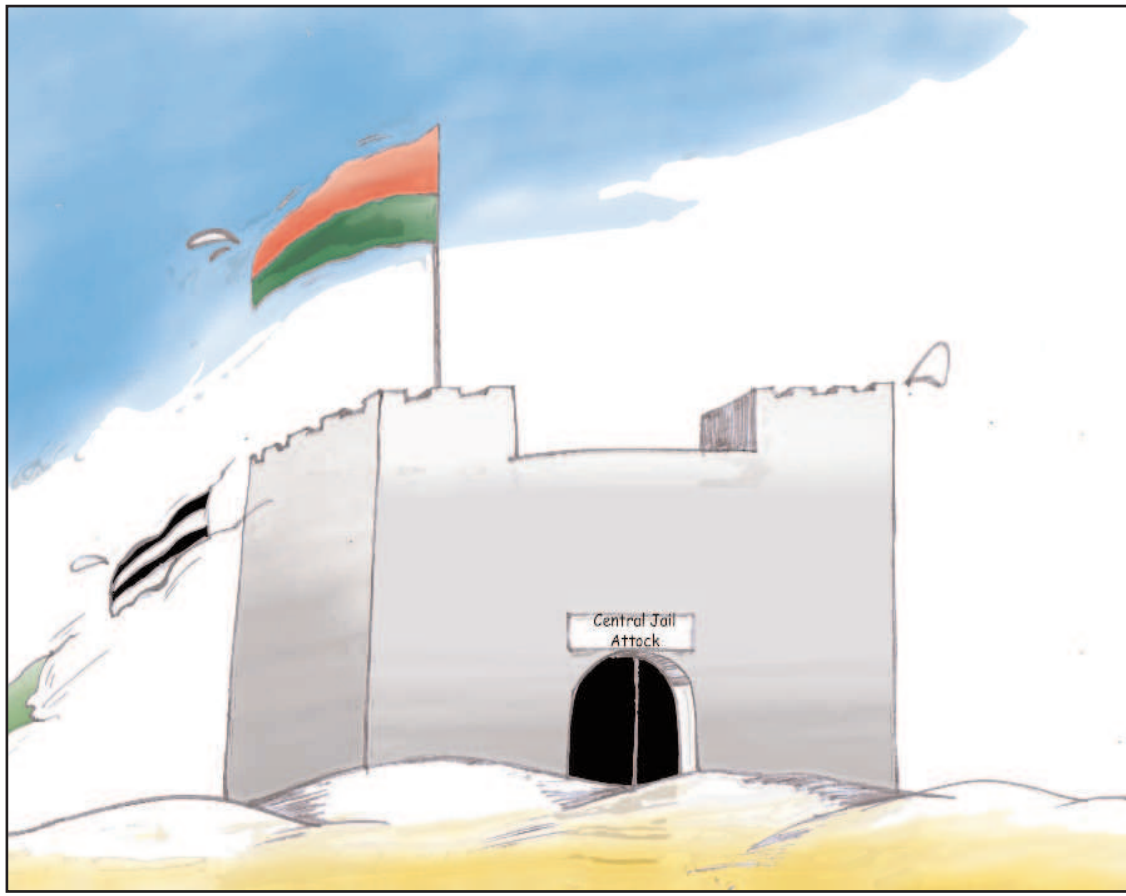
Train accidents are fairly common in Pakistan as the aging Railway network has long matured its normal life expectancy. Constructed by the British government in India over 150 years ago, Railway infrastructure, train track, controlling and signaling equipments are completely worn out while insufficiently trained staff coupled with oldaged practices seriously risk the lives of the poor passengers who currently have no other option for a relatively cheaper inter-provinces and inter-cities long journey. Despite multiple plans and several unsuccessful attempts, no successive government could ever implement its agenda for overhauling of Pakistan Railway and provision of the state of the art travel facilities to the people, mainly due to a lack of funds, massive corruption and slackness of the Railway authorities throughout in the past.

Historically, the story of growth and crash and the eventual fate of Pakistan Railway is not much different from rest of the other Pakistani state institutions including the PIA, the Pakistan Steel Mills, National Bank, Pakistan Telecommunication, WAPDA, Oil and Gas Development Corporation (OGDCL), Pakistan National Shipping Corporation and many more. Those institutions excelled during the early years of Pakistan's Independence and gained appreciation worldwide, later those flourishing institutions fell prey to Politicians' nepotism, Bureaucratic corruption, malpractices and incompetence of their employees. Meanwhile, the misuse and theft by the public turned those magnificent initiatives into ugly giants who succumbed under the weight of corruption and nonproduction. Currently, Pakistan Railways and many other state institutions have been shaped into white elephants, that are continuously adding to the current account deficit and need bulk of money on a regular basis to continue their routine operations. The majority of the past governments did not put in any serious effort to modernize the Railway system, expansion of the Railway network, and operationalization of Railway's cargo fleet that is the backbone of the Country's economy and real engine for revenue generation of Pakistan Railways. On this front, the majority of the political governments resorted to politically motivated initiatives such as renovation of Railways stations, launching of new Railway trains, and opening of new routes on political grounds instead of business strategies.

At the time, the entire setup of the Pakistan Railway was aged and worn out due to exhaustion, corruption, unsatisfactory repair and maintenance, poor management and no provision of funds by the government. The magnificent mass transit and logistic platform has lost its worth and gradually handed over its business to private sector transport and cargo firms. While worsley managed trivial passenger fleet is currently running on major routes and unable to satisfy the travel needs of the poor masses. Presently, there is dire need of a wholehearted national approach to replace the current day shabby Railway infrastructure with modern fleet, induction of state of the art technologies, exclusion of corrupt, incompetent and old aged staff to remobile cargo fleet and reinstate safe, secure and smooth transit facilities to the public. So, this country get rid of recurrent train accidents, mass homicides and poor travel conditions, while moving toward modernization, growth and prosperity.

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Trump's assault on American justice gives inspiration to authoritarians everywhere

Jill Abramson

AMERICAN democracy is only as strong as its legal system. The founders of the country created the judiciary as the third branch of the federal government to keep executive power in check and prevent corruption. So it was a cause for deep concern last week when Donald Trump unleashed a verbal tantrum on his Truth Social platform, accusing special counsel Jack Smith of "prosecutorial misconduct" even before he filed four federal criminal counts against the former president over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election in a bid to remain in office.

An identical barrage came last April when a Manhattan grand jury indicted Trump on 34 felony charges for falsifying business records. That time, he also called for defunding the justice department and the FBI, even though the charges did not come from either federal agency. Both reactions were part of a long-running campaign by Trump to undermine the rule of law in the US and dismiss the multiple charges he faces, and has denied, as politically motivated. Even lawyers who once supported Trump have told me that delegitimizing the law and the judiciary could destroy the country's system of government. Yet, even if he is convicted, Trump's supporters will probably remain loyal to him, convinced that the entire legal system is "rigged" - a favourite Trumpism. On one level, it is shocking to hear the worries that US lawyers are expressing about the impact of Trump's outbursts. On another, what we're witnessing in Washington is part of a trend happening around the world. From Hungary to Pakistan, the power of judges is being reduced and legal systems are being upended. It's been painful to watch. Since 1980, I've spent my journalism career covering the courts. Decades ago, one of my best legal sources, a highly paid partner at one of Washington's powerhouse law firms, called to tell me he was quitting his job to help the United Nations, as pro bono coun-

sel, to design American-style constitutions for other countries at a time when global autocracies were crumbling. Now, many US voters doubt whether our democracy will survive.

In Hungary, according to the Guardian, Viktor Orbán is leading "his government's assault on judicial checks and balances". In 2022, Iran arrested at least 44 independent lawyers who were representing demonstrators protesting against the ruling regime's violent crackdown on dissent. Legal freedoms previously enjoyed in countries

attacks on the US legal system come at a time when the supreme court has the lowest approval ratings in history. The court customarily follows legal precedent but in recent decisions the justices in the conservative majority have reversed past decisions guaranteeing women's right to an abortion, affirmative action in universities, gun restrictions and other established laws.

The founders intended the judicial branch of the federal government to be insulated from politics, which is why federal judges

Biden's election as president. The most famous is the former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani who, according to the indictment, pressured state election officials to switch their electors from Biden to Trump. The disciplinary committee of the district of Columbia has recommended that Giuliani be disbarred. John Eastman, another accused co-conspirator, joined Trump's legal team later and convinced him that the vice-president Mike Pence had the legal power to declare Trump the winner on 6 January 2020 when he clearly did not.

According to the New York Times, a federal judge who considered some of the evidence against the lawyer co-conspirators called their plot to overturn the election "a coup in search of a legal theory". They remain uncharged, probably because Smith is more likely to get a trial before the 2024 presidential election if Trump is the sole defendant. Tanya Chutkan, the judge assigned to the case, has already given stiff jail sentences to several of those convicted for breaking into the Capitol on 6 January 2020. In polls of Republican voters, the former president holds a huge lead over all his challengers for his party's nomination. Pandering to the Trump base, some of the other GOP presidential candidates, including the entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and the former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, have said they would consider pardoning Trump. Fellow Republican candidate Asa Hutchinson, the former governor of Arkansas, has called such promises "offensive". What is at stake is not just the outcome and aftermath of the next presidential election in America, fateful though that is. Across the globe, the fragile relationship between the political and judicial spheres is broken or under strain, and what happens in Washington will serve both as a stark warning of the consequences of that rupture and to give licence to other anti-democratic regimes. The US used to be a beacon of good governance. It is in danger of exporting entropy.

The Guardian

Five Trump lawyers were named co-conspirators in last week's indictment for using crackpot legal theories and unlawful ploys to overturn Biden's election as president. The most famous is the former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani who, according to the indictment, pressured state election officials to switch their electors from Biden to Trump.

such as India and China are in tatters. In 2020, a column by Washington Post global writer Rana Ayyub carried the headline, "The destruction of India's judicial independence is almost complete". Before the British government handed over Hong Kong in 1997, China agreed to a framework known as "one country, two systems", which granted Hong Kong broad legal freedoms. Beijing has abrogated those freedoms, enforcing a 2020 national security law that gave it broad new authority to silence and punish critics. In May, members of the US Congress urged sanctions against Chinese judges handling national security cases under the new law, which has profoundly changed life in Hong Kong.

Even in Israel, long America's stalwart democratic ally, the power of independent judges has been curtailed, sparking furious public demonstrations. Trump's raging

enjoy lifetime tenure. But in their stingy dissent when the court reversed Roe v Wade in 2022, the three liberal justices wrote: "The court reverses course today for one reason and one reason only: because the composition of this court has changed." During Trump's four-year term as president, he added three staunchly conservative, anti-abortion justices to the court. In an act of raw political muscle, Republicans in the Senate refused to act on President Barack Obama's final supreme court nominee, Merrick Garland, the man who is Joe Biden's attorney general and whose justice department Trump wants to defenestrate. Trump is also targeting government lawyers, although his own lawyers are the enablers of his alleged crimes. Five Trump lawyers were named co-conspirators in last week's indictment for using crackpot legal theories and unlawful ploys to overturn

THE EU has given its first positive signal regarding the softening of its relations with Turkey. This signal came last week from EU Commissioner for Economic Affairs Paolo Gentiloni, who said that the Turkey-EU Customs Union might be updated by the autumn.

It looks like a positive gesture, but it is a long-overdue promise by the EU. Turkey joined this customs union with the EU in advance of joining the bloc. This is a unique example. Some EU countries did exactly the opposite. They joined the EU but postponed for a while their accession to the customs union. But the main problem between Turkey and the EU is the reluctance of Brussels to update the customs union. Turkey has been losing money for decades because third countries that have signed similar deals with the EU can export their goods to Turkey without paying customs duties, while Ankara cannot export goods to these countries because it has no customs agreement with

them.

Each time Turkey has asked the EU to update the customs union, it has come up with futile excuses and postponed any changes. Let us see whether the EU will again come up with new excuses. A similar sign this time came from a member of the US House of Representatives. In a practice not seen for decades, Rep. Pete Sessions traveled to the Turkish part of Cyprus directly from Turkey. The Greek Cypriots have imposed a ban on foreigners traveling from Turkish airports to the Turkish part of Cyprus. We have to see whether this was an isolated initiative for a member of the US House of Representatives or if something is brewing on the US front as well.

Despite this background, there is a new reality in Europe. The increasingly strained relations between Russia and NATO have changed the power balance on the continent. Turkey flirted with Russia for a

while. It still hesitates about whether it should stay close to Russia and play a mediating role between East and West. This is a sensitive balance. If Turkey does not play its cards skillfully, it may spoil the entire scenario. Every single member of the EU may have its own game plan for the role to be given to Turkey in the future defense architecture in Europe.

Washington regards Sweden's accession to NATO as a done deal, whereas Ankara is still trying to obtain as many concessions as possible to reduce the role of the Kurdish activists and the Turkish left in Sweden. Turkey also had a preponderant role in the Black Sea grain deal, both because of the importance of the Turkish Straits and its warming relations with Russia at the time the agreement was reached last summer. In addition to the strategic importance of the Turkish Straits, there is an international agreement, the

Yasar Yakis

Montreux Convention, that gives Ankara the right to close the straits to foreign warships in case it perceives an imminent military threat. Article 20 of the convention provides that "the passage of warships shall be left entirely to the discretion of the Turkish government."

The role that Ankara has played in the grain deal continues to be important. Although it has nothing to do with Turkey's EU accession process, in a grand bargain like that every minute factor will probably play its role. Turkey has a problem with the US as well. In 2021, it placed an order to buy 40 F-16 fighter aircraft and 79 modernization kits from America, but this deal has run into trouble. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez and some other congressmen initially opposed the purchase, but lately have started to use milder language, saying that they need to give fur-

In Jeddah, Saudis' pragmatism proves vital for Ukraine

Faisal J. Abbas

In one of his definitions of what a "Good Country" is, Professor Simon Anholt - the British academic who coined the term "Nation Brand" in the late 1990s - says it is a country that people, halfway across the world, wake up feeling grateful it exists.

Just imagine how we would all wake up feeling if the Saudi efforts, embodied in the recently concluded Jeddah peace talks on Ukraine, translated into a solid peace proposal and a starting point to end the conflict that started in February 2022.

For context, the war in Ukraine has impacted everyone and everything, from lives lost to energy bills soaring, from food shortages to the threat of a nuclear disaster looming over us. According to the UN, "the war has contributed to volatile and elevated commodity and energy prices, which exacerbated food shortages and stoked inflation in many regions across the world. Although energy and grain prices subsided from their mid-2022 peaks, the risks of their resurgence remain, and Europe may still face challenges to its energy security."

For more than 18 months now, we have heard nothing but angry rhetoric from all sides, which has not helped reduce tensions and has only inflamed them further. Yes, Russia should not be rewarded for its aggression, but it became very clear from early on that a military solution is not what was going to solve this conflict. Yet everyone involved is too proud or has too much invested to admit the obvious. This is true even despite US foreign policy mastermind Henry Kissinger long advising the West to talk to Russia. "The time is approaching to build on the strategic changes which have already been accomplished and to integrate them into a new structure towards achieving peace through negotiation," he wrote in December.

The solution cannot be the not-so-diplomatic one top Russian diplomat Andrey Baklanov suggested to Arab News last week - that the Ukrainian government must be annihilated. "I think that there is no opportunity for any kind of truce between the present-day government - the so-called government, these fascist people in Kyiv - and us," he told "Frankly Speaking." "I'm absolutely sure that the only option we have is to, well, to annihilate this regime in Ukraine and to return Ukraine to normality. It can also not be the refusal of the current Ukrainian government to talk to their Russian counterpart as long as President Vladimir Putin stays in power. It is evident he is not going anywhere. Not to mention that, as long there is no clear cut winner, Moscow has demonstrated it can inflict sustained, intolerable pain on its Western foes - while being in a unique situation of having nothing more to lose itself."

This is why the Ukraine talks in Jeddah were about much more than just finding a peace proposal. In my opinion, they represented the triumph of the wise, patient and pragmatic views of the new Saudi Arabia over the populist, sometimes irrational and ideological decision-making that - unfortunately -

plagues most Western democracies today. At the start of the conflict, Saudi Arabia was accused of siding with Russia, despite the fact that it voted against the aggression against Ukraine at the UN. The Kingdom supported the General Assembly resolution of March 2, 2022, that demanded Russia immediately end its invasion and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces.

By meeting with the foreign ministers of both countries, the Kingdom sent a clear message that it wants to use its unique position, influence and power to mediate. Then, and despite oil prices going down following US President Joe Biden's visit last summer, Saudi Arabia was accused of supporting Russia through OPEC+, when the reality was that it was this same deal that allowed stability in energy markets and trust to be built with Moscow and provided some sort of leverage to be used when needed. A case in point was last year's Saudi-brokered prisoner swap that resulted in the release of citizens of the US, UK, Sweden and other countries. While the current administration in the US continues to play politics and accuses Saudi Arabia of siding with Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky himself thanked the Kingdom for its efforts and support for Ukraine, which includes more than \$400 million in aid.

Now, a new opportunity emerges after the conclusion of the Jeddah talks. People might ask, why will these talks be so different from their predecessor in Copenhagen? Well, there are crystal clear differences: First, unlike Denmark, Saudi Arabia has not taken sides in this war and, as such, is considered a much fairer mediator. Second, as previously indicated, the Kingdom has the ear of Moscow and has leverage through the mutual benefits. Third, Saudi Arabia has the added benefit of being able to talk to all parties, including the Chinese, who did not attend the Danish talks. Will this bear fruit? Well, it pretty much depends on the Russian response. Moscow was not represented in Jeddah, but Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov on Sunday confirmed that Moscow will discuss the results of the summit with its BRICS partners that took part in the meeting. My assumption is that the outcomes of the recently concluded meeting will serve as a starting point for a discussion, not an end. However, if it means we move the goalposts from potential annihilation to a possible discussion, that is already a huge win for humanity.

So, why does Saudi Arabia go through this effort? Well, look at it this way: If the reforms and ambitions introduced by Vision 2030 injected the Kingdom with newly found superpowers, then the philosophy has to be - to quote the late comic book genius Stan Lee - that with great power comes great responsibility. We saw this in action when Saudi Arabia helped evacuate citizens of other countries from Sudan, along with its own. And this is why it is adamant about resolving Sudan, Yemen, introducing green initiatives and finding a just solution for the Palestinians.

Arab News

Turkiye again tilting toward the EU

Yasar Yakis

ther consideration to the subject. If Russia-NATO tensions continue to rise, there will be an awkward situation between Ankara and Washington. Turkey will be asked to contribute to the NATO forces, but the US may still continue to refuse to upgrade and sell spare parts to its NATO ally. This is an anomaly. By adopting such an attitude, Washington will be cutting down the fighting capacity of its biggest ally.

While Turkey and Greece have recently softened their attitude toward each other, another chapter of their relations remains frozen. Greek Cypriots insist on a federal solution to the Cyprus problem, while Turkey insists on a two-state solution. The two peoples of the island - Turks and Greeks - have very little in common. They speak different languages. They follow different religions. There are very few intermarriages between the adherents of these two religions. There are several examples of two-state solutions in the world, both

big and small. One of them is the Baltic island of Usedom. The ratio of the land there is 373 sq km for Germany and 72 sq km for Poland. Saint Martin island in the Caribbean Sea is another example of a divided island. The French part constitutes 59 percent of the land and the Dutch part 41 percent. Other islands shared by two or more states include New Guinea, Borneo, Ireland, Hispaniola, Isla Grande Tierra del Fuego, Timor, and Sebatik Island. Therefore, insisting on a federal solution for Cyprus does not make sense. In the Middle East, Turkey supports a two-state solution for Cyprus and almost all Middle Eastern countries support a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine. Turkey's EU bid may be revived during the new era that Europe will enter as a result of the Ukraine war. If Ankara plays a positive role in the present turmoil, it may change the course of events in its favor. If not, Turkey will be left out of the EU accession process for many years to come.

How Lebanon, Syria and Jordan can overcome their troubles

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

IT is not an exaggeration to argue that the political, security, humanitarian and economic landscapes in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are closely interconnected. While prosperity and growth in one of these Arab nations directly affects the other two, so do economic woes and political instability.

Many of the problems that these three bordering Levantine nations currently face began with the Syrian civil war. Civil wars can inflict devastating damage on infrastructure and, more importantly, disrupt production and manufacturing processes in conflict-affected nations, as well as the countries adjoining them. It is worth noting that Lebanon and Jordan continue to experience the spillover of the conflict in Syria, which has not yet fully ended. Some parts of the country remain very unstable and insecure. This is particularly true of the southern areas of Syria, including the city of Deraa, which was the birthplace of the uprising and is considered to be one of the most strategic places in the country. Deraa is close to the border with Jordan, as well as the Syrian Golan Heights region of Quneitra.

Another important dynamic that has directly affected Lebanon and Jordan is the huge influx of Syrian refugees to their nations. After more than 12 years of conflict, Syria remains the largest refugee crisis in the world. The UN Refugee Agency reported in March that more than "14 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety." Jordan has the second-largest number of refugees per capita in the world. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan currently hosts some "675,000 registered refugees from Syria, who began fleeing in 2011 when the crisis in their country brought unimaginable suffering on its citizens. Most Syrian refugees in Jordan live in its towns and villages, among local communities. Only 17 percent live in the two main refugee camps, Za'atari and Azraq."

Lebanon, meanwhile, now hosts the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide. "The government estimates 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 13,715 refugees of other nationalities. Ninety percent of Syrian refugees are living in extreme poverty," according to the UN Refugee Agency. As a result, it should not come as a surprise that

many people in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan are facing severe economic hardship. Unemployment in all these countries is above 10 percent. Lebanon's economic crisis has been characterized as one of the 10 worst globally since the 19th century. Syrians are facing a record level of food insecurity and

Inflation also hit 139 percent in 2022. This placed it fourth in the world in terms of highest inflation rates, only ranking behind Venezuela, Sudan and Lebanon, according to the World Population Review.

Nevertheless, many of the problems Damascus, Beirut and

Ninety percent of Syrian refugees are living in extreme poverty," according to the UN Refugee Agency. As a result, it should not come as a surprise that many people in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan are facing severe economic hardship. Unemployment in all these countries is above 10 percent. Lebanon's economic crisis has been characterized as one of the 10 worst globally since the 19th century. Syrians are facing a record level of food insecurity and increasing prices for basic necessities. Syria's currency, which was trading at about 47 pounds to the US dollar just before the unrest erupted in 2011, recently hit an all-time low and \$1 is now worth about 13,000 Syrian pounds. Inflation also hit 139 percent in 2022. This placed it fourth in the world in terms of highest inflation rates, only ranking behind Venezuela, Sudan and Lebanon, according to the World Population Review. Nevertheless, many of the problems Damascus, Beirut and Amman face can be adequately addressed and resolved if they cooperate closely with each other on several fronts. In order to accomplish this objective, the first thing required is a united political will. The leaderships in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan can create a comprehensive, unified and long-term vision that advances their economic, humanitarian and political dynamics, all while taking into consideration the fact that their nations' sociopolitical and economic landscapes are intertwined.

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Lebanon and Jordan can create a comprehensive, unified and long-term vision that advances their economic, humanitarian and political dynamics, all while taking into consideration the fact that their nations' sociopolitical and economic landscapes are intertwined.

Several countries in the region have set up long-term and inspiring visions in order to direct their nations toward a better and more prosperous future. For instance, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive plans introduced in the modern Middle East because it encompasses not only economic, but also environmental, social and religious landscapes, along with political reforms. The UAE also has the "We the UAE 2031" vision, which represents "a national plan through which the UAE will continue its development path for the next 10 years, with focus on social, economic, investment and development aspects. The plan seeks to enhance the position of the UAE as a global partner and an attractive and influential economic hub." After the leaderships in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan set up a firm and united vision, they can chart a path to cooperate closely on security issues, securing their borders, enhancing political stability, attracting foreign investment and increasing revenues from tourism thanks to their historical significance.

They must invest in their infrastructure, address food insecurity and power shortages, tackle the smuggling of drugs from Syria, and pave the way for Syrian refugees to safely return to their homes. Without a doubt, such a plan will take time to bear fruit. But as the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day.

Syria, Lebanon and Jordan all have historical and cultural significance and they made significant contributions to civilization in the past. If they cooperate closely on security, social, economic and political matters, not only can they adequately address many problems of those they currently face, but they can also become examples for other nations to follow. In summary, the political, economic, social and security landscapes in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan are intertwined. These three Levantine nations need a united and strong vision, as well as close cooperation on several fronts, in order to address the difficult issues they are facing.

Justice for the Beirut blast can help avert Lebanon's collapse

Michael Fakhri

THE explosion on August 4, 2020 in the Port of Beirut devastated the Lebanese capital, killing more than 230 people, wounding over 7,000, and causing extensive damage to homes, hospitals, schools and shops. It is one of the largest non-nuclear blasts in recent memory.

Three years later, those responsible are yet to be held to account, as the Lebanese political elite continues to actively sabotage the investigation and legal process launched in the aftermath of the incident. Victims and their families are not only not getting justice for what has happened to them, but they are also struggling to recover from the blast amid a crippling economic crisis made worse by that same elite. Since 2019, the Lebanese currency has lost some 98 percent of its value compared to the United States dollar, triggering triple-digit inflation, spreading poverty and hunger, and resulting in a wave of emigration. According to a World Bank study, this is the result of a deliberate depression orchestrated by the country's political elite. The crisis is possibly one of the top three most severe economic collapses the world has seen since the 1850s.

The state of the Lebanese economy and the fact that there remains insufficient investigation into the Port of Beirut explosion both arise from a system of impunity that ravages Lebanon. An international investigation into the explosion would be the first significant step in holding Lebanese authorities accountable and giving people concrete hope in the midst of the endless suffering they have been subjected to. A new impetus for justice has to come from outside because the local legal proceedings have stalled. The lead investigator into the blast, Judge Tarek Bitar, has been repeatedly obstructed by public prosecutors protecting the authorities charged with crimes related to the explosion.

In January, the investigation was suspended for a fifth time since it began. The Beirut Bar Association, the Lebanese Judges Association and Lebanon's Coalition for the Independence of the Judiciary have all criticised the obstructions of justice, as

has Margaret Satterthwaite, the United Nations special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, and other legal experts. In March, Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for an urgent and "serious investigation into the explosion of August 2020 ... without political interference or further delay".

Right after that statement, Australia along with 37 other countries called on the Lebanese authorities to ensure the national investigation was independent and transparent. However, appealing to the Lebanese political elite to do something is pointless since these are the same people who are implicated in the blast and the collapse of the economy and wield extraordinary degrees of unchecked power. Understanding this reality, on this third anniversary of the blast, more than 350 individuals and organisations in and outside Lebanon, including a large number of victims, issued an open letter in support of a resolution of the UN Human Rights Council that would authorise an independent investigation into the Port of Beirut explosion. Indeed, such a fact-finding mission is the only way to push the accountability process forward.

Some may be sceptical about its potential for success, pointing at the controversial Special Tribunal for Lebanon which was established to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. The tribunal was authorised by the UN Security Council, partly paid for by the Lebanese government, and lacked local legitimacy.

By contrast, the proposed fact-finding mission into the Beirut blast would be more effective because it would enjoy wider international support given that the UN Human Rights Council is more representative than the UN Security Council. The investigation would also cost the Lebanese government nothing and would have local legitimacy, as members of victims' families, local organisations and more than 40 members of parliament have repeatedly called for such an international mission. International

human rights law is inherently part of Lebanon's constitutional order. Therefore, a UN Human Rights Council fact-finding mission would support Judge Bitar's investigation through the Lebanese judicial system.

The blast has significant international dimensions that further warrant an international investigation. The ammonium nitrate that ignited and caused the explosion was going from Georgia to Mozambique on a Russian-leased cargo ship when the captain says he was instructed to make an unscheduled stop in Beirut and take on extra cargo. The ship arrived in Beirut in November 2013 but never left, becoming tangled in a legal dispute over unpaid port fees, stranded seafarers, and ship defects. No one ever came forward to claim the shipment. It is suspected that the amount of ammonium nitrate that blew up at Beirut port last year was one-fifth of the shipment unloaded there in 2013 and that much of the cargo had been transferred to Syria to be used in explosives deployed in the civil war.

Citizens of at least 15 other countries died in the Beirut blast; six of these nations are members of the UN Human Rights Council, including Bangladesh, Belgium, France, Germany, Pakistan, and the US. If they seek justice for their citizens, heed demands made by the Lebanese people, show global leadership, and bring forward a resolution for an international investigation, there is a significant chance the entire council would support such an initiative. Dalal Mouawad, a Lebanese journalist, captured what is at stake behind a UN Human Rights Council fact-finding mission into the explosion when she stated during an interview for the British Channel 4: "If there's no accountability and justice ... if this crime goes unpunished, that's it, it's the end [for Lebanon]."

If the UN Human Rights Council does not take action, it would allow Lebanon to collapse. It would be a moral failure that would have devastating consequences not only for the Lebanese people but also for the whole region, if not the whole world. That is why, it is in everyone's interest to seek and demand justice in Lebanon.

One man can help make America great again

Nigel Farage

I AM one of very few people in Britain with a political or media profile who has met the Republican presidential candidate, Vivek Ramaswamy, but I don't think it's going to be long before he is better known here. Much better known, in fact. I first encountered him at the Conservative Political Action Conference held in Maryland in March. We both gave speeches there, and afterwards met for a chat. We discussed campaigning, messaging and Brexit, and have stayed in touch since.

Although Ramaswamy will celebrate only his 38th birthday this month, I could tell very soon after meeting him that he has what it takes to be a force in American politics. For those of us who aspire to a return to common sense in the Western world, I believe he can also be a force for good more generally. The story of his life so far is a sort of modern day representation of the American dream. His Hindu parents migrated from India to America. Ramaswamy was born in Ohio in 1985 and raised there. He attended Harvard University, worked in finance, obtained a law qualification from Yale University and has

already built a fortune via the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. It's safe to say that his intellect, capacity for hard work and all-round ability are not in doubt. This year, he has attracted attention in America via one of his main messages: that Western society must not be blighted any longer by the Left-wing ideology that underpins identity politics, wokeism and political correctness. His belief that these things divide people rather than uniting them has been hard to ignore among the centre-Right.

He also has a lot to say about the disastrous Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) orthodoxy that is so pervasive in the corporate realm and which led to the sorts of problems I've experienced at the hands of Coutts and NatWest. Quite simply, this highly successful entrepreneur knows that if companies hire or promote people on the basis of class, race or sex they are very likely to stop focusing on their main mission - to generate profits - and even more likely to start treating their customers according to their own narrow-minded world view. Ramaswamy

will be in Milwaukee this month for the first televised debate between the Republican candidates who want to take on Joe Biden in November 2024. I will be there as well to watch the debate. He is fighting to win and has made it clear to me that he wants to be in politics for the long term. Despite his energy, I'm not sure that he - or any of his rivals - will be able to overcome Donald Trump, whose nomination looks assured at this point. But I do think that Ramaswamy could become Trump's pick for the crucial role of vice presidential candidate. All the polling I've seen suggests that, despite the indictments against Trump, he should have no difficulty securing 42 or 43 per cent in a presidential contest. It's no secret, however, that he does not appeal to the all-important suburban "mom" vote. It's in this area that I think Ramaswamy, as Trump's running mate, could be decisive.

When I was in touch with Ramaswamy a few days ago, he told me that some of his main concerns include "stopping our children being poisoned in schools".

He added that, as a father of two, he has a personal stake in this battle and, more broadly, in America's future. The extreme messages being peddled in classrooms about the environment, race, sex and sexuality have shocked and dismayed many parents, eroding their right to inform their children about sensitive issues in their own way. I asked him whether he thought being Hindu is a handicap when so much of the conservative base in America is deeply Christian. He responded that he fully endorses and personally embodies the Christian principles of the founding fathers of our country. "In many ways," he said, "I think I represent those values more than those who outwardly profess to be Christian." Ramaswamy wants order to be restored to our increasingly topsy-turvy world, and he is not frightened to take on the interests of the powerful Left-wing establishment to achieve it. The hopeful may not end up being the Republican presidential candidate for the 2024 race. But he has already won the right to play a big role in getting Joe Biden out of the White House.

The Telegraph

Why the UK has it so wrong on refugees

Mick O'Reilly

AUGUST, in the newspaper business, has long been referred to by old ink-stained wretches and editors as "silly season". Parliament has shut down, and so too county councils. Schools are out for the summer and many in business are on holidays - so "silly season" gets its name because there are newspaper pages to be filled and websites to be fed - and stories that are, well, silly, or would not normally see the light of day, get the oxygen of publicity.

I was reminded of the advent of silly season when I read that small news, lizard-like creatures, might be the reason why the former UK prime minister Boris Johnson and his family might not be able to build a swimming pool in the back garden of their new Cambridgeshire home. News are a protected species and hence take precedence over a paddling pool. And again, silly season reared its head with a report that a Welsh sheep farmer suspects that large black panther-like cats are to blame for the loss of several animals in the Cambrian Mountains that make up most of the mid-Wales. It seems that a DNA analysis suggests that large felines are indeed to blame for the loss of livestock there over the years. The cats are believed to have been

released into the wild by an owner who had kept the game felines illegally. But perhaps the most stark reminder that silly season is indeed now came in a news story that fire safety officers believed the new barge shipped from Amsterdam to accommodate refugees and migrants to the UK does not meet fire safety standards.

The Bibby Stockholm was towed into place in the small harbour of Portland in Dorset on the UK's south coast three weeks ago. It was heralded as the centrepiece of a new get-tough approach by the government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak that would end the long-standing practice of putting newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers up in hotels. It's costing British taxpayers £6 million (Dh28 million) every day to pay for those hotel rooms - a not insignificant sum and one that is quoted at every available opportunity by government ministers and those who want to appear tough when it comes to ending the daily armada of small boats that make it to Britain's southern shores from France.

The barge had been previously used as temporary accommodation for asylum seekers in the

Netherlands and was also used for oilfield workers working on rigs off the coast of Norway. Before being pressed into service by the UK government, it was stripped of all but the most basic services and its small cabins were fitted with bunk beds. Televisions in the cabins were disconnected too, lest British taxpayers believe that the refugees and asylum seekers had any level other than the most basic creature comforts at their disposal. The UK government also brought in national media and television crews for a tour of the barge at its most basic - all 222 rooms over its three-storey structure.

The first 50 newcomers were supposed to be put on board this week. But too bad no one bothered to check to make sure the barge was compliant with the fire code. Those first arrivals have been delayed until the barge meets fire safety standards. Oops! But the government policy has long been riddled with a series of self-inflicted oops' moments. There is a legion of opponents who are only all too willing to offer support to the refugees and asylum-seekers to show that many Britons are compassionate, welcoming and opposed to the hardline policies advocated by Downing Street.

Lawyers for various new arrivals have managed, through actions at the High Court, to force the Home Secretary Suella Braverman to increase the level of payments offered to refugees. While the minister, who has long-term leadership ambitions, is eager to be seen as a get-tough no-nonsense politician, the various court rulings suggest that the policies are needlessly cruel, mean-spirited, and illegal. Sending new arrivals to Rwanda to await processing has been touted as the way forward. But time and again, courts have stepped in, and the thrust of the Sunak government policy on migrants has been riddled with legal, fiscal and practical impediments. That figure of £6 million per day? It turns out that using barges and setting up temporary encampments in former air force and army bases would roughly cost the same.

If ever there was a definition of silly season, this entire chapter of missteps and mistakes on refugees and migrants seems to be it. It's just a pity that the thousands of refugees who have fled social, religious, political and economic upheavals in their homelands and simply want an opportunity to have a better life, are used as pawns. That is truly - and sadly - silly.

Gulf News

Ukraine is attacking its allies

AFTER 18 months of the illegal invasion of Ukraine, the war in recent weeks has come to Moscow: first with Ukraine's protracted drone strikes on the Russian capital, now with one of its warships sinking in its home port in the Black Sea. Though these are small in comparison to the thousands of attacks on civilian and military targets in Ukraine by Russia, they are making some in the West nervous. In tandem to criticisms that Kyiv should be more grateful for the support they are getting, this is a precarious moment: any potential fracturing of the effort to kick the Russians out of Ukraine would be a gift to Vladimir Putin.

It has indeed been a troubled few weeks for the Ukrainian government. The counter-offensive, though still making steady progress every day, has not yet broken through the tough Russian defences. Kyiv has been a victim of its own success: the West expected similar scenes to those we saw last year with vast swathe of territory liberated. Then this week Zelensky had to intervene to de-escalate a diplomatic row with Poland, Ukraine's close partner. Kyiv had requested a meeting with Warsaw's representative following comments from a senior Polish figure implying that Ukraine ought to acknowledge the significant assistance it has obtained from Poland since the commencement of Russia's extensive encroachment the previous year.

Whether this admonishment was signed off by Zelensky or not, by summoning the ambassador, Kyiv is playing with fire. As frustrated as they may be - and it is understandable given the delays of Western weapons deliveries - they are in danger of isolating their allies. Poland and Britain are

made by Nato. But as somebody who has spent the last 35 years on the battlefields of the globe, my sympathies are with Kyiv. I was the Peshmerga's advisor in the fight with ISIS for a few years, and it was their "boots on the ground" which were ultimately responsible for defeating this terror regime who had attacked us, alongside Al Qaeda. Sure, western military hardware and intelligence was important, but it was the Peshmerga's hard yards on the ground which were decisive. In a similar fashion, and not by design, it is the Ukrainian military who have bled the Russian army to a point that it will not be able to threaten Nato conventionally again for a decade or more. Hence, as the Peshmerga silenced ISIS, Ukraine is doing the same to Russia, for which we should be eternally grateful. A weakened Russia is good for the world. Nevertheless, one of Kyiv's greatest assets has been its ability to masterfully rally countries to its cause. Recently, the perception is they have dropped the ball, feeding its enemies who claim they are ungrateful and escalatory.

Whilst I acknowledge that "manners maketh man", and a bit of humble recognition can go a long way, let's face it: sometimes niceties and good manners go out of the window when somebody is trying to blow your head off. The key on the battlefield is to maintain the moral high ground, which Putin and his gangsters have so clearly lost. Missing the odd thank you in the heat of battle is a misdemeanor not a crime. Every Ukrainian I know is eternally grateful for every bit of support they are getting - tanks, medical kits, advice - and I for one hope that the perceived lack of gratitude does not put anybody off from giving Ukraine everything it needs to prevail.



Pakistan Stock Exchange's 100-Index loses 199 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 199.47 points, a negative change of 0.41 percent, closing at 48,386.25 points against 48,585.72 points the previous trading day.

A total of 381,855,144 shares were traded during the day as compared to 331,132,473 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs14.528 billion against Rs12.500 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 354 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 104 of them recorded gains and 225 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Energyco

Pk with 74,504,972 shares at Rs3.80 per share; Pak Refinery with 35,710,774 shares at Rs18.01 per share and Oil and Gas Dev with 26,010,351 shares at Rs105.57 per share.

Nestle Pakistan XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs91.67 per share price, closing at Rs7,070.00, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum with an Rs65.62 rise in its per share price to Rs1,705.63.

Philip Morris Pak witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs29.99 per share closing at Rs339.01; followed by Al-Abbas SugarXD with Rs22.00 decline to close at Rs450.10.

Rupee sheds 46 paisa against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday was weakened by 46 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs287.42

against the previous day's closing of Rs286.96.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs291.6 and Rs294.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.89 to close at Rs315.87 against the last day's closing of Rs313.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen gained 01 paise to close at Rs2.02, whereas an increase of Rs1.64 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs366.17 as compared to last closing of Rs364.53.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 13 paise each to close at

Rs78.25 and Rs76.61 respectively.

Gold rates decrease by Rs 1,100 to Rs221,700 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,100 and was sold at Rs221,700 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs222,800 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs943 to Rs190, 072 from Rs191,016 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 Karat gold declined to Rs174,233 from Rs174,076, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2750 and Rs2357.68 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$2 to \$1,940 from \$1,942, the association reported.

Naveed Khalid appointed as president of TOA Management Committee



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Group Chief Regulatory Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Naveed Khalid Butt has been appointed as the President of the Management Committee of the newly formed Telecom Operators Association (TOA).

With all major Pakistani telecom operators aboard, the association aims to help foster digitization of national economy by advocating policy and regulatory interventions in the tele-

com and broadband industries.

During the maiden meeting of the association, top leaders of Pakistan's telecom industry, including Naveed Khalid Butt were appointed as the office holders.

He brings along a wealth of experience in management and regulatory affairs in Pakistan's technology and telecommunications industries. His vast knowledge and experience will really help achieving the mandate of the newly formed association, empowering the body to work in close coordination with the government, regulatory bodies and other important stakeholders.

Commenting on his new responsibility, Naveed Khalid Butt said, "Pakistan's telecom operators have shared goals and responsibilities and a collaborative approach is cru-

cial for achieving the same.

The association was a long time coming and efforts were underway to coordinate common objectives for required policy and regulatory interventions.

We hope that the association will serve as an effective platform for streamlining and amplifying our efforts for accelerating digitalization, and growth of the telecom and digital industries through investment and innovation.

It will ultimately contribute to the national economy and empower the common telecom consumer in the country."

Naveed Khalid Butt has been associated with the PTCL Group for nearly two decades now and has been instrumental in driving the company's momentous progress to becoming the backbone of Pakistan's telecommunication industry.

PFC to take part in Dubai Expo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in 3-day Dubai International Expo starting on October 30 to discover business opportunities and explore new markets access for Pakistani products.

Chief Executive Officer PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq in a statement on Monday said that PFC along with Chenone would be participating in this mega event.

He said, "Chenone will also exhibit its high-quality international standards products to capture their share in the global market."

He said, "It's an excellent opportunity to showcase Pak products and develop business deals with international buyers."

He said, "PFC and Chenone have already attended several other international fairs in US, China, Italy, Sri Lanka etc, and introduced its products which are in great demand."

He hoped in getting orders from foreign buyers. "TDAP is facilitating the manufacturers of export products," he informed.

He said, "he will also hold a series of marathon meetings with tycoons for investment to avail government unprecedented special package for foreign investors."

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): PQA shipping activity was recorded at the port where four ships namely, Bull Shark, Hafnia Experience, Epic Bolivar and Al-Jassasiya carrying Palm oil, Mogas, LPG and LNG, berthed at Liquid Cargo Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Eastern Laelia, As Sovereign, Epic Burano and Enugu carrying Steel coil, Palm oil, LPG and LNG are also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers carrier 'Maersk Chesapeake' sailed out to sea on Monday (today) morning, while another Gas carrier 'Epic Bolivar' is expected to sail on same day afternoon.

A cargo volume of 94,891 tonnes, comprising 65,549 tonnes imports Cargo and 29,342 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,340 Containers (614 TEUs Imports and 1,726 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Eastern Laelia and Enugu & two more ships, MSC Silvia and Lisa carrying Steel coil, LNG and Containers are expected to take berths at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Gasport Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on 7th August, while another containers ship, MSC Maria Elena is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

cent year on year.

In the same period, the average wholesale price of 19 vegetables tracked by the government dipped 1.4 percent on a weekly basis, and fell 13.6 percent from the same period last year.

The figure for six key fruits edged down 1.2% from the previous week, but up 4.3% year on year.

decreasing by 5.08 points year on year, according to the ministry.

The average wholesale price of pork, China's staple meat, rose 8.6 percent week on week, but went down 30 percent year on year. The figure for the price of eggs went up 5.1 percent from the previous week and edged up 0.6 per-

HC for strengthening bilateral trade relations

LAHORE (APP): In a bid to foster stronger economic ties between Pakistan and South Africa, High Commissioner Mthuthuzeli Madikiza made his third visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Monday. During his address to the business community, Madikiza underscored the need for collaborative efforts to address challenges faced by the business community and enhance trade cooperation.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Honorary Consul General of South Africa Syed Shahid Ali, LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Executive Committee members were also present.

Madikiza highlighted the importance of understanding the unique opportunities and complexities that Africa presents for trade and investment. He commended the presence of an Africa Desk at the LCCI and acknowledged the commendable initiative of the government of Pakistan, "Look Africa", aimed at bolstering economic relations with the continent.

Madikiza said the two countries suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic and stressed the need for diversification and expansion of trade beyond coal, urging stakeholders to analyze the progress made and work towards increasing trade volumes.

In his address, LCCI President Kashif Anwar expressed optimism that the meeting would pave the way for stronger bilateral economic relations. He emphasized the significance of South Africa in the African continent, with its impressive GDP of over \$400 billion and diverse economy, and highlighted the mutual benefits that closer cooperation could bring.

He said participation in trade fairs, exhibitions and exchange of trade delegations play a fundamental role in boosting two-way trade. He informed the High Commissioner that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry had established a state-of-the-art Alternate Dispute Resolution Center to settle business disputes.

Kashif Anwar noted that while Pakistan and South Africa shared cordial relations, the trade balance had been skewed in favour of South Africa. He cited figures from the State Bank of Pakistan, revealing a decline in bilateral trade from \$1.7 billion in 2021-

22 to \$626 million in 2022-23, primarily due to reduced imports from South Africa.

The LCCI President emphasized the potential for collaboration across various sectors including agriculture, textiles, manufacturing, and technology. He also stressed the need for Pakistan to tap into South Africa's pharmaceutical market, which imported \$2.5 billion worth of products in 2022, mainly from India, Germany, France, and the US.

Senior Vice President LCCI Zafar Mahmood Ch outlined LCCI's plans to organize an "Africa Day" to promote trade and investment opportunities between Pakistan and South Africa. He highlighted the strong demand for IT professionals in South Africa and potential areas of cooperation such as vehicle parts, tractors, and pharmaceuticals. He also called for the removal of duties on cement imports from South Africa.

At the end, both sides expressed a shared commitment to further explore avenues for trade and investment, with a focus on leveraging each other's strengths to create a win-win scenario.

China's agricultural produce prices edge up

BEIJING (APP): Wholesale prices of China's farm produce edged up during the week from July 28 to August 3, data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs shows.

During the period, the country's farm produce wholesale price index came in at 118.25, up 0.01 points from the previous week and



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque addressing at launching ceremony of Pakistan's First Communication APP "beep".

PMEX achieves Highest Ever Profit for FY23

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Mercantile Exchange Limited (PMEX), the only Multi-Commodity Futures Exchange in the country, has achieved its highest-ever profit after tax for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023 (FY23), since its inception in 2007.

As per unaudited accounts, PMEX has achieved a net profit of PKR 207 million in FY23, a growth of 266 percent compared to the last fiscal year. During this fiscal year, the exchange's operating income surged to PKR 673 million, representing an impressive growth of 80 percent compared to the previous year. The trading volume in FY23 reached a significant milestone of PKR 4.641 trillion, surpass-

ing the PKR 3.867 trillion recorded in the corresponding period last year.

PMEX, on the basis of this year's performance, has completely recovered its equity of PKR 313.6 million, which was negative PKR 192 million in FY11. Additionally, in achieving this phenomenal turnaround, PMEX has maintained a Settlement Guarantee Fund of around PKR 600 million over a period of time.

Several crucial factors have contributed to PMEX's outstanding financial performance in FY23. The exchange has successfully implemented strategic initiatives, including expanding the product portfolio, introducing new members and liquidity providers, streamlining the Direct Fund Model to facil-

itate direct deposit & withdrawal of funds for traders, extending trading hours, introducing digital account opening, improving customer support, and raising awareness about the advantages of futures trading on a regulated exchange.

These endeavors have helped enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and significantly improve the overall trading experience for market participants.

Ejaz Ali Shah, Managing Director - PMEX attributed the unrelenting support & guidance received from Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the strategic direction provided by the PMEX Board of Directors as the key elements in achieving this feat.

While commenting on

this occasion, he said, "This exceptional financial performance reflects our unwavering pursuit of excellence, effective risk management practices, and the resilience of our market participants. As the leading commodity futures exchange in Pakistan, PMEX will continue to drive growth, promote transparency, and deliver value to our stakeholders."

He further added, "With over 55 million bank accounts, we see a great opportunity to create 2 to 5 million new Unique Identification Numbers (UINs) and facilitate pan Pakistan penetration. By expanding our reach, we aim to provide more individuals with access to our services and contribute to the overall economic growth of the nation."

Sir Syed University paid glowing tribute to Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Rich tributes were paid to the eminent nuclear scientist of international repute Late Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan for his valuable services to make the country invincible. Posthumous "The Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Peace Award" was presented to him in a grand ceremony held by Aligarh Muslim University Old Boys' Association (AMUOBA) and Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology (SSUET) jointly at a local hotel. Mr. Khan's daughter Dr. Dina Khan received the award.

In the ceremony, a gold medal was also given to Lady Hendrina Khan, wife of Dr. Qadeer Khan, which was also received by their daughter Dr. Dina. On the occasion, a souvenir book "The Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Peace Award presented to Dr. A.Q. Khan", featuring Dr. Khan's family and his social services was also launched.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Dina Khan, daughter of Dr. AQ Khan, said, "I will continue the mission of my father who was involved in so many projects. If I did at least one, it means I lived a life that has not gone to waste. We need to work together for the development of the country and nation, paying no attention to differences. Education is the primary thing required for growth as a nation and country. My father wanted to do many things but he was not allowed to do it. His knowledge and skill were wasted."

She underscored that my father appointed me the chairperson of AQ Hospital of AQ Foundation, which is a family foundation, but the hospital has been high-jacked. There is a misappropriation of funds in the name of Dr. AQ Khan at the hospital.

Appreciating the services of Dr. AQ Khan, Chancellor SSUET, and President AMUOBA, Jawaid Anwar said that the renowned scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan made history by empowering Pakistan with nuclear energy. Not only do Pakistanis revere Dr. Qadeer but also the whole Muslim Umma acknowledges his greatness. The Mufti e Aazam of Saudi Arabia called him

the hero of the Islamic world, which truly reflects the sentiments of the entire Muslim Umma. Nuclear power given by Dr. Qadeer not only restored the confidence of the nation but also balanced the power in the region. Defence institutions and security agencies fully cooperated and supported the successful operation of Chaghi, which was indeed a great achievement of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan's team and nation.

He said that Mohsin e Pakistan, Dr. Qadeer Khan faced great difficulties and pressures in his struggle to make Pakistan invincible, but despite all the sufferings, Dr. Qadeer Khan did not compromise on patriotism and beyond doubt, he was a true patriot. Such a daring and brave person born in centuries.

Vice Chancellor SSUET, Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin, said that Dr. Qadeer Khan believed that the advancement of science should be dedicated to uplifting the lives of people and promoting cooperation among nations. Despite facing numerous challenges, Dr. Khan never wavered from his pursuit of peace and his commitment to building bridges between nations, fostering scientific collaboration was truly exemplary. His vision of a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons serves as an enduring inspiration to us all.

Vice Chancellor SSUET, Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin, said that Sir Syed University has decided to set up "Dr. Abdul Qadeer

Khan Chair" at the university to promote research and innovation in the field of science and technology. We believe that this initiative will provide a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and capacity building, and it will be established through generous cooperation and support of the corporate sector. A strong endowment fund is being created to ensure the chair's sustainability and longer-term impact.

He appreciated the editors of the souvenir book "The Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Award presented to Dr. AQ Khan" Mr. Saqib Jawaid and Mr. Shahid Saleem for their untiring creative work in compiling and editing the book that was also launched on the occasion.

Speaking on the auspicious occasion, Lt. Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider said that Dr. AQ Khan took us out of fear by making Pakistan the first nuclear power of the Islamic world.

Bashir Jan Muhammad said that the country is secure today because of Dr. Qadeer Khan's efforts.

Renowned businessman, Haji Muhammad Rafiq Pardesi, said that Pakistan's literacy rate is too low. There is no chance of growth and development without education. Dr. Qadeer laid more emphasis on education.

Former Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan said that Dr. Qadeer Khan was among those who are chosen by God for doing some specific work. He pointed out

that the courts are restored but not the justice, Cdre. (r) Salim Siddiqui read the message of Prof. Dr. M.D. Shami, while Citation was read by Registrar SSUET, Cdre. (r) Syed Safriz Ali, SI (M).

Sardar Yasin Malik said that Dr. Qadeer Khan was gifted with outstanding intellectual qualities and skills. Dr. Raza Shah said that Dr. Qadeer Khan belongs to the category of personalities who are destined to make history. Mian Arshad Farooq said that Dr. Qadeer is hailed by the masses as a National hero, leaving behind an amazing legacy. Former Chairman Kahuta Laboratories Karim Ahmed said that Mr. Khan sacrificed a lot in the struggle of making the country invincible.

Presenting vote of thanks, General Secretary AMUOBA, Engr. Muhammad Arshad Khan said that the name of the founder of Pakistan's nuclear program, Mohsin e Pakistan, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, would always be written in golden letters in the history of Pakistan. He made the defence of Pakistan unbeatable with his ability, skill, and determination. He sacrificed his brilliant career for the love of Pakistan. However, we don't give due respect to our national heroes, while sensible nations learn and take guidance from the work and services of their national heroes.

Professor Noshaba Siddiqui conducted the ceremony delightfully and professionally.



In brief

SBP coaches focusing on physical fitness

LAHORE (APP): Expert coaches continued to impart modern training to young participants at Sports board Punjab (SBP) High Performance Tennis Training Camp here at state-of-the-art Tennis Courts on Monday. Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail said that a large number of boys and girls of different age groups are participating in the month-long camp being organised under the supervision of qualified coaches till August 31. "Besides routine training, special emphasis is being given on physical fitness of young male and female camp probables". He said that SBP High Performance Tennis Training Camp is being conducted with an aim to provide an opportunity to young tennis players to learn and polish their game skills. He urged the camp probables to utilise all of their energies for learning of games techniques under the supervision of expert coaches. "Sports Board Punjab is providing all essential facilities to participating young players during the High Performance Tennis Camp," he added. Dr Asif Tufail further said that tennis is one of the most popular sports among young generation. "The top class training at High Performance Tennis Camp will help a lot in producing several future tennis stars", he added.

Tottenham reject latest Bayern Munich offer

LONDON (Agencies): Tottenham have rejected Bayern Munich's latest offer for striker Harry Kane. Bayern had hoped to agree a deal for the England skipper but it is understood the two sides remain apart in their valuation of the 30-year-old. The Bundesliga champions had suggested if their bid for Kane was unsuccessful on this occasion they would move on to other transfer targets. However, with over three weeks of the transfer window left, it remains to be seen whether that is the case. Kane, who has scored 280 goals in 435 appearances for Tottenham in all competitions, skipped Spurs in Sunday's pre-season match against Shakhtar Donetsk. He has one year left on his contract with Tottenham and there have been no indications Kane would be willing to extend it. If chairman Daniel Levy elects to keep the England striker it would effectively be ending the club's last chance to cash in on their talisman. Bayern officials met Levy last week but a deal was not struck. Bild claim personal terms with Kane have already been agreed. Tottenham begin their Premier League campaign at Brentford on 13 August. Bayern start their season with a German Super Cup meeting with RB Leipzig a day earlier.

Sebastian Baez wins Generali Open

KITZBUHEL (Agencies): Sebastian Baez cruised to a 6-3, 6-1 victory over wild card and hometown favorite Dominic Thiem on Saturday in the final of the Generali Open in Kitzbuhel, Austria. Backed by his home crowd, Thiem recorded five aces while Baez didn't pick up one, but it was Baez who ended up prevailing. The Argentine was able to string together wins with ease, opening up a 4-1 lead in the first set before winning the last four games of the second to secure the title. It took just 80 minutes for Baez to complete the sweep. Despite the loss, Thiem was still able to move up 27 spots in the Pepperstone ATP Live Rankings thanks to his strong run. He now sits at No. 89.

Babar Azam's maiden LPL ton lifts Colombo Strikers to edge Galle Titans

PALLEKELE (Agencies): Babar Azam scored his maiden Lanka Premier League (LPL) century and powered Colombo Strikers to a thrilling seven-wicket victory over Galle Titans.

Set to chase a massive 189, the Strikers completed the pursuit on the penultimate delivery for the loss of three wickets, courtesy of a sensational century by Babar Azam.

Strikers' openers Babar and Pathum Nissanka scripted a solid start to the pursuit as they added 111 runs before Tabraiz Shamsi drew a much-needed breakthrough for the Titans by dismissing Nissanka.

Nissanka scored an anchoring 54 off 40 deliveries, laced up with five boundaries and a six. Babar Azam was then joined by Nuwanidu Fernando at the crease and the pair knitted a vital 55-run partnership for the second wicket.

The second-wicket stand was massively dominated by Babar while Fernando batted cautiously before falling to



Shamsi in the 18th over. He could score eight off 13.

Despite Babar Azam's blitz, the high-scoring encounter came right down to the wire with the Strikers needing 14 off the final over.

Kasun Rajitha, set to defend 14, bowled a fuller delivery outside off and Babar Azam holed it straight to the long-off fielder.

He smashed eight boundaries and five sixes on his way to a 59-ball 104.

The Strikers, with their mainstay back in the hut, looked in deep trouble but Mohammad Nawaz smashed Rajitha for a six and a boundary to seal the deal for the Strikers with one ball to spare. Shamsi led the bowling attack for

the Titans with 2/27 while Rajitha made one scalp.

Earlier, after opting to bat first, the Titans put on a commendable total of 188/3 in the allotted 20 overs at the back of a brilliant half-century by Tim Seifert and opening batter Shevon Daniel's 49.

Seifert top-scored for the Titans with an unbeaten 54 off 35 deliveries, hitting four boundaries and three sixes. Whereas, Daniel scored 49 from 31 deliveries with the help of five boundaries and two sixes.

Besides them, Lasith Croosapulle (36 off 19) and Bhanuka Rajapaksa (30 off 31) made notable contributions. For the Strikers, Naseem Shah, Ramesh Mendis and Lakshan Sandakan picked up one wicket apiece.

A close seven-wicket victory lifted Colombo Strikers to the third in the LPL standings with four points in as many matches while the Titans remained at the second spot due to a superior net run rate.

Pakistan Street Child Football team arrives home as Norway Cup concludes

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Street Child Football Team arrived home on Monday after participation in the recently-concluded Norway Cup.

The national team, who put up a great show in the tournament, landed here at Islamabad International.

The players received a warm welcome through garlands as a symbol of appreciation by their fans and families at the airport.

Notably, the Pakistan street child football team finished as the runners-up of the Norway Cup after falling to a 9-10 defeat on penalties against Sola FK on Saturday in Oslo. The match had 1-1 after extra time.

Tufail Shinwari's first-half equalizer, courtesy of a free kick, powered Pakistan

to make a comeback in the final after Sola FK pulled ahead with an early lead.

The 1-1 deadlock between the two sides persisted till the regulation and extra time and the fate of the match was then to be decided on the penalties.

Both teams continued their see-saw battle in the penalty shoot-out before Pakistan faltered and thus Sola FK ran away with the Norway Cup title with a close victory.

Pakistan street child football team entered the final after remaining unbeaten in seven games.

The national team scored the most goals by any team in the tournament and also recorded the largest victory in the tournament's history when they blew Frigg Oslo

FK 11-1. For an exceptional tournament, Pakistan's Asad Nasir was adjudged the player of the Norway Cup 2023.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan qualified for the finals of the Norway Cup for the second time, after ending up as runners-up in Norway Cup 2015.

Pakistan team also finished runners-up in the Street Child World Cup in Doha last year. They remained undefeated in that tournament, until losing to the eventual champions Egypt in the final on penalties.

They were also runners-up in the Street Child World Cup 2018 in Russia (2018), whereas, in the 2014 edition they finished third after losing in the semi-finals.



SYDNEY: Lydia Williams (R) and Kyra Cooney-Cross of Australia celebrate the team's 2-0 victory and advance to the quarter final.

England survive Nigeria scare, Australia also into World Cup quarters

BRISBANE (Agencies): England survived the sending-off of Lauren James to scrape past Nigeria in a penalty shoot-out on Monday and were joined in the Women's World Cup quarter-finals by co-hosts Australia.

European champions England will play either Colombia or Jamaica in the last eight on Saturday, but they got there the hard way.

Chloe Kelly scored the winning penalty in Brisbane as England beat Nigeria 4-2 in the shoot-out after a tense last-16 tie finished 0-0 at the end of extra time.

England had a major scare before a crowd of 49,461, having come through the whole of extra time a player short following the 87th-minute sending-off of James for a stamp on Nigeria's Michelle Alozie.

Coach Sarina Wiegman, who welcomed key midfielder Keira Walsh back into her side after injury, called it "a very, very hard game".

"How we did that and how the team just kept going, I'm so proud of them," said Wiegman, whose side are regarded as favourites to take the crown from beaten holders the United States.

Georgia Stanway put the first penalty of the shoot-out wide for England, but Desire Oparanizie and Alozie followed suit, both missing the target with Nigeria's first two attempts.

Beth England, Rachel Daly and Alex Greenwood all scored for England before Kelly converted the decisive kick. "It's amazing, anything that's thrown at us we show what we're capable of," said the Manchester City forward Kelly, who scored the winning goal in last year's European Championship final.

"We've been practising (penalties) a lot and it's working." The defeat was cruel on Nigeria, the world's 40th-ranked team, who followed up their

impressive performances in the group stage by pushing England all the way.

Their England-born defender Ashleigh Plumpton crashed a shot off the woodwork in the first half and Uchenna Kanu also hit the frame of the goal.

However, this was the third game out of four at this World Cup in which Nigeria failed to score.

"We had every opportunity to get the result and unfortunately we didn't get it done," said their American coach, Randy Waldrum.

"I think we could have (won it in 90 minutes). We had the best chances, we hit the crossbar twice in regulation play. We were a bit unlucky not to get something out of it.

"But credit to England, they are a great side."

England will discover the identity of their quarter-final opponents on Tuesday when Colombia face surprise-package Jamaica in

Pakistan thrash China to claim first win in Asian Champions Trophy

CHENNAI (Monitoring Desk): Afraz's match-winning lifted Pakistan to keep their semi-final hopes alive with a convincing 2-1 victory over China in the ongoing Asian Champions Trophy.

Pakistan started the game on a high as they maintained pressure on the Chinese defence right from the start and soon got the reward in the 19th minute, courtesy of Muhammad Sufiyan Khan's brilliant goal.

The green shirts completely dominated the first half while Chinese players struggled to keep possession. However, Jiesheng Gao helped level things for China with an excellent flick from a penalty corner in the 32nd minute.

China's comeback into the game was however cut short as Afraz scored in the 39th minute to give Pakistan a match-defining lead.

The green shirts put on a



great effort to prevent China from firing the equalizer and thus tasted their maiden success in the ongoing Asian Champions Trophy.

Pakistan's Rana Abdul, who was adjudged the player of the match termed the victory over China a crucial one and revealed that the young team is looking forward to their tie against arch-rivals India.

"This game was really

crucial for us. The young team played incredibly and we are looking forward to the India game," said Abdul in the post-match presentation.

Pakistan's first win in the Asian Champions Trophy propelled them to fourth place. Meanwhile, China's hopes of reaching the semifinals have been diminished.

Notably, Pakistan was winless in the Asian

Champions Trophy before this game, as they drew 3-3 against Japan yesterday.

Prior to that, they drew 1-1 against defending champions South Korea, while, they were handed a 3-1 defeat at the hands of Malaysia in their first game.

Pakistan will now face arch-rivals India on August 9, while China will face Japan in their final group-stage match on the same day.

This is the seventh edition of the Asian Champions Trophy. Pakistan have won the tournament in 2012 and 2013, while India have won in 2011 and 2016.

The 2018 edition saw Pakistan and India jointly sharing the trophy as the final was forfeited due to persistent rain. Defending champions South Korea won the tournament in 2021 after thumping Japan on penalties.

Pat Cummins: Australia captain expected to be fit for World Cup

SYDNEY (Agencies): Pat Cummins will be sidelined for six weeks because of a wrist injury sustained in the Ashes but should return for Australia's 50-over World Cup campaign in October and November.

Cummins, 30, fractured his wrist in the final Test at The Oval when England won by 49 runs. Australia retained the urn after drawing the series 2-2.

"Cummins has an undisplaced fracture of his left radius," said chairman of selectors George Bailey.

"We expect him to join the squad during the South African ODI series. We view a period of enforced rest for Pat as a positive

ahead of this important World Cup campaign.

"There are still a number of games he could play before the World Cup which is more than enough for him to have a strong preparation."

Cummins was named Australia's one-day international captain in 2022 and has skipped the national side in two 50-over games so far.

He sustained the wrist injury while diving in the field on day one of the fifth Test but played through the following four days.

Australia play three T20Is and five ODIs against South Africa between 30 August and 17

September, and they have three ODIs lined up against India between 22-27 September.

The 2023 Cricket World Cup begins on 5 October in India, with Australia kicking off their campaign against the hosts in Chennai on 8 October.

Mitchell Marsh has been named as Australia's T20 captain for the series in South Africa in Cummins' absence.

Marnus Labuschagne is the most notable omission from the extended 18-player ODI squad, having featured in each of Australia's last nine ODIs and 30 of the last 38 since making his debut in 2020.

The 29-year-old was part of the squad that won a three-match series in India in March.

The uncapped duo of leg-spinner Tanveer Sangha and all-rounder Aaron Hardie have been named in the squad, which will be trimmed down to 15 nearer to the start of the World Cup.

Marsh, Cameron Green, Marcus Stoinis and Sean Abbott are the leading seam-bowling all-rounders, while Ashton Agar, Sangha and Adam Zampa offer spin options.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell will miss the South Africa leg as he expects the arrival of his first child.

Inzamam-ul-Haq named Pakistan's chief selector for second time

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq has been appointed the chief selector of the national men's selection committee for a second time. The post had remained vacant since Haroon Rasheed quit as chief selector last month.

The selection committee, which also includes team director Mickey Arthur, head coach Grant Bradburn, and secretary Hasan Cheema will be in charge of selecting the senior men's team and Pakistan Shaheens. ESPNcricinfo understands Inzamam will no longer be part of the PCB's cricket technical committee, which he was appointed to last week.

Inzamam, who was also chief selector from 2016 to 2019, begins his second term ahead of a crucial period for the Pakistan side. His first task will be the announcement of a squad for the three-ODI series against Afghanistan in Sri Lanka, which begins on August 22. It will be followed by the ODI Asia Cup. Those two squads will be announced by Inzamam at a press conference on



August 10.

Inzamam, who named the squad for the 2019 World Cup as chief selector, will also be tasked with selecting the 2023 ODI World Cup squad. The tournament takes place in India from October 5 to November 19.

"I had a good run in the last tenure," Inzamam said. "We had famous victories with the ICC Champions Trophy 2017 being the highlight, but my most important achievement is that around 70 to 80 per cent of the cricketers - selected back then - form the core of today's sides. That team was in transition, but this team is stable and I would not face the same challenges.

"Heading a selection committee is already a tough job in Pakistan, but it is going to be more challenging this time with the ACC Men's Asia Cup and ICC Men's Cricket World Cup around the corner followed by the tour of Australia. But, I know I can deliver in this role and I will try to do better than I did the last time. Despite the paucity of time, we will announce the best possible sides."

Inzamam had been appointed to the PCB's cricket technical committee last week alongside Mohammad Hafeez, with Misbah-ul-Haq heading it. One of the tasks the technical committee had was to

appoint the national selection committees, though the PCB said the decision to appoint the chief selector was made by the board's chairman Zaka Ashraf, rather than the committee he appointed to make decisions of this nature.

"I am delighted that Inzamam-ul-Haq has agreed to head our national men's selection committee at a crucial juncture. He is a legend and has served the game with dignity," PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf said. "Inzamam's last tenure brought us success as we not only won the ICC Champions Trophy, but also unearthed some outstanding talent that continues to serve Pakistan cricket to date. I have no doubt that his new innings will add to the laurels and bring more talented cricketers to light."

While the role in the cricket technical committee was unpaid, the chief selector will be remunerated. The PCB confirmed to ESPNcricinfo that a replacement for Inzamam in the technical committee would be announced in due course.



BRISBANE: Georgia Stanway of England (C) battles for the ball with Antonette Payne of Nigeria (R) during the FIFA Women's World Cup.



In brief

IRSA releases 342,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (INP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 342,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 407,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1546.00 feet and was 148.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 239,800 cusecs and 210,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1235.40 feet, which was 185.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 45,200 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 215,300, 224,100, 191,300 and 157,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 45,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, COMST, Chatta Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtrar, Tramiri, ISI, Rahara, PHA, Kuri Road, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Shams Colony, Gulzar Quaid, Gangal, Airport, Khanna Road, Shams Colony Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, SPD-II, PAF, RIC, Gracie Line, Rahmatatabad, Jahangir Road, Kohala, Morat, Kahota City-II, Hanif Shaheed, Abrar Shaheed, Panjar, Khawaja, Nad, Morgah, Parkview, Pindi Borar, Fuji Foundation Hospital Feeders, Chakwal Circle, CS Shah, Dandut, Basharat Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-3 Gul Afshan, Garmala, Boren, F-2 Chip Bor, Industrial Feeders, GSO Circle, 06:00 to 08:30, Dhirkot, Chamankot, Ringla, Duna Express, Dhiala, Suhawa Minhasa, Nimble, Beirut Kazmi, Dhirkot-II feeders and surrounding areas.

Squad set up to check one wheeling

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) have set up a special squad to check one wheeling on Independence Day. According to the plan, teams have been deployed to stop motorcyclists indulging in one-wheeling and strict action would be taken against the violators to avoid a traffic mess and mishaps on August 14. A control room has been set up at the Headquarters to monitor the situation. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan said all-out efforts would be made to control traffic on the city's roads. He warned one-wheelers would be dealt with in accordance with the law and wardens have been directed to impound motorcycles of one-wheelers in their respective areas. He urged parents to keep a vigilant eye and play their due role to stop the dangerous activity.



ISLAMABAD: Former Mayor Rawalpindi Sardar Naseem calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Amin calls for supporting least developed OIC member countries through skill development

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Federal Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin ul Haque Monday stressed the need to support least developed countries of OIC through skill development in the field of science, education, IT, and digital economy.

The minister was speaking during a meeting with the organizing committee of Nobel Fest VI to be held in Islamabad.

The Nobel Fest VI will be held during November 29-30 at COMSTECH. The theme of this year's festival is "Bridging Science and OIC Countries in the Digital Future".

The meeting was attended by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, COMSTECH, Maxat Kurbenov, founder and CEO, Nobel Fest, Senator Dr. Serik, Deputy Head of Organizing Committee, Nobel Fest, Prof. Dr. Khalid M. Iraqi.

Vice Chancellor, University of Karachi, and Harris Akram, Program Manager, COMSTECH.

The organizing committee briefed the minister about the mission, objectives and program of the Nobel Fest. The minister appreciated the festival's noble mission and expressed gratitude for hosting the event in Islamabad. He assured full support from his ministry and the institutions under the umbrella of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication.

The minister emphasized on capacity building of Pakistan's youth in the fields of science and technology. This year's Nobel Fest will focus on scientific discoveries and technological innovations, with a particular focus on key topics such as the future of medicine, digitalization in education, disruptive technologies, efforts to combat cli-

mate change, and strategies for socio-economic development through science.

Nobel Fest is a unique and one of the most impactful educational and technological gatherings with an annual audience of 5K offline, 800K online participants from more than 500 universities, and 100 countries. Since 2020, 15 Nobel Laureates, 15 breakthrough winners, eminent experts, innovators, leaders of international organizations and global businesses have participated in the yearly event of the Nobel Fest.

The Nobel Fest event planned to be held in Islamabad, it is expected that several Nobel Laureates, and CEO's of global tech giants will join as speakers to interact with young students from Pakistan and other OIC member states through physical and virtual studios.

Missing boy reunited with overjoyed parents

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad's Tarnol Police Station orchestrated a heartwarming reunion on Monday as a missing boy was joyously reunited with his parents, as confirmed by a police spokesperson.

According to details, a citizen submitted an application at Tarnol police station, stating his son namely Bilal Ahmed had been missing and could not be traced despite hectic efforts by family members.

Upon receiving the application, police registered a case and immediately started the investigation.

A police team used technical and human resources succeeded to trace the missing boy Bilal Ahmed and reunited him safely with his family.

The parents appreciated the police team's efforts and thanked the Islamabad Capital Police for immediate assistance.

DIG (Operations) Islamabad Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari said that the safety of lives and property of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no stone would be left unturned for the purpose.

Women empowerment Key to socio-economic stability says NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Monday said that imagining development without women inclusion in every segment of society is impossible.

He expressed these views while addressing "The Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy" at National Press Club organized by Women Parliamentary Caucus.

Paying tribute to contribution of women Parliamentarians, he said that our women have potential to change the fate of country. He expressed gratitude that Shaheed Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto was his political mentor. He also said that the role of media is crucial to further the cause of democracy in Pakistan.

Secretary WPC Shahida Rehmani appreciated the cooperation extended by Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf for proactive WPC. She said that the prominent achievements of WPC in such a short time includes: prioritizing gender budgeting and furthering women friendly legislation.

Mehnaz Akbar Aziz Convener 1st Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights also briefed the participants regarding achievements of PCCR.

Afzal Butt President PFUJ said that PFUJ has given equal status to women journalist and women media representatives. The event was attended by women parliamentarians and prominent women journalists from across the country.

Ambassador of Iran called on HR Minister Riaz Peerzada

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada Monday in Islamabad.

Both sides discussed centuries-old deep strategic and brotherly relations between two countries.

Welcoming the ambassador, Minister said that Pakistan greatly values its relations with Iran rooted in cultural, historical and religious bonds.

He emphasized to enhance these relations in various areas particularly in economy, energy, culture and human rights.

Ambassador H.E. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam also reciprocated the same about historical bilateral relations and expressed that the people of Iran and Pakistan are tied with the knot of love.

They have been living peacefully for centuries without any dispute.

Both countries have been supporting each other in the UNO and Iran is now supporting Pakistan in IMF.

He said that Iran has been facing sanctions and pressure from the US due to its upright foreign policies and now this pressure has become an irritant in bilateral relations

between Iran and Pakistan.

During the call, Minister expressed that the trio of Muslim countries i.e.; Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, is continuously advocating for the rights of Palestinian and Kashmiri people who have been living under oppression and facing gross human rights violations for decades. He further said that Western countries cannot dictate us on human rights if they keep an eye close to such flagrant human rights violations and suppression just because of their own economic interests.

He added that Pakistan, besides having its weak economy, has always raised its voice against this oppression.

Ambassador stated that there is huge potential in the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline that is the way Iran can help its neighboring energy-starved country but international powers are hindering the energy blessings to the people of Pakistan.

There is urgent need for two governments to find its way out and we would respect every decision taken by Pakistan.

He also stressed to make Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) more effective forum to promote trade and economic cooperation

among member countries.

Minister hoped that after fresh elections in the country, upcoming regime, having public support, would introduce public-oriented international policies.

He said that this government has hardly pulled the country out of chaos and desperate situation under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Shabaz Sharif.

He said that this region has become an arena for power politics among superpowers due to CPEC but the current regime in KSA under the dynamic and progressive leadership of Prince Mohammed bin Salman has introduced a shift in policy that can further the autonomy of this region by bringing it out of the influence of the West and the USA.

While concluding, Minister said that OIC must be a forum that may raise effectively the concerns of Muslim world in this wave of Islamophobia where heinous occurrences of publishing insulting caricatures and burning of the holy Quran have severely injured the emotions of over 1.8 billion Muslim population in the world.

He said that Iran is our second home and very close to our hearts and we always share love and respect for its people.

Kaira inaugurates Syed Ali Geelani's corner at National Monument Museum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira on Monday inaugurated Hurriyat Leader Shaheed Syed Ali Geelani's corner at National Monument Museum here to pay tribute to his struggle for independence from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Talking to media, the Adviser acknowledged Shaheed Syed Ali Geelani's contribution and services for the Kashmir cause and termed him a great Kashmiri leader.

He said the inauguration of the corner would provide an opportunity to highlight Geelani's struggle and achievements to apprise the general public regarding the towering stature of the great Hurriyat leader.

He further said that Pakistani people and Kashmiris would never forget the Hurriyat leader and would remember him for the decades to come.

He appreciated the efforts of all officials in establishing the corner at the National Monument Museum Islamabad. The Adviser said that

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were effectively highlighting the Kashmir issue at all available forums including the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Bilawal Bhutto attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conference in India and highlighted its atrocities and barbarism against innocent Kashmiris.

"Pakistan is politically, morally, and diplomatically supporting the Kashmir indigenous movement as the Kashmiri people are rendering supreme sacrifices for decades," he maintained.

He said all the Pakistani governments had always taken a unified stance over the Kashmir issue.

He urged the international community to take steps to stop India from perpetrating gruesome human rights violations in IIOJK, adding that Kashmiris were awaiting the world commitment to implement the promises made by Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru and UNGA resolutions.

Kaira said that Indian troops despite tyranny and force could not weaken the resolve and determination of the Kashmiri people and they had continued their struggle to get the basic right to self-determination.

He said the resolution of the lingering Kashmir dispute is imperative to establish sustainable peace in the South-Asia region, adding that regional peace is interlinked with the settlement of Kashmir issue.

"Kashmiri sisters, brothers, mothers and children have rendered unprecedented sacrifices for the noble cause of freedom," the adviser added.

He said that Kashmir is the jugular vein and integral part of Pakistan. On the occasion, Hurriyat Leader Allam Muhammad Safi said that India was trying to sabotage the Shaheed Syed Ali Geelani's struggle but it would not achieve success in its nefarious motives. He said that the Kashmir issue should be settled as per the UN resolutions of the Security Council.

Dr Jamal inaugurates case response anti-polio campaign

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare, Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Monday said that the presence of polio virus in the environmental samples of Tehsil Taxila was alarming and a seven-day special anti-polio campaign had been launched in the high-risk areas of the district to eradicate this deadly virus.

He said this while inaugurating a case response anti-polio campaign at Rural Health Center

Khayaban e Sirsyed, by administering drops to a child under five years of age. The minister said the campaign will continue till August 13 to cover over 669,412 children in five tehsils of Rawalpindi, including Rawalpindi Cantonment, city, Taxila, Gujjar Khan and Potohar town. Dr Jamal informed that 2835 teams, including 674 area incharges, 269 fixed points and 189 Union council medical officers were participating in the drive while children were also immunized at 147 transit

points of the district.

Later, the provincial minister also called an emergency meeting to review the anti-dengue arrangements.

The minister was informed that 3,000 points had been declared vulnerable places for dengue larvae breeding where cleaning, fogging and all other measures were being ensured to eliminate larvae.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Hasan Waqar Cheema also administered anti-polio drops to children under five years of age here at his office.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a group photo with participants of the reception to pay tribute to "The Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy" at National Press Club.

Uplift of park gets underway

KABUL (Agencies): Kabul's 9.9 hectare greenbelt is set to change considerably over the next three years after work started on a major development project. Work on the Shahr-e-Now Park project officially got underway at an event attended by the economic deputy prime minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund. Akhund said in a statement that the development plan consists of a number of suggestions including an underground business center.

Ghee plant reactivated

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Xinhua): Provincial authorities have reconstructed and revived a ghee-producing plant in Mazar-i-Sharif of Balkh province. Being restored after more than a decade of suspension, the plant produces six tons of ghee daily, the statement said. According to the statement, the revival of the ghee-producing plant has created job opportunities for 60 people at the moment and more people would be hired in the future with the increase in the plant's products.

Americans among foreigners arrested, says Mujahid

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has arrested some foreigners, including American citizens, on different charges.

The caretaker government will decide the fate of the detainees once the investigation of their cases was completed, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) spokesman says.

Zabiullah Mujahid, who did not put a specific number on the foreigners in detention, said if found innocent, they would be set free.



Without going into details, the spokesman told TOLONews that some of the foreigners had been arrested on security grounds.

Haqqani: Today's Jihad for implementation of Sharia and development

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani has said that the Islamic Emirate fought for the freedom of the homeland in the past, but now it is fighting for the implementation of Sharia and the development of the country.

Haqqani stated in a meeting with officials, scholars and tribal elders in Laghman: "In the past, we were doing Jihad for the sake of Allah to liberate the homeland. Today, we do Jihad for the implementation of Sharia, the strengthening and survival of the system and the development of the country. We stand firm."

The Acting Minister of



Interior also asked the forces of the Islamic Emirate to be gentle, treat people well and refrain from arbitrary actions.

"Today is the time of compassion and governance. Our zeal lies in humility and good behavior," Haqqani said.

He emphasized that those who did not join the 20-year struggle of the Islamic Emirate are also "our brothers".

"We appreciate them. We use cadres. We provide them with the opportunity to serve," Acting Interior Minister said.

Over 200 poisoned after eating donated food

KHOST (Khaama Press): Over 200 people were poisoned and hospitalized after eating donated food in east Afghanistan's Khost province, according to officials on Monday.

The incident occurred in Zazai Maidan, Ban Sabari and Khost City after the people attended a donated meal. The poisoned victims had been taken to a nearby hospital for medical treatment, according to provincial spokesperson Mustaghfar Garbaz. According to officials, some poisoned victims, including women and children, are in critical condition.

Meanwhile, the security officials said they have launched an investigation to find the reasons for the incident. Recently, more civilians have been poisoned in ceremonies, particularly school students in some country provinces.

Nearly 150 people were poisoned earlier after eating at a wedding party in the Sang Atesh district of Badghis province.

Father, three sons die after inhaling toxic gases

KABUL (Khaama Press): Four labourers from Afghanistan died after inhaling poisonous gas at a waste collection facility in Shiraz, Iran's southern city, local officials said.

According to Hadi Eidipour, the head of the fire service for the Shiraz municipality, four labourers from Afghanistan died when one of them was trapped inside, and others went to save him.

"The four workers engaged in waste collection activities at the Gachi village workshop entered the septic tank containing toxic gases, one after another, to save their fellow workers. Tragically, they were overcome by the gases and lost their lives," Eidipour said.

According to Eidipour, the incident occurred in the village of Gachi on Sunday at about 9:15 a.m. local time, when rescue personnel and fire brigades were dispatched to the scene.

He said the preliminary inquiry shows five Afghan workers were reportedly trapped within a septic well at a plastic waste collection centre. While four of them died from the inhalation of toxic gases, the fifth one survived and is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital, according to reports.

IEA says decisions taken on key issues at Political Commission meeting

KABUL (Agencies): Political Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) led by Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Kabir has met following IEA's talks with the United States in Doha.

The PM's office said in a statement that the meeting discussed the recent political developments in the country and the visit of the delegation of the Islamic Emirate to Doha and the negotiations held there.

The statement added that necessary decisions were made regarding some important issues.

IEA's delegation led by Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi held two days of talks with US officials in Doha last week.

The US State Department said following the talks that Washington



was open to technical talks on economic stability and discussions on combating narcotics trafficking.

The US side repeated concerns about "deteriorating" human rights situation

and called anew on the IEA to reverse bans on girls' secondary education and women's employment and for the release of detained Americans, the State Department said in a state-

ment. Islamic Emirate officials raised the lifting of travel and other restrictions on IEA leaders and the return of Da Afghanistan Bank's assets held abroad, IEA said.

Kabul Municipality reports 66 km of road construction in past year

KABUL (TOLONews): Kabul Municipality said in its annual report that last year 66 kilometers of road were completed and opened in the capital.

The deputy of Urban Services and Environmental Protection of Kabul Municipality added that in the last year, the department has collected more than four billion Afghanis and they have destroyed about 200,000 tons of outdated and low-quality food.

"Last year, Kabul Municipality implemented 25 projects, based on which 66 kilometers of roads and alleys were completed," said Mohammad Khalid Sajistanini, The deputy of Urban Services and Environmental Protection of Kabul Municipality.

According to the department, so far 1,300 acres of land that were illegally grabbed have been reclaimed.

"Kabul Municipality reclaimed 1,300 acres of land that had been illegally grabbed by various peo-



ple," said Nematullah Barakzai, Spokesman for Kabul Municipality.

Officials said the planting of 6,000 plants, the surveying of 3,692 buildings, the transfer of more than 400,000 tons of garbage out of the city, and discussions with several companies to produce electricity from garbage, are accomplish-

ments of the department from the past year.

"The size of all the roads included in the plan for 1402 is 404,349 kilometers," said Mohammad Qasim Afghan, Head of the Plan and Policy of the Department.

The statistics of Kabul Municipality show that 75% of houses and build-

ings in Kabul city were built in a non-planned manner.

Based on the information of Kabul Municipality, 150 projects are currently underway in the capital, including 125 construction projects, and the department has allocated most of its budget to the road construction sector.

Turkish police arrest 64 illegal Afghan immigrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): According to Turkish officials, 64 Afghan refugees in Arzantan City who had entered Turkey illegally were detained.

These illegal Afghan immigrants were the most recent in the growing number of arrests of people with similar offences after they were found hiding in a truck containing electronic devices.

This incident occurred on the Arzanjan-Arzum highway, which has been identified as a route for smuggling illegal immigrants.

According to the Turkish authorities, the truck's driver was Iranian. The detained migrants were then promptly sent to a facility.

Earlier in June, Turkish authorities deported over 138 Afghan immigrants to their home country as part of its efforts to tackle illegal immigration.

Turkish authorities have promised to continue extradition operations as a sign of their commitment to defending their borders and addressing the concerns of illegal immigration.

The recent deportation of 138 Afghan asylum seekers by Turkey has aggravated the situation of



Afghan immigrants already seeking refuge in surrounding countries. Iran and Turkey have stepped up their deportation efforts and adopted measures to cut down on illegal immigration due to their immigration issues.

The General Directorate of Migration said that 68,290 of the 124,441 illegal immigrants deported by Turkey in the previous year were Afghan asylum seekers.

The General Directorate of Migration reports that Turkey deport-

ed 68,290 Afghan citizens, 12,511 Pakistanis, and immigrants from other countries in the past year. The Turkish government's migration service said this year it would deport more undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, including 227 citizens of Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban retook power in Afghanistan in August 2021, thousands of Afghans have immigrated to surrounding nations out of fear of being persecuted, killed, or physically harassed.

ARCS deputy president meets Italian ambassador for Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Deputy President of Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) Mullah Nuruddin Torabi and his accompanying delegation met with Italian Ambassador for Afghanistan Natalia Quintavalle and talked about humanitarian issues

in Afghanistan.

According to a statement from ARCS, the meeting was held in Doha, Qatar where the two sides conferred on current challenges in Afghanistan and sought solutions to them.

Deputy President of ARCS Mullah Nooruddin

Turabi appreciated Italy for its recent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and spoke about the problems and humanitarian needs of the Afghan people, the treatment of children suffering from heart defects, and some other health-related matters.

Ms. Natalia Quintavalle pledged her country's comprehensive cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society in delivering humanitarian assistance to underprivileged individuals in Afghanistan.

According to another report, Deputy President of ARCS Mullah Nuruddin Torabi, and his accompanying delegation met with the

British Ambassador for Afghanistan Robert Chatterton Dickson in Doha.

Deputy President of ARCS Mullah Nuruddin Torabi while acknowledging the support of the British government for the Afghan people, requested cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society in supplying humanitarian resources for Afghans.

British Ambassador to Afghanistan Robert Dixon has assured of his country's cooperation with the ARCS in the field of support for communities currently struggling with various forms of challenges.

Farzana runs own business, generates opportunities for others

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Seamstresses Farzana Barakzai from western Herat province is the breadwinner of nine-member family who runs a tailoring business and created work opportunities for some other women as well.

She has established a tailoring house in Herat City, the provincial capital, to earn livelihood for herself and some other women who work with her.

Farzan's daily earning is dependent on the running of her tailoring machine and she is now engaged working with one of the women business centre in Herat City.

Farzan started tailoring after the takeover of the Islamic 'Emirate of Afghanistan' (IEA) government and said eight months earlier she got her

work license and now she managed the entire tailoring house.

She said: "It has been eight months since I got the work permit from the government of the IEA, and now I have a tailoring house in this market, and eight women work with me, here I arrange the economic needs for my family."

She seems to be satisfied with her work, she earn up to 30,000 monthly but at the meantime she asked the government to provide opportunity for the export of tailoring products.

If export opportunity for the handicraft and garment products is provided their businesses of women entrepreneur would flourish.

She also stressed that government should not create hurdles in the way of businesswomen but it should sup-



port the business in women are involved.

Shamsizada, one of the women in this tailoring house, said she supported her family economically by work-

ing in the place.

She said if women are provided with work opportunities it would be a huge help with men back at home and the expenditures of homes would be

arranged in the most appropriate manner.

She note men were also struggling with work opportunities and said if equal work opportunities are arranged they could uplift their families financially.

Adeba Waziri, head of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the western part of the country, said government should take steps in three areas in order to improve women businesses.

Waziri stressed government should organized exhibitions, introduced ways to encourage export and discourage import so that business activities could further flourish in Herat.

Local authorities also pledged support to women business activities and

said steps had been taken in this regard.

Governor Spokesperson Mawlawi Nisar Ahmad Elyas said some exhibition with the support of local institutions had been organized in the province amid at support to women businesses and their products, currently, women in some markets are heading with their business activities without any hurdle.

It pertinent to mention that in the past two years, several sewing businesses have been established in Herat province, and after the closure of schools and universities, most girls and women have turned to the sewing profession in this province, and this had led to the creation employment opportunities for hundreds of women in this province.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi welcomes Omani Chief of Staff of Sultan Armed Forces, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al-Raisi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Bilawal: Everyone wanted to strengthen democracy

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a rare statement on the floor of the National Assembly, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari appealed to his "elders" to make decisions that would make politics easier for him and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz in the future and not similar to the one they faced 30 years ago.

Bilawal made the appeal in what looked like his final address to the National Assembly as the lower house of parliament is set to complete its term this month. The lower house's tenure will complete on August 12 but the government has hinted at moving a summary for the dissolution of the NA on August 9.

The PPP chief, who is also the foreign minister, deplored the state of politics in the country. While talking about the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, Bilawal said that he has been witnessing politicians go to jail or be in government since his childhood. If elections, he said, are held today or tomorrow whichever government comes the politics of rigging and sit-ins will continue.

"How much time did we get in 15 months to address the peoples' problems? Sometimes Islamabad was burning, sometimes Zaman Park was a battleground and sometimes incidents like May 9 happened," Bilawal added. He further said that it was the "responsibility" of the opposition to "fix its attitude" and also the one's sitting on the treasury benches to act like politicians. He added that both sides of the aisle should work on making politics and democracy stronger.

"I made a statement last week where I appealed to [former] president Zardari and Mian Nawaz Sharif to make such decisions that would make politics easier for Maryam and me in the future. And the way we are going, it seems our elders have made the decision that the politics they faced 30 years ago they want us to do the same politics," Bilawal said. The foreign minister told his fellow parliamentarians that the youth which comprises 65% of the country's population is "sick of the old politics".

"Seeing this [kind of] politics, they [youth] no longer trust us or anyone else," he added. Bilawal urged not just his own party — the PPP — but others as well to do politics in such a way that 65% of the population's

"hope remains alive". "We should not rob them of their hope because they will lead this country one day. And they should know that when they come after getting elected to this house, be it in opposition or government, we will try to resolve the problems of the people," he went on to say.

"I feel that in the last five years, we have learnt a lot and we will meet in elections," the foreign minister concluded. Earlier in his speech Bilawal mentioned the achievements they did during the five years they spent in the National Assembly. He added that he was proud that they did not resort to the politics of abuse and kept their point of view in a respectable manner.

"We all had the same intention, to rectify the mistakes that were made before us," said Bilawal. He added that everyone had the same idea of strengthening civilian institutions and restoring the dignity of the parliament. "Everyone wanted to strengthen democracy. History will decide whether we were successful in this endeavour or not," he said. He also lamented that during his time in government, they got an opposition that did not respect parliament and democracy.

PML-N on forefront to support journalists' struggle: Marriyum

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the entire leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz had been on the forefront to fully support the journalists' struggle for freedom of expression during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf regime.

Talking to the media after the meeting of Senate's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting in the Parliament House, the minister said she personally fought for the freedom of media along with journalists when the "media predator" was in power. Marriyum Aurangzeb said as a minister she had always faced criticism with a smile. She faced shouting incidents even at Masjid Nabawi (SAW) and in London too without being intimidated.

She recalled her struggle for freedom of expression, citing her protests along with the PML-N leadership out-

side Kot Lakhpat Jail and Attock Jail. The minister said consultations on the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill 2023 with all stakeholders continued for over 12 months. The minister said the bill was meant to protect the rights of journalists and media workers. Besides, Article 19 of the Constitution, definition of misinformation and disinformation were also added in the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023.

All the media organizations, including All Pakistan Newspapers Society, Council of Newspaper Editors and Pakistan Broadcasters Association were involved in the consultation process, she added. The minister said an attempt was made in the past to implement the black law of Pakistan Media Department Authority, but all the then opposition parties stood against it along with the media organizations.

She said the government was cognizant of the medical issues of jour-

nalists and media workers so it had launched the health insurance card scheme for them. Marriyum said as per the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023, it was mandatory for media houses to pay all dues of journalists and workers in two months. An objection was raised over payment of the dues in two months was a violation of labour laws, which was contrary to the facts, she added.

Under the amended bill, she said, all the powers of PEMRA chairman had been entrusted to the Authority as a whole, represented by the Council of Complaints. She said the government would not have carried out comprehensive consultations of 12 months if it had any desire to implement a black law. The minister said it might not be possible to incorporate the proposed amendments in the bill as the National Assembly would be dissolved after two days. She thanked the journalistic community for standing with her in the preparation of the bill.

Civilians trial in mily's courts: PHC orders submission reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Shahid Khan and Justice Khurshed Iqbal ordered both provincial and federal governments to submit records regarding the trial of civilians in military courts as well as directed Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for submission of record for constitution of Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to probe 9th & 10th May vandalism, on Monday.

The counsel Shah Faisal advocate argued that 33 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activists were arrested from Mardan on the 9th & 10th of May for vandalism in which seven workers have been transferred to military courts for trial.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa argued that identical cases are under proceedings at the Supreme Court of Pakistan and requested for adjournment till the conclusion of the matter at the apex court.

However, the counsel argued that Lahore High Court has granted petitioners whose petitions are under proceedings at SCP in attacking Lahore Corps Commander House while requested for granting relief to the applicants' alike bail.

The counsel argued for the release of petitioners on bail till the SCP decision and added that it is Public Interest Litigation (PIL) proceedings while assured to appearance before the court to face the trials.

In a writ petition seeking JIT to probe the 9th & 10th May vandalism, PTI's counsel argued that the party demanded the free and fair investigation of the incidents as well as

the identification of culprits involved in the hooliganism and agitating public for attacking public properties.

The counsel further contended that the JIT should be chaired by High Court's judges to place responsibility on the culprits involved in the vandalism and added that the provincial government didn't submit reply despite the court's orders on the previous hearing.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed objected to the maintainability of the writ, however, Justice Khurshed Iqbal ordered to submit comments as well as incorporate objections on the maintainability of the plea.

Court grants BBA to 17 PTI's workers: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Buner granted Bail before Arrest (BBA) to 17 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers including district president Kamran Khan while one activist Shahid Khan arrested from Totalai village and sent to judicial, on Monday.

PTI's workers reached court for BBA named Kamran Khan, Afsar Khan, Kabeer Khan, Syed Zeb, Irshad Alam, Balhrad Khan, Tor Nana, Muhammad Ali, Sajad Khan, Mian Moen, Qaisar Khan, Hashamand, Hashim and others. The PTI sole leader from Totali Shahid Khan surrendered before police and sent to judicial lock up. It's pertinent to mention here all of them were charged under section 188 PPC for violation the section 144 CrPC was imposed by deputy commissioner Arshad Qayum Barki on the day when PTI Chairman Imran Khan was arrested.

Maid torture case, Somalia Asim arrested

ISLAMABAD (INP): The suspect in Rizwana torture case was arrested after a district and sessions court in Islamabad on Monday rejected the bail plea of Somalia Asim — the wife of a civil judge — in a case pertaining to the alleged torture of an underage domestic help in the capital, and ordered police to arrest her.

On directives of court, the suspect was subsequently taken into custody by the capital police from the court's premises. Somalia Asim was booked in the case after she was accused of severely torturing a teenage maid, who was moved to the Lahore General Hospital in critical condition on July 24.

According to the Rizwana's medico-legal certificate (MLC), she had "laceration on head from vertex, on forehead, right side above eyebrow, swollen upper lips, laceration under upper lip on right side, broken left incisor and left canine, laceration on cheek, nose bleed, laceration on left side of vertex, multiple bruises on lower leg, fracture on right forearm, swollen left and right eyelids, bruise on right skull, laceration on back, multiple bruises on back and attempt on strangulation."

The Islamabad Police after showing reluctance had registered a first information report in the case on July 26. Initially, the police booked the judge's wife for criminal intimidation and wrongful confinement, without mentioning physical torture in the FIR. However, eight more sections — including murder — were later added to the FIR.

On July 28, the Lahore High Court (LHC) had granted protective bail to the judge's wife till August 1. Last week, a district and sessions court in Islamabad had granted the suspect pre-arrest bail in the case till August 7. However, upon the expiry of her pre-arrest bail, Somalia appeared before Additional District and Sessions Judge Farrukh Fareed Baloch who rejected the bail and directed her arrest.

Pak-China committed to boost ties

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan has said the areas of cooperation under Phase-II of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) include rural revitalization, agricultural development, industrialization, green development and science and technology.

This was stated by Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch at her weekly media briefing here in Islamabad on Monday. The Spokesperson said CPEC has brought huge dividends to Pakistan as manifested in the creation of over 200,000 jobs, addition of 8000 MW power to national grid, building of 510 kilometers of highways and 932 kilometers of road network, and a 820-kilometer long optical fiber line.

She said Pakistan and China are committed to enhance cooperation under CPEC and develop it as a connectivity project for the region. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said since 2019, India has taken a series of measures to alter the demographic makeup of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and intensified its suppression of the Kashmiri people. She said India has carried out a selective delimitation of electoral constituencies, issued fake domiciles to millions of non-Kashmiris, and added hundreds of thousands of temporary residents to alter the existing voter rolls.

The Spokesperson said these measures are aimed at disenfranchising the people of Kashmir and converting them into a disempowered minority in their own land in gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. She said Pakistan believes that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have the right to determine their own future in a UN-supervised plebiscite as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Imran 'in good spirits' despite tough conditions: Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leadership and legal team expressed alarm that the Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan was being kept in distressing conditions and provided "C-Class jail facilities" contrary to the claims of the government's ministers that he was given B-Class facilities in the captivity but his moral was high.

Addressing a press conference, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi flanked by PTI legal team Shoaib Shaheen, Sher Afzal Marwat and Naeem Haider Panjotha, said that government ministers said that Imran Khan had been provided all the facilities in the jail and he had no problem but they were concerned because the ground situation spoke otherwise.

Qureshi said that Naeem Haider Panjotha met PTI Chairman and found the situation contrary to the government's ministers' claims, who stated that Khan was given B-Class facilities. He deplored that the former prime minister of a country had been kept in inappropriate conditions, who was kept in a cramped cell in unhygienic condition, which was condemnable, adding that prisoners were brought to Attock Jail to suffer.

Qureshi stated that Section 144 was implemented, which was beyond comprehension, as the lawyers were denied meeting who was just wanted to meet him to sign the power of attorney, adding that meeting of family, lawyers and political leadership was a natural process. He went on to say that they would raise the issue at high judicial forum to get justice and to ensure his earliest release.

Speaking about PTI's victory in local bodies elections in KP, he said that the PTI core committee thanked the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed their happiness and gratitude for the historic victory. He said that Imran Khan had already stated that the people would vote to PTI even if he was in jail and the KPLG polls was the testimony of the nation trust on PTI and its Chairman.

Qureshi stated that owing to the rising popularity and fear of defeat, the ruling parties were resorting to delaying tactics to defer polls, asking that why the CCI meeting was called late when the census data was available in May. He said that the main purpose of convening the CCI meeting at this juncture was intended to delay the election, adding that the double standard of several parties exposed before the nation, as they claimed that the CCI meeting took the decision unanimously but some of their senior leaders were openly protesting the decision.

Qureshi stated that legal experts also raised a question regarding the CCI meet-

ing and many people have decided to challenge the move, adding that PTI core committee was of the opinion to challenge the decision after consulting lawyers. He made it clear that Imran Khan was, Imran Khan is and Imran Khan will remain the chairman PTI, who was the founding chairman and planted this plant, adding that Nawaz Sharif was not the head of the party, but Shahbaz Sharif has to get approval from London for the three names of caretaker prime minister. He stated that the decision under which Imran Khan has been disqualified has enormous legal flaws, God willing, this decision will be suspended.

Spokesman to Imran Khan on legal affairs Naeem Haider Panjotha claimed that the PTI Chairman was being kept in distressing conditions and provided C-Class jail facilities. Panjotha met the PTI chairman to find out about his health, as well as to get him to sign the power of attorney and to take instructions from him on the cases pending against him.

Narrating his conversation with Imran, he said: "I asked Khan about the situation in jail after his arrest. He said he is being kept in a dark, small, C-Class, chakki wala (manual labour) room, wherein it is difficult even to pray. He said there is an open washroom there, which does not have a shower. "He said the jail has flies in the morning and insects in the evening," Panjotha said. "Khan said he was being given the usual daal and saag ... but he said he had no issue in this regard because there was only two ways; freedom or slavery, adding that he was prepared if they moved him to a D-Class jail. However, he was happy with opportunity to read the Holy Quran.

"Imran Khan directed me to tell the media that he will never accept slavery," Panjotha stated, adding that the PTI Chairman also paid tribute to party workers and top leadership for their "steadfastness". "PTI Chairman also said that his house was attacked for the third time and attempts were made to break the door of his bedroom," the lawyer said. Panjotha said the former premier directed the party's legal team to take legal action against those who "attacked" Zaman Park and "kidnapped" him.

The lawyer also quoted Imran as saying that the public should continue their peaceful protests and continue this "war against slavery". Panjotha further claimed that Imran was not allowed to meet or talk to anyone over the phone. "I am the only person who has met him since the arrest," Khan, the lawyer continued, also expressed the difficulties he faced in offering prayers because of the small cell. "But at the same time he said he was determined despite and would never bow before slavery," Panjotha added.

PTI challenges Imran's conviction in SC

I S L A M A B A D (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Monday moved the Supreme Court asking it to declare Additional and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Humayun Dilawar's verdict in the Toshakhana case "null and void".

The petition was filed under Article 184(2) of the Constitution and sought to have the Toshakhana case be heard again, on the grounds that the PTI chief had not been given a fair trial. "A fundamental right under Article 10A, The Right to a Fair Trial, has been denied to Mr Imran Khan of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan in relation to his conviction in the Toshakhana case," the

petition read.

Khan was arrested and shifted to Attock jail on August 5 after the district and sessions court in the federal capital convicted him for corrupt practices related to the state gift depository — allegations which he denies. ADSJ Dilawar sentenced Khan to three years in jail, along with a fine of Rs100,000, while issuing an arrest warrant for his immediate arrest.

The petition argued that not only was the judgement passed in haste, it was also declared in Khan's absence and was "in complete disregard" of the directions of the Islamabad High Court (IHC). "That order of the Honourable Islamabad

High Court dated 04.08.2023 distinctly remanded back the issue of maintainability to the learned Additional Sessions judge with the directions to decide it afresh.

"However, undermining this directive, the Learned judge bypassed any fresh decision-making and dismissed the application in violating haste and without objective evaluation of the case, subverting principles of natural justice," the petition read.

Earlier, the party also approached the IHC petitioning that Khan be moved to Adiala jail and be provided better or A-Class facilities, since he was "accustomed to a better mode of life."

Govt stabilizes economy

(Continued from Page 1)

Minister for Board of Investment (BoI) Chaudhry Salik Hussain said CPEC had ushered in a new era of progress and development in various areas including energy, infrastructure, industrial development, agriculture, and science and technology. He said the mega project would help Pakistan localize the products that were currently being imported to fulfill the country's needs.

Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan Pang Chunxue said since its launch in 2013, the CPEC being the pilot project of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) had made remarkable contributions to the socio-economic development of local people of the country. She said China would always stand firmly with Pakistan and work together to coordinate the country's development and security areas.

PM awards Rs1m to SSC topper; directs govt to fund his education till masters degree: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced a Rs 1 million reward for a student who topped the Secondary School Examination of Gujranwala Board, besides announcing a monthly stipend of Rs 30,000.

The prime minister made the announcement as Jamshed Ali, the SSC topper met the prime minister along with his mother, teacher Waheed Ashraf and Chairman of the Gujranwala Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Naveed Haider Sherazi.

Minister for Federal Education and Training Rana Tanveer Hussain also attended the meeting.

The prime minister appreciated the student for his excellent performance and announced Rs 1 million reward for his encouragement. The prime minister instructed that the government should bear all of the educational expenditures of Jamshed Ali till his master's degree. He sought a commitment from the student to keep up showing excellence in his educational career ahead.

"The bright students like you are the pride of the nation. The credit for your success goes to the hard work of your parents as well as teachers. You are also a role model for other students of the country," the prime minister remarked.

PKLI University to serve as a hub of knowledge creation, innovation: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) University, which

he broke ground for a day earlier, would serve as a hub of knowledge creation, research and innovation to aid the Institute.

"Yesterday was a day of immense satisfaction for me, Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Center, which was conceived in 2015 to be John Hopkins of Pakistan, achieved a milestone. I laid the foundation-stone of PKLI University to serve as a hub of knowledge creation, research and innovation to aid PKLI," the prime minister wrote on a social media platform. He said a comprehensive nationwide program for the elimination of Hepatitis C was also resumed on Sunday under which filter clinics would be established across the country, for which the federal government had allocated Rs. 35 billion.

Additionally, he said, an endowment fund of Rs. 15 billion has also been set up whose proceeds would be used for the provision of free treatment to the poor. He commended Dr Saeed Akhtar, Dr Faisal Dar and the team of doctors, professionals and staff at PKLI as well as the government functionaries for their great national service. "Together we will make PKLI pride of the nation," the prime minister remarked.