

### MQM leaders call on PM F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was called on by MQM leaders Mustafa Kamal and Anis Qaimkhani here on Monday. During the meeting, several issues of bilateral interests came under discussion. The caretaker prime minister was apprised by problems of Karachi by MQM leaders and they thanked him for taking steps to resolve those issues.



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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing a meeting regarding power sector.

## 3 martyred in Pak Navy copter crash

F.P. Report

GWADAR: Two officers and a sailor martyred when a Pakistan Navy helicopter crashed due to technical fault in Gwadar on Monday. The chopper came down during a training flight, said a Pakistan Navy spokesman, adding the helicopter crashed due to technical fault. Pakistan Navy has launched an investigation into the mishap, the spokesman added.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the tragic incident of navy helicopter

crash in Gwadar.

Condoling the martyrdom of three personnel of Pakistan Navy, the prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty to grant courage to the bereaved families to bear the loss with equanimity.

In a statement posted on the PPP's account of X (formerly known as Twitter), former president Asif Ali Zardari also expressed sorrow over the incident and extended condolences to the families of the martyrs.

PML-N Senior Vice-President Maryam Nawaz, too, expressed grief over the lives lost in the Gwadar incident and prayed for the

martyred personnel.

Interior Minister paid tributes to the "brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty" and prayed for the departed souls and their families.

Last year in August, a military helicopter on flood relief mission in Balochistan had crashed due to bad weather, killing six people on board. Among those who perished were Lieutenant General Sarfraz Ali, a regional corps commander, a major-general and a brigadier. They were supervising flood relief and rescue efforts in the province, particularly the hard-hit Lasbela district.

## Alvi calls for supremacy of constitution

ISLAMABAD (INP):

Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam called on President Dr. Arif Alvi in Islamabad on Monday. They discussed many issues related to holding of General Elections in the country.

The President appreciated the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar's statement that the caretaker government would abide by the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on this issue. He emphasized the need for upholding supremacy of the Constitution, saying that decisions should be taken in accordance with spirit of the Constitution.

## ECP asked to issue polls schedule

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has asked the Election Commission to release the schedule of general elections in the country. The HRCP said that the uncertainty surrounding the elections should end and new delimitations should not be used as an excuse to further delay general polls.

In its statement, the HRCP added that there were reports of sectarian divisions being fueled to create an artificial political space for far-right political parties. In a statement issued by HRCP, it was said that the caretaker government should also look into the public protests, take note of the issues due to which people were being mobilised.

The ECP has decided to shorten the timeframe for fresh delimitation of constituencies, announcing the exercise will now be concluded by November 30 this year. According to a press release issued here Friday, the ECP made this decision after feedback from different political groups as part of its ongoing consultations process on the roadmap for the next general elections. Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja, who chaired Friday's meeting, averred that the ECP would ensure transparency of the delimitations exercise.

## 'Pervez, Moonis to be prosecuted'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Attaulah Tarar has said that former chief minister Pervez Elahi and Moonis Elahi will be prosecuted for their corruption in Punjab.

Talking to media persons here on Monday, he claimed that around Rs120 billion were consumed in the master plan of Lahore alone. Tarar further said such a big criminal was escorted to his home, where was the justice when the entire family was inside the jail. "Today there are talks of contempt of court on the police officers, what is the fault of the police officers", he questioned. The PML-N leader further stated, "The police officers are being given show cause notices. Passing such an order that the criminal should be dropped at home was the contempt of court in actual sense."

bruises on Rizwana's face could be seen in the pictures as well, to prove that her wounds were not new or caused by any torture. The argument was opposed by the complainant's lawyer Faisal Jutt. However, the court accepted Somalia's bail plea and directed her to submit surety bonds of Rs100,000 for the bail.

Meanwhile, the head of the medical board looking into Rizwana's case said that the child is still undergoing treatment at the hospital and is still unable to walk. He said that no decision had been taken regarding her head's grafting.

It may be noted that Rizwana had several major injuries including fractures and severe skin infection when she was brought to the hospital, but the most serious of them was the wounds in her head, which were "infested with maggots".

The matter came to light when the teenager was

shifted to a Lahore hospital with serious injuries, and her parents accused Somalia of allegedly torturing their child. The judge and his wife deny all the allegations, claiming that Somalia had never beaten Rizwana and that all injuries she had were due to a skin infection caused by eating "dirt". They also got a pre-arrest bail for the suspect to avoid arrest.

Despite immediate registration of an FIR, Somalia was arrested after a long wait on August 7 when a local court in the federal capital cancelled her bail. However, she once again managed to escape incarceration as the trial court approved her request for bail today.

It may be noted that Somalia's husband, Hafeez, is also required in the investigations of the case; but he hasn't appeared before the joint investigation team (JIT) probing the matter, despite several summons.

## Judge's wife gets bail in house help torture case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Civil judge Asim Hafeez's wife, Somia Asim, who is facing the allegations of brutally torturing her 14-year-old house help got relief on Monday, when a local court in Islamabad accepted her plea for release on bail.

Somia has been behind bars since her arrest last month after the harrowing case of inhumane treatment and physical abuse of a minor girl, Rizwana, at the former's hands surfaced on July 25.

During a hearing before additional sessions Judge Mohammad Haroon, the investigation officer, prosecutor, defence lawyer, complainant's lawyer and Rizwana's family appeared in the court. Defence lawyer Ghulam Dastgir presented some pictures from Somia and her family's trip to northern areas, where Rizwana also accompanied them.

He contended that the

## Elahi rushed to Islamabad hospital for treatment

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Former Punjab chief minister and PTI President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi fell ill in Attock Jail and was rushed to Islamabad for medical treatment on Monday. The police took Pervaiz Elahi from Attock Jail to the PIMS Hospital in Islamabad where the medical check-up of the PTI leader will be conducted.

Meanwhile, authorities in Islamabad deployed police inside and outside of the Heart Ward at PIMS hospital where Pervaiz Elahi will undergo medical treatment. On Friday, the Lahore High Court released Elahi and prohibited his arrest in connection with any First Information Report (FIR) or inquiry. But soon after he walked out of the court as a free man, the Islamabad police re-arrested him from near his house in defiance of explicit orders of the LHC. He was arrested under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) by the federal capital police in Lahore. This move was made at the behest of Islamabad District Magistrate Irfan

## LHC summons Punjab IGP over contempt of court

LAHORE (PPI): Lahore High Court on Monday summoned the IG Punjab in contempt of court case for re-arresting former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi despite court order.

Lahore High Court Chief Justice Amjad Rafique conducted hearing of the petition filed by former chief minister's wife Qaisra Elahi for not shifting the central president of Tehreek-e-Insaf Pervez Elahi to home safely. During the hearing, the court had summoned the DIG operations, DIG investigation and SP security and directed the three officers to appear in the court at 10:30 am. On behalf of the two officers, a reply was submitted in the court that they could not appear in the court due to being out of the province, on which the High Court summoned the IG Punjab, CCPO Lahore and other officers at 2 pm.

Nawaz Memon.

According to the magistrate's order, Elahi was an important leader of the PTI and there were many supporters of the party in Islamabad. He expressed the apprehension that Elahi and other PTI workers might disturb the law and order situation in Islamabad. The order said that Elahi was being detained for 15 days on the recommendation of senior superintendent of police (SSP) of the Special Branch and the Intelligence Bureau (IB)

on the reports of the Divisional Intelligence Committee. Elahi had the right to challenge this order in the court, it said.

On Saturday, Elahi moved to the Islamabad High Court challenging his detention, pleading with the court to declare the magistrate's order "patently illegal, unlawful, and without lawful authority". Elhi is imprisoned in the Attock Jail where PTI Chairman Imran Khan has also been incarcerated. But they are kept in separate cells.

# The Frontier Post

### Li to attend summit in India

BEIJING (APP): Premier Li Qiang of China's State Council will attend the 18th G20 Summit to be held in New Delhi, India on September 9 and 10, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced Monday. "As one of the major summits of international economic cooperation, member countries should strengthen partnerships and jointly face the challenges posed by the current world economy and development."

# PM orders action against power thieves, defaulters

— Govt to come up with out-of-box solution on power sector for public relief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday ordered immediate action against those involved in power theft in the country and asked relevant authorities to submit reports in this regard on the daily basis.

Chairing a meeting, the prime minister also directed to take swift action against electricity defaulters, saying there should not be any leniency towards electricity thieves and the defaulters. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed in detail about all sections of the energy sector.

The meeting was informed about the total installed capacity, actual generation and overall energy supply during various seasons. The prime minister was also informed about the energy mix in power production. PM Kakar stressed that in future, renewable and hydel sources of energy should be given top priority to produce inexpensive and green energy in the country.

He also directed to take effective measures to reduce the line losses of the power distribution companies. "A comprehensive plan should also be prepared and presented to implement the transformer metering project." He said projects of small hydel power projects should be planned under the guidance of relevant experts.

Such projects will not only generate low-cost electricity but also help in reducing the harmful effects of climate change, he said adding local coal should be preferred, instead of

expensive imported coal in coal power generation projects. The prime minister also directed to immediately start work on the construction of 2400 MW solar power projects while ensuring transparency in the entire process.

The government, he said would take all possible steps to reduce the circular debt of the power sector. The meeting was also informed about the progress on the establishment of the electricity energy market in the country. It was informed in the meeting that with the establishment of energy market in the country, the performance and capacity of the power sector would be effectively increased that would eventually help 27 million domestic consumers. It was also informed that most of the work by the Power Division had already been completed in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar assured that his government was exploring realistic options to come up with out-of-box solutions to provide relief to electricity consumers.

The prime minister, in an interaction with foreign media representatives, said the government would make informed decisions to satisfy the masses on the issue of electricity bills without deviating from the country's commitments with the international financial institutions. Mentioning the issues of circular debt, power theft and taxes, the prime minister said the government would introduce short-term solutions to the issue without undermining the agitating people.

He assured that the caretaker government was mandated to facilitate holding the general elections as early as possible while observing the constitutional obligations. He said the Constitution called for carrying out the delimitation of constituencies following the population census.

Prime Minister Kakar said without redesigning the government structure, the interim setup was mainly focused on rearranging the fiscal and monetary policies to build an edifice for economic revival. Calling the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) a strategy for economic revival, he said it focused on agriculture, mines and minerals, defence production and information technology.

However, he also spelled out the economic reform agenda of his government, saying that the imminent steps included the privatization of two or more power distribution companies. He said the reforms needed in taxation and power sectors, and his government would leave behind a basis for mid-level reforms.

Kakar said the government was pursuing a policy of doing the doable and providing a strategic direction to economic planning. To a question, he said all the registered political parties would be provided a level playing field to contest the general elections without any discrimination. However, he said in certain instances, political behaviour turned into vandalism and the country's law was already in vogue to deal with such conduct.

(Continued on Back Page)

## Imran's bail pleas unheard as judge goes on leave

ISLAMABAD (INP): The PTI lawyers have reached the court of Judge Raja Jawad Abbas for the bail of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and Vice-Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher case as the special court judge who conducts hearing of cases registered under the Official Secrets Act has gone on leave.

PTI lawyers Salman Safdar and Babar Awan appeared in Judge Abbas's court on Monday requesting him to conduct a hearing on the bail applications of Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi as the special court judge went on week-long leave. However,

Judge Abbas told them that he could hear the anti-terrorism court cases as a duty judge, but he was not authorized to hear cases registered under the Official Secrets Act. He advised the PTI lawyers that they should submit an application to the high court, and if the high court ordered him then he could hear their bail pleas.

Judge Abbas said that he was the admin judge of 24 courts. He also read out the procedure under which the judges perform their duties. He said the Official Secrets Act court was not among the 24 courts under his jurisdiction. He said that

only the high court could authorize him to hear the Official Secrets Act cases. The PTI lawyers requested the judge to help them out.

The judge said there were only two ways: either they should move to the high court or wait till Sept 9 when Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain would be back on duty. Then PTI lawyer Salman Safdar requested Judge Abbas to give them in writing that he had no authority to hear their bail applications so that they could fill up the form to obtain the high court's order. However, the prosecution team opposed the PTI lawyers' request.

## IHC restrains authorities from arresting Imaan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday ordered authorities to inform the court before arresting human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir in any case.

Imaan and former lawmaker Ali Wazir were arrested earlier this month. A pair of first information reports (FIR) were registered against the two at Islamabad's Tarnol police station and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station. The arrests were made two days after a public meeting, organised by the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). Wazir, a PTM member, and Imaan had both addressed the rally, with videos circulating on social media showing speakers criticising the military establishment over enforced disappearances.

On August 28, Imaan had received bail in the sedition case but was re-arrested within hours by the Islamabad police in connection with a freshly filed terror case. The following day, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) had handed her over to police on a three-day physical remand in the same case. Subsequently, on August 30, the IHC had barred the police from arresting Imaan in any case

registered after August 20 — when she was first arrested.

On September 2, Imaan was granted post-arrest bail in the terror case against surety bonds worth Rs10,000. She was subsequently released. Earlier today, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of the IHC took up Imaan's plea seeking the details of the first information reports (FIRs) registered against her and protective bail. The plea was filed last week.

At the outset of the hearing, Additional Attorney General (AAG) Munawar Iqbal Dogal informed the court that after the previous hearing, he had written to the provinces seeking the details of the cases against Imaan, as well as communicated the same over fax and WhatsApp. "The petitioner should not make such statements," the AAG added, referring to Imaan's speech during the PTM rally.

At this, Justice Aurangzeb said, "We are disposing of the case. If there is any [new] FIR, then you will inform the court."

In the plea filed last week on Tuesday, Imaan had sought "protective omnibus bail" to allow her to approach the relevant court for "bail before arrest and take part in the investi-

gation". The plea made the state, the Islamabad inspector general, city senior superintendent of police, Adiala Jail superintendent and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) respondents in the case.

It had urged the IHC to issue directives barring the respondents and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from "arresting, harassing or restricting" Imaan's liberty and from taking any adverse measure for a period determined by the IHC. The petition also requested the IHC to direct the respondents to provide details of all cases registered against the petitioner in Islamabad and the rest of the country.

**Petition filed in IHC for recovery of PTI's Sadaqat Abbasi:** A petition has been filed in Islamabad High Court on Monday for recovery of PTI's former MNA Sadaqat Abbasi. PTI's Babar Awan has submitted plea on behalf of Sadaqat Abbasi's brother in the high court. "Sadaqat Abbasi has been kidnapped by plain-clothed men, who didn't disclose their identity," petitioner said.

Petitioner sought the high court's order for presenting Abbasi in the court and his release from detention.

## US Consul General calls on KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan was called on by newly posted US Consul General in Peshawar, Bante Moore here at Chief Minister's House on Monday. The Chief Minister and US Consul General discussed at length matters of mutual interest, cooperation and collaboration among the provincial government and US donor agencies in different sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan said that the caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa highly values the cooperation of US government and its donor agencies in various sectors of the province, and expressed the hope that US government would continue to extend its support to the province.

He further said that the newly merged districts required special attention and cooperation of friendly countries and donor agencies because these areas are lagging behind in development as compared to other areas due to decades old militancy in the region, and these areas require more attention especially in basic infrastructure development adding that police infrastructure in the merged districts needs substantial improvement in order to ensure law and order. The Chief Minister said that advancement of educational opportunities for females was also one of the top priorities of the provincial government.

The caretaker provincial government would welcome American cooperation in these fields and would extend all out support in this regard. Speaking on the occasion, the US Consul General said that US government would continue to support public welfare initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with provincial government and public. He further said that the US government is also desirous to work on the preservation of archeological sites, historical buildings and cultural heritage of the province.

# CM inspects development projects in city

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Shahdara flyovers and the Nawaz Sharif Interchange Bedian Road underpass projects to assess the progress.

The Shahdara flyovers project is approximately 84 percent complete, while the Nawaz Sharif interchange Bedian Road underpass project has seen about 40 percent of its work finished.

During his visit to the Shahdara flyovers, Mohsin Naqvi closely examined the construction of protective walls and met with the project workers, urging them to continue their hard work diligently. He expressed satisfaction with the progress and instructed the creation of an alternative service road to facilitate traffic flow from Gujranwala. He emphasized the need to elevate the service road to improve traffic management and provided necessary directives to the Director General Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and the contractor to ensure timely completion of both projects within the specified time frame.

This project would permanently resolve traffic issues at entry and exit points of the provincial metropolis, he noted.Commissioner/ DG LDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa, chief engineer

LDA and contractor briefed that work on the Shahdara flyovers projects continues round the clock to achieve timely completion, which will significantly improve daily traffic flow for 300,000 vehicles.

Furthermore, the CM directed the acceleration of work on the Nawaz Sharif interchange Bedian Road underpass project as it would provide improved transportation facilities for the public while alleviating traffic congestion.

Additionally, the construction of the Bedian Road underpass at the Nawaz Sharif interchange is expected to benefit approximately 120,000 vehicles daily. CCPO and DC Lahore were also present.

**CM overflies Ring Road Southern Loop-III project for inspection:** Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi conducted an aerial inspection of the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-III project, here on Monday.Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Secretary Communication and Works (C&W) accompanied him during the visit.

The CM reviewed the ongoing construction work during an aerial inspection of the over 8-kilometre ring road stretch and gave instructions to the secretary C&W regarding the project's timely completion.

# Turkish CG calls on Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Turkish Consul General Cemal Sangu Monday called on Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab along with a delegation and discussed matters of bilateral interest.

Turkish Consulate Commercial Attache Eyyup Yildirim and Hilal Ibrahim accompanied the Turkish Consul General on this occasion. Barrister Murtaza Wahab welcomed the Consul General of Turkey and his delegation on their arrival at the KMC head office.

He said that the relations between the Republic of Turkey and Pakistan were a great example of long-standing friendship.

Turkey provided cooper-

ation in various fields, the people of Pakistan are proud of their deep friendship with Turkey, he said.

He said that the relations between Pakistan and Turkey would become more stable with the passage of time.

He informed the Turkish Consul General in Karachi about the local government system and said that facilities were being provided to the citizens by developing the basic infrastructure.

He said Karachi was the commercial hub of Pakistan and industrial and commercial activities continue here throughout the year. Karachi has a special importance in this region due to its unique location.

# School principal arrested on sexual assault charges

KARACHI (NNI): Police on Monday arrested principal of a private school on the charges of sexual assault in Gulshan-e-Hadeed area.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Muneer Hassan Sardar, 25 videos related to the alleged misconduct and sexual assault were recovered during a search of the suspect's office.

He explained that the accused used to entice women with promises of employment and then subject them to sexual assault. He used to black-mail the victims by showing them the recorded acts of assault. It was revealed that five women who had become victims of sexual assault at the suspect's office had been identified, and further information would be gathered from the affected women.

On the other hand, Inspector General of Police (IG) Sindh, Raffat Mukhtar, has taken notice of the incident sought a detailed report from SSP Muneer Hassan Sardar. He stressed the need for an impartial and transparent investigation to bring the case to a logical conclusion.

Meanwhile, Sindh Education Minister Rana Hussain formed a four-member inquiry committee in this regard.

According to Additional Director Registration, the committee is headed by Deputy Director Qurban Bhutto and includes Assistant Director Mamtaaz Kambrani, Zaid Magzi, and Javed Qazi as its members.

They will conduct a thorough investigation of the school, gather details, and take further action based on the facts and recommendations of the committee.

# Daycare centre to be set up at PINS Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Newly-appointed Executive Director PINS and renowned Neurosurgeon Prof. Dr. Asif Bashir announced establishment of a daycare centre at the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS).

He was speaking at the reception given to him as well as the farewell party held for Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr. Khalid Bin Aslam. The female staff welcomed announcement about establishment of the daycare centre.

Senior professors, doctors, nurses, President Health Support Staff Association Rana Pervaiz and a large number of employees participated in the event.

Prof. Asif Bashir said in his opening remarks that no task could be completed properly without teamwork. He added that there was a greater need to adhere to the principles for the sake of proper treatment of patients.

Prof. Asif Bashir said that for smooth running of any system, along with regular feedback, monitoring of treatment procedures was also indispensable as it would not only resolve the complaints of patients but also ensure proper activities and services of health professionals. He said he was convinced that the abilities of each person could be utilised so he would get benefit of everyone and take him along.



# NOTICE OF 30<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 30th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of **Lucky Cement Limited** (the “Company”) will be held and conducted on **Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 12:00 noon**, at the registered office of the Company situated at factory premises in Pezu, District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to transact the following businesses:

## ORDINARY BUSINESS:

- To receive, consider and adopt the audited financial statements of the Company, together with the Board of Directors' and Independent Auditors' reports thereon, for the year ended June 30, 2023.

In accordance with Section 223 of the Companies Act, 2017, and pursuant to S.R.O. 389(I)/2023 dated March 21, 2023, the financial statements of the Company have been uploaded on the website of the Company which can be downloaded from the following weblink and QR enabled code:

<https://www.lucky-cement.com/investor-relations/downloads/financial-reports/>



- To declare and approve final cash dividend @ 180%, i.e. PKR 18/- per ordinary share of PKR 10/- each, for the year ended June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Board of Directors.

- To appoint Auditors of the Company and fix their remuneration for the year ending June 30, 2024. The present Auditors, M/s. A. F. Ferguson & Co., Chartered Accountants, retire and being eligible, have offered themselves and consented for re-appointment, and the Board of Directors has recommended their appointment.

## SPECIAL BUSINESS:

- To consider, and if thought fit, alter the Articles of Association of the Company in accordance with Section 38 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2017, and in that connection to pass the following resolutions as special resolutions, with or without modification:

**“RESOLVED THAT Articles 110 and 111 of the existing Articles of Association of the Company be substituted to read as follows:**

*“110. The Board of Directors shall be empowered and may resolve that any part of the amounts for the time being standing to the credit of any reserves, or other special accounts, or the profit and loss account, or representing premiums received on the issue of shares and standing to the credit of the share premium account, or capital reserves, including arising from realized or unrealized appreciation of the assets or goodwill of the Company or from any acquisition / sale of interest in other undertakings, or amounts otherwise available for distribution, be capitalized and distributed amongst the Members as would be entitled thereto if the same were if distributed by way of dividend and in the same proportions on the condition that the same be not paid in cash (subject to Article 111) but be applied either in or towards paying up any amounts for the time being unpaid on any shares held by such Members respectively, or paying up in full unissued shares or debentures of the Company to be allotted and distributed credited as fully paid up to and amongst such Members in the proportion aforesaid, or partly in the one way and partly in the other.*

*111. Whenever such a resolution as aforesaid has been passed by the Board of Directors, the Directors shall make all appropriations and applications of the undistributed profits, reserves etc. (as the case may be) resolved to be capitalized thereby, and all allotments and issues of fully paid shares or debentures, if any, and generally shall do all acts and things required to give effect thereto, with full power to the Board of Directors to make such provisions (including by payment in cash) as they think fit for the case of shares or debentures becoming distributable in fractions and also to authorize any person(s) to enter on behalf of all the Members entitled thereto into an agreement with the Company providing for the allotment to them respectively, credited as fully paid up, of any further shares or debentures to which they may be entitled upon such capitalization, or (as the case may require) for the payment up by the Company on their behalf, by the application thereto of their respective proportions of the profits resolved to be capitalized, of the amounts or any part of the amounts remaining unpaid on their existing shares, and any agreement made under such authority shall be effective and binding on all such Members.”*

**FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Company Secretary be and is hereby authorized to prepare, finalize, execute and file all necessary documents, and take all necessary steps, fulfil necessary formalities and legal procedures, and to do all such acts, deeds and things for and on behalf of, and in the name of the Company, as may be necessary or required as he may think fit for, or in connection with, or incidental for, the purposes of the above mentioned resolution, as well as carry out any other act or step which may be ancillary and / or incidental to, and necessary to fully achieve the objects of the aforesaid resolution, including without limitation, filing of requisite documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan.”

- To consider and if deemed fit, ratify and approve (as the case may be), the following resolutions, as special resolutions, with respect to related party transactions / arrangements conducted / to be conducted, in terms of Sections 207 and / or 208 of the Companies Act, 2017 (to the extent applicable), with or without modification:

**“RESOLVED THAT** the transactions carried out by the Company with different Related Parties, during the year ended June 30, 2023, as disclosed in note 39 of the unconsolidated financial statements of the Company for the said period, and specified in the Statement of Material Information under Section 134(3), be and are hereby ratified and confirmed.

**FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Company be and is hereby authorized to enter into arrangements or carry out transactions from time to time including, but not limited to, for the purchase and sale of goods, commodities and materials including cement, chemicals, vehicles, or availing or rendering of services or share subscription, with different related parties to the extent deemed fit and / or approved by the Board of Directors, during the financial year ending June 30, 2024. The members have noted that for the aforesaid arrangements and transactions some or a majority of the Directors may be interested. Notwithstanding the same, the members hereby grant an advance authorization and approval to the Board Audit Committee and the Board of Directors of the Company, including under Sections 207 and / or 208 of the Companies Act, 2017 (to the extent applicable) to review and approve all related party transactions as per the quantum approved by the Board of Directors from time to time.

**FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the related party transactions, for the period ending June 30, 2024, shall be deemed to have been approved by the members, and shall subsequently be placed before the members in the next Annual General Meeting for ratification and confirmation.”

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- To transact any other business with the permission of chair.

(A Statement of material facts under Section 134(3) of the Companies Act, 2017pertaining to the Special Businesses to be transacted at the Annual General Meeting is being sent to the shareholders and also available at Company's website (www.lucky-cement.com).

By Order of the Board  
**FAISAL MAHMOOD**  
Company Secretary

Karachi: September 05, 2023

## Notes:

### 1. Closure of Shares Transfer Books

The Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Saturday, September 16, 2023 to Tuesday, September 26, 2023 (both days inclusive). Share transfers received in order at the office of our Share Registrar / Transfer Agent, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.M.C.H.S., Main Shakra-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400, by the close of business on Friday, September 15, 2023 shall be treated as being in time for the purpose of attending, and voting at, the AGM and entitlement of receiving cash dividend, if approved by the members.

It is clarified to the members that dividend shall not be payable in respect of shares of the Company which have already been purchased by the Company prior to the close of business on September 15, 2023, as part of the Company's on-going buy-back of its shares (which are to be cancelled).

### 2. Participation in the AGM, via physical presence including through proxy

Members whose names appear in the Register of Members as of September 15, 2023, are entitled to attend and vote at the AGM. A member entitled to attend and vote at the AGM is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend, speak and vote for him / her.

An instrument of proxy applicable for the AGM is being provided with the Notice sent to the members. Proxy form may also be downloaded from the Company's website: <http://www.lucky-cement.com>. An instrument of proxy and the power of attorney or other authority (if any) under which it is signed, or a certified true copy of such power or authority duly notarized must, to be valid, be deposited through email on [Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com](mailto:Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com) or by post at the registered address of the Company's Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL) not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time of AGM, excluding public holidays.

Members are requested to submit a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) at the registered address to our Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL).

If a member appoints more than one proxy and more than one instrument of proxy is deposited by a member, all such instruments of proxy shall be rendered invalid.

### 3. Participation in the AGM through video conferencing:

- To attend the AGM through video-conferencing facility, members are requested to register themselves by providing the following information through email at [Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com](mailto:Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com) at least forty-eight (48) hours before the AGM: (i) the Name of Member; (ii) CNIC / NTN No.; (iii) Folio No. / CDC IAS No.; (iv) Cell No.; and (v) Email Address.
- Members will be registered, after necessary verification as per the above requirement and will be provided a video-link by the Company via email.
- Only those members will be accepted at the AGM via video-conferencing whose names match the details shared with the Company for registration (as mentioned in point 'a' above).
- The login facility will remain open from 11:30 a.m., till the end of AGM.

### 4. Guidelines for Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited ('CDC') Investor Account Holders:

CDC Investor Account Holders will further have to follow the under-mentioned guidelines as laid down in Circular No. 1 dated January 26, 2000, issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

- For attending the AGM:
  - In case of individuals, the investor account holder or sub-account holder and / or the person whose securities are in group account where registration details are uploaded as per the CDC Regulations, shall authenticate his / her identity by showing his / her original CNIC or valid passport at the time of attending the AGM.
  - In case of a corporate entity, the Board of Directors' resolution / Power of Attorney with specimen signature of the nominee shall be produced at the time of the AGM.
- For appointing Proxies:
  - In case of individuals, the investor account holder or sub-account holder and / or the person whose securities are in group account and their registration details are uploaded as per the CDC Regulations, shall submit the proxy form as per the above requirement.
  - The proxy form shall be witnessed by two persons whose names, addresses and CNIC numbers shall be mentioned on the form.
  - Copies of CNIC or the valid passport of the beneficial owners and the proxy shall be furnished along with the proxy form.
  - The proxy shall produce his original CNIC or original valid passport at the time of the AGM.
  - In case of a corporate entity, the Board of Directors' resolution / Power of Attorney with specimen signature shall be submitted (unless it has been provided earlier) along with proxy form to the Company.

### 5. Unclaimed shares and dividend

The members who have not yet claimed their shares and cash dividends, which are either kept with the members themselves or returned as undelivered to the Share Registrar and Transfer Agent of the Company, are requested to make a claim for such unpaid/unclaimed dividends and/or shares with the Company.

Claims can be lodged by members on claim forms as are available on the Company's website. Claim forms must be submitted to the Company's Share Registrar, M/s. CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), for receipt of dividend / shares.

### 6. E-voting and Postal Ballot

It is hereby notified that pursuant to the Companies (Postal Ballot) Regulations, 2018 and its amendments notified vide SRO 2192(1)/2022 dated December 5, 2022, members will be allowed to exercise their right to vote for the special business(es) in the AGM, in accordance with the conditions mentioned in the aforesaid Regulations. The Company shall provide its members with the following options for voting:

- E-Voting Procedure
  - Details of the e-voting facility will be shared through an e-mail with those members of the Company who have their valid CNIC numbers, cell numbers, and e-mail addresses available in the register of members of the Company within due course. Members who intend to exercise their right of vote through E-Voting shall provide their valid cell numbers and e-mail addresses on or before September 15, 2023.
  - The web address, login details, will be communicated to members via email.
  - Identity of the members intending to cast vote through E-voting shall be authenticated through authentication for login.
  - E-Voting lines will start from September 20, 2023, 9 a.m. and shall close on September 25, 2023 at 5 p.m. Members can cast their votes any time in this period. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by a member, he / she shall not be allowed to change it subsequently.
- Postal Ballot
  - Members may alternatively opt for voting through postal ballot. For convenience of the members, Ballot Paper is annexed to this notice and the same is also available on the Company's website [www.lucky-cement.com](http://www.lucky-cement.com) to download.
  - The members shall ensure that duly filled and signed ballot paper, along with copy of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) should reach the Chairman of the meeting through post at 6-A Muhammad Ali Housing Society, Karachi (Attention of the Company Secretary) by Monday, September 25, 2023 before 5:00 p.m. The signature on the ballot paper shall match with the signature on CNIC. A postal ballot received after this time / date shall not be considered for voting.

### 7. Withholding tax on Dividend

In compliance with Section 150 read with Division I of Part III of the First Schedule of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, withholding tax on dividend income will be deducted for 'filer' and 'non-filer' shareholders at 15% and 30% respectively. A 'filer' is a taxpayer whose name appears in the Active Taxpayers List (ATL) issued by the FBR from time to time and a 'non-filer' is a person other than a filer. To enable the Company to withhold tax at 15% for filers, all members are advised to ensure that their names appear in the latest available ATL on FBR's website, otherwise tax on their cash dividend will be deducted at 30% for non-filers. Withholding tax exemption from the dividend income shall only be allowed if a copy of valid tax exemption certificate is made available to the Share Registrar, / Transfer Agent CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), of the Company by the first day of book closure.

According to the clarification from the FBR, withholding tax in case of joint accounts will be determined separately based on the 'Filer/ Non-Filer' status of the principal member as well as the status of the joint holder(s) based on their shareholding proportions. Members that hold shares with joint shareholders are requested to provide the shareholding proportions of the principal member and the joint holder(s) in respect of shares held by them to our Share Registrar / Transfer Agent, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL) in writing. In case the required information is not provided to our Registrar it will be assumed that the shares are held in equal proportion by the principal member and the joint holder(s).

### 8. Conversion of Physical Shares into the Book Entry Form

The SECP through its letter No. CSD/ED/Misc/2016- 639-640 dated March 26, 2021 has advised listed companies to adhere to provisions of Section 72 of the Companies Act, 2017 by replacing physical shares issued by them into book entry form.

Members having physical shareholding are encouraged to open CDC sub - account with any of the brokers or Investor Account directly with the CDC to convert their physical shares into scrip less form. This will facilitate them in many ways, including safe custody and sale of shares any time they want, as the trading of physical shares is not permitted as per existing regulations of the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

### 9. Submission of the CNIC/NTN details (Mandatory)

In accordance with the notifications / directives of the SECP vide SRO 779(1)/2011 dated August 18, 2011 and SRO 83(1)/2012 dated July 5, 2012, dividend warrants should bear CNIC number of the registered member or the authorized person, except in case of minor(s) and corporate members. Accordingly, members who have not yet submitted copy of their valid CNIC or NTN (in case of corporate entities) are requested to submit the same to the Company's Shares Registrar. In case of non-compliance, the Company may withhold dispatch of dividend warrants under intimation to the regulator till such time they provide the valid copy of their CNIC / NTN (as the case may be) as per law.

### 10. Provision of International Banking Account Number (IBAN Detail)

In accordance with the provisions of Section 242 of the Companies Act, 2017 and SECP's Circular No. 421(I) 2018 dated March 19, 2021, it is mandatory for a listed Company to pay cash dividend to its members only through electronic mode directly into bank account designated by the entitled member. In this context, in order to receive dividends directly into their bank account, members having shareholding in physical form are requested to provide their IBAN details duly signed along with a copy of CNIC to the Registrar of the Company CDC Share Registrar Services Limited. Members having shareholding in book entry form in CDS are advised to submit their IBAN details directly to relevant broker/ participant/CDC Investor Account Services. In case of non-receipt of information, the Company will be constrained to withhold payment of dividend to members.

### 11. Availability of Financial Statements and Reports on the Website

In accordance with the Provision of Sections 223(6) and (7) of the Companies Act, 2017, the audited financial statements of the Company for the year ended June 30, 2023 are available on the Company's website.

Notwithstanding the above, the Company will provide hard copies of the audited financial statements, to any Member on their request, at their registered address, free of cost, within one (1) week of receiving such request.

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## Man assisted by wife loots in-laws' house

PESHAWAR (APP): A man, with the assistance of his wife, committed a burglary worth hundreds of thousands of rupees at the house of his mother-in-law in Hayatabad area here.

SP Cantt Division, Waqas Rafiq said the thief and his wife have been arrested and all the stolen valuables have been recovered from them. The thief's wife and his mother-in-law belong to Afghanistan, he said.

SSP Cantt Division said a report was lodged by the wife of Usman about a burglary at her house, following which police started investigation into the incident.

He said footage of the area CCTV cameras were collected and statements of the affected family members were also recorded.

Meanwhile, he said the police sorted out that the son-in-law of the affected woman and her daughter were involved in the theft. Police arrested the thief named Shoaib and his wife who later confessed to committing burglary. The accused Shoaib was shifted to Hayatabad police station for interrogation while the woman was shifted to women police station for investigation.

The SSP said the accused was jobless and he along with his wife planned to loot the house of his in-laws. A cash amount of Rs 1.2 million, 40000 Afghan currency, 4200 American dollars and gold ornaments were recovered from them. A case was registered against them at Hayatabad police station.

## Dengue cases increased

PESHAWAR (APP): The Health Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday wrote a letter to all district administrations warning of an upward trend in dengue cases in different districts of the province during the last 24 hours and advised vigorous precautionary measures to curb the spread.

According to a report from the health department, during the last 24 hours, the number of dengue-infected cases had reached 97 with maximum of 25 cases reported from Peshawar.

Similarly, 19 cases were reported from Swabi, Mardan 13, Chitral Lower seven, Bajaur and Kohat six each, Batagram four, Nowshera three, DI Khan three, Abbottabad, Dir Lower and Khyber two each and one each from Hangu, Torghar, Mansehra, Lakki Marwat and Bannu.

## PCF released election schedule



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Cycling Federation has released the complete election schedule and Election rules for its upcoming four-year election 2023.

The election form has been sent to all the voting members on 27th August, 2023, the date of collection of nomination from will be received on 5th September, 2023 at the official address of the Federation by 5pm on 5th.

After checking the scurrying of forms of all the nomination members, the list will be weighed on 11th September, and it is the last day to submit the voter names. The date of submission of objections will be September 12. After hearing the objections and the final decision, the final list of the names of the candidates will be issued. The candidate can be withdrawn on 14th September.

Election will be held at Islamabad and polling will be start from 10.30 am to 1.00pm. All members will carry updated cycling license and National Identification Card with them. If any member needs any information, they can get all the information from Taffir Zareen Secretary Cycling.

## Smuggling of essential commodities: KP CS orders operations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary on Monday directed intelligence-based operations against smuggling and hoarding of essential commodities.

He gave the instruction while presiding over a meeting of the provincial task force on anti-smuggling and hoarding of essential commodities and other items.

The Chief Secretary said that, constituted on the direction of the Prime Minister, the task force would ensure that smuggling and hoarding of essential commodities are halted and strict action is taken against violators as per law.

The forum was apprised that sufficient stock of sugar was available in the province, which would last until the start of the sugar

crushing season in mid-November, provided that smuggling and hoarding of the commodity was controlled. To stop currency smuggling, scanning and full body searches at airports and border points are standard procedures.

It was further informed that 21 provincial joint check posts had been established in border districts, manned by officials of the agriculture and food department, the police, and the district administration.

The Chief Secretary stressed upon the authorities to work in close coordination to tackle the sugar crisis, smuggling of currency, POL, timber, and fertilizers.

Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary said that task force meetings would be regularly held fortnightly. Officials of good repute should be posted at border points, he said performance reports about checkpoints

would be sought from intelligence agencies and the special branch.

The Chief Secretary directed that timber cutting and smuggling be discouraged as this severely reduce forest cover.

The meeting was attended by administrative secretaries, representatives of police, customs, intelligence agencies, and others.

## US CG calls on CS

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The newly appointed United States Consul General in Peshawar, Shante Moore, called on the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary here on Monday.

During the introductory meeting, bilateral cooperation in different areas came under discussion.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary presiding over a meeting of Provincial Task Force.

## Man held with 86 heroin-filled capsules

PESHAWAR (PPI): A man carrying 86 heroin-filled capsules in his stomach was held at Bacha Khan International Airport in Peshawar, police said Monday.

According to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), the accused was a resident of Khyber district, and he was leaving for Dubai before being arrested.

In a major action at Karachi International Container Terminal, the ANF recovered a large number of bottles of liquor from a container sent from Dubai.

As many as 8,520 bottles of foreign liquor were booked for a private company in Karachi. The ANF carried out two operations near the Motorway Toll Plaza in Islamabad.

In the first operation, it recovered 2kg of hashish and 480 grams of ice drug from two suspects in a passenger bus.

In the second operation, six packets of hashish were recovered from Toba Tek Singh. The total weight of the hashish recovered from him was 7.2kg.

Similarly, the ANF recovered 464 drug pills from an accused on University Road, Peshawar.

The accused, a resident of Hangu, confessed to selling drugs to university students.

Likewise, 20kg of hashish, concealed for the purpose of smuggling, was recovered from the Zakha Khel area of Khyber.

Cases were registered

against all the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and investigations were launched.

**APP adss:** The Excise police in collaboration with Excise Intelligence Bureau on Monday apprehended three drug peddlers and recovered 60 kg of narcotics in two major crackdowns during 48 hours.

According to Excise Department spokesperson, Excise police conducted operations on Jameel Chowk, Ring Road and Northern Bypass Service Road here and recovered 30 kg of hashish and 30 kg of opium from three drug peddlers.

The excise police registered cases against the arrested accused and started investigation.

## PCSP conducts special CNIC registration drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Community Support Project (PCSP) in collaboration with the National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) has successfully conducted a two-day drive in the Telaband Ghalibkhal area of Frontier Region Peshawar.

The special CNIC registration drive was organized particularly for the women in the area as part of the project's commitment to bring public service delivery at the community doorstep.

The initiative was part of the project's social development initiatives to facilitate women community members in obtaining

Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) in a convenient manner.

On the first day of the drive, a total of 50 community members availed the opportunity to acquire or modify their CNICs at their doorstep.

Among the beneficiaries, 29 were male and 21 were female, hailing from the PCSP target areas in district Peshawar.

The second day also witnessed an equally positive response, with 41 individuals benefiting from the special facility. Out of this group, 18 were male and 23 were female.

The PCSP has provided improved access to infrastructures and services through a range of measures which have adopted

the community-driven development approach.

Following the success of the CNIC Drive in different parts of district Khyber, the PCSP initiative was met with enthusiasm and appreciation from the local community.

The convenience and accessibility of the CNIC drive has enabled them, women in particular, to fully benefit from this facility. It is noteworthy to mention here that the community members expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to acquire their CNICs without having to travel long distances.

The PCSP will be heading out to the project areas in district Nowshera in the next phase of the CNIC Drive.



PESHAWAR: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami District Peshawar Bahrullah Khan Advocate addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



PESHAWAR: US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

## Education Deptt warns action

PESHAWAR (APP): The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education while expressing concerns over the "very poor" results of the government schools in Peshawar in the SSC examination 2023 had sought details of the schools for strict action against the officials responsible.

According to a letter from the department, explanations of the district education officers (DEO) male and female were called, regarding the below 50 per cent results of the government schools in the SSC examination, while they were also asked to provide details of the subject teachers, enrolment in class 9th and 10 and subject wise result percentage of both the classes.

The department has decided to take action against both the DEOs and subject teachers for unsatisfactory performance in matriculation exams.

According to the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Peshawar the result of Government Higher Secondary School Khawaida Khel was zero per cent, GGHS Hazar Khwani (Science) five, Achini Payan School eight, Wazir Bagh 26 per cent, GGHS Sufaid Sang and GGHS No 2 Peshawar Cantt 27 per cent, GGHS Civil Quarters 28, GGHS BSD 30, GGHS University Town and GGHS City Railway Station 31, GGHS Hazar Khwani (Art) 33, GGHS Wazir Bagh 41, GGHS Dabgari Gate 47, GGHS Khyber Colony and GGHS Kukar 48.

## ICS teaching staff polls scheduled

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The election for Islamia Collegiate School Teaching Staff Association has been on 12th September, on Monday.

The scheduled was announced by Election Commissioner Islamia Collegiate School while 6 September is last date for submission of nomination forms.

Moreover, scrutiny should be held on 7 September while provisional list will be displayed on 11th and polls to be conducted on 12th September.

## PBS to participates in Butterfly Month

PESHAWAR (APP): The recently launched Pakistan Butterfly Society (PBS) has decided to take part in regionally observed 'Butterfly Month' and walks have been planned to be held in different cities for highlighting importance of butterflies.

"This is first time that Pakistan is taking part in 'Butterfly Month' to be observed in South Asian region in the month of September and will help in promotion of butterfly monitoring through capturing of pictures in the country," observed Muhammad Akram Awan, an ardent butterfly lover, researcher and founder of Pakistan Butterfly Society.

Talking to APP here on Monday, Muhammad Akram informed that for the first time in August 2023, Pakistan Butterfly Society has been launched with members from different cities of the country.

The Pakistan Butterfly Society has developed its facebook page and the team members are uploading pictures of butterflies being found in different parts of the country.

## Supplying clean drinking water: Govt to utilize all resources: CM's aide

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to KP Caretaker Chief Minister on Public Health Engineering (PHE) and Communications & Works, Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah has said that all resources will be utilized for uninterrupted supply of clean drinking water to the people across the province.

He expressed these views during a briefing regarding the Public Health Engineering Department here on Monday. Besides, Additional Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Chief Engineers, Executive Engineers of the department were present on the occasion.

The Advisor further directed the up-gradation and activation of all completed schemes on emergency basis beside modern training of staff including timely release of funds and approval of new projects under public private partnership and practical steps and initiating of practical steps for the achievement of the recovery of the water charges.

He also directed for bringing further improve-

ment in the monitoring system of the ongoing development projects and their completion within the stipulated time period.

Director Technical Waseem Marwat while giving a briefing said that there are 7991 water supply schemes in the settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2151 water supply schemes in the newly merged districts providing potable water to 5.27 million people.

Similarly, the ongoing development projects include 80 annual development programme (ADP), 12 Accelerated Implementation Programme (AIP) funded schemes in NMDs and 102 other schemes including three foreign-funded schemes, which will cost Rs 3146 million. Out of the allocated fund 79 per cent of the budget has already been released so far.

Amongst the mega projects, Rehmanabad, Shakardara schemes will cost 2085 million rupees and benefit 77000 people. Other mega schemes include Khaal (Dir Lower),

Atla Dam (Swabi), Havilian (Abbottabad) gravity based scheme, Mansehra Gravity Scheme and Ali Masjid Scheme (Khyber), Malk Yar Gravity Based scheme and Lowaghar Dam to Karak City Gravity Scheme.

The advisor was further informed that this year the recovery target in head of water charges is Rs. 300 million from 3,32603 users.

The advisor directed for taking steps to bring improvement in the water quality monitoring system under the e-governance, extension of material testing laboratories to all districts of the province and shifting the maximum number of schemes on solar energy.

He directed further activation of the Research and Development Cell of the department, bringing more reforms and provision of internship to young engineers and researchers in various projects and signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with professional universities in this regard.

## DC chairs meeting to improve educ standards

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahd on Monday chaired a meeting to discuss the ways to enhance the educational standards in government schools.

The meeting was attended by officials from the education department, including the District Education Officer female.

During the meeting, in-

depth discussions were conducted regarding the educational standards and facilities in Peshawar's government schools. Shah Fahd instructed the officials to further improve the educational standards in these schools.

He stressed the importance of officials regularly visiting schools, assessing educational standards and

facilities, and submitting their reports.

Furthermore, it was decided that Peshawar's monitoring team would conduct ongoing inspections of schools. Postings and transfers would only take place after the specified tenure had been completed, with principals playing a vital role in enhancing educational standards.



PESHAWAR: Minister Irshad Qaiser presiding over a meeting of performance of Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Department.

## KMU withdraws increase in examination fee

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar on Monday decided to withdraw the increase of 10% in various examination fees.

This decision has been taken after a special meeting held with the vice chancellors of the public sector universities of the province under the chairmanship of Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali, in which the Governor advised the vice chancellors of all the universities to withdraw the recent increase of 10 per cent in the examination fee.

It is worth mentioning that the tuition and examination fees of all the public sector medical and dental colleges, nursing and allied health sciences institutes of KMU have not been increased for the past several years, however, according to the rules, to meet the examination expenses and staff compensation and transportation, along with this, due to significant increase in paper and printing costs, it was decided to increase the examination fees at the rate of 10 percent,

which was approved by all the relevant forums of the University including Finance and Planning Committee, Syndicate and Senate.

But now, on the directives of the Governor, the decision of this 10 percent increase has also been withdrawn in the larger interest of parents and students.

This decision has been enthusiastically welcomed by the parents and students

and it is expected that with this decision the parents and students will get immediate relief.

They expressed their gratitude to the Governor and the vice-chancellor of KMU for this timely decision and hoped that this people-friendly decision will provide considerable relief to the parents and students who are already suffering from inflation.

## DG Livestock directs officials to perform duties properly

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General, Livestock and Dairy Development Department KP Dr. Alamzeb on Monday strictly instructed all district officers and project directors to discharge their responsibilities efficiently and perform official duties properly. Action will be taken against the officials who show lethargy in fulfilling their official obligations under the rules and regulations. He said this in a meeting all the district officers of the department participated. The Director General urged the officers present in the meeting to focus on their duties and directed all the District and Farms Directors to ensure the attendance and punctuality of the subordinate staff in the veterinary hospitals. He asked all districts officers to conduct regular ADP and AIP review meetings in the first week of every month and improve their performance. He said that strict action will be taken against any officer or official of the department who does not take an interest in government affairs.



## In brief

### Six water thieves arrested

SARGODHA (INP): In line with special directives of Punjab government, Irrigation department Sargodha on Monday launched a comprehensive crackdown against the water pilferers and claimed to have arrested six water thieves across the District. The accused Ahmed Hayat, Nasar, Iqbal, Bilal, Sarwer and Nabeel, were involved in stealing water from water canals.

### Flood level falls to low

MULTAN (INP): Spokesperson of Provincial Disaster Management Authority Punjab has viewed that flow of water is normal in River Sutlej except for Islam Headworks. In a statement, he said that there is low level flood at Islam Headworks in River Sutlej. He said inflow of water at the headworks is 62474 cusecs while outflow is 60244 cusecs. He said that flow of water is normal in Rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sindh. Meanwhile, relief activities are continued in flood affected areas and meal, medicines and other necessities are being provided to citizens living in the relief camps.

### Robber killed in encounter

FAISALABAD (APP): One robber was killed while his accomplice was arrested after a police encounter in the area of Sadar Tandianwala police station. A police spokesman said here on Monday that three outlaws were robbing a villager Abdul Hameed at Rehmay Shah Road, who raised alarm and a security squad of a sessions judge intercepted them early in the morning. The squad, along with the Elite force, was going to receive the sessions judge from Sahiwal when they spotted the robbers and asked them to surrender. But the criminals fled the scene. The security squad and Elite force chased and encircled them near Chak No 397 and once again directed them to surrender, but they opened fire, and the police had to return the fire. In exchange of fire, one robber received serious bullet injuries and died on-the-spot near Government Girls' High school Rehmay Shah, whereas the police succeeded in overpowering his one accomplice. However, the third accomplice managed to escape from the scene on a motorcycle. The killed outlaw was identified as Imtiaz alias Chaledu and injured one as Zahid Iqbal and they both were wanted to the police in a number of dacoity, robbery and other cases. The police shifted the body to mortuary and injured robber to hospital. Further investigation was under progress, spokesman added.

### Security arrangements

FAISALABAD (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr Muhammad Abid Khan has ordered for foolproof security arrangements in the region on the occasion of Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA). In a directive issued to CPO Faisalabad and DPOs of Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chiniot, he ordered to review the arrangements and make foolproof security in and outside Imambargahs, Majalis points and procession routes. The peace committees should be activated at police stations, he directed. Security circles around procession, inner and outer cordon, setting up pickets at entry and exit points, deployment of force at rooftops, screening of routes through special branch, sweeping, inspection of routes through bomb disposal squads, installation of CCTV cameras, walk through gates, search through metal detectors and parking arrangements should be part of the security arrangements, he said.



QUETTA: A view of a dump of garbage on Art School Road due to strike of Metropolitan Corporation employees creating problems for locals.

## Malaria mass screening Thousands diagnosed with vector-borne disease

### F.P. Report

ZHOB: Balochistan Rural Support Programme in collaboration with the Indus Hospital and Health Network (IHNN) has organized twenty-two free malaria mass screening and medical camps in different remote union councils of the district, which falls in the high risk zone for the vector-borne disease malaria.

Supervised by the District Coordinator IHNN Dr Ubaid Harifal, the camps were set up in high risk union councils including mountainous areas Sabakzai, Garda Babar, Ghondi Sulaimanzai and Narezai, where 3400 male, female patients were screened, out of them over four hundred were tested positive with vivax and falciparum malaria. Medicines were provided to the malaria infected

patients.

Dr Ubaid Harifal told this scribe that thirty-six health centers including the District Headquarters civil hospital, RHCs, BHUs and private clinics in every nook and corner of the district have been visited to inspect the malaria diagnosis facilities during the last three months, where thirty-two thousand patients have been screened, diagnosed and treated. Out of the total number, 5600 patients have been found infected with malaria.

"We are fully committed and leave no stone unturned in eradicating malaria from the high risk region and creating awareness among the people. In this regard, a monthly surveillance committee meeting also held at the DHO office, where the district coordinator IHNN shared the overall progress report

regarding malaria control with the stakeholders," adding DHO Dr. Muzaffar Shah, Meal Officer IHNN Abuzar Mandokhail, DMU Usman Sherani, District Coordinator Nutrition Program Ajmal Mandokhail, Coordinator UNICEF Muhammad Zubair Sherani, M&D Officer PPHI Shoaib Khan and Focal Person EPI Muhammad Ismail attended the meeting.

According to Dr. Ubaid Harifal, his efforts aimed at creating awareness among the rural communities, enhancing vector control with long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LITNs) and performing village-wide screening with rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) malaria treatment. The patients are being diagnosed, screened and treated free of cost at the designated health facilities, the official added.

## Community face-to-face dialogue session arranged

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: A Khuli Kachehri and community face-to-face dialogue session was held, at the TMA Hall in Mardan. The purpose of the event was to promote the rule of law and improve women's access to justice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said press release issued here on Monday.

Blue Veins organized the session in collaboration with Mardan Police, the Social Welfare Department, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), and the End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAW/G) Alliance Mardan. The event was part of the "Promoting Rule of Law, Legal Literacy and Women's Access to Justice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" project, which is supported by the United Nations and the Home and Tribal Affairs Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Different stakeholders attended the session, including Himayatullah Mayor City Mayor Mardan, Ms. Khaula Haqdar, AAC Mardan, Resham Jehangir, ASP Mardan, Arshad Alam, District Attorney, Mr. Jamal Shah, District Officer, Social Welfare Department

Mardan, Rizwan Coordinator NCHRP region, and Natasha Kainat, Representative of KP Ombudsperson Against Harassment of Women at Workplace.

The session aimed to create a conducive environment for addressing local grievances effectively, with a particular focus on women and other vulnerable groups. This collaborative effort aimed to facilitate a two-way communication process to improve the overall justice delivery system, aligning with the KP Government Rule of Law Program. In addition, the session aimed to enhance the community's legal literacy as they were informed about various pro-women laws.

Mayor addressed the participants with a special focus on the implementation of laws. "The enforcement of laws holds equal importance as their enactment. A crucial factor in ensuring successful implementation is the public's awareness of these laws. Initiatives such as open public forums (khuli kachehri) are highly necessary to promote public understanding of these laws, ultimately contributing to their effective enforcement."

Ms. Jehangir also

addressed the participants and attentively listened to their concerns. The participants expressed their concerns regarding harassment and domestic violence, receiving immediate responses. According to Ms. Jehangir, "In cases of harassment, especially at the university level, any female can directly contact the police, and the police will promptly respond in accordance with the law."

Ms. Haqdar and Mr. Alam also spoke on the issue of forced and child marriage, respectively. As per Ms. Haqdar, "Forced marriage at times sacrifices the agency of girls which also impacts their overall mental health." As per Mr. Alam, "Under Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, marrying a girl under the age of 16 is a punishable act and therefore, it should be avoided."

All the representatives from the district institutions concurred on the importance of enhancing women's legal literacy to enhance their access to justice. The community sessions, or khuli kachehri, provide a platform for officials to directly engage with the public and gain insight into their concerns. Therefore, more of these events should be organized in the future.

## Malaria fever intensified in Mardan

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: Malaria fever intensified in Sarkhab, a remote village council of Tehsil Rustam, hundreds of people, including school children, has been affected. Officials of Malaria Control Program started free treatment of positive cases by organizing timely screening and medical camps according to the details, Village Council Sarkhab Chairman Laeeq Zaman and VC Secretary Ajmal Khan pointed out that malaria is common on social media.

The local journalist reported the malaria related post to

Arif Khan, Coordinator of Malaria Control Program in Mardan District on which Deputy Commissioner Mardan and DHO Mardan took action and appointed a team for inquiry. During the screening, 22 cases out of 34 came out positive after which the officials of Malaria Control Program with the support of Indus Hospital and Health Network and Frontier Primary Health Care at two different places of Village Council Sarkhab in the presence of Secretary of Village Council Sarkhab Ajmal Khan, District Coordinator of Malaria Control Program Arif Jan, Supervisor

Mansoor Ahmed DHO Office Mardan and Hazrat Hussain Monitoring Officer Indus Hospital and Health Network examined the patients in the camp in which a total of 267 patients, including school children, were examined, in which 104 cases were found to be positive, medicines were distributed and the course for complete treatment was started. Malaria Control Program Coordinator Arif Jan told media representatives that the entire district Free malaria diagnosis and treatment facilities are available in 40 private health clinics including all government hospitals.

## Four special assistants inducted in GB Cabinet

GILGIT (PPI): The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Cabinet was on Monday expanded with the appointment of four special assistants to Chief Minister (CM) Gulbar Khan.

According to the notification, Zabihullah was appointed as a Special Assistant to CM (SACM) on Commerce and Youth Affairs. After his appointment, 25-year-old Zabihullah, belonging to Chilas, became the youngest provincial minister in Pakistan's history.

Maulana Sarwar Shah was appointed as SACM on Minerals; senior journalist Iman Shah was appointed as SACM on Information, while Hussain Shah was notified as special assistant to chief minister on irrigation. According to the notification, the SACMs will enjoy the perks and privileges of a provincial minister.

## Two killed in Gujrat cars collision

GUJRAT (INP): Two including a woman were killed and three others injured in collision between two speedy cars here on Monday.

Rescue sources that the accident took place at Sargodha road in Gujrat where a car got out of control due to bursting of tyre and rammed into another car on other side of the road.

As a result of accident two including a woman were killed and two women among three sustained injuries. The rescue personnel shifted the bodies and injured to hospital where condition of the wounded people were stated to be critical.

## 3 robbers killed in encounter

LASBELA (INP): Three robbers were killed, weapons and looted valuables recovered in police encounter here on Monday. DSP Hub Circle, Rafique Hamza Baloch said that a gang of robbers was engaged in looting citizens in jurisdiction of Sakran police station of Lasbela when police getting the information reached the spot.

Upon sight of police, the robbers started firing and attempted to flee. In retaliatory firing of police, all three robbers were killed on the spot. The police recovered weapons and looted valuables from possession of killed robbers. The bodies of robbers killed in encounter were shifted to Jam Mir Ghulam Qadir Hospital.

## Ex-councillor shot dead

ARIFWALA (INP): A former councillor was shot dead by dacoits in 205EB village within the jurisdiction of Ahmad Yar police station, Arifwala.

Muhammad Ashraf was asleep on the roof of the turbine on his land when the dacoits shot him dead, Rescue 1122 said. The rescue service recovered his dead body and handed it over to Ahmad Yar police. The police shifted the body to the hospital for post-mortem and started investigations.

# Villagers demand rehabilitation of water supply scheme

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Residents of Qaziabad, Soghalay and Narai Shah villages in Talash have complained that their water supply scheme has been out of order for the last month and they have no alternate to fetch drinking water.

Talking to local journalists at Talash on Monday the villagers including Maulana Fazal Wahid, Fateh Muhammad, Bacha Muhammad and others said the public health engineering department supplying drinking water to several villages had been dysfunctional due to a technical fault in its solar inverter. The villagers said that the poverty and inflation-hit consumers had to buy water and bring it in tankers to their houses.

They said the tanker owners charged them Rs 2000 per trip. The residents said that the public health engineering department (PHED) after their repeated contacts had taken out the machine but due to lack of funds the water supply

scheme could not be made functional despite the passage of one month. The villagers said the wealthy persons had their own boring wells while the poor segment of society had no alternative sources to fetch water. They said that the Timergara tehsil chairman and authorities of the concerned department had been contacted but to no avail.

They threatened to stage a protest sit-in on the main road if the problem was not solved. The residents demanded of the Lower Dir deputy commissioner and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker chief minister to take notice of their difficulty and resolve the matter as soon as possible.

**Wardak tribe:** The Wardak tribe's elders on Monday asked the Wardak living in different parts of the world to extend their all out support to the tribesmen to get their children educated. A function in this regard was held at the Kharkanai Ouch with the Awami national Party's central secretary finance and senator

Haji Hidayatullah in the chair. The senator also administered oath to the newly elected cabinet of the Wardak for Lower Dir.

The gathering was addressed by senator Haji Hidayatullah, provincial president of the Wardak tribe Wali Khan Wardak, general secretary Ajmal Khan Wardak, chairman Baz Muhammad Khan Wadak, advocate Muhammad Riaz Wardak and others. They said the Wardak tribesmen resided in every nook and corner of the world and they played a vital role in national development. The speakers said that Wardaks were famous for their bravery, hospitality and humanity. They asked the newly elected cabinet members to come forward and play their active role in ending family and property disputes among the tribesmen. The speakers also asked the overseas Wardaks to help and support their poor brothers living in Pakistan so that they could provide standard education to their children.

# Strong opposition to increase in electric bills

### Syeda Kiran

**The rising cost of electricity has a profound impact on individuals and families, particularly those who are already facing financial challenges. It is disheartening to see the burden of increased electric bills being placed on consumers, especially during times when economic uncertainties are prevalent. As responsible citizens, we are committed to conserving energy and adopting sustainable practices, but these efforts should not come at the cost of unbearable financial strain.**

The recent increase in electric bills has left many of us struggling to make ends meet. Families, fixed-

income individuals, and small business owners are all grappling with the added financial pressure. This situation not only affects our daily lives but also threatens our ability to contribute to the overall economic growth of our community.

I understand that there may be various factors contributing to the need for an increase in electric bills, such as maintenance costs, infrastructure development, or fluctuating energy prices. However, I urge you to consider the adverse impact this increase has on vulnerable segments of the population.

I respectfully request that you reconsider the decision to increase electric bills and explore alternative solutions that can strike a

balance between ensuring fair compensation for energy services and minimizing the financial strain on citizens.

I believe that a collaborative approach, involving transparent communication and public consultation, can lead to a solution that benefits both consumers and the government. Open dialogue and understanding the concerns of the people you serve will be key in finding a sustainable resolution to this issue.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. I hope that you will take the necessary steps to alleviate the financial burden that the recent increase in electric bills has placed on the citizens of our community.

# Thar deep installed solar system at BDS Sakrand

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Shehryar Gul Memon performed the opening of a 5kv Solar System installed at Benazir District Schools Sakrand and Qazi Ahmad by a Social Welfare Organization Thar Deep.

Addressing the opening ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner said that all possible assistance would be accorded to schools by Divisional and district administration for providing better educational facilities to girls. He said that solar system installations at educational institutions and health centres of the district by the Thar Deep Rural Development Program is an applauding step that would resolve the issue of power load shedding to educational institutions and health centres.

On the occasion, the DC said that all measures are being adopted for the betterment of education in the district. He thanked Thar Deep and Concern Worldwide who installed solar systems at different educational institutions and health centres that would help students prevent heat

waves.

Assistant Commissioner Sakrand Rashid Ali, BDS Sakrand Principal Musarat, BDS Qazi Ahmad Principal Shabnam Dahrijo, District Coordinator Thar Deep Ameer Maznani, teachers and students in large numbers were present on the occasion.

**DC reviews arrangements:** Deputy Commissioner Shariyar Gul on Monday presided over a meeting to review arrangements made for maintaining law and order in the district and ensure cleanliness in the limits of mourning processions and majalis on the occasion of Chehlum of Shuhada-e-Karbala. Addressing the meeting, the DC asked the citizens belonging to all faiths to play their role for creating religious cohesion and brotherhood so that majalis, mourning procession and other religious programmes could be organized peacefully.

He said that Shaheed Benazirabad district had always remained peaceful. The police have ensured foolproof security arrangements besides Sindh

Rangers was also assisting the police for maintaining law and order situation. The DC directed officers of Municipal committee and all town committees to ensure cleanliness and lighting arrangements on Chehlum.

He asked officers of the Health department to set up medical camps and availability of ambulances on the routes of mourning processions to be taken out from various areas. SSP Nawabshah Mahzur Ali apprised the meeting that about 18 Majalis will be organized and 8 mourning processions will be taken out in the district under strict security measures.

He further informed that around 1200 police officers and personnel would perform duty while additional contingents were kept on standby. Additional Deputy Commissioner Kanwal Nizam, DHO Dr. Assadullah Dahri, Rangers officer Zia, Deputy Director Information Officer Ghulam Abbas, all A.Cs, HESCO, Municipal, town officers and religious leaders were also present in the meeting.

## Special measures being taken to improve cleanliness

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Local Government South Punjab, Amin Owaisi, said that special measures were being taken to improve cleanliness of city of Saints. He expressed these views during visit to Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) office here on Monday.

Chief Executive Officer MWMC Shahid Yaqub gave briefing on sanitation situation. New board of directors has been formed for the improvement of the company's affairs and capacity of the company will also increase. Amin Owaisi directed officials to place containers and dust bins at central places of the city in order to provide pleasant environment to citizens.

Company was performing well despite limited resources. He also ordered to fix place for new landfill sites and transfer stations. Earlier, CEO Shahid Yaqub said that merit policy was implemented to improve the performance of the company. Exemplary

cleanliness was ensured on all mega events including Muharram-ul-Haram and Eid-ul-Adha.

Secretary Local Government South Punjab Amin Owaisi also visited various branches of the company and took briefing. Meanwhile, newly appointed Chairman MWMC BoD Mian Rashid Iqbal paid visit to MWMC office. CEO MWMC Shahid Yaqub welcomed the chairman and presented bouquet. Speaking on this occasion, steps would be taken to improve company's performance as per vision of Punjab Government. Earlier, he took briefing on performance of the company and working mechanism.

**Special care for cotton during September stressed:** Secretary, Agriculture for South Punjab, Saqib Ali Ateeel Monday highlighted critical significance of September in shaping Pakistan's agricultural sector especially in terms of cotton crop.



# Erdogan takes grain diplomacy to Putin in Sochi



MOSCOW (AFP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Monday in a long-shot bid to revive a Ukrainian grain export agreement in time for the autumn harvest. Erdogan's first face-to-face meeting with Putin since October comes as Russian forces try to hold off a new Kyiv offensive that has started to show promise after three months of brutal battles along Ukraine's southern front.

The Turkish leader hopes to use the informal summit in the Black Sea resort of Sochi as a basis for peace negotiations that some Western officials are debating, but that both sides only want held on their own terms. Erdogan has been one of the few leaders within the NATO defence alliance to maintain open access to Putin. The two leaders have had a close but tempestuous relationship that appears to have grown stronger since Russia launched its "special military operation" in February 2022.

Putin's decision to discount and delay Turkey's payments for Russian gas imports helped ease an economic crisis that almost kept Erdogan from winning reelection in May. Turkey reciprocated by refusing to join Western sanctions on Moscow and becoming a crucial venue for Russia to access services and goods. But Erdogan has also irritated Putin by supplying Ukraine with weapons and backing its ambitions to join NATO. The Kremlin grew particularly angry when Erdogan in July allowed visiting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to bring back five commanders that Russia sent to Turkey in a major prisoner swap.

The commanders were meant to stay in Turkey and the Kremlin warned that it would "take this into account in our future agreements" with Erdogan. Yet both

Moscow and Kyiv are now seeking Erdogan's backing in their standoff over grain and hostilities in the Black Sea. Russia followed its break from the grain deal in July with repeated strikes against Ukrainian port infrastructure that Kyiv countered with its own attacks around the Black Sea. It marked the end of the only major deal signed by the two sides during the fighting. Ukraine's ability to export more than 32 million tonnes of grain under the agreement pushed down global food prices and eased hunger in Africa and parts of the Middle East. Turkey helped broker the UN-backed agreement and is now trying to revive it to regain the diplomatic prestige of being a crucial intermediary between Moscow and Kyiv.

Erdogan dispatched Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to Kyiv and Moscow to prepare the talks with Putin and try to keep the sides from pushing ahead with their own rival plans to export grain. Ukraine has sent four ships to test a new route that enters international waters only briefly and largely follows those controlled by NATO members -- and thus less prone to Russian attack. Moscow has pushed its own proposal to supply free foodstuffs to Africa and send discounted grain for processing in Turkey under a proposed deal involving Qatar. Russia says last year's deal failed to lift indirect restrictions on its grain and fertiliser exports that existed because of Western curbs on Moscow's access to global payment systems and insurance. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also brushed aside a new grain proposal from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that Hakan promoted in Moscow. "There still isn't a single guarantee in this (proposal), only promises," Lavrov said.

## Iraqi security forces deployed in Kirkuk

SULAIMANIYA, Iraq (Reuters): Iraqi security forces deployed in the northern Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk to prevent further violence as the death toll in clashes between ethnic groups the previous day rose to four, police and security sources said.

Four protesters were shot dead in clashes between ethnic groups in Kirkuk that broke out after days of tensions. Police and medical sources said all four were Kurdish. Amir Shwani, a spokesperson for Kirkuk police, said in a statement to reporters a curfew had been lifted and vehicles were moving normally in the city.

But security forces had deployed additional troops on the streets to "prevent violence and protect civilians", he said. The dispute centres on a building in Kirkuk that was once the headquarters for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) but which the Iraqi army has used a base

since 2017. Iraq's federal supreme court issued an urgent temporary ruling obliging the government to delay procedures regarding the handover of a building in Kirkuk to the KDP, the state news agency reported. The court ruling halted an order issued by Prime Minister Mohammed al-Sudani in his capacity as the commander-in-chief of Iraq's armed forces to hand over the army building to the KDP on September 1, according to a copy of the ruling seen by Reuters.

Sudani in a cabinet meeting held after the court ruling urged political parties in Kirkuk to "steer clear of any potential conflicts, emphasising the need to avoid resorting to violence or clashes that could harm Iraq's overall stability", according to a statement from his office. The ruling could raise tensions amid discussions over the return of the powerful Kurdish party to the city. Iraqi Kurdish Prime Minister

Masrour Barzani condemned the federal court ruling as a "farce", he posted on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. Military helicopters flew over the city, according to four Kirkuk residents who spoke to Reuters by phone. Shwani confirmed that four protesters had been killed and 15 people were wounded. Residents said police detained several people who had participated in the clashes but police refused to comment on any arrests.

Kirkuk, an oil-rich province in northern Iraq along the fault lines between the Kurdish autonomous region and areas controlled by Iraq's Shi'ite-dominated central government, has been the focus of some of the country's worst post-Islamic State violence. Arab residents and minority groups, who say they suffered under Kurdish rule, have protested the KDP's return to the city.

## Armenian PM says depending on Russia

LONDON (Reuters): Armenia's prime minister has said his country's policy of solely relying on Russia to guarantee its security was a strategic mistake because Moscow has been unable to deliver and is in the process of winding down its role in the wider region.

In an interview with Italian newspaper La Repubblica published, Nikol Pashinyan accused Russia of failing to ensure Armenia's security in the face of what he said was aggression from neighbouring Azerbaijan over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region. Pashinyan suggested that Moscow, which has a defence pact with Armenia and a military base there, did not regard his country as sufficiently pro-Russian and said he believed Russia was in the process of leaving the wider South Caucasus region. Yerevan was there-

fore trying to diversify its security arrangements, he said, an apparent reference to its ties with the European Union and the United States and its attempts to forge closer ties with other countries in the region.

"Armenia's security architecture was 99.999% linked to Russia, including when it came to the procurement of arms and ammunition," Pashinyan told La Repubblica. "But today we see that Russia itself is in need of weapons, arms and ammunition (for the war in Ukraine) and in this situation it's understandable that even if it wishes so, the Russian Federation cannot meet Armenia's security needs. "This example should demonstrate to us that dependence on just one partner in security matters is a strategic mistake." His words underscore resentment inside Armenia about

what many there see as a failure by Russia to defend their interests. There was no immediate response to Pashinyan's interview from Moscow, which has chaired talks between Yerevan and Baku in what it says is the complex search for a peace deal.

Moscow has in the past bridled at such criticism, defended its actions, and rejected the idea that it has downgraded its foreign policy priorities because of Ukraine. Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but its 120,000 inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians. It broke away from Baku's control in a war in the early 1990s. Heavy fighting took place again in 2020 until Russia brokered ceasefire. Pashinyan accused Russian peacekeepers deployed to uphold the ceasefire deal of failing to do their job.

## Third day of rallies in Niger

NIAMEY (AFP): Thousands of demonstrators in Niger held a third day of rallies calling for former colonial ruler France to withdraw its troops, as sought by the junta which seized power in July. "Down with France! France get out," the demonstrators chanted, repeating slogans heard at various rallies in Niamey since the coup d'etat on July 26.

Niger's military regime had fired a new verbal broadside at France, accusing Paris of "blatant interference" by backing the country's ousted president. Since then, tens of thousands of people have joined in the protest at a roundabout, close to the Niger military base where French soldiers are stationed. Relations with France, the country's former colonial power and ally in its fight against jihadism, went swiftly downhill after Paris stood by ousted president Mohamed Bazoum. On August 3, the regime announced the scrapping of military agreements with France, which has about 1,500 soldiers stationed in the country. Niger's military rulers have also announced the "expulsion" of the French ambassador Sylvain Itte and said they are withdrawing his diplomatic immunity. They said his presence constituted a threat to public order. But French President Emmanuel Macron last Monday hailed Itte's work in Niger and said he remained in the country despite being given a 48-hour deadline to leave. France once again justified keeping its ambassador in place.

"He is our representative to the legitimate authorities in Niger," said Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna in an interview with Le Monde newspaper. "We don't have to bow to the injunctions of a minister who has no legitimacy", she added, assuring that Paris was ensuring "that he can face the pressure from the putschists in complete safety".

## Karabakh separatist leader resigns

TBILISI (Reuters): The separatist head of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh has resigned amid widespread food and fuel shortages resulting from an almost year-long blockade of the territory by Azerbaijan. Arayik Haratyunyan, who is an ethnic Armenian, said in a statement: "Tomorrow I will present to the people of the Artsakh Republic and the national assembly of Artsakh my resignation from the post of president of the republic."

Artsakh is the Armenian name for the breakaway region. Haratyunyan suggested that his presidency was an obstacle to negotiations with Azerbaijan and that "difficulties in the country have significantly reduced the trust in the authorities". Karabakh, which is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but whose population of 120,000 is predominantly ethnic Armenian, won de facto independence after a war in the early 1990s. In 2020, Azerbaijan retook territories in and around Karabakh in a second war that left the region dependent on Russian peacekeepers deployed under a Moscow-brokered ceasefire. Haratyunyan, who presided over the 2020 defeat, faced calls to quit that have intensified since December, when Azerbaijan began a blockade of the Lachin corridor, the one road linking Karabakh to Armenia, on which the region is dependent. Azerbaijan denies that it imposed a blockade on the Lachin corridor, and says that alternative routes to resupply Karabakh through Azerbaijan territory are available.

The blockade has seen acute shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies inside Karabakh. Haratyunyan had also clashed with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who has signalled a potential willingness to recognise Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan, a move that would jeopardise the survival of the region's breakaway authorities.

# US expects to upgrade Vietnam ties, risks China anger

HANOI (Reuters): The United States expects to elevate its diplomatic relations with former foe Vietnam to the top level as President Joe Biden travels to Hanoi in a week, in a move that may irk China and with unclear business implications.

Fearful of the potential reaction from its much larger neighbour, Vietnam had initially expressed caution about the upgrade. That led the Biden administration to multiply efforts to persuade the southeast Asian nation, including through multiple visits of high-ranking members of the US government in recent months. The unprecedented push has led Washington to expect to be elevated to the top tier of Vietnam's diplomatic ranking, together with China and Russia, from two notches below now.

Biden said it publicly in July and officials in both

countries have since informally expressed optimism about the two-step upgrade, although no official statements have been released from either government. Perhaps seeking to assuage Beijing, Vietnam is discussing top-level visits to Hanoi after or even shortly before Biden's arrival on Sept. 10, with officials saying China's President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Qiang could meet Vietnamese leaders in coming days or weeks. China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday. Risks that a double upgrade with Washington may not go down well in Beijing remain high, but Vietnam's communist leaders may have calculated the best timing for the move is now as US relations with China are "likely to get worse in the future," said Le Hong

Hiep, a senior fellow at Singapore's Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute. "Vietnam's economy badly needs a boost in capital, technology, and market access", said Alexander Vuving of the Hawaii-based Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, noting that may have been a key reason for the possible upgrade.

A boost of US military supplies to Hanoi has also long been discussed but no immediate deal is expected as these talks take time, Hiep said. Meanwhile, Vietnam is talking with several other countries to upgrade and expand its mostly Russian-made arsenal, and has recently engaged in multiple high-level defence meetings with top Russian officials. Supporting Vietnam's ambitions to become a hub for the semiconductor industry is also part of Washington's inducements, but public

funds so far available under the CHIPS Act are very limited. The US may offer more, said Vu Tu Thanh, head of the Vietnam office of the US-ASEAN Business Council. Energy is another sector where cooperation could increase as Vietnam prepares to become a player in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and offshore wind although administrative and funding delays are dampening the mood. The upgrade of relations is expected to boost US firms' plans in Vietnam. Planemaker Boeing and energy firm AES may make announcements during Biden's visit, people familiar with the plans said. The companies had no immediate comment. The US is already Vietnam's largest market for its exports and US customs procedures could be eased to boost trade, Thanh from the US-ASEAN Business Council.

## Malaysias Forest City teeters over China property giant woes

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP): On the approach to Malaysia's \$100-billion island megaproject backed by Chinese investment, a collapsed bridge forces drivers to detour before they reach an artificial city emerging from palm oil trees where condos, roads and shops lay empty. Aimed at middle-class Chinese buyers, Forest City has weathered scant sales, a pandemic shutdown and public anger at China's growing influence in Malaysia.

But its future is in doubt again because of the financial woes of Chinese property giant Country Garden. The project developer rose from a farmer's idea to Beijing's largest private real estate firm, but is now saddled with \$196 billion of debt. It posted a record loss for the first half of 2023 this week but won creditor approval to extend a key bond repayment deadline, narrowly avoiding a potential default that imperilled thousands of developments in and outside the world's second-largest economy. Another deadline looms next week over an unpaid multi-million dollar interest

payment that again leaves it at risk of default. "I hope Country Garden can overcome their financial difficulties," said 29-year-old Zhao Bojian from Chinese province Henan, who bought one of 26,000 Forest City apartments for around \$430,000 five years ago. "If nobody comes to Forest City, we cannot do business here."

Sitting across from gleaming city-state Singapore, the sprawling private town in Johor state was one Country Garden's many ambitious gambles that took the company to great heights but now risk crashing it back down to reality. Launched under China's Belt and Road Initiative with a company partly owned by a powerful Malaysian sultan, Forest City houses around 9,000 people, way below its 700,000 target. Construction workers chip away at the island city by day while an eerie silence falls over its deserted four-lane highway at night. Only a small number of lights shine from windows by evening across the project's more than two dozen high-rise towers. Below those sit rows of shuttered shopfronts, some

with court documents stuck to doors demanding outstanding payments. Inside, rubbish is strewn across the floors. Many buyers do not live in the artificial city, a security officer told AFP, and instead stash their money as absent owners.

Model sculptures of the completed city's four artificial islands -- far from its current state -- sit in the lobby of a sales showroom to attract potential buyers guided by Mandarin, Malay and English road signs. Previous governments have opposed residency for expat investors, criticising the project as built only for foreigners. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has stepped in to try to save Forest City as it threatens to become a white elephant. Last week, he announced the creation of a "special financial zone" and perks including a special income tax rate and multiple entry visas. Observers say Forest City faces an uphill battle regardless. "The liquidity pressure could have an impact on their capability to complete overseas housing projects," said Bernard Aw, chief Asia-Pacific economist at credit insurance firm

Coface.

A three-hour drive from capital Kuala Lumpur, the city attracts visitors who want to catch a glimpse of the space-age towers or buy duty-free alcohol. "Everyone comes here for the liquor," said Singapore-based technician Danish Raj Ravindaran, 32. "I will not stay here, it is a ghost town. The road is dark and dangerous and there are no street lights." Much of the activity is foreign workers -- many from Nepal or Bangladesh -- maintaining the city's bushes, sweeping its roads or guarding its towers. An artificial sand beach littered with beer cans where families picnic under coconut trees also bears a sign warning would-be swimmers about crocodiles. At one 45-story tower, an official says only two floors are occupied while the rest are for sale. As Country Garden fights for its survival, drastic efforts will likely be needed from both Beijing and Kuala Lumpur to get Forest City on its feet. "I came here for a holiday after seeing TikTok videos," said retail clerk Nursziwah Zamri, 30, from Malacca state. "If you ask me if I would live here, the answer is no."

## New Delhi got a makeover for the G20 summit

NEW DELHI (AP): New Delhi's crowded streets have been resurfaced. Streetlights are illuminating once dark sidewalks. City buildings and walls are painted with bright murals and graffiti. Planted flowers are everywhere. Many of the city's poor say they were simply erased, much like the stray dogs and monkeys that have been removed from some neighborhoods, as India's capital got its makeover ahead of this week's summit of the Group of 20 nations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government hopes the elaborate effort to make New Delhi sparkle - a "beautification project" with a price tag of \$120 million - will help showcase the world's most populous nation's cultural prowess and strengthen its position on the global stage. But for many street vendors and those crammed into New Delhi's shantytowns, the makeover has meant displacement and loss of livelihood, raising questions about the government's policies on dealing with

poverty. In a city of more than 20 million people, the 2011 census had the homeless at 47,000 but activists say that was a vast underestimate and that the real number is at least 150,000. Since January, hundreds of houses and roadside stalls have been demolished, displacing thousands of people. Dozens of shantytowns were raised to the ground, with many residents getting eviction notices only a short while before the demolitions got underway.

Authorities say the demolitions were carried out against "illegal encroachers," but right activists and those evicted question the policy and allege that it has pushed thousands more into homelessness. Similar demolitions have also been carried out in other Indian cities like Mumbai and Kolkata that have hosted various G20 events leading up to this weekend's summit. Activists say it was more than just a case of out of sight, out of mind. Abdul Shakeel, with the activist group Basti Suraksha Manch, or Save Colony

Forum, says that "in the name of beautification, the urban poor's lives are destroyed." "The money used for G20 is taxpayers' money. Everyone pays the tax. Same money is being used to evict and displace them," he said. "It doesn't make any sense."

The two-day global summit will take place at the newly constructed Bharat Mandapam building, a sprawling exhibition centre in the heart of New Delhi near the landmark India Gate monument - and scores of world leaders are expected to attend. The G20 includes the world's 19 wealthiest countries plus the European Union. India currently holds its presidency, which rotates annually among the members. In July, a report by the Concerned Citizens Collective, a rights activist group, found that the preparations for the G20 summit resulted in the displacement of nearly 300,000 people, particularly from the neighborhoods that foreign leaders and diplomats will visit during various meetings. At

least 25 shantytowns and multiple night shelters for the homeless were razed to the ground and turned into parks, the report said, adding that the government failed to provide alternative shelters or places for the newly homeless. Last month, Indian police intervened to stop a meeting of prominent activists, academics and politicians critical of Modi and his government's role in hosting the G20 summit and questioning whose interests the summit would benefit.

"I can see the homeless on the streets and now the homeless are not allowed to live on the streets either," said Rekha Devi, a New Delhi resident who attended the Aug. 20 gathering. Devi, whose home was demolished in one of the drives, said authorities refused to consider documents she showed as proof that her family had lived in the same house for nearly 100 years. "Everyone is behaving as if they are blind," Devi said. "In the name of the G20 event, the farmers, workers and the poor are suffering."

## Japan's 'militarisation' complicates Asia-Pacific: Medvedev

MOSCOW (Reuters): Territories. Japan's "militarisation" complicates the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, the deputy chair of the Russian Security Council and former President Dmitry Medvedev said. Russia and Japan have complex relations marked by decades of territorial dispute over a handful of small, Russian-held islands off Hokkaido that Moscow calls the southern Kurils but Japan claims as its Northern

place near the Kuril Islands, which seriously complicates the situation in the Asia-Pacific region." Japan's foreign ministry and Prime Minister's Office could not immediately be reached for comment outside business hours.

Russia decided this year to declare Sept. 3 - the day after Japan's surrender in World War Two - a "Day of Victory over Militaristic Japan", spurring a protest from Tokyo. Medvedev said

place near the Kuril Islands, which seriously complicates the situation in the Asia-Pacific region." Japan's foreign ministry and Prime Minister's Office could not immediately be reached for comment outside business hours.

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Japan, with help from the United States, was expanding its military infrastructure and increasing its arms purchases. Japan's defence ministry sought a record \$53 billion in next fiscal year's budget, part of its biggest military buildup since World War Two, aiming to double defence spending to 2% of gross domestic product by 2027, citing an increasingly assertive China and an unpredictable North Korea.

## The Frontier Post

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## Military's role in rconomic rival

**Y**ESTERDAY media reports exclusively covered the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir's interaction with seasoned business leaders from the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry who called on the Army Chief to discuss current economic and business situations in the country. The Senior General assured the business icons that the newly established Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has great potential to attract substantial investments of up to 100 billion dollars from Gulf nations and other countries across the globe. Meanwhile, the business community put forth several economic, administrative and legal measures that could ramp up business and trade activities while leading the nation to economic sustainability and growth. Almost four years ago, Business Tycoons met then Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and the PTI economic team to discuss economic issues and deliberate on possible solutions for economic recovery and speedy growth, but no improvement occurred over the past years and the episode aired once more.

Years and decades had moved on, the sequence of events repeated themselves after certain intervals with changed faces but the same narrative, sloganeering and verbosity. No recipe, no suggestion and no policy could neither change the system nor bring the required revolution in the country. The core political wisdom and economic talent, combined with huge infrastructure, and tremendous national resources failed to realise the long-held dream of sustainable development, self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. Unfortunately, foreign imported economists like Moeen Qureshi, Shaukat Aziz, Hafeez Sheikh and others could not remove the corrosion of Pakistan's economy and returned to their destination with great mortification and shame, but the cascade of the country's economic depletion could not be reset on its right path. After defying all west-turned bankers and economic Strategists, Pakistani leaders set their Qibla toward GHQ and offer their prayer behind military generals to resolve the increasing economic puzzle and untie budgetary glitches of the country.

Historically, the Pakistan military has offered unconditional support to civil governments in their efforts to consolidate the national economy and attain sustainable growth. Previously, the PTI government used military crutches and later the PML-N-led coalition government used a marshal strategy to revitalise the agri-sector and boost economic growth. Currently, the Army is wholeheartedly backing government endeavours through the forum of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), while the business circle also relies on the Pakistan military rather than the civil administration. Pakistan's military had always been available to the civilian government during all times of need, natural calamities, epidemics, urban flooding and other colossal issues that got out of reach of the civilian administration. The army has played an adorable role in handling deadly coronaviruses, desalination of water canals, locust control, earthquake and flood relief etc. in the past and now the civilian government has demanded Army assistance in attracting and management of investment from the country and abroad.

The government has envisaged plans capitalising Pakistan's untapped economic potential in key sectors including defence production, minerals and mining, agriculture and livestock along with IT and energy sectors that have become real impediments to industrialisation and economic growth.

At the time, each sector of the national economy was disfigured by misgovernance, corruption and bad planning, a majority of the elements correlate and are directly interdependent with each other. The energy crisis has raised production costs and clamped hard on industrial exports, while the rupee's sharp devaluation further spoiled the economy. Amid such a level of diverse economic ruination, the attraction of investment and the wheeling of industry is not the permanent solution to the unceasing predicament. Hence, all-out overhauling of the system ranging from the SECP to the Board of Revenue, Finance Ministry to the Power Division, local government to Customs Department, regressive reforms and stern anti-corruption measures must be enforced, so no corrupt officials or scarcity of energy or raw material ever derailed this national endeavour in the future.

## Face the nation and face the reality

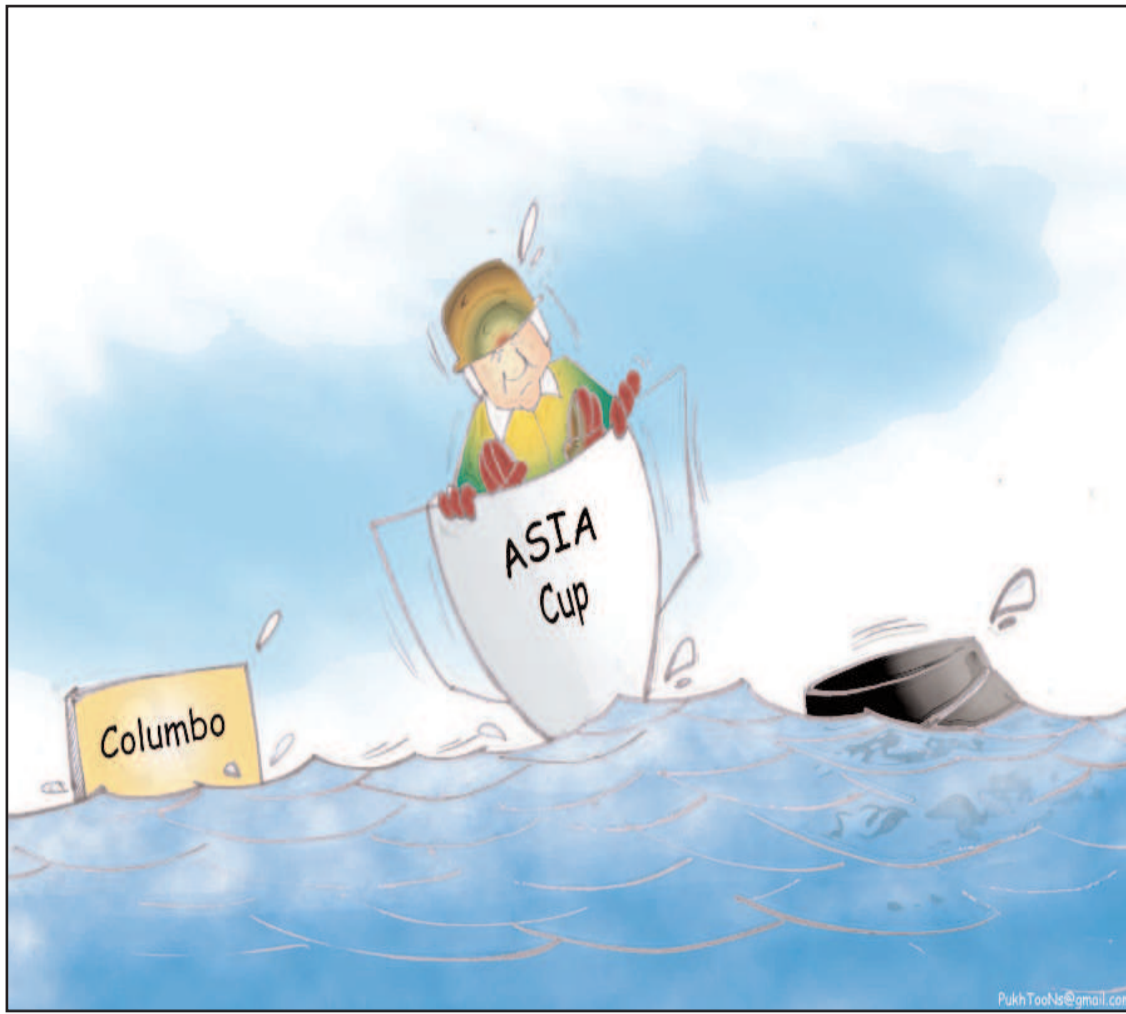
**D**URING an interview at CBS News "Face the Nation" with Margaret Brennan, the US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo warned China by saying that the patience of US business was wearing thin and American companies deserved a predictable environment and a level playing field. According to the US Deputy, there was a strong appetite among US businesses to make the relationship work. She praised some actions of the Chinese government as positive, while stressed that the rhetoric should match with the situation on the ground. US firms face new challenges, among them unexplained large fines, raids on businesses and changes to a countersubversion law, that narrowed space for managers and threatens businesses survival in the world's second largest economy. Raimondo acknowledged the slowdown in the Chinese economy and emphasized the need for transparency and market-orientation. Interestingly, she perceived Chinese trade regulations somewhat more arbitrary and challenged.

The two biggest economies in the world used to be each other's largest trade partners over the past decades, now turned into the greatest adversaries in recent years. Although there had been anti-China sentiments because of growing Chinese stacks in the US stock market, real states and other sectors of the US economy. That scrimmage ignited into full fledged tussle by the former US President Donald J Trump after landing White House in early 2017. The Trump administration not only banned Chinese investment and Chinese Tech giants in its country but imposed heavy tariffs on import of Chinese goods to the United States. That attracted a tit-for-tat response from Beijing and set the stage for a large-scale trade war between the two leading economies in the world. According to analysts, the policy of sanctions, restrictions and taxation caused serious damage to China and adversely affected the US economy as well, because American businesses were heavily dependent on Chinese manufacturers and low cost labour.

During this time, Washington traded with neighboring Canada, Mexico and Europe, while Beijing increased its focus in neighbourhood South and Southeast Asia. Recently, the Biden administration has brought some leniency in the US trade policy toward China to support the deteriorating domestic economy and to counterbalance the worst effect of the ever increasing global energy crisis. Although, Chinese economy is experiencing the worst slowdown in history, yet Chinese strategists had shown a cold shoulder to Secretary Gina Raimondo during his recent visit to Beijing. As of now, Chinese authorities enjoy the weakness of the Biden administration and intend to use it to their advantage. Although American officials face the nation by accepting their helplessness, they must face reality by acknowledging the mistaken strategy of their predecessors.

### Important Notice

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## Why any Middle East reset has to start in Lebanon

Nadim Shehadi

**I**f the US and its allies in the Gulf states are serious about turning the page and solving the conflicts of the region, the place to start should be Lebanon. It is a barometer that can foresee both problems and their solutions.

If democracies are not supposed to go to war with each other, then how come Lebanon and Israel are on the brink of war year after year while they both claim to be the only democracy in the Middle East? Both states faced the same dilemma at their creation, but their different answers to the same questions led them toward divergent but equally turbulent paths. One of the most fundamental questions the region has to grapple with is: Can people who do not share similar ethnic origins or religious beliefs live together in a stable and democratic state? It is not easy and it is too late to ask this question now. We already have these states and we are not about to redraw all the borders. The answer, therefore, has to be yes.

However, one Israeli journalist and one Lebanese banker both found that the other country made the wrong choice. According to Uri Avnery, Lebanon was a mistake and Israel should avoid following its path at any cost. Avnery had great credentials. A prominent peace activist, he had also fought in Israel's war of independence, so no one could question his patriotism. On July 3, 1983, he literally crossed all the lines and was the first Israeli to meet with Yasser Arafat while he was under siege in Beirut during Israel's invasion of Lebanon. He was also a contributor to Arab News. In 2011, Avnery wrote an article that stated that Lebanese Christians made the wrong choice when they lobbied for the creation of a Greater Lebanon in which they were no longer the absolute majority. He was obviously projecting. Looking at the map, he feared that Israel

would do the same if it annexed the West Bank and Gaza, ensuring that the Jews would no longer form a majority.

For Avnery, "the Lebanese malaise started with a crucial decision made on the very day the state was set up," when Christians chose to include people of different religions in the same state. Some Lebanese would agree with him. But there was an equally negative view of Israel by the Lebanese banker and journalist Michel Chiha, who in many ways can be considered the main founder of the Lebanese political system. He emphatically wrote that it was the creation of Israel as a "Jewish state" that was the mistake. Chiha was one of the principal authors of the Lebanese constitution in 1926 and was credited with introducing the elements of communal power-sharing that, for Avnery, are actually the problem.

In 1947, Chiha stated that "the decision to partition Palestine with the creation of a Jewish state will prove to be the worst universal error ever committed." He added that "an error of this magnitude committed in this century will have repercussions on our descendants in the next." For Chiha, Lebanese nationalism constituted a rich array of different people who were bound by the will to live together despite the differences of their religious backgrounds and who history had brought together in the same geographical setting. It is, in a way, exactly the opposite of Israel and he was thus opposed to the UN Partition Plan for Palestine.

For him, "those nations who chose to support partition also chose the outrageous option of creating the most prejudiced and the most exclusively confessional state in the world. This is the fact that liberals will not face and what the so-called 'democracies' are recommending." Some

Israelis and diaspora Jews would also agree with him. Most importantly for Chiha, the fact that you can have an assembly or parliament driven by "the will to live in common," and where Maronites, Sunnis, Shiites, Druze, Melchites, Catholics, Orthodox and multiple other sects can debate together an outcome for the common good away from their respective affiliations means that the result can be of universal importance.

This last idea is echoed by the Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi. For him, it was precisely because the Lebanese population happened to be divided, socially and politically, between equally forceful Christian and Muslim sides that disagreed on fundamental issues that the Lebanese state could only function as a democracy or, more correctly, as the "democratic management of a perennial conflict situation." This made Lebanon an open society, even if by default, where all issues could be debated freely. This included all the regional issues that could not be debated in the rest of the Arab world.

Thus, in the 1980s, at the height of the Lebanese Civil War, the ideas that were fought over between gangs in the streets of Beirut were in fact part of broader regional disputes, such as big issues like pan-Arabism versus nationalism and Islamism versus democracy. The Iran-Iraq War also introduced the Sunni versus Shiite element, with various radical movements unleashed by the success of the 1979 Iranian revolution. Add to these the disputes between those for or against a negotiated peace with Israel and Lebanon became the test case or the battleground for all these ideas, simply because they could not be discussed or resolved anywhere else. Because of this, whatever happens in Lebanon is of concern to everyone else in the Middle

East and the outcome of very localized conflicts and debates in the country will have an effect on the broader region. This is where the neglected issues are still alive. This is also where they can blow up and spread or fizzle out and be resolved locally.

This explains why the Arab-Israeli conflict has all but disappeared from the rest of the Arab world but is still alive in Lebanon, which could erupt into a war with Israel at any moment. It is also why Iranian influence, through the control of the country by Hezbollah that started in the 1980s, has been gradually spreading in the region too. My Iranian friends use the octopus as a way to describe the institutions of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps because it has tentacles in every country. In 1983, one of the tentacles blew up the US Marines barracks in Beirut. The Marines were in the country as part of a multinational force tasked with keeping the peace after the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The same tentacles, allied with Syria, took American and other Western hostages and released them in Damascus.

The US Reagan administration found this too costly and complicated and withdrew, followed by the European forces, eventually handing the country over to Syria, which, when it came to hostages, seemed to be able to resolve problems that were often of its own creation. Forty years after the bombings of the US Marines barracks and the US Embassy in Beirut, what was an IRGC problem in Lebanon has now spread to Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and the US is still paying for the release of hostages in Tehran. The region has been unstable for more than half a century. It is high time for a new beginning and, for a comprehensive solution to be successful, it must start from Lebanon.

Arab News

## Turkiye-Syria detente becoming an uphill task

Yasar Yakis

**T**HERE were high hopes not so long ago that Turkish-Syrian relations might be revived. This hope will not vanish for good, but an early recovery is not in sight. The relations between these two countries were strained for decades. They started to improve when then-Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer decided to attend the June 2000 funeral of late Syrian President Hafez Assad. Extremely warm relations ensued in 2009, when Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Syrian President Bashar Assad spent their holiday in Türkiye with their families. But the so-called Arab Spring changed the direction of the wind.

In the early months of the Arab Spring, Türkiye's ruling Justice and Development Party thought that a Muslim Brotherhood-dominated belt of countries all the way from Tunisia to Syria, via Libya and Egypt, was taking shape and Türkiye could become the leader of this belt. But this dream was quickly shattered. Rather than becoming the leader of these regional neighbors, it became a country that had problems with almost all of them. Türkiye carried out military operations in Syria at various points. Now, we are at the stage of debating the conditions of its withdrawal from these territories.

Assad's repeated statements indicate that he regards Türkiye's withdrawal from the north of Syria as a condition for resuming normal relations between Ankara and Damascus. Several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, have covered a lot of ground in improving their relations with Türkiye. But Syria has as a condition the withdrawal of the Turkish military forces from its territory, as well as Ankara cutting the support it has extended to extremists and other organizations. Assad has said that, if a suitable environment emerges after Türkiye's withdrawal from Syrian territory, it would be natural to go back to the normal relations of the past.

On the Turkish side, Defense Minister Yasar Guler hinted that there was no change in Türkiye's attitude to withdrawing from Syria. He referred to the talks held at various levels between the two countries. He mentioned Türkiye's sensitivities regarding its border security and the security of the Turkish people living in areas close to the Syrian border. He added that he expected that Assad would act reasonably, suggesting he would display a conciliatory attitude. The meetings between Türkiye and Syria started when the present Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan was the head of the Turkish intelligence service. Therefore, he is aware of the background to these talks. He is expected to contribute to the future negotiations in his new capacity. Russian and Iranian representatives have also participated in the

previous meetings held in Russia. One of the most important effects of Türkiye's withdrawal from Syria would be the fate of the extremists cornered in the north of Idlib. The main terrorist organization there was the Al-Nusra Front, which was established as an extension of Al-Qaeda. It later disrupted its ties with Al-Qaeda and called itself Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham.

Ahrar Al-Sham is another militant group operating in Idlib and it cooperates from time to time with HTS. Neither HTS nor Ahrar Al-Sham are part of the Türkiye-sponsored Free Syrian Army, which was renamed in 2017 as the Syrian National Army. These groups have changed their names several times, but UN Security Council Resolution 2254 makes a comprehensive reference, calling on member states "to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed by Daesh, Al-Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or Daesh, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the Security Council, and as may further be agreed." This definition does not leave out any group. In case Türkiye withdraws from the north of Syria, the Kurds, who are well organized and equipped thanks to the strong support of the US, will further change the power balance in their favor. The area covered by the US-supported Kurds corresponds to roughly a third of the entire Syrian territory.

Turkish, Syrian and Kurdish cooperation would have been the best compromise for the north of Syria, but Türkiye could not utilize this opportunity to its advantage, partly because of American opposition. One of Türkiye's misfortunes is that two important players, namely the US and Russia, are strongly supporting the Kurdish cause. Russia is trying to integrate the Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units, known as the YPG, into the Syrian army as a separate brigade, but this plan faces several hurdles. A similar problem will arise regarding the fighters that are currently serving in the so-called Syrian National Army. Will they be dispersed or integrated one way or another into Syrian society? If they are dispersed, to what extent will the Syrian population admit them? This will be a major issue for Türkiye as well as for Syria.

Many problems are the result of Türkiye's Syria policy. Therefore, Ankara will have to make more efforts. The participation of Syria in the Arab League will give Damascus an opportunity to blame Türkiye in a forum where the latter will be absent. Syria's attendance in the Arab League meetings after an interval of 12 years puts an end to its isolation. Therefore, Damascus will need less cooperation with Türkiye and Assad may grow more intransigent. Whichever way you look at it, the improvement of Turkish-Syrian relations is becoming an uphill task.

## DeSantis' snub of Biden in Florida shows why he's bad at politics

Dean Obeidallah

**P**RESIDENT Joe Biden traveled to Florida on Saturday to survey the devastation from Hurricane Idalia. The president met with GOP Sen. Rick Scott of Florida and other local officials. But one person noticeably absent was Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose office cited the "security preparations" for such a visit that it said would disrupt the recovery effort. DeSantis told reporters he had raised concerns with Biden that providing security for the visit would take away resources from the recovery effort. But a White House official told CNN the governor hadn't raised that issue when the president told him of his visit before announcing it publicly.

Of course, those concerns were apparently not an issue when DeSantis welcomed Biden to the state to survey past calamities. For example, in 2021, after the deadly condo collapse in Surfside, Florida, Biden and DeSantis came together as the president toured the damage.

Both offered praise for

each other at the time. "You've recognized the severity of this tragedy from day one. And you've been very supportive," DeSantis said during a briefing in Miami Beach. Biden, for his part, added, "You know what's good about this? We live in a nation where we can cooperate. And it's really important."

Just last year, again Biden and DeSantis publicly toured the destruction caused by Hurricane Ian in October. At the time, DeSantis praised Biden, stating, "Mr. President, welcome to Florida. We appreciate working together across various levels of government." And Biden told reporters that DeSantis had "done a good job" leading Florida through that disaster, calling his response "pretty remarkable." So what changed since then? In May, DeSantis announced he was seeking the 2024 GOP presidential nomination. In other words, politics - and petty politics at that.

It's not just my view, but also that of CNN political commentator Kate Bedingfield, former Biden White House communica-

tions director, who called DeSantis' refusal to meet with the president when he was in the Sunshine State "small and petty." Bedingfield recalled being there in 2022 when the two men stood together to assess Hurricane Ian's devastation, saying that "it was a powerful day. And it was an opportunity to put politics aside, in a really difficult moment."

Putting aside partisan differences in the face of emergencies has become a staple of American politics. We saw that with Biden and DeSantis two years in a row. During his presidency, Donald Trump traveled to California to assess damage caused by wildfires with Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom. Both Trump and Newsom exchanged praise for each other despite past political differences. But what potentially raised a red flag for DeSantis may be what happened to then-GOP Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey after he toured the damage from Hurricane Sandy in late October 2012 with then-President Barack Obama. Given that the

event occurred a week before the 2012 election that pitted Obama against Republican Mitt Romney, some Republicans slammed Christie for, in their view, helping Obama with this bipartisan appearance.

When Christie first ran for president in 2016, he was peppered with questions about that meeting. Christie bluntly - as usual for him - defended his actions, saying, "The president came to offer help. If they expected me to play politics and dump on the president, I wasn't going to do it." To his credit, Romney defended Christie for this appearance with Obama, saying in 2013 that as a former Massachusetts governor "you look for help from the federal government" at the time of a natural disaster. He added, "You want the president and you want the other agencies of the federal government to step in and provide help."

Despite the apparent snub over the weekend, Biden did not criticize DeSantis. When asked if he was disappointed that DeSantis didn't join him to

tour the damage, he responded, "Well, no, I'm not disappointed," adding, "He may have had other reasons, because - but he did help us plan this." Indeed, Biden even praised DeSantis, telling reporters that the two had been in frequent touch throughout the storm and "the governor was on top of it." One Biden comment Saturday in Florida perfectly sums up where the president's passion lies. When asked if he had a message for DeSantis, he said simply, "We're going to take care of Florida." And he has been doing just that.

On Thursday, the president declared a "major disaster" in Florida, which makes federal funding available to affected individuals for a wide range of needs. He also swiftly deployed resources to Florida, with about 1,500 federal responders arriving on the ground, including search-and-rescue personnel and members of the Army Corps of Engineers. In the wake of Idalia and other recent disasters, Biden on Friday called on Congress to approve \$4 billion for the Federal

Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund in addition to a request for \$12 billion last month. Biden added while in Florida Saturday standing in front of a home damaged by the hurricane, "I'm calling on the United States Congress - Democrats and Republicans - to ensure the funding is there."

While DeSantis would not appear with Biden on Saturday, he was happy to accept the federal aid the president was championing. DeSantis - who once opposed such aid as a member of Congress after Hurricane Sandy - responded about the Biden aid package, "We will apply for whatever federal money is available." This entire episode shows us why Biden is president of the United States and why DeSantis' campaign for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination is floundering. Biden is laser-focused on helping people, while DeSantis proves his lack of political savvy. He left the campaign trail to help his state through this crisis but did himself no favors with his petty snub of the president.

CNN

# African Climate Summit: An opportunity to decolonise Africa’s energy

Aneesa Khan, Salome Nduta & Samuel Mondlane

**AFRICAN and international leaders will attend the African Climate Summit from September 4 to 6 in Nairobi, Kenya. They will deliberate on Africa's unified position on the climate crisis ahead of COP28, the global climate talks, in December and develop the Nairobi Declaration for green growth, a blueprint for Africa's green energy transition. COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber, who serves as CEO of the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC), will also be in attendance.**

Oil Change International data shows the growth in oil and gas production in the United Arab Emirates is poised to be among the world's largest in the next few years and ADNOC is expected to see the second biggest growth among fossil fuel companies. Because of this, all eyes will be on Al Jaber to ensure he will set aside the short-term interests of the oil and gas industry and deliver transformative action at COP28 as promised. To us, that means a just and equitable energy transition for Africa, phasing out all fossil fuels and bringing an end to the exploitation of our land, resources and communities by Global North countries.

This year, African civil society organisations sent letters to the CEOs of BP, Chevron, Exxon and Shell, among others, warning these companies against investing in the

drilling activities of Reconnaissance Energy Africa (ReconAfrica) in the Okavango Basin in Namibia and Botswana. ReconAfrica's projections of 120 billion barrels of recoverable oil could produce a "carbon gigabomb" of 51.6 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to one-sixth of the world's remaining carbon budget - an amount we simply cannot afford to extract. The drilling operations have already caused significant legal, social and environmental issues, including destroying forests and crops and risking the destruction of one of the richest biodiversity hotspots on earth. Biodiversity hotspots sustain livelihoods and critical ecosystems. Extraction in these hotspots threaten livelihoods and species survival across the continent.

BP's big new gas plans in West Africa pose climate and biodiversity threats in Senegal, and lucrative contracts with ENI, ExxonMobil, BP, Shell and Total threaten Mozambique. Africa's leaders must take heed that our communities cannot risk a repeat of the devastation the fossil fuel industry brought to the Niger Delta. The neocolonial model of extracting and exploiting Africa's resources at any cost must stop.

The African Climate Summit should be an opportunity to chart the continent's direction towards an equitable and sustainable future

that protects our people and communities, and to prepare a coordinated front from African leaders to call for a fast and fair phase-out of all fossil fuels at COP28. Yet the summit agenda appears to have been hijacked. The focus is on fossil fuel promotion instead of clean energy solutions and carbon credits instead of a just transition towards renewables. Pushing for fossil fuels will continue to allow Global North countries to exploit our continent's resources and threaten our future.

More than 500 civil society organisations issued an urgent call to reset the focus of the Africa Climate Summit from Global North and corporate interests to one of African priorities, such as a just and equitable phase-out of all new fossil fuel projects. Every new fossil fuel project is incompatible with a liveable future. According to the International Energy Agency, respecting the 1.5C warming limit and securing a liveable future means there can be no new coal, oil or gas. It is a myth that fossil fuels support development. Fossil fuels neither equal energy access nor do they equal jobs or profit. The resources and profits from fossil fuel extraction in Africa have always been exported to the richest countries, leaving our communities with nothing but pollution, increased inequality, eroded governments and growing militarisa-

tion.

Africa - the continent suffering the worst of the climate crisis but having the highest renewable energy potential - does not need new fossil fuels or false and unproven technologies that allow rich countries to continue to burn fossil fuels. African leaders must listen to the African people, who want a just transition to 100 percent renewable energy. With 600 million Africans lacking access to clean, modern energy, we say scaling up cheap, decentralised, renewable energy is the fastest and best way to end energy exclusion and meet the needs of Africa's people.

Shifting to renewable energy and phasing out fossil fuel reliance will permanently bring down soaring energy costs and increase energy security. Renewable technologies are more affordable, can be scaled up more rapidly and do not introduce further volatility through increased climate damage, fiscal instability and stranded asset risks as global gas demand drops. They can also be community-led and owned and can better reach rural communities. This is the only effective route to achieving a more secure, prosperous future - for Africa and the world. As African leaders gather at the Africa Climate Summit and head towards COP28 talks in Dubai, they must act with the integrity and leadership required to ensure a sustainable future powered by clean energy.

Aljazeera

# Is UK falling behind other rich economies? Yes, but that's only part of the story

Andy Beckett

**NOW, more than ever, complaining about the state of the country is one of the main ways that Britain talks about itself. But in all the endless exchanges about the decay of public services and the cost of living, there is one theme that typically is raised only briefly before the conversation moves on.**

How does today's Britain compare with other rich countries? The answer is increasingly unsettling. Despite facing many of the same problems, such as an ageing population, the climate crisis and the diminishing returns for most people from modern capitalism, Britain seems to be struggling more than other western states. From our fragile education and transport infrastructure to our sluggish productivity, our unusually high inflation to our relatively poor public health, it appears to be falling behind traditional peers such as France and Germany, while being steadily caught up by previously much poorer societies such as Slovenia and Poland.

Comparing our quality of life unfavourably with the rest of Europe's is a traditional post-holiday ritual for some Britons, as another underwhelming British summer peters out. Yet usually this sense of inferiority doesn't linger, as the parochial nationalism of much of our media discourages such unpatriotic thoughts, and the particularly demanding rhythms of British working life reassert themselves. Differences in customs, social values and the worth of currencies also make precise comparisons with other countries difficult. It's easier to put envy of other societies down to the sun and long lunches we enjoy in them, and move on.

This summer, however, the

unease about this country's performance became more public. "Why has Britain become so poor?" asked the Sunday Times in July. "Even eastern Europe is catching up with our sluggish GDP." Last month, Tim Harford wrote in the Financial Times after visiting Germany. "This is what prosperity looks like - and the UK doesn't have it." In the same paper, another respected data journalist, John Burn-Murdoch, calculated that without London, the UK would be poorer, in terms of GDP per capita, than even the poorest US state, Mississippi.

Mississippi is a sometimes beautiful, sparsely populated place with lingering poverty and illiteracy - the latter partly caused, a local journalist told me when I visited in the 90s, by some white residents refusing to send their children to school alongside Black pupils. For a supposedly modern, often self-important European country to be unflatteringly compared to one of the most maligned parts of the deep south comes as quite a shock.

In fact, "the Mississippi Question", as Burn-Murdoch calls it, was first raised nine years ago, in a Telegraph article by the Tory journalist Fraser Nelson, partly about Britain's alleged backwardness compared with most of the US. Then, as now, the Conservatives were in power. Unlike the last period in our history when there was widespread talk of national decline - the 1970s - the country's deep problems can't be simplistically pinned on Labour administrations, however hard some Tories still try to blame the distant governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, or the modest powers of the London mayor, Sadiq Khan. Instead, today's declinists make a more subtle, but

not necessarily less rightwing argument. They describe Britain's troubles as primarily economic. And, within those limits, they focus on the classic capitalist concerns of productivity, growth and wealth, rather than the distribution of assets and income, or the extent to which Britons are satisfied by their work.

Meanwhile, other aspects of how the country is doing - social, cultural, environmental - barely feature in these gloomy state-of-the-nation assessments. Life for Britons is reduced to playing a part in a never-ending competition between nations, in what the government of David Cameron and George Osborne joylessly called "the global race", a phrase that, depressingly, Keir Starmer also sometimes uses. This notion of Britain as an economy rather than a society feels like a backward step. Fourteen years ago, in their acclaimed book *The Spirit Level*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett described in convincing detail "the contrast between the material success and social failure of many rich countries". They explained: "As affluent societies have grown richer, there have been long-term rises in rates of anxiety, depression and numerous other social problems."

The economically resurgent Britain for which the declinists are yearning would almost certainly bring new problems, just as the boom of the 80s created a harsher, more individualistic country after the less dynamic but more egalitarian Britain of the 70s.

A country can be seen as a success story by the media, many of its citizens and foreign observers while the lives of some of its people get worse, such as the millions of people made unemployed in the

80s so that Britain could become more "competitive". Then again, there is an argument that we live in such tough times now - in many ways tougher than the 70s or the 80s - that economic revival has to be the national priority. Without it, there won't be enough money to repair the damage the Tories have done to public services and to Britons' individual finances. In essence, this has become Labour's position under Starmer, as it has gradually given up on the idea that a better Britain can be created partly by increasing taxes on the elites who have exploited our profoundly unequal economy. It will be interesting to see if abstinence from such populism, and potentially highly popular, tax-raising policies remains Labour's position if it makes it into office.

Even if a Starmer government does return Britain to its accustomed place among leading European economies, the issue of the country's decline, relative to other countries, will never completely go away. As the first state to have an Industrial Revolution and one of the first global empires, and a place with a modest population and resources, Britain was never going to maintain its pre-eminence once other nations inevitably modernised. Realists have understood this for a very long time. In 1835, after visiting the US, the British entrepreneur and economic reformer Richard Cobden wrote: "Our only chance of national prosperity lies in the timely remodeling of our system, so as to put it as nearly as possible upon an equality with the improved arrangement of the Americans." Economic decline compared with some other countries has always been our destiny. We need to accept that, and instead worry more about the state of our society.

The Guardian

# Arming Ukraine with cluster bombs will only bring devastation to its people

Joshua Askerw

**THE Ukraine war took a troubling turn in July when the United States decided to arm Kyiv with cluster bombs. After months of deliberation, Washington said thousands of munitions would be sent to help Ukraine drive out Russian forces. Politicians and rights groups immediately blasted the move as a "terrible mistake" that flew in the face of international law.**

Washington's decision sets a worrying precedent. In August, Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anušauskas proposed withdrawing his country from the Convention on Cluster Munitions, echoing several other countries that have criticized the treaty that bans these cruel weapons. This should not be happening. Instead of normalizing cluster bombs, everything should be done to end their use.

Both Russian and Ukrainian forces have been documented deploying the munitions, killing many non-combatants and causing serious harm. Moscow's usage is far more extensive than Kyiv's. It's obvious that President Vladimir Putin does not distinguish between military targets and civilians in Ukraine. Killing civilians is deliberate. The relentless bombing of Ukrainian cities is a testament to this fact. Things could get worse, however. White House national security spokesman John Kirby says Kyiv has already unleashed its new US-supplied weapons. Ukraine could see more furious cluster bombing, with Putin warning Moscow has a "sufficient stockpile" to retaliate. It could also prompt the deployment of other banned weapons such as chemical attacks, escalating an already horrific conflict. The Kremlin has a long history of showing that when it comes to war, it will not show restraint. Morals are irrelevant where Russia's interests are concerned, as shown by how Moscow continued to back the Syrian regime despite it brutalizing its own people with chemical weapons.

Ukraine has provided written assurances it will deploy the weapons in a way that minimizes danger to innocent lives. But this is impossible. By their very nature, cluster bombs are indiscriminate. Like a shotgun, they splatter explosive submunitions over an area as big as several soccer fields. Civilians will almost inevitably be killed. Research shows when they

are fired at towns or cities, nine out of 10 victims are non-combatants. Worse still, bomblets that fail to explode lie dormant like landmines. That is, until they come into contact with people. Children are at particular risk, as they can confuse the explosive bomblets for toys. Up to 40% of bomblets don't immediately detonate, meaning huge numbers of highly unstable bomblets can infest an area, killing, crippling and disfiguring for years to come. The cluster bombs the US will supply to Kyiv are more than two decades old, making their reliability even more questionable. All these victims will almost exclusively be Ukrainian civilians, simply because the war is waged on their soil. History reveals the risks a revival of cluster bombs poses. Their prolific use has left a dark and tragic legacy in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

In Laos, one of the worst affected countries, the US dropped a jaw-dropping 260 million cluster bombs between 1964 and 1973. Approximately one-third of them failed to explode and remained dormant. Fewer than 400,000 - just 0.47% - have been cleared so far and at least 11,000 people have been killed. Half of these victims were children. Death or injury are not the only risks. The psychological devastation is huge. The specter of unexploded ordnance terrorizes surviving populations, forcing them to move away from contaminated areas. In Afghanistan and Iraq, US munitions dispersed bomblets of the same size and fluorescent yellow color as the humanitarian rations it air-dropped for civilians - another source of terror. When Ukrainian refugees eventually return home, unexploded bomblets will only make the challenge of rebuilding their country more immense. Expensive, time-consuming and dangerous clean-up operations will be needed. Agricultural land and water sources riddled with cluster bomb remnants will strangle local economies and livelihoods. In Ukraine - Europe's breadbasket - farming will be hazardous for decades. Arms manufacturers claim technical improvements can address these environmental and humanitarian concerns. Self-destruct features, where submunitions destroy themselves if they fail to explode, repeatedly fail in the field.

Despite claims from naysayers like Anušauskas,

who paradoxically claims it makes his country more vulnerable to the weapon, the Convention on Cluster Munitions has been immensely successful. Since it was adopted in 2008, 99% of global stockpiles have been destroyed and more countries - many former munitions producers - have joined. No new use, production or transfer of cluster bombs has been recorded among the 123 states who are signatories.

But their deployment in Ukraine is testing the treaty as never before. While the US, Russia and Ukraine never signed up - insisting these weapons were necessary - others may leave the agreement or decide it's not worth joining. Some 75 countries are estimated to have cluster bomb stockpiles. But if their use was legitimized by an exodus from the agreement, this number could grow, amounting to millions of munitions and billions of individual submunitions. If even a tiny fraction of these stocks are deployed or sold to other countries or non-state armed groups, the consequences could be severe.

Normalizing violations of international agreements is also deeply problematic. Treaties take years to develop and when one state openly disregards them it can create a damaging spillover effect, encouraging non-compliance with other treaties and jeopardizing global stability. Laws should never be seen as optional. The irony isn't lost on some that Washington has rightly called Putin's invasion of Ukraine illegal, but itself has violated an international law observed by a majority of UN member states in giving Kyiv cluster bombs.

Even when an adversary breaks international law, this does not give a state the legal right to respond in kind. Taking an eye for an eye is not allowed. Plus, Moscow's spin-machine could seize upon Ukraine's cluster bomb use to frame Kyiv as a criminal regime that needs to be destroyed. Moreover, using these vile weapons may ultimately backfire for Ukraine on the international stage. Though Ukraine may justifiably want to give Moscow a taste of its own malicious medicine or feel that war requires whatever it takes, Kyiv must maintain the moral high ground. This is key to its popular support in the West securing future deliveries of vital weapons. Resorting to the same abhorrent tactics as Moscow could put that at risk.

The Moscow Times

# Global leaders call on BD to halt case against economist

Shaikh Azizur Rahman

**BANGLADESH'S government says a letter signed by more than 170 global figures voicing concern for Nobel laureate and microloan pioneer Muhammad Yunus is undesirable foreign intervention. The letter condemns what the signatories describe as "continuous judicial harassment" of Yunus and calls for the suspension of current judicial proceedings against him.**

The signatories to the August 27 letter include more than 100 Nobel laureates, among them former US President Barack Obama. The names of former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with entertainers, elected officials and business and civil society leaders, are also listed.

The letter, addressed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was published in the international edition of The New York Times Thursday as a full-page ad. It expressed concerns over "threats to democracy and human rights" in Bangladesh, ahead of general elections set for January. Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions of people out of poverty through his pioneering use of microloans through Grameen Bank, which he founded in 1983 for those unable to use conventional banks. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his grassroots development work in Bangladesh.

Although Hasina initially praised the work of Yunus and the Grameen Bank, she changed her tune after starting to view him as a political rival. Yunus was removed from the Grameen Bank board in 2011. Over the past few years, he has faced 166 civil suits and two criminal cases related to business companies founded by him. In one of those criminal cases, involving the Grameen

Telecom company, the anti-corruption commission charged him with money laundering. In a separate criminal case, another government agency accused him of labor law violations in the company.

His lawyer, Abdullah Al-Mamun, told VOA September 2 that the charges of labor law violations that have been brought against Yunus in one case by the government are civil offenses under Bangladesh's Labour Act but that the government had filed them as a criminal case and that the trials had been "fast-tracked in such a manner that we are not being given enough time to present our arguments in the court." "Under such circumstances, we fear that he may be denied a fair trial," the lawyer said.

The letter published in The New York Times noted that the "previous two national elections [in 2024 and 2018] lacked legitimacy," and added that it was of "utmost importance" that the upcoming national election be "free and fair." The letter also noted their concern about the case against Yunus. "We respectfully ask that you immediately suspend the current judicial proceedings against Professor Yunus. ...We are confident that any thorough review of the anti-corruption and labor law cases against him will result in his acquittal," it said. Hasina's government has reacted sharply to the letter.

Hasina told a press briefing in Dhaka Friday that the government would not be influenced by the letter. "The cases [against Yunus] are going on in court. The judiciary is completely independent. We have no authority to intervene in these cases. Why is this statement brought from outside the country asking us to withdraw the cases?" Hasina asked. Hasina

said that the authors of the joint letter should send their experts, including lawyers, to see for themselves why Yunus has been charged. "I invite them here to verify the case documents and see if he has been charged falsely. I cannot understand how they want the case against him suspended by issuing such a statement," she said.

M o h a m m a d Ashrafuzzaman, former liaison officer of Hong Kong-based rights group Asian Legal Resource Center, said that Bangladesh's judiciary has "failed to emerge with an image of having independence and integrity" as an institution when its recent track records are assessed carefully. "Dissidents are regularly targeted by the Bangladesh government, and subsequently the police and judiciary act as its extended hands," Ashrafuzzaman told VOA. "The track records of the judiciary of Bangladesh do not match with the universal principles of justice. It utterly disregards the notion of the right to fair trial in politically motivated cases." Referring to a 1997 speech Hasina gave in Washington expressing Bangladesh's pride in "the outstanding work done by Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank that he founded," Badiul Alam Majumdar, founder of the pro-democracy Citizens for Good Governance said Hasina used to be an ardent supporter of Yunus. "Some global leaders are asking to stop the judicial harassment of professor Yunus and ensure that the next general election is free and fair. As Bangladeshis, we should not ignore the views of these leaders who are the world's opinion makers," Majumdar told VOA. "Those (global) leaders are certainly speaking in the interest of Bangladesh's 170 million people," he said.

The Telegraph

# Brexit Britain has set its foreign policy direction: it is heading East

Nick Timothy

**AT the end of this week, world leaders will head to India for a meeting of the G20. There are divisions between Western and non-Western powers, and speculation that President Xi might not even attend. No matter: we should start getting used to Western eyes looking east, and to heeding the words of President Modi and leaders across the Indo-Pacific region.**

The region is home to more than half the world's total population. Forecasts suggest it will generate more than half of global economic growth between now and 2050. And yet it is also the stage for strategic rivalry and danger to the prosperity and security of countries around the world. India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed neighbours with a history of conflict. China menaces Taiwan, clashes with India and worries countries across the region, from Japan to Australia.

To some in the United Kingdom, including some in the Foreign Office and the political establishment, these are distant places we can do little to influence. But we have vital interests in the region. There are trading opportunities with them which could boost growth and jobs. There are risks to be mitigated that would otherwise harm our interests and those of our allies.

War between India and Pakistan, for example, would not only be a disaster for the region but a huge asylum risk for Britain. A Chinese attack on Taiwan could endanger more than 60 per cent of the world's semiconductors, and more than 90 per cent of the most advanced ones. Most seriously, it would also risk war between the United States and

China. The China of 2023 is very different to the China of 2013, when Britain pursued its irresponsible policy of kowtowing to Beijing in pursuit of a "golden era" in relations between the two countries. China suffers what some economists nickname "Long Covid": its property sector is on the brink, consumer prices are falling, and analysts fear deflation and default. Trade with America, its largest export market, is down a fifth, and foreign investment is down by 87 per cent - reaching the lowest level on record last quarter.

Yet China still presents a threat. Its response to Covid and the disruption to global supply chains caused by the pandemic finally taught Western leaders that exposure to and dependence on Beijing was a danger. Its bellicosity towards Taiwan, America and others - backed by enormous military investment - continues. Its support for Russia in Ukraine, its treatment of its own citizens, and its aggressive conduct within other countries all point in the same direction. China may be struggling, but its rise and the relative decline of the West make for a less stable world. Many of the crises we see internationally are caused by the loss of undisputed American global leadership. This is the context in which Britain - fresh from having left the European Union - has recast its foreign and trading policies. It surprised the world and signed the Aukus treaty with Australia and America to co-operate on nuclear submarines and, in future, probably more. It joined the trans-Pacific trading partner-

ship, CPTPP. And a trade deal with India, now the world's most populous country, is on its way.

Closer to home, British leadership in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shown that there is no inevitable trade-off between playing a greater role in the Indo-Pacific and playing our part in the security of our own continent. Those scarred by Brexit believe the tilt to the east is delusional and grandiose, but this is not the view of the governments of Pacific powers such as Japan. Those American voices saying it would be better for Britain to focus on Europe were judging their own national interest, not ours. While the shape of the new British foreign policy is becoming clearer, some issues remain unresolved, and the role of the US is one of them. Under Presidents Biden and Trump, the United States has proved an unreliable ally, not only to Britain but to Europe. It will, like any state, pursue its national interest, but its politics are capricious and its commitment to our continent uncertain.

Then there is British policy towards China, which has veered back and forth over the years. There has been little recognition from the golden era advocates of their error, and inside government the pull of those who prioritise Chinese trade and investment is met by the push of those who warn of industrial espionage and strategic dependency. And then there is our approach to states, such as Saudi Arabia, whose values we may not like but who play an important role in the world. The reaction to Rishi Sunak's



## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 394 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday and gained 394.77 points, showing growth of 0.87 percent, closing at 45,707.43 points against 45,312.66 points the previous trading day.

A total of 139,251,269 shares were traded during the day as compared to 161,824,998 shares, whereas the trading value of shares was recorded at Rs4.476 billion against Rs4.464 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 313 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 187 of them recorded gains and 105 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 21 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Al-Shaheer Corp with

11,268,667 shares at Rs10.48 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 11,211,536 shares at Rs1.17 per share and Dewan Motors with 8,848,489 shares at Rs16.41 per share.

Cotton Palm witnessed a maximum increase of Rs31.31 per share price, closing at Rs1,298.30, whereas the runner-up was Indus Al-Abbas Sugar with Rs23.98 rise in its per share price to Rs504.99.

Mehmood Textile witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs47.55 per share closing at Rs586.45; followed by Archroma Pak with Rs27.58 decline to close at Rs454.42.

**Rupee sheds 18 paise against US Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed a devaluation of 18 paise against the US dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at

Rs305.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs305.46.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs331 and Rs334 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.48 to close at Rs330.04 against the last day's closing of Rs331.52, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down up by 02 paise and stood at Rs2.08, whereas a decrease of Rs1.46 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs385.96 as compared to the last closing of Rs387.42.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 05 and 04 paise to close at Rs83.21 and Rs81.48

respectively.

**Gold rates decline by Rs700 to Rs239,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.700 on Monday and was sold at Rs239,100 as compared to its sale at Rs239,800 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs600 to Rs204,990 from Rs205,590 whereas the rate of 10 gram 22 karat went down to Rs187,907 from Rs188,457, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price per tola silver and that of ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs2,900 and Rs2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$1,940 from \$1,945, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam shake hands with Caretaker Federal Minister for Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali.

## 7.846m mt of wheat available

ISLAMABAD (APP): Strategic wheat reserves of the country during the start week of the current month (September) were recorded at 7.846 million metric tons, which is enough to fulfill the local requirements and maintain stocks for keeping the demand and supply smooth in domestic markets.

The government had procured about 5.879 million metric tons of wheat during the crop procurement campaign for the year 2023-24, said Food Security Commissioner In the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Intiaz Ali Gopang.

Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that grain procurement targets for the current season were fixed at 7.800 million tons as out of the total fixed targets about 75 per cent was accomplished, adding that Punjab completed 87 per cent of its procurement targets as it procured 3,921 million metric tons, Sindh 56 percent to procured 777,394 metric tons respectively.

Meanwhile, Balochistan had procured 50,000 metric tons, whereas Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Services Corporation had completed 63 percent of its assigned task as it procured 5.879 million tons of wheat, he added.

Food Security Commissioner informed that local carry-forward stocks of wheat in the country were recorded at 1.570 million metric tons, which further strengthened the local reserves of grains, adding under import of 2022, the government had also imported about 375,589 metric tons of wheat.

So far, the government has released 762,471 metric tons of wheat for grinding, adding that private sector procurements had recorded at 3.590 million tons, of which 2.656 metric tons had been grinded.

It is worth mentioning here that wheat production targets during 2022-23 were fixed at 28.37 million metric tons, whereas local grain output was estimated at 28.185 million metric tons.

## SME development:

# SMEDA assured of close coordination

LAHORE (APP): The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government has assured the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) of close coordination for implementation of the National SME Policy 2021 and coordination for small and medium enterprises development in the province.

A spokesperson said here on Monday that SMEDA had made great strides towards implementation of the National SME Policy 2021 in an effective manner despite numerous challenges and constraints. He said that it had been

acknowledged by the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government through a letter written by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry that irrespective of scarcity of financial and human resources, the organisation had initiated many projects such as National Ideas Lab (NIL), SME One Window (SOW) and SME Database Development.

The SMEDA also achieved remarkable progress in a number of other areas in a short span under leadership of Farhan Aziz Khawaja, as the chief executive officer (CEO). Besides, allocation of sub-

stantial funds for ongoing projects in PSPD, land acquisition at Industrial Estates in Lahore & Quetta for establishment of SME Facilitation Centres as well as pursuing of various funding options and submission of 15 projects proposals for Export Development Fund and 22 project proposals for the Pakistan Innovation Fund speak volumes about the commitment of SMEDA team.

The letter hoped that all these initiatives would significantly contribute towards development of the SME sector in the country.

## Tariq discuss key problems with Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation led by the President of the Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association Islamabad Tariq Saeed met President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

They informed him about the key problems of his sector and emphasized the importance of their quick redress, said a press release.

Addressing the delegation Ahsan Bakhtawari said that small pharmacies are facilitating customers in payment through debit/credit card, but FBR have grouped them in Tier-1 Retailers category for heavy taxation due to which they are facing many problems.

He urged FBR to remove them from Tier-1 category to ease their difficulties. He said that the chemists and druggists are performing an important national service by providing timely medicines to patients, but like other businesses, the business community of this sector is also facing many problems due to which their business activities are suffering.

He urged the government to solve the issues of this sector for the convenience of the patients. He said that he is well aware of the problems faced by chemists and druggists and will be their voice from the platform of the Chamber and will highlight them at every relevant forum for redress on a priority basis.

President of Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association Islamabad, Tariq Saeed, while speaking on the occasion, said that in view of the sky-high inflation, like other industries and businesses, the chemists and druggist sector is also facing great difficulties.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where four ships namely, MSC Denise, Marlen, Erietta and Falcon Royal carrying Container, Palm oil, Coal and Gasoline, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Sunday.

A total of 10 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of two ships, Maersk Phuket and Marangas Asclepius sailed out to sea on Monday (today) morning, while two more ships, Mari Blue and New Liberty are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo throughput of 94,821 tonnes, comprising 66,436 tones imports Cargo and 28,385 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,057 Containers (552 TEUs Imports and 1,505 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a gas carrier FSM & two more container ships, Lisa and America carrying LPG and Container are expected to take berths at Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Monday, 4th September, while two more container ships, MSC Lisbon and Maersk Hartford are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

## Petroleum sales in Pakistan decline 8% YoY in August 2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan witnessed a significant 8.0 percent year-on-year decline in petroleum product sales for the month of August 2023, according to industry experts.

This sharp drop in sales was predominantly attributed to a staggering 64 percent YoY reduction in Furnace Oil (FO) sales, largely driven by the nation's decreased reliance on FO-based power generation. The decline in FO sales can be attributed to the addition of new local coal-based power plants, a trend experts have been closely monitoring.

However, the month of August did bring some positive news for the industry, with Motor Spirit (MS) and High-Speed Diesel (HSD) sales surging by 5.0 percent and 11 percent YoY, respectively.

This growth was attributed to the absence of heavy rainfall compared to the previous year, creating

a more favorable environment for these products.

On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, the petroleum industry did experience a 4.0 percent increase in sales during August 2023, driven by a rising fortnightly pricing trend throughout the month.

MS sales increased by 2.0 percent MoM, totaling 0.67 million tons, while HSD sales witnessed an impressive 11 percent MoM growth, reaching 0.55 million tons. In contrast, FO sales plummeted by 18 percent MoM, falling to 0.12 million tons, reflecting the earlier-mentioned shift in power generation methods.

For the first two months of the fiscal year 2024, Pakistan's total petroleum product sales declined by 7.0 percent YoY, amounting to 2.76 million tons.

Analysing the performance of individual companies in the petroleum sector, it was noted that

Pakistan State Oil (PSO) experienced an 8.0 percent YoY reduction in August 2023, primarily due to an 86 percent YoY plunge in FO sales. Conversely, MS and HSD reported robust growth, with 15 percent and 32 percent YoY increases, respectively.

Meanwhile, Attock Petroleum Limited (APL) and Shell Pakistan Limited (SHEL) saw declines of 2.0 percent and 11 percent YoY, respectively, while HASCOL's off-take witnessed a remarkable 27 percent YoY jump.

In cumulative terms, the petroleum sales of PSO, SHEL, and APL decreased by 10 percent, 9.0 percent, and 5.0 percent YoY, respectively, during the first two months of fiscal year 2024. Conversely, HASCOL showcased a remarkable 60 percent YoY growth during this period.

Market share dynamics

also underwent changes during the initial months of fiscal year 2024. PSO's market share declined by 1.4 percent to 50.9 percent compared to 52.3 percent in the same period the previous year. In contrast, SHEL's market share dropped slightly to 6.96 percent YoY, down from 7.10 percent in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, APL and HASCOL saw their market shares rise to 10.2 percent (from 10.0 percent) and 2.9 percent (up from 1.7 percent) in the first two months of fiscal year 2024, respectively. Other Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) maintained a stable market share at 29.0 percent during this period.

The petroleum industry in Pakistan continues to navigate challenges and shifts in demand, with companies seeking to adapt to evolving market conditions and consumer preferences.

## Oil falling as traders capitalize on rising oil prices

ANKARA (APP): Oil prices recorded a limited decline on Monday as investors profited from the highest oil prices seen since November and on expectations that Saudi Arabia and Russia's curbs would continue through October.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$88.48 per barrel at 10.21 a.m. local time (0721 GMT), a 0.08% loss from the closing price on Friday of \$88.55 per barrel.

The American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at the same time at \$85.45 per barrel, down 0.11% from the previous session close of \$85.55 per barrel.

Brent trade on Friday saw prices reach the highest level since last November at \$88.99 a barrel on concerns that Saudi Arabia and Russia will

maintain production curbs throughout October.

Concerns were amplified after Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said on Thursday that OPEC+ countries agreed on fresh supply curbs.

"Yes, we agreed. But we will announce the basic parameters next week, publicly," Novak was quoted as saying by Russian media outlets.

Earlier last month, Saudi Arabia stated that it would extend its existing 1 million barrels per day (bpd) of output cutbacks through September. The country originally reduced output in July and extended it through August.

Likewise, Russia announced it would continue to voluntarily reduce oil exports. It said it would reduce exports by 500,000 bpd in August and cut

300,000 bpd in September.

Data suggesting some symptoms of softening in the employment sector further bolstered bearish market sentiment.

The American economy added 187,000 jobs in August, higher than market estimates of 170,000, while the unemployment rate jumped to 3.8% from 3.5% in July, the US Labor Department announced earlier.

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland President Loretta Mester stated Friday that the labor market remains strong while stressing that future interest rate decisions will be based on incoming data.

Analysts believe that if new data releases echo slowing inflation, the Fed may halt the rate rise in September and October.

Waning concerns about China's economy, the

world's top oil importer, also aided oil price increases.

The Caixin manufacturing industry Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) increased to 51.0 in August from 49.2 in July, above analysts' expectations of 49.3, to reach the highest level since February. Readings above the 50-point index indicate growth.

On Thursday, China's central bank and financial regulator issued notices to modify several borrowing requirements to help homeowners, including decreasing the existing mortgage rate for first-time buyers and the down payment ratio in select locations.

The economic recovery is projected to remain fragile, putting further pressure on authorities to provide additional assistance.

## Conference on trade, tourism opportunities in ASEAN held at LCCI

LAHORE (APP): As part of the efforts of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) aimed at exploring new avenues for trade, investment and economic gains, a Trade and Tourism Conference on ASEAN was held here on Monday.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman, LCCI President Kashif Anwar, High Commissioner of Malaysia Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Mulawarman Tugio, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, spoke on the occasion while Convener LCCI Standing Committee on ASEAN Raja Hassan Akhtar and EC Member Fareeha Younas were also present.

The governor congratulated the LCCI president for organising a conference on the topic. He said that it is also a primary responsibility of the chamber to look for new opportunities.

The governor said that the country was going through extraordinary circumstances. "At present we are witnessing the devaluation of the rupee and our economy is slowing down." He said that the country was going to default in 2022 and many economists said that we had already defaulted. But we came out of that situations and now we are moving towards new opportunities.

The governor said that there are many opportunities for the businessmen in ASEAN. "We now have to target our untapped export potential and the import potential of ASEAN," he said and asserted that Pakistan has to improve its halal standards to make its place in the halal market. He said that all institutions and government are fully ready to facilitate the investors.

Talking about tourism, he said that Pakistan has a lot of potential in terms of tourism. He said that

investment is needed in tourism infrastructure, hospitality, hotels and restaurants. He said that LCCI Research department should conduct research in collaboration with embassies and work together in each area.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that this conference serves as a pivotal platform for fostering collaboration and improving connectivity among private sector representatives from Pakistan and the member states of ASEAN. It is our shared goal to boost mutual trade and explore new horizons of economic cooperation.

He said that ASEAN region has long been recognized as a dynamic economic powerhouse, and Pakistan is keen to harness the immense potential, it offers for our mutual benefit.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that LCCI has always been at the forefront of supporting the economic growth of Pakistan

through facilitating exporters and empowering the local business community. He reaffirmed that solid commitment to this cause, as we believe that promoting international partnerships and collaborations is essential for achieving sustainable economic prosperity.

He said that ASEAN has been one of the fastest-growing regions in the world. Over the past few decades, ASEAN has experienced robust economic growth, driven by factors such as favorable demographics, increasing urbanization, rising consumer demand, and expanding trade and investment opportunities.

The LCCI President said that the global exports of ASEAN stood in excess of 2 trillion dollars in year 2022 while imports at 1.87 trillion dollars. Pakistan's exports to ASEAN are merely 1.58 Billion Dollars while our imports from ASEAN are around 8.96 Billion Dollars.

Pakistan has already signed Free Trade Agreement with Malaysia and the same is in process with Indonesia.

He said that it is worth mentioning that ASEAN serves as a vital trade and investment hub, both within the region and globally. It has established a network of free trade agreements with key trading partners, facilitating trade flows.

High Commissioner of Malaysia Mohammad Azhar Mazlan said that both the countries have excellent relations. At present, more than one lakh Pakistanis are living in Malaysia and 5000 Pakistani students are studying there.

He invited Pakistanis to study in Malaysia and also emphasized the importance of education. He said that the human resources are very important for development. We have a trade of 1.8 billion with Pakistan and the balance is slightly in favor of Malaysia because of palm oil and

chemical products export to Pakistan. He said that Pakistan is a region full of opportunities with excellent human resources. It has sea, rivers, ports and its geographical position is ideal. He said that there is a lot of potential in Halal industry and demand for the products ranging from cosmetics to pharmaceutical.

Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Mulawarman Tugio said that ASEAN's GDP is 30% of the international GDP. We want LCCI to conduct research on South Asian markets in collaboration with various universities. He emphasized that development of Halal industry is very important at this time and the largest importer of Halal cosmetics in the world is European Union. After that, the second largest importer is Russia and the third is France. There is a huge potential for Pakistan in this area. Pakistan is a beautiful country where people are friendly.

### COURT NOTICES

On the court of Mr. Kaleem Ullah Civil Judge II/Elaga Qazi Malakand at Bathkela, Case No. 99/1 of 2023, Next date: 05/09/2023, Mr. Fazal Aleem Versus Mr. Wazir Hassan Proclamation Against Legal heirs: (4/1) Fazal Qadar S/O Abdul Qadar resident of Nawagai Piran Tehsil Bathkela District Malakand Present UAE Dubai. In the above title case the service of you above named defendants is not possible with ordinary means, hence you are hereby informed through this proclamation to attend this court on 05/09/2023 at 08:00am in person or through appointed agent/attorney or through counsel, otherwise you shall be place and proceed against ex-parte.

IN the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Case No.67/1, Institution. 6/3/2023. Date of hearing. 14/9/2023.Khalil urv Rehman VS Fazal Subhan etc. Notice to No. 1.Fazal Subhan. 2.Sultan. 3.Mehboob sons. 7.Husna. 9.Bushra. 10.Afsara Bibi daughters of Sadar resident of Muhalla Sargental Torwarsak tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore,

proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 14/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

IN THE COURT OF SANA AFZAL CIVIL JUDGE V KOHAT, Suit No 287/1 Date of hearing 07-09-2023, Titled:- Saeeda Bibi Vs Nasir Shah Notice against:- (2) Shabana Mehreem Wife of Saleem Shah (3)Zahir Shah Son of Akbar Shah (4)Rubina Dughtler of Najmuddin Wife of Shahid Nawaz (5)Liaqat Muhammad Son of Fazal Karim (6)Kiran Jabeen Widow of Faheem Shah R/o Jungle Khel District Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad) (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit of against you defendants in which date of hearing 07-09-2023 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendants is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 07-09-2023 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 25-07-2023 (Court of C.J.V Kohat)



## In brief

## Badminton trials to start in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Kinnaid College for Women in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission, is set to launch the "Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Regional Badminton Women Trials In a move to nurture young badminton talent among women." This exciting initiative is roll into action from tomorrow, Tuesday at the District Sports Gymnasium in Sargodha, said Ammara Rubab, head of sports Kinnaid college while talking to APP here on Monday. She said the event aims at scout and develop budding badminton stars from across Punjab, providing them with comprehensive facilities and opportunities to showcase their skills. The trials will extend over the course of several weeks, covering seven different locations throughout the region, she asserted. The trials will be held at Sargodha, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Bahawalpur, Multan, Faisalabad and Lahore. Ammara said during these trials, talented young women will have the chance to demonstrate their badminton prowess, with an eye on potential future success in the sport. The collaborative effort between "Kinnaid College for Women and the Higher Education Commission underscores their commitment to fostering sporting talent and promoting gender equality in sports", said KC head of sports She said third exciting venture promises to invigorate the badminton scene in Punjab, offering a platform for young women to excel in the sport and contribute to the nation's sporting achievements.

## World Cup 2024 pools revealed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The highly anticipated FIH Hockey5s World Cup Oman 2024 was officially launched at a ceremony in Salalah, Oman. According to media release issued by the International Hockey Federation, on this occasion, the pools of the tournament were also revealed. In the women's competition hosts Oman were drawn in Pool A along with Malaysia, Fiji and Netherlands. Australia, South Africa, Ukraine and Zambia are placed in Pool B. India, United States, Poland and Namibia are in Pool C, while New Zealand, Uruguay, Thailand and Paraguay complete Pool D. In the men's competition, Pakistan were drawn with the Netherlands, Poland and Nigeria in Pool A. India, Egypt, Switzerland and Jamaica will compete in Pool B. Australia, New Zealand, Trinidad & Tobago and Kenya are placed in Pool C, while hosts Oman will face Malaysia, United States and Fiji in Pool D. The 16 men's and women's teams from around the world will all be vying to become the first ever Hockey5s World Champions when the World Cup gets underway from 24-31 January 2024 in Muscat, Oman. FIH President Tayyab Ikram, in his message congratulated all the 32 teams that qualified for the FIH Hockey5s World Cup and said: "I would like to congratulate all the 16 men's and women's teams that will be a part of the record books as the first teams to compete in an FIH Hockey5s World Cup! You represent the very best of Hockey5s; and you will be the trailblazers and the role models for all future players who take up this new and exciting format of our beloved sport." Speaking about the new era that the FIH Hockey5s World Cup 2024 ushers, he added,

# PCB hopeful of stronger Pak-India cricket ties as BCCI delegation arrives in Lahore

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Zaka Ashraf on Monday expressed optimism about the future of cricketing relations between Pakistan and India and extended a warm welcome to a delegation from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) that arrived in Lahore today.

The visiting delegation comprised BCCI President Roger Binny and board's Vice President Rajiv Shukla among others.

The visit of the high-level BCCI delegation comes during the ongoing Asia Cup that is being jointly hosted by Pakistan and Sri Lanka under a hybrid model after the Indian cricket board refused last year to tour Pakistan for the tournament.

According to a Times Now report, it was the first visit of any BCCI delegation

to Pakistan since November 2008. It said the delegation arrived in Pakistan via the Wagah Border.

"Our visit is related to cricket and Pakistan fans should enjoy the Asia Cup as impressive matches are being organised in the tournament," Shukla told journalists in Lahore, who was flanked by the PCB chief and Binny.

In a brief interaction with the media after a meeting with PCB chief Ashraf, Shukla noted that the BCCI secretary was the chairperson of the Asian Cricket Council hence "it was incumbent upon us to make it here because Pakistan is hosting the Asia Cup."

He said the BCCI delegation also visited Sri Lanka's Kandy last week. Speaking on the occasion, Binny said he had last visited Pakistan in 2005.

"We are here to watch matches including the one

of Afghanistan scheduled tomorrow as well as other matches [of the tournament] in the future," he said in response to a query.

The PCB chief termed the arrival of the BCCI delegation "a great moment".

Ashraf said he was thankful to the Indian delegation for accepting the PCB's invitation and making it to Pakistan.

"If they (BCCI) reciprocate the same gesture, we will also respond accordingly," the PCB chairman said, adding "We will grow together and the two boards will have stronger ties."

According to reports, the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is considering moving games in the Super Four round of the ongoing Asia Cup away from Colombo as wet weather looms over the Sri Lankan capital. However, no formal decision has been taken in this regard.



PALLEKELE: A familiar sight for cricket-watchers in Pallekele, Nepal vs India, Asia Cup

## Williamson will be picked in New Zealand's WC squad despite knee injury

WELLINGTON (Agencies): Kane Williamson will be included in New Zealand's squad for the 50-over World Cup next month despite his knee injury.

The Black Caps' one-day international and T20 captain, 33, has not played since tearing cruciate ligaments at the Indian Premier League in April.

New Zealand say he has made "sufficient progress" to be picked but there is no guarantee he will be fit for the first game against England on 5 October.

"We are delighted to be in a place to select him," coach Gary Stead said. "He's left no stone unturned in trying to get back playing cricket at the highest level."

"The World Cup is not a short tournament and we will continue to monitor his

progress over the next month ahead of the first tournament match."

When Williamson suffered the injury, New Zealand said "standard rehabilitation timelines" meant he was "unlikely to be fit and available for selection" for the tournament in India. "Through this entire process I have tried to keep an open mind on when I might be able to return to cricket and not get too focused on one date or match," Williamson said.

"Being selected doesn't change that and I know there's still work to do and day by day goals to tick off to get back on the field with the team." Williamson has been with the Black Caps on their tour of England but is not in the T20 or 50-over squads. He has been batting

in the nets and taking part in fielding drills.

Williamson, New Zealand's captain when they lost the 2019 World Cup final to England at Lord's, is one of his country's greatest batters across all formats and has played 161 ODIs, scoring 6,554 runs at an average of 47.83.

The format of the World Cup - a five-week round-robin stage featuring 10 teams before semi-finals and a final - means he could enter the tournament part-way through.

The rest of New Zealand's squad will be named on Monday, 11 September. England and New Zealand meet in the fourth T20 at Trent Bridge on Tuesday before four ODIs, with the hosts leading the series 2-1.

## Gavaskar finds a flaw in Babar Azam's captaincy

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indian batting great Sunil Gavaskar has taken a sly dig at Pakistan captain Babar Azam after India's dismal performance in Asia Cup 2023 match against the greenshirts in Sri Lanka.

How India can dissolve the Shaheen Shah Afridi threat in Pakistan-India? In a match that featured some of the biggest superstars in world cricket, there was only one name that reigned supreme - Afridi.

The pace spearhead of the Green Army bagged not one but two prized scalps in the rain-marred contest between the traditional rivals at the Asia Cup 2023 on Saturday last.

Pacer Afridi first bamboozled Indian skipper Rohit Sharma. He then outsmarted Virat Kohli, who had just brought out his signature cover drive to highlight his form in the previous over. The premier pacer of the two-time Asia Cup winners had silenced the Indian sup-

porters at a packed Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Sri Lanka.

Though Afridi owned the Indian top-order with his bowling masterclass, legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar is still not convinced that Babar Azam's Pakistan side played their cards right against rivals India at the continental tournament.

Talking about the blockbuster Pakistan-India showdown, Gavaskar opined that the bowling changes of the bowling changes of Afridi didn't make any sense to him. "I think the bowling changes didn't make any sense because if you have three bowlers, the pace bowlers have taken the early wickets, you want to keep at least one ongoing from one end. I know that you can't really go through long spells, but one person could have been bowling from one end and Shadab or Nawaz from the other end," Gavaskar told India Today.

Suggesting Babar clearly missed a trick in India's Asia

Cup opener, Gavaskar observed that Rohit and Co. managed to stage a fightback after a top-order collapse. Middle-order stars Hardik Pandya and Ishan Kishan smashed half-centuries to help India register a fighting total. Pandya and Kishan's fifth-wicket stand was worth 138 runs off 141 balls.

Gavaskar claimed that India would have struggled to cross the 200-run mark if the Pakistani pacers had dismissed either Pandya or Kishan earlier in the innings. When Afridi returned to dismiss Pandya for 87 off 90 balls, the Kishan-starrer side had already scored 239 runs in 43 overs. "I mean India will be saying a big thank you because that's what allowed the partnership to flourish because otherwise, if one of the pacers had taken just that one wicket between Ishan Kishan and Hardik Pandya, then maybe India would have struggled to reach even 175, 200," Gavaskar added.



LAHORE : PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf with BCCI president Roger Binny and vice president Rajeev Shukla in Lahore.

## Asia Cup matches shifted to Hambantota

COLOMBO (Agencies): The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has decided to shift all the Super 4 matches of the Asia Cup 2023 to Hambantota as a long rain spell are expected in Colombo — where matches were scheduled to be held — for the next 15 days.

The decision was taken after closely looking at the weather forecast and the possibility of rain disturbing the matches. If India beat Nepal on Monday then Pakistan vs India's Super Four clash will be played in Hambantota. Not only that, a reserve day for the India-Pakistan encounter is also under consideration because their group-stage encounter was called off without a ball being bowled in the second innings.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had already expressed their concerns to ACC who assured proper coordination. According to BBC Weather forecast, thundery showers are expected in Colombo for the next 15 days.

It must be noted that the ACC is already under heavy criticism for organising Asia Cup matches in Sri Lanka knowing that it always rains there during this time of year. These matches will be shifted to Hambantota:

Super 4s  
Sept 9 - B1 vs B2 at 2:30 pm (PST)  
Sept 10 - A1 vs A2 at 2:30 pm (PST)  
Sept 12 - A2 vs B1 at 2:30 pm (PST)  
Sept 14 - A1 vs B1 at 2:30 pm (PST)  
Sept 15 - A2 vs B2 at 2:30 pm (PST)  
Sept 17 - Final at 2:30 pm (PST)

## Pakistan reach semi-final of SAFF U16 C'ship

BHUTAN (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan defeated Maldives 3-0 to reach the semi-final of SAFF U16 Championship in Bhutan on Monday. In-form Green Shirts outclassed opponents by scoring their first goal in the 14th minute thanks to Subhan Karim.

The Maldives looked shaky and remained goalless throughout. Abdul Samad doubled the lead in the 39th minute for Pakistan. Maldives goalkeeper gave away an own goal to help Pakistan take 3-0 lead in the last part of the game. Pakistan will now meet Group A's runner-up in the semi-final on September 8.

Pakistan beat Bhutan in opening match

The Pakistan U16 football team beat the hosts Bhutan 2-1 in their opening match at Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu, Bhutan on Saturday.

The home side scored the first goal but their lead was overturned by the Men in Green as they scored two goals in the first half and got into a dominating position. Tandin Phuntsho gave his side an early breakthrough by scoring a goal in the 13th minute but Pakistan resisted and pulled one back just four minutes after the hosts' opener.

Pakistan's captain Ubaid Ullah Khan equalised in the 17th minute and the Green Shirts continued with their attacking display. The hard work paid off in the 30th minute when Subhan Karim scored the second which turned out to be a winner for his side.

## India overcome dropped catches to thump Nepal in Asia Cup

PALLEKELE (Reuters): India shook off some sloppy fielding and fired with the bat to comprehensively beat Nepal in a rain-shortened Asia Cup match in Pallekele on Monday as they joined arch-rivals Pakistan in the Super Four stage from Group A.

Chasing a revised target of 145 in 23 overs following a long rain interruption, India romped to a 10-wicket victory under the Duckworth-Lewis method as Skipper Rohit Sharma and fellow opener Shubman Gill got them across the line with 17 balls left.

Rohit was not out on 74 after smashing six fours and five sixes, while Gill made an unbeaten 67.

India had earlier let Nepal off the hook after opting to bowl as Shreyas Iyer dropped Kushal Bhurtel in the opening over and Virat Kohli made a mess of another chance in the next to hand Aasif Sheikh a lifeline.

Bhurtel got another reprieve when wicket-keeper Ishan Kishan put down a simple catch off Mohammed Shami, but fell to Shardul Thakur for 38 while Sheikh scored 58 - his 10th half-century in one-day international cricket.

But Ravindra Jadeja (3-40) tore through the middle-order and Mohammed Siraj (3-61) also got in on the act before rain briefly

halted play at 178-6. Nepal then rode on Sompal Kami's 48 lower down the order to finish with 230 in 48.2 overs.

More rain followed after India began their chase, prompting match officials to revise the target after a lengthy delay.

India advance to the next stage of the tournament with three points after their meeting with Pakistan at the same stadium was washed out on Saturday.

The south Asian neighbours, who only face off in multi-team tournaments due to soured political relations, are set to clash again in the next stage at the weekend.

## Pakistan women's team whitewash South Africa in 3-match T20I series



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's team have whitewashed South Africa in a three-match T20 International series at the National Stadium, Karachi.

It is the first time in history that Pakistani women have won the T20I series against South Africa and the first series since they defeated Sri Lanka back in 2022 at home.

The Green Shirts beat the Proteas by six runs in the third T20I and completed their whitewash against the visitors on Monday.

After winning the toss, the guest team asked the Pakistan team to bat first. Former Pakistani Bisma Maroof, Sidra Ameen, and Nida Dar helped Pakistan to post a fighting total of 150 for 5 in the 20 overs.

Chasing the target of 151 runs, the visitors kept on losing wickets at intervals but it was skipper Laura Wolvaardt who played a valiant knock of 72 runs on 54 balls with nine boundaries.

She single-handedly carried her side and was near to completing the target. The

24-year-old decided to go for a six but the ball didn't cross the boundary line and was caught by the substitute.

After the well-settled batter lost her wicket, none of the other batters could take their team over the line and lost the game.

For Pakistan, Sadia Iqbal and Nushra Sundhu took two wickets each and played a key part in their side's victory.

Meanwhile, in the first innings, Pakistan posted 150/5 on the scoreboard in the allocated overs.

Sidra Ameen, and Bismah Maroof both scored 39 runs each while the skipper Nida Dar played a destructive knock scoring 36 off 20 balls including six boundaries. Pakistan won the first T20I by five wickets, while they won the second T20I by seven wickets.

Pakistan will now play a three-match ODI series against South Africa.

## Messi assists Miami to big win over MLS champions LAFC

LOS ANGELES (INP): Inter Miami delivered the most impressive win of their Lionel Messi era, 3-1 over Major League Soccer champions Los Angeles FC, with two assists from the Argentine boosting their playoff hopes.

Goals from Argentine forward Facundo Farias, Spanish full-back Jordi Alba and substitute Leonardo Campana of Ecuador earned Miami a statement victory that moves them within nine points of the playoff places with nine games remaining.

Messi's first MLS appearance in Los Angeles, attracted a capacity crowd, swollen by a host of A-List celebrities including Leonardo DiCaprio, Selena Gomez and Prince Harry. But the home fans left frustrated as last year's MLS Cup winners wasted a series of chances.

French-born Bouanga international Denis Bouanga had the first opportunity, bursting goalwards but with Mexican Carlos Vela unmarked to his right, unwisely chose to shoot and his effort was

blocked -- to the fury of his teammate.

Bouanga had another great chance in the 11th minute after a fine through ball from former Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini but Miami keeper Drake Callender pulled off an excellent save.

After surviving those early scares, Miami took the lead in the 14th minute when Tomas Aviles split the LAFC defence to find Farias who beat John McCarthy with a low shot on the slide.

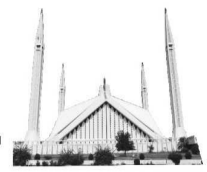
Miami struggled to contain Bouanga but the LA forward was again unable to make the most of his opportunity when he burst through the middle but fired wide.

Mario Gonzalez should have done better when he was given space for a shot but blasted into the side-netting as Miami were increasingly threatening on the counter. Paraguay midfielder Diego Gomez broke forward and played a clever backheel to Messi but the Argentine's shot was weak and easily dealt with by

McCarthy.

Before the interval, Messi had his best chance of the game, again set up by the outstanding Gomez, but one-on-one with McCarthy, Messi saw his lofted shot pushed away by the LAFC keeper. - 'Nice test' - LAFC paid the price for the wastefulness in front of goal in the 51st minute when Miami's former Barcelona trio combined in style.

Spanish midfielder Sergio Busquets fed Messi who picked out the overlapping Alba and he burst into the box to score with a cool, left-footed finish. Miami were in firm control and wrapped up the win in the 83rd minute when Messi burst from midfield and slipped the ball out on mistake to Campana who made no mistake with a curling finish. "You know what Leo is, what he can give on the pitch. He gets the best (out) of everyone," said a beaming Campana. "Right now, the goal is to achieve the playoffs and I hope we can do it to give happiness to the people of Miami," added the striker.



## In brief

### DC inaugurates case response anti-polio drive

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema Monday inaugurated the week-long case response Anti-Polio drive by administering drops to children under five years of age here at his office. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the drive had been launched in four high-risk towns of the district after the presence of poliovirus in the environmental samples of Rawalpindi and Tehsil Taxila areas. Hassan said that over 741,579 children would be covered during the drive in Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantonment, Rawalpindi Rural, and Tehsil Taxila. He said that 2,770 teams including 2,430 mobile teams, 568 area incharges, 261 fixed points and 156 Union Council medical officers were participating in the drive while children were also immunized at 109 transit points of the district. He urged the citizens, particularly the parents, to come forward and play their role in eliminating the crippling disease from the society.

### AIOU's Matric, FA admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): September 05 (Tuesday) is the last date for submission of application forms for admissions in the Matric, Intermediate and I.Com programs, Semester Autumn 2023, being offered by the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). According to the news release issued here on Monday, the students can apply through both online and manual modes to avoid late fee charges. The admission forms and prospectuses are available on the university's website, regional offices, and SWIFT centres established nationwide. The Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has instructed all regional directors of the university to provide free computer and internet facilities to students who do not have access to these resources for online applications. Students can avail of these facilities for free at the regional offices of the university. Admissions to various programs such as associate degree (BA/BCom), BBA, BA Ed programs, Post Graduate Diploma programs and Certificate courses, offered in the second phase, will remain open until October 17.

### 'Rain likely at isolated places'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and humid weather for most plain areas of the country. However, rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Potohar region, Islamabad, northeast Punjab, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. As per the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country while a shallow westerly wave was present over the upper parts of the country. During the last 24 hours, hot and humid weather prevailed over most parts of the country. However, rain recorded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Malam Jabba 04mm, Gilgit-Baltistan: Skardu 04, Hunza and Bagrote 01mm. The highest temperatures recorded during the last 24 hours were Dalbandin 42 C, Bhakkar, Dera Ismail Khan, Dadu and Nokkundi 41 C.



ISLAMABAD: MQM leaders Mustafa Kamal and Anis Qaimkhani called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Dr Jamal for anti-dengue surveillance on bordering areas

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Dr Jamal Nasir on Monday directed the officials of Rawalpindi/Islamabad administration to conduct anti-dengue activities on bordering areas of twin cities through joint operations three to four days a week. Presiding over a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Laiqat Ali Chhatta, he said that anti-dengue activities must not be compromised due to Anti-Polio campaign started today.

Dr Jamal said that Rawalpindi's graveyards had been outsourced, adding Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority would not disburse payment to the contractor till the third party validation of the work done on the graveyard and Nullah Lai.

Commissioner Rawalpindi on the occasion said that 19 private hospitals had been mandated to

establish dengue wards to deal with the increasing number of patients.

He directed the officials of Health Care Commission to visit the private hospitals and ensure setting up of dengue wards.

Laiqat further directed the officials to expedite anti-dengue surveillance and ensure strict compliance to anti dengue SOPs.

Station Commander Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, Brigadier Salman while taking part in the meeting directed the officials to ensure the cleanliness of offices, in-house and outdoor settings and leave no place wet or with stagnant water as puddles of water were the leading cause of mosquitoes breeding. He also directed the officials of the relevant departments to cut grass, bushes and trees from the educational institutions.

On the occasion, health official briefed the meeting that around 272 dengue cases had been reported in the district so far out of which 232 discharged after treatment while 40 con-

firmed patients were under treatment in public hospitals. He informed that indoor and outdoor surveillance was being carried out regularly while during indoor surveillance, the anti-dengue teams had checked around 4.6 million houses from January 1 to date and found larvae at 29,797 houses.

Similarly, during outdoor surveillance the teams inspected over 1.8 million spots and detected larvae at, 5463 sites. The health official further briefed that district administration in collaboration with allied departments had registered 43 FIRs, issued tickets to five sealed three premises and fine of Rs 61,000 was imposed on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Dr. Hasan Waqar Cheema, Director General RDA Saif Anwar Jappa, District Health Officer Islamabad Dr. Zaeem, CEO Health Rawalpindi and heads of other relevant departments were also present.

### Security arrangements of Chehlum reviewed

RAWALPINDI (APP): A meeting was held in the chair of Senior Superintendent of Police SSP Operations Faisal Saleem to review security arrangements of Chehlum Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) at Police Lines Headquarters here on Monday.

According to a police spokesman, SDPOs and SHOs of Rawal Division participated in the meeting. Addressing the occasion, SSP Operations Faisal Saleem said that foolproof security arrangements must be ensured for the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS).

SSP Faisal Saleem directed the police officers on duty will report on time and will not leave their point until the duty is over. He said that negligence will not be tolerated at any cost.

He warned that strict action would be taken against those officials who were found negligent in performing their duties.

The senior police officers will check and brief the duty from time to time, he added. Walk-through gates will be installed at the entry point of the procession, he said, the participants of the procession will be allowed to enter after a body search, snipers will be deployed on the rooftop for the security of the procession.

### Two alleged extortionists arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Airport Police here on Monday claimed to have arrested two suspects allegedly involved in extortion activities.

According to a police spokesman, the alleged extortionists used to write letters to businessmen demanding extortion money.

The spokesman said that two accused namely Namiatullah Khan and Haroon Gul were arrested during an operation. Police also recovered weapons from their possession. Police said that other facilitators of the accused would also be arrested. The accused are record holder criminals and remained jail birds in an attempt to murder and illegal weapons cases, he added.

## Sindhi for enhancing Pak-Turkiye cooperation in education, culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi Monday emphasized enhancing cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye in the fields of culture and education.

He was speaking during the event titled 'One Hundred Years of Magnitude: Pak-Türk Affinity,' organized by the National Institute for Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Quaid-i-Azam University, and the Yunus Emre Institute, Turkish Cultural Center.

The minister stated that the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Türkiye were an unprecedented manifestation of brotherhood and love, which cannot be compared. He said that the Muslims of the subcontinent actively participated in the Khilafat Movement and added that the new generation should be aware of their cultural identity. "We are proud that our region is home to the great civilizations of the world. Thousands of years ago, when the world was plunged into darkness, the civilization of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa were the cradles of knowledge and wisdom" he said.

Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah while addressing the event said that a talented and creative mind was the hallmark of any nation. It is through the promotion of literature and art that nations come closer to each other and the intimacy between them increases. The guest of honor, Ambassador of Türkiye, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Picaci said that Türkiye values and respects the ever-green relationship with Pakistan. In every field of life, both of them have supported each other wholeheartedly.

He said, "We should increase coopera-

tion in education, health, tourism, and other matters of mutual interest so that the effectiveness and recognition of this relationship may become deeper and stronger." Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor, Quaid-i-Azam University, Professor Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar (SI) elaborated on the profound connection between Pakistan and Turkey, rooted in the concept of 'Tawheed' a connection transcending time and space.

He highlighted the significance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between educational institutions in Pakistan and Turkey, foreseeing its benefits for students.

Dr Akhtar encouraged students to break free from the race for grades and to demonstrate their capabilities in practical fields. He announced that Quaid-i-Azam University would soon offer advanced facilities for students interested in online business and attractive prizes to motivate outstanding students.

Director of Yunus Emre Institute, Prof. Dr. Halil Tokar stressed the strengthening of bilateral relations. Reaffirming the strong ties between the two countries, the speakers emphasized the deep-rooted connection between the two nations and the need to expand cooperation in education and culture. Director National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Dr. Sajid Mahmood Awan underscored the importance of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed today between NIHCR and Yunus Emre Institute. He said this step not only would promote creative and research aspects but students and scholars will also learn Turkish language to boost their abilities.

## Caretaker minister drives forward 'Private Hajj Scheme' with strategic meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, spearheaded a pivotal gathering on Monday to discuss the Private Hajj Scheme's future.

The meeting brought together key players from diverse Hajj groups and representatives of the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP), with the joint secretary of Hajj delivering a comprehensive briefing. The focal points of the discussion included the government's commitment to addressing concerns and reservations of Hajj companies during the upcoming Kingdom's visit and pledged to mobilize all available resources to ensure a seamless experi-

ence for pilgrims. He commended the services offered by most private Hajj group operators and proposed measures to further strengthen trade relations. The briefing disclosed that a total of 901 Hajj companies were registered under the Private Hajj Scheme, but corrective action was deemed necessary as 102 companies failed to upload the required data on the Ministry's portal.

In line with new Saudi directives, the HOAP committed to presenting their recommendations on the cluster system to the ministry within 24 hours, reinforcing their dedication to facilitating a smoother Hajj experience.

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## Experts stress availability of cessation services for effective tobacco control

ISLAMABAD (APP): Effectively reducing the prevalence of tobacco along with offering cessation services in healthcare centers, and robust advocacy efforts to counter innovative misinformation marketing tactics of novel smokeless tobacco products was the key to stemming the growing use of smoking products, said tobacco control experts at a webinar on Monday.

The webinar was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute and The Union for Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, a news release said. Head, the Centre for Health, and Policy

Innovation, SDPI, Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi remarked that although WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control mandates states to establish tobacco cessation services, only 30% of people out of the 780 million smoking quitters have access to such services.

Counseling and assistance can double the chances for a person to quit tobacco consumption and these must be provided by states to improve health indicators and reduce tobacco prevalence, he added. Senior Technical Advisor, The Union for Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, Khurram Hashmi expressed that high preva-

lence of tobacco consumption exerts significant strain on healthcare systems and regional collaboration must be leveraged to achieve for sustainable impacts.

He urged that policy advocacy must be backed by rigorous evidence-based research and government's tobacco control initiatives must be strengthened by resource allocations. Advisor SDPI, Wasim Janjua remarked that in Pakistan, healthcare burden due to tobacco use stands at a staggering Rs 615 billion, is a major challenge. One critical gap hampering efforts to combat tobacco use is the absence of formal cessation services in both public and private hospitals.

## OPF establishes OWFDs at all international airports of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) has established One Window Facilitation Desks (OWFDs) at all International Airports of the country to facilitate Overseas Pakistanis on their arrival from various countries. An official source told APP here on Monday, that OWFDs are located at each terminal (International arrival/departure) for the assistance of Overseas Pakistani passengers round the clock.

To a question, he said that courteous and trained officials were deputed at OWFDs to ensure the provision of high-quality facilitation and assistance to overseas Pakistanis. The existing infrastructure at OWFDs has been upgraded by the previous regime to address the problems of expatriates. Besides additional facilities, the service delivery at facilitation counters at various airports has also been improved with added staff/services. He said that necessary assistance to the overseas Pakistanis has been ensured at the time of arrival and departure. Coordination

among various agencies/departments functioning is also ensured at the airport for smooth arrival and departure of overseas Pakistani passengers, he added. He added that special assistance is being provided to overseas Pakistanis who are physically challenged, senior citizens and passengers not maintaining good health. For getting any assistance in lost and found baggage and for improvement in services/complaints at airports, these counters should be contacted.

Necessary guidance is also provided to overseas Pakistanis for their connecting flights and travel advisories for their destinations within in Pakistan. Information material about OPF and its projects/schemes is placed at all international arrival/departure lounges. OPF also extends all possible help and provides facility of ambulance service, free of cost, from the airport to deceased/ disabled OPs native town/ village. OPF staff deputed at airports facilitates the deceased's family in the clearance of human remains and coordinates with the ambulance for its timely transportation.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah chairing 59th meeting of Governing Body of Iqbal Academy Pakistan at National Heritage and Culture Division.

Revenue Dept collects 44m

PANJSHIR (Agencies): Revenue Department of Panjshir has collected more than 44 million Afghanis in revenue during the first five months of the current solar year. The revenue comes from government offices, private companies, businesses, and other sources. Lotfullah Bawar, in charge of collecting revenues at the Panjshir Revenue Department, told Bakhtar News Agency that the department has collected 44.4 million Afghanis during the first five months of the current.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Saffar 18, 1445 — Tuesday, September 05, 2023

Hospital to be constructed

KABUL (Agencies): The Qatar Charity, a humanitarian organization, has announced that it will build a 400-bed hospital in Kandahar province with its funds. The project aims to improve the health care services in the region. Two officials of the Qatar Charity, Eng. Jamal Qasim Mohammad and Dr. Abdul Majeed Abdul Qavi Al Hamidi, met with the governor of Kandahar, Mullah Sharin Akhund, to discuss the details of the project.

University entrance exam results announced

KABUL (TOLONews): The National Examination Authority announced the results of the 1402 Kankor university entrance exam at a ceremony on Monday.

The authority announced that Mahmoud, a resident of Farah province, got first place in the 1402 entrance exam with a score of 359 and entered the Faculty of Medicine of Kabul Medical University.

Abbas, a resident of Kabul, was second with 357 points, and Abdul Baais, a resident of Kabul, was third with 355 points, Shafiullah, a resident of Ghazni, was fourth with 354 points and Hashmatullah, a resident of Kabul was fifth with 352

points.

All five students have been admitted to the Faculty of Medicine at Kabul University.

Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of the National Examination Authority, said that 84,234 people participated in this year's entrance exam, and among them 44,336 people entered higher education, 2,755 people entered semi-higher education, and 31,420 people entered private universities.

Meanwhile, Abdul Salam Hanafi, the second deputy of the prime minister, said at the ceremony that about 20,000 more students participated in the entrance exam compared to

previous years, and he called on the youth to stay in Afghanistan and take advantage of the education in the country.

Noorulhaq Anwar, the head of the Administrative Office of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, at the announcement of the entrance exam results said that in the past few decades, due to a lack of expertise and commitment, problems have arisen in Afghanistan that are not easy for the Islamic Emirate to compensate for.

Before the Islamic Emirate took power, girls had won first place in the entrance exam for two years, and females were excluded from the exam.

Minar Jam minaret attracts tourists

KABUL (Agencies): The historical Minar Jam minaret in Ghor province is a popular destination for foreign tourists.

According to recent figures, 107 foreign tourists have visited the minaret in the last five months.

Ghor has many historical attractions and monuments that have fascinated hundreds of tourists. Mawlawi Abdul Hai Zaeem, director of information and culture of Ghor, told this Afghan news agency that these tourists have traveled to this western province from different countries of the world to see the historical attractions, especially Minar Jam.

Mawlawi Abdul Hai Zaeem, director of information and culture of Ghor said that with the return of the Islamic Emirate and the provision of national security in Afghanistan, the number of foreign tourists has increased in Ghor province.

Facilities have been provided to foreign tourists, including guidance and information about Ghor.

Minar Jam is located seventy-five kilometers west of Firozkoh City, the capital of Ghor province. This nearly thousand-year-old building is one of the architectural wonders of the world. Statistics show that Ghor has more than six hundred historical monuments.

Afghanistan has been home to great civilizations throughout history, as evidenced by the existence of thousands of historical monuments from different eras.

‘IEA saved Afghanistan from disintegration’

TAKHAR (Agencies): Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's chief of army staff said Monday that for 20 years Afghanistan's enemies tried hard to divide the country and its people but following the IEA's takeover, plots by enemies failed and the people once again united.

Speaking at a large public gathering in Takhar province, he said: "Before this, we saw that Afghanistan was divided, Afghanistan was divided by zones and language. There were differences between the tribes and there were differences between those who spoke different languages, but these differences do not exist today," said Fitrat.

The acting minister of information and culture, Mullah Khairullah Khairkha, said at the same event, organized in the



hope of closing the gap between the people and authorities, that enemies should not be allowed to divide the IEA government or the nation.

He said: "Let's come and join hands and not give the enemies time to create danger for our Islamic system."

The deputy minister of publication affairs of the ministry of information and culture says that there is no alternative to the current system and that it is necessary for everyone to join hands to support the system for the progress and development of the country. Ensuring social justice,

creating job opportunities, and opening schools and universities to girls were among the demands of Takhar residents at the meeting.

The delegation from Kabul said they will share the people's demands with the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

Since political change, nearly 50 clashes happened on border areas

KABUL (TOLONews): Nearly 50 clashes have happened in border areas with the neighboring countries within the past two years, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior said.

MoI spokesman Abdul Matin Qani called on the neighboring countries to observe the border rules with Afghanistan.

"There have been some small and big clashes. You know that there have been clashes with Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The total number is less

than 50," he said.

Qani said that the clashes were first started by the neighboring countries and then faced reactions by the Islamic Emirate's forces.

According to him, at least 15 incidents of missile firing on Afghanistan by the neighboring countries have been recorded within the past two years.

"There are some problems from some sides. We call on the neighbors to not violate the land sovereignty and airspace of Afghanistan. We don't

want to have negative relations with them. Some of the missiles which were fired (on us), we had a good reaction against it," he said.

Meanwhile, the military analysts believe that the border clashes do not benefit Afghanistan and that the problems should be addressed through negotiations.

"If every country stays in line which is marked and doesn't come forward, there will be no border clash," said Mohammad Matin Mohammad Khail, a military analyst.

"The Afghanistan border forces have tried a lot to improve vibes particularly with Uzbekistan and Iran and Pakistan. I think these problems are being solved gradually and will not happen in the future," said Kamran Aman, a military analyst.

Since the Islamic Emirate came to power, many clashes took place with the neighboring countries—an issue which has been also discussed at the senior level between the governments.

IEA ‘behaving better’ than Ashraf Ghani over water rights: Iran’s FM

KABUL (Agencies): Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is dealing with the water rights issue a lot better than former president Ashraf Ghani did.

"We will not forget what statement the then president of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani used while inaugurating the Kajaki Dam, but

the ruling body of Afghanistan clearly stated many times that it adheres to the treaty," Amir Abdollahian said in an interview with Iran's Ettela'at newspaper.

Ghani once said that Afghanistan would give water to Iran in exchange for fuel.

Iran's foreign minister said that the visit of Iran's technical delegation to

Afghanistan was a good step on Afghanistan's part, "but it was too late."

He said that Tehran expects the IEA to give Iran its share of water when there is no drought.

He said that Tehran's expectation from the IEA is that cooperation will continue with the presence of the technical delegation "to a level where there is a common understanding

between us and our public opinion should be such that if the water does not come this year, it is not rooted in bad promises and non-implementation of the treaty."

In the interview, Amir Abdollahian also reiterated the call for the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of all ethnic groups.

Afghan woman leads hunger strike for women’s rights



KABUL (Khaama Press): Tamana Zaryab Paryani, an activist for women's rights, along with several other women, has initiated a hunger strike due to global neglect of the situation of women in Afghanistan and what is referred to as gender apartheid. Despite feeling unwell on the fourth day of their strike, they emphasize their commitment to continuing the hunger strike.

On the fourth day of the strike, Ms. Paryani said in an interview with Khaama Press News Agency that the world has been unsuccessful in defending women's rights in Afghanistan. While women are fighting and sacrificing for their freedoms, the world has engaged with the interim administration.

Ms Paryani is a former detainee of the Taliban administration and has experienced being imprisoned under their rule. She explains the reasons for setting up the protest camp and going on a hunger strike: "We demand justice

due to increased travel, Taliban's international outreach, funds sent to Afghanistan, and the neglect of gender rights despite ongoing oppression."

Four days have passed since the hunger strike of Tamana Zaryab Paryani and some women's rights activists. Their condition on the fourth day of the hunger strike is not good. If the German government and the global community do not pay attention to their demand regarding the situation of women in Afghanistan, this strike will continue for another eight days, until September 12.

The health condition of Ms Paryani and her companion is not very good. The audio recordings she sent to Khaama Press News Agency indicate that their health situation on the fourth consecutive day of the hunger strike is not good.

She continues sharing a video of herself inside the sit-in tent, confessing that she and her companions' conditions are not very

good.

The current situation in Afghanistan, especially for women, is described as "horrific," emphasizing that remaining silent in the face of such oppression and heinous crimes is shameful. According to her, the institutions expected to raise their voices have not yet paid attention to their demands.

Ms. Paryani calls on other women in Afghanistan not to remain silent in the face of the human rights abuses occurring under the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan. She believes that the fundamental rights of people, especially women's rights, are violated without any shame, and silence in the face of this is a sign of society's human and moral decline.

Other women's rights activists have welcomed Ms. Paryani's protest and are demanding its expansion within and outside Afghanistan.

Taranum Saeedi, a women's rights activist in

Afghanistan, also supports Mrs. Paryani's protest, saying that these protests will continue until September 12 in Germany and various other countries.

Ms. Saeedi emphasizes the effective continuation of women's persistence for their rights and highlights that the most significant achievement of women's struggle in the past two years has been the global non-recognition of the Taliban regime.

She has asked the German government for support in the case of Ms Paryani's struggle, saying that women have faced significant deprivation in the past two years and have been systematically excluded from society.

During the past two years, women have been subjected to widespread deprivations, including bans on education, work, and political and social activities in the country, leading to their isolation and prompting the global community to repeatedly call for lifting restrictions on women.

Other women's rights activists standing alongside Ms. Paryani urge the international community to recognize "gender apartheid" in Afghanistan.

Gender apartheid was first used by the head of Afghanistan's permanent mission to the United Nations to highlight the depth of anti-women practices in Afghanistan. Later, instances of it were reflected in Richard Ben's report.

IEA makes no compromises

KABUL (Agencies): Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, stated during a meeting with the executive director of the TAPI project that the government will make every effort to complete this project.

He met with Mohammad Murad Amanov, Executive Director of the TAPI project, and his accompanying team, according to a statement from the Mines and Petroleum Ministry.

The meeting was also attended by deputy Mines and Petroleum Ministers, Mawlawi Hossamuddin Saberi, Sheikh Zia Al-Rahman Al-Aryoubi, and some other officials.

The executive director of the TAPI project provided detailed information regarding the recent progress of the TAPI project and both sides discussed and exchanged views on the beginning of practical work on the plan.

Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum said that all the necessary conditions, including reliable security, are ensured for the implementation of this project, and the Islamic Emirate does not spare any effort to implement this project.

Over 70 aircraft and helicopters repaired



KABUL (TOLONews): The commander of the Afghan Air Force, Abdul Ghafar Mohammadi, said that they have repaired more than 70 aircraft and helicopters within the past two years.

He said that maintenance teams of the AAF have recently repaired a Russian MI-17 helicopter.

"Our maintenance has repaired approximately more than 70 aircraft and

helicopters. Some of the helicopters and aircraft are still under repair," he said.

The military analysts said that the repair of the aircraft and helicopters are important for the military sector.

"Any kind of Air Force equipment which is being repaired, from helicopters to other equipment, is beneficial," said Yousuf Ameen Zazai, a military analyst.

"Having helicopters will strengthen the Air Force and the Islamic Emirate should make efforts in this regard," said Sadiq Shinwari, political analyst.

Amid the collapse of the former republican government of President Ashraf Ghani, dozens of aircraft and helicopters were taken to the neighboring countries by Afghan pilots, who fled the country.

12 ancient artifacts from illegal excavations handed over to NM

KABUL (Agencies): The director of information and culture of Jawzjan province, Mawlawi Saifuddin Mutasim, officially handed over 12 items of antiquities obtained from illegal excavations to Mawlawi Sibghatullah Abed, the head of the National Museum.

These relics include small and large pottery, two columns, and some objects related to the bronze age recovered from the village of Mozian of Jawzjan's Faizabad district.

Mawlawi Saaduddin Saeed, Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of the Ministry of Information and Culture appreciated the efforts of the Information and Culture Department of Jawzjan province to prevent smuggling and illegal excavations. He said that ancient



monuments and sites are among the great national assets that need to be protected.

Mawlawi Sibghatullah

Abed said that preliminary research shows that these works are from the bronze age, dating back to the Buddha period, about 7,000

years back. The 12 items were officially handed over to the officials of the National Museum for preservation.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmad Irfan Aslam called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## LHC okays judicial probe plea for hearing

LAHORE (PPI): Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday approved a petition for hearing, seeking judicial commission to probe recent violent incidents in Jaranwala against Christians.

The high court issued notices to Punjab government and other respondents for September 11. The bench also directed the Assistant Advocate General to submit report. "Fundamental human rights of the religious minority, mandated in the constitution, have been violated in Jaranwala violent incidents."

"Existing mechanism of the probe has been slow-moving, the court should issue an order for constitution of judicial commission for prompt justice," petition read. A petition filed by Shehbaz Soraya Advocate and another by the Grace Bible Fellowship Church had earlier said that over 600 people were involved in vandalizing and violence against Christian citizens and pleaded for a judicial probe of the Jaranwala incidents on August 17.

Christians facing hardships and have security concerns, petitions read while seeking protection to the religious minority community. A mob had attacked, vandalized multiple churches, and torched homes belonging to the Christians in Jaranwala in Faisalabad district over blasphemy allegations. The Jaranwala police had registered terror cases against more than 600 people on August 17 for "vandalizing multiple churches and torching homes belonging to the Christian community."

## US dollar reaches Rs330 in open market

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a relentless surge, the value of the US dollar against the Pakistani rupee continued to rise, reaching an unprecedented high of Rs330 in the open market on Monday. On the first day of the business week, the interbank market saw the dollar's value increase by 53 paisas, while in the open market, it surged by 2 rupees.

The staggering climb to Rs330 in the open market is a new record that has left traders and the public grappling with the implications. Last week had witnessed a slight dip in the dollar's value in the interbank market, as it had depreciated by 7 paisas, closing at Rs305.47 according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

However, the respite was short-lived as the dollar bounced back, reaching an all-time high of Rs305.54 in the interbank market, surpassing the previous week's high of Rs301. The open market also experienced a surge, closing at Rs328, an increase of 5 rupees.

Economists are attributing this rise in the dollar's value to various factors. Firstly, the conclusion of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) standby program has led to increased pressure on the dollar, with imports and exports being impacted. Additionally, external payments made in July further contributed to the dollar's appreciation.

The reasons behind the

dramatic surge in the dollar rate are multifaceted, reflecting a confluence of domestic and international factors. Economists point to several key drivers: Inflationary pressure: Pakistan has been grappling with high inflation for a considerable period, driven by a surge in global commodity prices and domestic economic challenges. This inflationary pressure has eroded the purchasing power of the Rupee, making it weaker against the dollar.

Balance of payments crisis: The country's balance of payments has been under strain, with a persistent current account deficit. This deficit means that Pakistan is importing more than it is exporting, necessitating foreign currency reserves to meet its external obligations.

Monetary policy: The monetary policy pursued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has also come under scrutiny. Some argue that the SBP's decision to maintain a relatively high interest rate has made the Rupee less attractive to investors.

The soaring exchange rate serves as a stark reminder of the economic challenges that Pakistan must confront in the coming months. As the nation grapples with this currency crisis, the focus will be on policymakers to implement effective measures to stabilize the Rupee and steer the economy towards a more sustainable path.

## SIFC continues to steer investment related initiatives

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) continues to steer investment related initiatives at fast pace through exhaustive engagements involving all stakeholders.

Accordingly, 4th meeting of its Executive Committee (Functional Tier) was held on Monday with the objectives to remove bottlenecks and improve overall investment environment. The meeting was chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and attended by the National Coordinator for SIFC, federal and provincial ministers concerned, and high level government officials, a press release said.

The ministries concerned presented progress on various aspects and highlighted areas needing special focus. The committee showed its satisfaction regarding the ongoing outreach strategy of the SIFC and directed to further build on it by engaging business community and missions abroad.

At the end, the committee recommended measures to further improve the ecosystem for investment in the country with focus on, inter alia, policy interventions, visa facilitation for investors, dispute management / resolution mechanism, and technical refinement of approved projects in agriculture, IT, minerals and energy sectors. The matters recommended by the Executive Committee will be presented at the Apex Committee Meeting, to be chaired by the prime minister, for their approval and implementation.

## Floods in Spain: 3 die

MADRID (Agencies): At least three people have died after heavy rains lashed Spain, triggering flash floods that forced the closure of Madrid metro lines and high-speed rail links. Helicopters were sent to rescue people who had sought refuge on the roofs of their homes in the central city of Toledo, about 50km (31 miles) southwest of Madrid, on Monday.

Three people died in the countryside around Toledo, where the weather service Aemet registered record rainfall of 90 litres per square metre on Sunday. Spanish media said a man was found dead by police during a rescue attempt on a road near Bargas, while another man died as rescuers tried to reach him in the tow of Casarrubios del Monte. The third person who died was a 50-year-old man who had been reported as missing. His body was found on Monday afternoon floating in a river near his home in the town of Camarena. According to Aemet, the weekend storm affected almost the whole country, with the heaviest rains recorded on Sunday in the coastal provinces of Cadiz, Tarragona and Castello.

The sudden downpours on Sunday and Monday transformed streets into rivers of mud that swept away cars and rubbish bins in Madrid, Castilla-La Mancha, Catalonia and Valencia regions. Hail was also reported in many areas. Several bridges collapsed in Aldea del Fresno, and torrents of water swept away many cars, AFP news agency reported.

"It just kept raining and we were a little scared, but we were indoors so we were safe," said Isabella Stewart, a US missionary living in Toledo as she was taking a bus.

# UN experts slam India's 'inadequate' response to Manipur abuses

NEW YORK (Agencies): UN experts condemned on Monday the Indian government's "slow and inadequate response" to reported serious rights violations, including sexual violence, amid deadly ethnic clashes in the country's remote northeast.

"We have serious concerns about the apparent slow and inadequate response by the Government of India, including law enforcement, to stem physical and sexual violence and hate speech in Manipur," they said in a statement.

The nearly 20 independent United Nations rights experts, including the special rapporteurs on violence against women and girls and on torture, responded to the abuses reported since clashes broke out in Manipur in May. Reports indicated that by mid-August, around 160 people were killed and 300 others injured in the violence, they said,

also pointing to tens of thousands of people displaced, thousands of homes and hundreds of churches burnt down and farmland destroyed.

In particular, the experts said they were "appalled by the reports and images of gender-based violence targeting hundreds of women and girls of all ages, and predominantly of the Kuki ethnic minority". "The alleged violence includes gang rape, parading women naked in the street, severe beatings causing death, and burning them alive or dead," they said.

The experts, who are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but who do not speak on behalf of the United Nations, said they were especially concerned "that the violence seems to have been preceded and incited by hateful and inflammatory speech". Such hate speech, spread online and offline, was used

"to justify the atrocities committed against the Kuki ethnic minority, particularly women, on account of their ethnicity and religious belief", they said.

Manipur has been fractured along ethnic lines, with rival militias setting up blockades to keep out members of the opposing community. Tens of thousands of additional soldiers have been rushed from elsewhere to patrol towns and highways, and a curfew and internet shutdown remain in force across Manipur.

The UN experts called on the Indian government "to step up relief efforts to those affected and to take robust and timely action to investigate acts of violence". They stressed the need to "hold perpetrators to account, including public officials who may have aided and abetted the incitement of racial and religious hatred and violence."

## Biden hits out at Trump, focused on US economy

WASHINGTON (Agencies): US President Joe Biden has hit out at the economic policies of his predecessor and likely 2024 election challenger Donald Trump, noting that the United States lost jobs under the former Republican president's tenure.

In a speech in Philadelphia to mark the US Labor Day holiday on Monday, Biden repeatedly took shots at Trump's record in the White House. "It wasn't that long ago we were losing jobs in this country," said Biden, who is expected to make his administration's employment and economic policies a central plank of his 2024 re-election campaign.

"In fact, the guy who held this job before me was just one of two presidents in history who left office with fewer jobs in America than when he got elected." When Trump left the White House in early 2021, the US and global economies were battered by the outbreak of COVID-19, which led to the loss of millions of jobs. But the Trump administration says it oversaw historically low unemployment prior to the pandemic.

Still, Biden on Monday argued that the American economy has been transformed under his watch, with his Democratic administration putting a focus on empowering workers and strengthening the US middle class. "When the last

guy was here, he looked at the world from Park Avenue," Biden said, referring to a wealthy street in New York City. "I look at it from Scranton, Pennsylvania. I look at it from Claymont, Delaware."

Biden's comments underscore his ongoing rivalry with Trump, who maintains a sizeable lead in the Republican Party's 2024 presidential nomination race and is widely expected to take on Biden in what would be a rematch of 2020. Trump is seeking re-election despite facing four separate criminal indictments, including two cases in which he is accused of seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 vote that he lost to Biden.

The former Republican president has denied any wrongdoing in all the cases against him and accused US prosecutors of trying to derail his 2024 campaign. On Monday, Biden talked up his own success in passing a \$1.2-trillion infrastructure bill – again drawing a contrast with Trump. "The great real estate builder – the last guy – he didn't build a damn thing," the US president said of Trump, a real estate mogul.

Trump had announced "Infrastructure Week" in 2017 to promote a plan to fix highways and bridges, but the push was derailed by political turmoil in Washington at that time. "Infrastructure Week" sub-

sequently became a joke about the chaos that engulfed the Trump administration. Biden on Monday also criticised the right-wing theory of "trickle-down economics", which contends that deregulation and tax cuts for the rich produce economic growth that eventually benefits working people.

"Not a whole lot of 'trickle down' ended up on my dad's kitchen table, and he busted his neck," Biden said. Overall, Biden voiced optimism about the future of the US economy, stressing that efforts to rein in inflation are working. But public perception of the economy could prove to be a major hurdle for the 80-year-old president's re-election bid.

Trump often bemoans soaring US inflation, saying the country is "going to hell" under Biden. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll last month, 60 percent of Americans – including one in three Democratic Party voters – said they disapproved of Biden's handling of inflation. Public opinion polls also show that voters are concerned about Biden's age.

But on Monday, the US president seemed to dismiss the issue. "The only thing that comes with age is a bit of wisdom. I've been doing this longer than anybody, and I guess what, I'm going to continue to do it with your help," Biden said.



ISLAMABAD: Women activists of Jamat-e-Islami taking part in a pro-Hijab rally on the eve of 'International Hijab Day'.

## Sugar price hits Rs230 per kg in Chaman

CHAMAN (PPI): The price of 1kg of sugar has touched the highest Rs230 mark in Chaman, Balochistan, according to a report on Monday. The price control committees and the district administration are nowhere to be seen amid the sale of sugar at such an exorbitant price.

There are no utility stores in Chaman, and sugar is not available at shops either. Citizens have demanded that the government take notice of the inflated sugar price. In Arifwala, the price of 1kg of sugar is ready to hit the Rs200 mark as sugar is being sold in the city at Rs185 which is beyond the purchasing power of the poor. Citizens have demanded that the government tighten the noose around the sugar mafia.

In Karachi, the sugar price fell by Rs2 per kg to Rs176 in the wholesale market. However, the retail price of 1kg of sugar is

Rs190 in the city. On the other hand, the monitoring of sugar mills of all politicians and businessmen including Sharif Family, Jahangir Khan Tareen, Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf, Haroon Akhtar and Makhdoom Umar Shehryar has started.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has deployed monitoring teams to compile a record of the sales and stock of all sugar mills. The FBR monitoring teams will daily compile a record of sugar stocks, sales and sugar going out of the mills' premises in all sugar mills. The FBR teams will keep carrying out monitoring of the stocks and sales at the sugar mills for an indefinite period. A team has been deployed to monitor the production of sugar at Ramazan Sugar Mills, JDW, Abdullah Sugar Mills and Al-Arabiya Sugar Mills.

The FBR has also

deployed a team to monitor the sales and stocks of sugar at Ashraf Sugar Mills, Chanar Sugar Mills and Ittehad Sugar Mills. The monitoring teams have also been deployed at Haq Bahu Sugar Mills, Hunza Sugar Mills, Hussain Sugar Mills, Indus Sugar Mills and Joharabad Sugar Mills.

The monitoring of JK Sugar Mills, Kashmir Sugar Mills, Layyah Sugar Mills, Makkah Sugar Mills, Moon Sugar Mills, Pattoki Sugar Mills, Rasool Nawaz Sugar Mills and Safeena Sugar Mills has also started. The FBR teams have also been deployed at Seven Star Sugar Mills, Shah Taj Sugar Mills, Shakar Ganj Sugar Mills, Shekhu Sugar Mills, SW Sugar Mills, Tandlianwala Sugar Mills, Two Star Sugar Mills and Rahim Yar Khan Sugar Mills. The FBR teams will compile data to prevent sales tax evasion.

## Israel opens new embassy in Bahrain

MANAMA (Agencies): Israel's foreign minister has agreed with his Bahraini counterpart to boost trade relations, during his first visit to one of the two Gulf Arab states to establish ties with Israel. "The foreign minister and I agreed that we should work together to increase the number of direct flights, the tourism, the trade volume, the investment," Eli Cohen said during a ceremony to inaugurate Israel's new embassy in Bahrain on Monday.

The embassy in the capital Manama will replace the first embassy Israel opened in 2021, a year after it established diplomatic relations with Bahrain as part of the United States-brokered Abraham Accords. Under the accords, Israel also established ties with the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

Monday's ceremony was attended by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al-Zayani, who said the "new embassy assumes a pivotal role" in growing collaboration between the two countries. Zayani said his talks with Cohen on Monday resulted in an agreement on advancing "relations across the broadest range of fields, including, economic, investment, trade and other areas".

Cohen arrived in Bahrain, accompanied by a business delegation of more than 30 companies working in high-tech, logistics and real estate. Earlier on Monday, he met Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and discussed "the importance of advancing a free trade agreement and projects to connect youths in Israel and Bahrain". Cohen posted on X, formerly Twitter.

"We look forward to expanding the circle of peace and normalisation to other states in the area," he said. Despite now having steady ties with Israel, Bahrain and the UAE have joined other Gulf Arab states in issuing a series of condemnations against it this year. Raids on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem and the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank were among Israeli moves that sparked criticism from the Gulf.

However, Cohen's trip coincides with growing speculation about an impending normalisation deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which is not a signatory to the Abraham Accords. Riyadh and Washington have held talks on Saudi conditions for progress on normalisation with Israel, according to people briefed on the meetings. "There are more Arab and Muslim countries that have shown interest in taking a step forward in joining the peace circle," Cohen told a news conference in Manama, without naming them.

Cohen was at the centre of controversy at the end of August, after he revealed that he had secretly met his Libyan counterpart in Rome to discuss normalisation. The revelation led to protests in Libya, where pro-Palestinian sentiment is strong, the dismissal of the Libyan foreign minister Najla al-Mangoush, and censure for Cohen from within Israel, where he was attacked by the opposition for revealing the details of such a sensitive meeting.