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SC returns plea for ban on PTI

By our correspondent
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court registrar office Monday returned with objections a petition seeking dissolution of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Aun Chaudhry, Additional Secretary General of newly formed Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), filed the petition under Article 184(3) of the Constitution praying for dissolving the PTI. He has made the Federation of Pakistan through secretaries the ministries of law and justice, interior, defence as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Imran Khan Niazi, Tehreek-e-Insaf through its president Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif as respondents.

The petitioner prayed the apex court to declare the acts of PTI, its

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Fitch upgrades Pakistan's sovereign rating after IMF deal

By Andaleeb Rizvi

KARACHI: International credit rating agency Fitch has upgraded Pakistan's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating (IDR) on improved external liquidity and funding conditions as the country reached a deal with the IMF on a nine-month stand-by arrangement (SBA).

Moving the rating a notch up, the ratings agency has upgraded Pakistan to 'CCC' from the previous 'CCC-' assigned back in February 2023. Typically, the agency does not assign outlooks to

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Second green revolution after 1960s

Agriculture revival, 4m jobs soon: PM

Says Pakistan can attract up to \$50bn investment in years ahead; COAS assures people, govt of army's full support to all initiatives; foreign dignitaries, potential investors and experts from UK, Italy, Spain, China, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and other countries attend seminar

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday said that the Green Pakistan Initiative would eventually bring about the second agriculture revolution, in addition to the creation of four million jobs



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir during the National Seminar on Agriculture and Food Security here on Monday.

PM tasked to mollify Fazl upset over Dubai huddle

Shehbaz meets PDM chief; JUIF spokesperson says entire PDM, not just his party, in the dark about parleys in UAE

ISLAMABAD/ LONDON: PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif has invited PDM Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to Dubai to remove his reservations about his meetings with

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ECP to ask Punjab to amend law for LG polls without EVMs, i-voting

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan is waiting for amendments to the Punjab Local Govern-

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PAC decides to conduct forensic audit of Haj 2023 expenditure, agreements

Directs religious affairs ministry to make names of 1,790 people who performed free Haj public

By Asim Yasin

ISLAMABAD: Describing the briefing of the religious affairs secretary and the Hajj director general (DG) as unsatisfactory on the difficulties faced by the Pakistani pilgrims during the Hajj operation 2023, the Public Accounts Committee has decided to conduct a forensic audit of the Hajj expenditure and facility agreements.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has also issued directives for making the list of 1,790 people who performed free Hajj public.

A PAC meeting, held under the chair of Noor Alam Khan, examined the audit paras related to the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the year 2019-20, while the secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs gave the briefing to the committee on Hajj operations 2023.

The committee chairman strongly criticised the sending of government officials as Hajj aides and questioned what service an SSP and an additional secretary would have rendered to the pilgrims. "It was understandable sending government employees from grade 4 to grade 10, but under what law grade 17 and grade 19 officers went for free Hajj," he remarked.

The PAC chairman expressed annoyance at the officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and asked

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ATC extends Imran's bail till 19th

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad extended the bail of Imran Khan in three cases till July 19 next.

The PTI chairman appeared before the court for the hearing of the cases. Two cases were registered against him at Khanna police station and one at Bhara Kahu police station.

Lawyer Salman Safdar told the court that cases against the PTI chairman had been registered on the charge of setting tyres on fire.

"There is a repetition of the same statements in three cases. This unusual appearance before the court is on the charge of setting tyres on fire," he said.

ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain heard the arguments of the PTI chairman's lawyer and emphasised transparent investigations into the cases.

He then extended the bail of Imran Khan in three cases till July 19 next. —PPI

Bilawal, Hina away from country during Swiss FM's visit

Only an acting secretary welcomed visiting foreign minister in Islamabad

By Farooq Aqdas

ISLAMABAD: Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, who came to Pakistan recently on an official visit, has returned to his country with his delegation after three days of engagements here.

During his tour, he met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and officials and heads of government institutions, along with his delegation. But he could not meet his Pakistani counterpart, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who is in America on a private visit currently, which

Continued on page 4

WB loan condition

FBR decides to hike valuation rates of properties

Rates to be jacked up to 15pc; number of cities under this exercise to be increased from 42 to 51

By Mehtab Haider

ISLAMABAD: Under the World Bank's loan conditions, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has decided to jack up valuation rates of properties in the range of 13 to 15 per cent on an average in different urban centres of the country.

It has also been decided that the number of cities would be increased from 42 to 51 in the ongoing exercise, under which the hiked property valuation rates of the FBR would be notified.

"We are working on jacking up valuation rates of properties with effect from August 1, 2023 in consultation with the provincial authorities," top official sources confirmed to The News on Monday.

Currently, the FBR fixed property valuation rates are applicable in more than 40 cities/ towns of the country including Abbottabad, Attock, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Chakwal, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Ghotki, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Gwadar, Hafizabad, Haripur, Hyderabad, Islamabad, Jhang, Jhelum, Karachi, Kasur,

Khushab, Lahore, Larkana, Lasbela, Lodhran, Mandi Bahauddin, Mansehra, Mardan, Mirpurkhas, Multan, Nankana Sahib, Narowal, Peshawar, Quetta, Rahimyar Khan, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Sukkur and Toba Tek Singh.

Now, the valuation tables of all these cities would be revised upward in the range of 13 to 15 per cent, while new nine more cities/ towns would be added to the valuation tables' list with effect from August 1, 2023.

The Punjab's Board of Revenue, in its last month communication to all deputy commissioners/ district collectors, stated that a meeting was held under the chairmanship of a senior member of the Board of Revenue, Punjab, regarding the updated progress of preparation of DC Valuation Tables in the consultation with the FBR representatives.

During the meeting, the senior member asked for issuing instructions to all district collectors in

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Rs16bn laundering

Court acquits Suleman Shehbaz, others

Admonishes FIA officer for faulty investigation

By Numan Wahab

LAHORE: Special Central Court Judge Bakht Fakhr Behzad on Monday acquitted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's son Suleman Shehbaz and others in Rs16 billion money-laundering case.

Earlier, the court had acquitted PM Shehbaz Sharif and his other son Hamza Shehbaz in this case.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) submitted answers to 27 questions, which were asked by the court during the course of hearing. The hearing was held on the pleas of acquittal of Suleman Shehbaz and

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Over 200 rescued in Shakargarh after water from India floods Ravi

NDMA asks authorities to remain alert

By our correspondent/ News Desk

LAHORE: A collaborative rescue operation was kick-started on Monday by Punjab Rangers and Rescue 1122 teams in the province's Tehsil Shakargarh after India released excessive water a day earlier, causing flash floods near the bordering village.

Through the rescue operation, the teams managed to save at least 223 residents of the area — mostly women and children — stranded in the midst of rising water levels in the River Ravi.

They were later brought to safer locations as the Punjab Rangers' rescue team stayed in the border area to

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Elahi wants bail like Imran, Qureshi

Requests court to shift him to hospital; Shujaat meets him in jail for third time

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Monday summoned additional chief secretary and IG prisons for Tuesday (today) on the plea of former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi complaining that the jail authorities had deprived him of basic facilities.

Pervaiz, who was present in the court on the orders of Justice Amjad Rafiq, told the court that there were a plethora of problems and victimization in the jail.

The former CM complained that the room where he had been kept for one and a half months was full of insects and foul smell.

He further complained that there was a small wash-room in the room and even the ceiling fan had been removed.

Pervaiz told the court

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WORLD POPULATION DAY 11th JULY



Syed Murad Ali Shah Chief Minister, Sindh

It gives me great pleasure that Sindh, along with the global community, is commemorating World Population Day to sensitize people regarding problems associated with an alarming growth rate of Population that needs to be checked. This day also sheds light on health problems faced by women during pregnancy and childbirth, making the need for family planning, gender equality, and maternal health more important than ever.

Pakistan and other developing countries strive to meet FP2030 targets. The targets set for Sindh to achieve CPR by 2025 and 2030 are 47 percent and 57 percent respectively. These FP 2030 targets encourage making rights-based family planning commitments to support the vision of a future where women and girls everywhere have the freedom and ability to lead healthy lives, make their own informed decisions about contraception, and participate as equals in society and its development. As a forward-thinking and progressive province, Sindh is well committed to achieving international and national commitments.

The unregulated and rapid population expansion is detrimental to socioeconomic development. The pandemics and natural calamities like devastating rains/floods in 2022 have destroyed the service delivery networks, adversely affecting the health of women and children. We believe that for bringing improvement in the life of the poor especially women, there is a need for integrated approaches. Sindh has a single Minister of Health and Population Welfare, which demonstrates a realization of the interconnections between family planning and reproductive health services and rights.

The Sindh Integrated Health and Population Project will help improve both the quality and utilization of basic reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition services.

Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho Minister for Health & Population Welfare, Sindh

The theme set this year for World Population Day 2023 highlights the need to advance gender equality to help realize the dreams of 8 billion. Gender inequality can be reduced by heeding and protecting the voices and rights of women and girls. The legislation, rules and policies in this context will help improve the participation of half of the world's population in decision making – not only regarding their health, reproductive lives and family size but it will also safeguard women and children from violence, harmful practices and preventable maternal death.

Government of Sindh has enacted five historic laws in the last one decade: The Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013, Sindh Rights of the Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2013, The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013, Sindh Women Agricultural Workers' Act 2019 and Reproductive Health Rights Act, 2019 (Amended 2022). These laws fortify the rights of women and girls and are instrumental in upholding gender equality. The FP-2030 and SDG-2030 Goals can only be achieved if women and girls' voice and rights are uplifted. Sindh pursues FP-2030's targets to bring CPR to 47% by 2025 and 57% by 2030. Sindh envisions to reshape the lives of women, men, girls, youth and adolescent from villages to cities and from remotest rural terrain to peri-urban and urban settings through rights-based approach for women empowerment, access to high quality modern contraceptives, relevant legislation, life skills, health and hygiene for the young and adolescents with interventions within health, population, education and social sectors. Thus, creating an enabling environment, so as to ensure the transformation of social and gender norms – hallmark of a progressive society. With an aim to broaden the focus, the Population Welfare Department Sindh has established a FP2030 Working Group and

Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput Chief Secretary, Sindh

The "World Population Day" is celebrated globally on 11th July to draw attention to the growing population and its impacts on our lives. In November 2022, the world population surpassed 8 billion people. 49.7% out of these eight billion are females. The theme of WPD-23, "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities" underscores the importance of gender equality and potential of rights and voice of women and girls for resilient and healthier countries.

Government of Sindh is committed to support and protect the rights of women. Women's empowerment is ensured through family planning, which allows them to choose their family size as well as their children's health and education. Undeniably, making quality family planning available to all women saves lives and creates a healthier population, which contributes to a country's economy.

Population Welfare Department, Government of Sindh has taken commendable steps to ensure universal access to family planning and reproductive health services. Functional integration of Department of Health and Population through task shifting and task sharing, maintaining contraceptive commodity security and supply of same to the public and private sector, digitization of client data, free of cost FP&RH services, focus on urban and peri-urban areas are such steps that will definitely improve Contraceptive Prevalence Rate.

It gives me great pleasure to report that Government of Sindh, through Population Welfare Department and Department of Health, has set specific targets in the light of commitments made at ICPD25, Nairobi Summit held in November 2019 in Kenya. The Nairobi conference focuses on "three zeros" i.e zero maternal death, zero unmet need for family planning and zero gender based violence and harmful

Rehan Iqbal Baloch Secretary to Government of Sindh Population Welfare Department

Population Welfare Department of Sindh celebrates World Population Day annually on 11th July. Theme of World Population Day this year is to uplift the rights and voices of the girls and women for achieving infinite possibilities.

Like global population almost 50% of the population of Pakistan are women. If these girls and women are treated equally, their rights are safeguarded and their voice is given due consideration, there are greater possibilities for improved, enlightened, egalitarian and developed society.

Population Welfare Department Sindh endeavors hard to provide women undeniable right of family planning. There is a huge population influx in cities due to migration. In this regard, Population Welfare Department in collaboration with its partners started various programs to ensure that quality Family Planning services are provided to growing population of peri-urban areas of Sindh. The women in hard-to-reach rural areas of Sindh are also catered through conducting weekly Family Health Days (Camps) and monthly Family Health Mela. It is necessary to highlight works done by Population Welfare Department in last couple of years under the leadership of Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Minister for Health and Population Welfare Sindh

Training Institutes: Population Welfare Training Institute (PWTI) at Karachi is made fully functional by providing all necessary Electronic/Electrical Equipment, Furniture and Fixtures; Regional Training Institutes at Karachi and Hyderabad are also strengthened.

Supply Chain System: The supply Chain System of Contraceptives from Central Ware House to Districts is strengthened. For supply of contraceptive commodities from Central Ware House to districts 2 reefer trucks and 3 loading trucks are procured. District stores are provided with Refrigerator, Iron Racks & Plastic Pallets.

Dr. Natalia Kanem UNFPA Executive Director

Imagine a world where everyone – all 8 billion of us – has a future bursting with promise and potential. Now open your eyes to the current reality that 4 billion women and girls – half of humanity – face discrimination solely based on their gender.

Thirty years ago, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), we set out to achieve a world in which people lived longer, healthier lives and enjoyed more rights and choices than ever before. This vision has become a reality for many; in fact, the human population is at its highest number ever, thanks in large part to improvements in health care and increased longevity. Yet, as we celebrate the progress that has been made, we must also recognize that for millions, even billions, of others this promise remains out of reach.

This World Population Day is a reminder that we can achieve the prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future envisioned by the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development if we harness the power of every human being on the planet. When we unlock the full potential of women and girls – encouraging and nurturing their desires for their lives, their families and their careers – we galvanize half the leadership, ideas, innovation, and creativity to better society.

Realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights for all is the foundation for gender equality, dignity and opportunity. Nevertheless, over 40 per cent of women around the world cannot exercise their right to make decisions as fundamental as whether or not to have children. Empowering women and girls, including through education and access to modern contraception, helps to support them in their aspirations — and to chart the path of their own life.

Advancing gender equality is a crosscutting solution to many population concerns. In ageing

WORLD POPULATION DAY 11th JULY



Uplifting Women, Unlocking Our World's Potential

In order to safeguard the health and rights of women & girls, we need to create a world full of infinite possibilities where they can progress along with men and aim for a better and a prosperous future.

Population Welfare Department Government of Sindh along with all stakeholders have been advancing and working to give women and girls equal access to family planning services.

Let's come forward to build a progressive future.



Population Welfare
Department



FOREX RATES		
Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	280.00	283.00
Canadian Dollar	214.00	216.00
Pound Sterling UK	361.00	364.00
Australian Dollar	193.10	195.00
Malaysian Ringgit	68.00	69.00
U.A.E Dirham	76.70	77.50
Saudi Riyal	73.80	74.50
Omani Riyal	717.20	722.00
Euro	303.00	306.00
Japanese Yen	1.92	1.96
Kuwaiti Dinar	898.00	902.50
Bahrain Dinar	732.35	736.00

* All rates are as per Monday, July 10, 2023.

Strengthening social protection delivery systems Sindh govt's top priority

Secretary says providing support to 50,000 pregnant and lactating women for taking up maternal, neonatal and child health services; no question of performance of transferred or repatriated officials; project slots are to be filled from market and govt officers under World Bank procurement rules

KARACHI: The initiative 'Strengthening Social Protection Delivery Systems in Sindh (SSPDSS)' is of high priority for the Government of Sindh of the newly established Sindh Social Protection Authority, functioning under the administrative umbrella of the Social Protection Department.

Sindh Social Protection Department Secretary Agha Abdul Rahim stated this in response to a news report — 'WB's \$230m Social Protection Project in Doldrums' — published by The News.

Mr Rahim stated, "The project builds upon the successful operation of the pilot 'Mother and Child Support Program' (MCSP) over the last two years in the districts of Tharparkar and Umerkot. The project has already enrolled over 50,000 pregnant and lactating women, providing them support for taking up maternal, neonatal, and child health services."

He said, "The success of the pilot is one of the primary reasons why the Government of Sindh has decided to scale up MCSP to the 15 poorest districts of the province. Its success is also evidenced by the fact that the World Bank has agreed to assist the Government of Sindh with a loan of \$200 million for strengthening social protection systems."

He explained, "The progress of the SSPDSS project, which started in January 2023, like all other World Bank-assisted projects, is monitored actively by the relevant stakeholders in government and the World Bank, including the Honourable Chief Minister. Routine monthly meetings are held to candidly discuss the progress of all projects and to take immediate remedial actions if necessary."

He said the news report cites unnamed sources, adding, "I am well aware that the two credible entities understand that unauthorized reports from the routine meetings are a serious matter as they can gravely impact the vital role candid discussions play in review processes, compromising the significant achievements of the Government of Sindh in cultivating a solid development partner-

ship with the World Bank."

He said it is contrary to the claim that the project was "in the doldrums" and that the CM ordered the transfer of officials related to the project, and maintained the meeting in question in fact reviewed the progress of the project and the CM suggested induction of more senior officers into the project to expedite its work.

Explaining the approval by the Sindh government of PC-1 Strengthening Social Protection Delivery Systems (SSPDSS) and employing 251 personnel on deputation and project pay scale waiver of domicile condition, the secretary stated, "the concerned project, like all other World Bank-supported projects has a range of project positions that are required to be filled from the market such as consultants and from the government officers under World Bank procurement rules. The personnel plan for this project has been approved in PC-1 by ECNEC."

The review meeting presided over by the Chief Minister and attended by the World Bank Country Director further endorsed the need to hire the most competent specialist and senior specialist staff from the market using World Bank procurement rules.

In addition, the secretary said there is no charge of "bad performance" against the transferred officials including Nisar Ahmed Memon, Amir Waheed Khawaja, Ambreen Zehra, and Syeda Ghanwa who were associated with the Sindh Social Protection Authority.

The secretary said the report about Ambreen Zehra's daughter Sara Nizamani appointment as a coordinator for the project unfounded, adding Nisar Ahmed Memon received mandatory relief from government duties as per his entitlement to pursue a full-time course for his career advancement.

Mr Rahim said the other three named officers belonging to the Social Welfare Department were repatriated as their parent department required in their services.

Explaining the delay in launch of a different project for social protection institu-

tion-building (Peoples Promise Sindh Social Protection Strategy - Feasibility and Institution Building), "could not be launched" due to the "negligence of incapable staff", the secretary said the project was a relatively small initiative that was delayed in the first instance to COVID-19-related restraints.

He said many of the project's functions and objectives were subsequently superseded by the launch of the MCSP under a different window and the preparation and approval of a more ambitious SSPDSS project with the support of the World Bank. A scaled-down version of the project was approved by the Planning and Development Department.

Ms Ambreen Zehra Syed, in a separate note, clarified her position as well as her colleagues — Aamir Waheed Khawaja (BPS-19) and Syeda Ghanwa Hussaini (BPS-17) — stating it is false to claim the goals of the project have not been achieved.

She maintained, "In reality, our team successfully launched this intervention in June 2021, and it has been positively impacting over 51,000 registered beneficiaries to date. This led to the approval of the scale up of the same intervention to 15 poorest districts in Sindh."

She stated, "The story wrongfully associates us with the Peoples Promise Sindh Social Protection Strategy, even though we were never posted under that specific ADP Scheme. The inclusion of incorrect information regarding our roles and responsibilities undermines the credibility of the story. I was never posted as General Manager Operations, but rather had a temporary assignment with look-after charge, while drawing BPS 18 salary from the regular budget and not the project. Also, my colleague Mr. Aamir Waheed Khawaja was not posted in the project and was also given the look-after charge as an interim arrangement. Moreover, the story wrongfully mentions that Syeda Ghanwa Hussaini was posted in the project and truth is she was never posted in the project."



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation, Monday.

'IS-KP network' behind targeted killings busted

Officials say group from Afghanistan was behind attacks on Sikhs, Christians, Islamic scholars and cops

By Javed Aziz Khan

PESHAWAR: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and the Capital City Police have said a network of the Islamic State-KP has been smashed which was allegedly involved in the target killing of minorities, police and religious scholars in the several months.

Additional Inspector General of CTD Shaukat Abbas and Capital City Police Officer Peshawar Ashfaq Anwar told a press conference on Monday that the group from Afghanistan was behind the target killings of three Sikhs, two Christians, four Islamic scholars and injuries to three policemen in Peshawar since March.

"Terrorists targeted a Christian in the limits of Pishtakhara police station and later encountered the Ababeel Squad on Kohat Road a few days back. Three policemen were wounded while a key terrorist Zaffar alias Khalid from Afghanistan, presently living in Rashid Garhi, was killed in the encounter," Shaukat Abbas said.

He added that the group had planned major terrorist attacks during the coming Muharram but the cops arrested the ring leader before that.

The officials said two SIMs, Zu card, Afghan card and other documents recovered from the deceased led the cops to the network behind the major target kill-

ing incidents in Peshawar in which the same 30 bore pistol was used.

"The CCTV footage of the BRT, the phone record and other pieces of evidence led the cops to arrest the key member of the network, Aminullah, a close relative of slain Zafar after raids were conducted in different parts of Peshawar and other districts of the province," said the officials.

They added that raids were being conducted to arrest other members of the network.

The officials said the law and order in Peshawar and across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had improved after actions by the CTD and local police in the last several months.

"Police have increased patrolling as well as intelligence gathering following a few attacks in the limits of the Agha Mir Jani Shah police station and nearby areas during the recent weeks. More Ababeel Squad bikers have been deployed for patrolling the narrow streets to keep a check on the suspicious elements," said CCPO Ashfaq Anwar.

A Sikh Manmohan Singh was killed and another was wounded in two attacks on consecutive days in Kakhshal and nearby areas.

Besides, a cop was shot and wounded in the vicinity while three cops were wounded on the nearby Kohat Road. All these incidents happened within three days last month.

Polls within 60-90 days, says Kaira

By our correspondent

LALAMUSA: Advisor to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira has said nowadays, many people ask whether the elections will be held on time or not.

Addressing the participants of the inauguration ceremony of the Lalamura to Nonanwala Road here on Monday, he said the elections would be held within 60 to 90 days. There is no need to be a victim of any kind of confusion. "For several months, I have been trying to hold dialogue for the better future of Pakistan and save the country from crises. The PPP consulted all parties

and decided that the elections will be held on the same day all over the country," he said, adding that Imran Khan did not give up stubbornness.

If negotiations with him had been successful, there would have been no attacks on the integrity of Pakistan. Imran filled youths with so much hatred that it is unspeakable. By doing this, he has harmed the country. "We are facing problems today because of the policies of Imran Khan. Unless people change their attitudes, there can be no progress in the society. We should get out of this hatred because history is a witness that it is not useful for us to harbour hatred."

LHC grants bail in alleged rape case

By our correspondent

MULTAN: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has granted bail to a man involved in the alleged rape of American Vlogger Isebella Urphi in Dera Ghazi Khan a couple of years back, according to the petitioner's counsel. LHC Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar granted bail to Muzamil Shahzad.

Two other men, Azan and Abid, are also accused in this case. Former Punjab chief minister Hamza Shehbaz had taken notice of the incident. It should be remembered that Isabella, daughter of Leo Alingzander, had come to Rajanpur from Karachi. Muzamil and his accomplices took her Fort Munro where they allegedly raped her. Photos of the accused with the woman also went viral on social media.

Justice Naseem sworn in as acting AJK CJ

By Syed Abbas Gardezi

ISLAMABAD: Justice Khawaja Muhammad Naseem, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), was sworn in as the acting chief justice of AJK on Monday.

The AJK President Barister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry administered the oath to Justice Khawaja Muhammad Naseem. The oath taking ceremony was held at Kashmir House Islamabad, and was attended by Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, ministers, judges of the Supreme Court and High Court.

AJK cabinet forms panel for fixing flour price

Chaudhry Anwarul Haq chairs meeting; says 12-member committee to send recommendations to govt to reduce expenses, increase revenue

By Syed Abbas Gardezi

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq on Monday presided over a cabinet's meeting, wherein a 12-member committee was formed to maintain a balance between the subsidised and open market flour price as

well as improve the government's flour delivery system in the region.

The meeting also gave approval for making necessary amendments to the existing law regarding the registration of government employees' associations or organisations. The committee has been tasked with sub-

mitting its recommendations pertaining to maintaining a balance in flour prices and improving the government's flour delivery system in the state. The committee's members include Azhar Sadiq, Majid Khan, Akmal Sargala, Chaudhry Rashid, Mian Waheed, Sardar Zia Qamar, Sardar Amir Altaf, Sardar

Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Diwan Ali Khan Chagatai and Javed Iqbal Badhanvi.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq said the government in principle has decided to increase the salary and pension of government employees on the pattern of the federal government. He, how-

ever, maintained that the government would have to bear additional expenses worth Rs18 billion per year.

He said the 12-member committee of the cabinet has also been assigned the task of submitting its recommendations as to how the government could meet these additional expenses and increase

the sources of revenue.

The cabinet meeting was attended by senior ministers, Finance Minister Colonel (ret'd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, government ministers Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi, Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Sardar Muhammad Hussain and others.

Rs2.6tr power sector liabilities

Power consumers to be billed surcharge to collect Rs335bn in FY24

Financing Cost surcharge to be charged from July 1 at the rate of Rs3.23 per unit; consumers already paying bills with two surcharges, electricity duty, PTV licence fee, GST, income tax, extra tax and sales tax accounting for 31 pc of total bills; taxpaying tenants advised to upload NIC details on PITC website to avoid being charged income tax from next month

By Khalid Mustafa

ISLAMABAD: The government has started charging the Financing Cost (FC) surcharge of Rs3.23 per unit from end consumers from July 1, 2023, to mop Rs335 billion to finance the power sector's debt and liabilities which stands at Rs2.6 trillion. In addition, they will also continue to pay Tariff Rationalization surcharge which is at Rs0.47 per unit.

Shockingly, the consumers — active taxpayers residing in the rented houses who have received electricity bills of more than Rs20,000 in July (mainly because of the high electricity tariff) have been charged income tax too, according to the consumers in Islamabad bringing them under great burden.

As far as the FC surcharge is concerned, the government would charge FC Surcharge at Rs3.23 per unit from July 1, 2023, in light of the NEPRA decision taken on March 30, 2023. But from July 1 to October 30, 2023, the lifeline con-

sumers who utilize 50 units will pay no surcharge.

However, from July 1 to October 30, 2023, protected and residential non-protected consumers using up to 200 units, and non-protected residential consumers who use electricity up to 300 units per month and agriculture tube wells will pay Rs1.43 FC surcharge per unit and this facility for the said four categories will be available till October 2023. Other categories will pay Rs3.23 per unit as the FC surcharge till October 2023. And from November 1, 2023, to June 2024, residential protected consumers who utilize 200 units per month alone will pay Rs1.43 per unit as FC shortage till June 2024 but all the categories will pay an FC surcharge at Rs3.23 per unit.

Apart from it, the consumer also pays the capacity charges built into the base tariff. In the current fiscal 2023-24, the consumer is expected to pay Rs4.48 per unit as capacity charges. The consumers have paid in the last fiscal year 2022-23 almost

over Rs1.2 trillion which will swoop upward in the current financial year 2023-24 up to Rs2.2-2.5 trillion. The country's installed capacity stands at 45000 MW, but the government has geared up endeavours to install more power plants knowing the fact that in the years to come capacity charges will increase manifold to haunt the masses.

The consumer also pays the monthly fuel charges incurred for the generation of electricity as fuel cost is a pass-through item.

This is how the end electricity consumer in Pakistan is virtually being fleeced to cover up the unending inefficiencies in the power sector as apart from paying the actual cost of electricity, tariff rationalization, and financing cost surcharges, electricity duty, PTV licence fee, GST, income tax, extra tax, further tax and sales tax.

Though industrial consumers pay additional extra and further taxes, residential consumers do not pay extra and further taxes, but pay the

remaining duties, taxes, and surcharges.

Electricity Duty, a provincial duty, has been levied to all consumers ranging from 1.0 percent to 1.5 percent of Variable Charges, General Sales Tax (GST), is levied under Sale Tax Act 1990, on all consumers at the rate of 17 percent of the electricity bills. Now the time has come for PTV management to come up with its own business plan to stand on its own feet. It is quite an injustice to the consumers to share the financial burden of PTV at a time when the masses have other options available to equip themselves with the latest news through other private channels, as well as the social media world. The private sector is entertaining through better drama and sports coverage.

Income Tax is charged to consumers at various rates depending upon applicable tariff and the amount of electricity bill and 5 percent to commercial consumers on bills up to Rs. 20,000 and 7.5 percent on bills exceeding Rs.

20,000.

Further Tax is being charged at the rate of 3 percent to all consumers - having no Sales Tax Return Number (STRN) except domestic, agriculture, bulk consumers, and street light connections. Income Tax is charged to consumers at various rates depending upon applicable tariff and the amount of electricity bill and 5 percent to commercial consumers on bills up to Rs20,000 and 7.5 percent on bills exceeding Rs20,000.

One consumer, Mohammad Ilyas while talking to The News said: "I received the electricity bill in the month of July 1, 2023, at Rs2,9819 against the use of 685 units. My meter is ToU. The actual cost of the electricity I received in the bill is Rs19,980. The government has mopped from me in the shape of surcharges, taxes, and duties an amount of Rs 9,235 which is 31 percent of the total bill. This is too much. I am an active taxpayer, but ISECO imposed an income

tax of Rs2,028 which is sheer injustice. The government has collected from me in the July bill Rs2616.70 in the form of FC surcharge and Rs31.20 RT surcharge, Rs35 PTV fee, Rs 4,123 as GST and Rs108 as GST on FPA and Rs602 as a fuel price adjustment."

The spokesman of the FBR, when contacted, said that if the electricity bill is received in the name of the owner of the house who is a non-taxpayer, and the bill exceeds Rs25,000 per month, then the electricity bill will be subjected to income tax even if an active taxpayer is residing in the rented house and paying bills.

But the tenant must deduct that amount from the rent. However, the Power Division spokesman said that if the active taxpayer was residing in a rented house and the owner of the house is a non-taxpayer, then he (the active taxpayer) must upload NIC details on the PITC website and they will not be charged income tax from next month.

Job Opportunities

A well established and leading Non-Profit Organization (NPO) requires energetic females with minimum Bachelor Degree in any discipline. Selected candidates would require to conduct survey and also holds office duties for that they may have to move to different cities of Pakistan. Desirous females can send their CVs on undermentioned address. Selection of candidates will be made on completion of test / interviews. Persian language speakers will be given preference.

Email: jehansikandar5@gmail.com.
WhatsApp # 03466352846.

GWADAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Government of Balochistan
TOWN PLANNING DIRECTORATE

PUBLIC NOTICE / اعلان عام

عوام الناس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ ادارہ ترقیات کوادری کی جانب سے جی ڈی ایس ایف اسکیم نمبر 3 (GDA Industrial Scheme No. 3) کو این-اوسی نمبر 03/05/IND/GDA مورخہ 03.02.2005 برائے زمین مکتویٰ کی کھیت نمبر 4/4، مشرق نمبر 1,2,3,7,8 واقع موضع سرحد تحصیل و ضلع کوادری برائے صنعتی اسکیم کے لئے جاری کیا گیا تھا کوادری ہرٹ سٹی ماسٹر پلان کے لینڈ یوز کے مطابق مذکورہ اسکیم کی لینڈ یوز صنعتی سے رہائی و تجارتی میں تبدیل ہو چکا ہے جس کی وجہ سے اسکیم ڈاکیومنٹڈ اور ایکٹو سٹیٹس میں تبدیل ہوئی ہے۔ اس تبدیلی کے تحت زمینداروں کو اس اسکیم کی ڈی ڈی ایس ایف اسکیم نمبر 3-42201-2984930-3 برائے تجارتی نام اسکیم کی ڈی ڈی ایس ایف اسکیم نمبر 3 سے کوادری انٹرنیشنل بزنس سٹی (Gwadar International Business City) کے لئے درخواست ادارہ ترقیات کوادری میں جمع کرانی ہے۔ جس کی توثیق و منظوری ادارہ ترقیات کوادری کے گورننگ باڈی کے مندرجہ ذیل اجلاس 2022 میں ہو چکی ہے۔ اس سلسلے میں اگر کسی فرد، لائسنسی یا کسی کوادری امور سے متعلقہ شخص کو اطلاع دینے کے چہرہ (15) دن کے اندر اپنے اعتراضات و استدعاؤں کی تہذیبی ادوارہ ترقیات کوادری میں جمع کرنا ہے۔ اس تاریخ کے گزر جانے کے بعد کوادری امور سے متعلق نہیں ہوگا اور تمام کاغذی و قانونی کارروائی مکمل کر لی جائے گی اور ادارہ ترقیات کوادری

فون نمبر: 211775 (0864)

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF WITHDRAWAL OF INTENTION

TO ACQUIRE AT LEAST 51% OF THE ISSUED AND OUTSTANDING ORDINARY SHARES AND CONTROL OF EFG HERMES PAKISTAN LIMITED BY JS GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

Under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Listed Companies (Substantial Acquisition of Voting Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2017.

This is in reference to the Public Announcement of Intention to Acquire at least 51% of the issued and outstanding ordinary shares and control of EFG Hermes Pakistan Limited given by JS Global Capital Limited (JSGCL) on January 17, 2023, which was published in the Daily Jang and The News on January 19, 2023.

Due to unsuccessful negotiations with the seller, it is no longer feasible for JSGCL to continue with the intended takeover. Consequently, JSGCL hereby withdraws its intention to acquire at least 51% of the issued and outstanding ordinary shares and control of EFG Hermes Pakistan Limited under the provisions of Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Listed Companies (Substantial Acquisition of Voting Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2017.

Imtiaz Gadar, CFA
Chief Executive Officer
JS Global Capital Limited
18th Floor, The Centre
Abdullah Haroon Road
Saddar, Karachi

JS Global

Agriculture revival, 4m jobs soon: PM

Continued from page 1

security, he said agriculture is the backbone of the country and the farmers worked hard to provide food to millions of people and they would be remembered in the history as builders of Pakistan.

He said the farmers had the due right to avail themselves of incentives for the agriculture sector and it was the responsibility of the government to provide them all possible assistance for overall development and progress. "Farmers work hard but it is common knowledge that they are facing lack of resources," he added.

The prime minister said growth in the agriculture sector would definitely bring Pakistan at par with developed countries.

He said hard work is imperative to ensure progress of Pakistan, adding the green revolution in 1960s was due to the introduction of new varieties of seed, building of dams and canals and modern agriculture practices in the country.

He said farmers should get more profits than the cost of production of their crops including wheat. The government did increase the support price of wheat which led to record produce of the commodity, he added.

He was hopeful that due to the incentives given by the government, cotton produce would also enhance.

He said it was the responsibility of the government to provide standard seeds, fertilizers and pesticides to the farmers and equip them with the latest technology. Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the new agriculture initiative for giving real-time information about any pest attacks. He expressed concern over the adulterated drugs given to the farmers and warned of strict action against the culprits.

He lauded the vision of Army Chief Syed Asim Munir for development of agriculture

sector in the country. "We have to implement the vision for agriculture through collaboration among federal and provincial governments, agriculture departments and research institutes," he added.

He said the government was ready to fund the agriculture research centres, adding unfortunately there had been no worthwhile work due to the culture of favouritism.

Shehbaz Sharif said state-owned enterprises were losing Rs600 billion annually. Pakistan imported \$4.5 billion of palm oil which was a burden on the national economy, he noted.

There was a time when Pakistan was producing more cotton than its neighbouring country but then it lost the track and was now producing less of staple crops, he said adding Pakistan could not afford more foreign loans but was forced to save its economy from default by getting loans from friendly countries, he added.

The PM said gulf countries were ready to invest in the agriculture sector and bring modern machinery to boost crops production in the country.

Pakistan needed political stability to attract investment as in an unstable environment, investors shied away, he added.

Pakistan could attract investment of \$40 to 50 billion in the years ahead and it could make food exports to the gulf countries which were presently importing food products worth \$40 billion.

He was of the view that Pakistan had to compete with the world and increase its exports and added the economy would get revived in the next two years.

"It is demand of our national security that the country's food security and economic security should be strengthened," he said.

Meanwhile, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir attended the seminar as the

guest of honour.

He also addressed the participants and assured the people and the government of Army's full support for all the initiatives being taken under the ambit of Special Facilitation Investment Council (SFIC) including Green Pakistan Initiative.

The seminar was attended by federal ministers, chief ministers of Punjab and Sindh province, chief secretaries of provincial governments, agricultural experts and farmers from all the provinces.

Foreign dignitaries and potential investors and experts from United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, China, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and various other countries also attended the seminar.

Sequel to the inauguration of Land Information Management System - Centre of Excellence (LIMS - COE), Green Pakistan initiative is being undertaken to enhance the food security of Pakistan, increase exports and reduce the agriculture related imports, thereby, contributing to the national economy.

Agriculture experts and farmers highly appreciated the government's landmark initiative and Pakistan Army's special focus on revolutionizing the agriculture sector by promoting modern contemporary technology, collaboration of public and private sectors and trickling down dividends to the local farmers to alleviate poverty. The participants hailed the conduct of seminar and its attendance by experts, government representatives and potential investors as a success and first step towards bringing positive change in the agriculture and livestock sectors.

The participants, especially lauded the Pakistan Army's efforts in boosting the national economy by focusing on this critical sector.

Later the prime minister visited the agriculture and livestock exhibition as well. —APP

Continued from page 1

deal with the situation unfolding.

The border village of Jalala in Shakargarh has also suffered crop damage as a result of the floodwaters originating from India. The crops cultivated by local paddy farmers were submerged while they themselves remained trapped.

Pakistan's eastern neighbour released at least 185,000 cusecs of water in the River Ravi on Sunday.

Resultantly, excessive water from India reached Kartarpur Jassar through Naina Kot and is expected to reach Lahore via Shahdara in the next 48 hours. Meanwhile, there is flooding in the River Ravi, Nulaha Baen and other tributaries.

The administration, as per officials, is on alert in the districts adjacent to River Ravi and Chenab, while relief camps have been set up in various districts in view of the floods.

According to Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), there is moderate flooding in Chenab at Marala as well as Shakargarh and Nulaha Baen, low-level flood in Khanki and Kadirabad in Chenab, while the flow of water in other rivers, including Ravi, is normal.

The flow of water in all rivers, barrages, dams and canals

is being continuously monitored. The control room, meanwhile, is monitoring the entire situation in Punjab.

Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said there was no flood in the province. India, he added, had released the same amount of water in Ravi last year, which was 31,000 cusecs when it reached Lahore.

Speaking about the arrangements regarding flooding in Dera Ghazi Khan, the chief minister said the preparations were complete. However, he added, settlements should not have been built inside the river, emphasising that people settled on government lands would definitely be removed.

The National Disaster Management Authority has also issued an update on the present status of floods stating that as per the latest flow data from Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW) and Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Akhnoor is experiencing high flows. However, Marala will experience the rising of flows in next 12 hours, which will climb from medium to high flow level, it added.

According to NDMA, Marala's maximum level capacity is 1,100,000 cusecs, while its current level is medium at 170,000 cusecs. The water is expected to rise by 250,000 cusecs.

SC returns plea

Continued from page 1

chairman and office-bearers, their hate speeches attacking the judiciary, defence, burning and looting public assets, etc, totally unconstitutional, violative of the fundamental rights and various provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan, including but not limited to Articles 3,4,5,6,9,14,15, 22, 24, 29, 28, 39 and 40 of the Constitution of Pakistan and thus their party was liable to be dissolved.

The registrar office, however, returned the petition by raising objections that the requirements of Article 184(3) of the Constitution were not fulfilled while filing the petition.

The office further stated that it was not clear in the plea how the imposition of a ban on the party came under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, adding that the instant petition did not explain as to how banning the PTI was a matter of public interest.

The office also stated that the IPP's leader, who is also adviser to the prime minister on sports and tourism, did not approach the relevant forum ahead of filing the petition.

The Registrar Office also stated that under Article 248 of the Constitution, the prime minister and the defence minister could not be made a party to the case.

Elahi wants bail

Continued from page 1

that he had been ill and his feet had swollen and requested that he be sent to the Services Hospital.

When the judge asked what other relief he wanted, Parvaiz said he should be given bail like Shah Mehmood Qureshi and PTI chief Imran Khan.

Hearing his demand, the whole court room burst into a laughter. The judge, however, called for order.

Parvaiz requested that he be given the facility of doctor. His lawyer Aamir Saeed said

even lawyers were not allowed to meet him.

Meanwhile, PML chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain met Parvez Elahi for the third time in jail on Monday. They had met a week ago after Eid.

According to sources, Parvez Elahi is ready to leave the PTI, but Chaudhry Moonis Elahi is not agreeing. During Monday's meeting, an attempt was made to contact Chaudhry Moonis Elahi by phone in London, but he did not take the call. However, sources close to PTI president dismissed this information.

Bilawal, Hina away from country during Swiss FM's visit

Continued from page 1

was part of his scheduled engagements.

Similarly, due to the unavailability of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar in Islamabad, the foreign minister of Switzerland also could not meet her. Not only this, the foreign secretary was also not available to welcome the visiting foreign minister. That was why Special Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Acting Foreign Secretary Cyrus Sajjad Qazi welcomed the visiting minister and his delegation.

It was a very objectionable diplomatic process and against the diplomatic requirements and etiquette. Usually, at the arrival of any foreign minister, if the counterpart is not present in the country, he/she must be represented by the minister of state. But in the current situation, neither the minister of state for foreign affairs nor the foreign secretary were available to welcome the visiting minister. Although the country of the visiting ambassador did not express any displeasure at the state of affairs openly, it must be a matter of concern for the host country.

Meanwhile, the incident of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden was condemned and protested by Pakistan at all levels, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also summoned the Swedish ambassador over the religious tragedy. But on the occasion, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto was in the US for his private engagements and Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar was also absent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A so-called

formal protest was also made to the Swedish ambassador by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It would have been better had the foreign minister or the minister of state for foreign affairs talked to the ambassador and conveyed him the religious sentiments of the people of Pakistan.

These two incidents raise questions about the professionalism and diplomatic credibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto, who left Tokyo for a private visit to America on July 4 after completing his official visit to Japan, and it was told that his unofficial visit would complete in a week. On July 11, one week of his private engagements had completed, but there was no information about his return to the homeland.

During this time, no information about ministerial or political engagements of Pakistan's foreign minister in the US came to the fore, although People's Party sources said Bilawal Bhutto was supposed to meet US officials and attend think tanks discussions. There is no information about his return to the country and apparently his contact with Pakistan at the government and political level is cut off currently.

On the other hand, attempts to contact State Minister Hina Rabbani Khar remained unsuccessful. During the past week, she was seen nowhere, neither in the cabinet meetings, nor in the budget meeting at the National Assembly. Her staff also expressed ignorance about her by avoiding any conversation in this regard.

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sovereigns with a rating of 'CCC+' or below.

The upgrade reflects Pakistan's improved external liquidity and funding conditions following its staff-level agreement (SLA) with the IMF on a nine-month SBA worth \$3 billion.

Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a tweet wrote, "Another positive news towards current economic revival journey, alhamdulillah."

The minister also congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the people of Pakistan, government allies and his economic team.

"We expect the SLA to be approved by the IMF board in July, catalysing other funding and anchoring policies around parliamentary elections due by October. Nevertheless, programme implementation and external funding risks remain due to a volatile political climate and large external financing requirement," the agency said.

The approval from the credit rating agency came through because Islamabad has showed willingness to follow through on IMF-driven reforms.

Pakistan has recently taken measures to address shortfalls in government revenue collection, energy subsidies and policies inconsistent with a market-determined exchange rate, including import financing restrictions.

These issues held up the last three reviews of Pakistan's previous IMF programme, before its expiry in June.

The government amended its proposed budget for FY24

Fitch upgrades

to introduce new revenue measures and cut spending, following additional tax measures and subsidy reforms in February.

Pakistan also let go of exchange rate management in January 2023, although guidelines on prioritizing imports were only removed in June.

However, Fitch pointed out that Pakistan had an extensive record of going off-track on its commitments to the IMF.

"We understand the government has already made all the required policy actions under the SBA. Nevertheless, there is still scope for delays and challenges to implementation as well as new policy missteps ahead of the October elections and uncertainty over the post-election commitment to the programme."

Once the IMF board approves the SBA, it would disburse \$1.2 billion, while the disbursement of the remaining \$1.8 billion would happen after reviews in November 2023 and February 2024.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have committed another \$3 billion in deposits, and the authorities expect \$3-5 billion in other new multilateral funding after the IMF agreement.

The SBA should also facilitate disbursement of some of the \$10 billion in aid pledges made at the January 2023 flood relief conference, mostly in the form of project loans (\$2 billion in the budget).

Authorities expect \$25 billion in gross new external financing in FY24, against \$15 billion in public debt maturities, including \$1 billion in bonds and \$3.6 billion to multilateral creditors.

The government funding target includes \$1.5 billion in

market issuance and \$4.5 billion in commercial bank borrowing, both of which could prove challenging, although some of the loans not rolled over in FY23 could now return.

It also pointed out the likelihood of the rollover of \$9 billion in maturing deposits from China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in FY23.

Although import restrictions and other measures helped the country narrow its current account deficit (CAD), Fitch forecast a CAD of about \$4 billion (1 percent of GDP) in FY24, after \$3 billion in FY23 and over \$17 billion in FY22.

"Our forecast CAD is lower than \$6 billion in the budget on the assumption that not all of the planned new funding will materialise, constraining imports," it said, adding that it could still widen more than expected, given continued reports of import backlogs, the dependence of the manufacturing sector on foreign inputs, and reconstruction needs after last year's floods.

Nevertheless, currency depreciation could limit the rise, as the authorities intend for imports to be financed through banks, without recourse to official reserves. Remittance inflows could also recover after partly switching to unofficial channels to benefit from more favourable parallel market exchange rates.

The 'CCC' rating also reflected Pakistan's low reserves of around \$4 billion since February 2023, political volatility since the May protests supporting former PM Imran Khan, and high fiscal deficits, which could widen to 7.6 percent of GDP in FY24 from 7 percent in FY23.

PM tasked to mollify Fazl upset over Dubai huddle

Continued from page 1

with Fazlur Rehman.

Earlier, JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri had told the reporters that whole PDM did not know anything about Dubai meeting and it was not only JUI-F who were ignorant.

He also said that it was their right to raise their concerns regarding the matter, as JUI-F believes it will cause them political damage if the tenure of assemblies is extended.

Aslam Ghauri added that it was Asif Ali Zardari's idea to remove Imran Khan by no-confidence motion, as they wanted to show street power and wanted elections. He said that it would be disclosed soon that which powers were behind this idea to remove by no-confidence. He said that JUI was in favour of holding elections soon after removal of PTI government. He said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman also confirmed PM Shehbaz's statement regarding dissolution of assemblies at the end of their tenure.

Meanwhile, in a bid to prepare for the anticipated general election which is likely to be held in October, PMLN

supremo Nawaz Sharif on Monday directed his party's stalwarts to accelerate their poll drive.

According to media reports, Sharif recently made telephonic contacts with key party members urging them to ramp up their election campaign efforts as the ruling party indicated plans to dissolve the assembly in August possibly on August 11 or 12.

During these contacts it was decided that the PMLN would introduce fresh faces to invigorate the party's image and strengthen its chances in the upcoming election.

Meanwhile the process of ticket distribution is expected to be completed by August or September enabling the party to field its candidates in a timely manner.

Simultaneously deliberations are underway to determine the final date for Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan. Currently residing in Saudi Arabia Sharif has been engaging in meetings with influential leaders and consulting his legal team to strategise his comeback

Court acquits Suleman Shehbaz, others

Continued from page 1

used to say that he was also under pressure to make the case.

The FIA prosecutor told the court that there was no direct evidence of money laundering against Suleman.

The court asked him to share if there was any indirect evidence against the accused.

Investigating Officer Ali Mardan said the action was started in the light of a report of the sugar inquiry commission.

The court said what was done by the agency against the rest of the sugar mills.

Ali Mardan said he was not aware of the action as he was not the inquiry officer of that case.

To a court query, the investigation officer said that during the investigation,

details of Suleman Shehbaz's accounts were obtained. He said money was collected in the accounts of Suleman Shehbaz and then withdrawn in cash.

The court remarked that what was crime in collecting and withdrawing money from a bank account. "That's why, I called the FIA to tell the court why a drama had been going on for so many years," the judge said.

The court remarked that who used to give record to Shahzad Akbar, on the basis of which he used to hold so many press conferences.

The investigation officer remained silent over the remarks of the court.

Later, the court acquitted Suleman of the charges.

FBR decides to hike valuation rates of properties

Continued from page 1

Punjab regarding preparation of valuation tables for FY 2023-24.

In order to rationalise and bring harmony in the DC valuation tables and the FBR valuation tables, the district collectors should co-opt the representative of the FBR, as member of the committee had already notified in the Punjab Stamp (Valuation Tables in respect of Immovable Property) Rules, 1999.

It is advised that the timelines for completion of valuation tables already circulated should be followed. It is further advised that the name of the housing society/ scheme, along with the Khasra num-

bers, on which the housing society/ scheme is developed, should be mentioned in the valuation tables. While notifying the rates, the brochure value advertised by the housing societies/ schemes may also be considered. This task must be assigned 'Top Priority', said the order.

When contacted, one senior FBR official, told The News working for updating the valuation tables as well as adding more cities and towns had already been completed and now the FBR high-ups were scrutinising the work done by the field formations with the consultation of the respective provincial authorities.

It has been decided that on an average, 15 per cent valuation

tables would be jacked up in the upcoming exercise with effect from August 1, 2023.

"We want to make updating of valuation tables a permanent annual feature," said the official and added that there was still a gap between the valuation rates, notified by the FBR and existing market rates.

ECP to ask Punjab

Continued from page 1

(EVMs) and i-voting.

The commission has decided to once again ask the provincial government to remove the provisions that mandate the use of EVMs and i-voting.

A meeting of the election commission was held at its Secretariat in Islamabad on Monday, presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja.

The meeting was attended by members of the commission, special secretary, and other senior officers.

During a briefing on the conduct of local body elections in Punjab, the ECP was informed that the registration process for electoral groups will be completed on July 17 and that the commission has made all the necessary poll arrangements.

However, it was revealed in the meeting that according to Section 47(1) of the Punjab Local Government Act 2022, local government elections are supposed to be held using EVMs, and voters are also expected to have the option of i-voting.

The commission has repeatedly written to the provincial government expressing the impossibility of using EVMs in local elections and the unfeasibility of providing i-voting facilities.

Despite sending several letters to the Punjab chief secretary and the local government departments concerned, the

necessary actions have not been taken yet. The commission needs to procure approximately 205,000 EVMs for local government (LG) elections due to the large population of the province. This requirement involves significant financial resources, expertise, and related machinery, which, among other challenges, would further delay the grassroots elections.

The chief election commissioner had previously criticised the Punjab government's actions as a tactic to intentionally prolong the already delayed elections.

So far, the Punjab government has made the required amendments to Rule 35(4) of the local government, and the voting procedure has also been provided for under the Elections Act 2017.

However, the meeting highlighted the necessity of amending the Local Government Act to ensure there is no conflict with the Act and rules. In light of this, the ECP has instructed its office to promptly write to the Punjab government, urging it to make the necessary amendments to the Local Government Act 2022 and rules in accordance with the amendments made by the federal government to Sections 103 and 94 of the Elections Act 2017, which relate to EVMs and i-voting. The objective is to ensure that elections can be held without delay in the province.

The forum was also informed that the commission

is prepared to conduct local body elections in the federal capital. However, it was explained that the Ministry of Interior has not yet issued a notification specifying the number of reserved seats in Islamabad or established rules regarding election expenditure limits for candidates. The chief election commissioner has directed the office to send another letter to the Ministry of Interior, seeking the issuance of the notification and the formulation of new rules by July 12.

The ECP was briefed that, in compliance with the order of the Islamabad High Court, the commission is fully prepared to hold and schedule the local body elections in the federal capital. However, during the meeting on June 22, 2023, when the representatives of the Ministry of Interior requested notification of the number of reserved seats and rules for limiting election expenditure for candidates, the ECP instructed them to provide these documents. However, no response has been received from the Ministry of Interior yet. As a result, the commission has ordered another letter to be written to the ministry, requesting the notification of the number of reserved seats and the rules for limiting election expenditure for candidates to be provided to the ECP. This will enable the commission to issue the schedule for the local body elections in the federal capital.

saying there was no complaint during his time.

He said that after the inquiry the committee would be able to cancel the licences of the responsible persons.

PAC member Sheikh Rohail Asghar urged cancelling the licences in case of complaints related to Hajj and Umrah.

The secretary of religious affairs said, "Our responsibility was to make Hajj arrangements in Madinah and Makkah while most of the complaints were received from other areas." He added that the responsibility of making arrangements in those areas lay with the Saudi government.

While briefing the media after the meeting, Noor Alam Khan said that there would be a forensic audit of all matters of the Hajj operation, adding, "Free Hajj pilgrims will be identified."

He said that Pakistani pilgrims suffered despite the fact that the private sector charged Rs2.5 million and the public sector received Rs1.18 million from the pilgrims.

He said Pakistani pilgrims faced difficulties in acquiring transport, food and accommodation, with no solution in sight.

PAC Chairman Noor Alam Khan also said that the food of five-star hotels was written in the contracts, but complaints were received from pilgrims on the quality of the food.

PAC member Shahida Akhtar Ali said that most tour operators sold the quota of assistants and asked what the role of the private sector was in terms of assistants.

The PAC chairman said the DG Hajj sought time for the briefing but could not give a satisfactory answer to the committee regarding the rents of nearby and distant buildings in Makkah and Madinah.

The DG Hajj was barred from the briefing and directed to furnish all the documents and the agreements.

Noor Alam Khan appreciated the services of the late Mufti Abd al-Shakur as former minister for religious affairs,

PAC decides to conduct forensic audit of Hajj 2023 expenditure, agreements

Continued from page 1

why, despite the completion of Hajj, why Additional Secretary Atta-ul-Rehman did not return since other personnel, including the DG Hajj, are already in Saudi Arabia.

The auditor general of Pakistan told the PAC that the Hajj assistants were not allowed to go to the important places, including Mina, Muzdalifah and Arafat.

The secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs told the committee that the civil servants were also given TA/DA by their department and Hajj assistants were sent this year in line with the requirement of the Saudi law, making it mandatory to deputee one assistant for every hundred pilgrims.

On the incomplete briefing of the ministry, the audit objections related to the accounts of the ministry were refused. "I possess videos showing problems faced by Pakistani pilgrims," said the PAC chairman, adding that in one of the videos, the minister for religious



RAWALPINDI: A traffic police personnel placing a helmet on the head of a biker at Murree Road, during road safety campaign. — Online

2 involved in illegal trade of rare bird species held

By our correspondent ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) has conducted raids and rescued rose-ringed parakeets, alexandrine parakeets, and rare black partridges, which are protected species under Wildlife Conservation Laws. According to the IWMB, two individuals have been apprehended on the spot for their involvement in the illegal trade of protected bird species and legal proceedings against them are currently underway. The wildlife experts have opined that black partridges are not endangered species. However, their sale is prohibited under the Islamabad Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Ordinance, 1979. Parakeets can easily live just as long of a life in captivity as they could out in the wild. It all depends upon the quality of care and hygiene maintenance that is provided to them. They said price of a partridge in black market is determined on the basis of different types of notes it chirps in a quick succession. The price tag normally ranges between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 1.5 million. The poachers also sell black partridges on high prices due to their demand especially in rural areas of Sindh and the Punjab. Local elders hold chirping competitions of black partridges. These competitions are arranged with different names in various parts of the country, like somewhere this competition is named as 'Chakriyan' and in some areas 'Boliyan'. They said the Punjab government has, unfortunately, allowed the hunters to hunt or poach partridges on Sundays across the 40 tehsils of the province. "The Margalla Hills National Park is also a natural habitat of black partridges. The traders sell them mostly through online websites so the ministry of information technology must keep vigil over their illegal activities," they said.

NCSW gears up to implement 'Women on Wheels'

By Myra Imran

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Nilofar Bakhtiar on Monday said that under Prime Minister Women Empowerment Initiative, the Commission will implement the distribution of 22,000 scooties and establishment of 220 day cares in public sector organisations across the country.

Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar said that implementation of these projects titled 'Women on Wheels' and 'Establishment of Day Care for Working Women in Public Sector Organisations Across the Country' respectively, will start soon and will address some of the most crucial needs of working women. These projects are part of the Prime Minister's initiative in which Rs5 billion has been allocated to the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) to undertake projects relating to Women's Empowerment. While sharing details, Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar said that the Commission would establish 220 day

cares in the first phase, and 220 more would be established in the second phase of the implementation. She said that hospitals and educational institutions will be the priority in the first phase. "According to implementation plan, there will be no construction involved in establishing these centres. The space would be provided by the organisation or the department. The Commission will provide the furniture, staff and other necessities and will run the centres for two year before handing it over to the

mother department," she said. Regarding distribution of scooties, the chairperson said that the process would be completely transparent and working women in the age bracket of 18 to 55 years, belonging to both public and private sectors, would be able to apply for the scheme. To implement both the initiatives, the Commission plans to form a steering committee and local committees besides establishing a Digital App for monitoring of the projects.

Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar was addressing a media interaction organised in collaboration with UNFPA. The interaction was aimed at sharing the work of NCSW and discussing the ways to engage media for promotion and protection of women rights. Journalists from print, electronic and digital media participated in the meeting and presented their suggestions to improve NCSW and media engagement for promotion and protection of women rights. "Mainstreaming gender related

news plays a catalytic role in achieving gender equality in Pakistan," said the chairperson. Nilofar Bakhtiar also shared the highlights of the research reports published by the Commission during her tenure. She briefed the participants about the National Media Fellowship program of the Commission and said that the second phase of media fellowships will be advertised in next 15 days under which journalists will be trained on ethical and impactful reporting on women rights.

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS CARRIAGE FACTORY ISLAMABAD
CORRIGENDUM
No. JC/F/4/PUR.C/0001/EC 2023-2024 dated 08-07-2023.

Sr#	Tender Number	Description of Material	Due Date for Opening
1.	ICFI/4P/0539/2023	Repair, Rectification, Commissioning, Testing & Successful operation of Over Head Cables etc. - 02 Items	29-07-2023

It is notified for the interested parties that the subject noted tender which was advertised in daily newspapers like Dunya and The News, Respected Labour & Karachi under PID (I) No. 156/23 also uploaded on Pakistan Railways & PPRRA website at S.No. 3 of tender notice is hereby amended/corrected in respect of Tender number and description which may read as under:

For: Existing
Read: Tender No. JC/F/4P/0669/2020 for Hoisting control Unit and Commissioning of Crane - 02 Items

All other terms and conditions of Tenders will remain unchanged.
This advertisement/Corrigendum is also available on following websites:-
www.pprra.org.pk & www.prd.gov.pk

(IGRA LATIF)
Assistant Controller of Purchase
For Managing Director
RAILWAY CARRIAGE FACTORY ISLAMABAD

PID(I)180-23

Bank of Khyber
TENDER NOTICE

Bank of Khyber invites bids from firms/companies for following tenders. Bidders must be KPRA registered.

Tender No BOK/PROC/OPS/25/July/2023: Procurement of solution for Trade Based Money Laundering (TBML) under KPRA rules for goods and non-consulting services, Single stage two envelope under framework contract for three years Service Level Agreement, compliance of State Bank of Pakistan FE Circular # 04 Dated 14-Oct-2019 for Managing Risks of Trade Based Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

Pre-Bid Meeting : 18 July 2023 at 11:00 AM
Last Date for Submission : 26 July 2023 at 11:00 AM
Tender Opening Date : 26 July 2023 at 11:30 AM

Retender No BOK/PROC/DBG/26/July/2023: Procurement for establishment of Bank's own Card Production Unit at Gulberg Green Islamabad under KPRA rules for goods, non consulting services single stage two envelope under frame contract for three years Service Level Agreement.

Pre-Bid Meeting : 18 July 2023 at 3:00 PM
Last Date for Submission : 26 July 2023 at 3:00 PM
Tender Opening Date : 26 July 2023 at 3:30 PM

All mandatory requirements, specifications and terms and conditions are mentioned in the bidding documents. Interested bidder may collect BID Document(s) from the office of the Head Procurement Division, Bank of Khyber Head Office, Ground Floor, 24 The Mall Peshawar Cantt., or by sending an email request at tender@bok.com.pk. Bid Document will be provided free of cost.

All bids must be delivered as per schedule mentioned above against tender to:

Head Procurement Division
Bank of Khyber,
BOK Tower, Ground Floor 24 The Mall, Peshawar Cantt. 091-7227020
021-111265 265 www.bok.com.pk /BankofKhyber

Ruling coalition has lost its bearings due to PTI's popularity

PTI spokesperson says Sharif family and its followers were punished by court

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Monday said that the rising popularity of PTI Imran Khan petrified the crooked ruling group due to which it lost its senses and it was evident from their courtiers' news conferences one after another. He regretted these news conferences against what he claimed the most respected and popular leader of the country. He was reacting to Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb's press conference earlier in the day. The absurd and senseless talk of the Sharifs' courtier (Mariyum), he alleged, was a proof of her being mentally ill. The spokesperson said that after being proved to be corrupt and liars, this group has also lost its vision and intellect.

The spokesperson said that the fast increasing popularity of Imran Khan had made the 13-party group lost its senses and those, who were unleashing scathing attacks on state institutions especially the army and the judiciary and till recent past were now falsely portraying themselves to be the guardians and protectors of their sanity for the sake of their petty personal political interests. He made it clear that the Sharif family and its followers were punished by the court in corruption cases and not for the gratification of anyone's personal ego,

adding that the corruption stories of Sharif mafia were known all over the world. The spokesperson said that the cowardly leader of a gang of criminals who escaped on Rs50 stamp was afraid of returning to Pakistan even in his brother's government. He went on to say that the family slaves of the Sharifs come forward every day with new lies and resorted to verbal abuse to secure their jobs. The spokesperson said that those who called the country's most popular and beloved leader as a foreign agent, they should tell the nation at least as to when the

fugitive proclaim offender and fugitive leader would return from London. Meanwhile, commenting on Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif's desire that the general election may be held in November, as the weather would be hot in October, the spokesperson said that as a matter of fact, 2018 general election were held in July but a minister of a puppet regime, feared hot weather in October. "Even if they take part in elections in chilly December, their skulls would be boiling. To turn this heat in cold is not the cup of tea of PDM component parties," he maintained.

ATC rejects Shehryar Afridi's bail plea in GHQ attack case

RAWALPINDI: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Rawalpindi on Monday rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shehryar Afridi's bail plea in the GHQ attack case. While rejecting his plea the ATC judge Hamid Hussain extended Afridi's judicial remand in GHQ attack case till July 24. The court also directed IO to submit a challan in the next hearing. The former federal minister was taken into custody from Islamabad's Sector F-8 under Section 3 of Maintenance of Public Order (3MPO). — PPI

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR RAILWAY ESTATE DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING COMPANY (REDAMCO)

Ministry of Railways is offering opportunity to well-qualified and experienced professionals to work in the subsidiary company of Pakistan Railways mentioned above. This position is available for appointment on contract basis for a period of three years.

S#.	Description of Post	No. of Posts	Salary/ Pay Package	Required Educational Qualification & Experience	Age Limit
1.	Chief Executive Officer, Railway Estate Development & Marketing Company (REDAMCO)	01	Market Based/Negotiable	Qualification: MBA / MPA / B.E / Master's degree in relevant subjects, such as Economics, Social Sciences, or equivalent from HEC recognized university. Experience: An overall experience of 20 years on Senior Management and Leadership positions. Experience in various aspects of Real Estate Management such as Financing, Sales, Licensing and Leasing etc. would be an added advantage.	Max: 62 Years

- The Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association provide guidelines for the nature of assignment. These may be reviewed on Ministry of Railways' website.
- The appointment will be on contract basis initially for a period of three (03) years further extendable for a maximum period of two (02) years on annual basis subject to satisfactory performance.
- Job Description, Eligibility Criteria and terms & conditions can be seen on our websites i.e www.pakrail.gov.pk and www.railways.gov.pk
- Candidates who fulfill above requisite educational qualification criteria and experience are requested to apply on website of National Job Portal i.e njp.gov.pk within fifteen days from the date of advertisement in newspapers.
- Only short-listed candidates shall be called for interview.

Director Establishment
Ministry of Railways
Islamabad
Ph: 051-9203068

PID (I) 174-23

EXTENSION

Reference to our Press Tender and Extension Notices published in national newspapers on 19.05.2023 and 20.06.2023, it is notified that the bids submission/opening date is extended as follows:

Sr#	Tender Enquiry No.	Description	From	To
1.	OGDCL-SCM-FD-CB-RMD-206478767-2023	GEO MODELLING SOFTWARE	DATE: 11-07-2023 SUBMISSION: 11:00 Hrs OPENING: 11:30 Hrs	DATE: 25-07-2023 SUBMISSION: 11:00 Hrs OPENING: 11:30 Hrs

2. Bid submission/opening time and all other terms & conditions shall remain unchanged.

3. Bidders are requested to contact Manager Supply Chain Management (SCM) Foreign at Phone # +92-51-92002-3652 for further queries / information.

4. This advertisement is also available on PPRRA website at www.pprra.org.pk and OGDCL website at www.ogdcl.com.

GENERAL MANAGER (SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT)
OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
OGDCL House, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad, Pakistan, Phone No. 92-51-920023540, Fax No. 92-51-9244139

LARGEST TAX PAYER COMPANY OF THE NATION WE EXPLORE PROSPERITY

TENDER NOTICE
RAWALPINDI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (RCCI)
CONSTRUCTION OF DISPLAY CENTER FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, SMES AND COTTAGE INDUSTRY

1. Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, RCCI (The Employer) hereby invites sealed bids on "Single Stage Two Envelop" procedure for "Construction of Display Center for Women Entrepreneurs SMEs and Cottage Industry at Mayo Road, Civil Lines, Rawalpindi" from experienced, reputable, and eligible Construction Firms / Developers with valid license of Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) for the year 2023 / 24 in category "C-3 and Above" for the following scope of work:

2. The Scope of Work to be performed consist of construction of Building and Infrastructure which includes Civil Work (Grey Structure only including Plaster, Electrical conduiting, Plumbing Piping and Fittings) and deployment of all necessary Material, Labor (s), Formwork, Tools & Machinery for execution of these works.

3. Bidding Documents are available from the publication of this advertisement and can be obtained from the address given below any day before the submission date during office hours upon submission written request on the firm's letter head and payment of non-refundable fee amounting to PKR 10,000/- (Ten Thousand) in the form of CDR/Pay order/ Demand Draft in the favor of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The same can also be downloaded from PPRRA website (www.pprra.org.pk), however, in such a case, bank draft amounting to Rs. 10,000/- (non-refundable) in favor of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry should be submitted along with Bid Submission.

4. The Tender Documents prepared in accordance with the instructions must reach at office of President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), 39A Mayo Road, Civil Lines, Rawalpindi on or before 1st August, 2023 no later than 10:30 am PST. Tender proposals (Technical bid) will be opened on the same day at 11:00 am PST.

PRESIDENT
RAWALPINDI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (RCCI)
39A Mayo Road, Civil Lines, Rawalpindi, Pakistan
Ph: +92 (0) 51 111 722 475, Email: rccli@rccli.org.pk

Part - I

Abdul Sattar

A perpetual identity crisis

Literary terms or concepts like 'mimicry' cannot be understood without some knowledge about colonialism and its impacts on developing countries, especially those in the Global South.

Prominent Arab intellectual and literary critic Edward Said believes that the modern world cannot be understood without delving into the topic of colonialism — which postcolonial intellectual Frantz Fanon, the author of 'The Wretched of the Earth' describes as "inherently destructive".

Fanon asserts that Western colonialism destroyed the identities of those who were colonized, dealing a severe blow to their prestige and self-respect. It also damaged their cultures, traditions and languages creating a sense of inferiority.

For instance, if we want to know why the elite in countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other British colonies prefer English over their languages, we will have to go back to the colonial history of those occupied colonies. Similarly, if one wants to know why almost all countries of South and Central America except Brazil speak Spanish then again, we will have to study Western expansionism in various parts of the world.

No effort to understand the dominance of Portuguese in

Brazil and other parts of the world is possible without peeping into the gargantuan appetite of the Portuguese ruling elite determined to subjugate the world.

The ascendancy of Spanish, English and French in North America and some parts of Canada could also be linked to this phenomenon of colonialism. According to famous American historian Howard Zinn, the author of 'A People's History of America', around 75 million indigenous people of South, Central and North America would speak 2000 languages before the arrival of Western people in 1492.

Many of these languages perished, so did the 90 per cent population of the indigenous people. It may be mentioned that some indigenous authors put the total population at 120 million while many independent historians believe it was 50-60 million. In the same way, the history of colonialism could serve as a key to understanding the presence of black Africans in these regions. Many historians assert that 12 million black Africans were brought to these regions, but Zinn contradicts it claiming 50 million of them were brought to these areas in shackles.

This long introduction is important because the impact of Western colonialism has been so profound that not only is it

difficult to carry out an effective critique of postcolonial literature without this history but modern-day conflicts and socio-economic situations of the Global South are also linked to our insight into colonialism. Jared Diamond, the author of 'Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies' asserts that before the Industrial Revolution 35 per cent of the world was already under the control of Western colonial

Western ways of life and feel shame in their culture and traditions. According to Masood, "Mimicry is frequently invoked with reference to the 'been-to,' someone who has travelled to the West, and then returned 'home,' seemingly completely transformed."

Citing Fanon's work, Masood says, "Frantz Fanon mocked the affected pretentiousness of Martinican 'been-tos' in 'Black Skin, White Masks', and the cultural

Western ways of life and feel shame in their culture and traditions. According to Masood, "Mimicry is frequently invoked with reference to the 'been-to,' someone who has travelled to the West, and then returned 'home,' seemingly completely transformed."

Citing Fanon's work, Masood says, "Frantz Fanon mocked the affected pretentiousness of Martinican 'been-tos' in 'Black Skin, White Masks', and the cultural

tries and adopted their culture and traditions. Successive generations of these aristocrats inherited this trend of copying their masters from their ancestors.

But Homi K Bhabha came up with a different definition of 'mimicry'. For him it is not as bad as one would like to imagine. Bhabha explains that mimicry is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas, thus mimicry is repetition with difference. Mimicry is also one response to the circulation of stereotypes. Bhabha's analysis of mimicry in his essay 'Of Mimicry and Man' is largely based on the Lacanian vision of mimicry as camouflage resulting in colonial ambivalence.

He sees the colonizer as a snake in the grass who speaks in "a tongue that is forked", and produces a mimetic representation that "... emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge."

According to a research paper of Yulis Setyowati of Wijaya Putra University, "In post-colonial studies 'mimicry' is considered as unsettling imitations that are characteristic of post-colonial cultures." Setyowati says that Bhabha's definition of colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable 'Other', as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite."

Bhabha is considered the foremost contemporary critic who has tried to unveil the contradictions inherent in colonial discourse to highlight the colonizer's ambivalence with respect to his attitude towards the colonized Other and vice versa. Bhabha believes that the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.

Analyzing Bhabha's theory described in Japanese author Tanizaki's novel 'Naomi', Setyowati says, "Naomi or Chijin no Ai (literally A Fool's love) tells the heroine Naomi who looks like the Western actress Mary Pickford and is trained to behave like a Westerner ... Naomi is described as 'Western-looking'."

She believes that this paradigm involves a complex and varied cultural contact, interaction and counter-globalization movements. It may be said that some critics like Robert Young assert that when two different cultures meet at the beginning, one of them dominates another with their superiority and finally becomes a new culture and civilization.

For them it leads to the civilization of a 'new modern culture' but Bhabha describes those circumstances as 'mimicry' and 'hybridity'.

To be continued

The writer is a freelance journalist who can be reached at: egalitarianism44@gmail.com

Not only did colonial powers carry out ruthless genocides and plunder in the colonies, they also radically changed the identities of people, transforming their culture by annihilating national languages or relegating them to a lower status. This created a sense of inferiority, forcing them to consider their masters to be superior

powers. Such control extended to 85 per cent by 1945.

Not only did these colonial powers carry out ruthless genocides and plundering in the colonies, they also radically changed the identities of people, transforming their culture by annihilating national languages or relegating them to a lower status.

This created a sense of inferiority, forcing them to consider their masters superior and prompting them to make efforts that could elevate their status in society. One of the ways to attain

other members of his or her group for doing so ... Though mimicry is a very important concept in thinking about the relationship between colonizing and colonized peoples, and many people have historically been derided as mimics or mimic-men, it is interesting that almost no one ever describes themselves as positively engaged in mimicry: it is always something that someone else is doing."

Fanon was extremely sarcastic about folks who forget their cultures and identities, adopting

confusion of the been-to Nyasha (and her family) in Tsitsi Dangarembga's 'Nervous Conditions' is one of the central issues in that novel. Characters in 'Nervous Conditions' who have not had the same experience of travel in the West find the desire of those who have returned to impose their English values, language, and religion on everyone else bewildering and offensive."

This definition applies to feudal and aristocrats of India and other parts of the world who visited their colonial masters' coun-

Repairing ties

Maheen Shafeeq



Since the start of trade wars between the US and China in 2018, the two sides have plunged into a competitive rivalry often quoted as 'Cold War II' or 'New Cold War' by analysts.

However, unlike the cold war, the two sides are trying to manage their rivalry. Since last year, the two sides have been attempting to resolve their tensions. The US National Security Strategy of October 2022 and the meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Bali in November 2022 marked the turn of events in US-China relations.

Recently, two important meetings between the US and Chinese top officials made the headlines. The first meeting was between US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs Commission and member of the Chinese Politburo Wang Yi in Vienna on May 10-11, 2023.

The salient features of the meeting were a constructive and candid discussion over bilateral, regional and global security issues. The purpose of the meeting was to sustain the vital means of strategic communication and build on engagements between US President Biden and Chinese President Xi in Bali in November 2022.

This revealed that despite raging tech and trade competition and challenges in US-China bilateral relations, the two sides intend to lower tensions through dialogue and diplomacy. It is critical to note that the two sides want to continue talks to manage the friction.

The second meeting was between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Wang Yi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang in China on June 18-19, 2023. Similar to the previous meeting, the two sides had a candid, substantive and constructive discussion on addressing bilateral, regional and global issues. The purpose of the meeting was to construct the talks further to maintain communication channels and reduce miscalculation risks.

This is significant as during an unexpected crisis, the two sides must have open channels of communication to avoid miscommunication. For the US

and China, it could be a crisis across the Taiwan Strait, the Pacific Ocean, the South China Sea, or in China or in areas of bilateral trade policies as observed during trade wars.

While the US remains committed to out-competing China, the two sides have managed to change their rivalry to an under-control competition. During the meeting, US and Chinese officials, despite the competition, wanted to cooperate to address shared transnational challenges such as climate change, food security, public health, global macroeconomic stability and counter-narcotics. Secretary Blinken invited his Chinese counterparts to Washington, and the two sides agreed on further high-level engagements.

Spoilers usually become active and alert to disrupt the process when two opponents are about to mend ways. This was observed when Secretary Blinken was scheduled to visit Beijing

Although chances of peace remain low under an increasingly hostile India, Pakistan and India may attempt to catch the low-hanging fruit and open channels of formal communication

in February, but the trip was postponed over the weather balloon incident, which was recently refuted as suspected of collecting intelligence. As the two major powers are on the way to building a collaborative environment, there are likely chances that spoilers who are gaining from the US-China rivalry will become active. It will be up to Washington and Beijing to manage relations maturely under such circumstances as they have done recently.

Peace among major powers is important for global stability. Russia's war in Ukraine is an example of how a regional rivalry of a major power can impact on the global scale.

Similarly, if the US-China competition veers into a conflict, it could be detrimental for international peace and political economy. This will push states to take sides in a multipolar world, accentuating bloc and camp politics.

Therefore, the timely measures by the Biden administration to manage the competition is an important tenet of current global peace.

Pakistan and India could draw important lessons from how the US and China manage their rivalry. The Modi government has adopted inflexible and warmongering policies towards Pakistan. Even though the US and China are not in close proximity as Pakistan and India, the two states are working towards developing channels of strategic communication, and efforts are being made to address possible miscalculations.

In contrast, such communication channels between India and Pakistan have been cut off. The two sides are actively building military power with the support of their close allies; inadvertent escalation and miscalculations are inevitable. Pakistan acted maturely during the BrahMos crisis; however, in case of another miscalculated action like it, a befitting response from Pakistan should be expected. As elections in India draw closer (May 2024), miscalculated measures towards Pakistan in order to appease people for votes could be expected as a usual practice of the Modi government.

Although chances of peace remain low under an increasingly hostile and stubborn India, the two sides may attempt to catch the low-hanging fruit and open channels of formal and high-level communication. It is also important that, like the US and China, the two sides note down areas of cooperation, such as climate change, public health, counterterrorism, public health and cross-border trade.

Instead of developing conducive multilateral economic and connectivity structures within the region where it has to survive, India is looking outside the region for economic collaborations, such as BRICS and G20, while negating the SCO platform for regional connectivity.

As neighbouring countries with several historical, cultural and religious linkages, it would be prudent for the Pakistan and India governments to have open communication channels to manage relations cautiously — like the US and China are doing despite their differences.

The writer is a research analyst in emerging technologies and international security. She tweets @MaheenShafeeq



The quest for immortality

Mir Adnan Aziz

The quest for immortality has been as timeless as it has been fruitless. First recorded over 4000 years ago on the Babylonian Tablets, it narrates the tale of King Gilgamesh of Uruk. His recorded lament reads: "Then I was afraid that I too would die". Ishtar, the mythical goddess of love, urges him to be content with his mortal life and "regard the little one who takes thy hand and the wife happy against thy bosom". Unheeding, Gilgamesh turns his back on family and friends in a futile search for eternal life.

Transcending ages, a young Bertrand Russell would refer to Earth bitterly as "the petty planet on which our bodies impotently crawl" adding "brief and powerless is man's life, on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark". Today, this dread sees some amongst the ultra-rich besotted with visions of immortality. Sensing a once in a (mortal) life opportunity, the biggest names in Silicon Valley now term death a fixable glitch. By 2025, this venture shall be an over \$700 billion dollar industry.

Ray Kurzweil, AI visionary at Google, is the author of 'The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology'. He prophesies a merger of AI and biological intelligence creating immortal software-based 'humans' in a virtual civilization. Advocates of this cause can now be found in some of the most prominent universities, corporations, research laboratories and political institutions. Aubrey de Grey, a famed Cambridge gerontologist, leads the charge.

Oracle's Larry Ellison once remarked "death makes me very angry". He has donated \$430 million into research that can do away with the source of his anger. Google co-founder Larry Page found and funded Calico with \$750 million to "solve the death problem". PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel sees death as "the great enemy". His Breakout Labs funds the drive for immortality.

Azanson Chairman Jeff Bezos and Russian billionaire Yuri Milner invested in Altos Labs, a \$3 billion dollar biotechnology company working to alter life detriments. Elon Musk is funding a Neuralink project to merge minds and machines. Russian billionaire Dmitry Itskov's 2045-Initiative seeks to

achieve immortality with avatars replacing humans. Into the creation of his own avatar, Itskov envisages thousands of life years for himself.

Max More, a philosopher and futurist, owns Alcor, one of the largest cryonics facilities. Here, "death can be paused" as bodies and brains are preserved at minus 196 degrees centigrade to supposedly rejoin humanity after reanimation. These frantic forays have spawned the most bizarre. Apps like LivesOn now offer social media presence after death. Based on past data, it offers to generate postmortem tweets with the surreal claim "When your heart stops beating, you'll keep tweeting".

With humans creating stone tools two million years ago, evolution spread over millennia, is an ex-

Looking up to the stars is a quality innate to humankind; keeping our responsibilities, boundaries and collective wellbeing in mind is equally imperative

tremely slow, arduous and a complex process. It cannot be mega turbo boosted to redesign humankind itself. This gambit has some like historian Yuval Harari prophesying in his 'Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow' that homosapiens shall soon be replaced by homodeus or man-god. Once in a while a destructive calamity or a seemingly innocuous microorganism morphing into a devastating pandemic tries to show us our limitations. Yet, we remain beholden to the illusion that we are the masters who can force nature into submission.

Nick Bostrom, professor at Oxford University, is a leading transhumanist philosopher. He writes in his bestselling 'Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies' that true AI, if realized, shall pose a danger that exceeds all known threats. His stark warning: "if a super-intelligent machine's development is not managed carefully, humanity risks engineering its own extinction". Stephen Hawking, ever sceptical of runaway

AI, wrote in his last book, 'Brief Answers to Big Questions': "Super-intelligent AI will be extremely good at accomplishing its goals and if those goals aren't aligned with ours we're in trouble".

As a species, we have proven to be the most reckless and irresponsible, be it something seemingly as mundane as a cigarette which causes over 7 million deaths annually, industrial emissions ravaging our planet or the chilling specter of a nuclear winter. Eight billion humans make up a mere 0.01 per cent of Earth's biomass; viruses and worms each weigh three times more. Yet, we are enabling the sixth mass extinction, the only one by human activity, occurring in our planet's four-billion-year history. Despite knowing that extinction of even a single species creates a negative ecological shift, our recklessness remains unbounded.

A WWF report reveals that in the last 50 years, 83 per cent of wild mammals and half the plants have been lost; one million animals and plant species face extinction. A UNESCO study found that "the rate of species extinction over the past 50 years is at least tens to hundreds of times higher than averaged over the past 10 million years".

In our own backyard, the Hindu Kush Himalaya glaciers, a source of water for two billion people, are melting 65 per cent faster than the previous decade. Experts warn that without immediate remedial measures, 80 per cent of these glaciers shall be gone by the end of this century.

Looking up to the stars is a quality innate to humankind; keeping our responsibilities, boundaries and collective wellbeing in mind is equally imperative. When famed astrophysicist Carl Sagan saw the famous earth photograph taken by Voyager 1 in 1990, he poignantly described it as "The Pale Blue Dot; a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam". He wrote: "To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known".

As for those craving immortality, novelist Susan Ertz was spot on when she wrote: "Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon".

The writer is a freelance contributor. He can be reached at: miradnanaziz@gmail.com

Will the Ukraine war end?

Ron Jacobs

When certain lines are crossed, the nature of other things becomes clearer. Providing cluster bombs to the Ukrainian military is such a rubicon. The pretense that the Nato sponsored forces have some kind of moral high ground in their conflict with Moscow is fading quickly.

Even retired Vermont senator Patrick Leahy together with current senator Jeff Merkley acknowledged as much in a recent opinion piece in the newspaper of the warfare state, the Washington Post (7/8/2023). Neither of these men oppose the US involvement in the conflict, but providing a weapon banned by most governments in the world is too much for these humanitarian warmongers.

Historically, the first cluster bomb in the United States was developed in the 1950s by Ralph M Parsons Company. Its identity number was E86 and was originally developed to disperse chemical and biological agents among enemy populations during war. After chemical and biological warfare fell out of favor with those servants of

Mars who plan wars, the concept was modified so that the bombs would explode in the air.

The explosion releases hundreds of bomblets which fall to the ground, creating a sort of minefield. The primary type being sent to Ukraine is the Mk 20 Rocketye II, which is considered an anti-tank weapon but was used by the US military during the first US attack on Iraq on numerous types of targets. According to Globalsecurity.org, US Marines used the weapon extensively against armor, artillery, and personnel targets. The remainder were dropped by Air Force and Navy aircraft. (accessed 7/8/2023)

The alleged use of cluster bombs by Russian troops has been called a war crime by some politicians in the global north. In fact, then-White House press secretary Jen Psaki called Russia's alleged use of cluster munitions a potential 'war crime' in March 2022. I don't disagree. These charges must now also be applied to Kyiv's government and the government in Washington, DC.

Any other NATO regime approving this move should also be put on notice. One of the primary reasons liberal human rights organizations and the United Nations support the ban on

cluster bombs is because, like underground mines, the bomblets remain deadly for years after a war ends. No one removes the explosives from the former battlefields, which means they can (and do) kill civilians well after a military conflicts is over.

The victims of these random explosions are often children. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that in Laos alone, 9 to 27 million unexploded bomblets remain, causing death or injury to at least 11,000 people, with over 30 percent of them children.

I wrote several months ago that the Ukraine-Russia-Nato conflict did not meet the criterion for what is called a just war. The primary reason I wrote this is because the hoped for ends of this war do not justify the means used to achieve those ends. This applies to all military participants in the conflict — government troops, mercenaries and so-called foreign volunteers. The addition of cluster bombs to the Nato/Kyiv arsenal puts an exclamation point on my statement.

Excerpted: 'Let's Be Clear, Cluster Bombs are an Escalation'. Courtesy: Counterpunch.org

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Secure borders

Only in these first 11 days of July, one Pakistan Army major has been martyred, three soldiers and as many civilians critically injured, and three police officials and a Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel martyred in separate terror incidents. It will thus not be an exaggeration to say that the terror menace is back, a particularly alarming situation for a country that has over the years lost tens of thousands to militant attacks; many more have had to live with the sorrow and anger of losing their loved ones. The hope this time around though is that, since parliamentarians and the military have categorically stated that talking to terrorists only ends up strengthening them, helping them gain ground and organize more robustly, the state in its entirety has recognized the threat posed by a resurgent TTP. Just a few months back, the army's top brass had also vowed to hunt down terrorists through a 'whole-of-the-system' approach to eradicate the permissive factors of terrorism, extremism and instability in the country.

One of the most important factors in the increased terror threat in the country is the TTP finding safe haven in Afghanistan. In this context, Pakistan has been pressing on the Afghan Taliban to tackle the TTP threat on their side of the border so that Pakistan can manage its counterterror strategies on its own soil more effectively. There has now also been acknowledgement on the part of the Pakistani authorities of the steps being taken by the Afghan Taliban regime to counter cross-border terrorism. Pakistan has called the Afghan government's relocation of TTP militants from border areas a significant development, saying that the Afghans had made efforts to address the terror concerns of Pakistan and its neighbours, including China, but that it is a bit premature to speculate further. The signs though are good. It is a fact that the new wave of terrorism that has gripped the country started soon after the fall of Kabul in August 2021. This was something security experts in Pakistan had been warning the previous Imran Khan-led government. Security observers had also warned that, while the Pakistan government may have wanted to give peace a chance, the TTP has consistently signalled its lack of interest in peace. Back then, these questions – and more – were asked but not answered by the PTI government. For example, if TTP members were being resettled, what were the terms and conditions of these negotiations? If the negotiations did not succeed in the end – and that was what happened eventually – would the state not have ceded enough space and time for the TTP to have regrouped and strengthened?

It is thus much-needed encouraging news that the Afghan Taliban are taking steps to neutralize the TTP and moving the terror group away from the Afghan areas bordering Pakistan. Our government authorities have said that pockets of TTP, ETIM, and other groups are a source of concern and that both Pakistan and China are hopeful that the Afghan government will take practical measures in this regard. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, if terrorism is to be truly eliminated, it is vital that the government follow through on all planks of the National Action Plan, from displaying zero-tolerance for extremism from any group to better harnessing our intelligence resources as a preventative measure. Winning on the battlefield alone will not be sufficient either. To prevent new militant threats from rising up, it is their divisive ideology which must be discredited. This is an uphill task, but it is not impossible. With an Afghan regime that does not dither from providing cooperation in counterterror strategies, and a Pakistani state willing to counter the entire terror threat, this battle can be won finally.

Population and gender equality

The theme for this year's World Population Day – which falls today (July 11) – is 'Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities'. The theme recognizes the crucial link between empowering women and girls and resolving demographic problems and how discussions about population issues often ignore women despite this link. The UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) 2023 State of World Population report recognizes that both narratives that problematize overpopulation and under-population run the risk of violating women's choices and their reproductive rights. While in Pakistan we often hear about the many problems that overpopulation causes, globally the era of population growth is approaching its peak due to declining fertility rates among women.

In the early 1970s, women had on average 4.5 children each, but in 2023 fertility rates have declined to around 2.3 children per woman, according to the UN. This dramatic change in fertility rates has been made possible by empowering women in terms of their reproductive rights, giving them greater control over how many children they chose to have and when. However, Pakistan is somewhat of an outlier when it comes to this trend. While fertility rates in the country have declined, from 6.8 children per woman in 1960 to 3.3 children per woman in 2023, the current fertility rate means our population is projected to double in just 35 years, according to the UN Population Fund's World Population Dashboard. This is more than twice as fast as the dashboard's projected global population annual doubling time of 76 years.

This rate of increase will put added pressure on our already strained state resources. It is highly unlikely that we will manage to double the amount of food, energy, jobs and water available to us in just 35 years. Furthermore, the current population growth rate is likely driven by the lack of reproductive rights among Pakistani women. According to the World Population Dashboard, the unmet need for family planning rate among women aged 15-49 in Pakistan is at 11 per cent, compared to a global rate of 9.0 per cent. Any strategy that seeks to deal with our population challenges will thus have to overcome the gap when it comes to access to family planning and contraception in Pakistan. This not only means addressing the shortcomings in our healthcare networks but also doing more in terms of challenging cultural attitudes and norms that stigmatize family planning and value having more children even at the expense of women's reproductive choices.

A decade of CPEC

In recent times, hardly has any other strategy or initiative gained any such global limelight than Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The US's Build Back Better World (B3W)/Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and the EU Global Gateway are concrete instances of how the world has responded to counter the rising global role and influence of China.

There is hardly a policy think tank or academic institute across the globe that has remained disinterested in the enterprise. On account of massive enthusiasm for the subject, one study asserts that in China alone "the BRI-related publications increased by nearly 30,000 in 2018". To a large extent, similar has been the case with one artery of the BRI in Pakistan – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is one of the most discussed subjects in universities, think tanks and in business circles and the media.

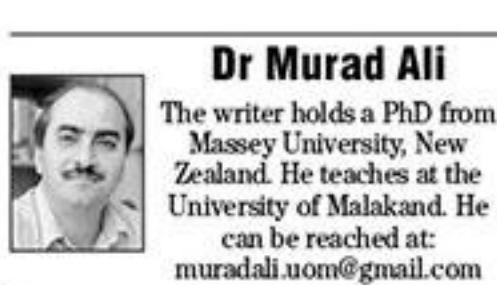
In her study 'The Words of the Belt and Road Initiative: A Chinese Discourse for the World?', C M Costa has appropriately stated that the Chinese initiative has "turned into a global hot academic and media topic". One study claims that in China alone, "the BRI-related publications increased by nearly 30,000 in 2018", including probably media reports otherwise these figures seem quite exaggerated. What I want to emphasize here is that the BRI (globally) and CPEC (to some extent globally but mostly regionally or locally) have remained at the centre of attention, although the intensity of interest has been waning of late.

Both Pakistan and China have identified the benefits of the corridor and its achievements to date and hence have decided to celebrate a decade of CPEC this month, including a planned international conference in Islamabad. I am in Germany on a short research fellowship, working on my book on BRI/CPEC at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn, thanks to my researcher collaborator Professor Stephan Klingebiel, who is an eminent expert in the field of transnational development cooperation.

I participated in a workshop '10 years of BRI – learning processes, policy adaptations and managing complexity', organized jointly by University of Bonn and Academy of International Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). While a lot of issues were discussed during the seminar where experts and Sinologists from several countries participated, including from Taiwan and mainland China, there was also this feeling that the West is on the path of 'de-risking' – a mere euphemistic impression and a soft version of 'decoupling'.

One PhD scholar showed how Sino-EU cooperation in the area of space mission and space technology has come to halt during the last several years. In addition to space technology, there are several other areas such as AI, biotechnology and information technology where the West has been on the course of 'de-risking' (read: decoupling). Sad for the growth of science and technology and for the greater benefit of humanity indeed.

The problem with the US and by extension the larger Western world is that it has been looking at the BRI primarily from geopolitical lenses. In his book, 'The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict between the US and Xi Jinping's China', former prime minister of Australia Kevin Rudd argues that an "armed conflict between China and the United States over the next decade, while not yet probable, has become a real possibility". He is not alone to predict such a catastrophic scenario of the Sino-US bilateral ties, there is a long list of American writers. During the seminar, a US-based Chinese professor told me



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that you will rarely come across such warmongering from Chinese leadership and people in academia. The US is always obsessed with the idea of war, he stated. And perhaps, no other writer can sum it better than the great Kishore Mahbubani, Singaporean diplomat and author of several books, whose parents lived and grew up in pre-partition Pakistan in Hyderabad. In his book 'The Asian 21st Century', he asserts: "The Chinese have, for instance, avoided unnecessary wars. Unlike the United States, which is blessed with two nonthreatening neighbors in Canada and Mexico, China has difficult relations with a number of strong, nationalistic neighbors, including India, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam. Quite remarkably, of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom), China is the only one among them that has not fired a single military shot across its border in 30 years...By contrast, even during the relatively peaceful Obama Administration, the American military dropped 26 thousand bombs on seven countries in a single year".

To be certain, CPEC is not a hollow narrative or a mere slogan as it has real and tangible impacts. Recently, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin stated in a press conference in Beijing that

There is plenty to celebrate the decade of CPEC as without any doubt both governments, despite security and political challenges as well as the Covid pandemic, have made significant progress

CPEC has attracted about \$24.5 billion since it was initiated. He added that CPEC projects have generated about 192,000 jobs, added 6,000 MW of power, constructed 510 km highways, and expanded the national power transmission network by 886 km. Several government documents corroborate such statements. Also, among the six economic corridors envisioned under the BRI, CPEC has made tremendous progress as numerous projects worth \$25 billion have been executed in energy, infrastructure, and industrial sectors.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22, out of the total 56 projects currently underway, "26 projects worth approximately US\$17 billion have been completed so far and 30 projects worth US\$8.5 billion are under construction". Similarly, another 36 projects of about \$28.4 billion are stated to be in the pipeline. However, there is also a feeling that "China faces challenges in the realization of the BRI as the multiple countries along the network have different economic, political, institutional and infrastructural conditions and agendas".

In the case of CPEC, no doubt substantial progress has been made as projects have been completed across the length and breadth of Pakistan, including the first metro line in Lahore. Unfortunately, in contrast to our only Orange Metro Line in La-

hore, 15 Indian cities have metro line infrastructure.

Pakistan has not made any progress in this area, with or without CPEC. Along with the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project and other planned mass transit systems in big cities, we have prioritized roads and motorized infrastructure and the fate of several projects is still in limbo. For example, Peshawar-Karachi railway line, known as Main Line-1 (ML-1). It must be mentioned that the project had been designated a 'strategic' project by the 6th JCC meeting held in Beijing. It was stated that with completion, travel time and cost of transportation would be reduced as trains would ply at the speed of 160 km per hour. Despite several promises, there was no headway on ML-1 during the 11th JCC meeting, and the project cost has phenomenally increased with the delay. There were no words about ML-1 during the 10th JCC meeting held in September 2021, the last such summit convened via videoconference by the previous PTI-led government. Another conspicuous example is that of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam.

In sum, there is plenty to celebrate the decade of CPEC as without any doubt both governments, despite security and political challenges as well as the Covid pandemic, have made significant progress. There is a need for prior coordination, meticulous planning, and no need to rush to projects which have political capital but are financially unsustainable. Beijing and Islamabad have been working in the field of defence and security for decades and they should not find challenges in clear communication. For CPEC implementation, the formation of institutional arrangements such as Joint Working Groups (JWGs) and JCC are innovative approaches for increased consultations and coordination.

That said, both countries need to plan ahead – and plan well. In contrast to the ML-1 case in Pakistan, the development and upgradation of railways has been a key element of the BRI in several participating countries. For example, in Ethiopia, the transboundary railway between Addis Ababa and Djibouti is considered to be a prominent BRI project in the region with significant dividend. According to one study, "the railway improves efficiency by reducing the amount of time required to import goods to central Ethiopia from three days to half a day". Similarly, in Cambodia, Chinese investment in transport infrastructure has significantly reduced travel time as the mobility of local people and goods have increased domestically as well as between Cambodia and neighbouring countries through better transport networks.

The Thai case is another example which shows how to make the BRI more economically viable without venturing into the risks of 'debt-traps' by ensuring the BRI project fits in with the country's priorities in alignment and delivery. For the successful fruition of CPEC, the onus is on Pakistan to keep its house in order. For petty political gains, our politicians do not hesitate to drag China in the country's domestic politics. Such practices must not be repeated. Even if there are reservations regarding the financial aspects of certain projects, there are proper forums for that rather than to resort to mudslinging.

To make the initiative truly a game-changer, Pakistan must revisit its political and governance model – and of course its foreign policy priorities. With the existing mode of governance plagued by corruption, ineffective institutions, political instability, elite capture and mismanagement at different tiers of the government and sycophancy rather than meritocracy, it seems a daydream to see this country have a flourishing economy.

THE HOLY QURAN

And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your Befriender—a transcendent Patron, a transcendent Helper.

Surah Al-Anfal – 8, Verse – 40

Climate stability

Emily Nyrop

In June, the United States Supreme Court wrapped up the 2022-23 term much like the previous one. In late May, the court undercut the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate water pollution under the Clean Water Act. That came nearly a year after it curtailed the EPA's authority to broadly regulate emissions from power plants. This continued barrage on federal environmental regulations leaves us in a precarious spot.

"The vice in both instances is the same," Justice Elena Kagan wrote in a dissenting opinion on the water pollution ruling, "the Court's appointment of itself as the national decision-maker on environmental policy".

In April, the Biden administration proposed ambitious new regulations to reduce methane pollution, tighten fuel-efficiency standards, and curtail emissions from power plants – essential steps for slashing national emissions in half by 2030. As opponents bring new legal challenges before a sympathetic Supreme Court, we cannot assume these measures will stand.

State- and local-level leaders will be our last line of defence against judicial overreach – they must rise to the occasion and enact ambitious climate policies of their own. When groups of states leverage their collective influence, they can set de facto national policy. Fortunately, that work is well under way.

To date, 24 states have adopted concrete greenhouse gas reduction targets. An ambitious Maryland law, passed in April 2022, requires the state to slash emissions by 60 percent by 2031 and achieve net zero by 2045. Maryland will do so by systematically reducing energy consumption in large commercial buildings and investing in renewables. A new regulation that will come into effect later this year will also see the state phase out the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035.

California is another example of what individual states can accomplish: It has committed to 100 percent clean energy by 2045; appropriated billions of dollars for climate-smart agriculture and green transit infrastructure; and also set a 2035 deadline for phasing out new gasoline-powered vehicles.

State governments are amplifying the impact of their efforts by banding together. Twelve states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic have set up their own regional cap-and-trade arrangement, a market-based mechanism for reducing emissions; California and Washington have created similar systems.

Another promising coalition is the US Climate Alliance, a group of 25 states and territories representing 58 percent of US GDP, 54 percent of the population and 41 percent of national emissions. There is a real upside to this collective approach. California, for example, commands such a large share of the US automobile market that its fuel efficiency standards have been adopted by large automakers that cannot afford to ignore the state. Rather than joining a race to the bottom, California is leveraging its power to encourage greener private sector behaviour.

For an inspiring example of what individual cities can accomplish in a short time, look to Denver. In 2019, a local advocacy group got the city council's and the mayor's attention, prompting them to create a citizen climate task force. The task force recommended a 0.25 percent sales tax increase to fund climate policies, and it passed with nearly 62 percent support.

That meagre increase has transformed the city's climate budget from \$4m to roughly \$40m, allowing for programmes like e-bike rebates, vouchers for swapping gas-powered furnaces with air source heat pumps and workforce development for green jobs.

The changes are often minor in isolation but incredibly effective in aggregate – Denver is now on track to reduce emissions by 65 percent by 2030 and go carbon neutral by 2040.

Excerpted: 'The road to climate stability runs through us, not SCOTUS'. Courtesy: Aljazeera.com

News Post

Email: news.post@thenews.com.pk

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Frozen in time

Strangely, the ongoing battle between Twitter and Threads led me to ponder about how far behind the rest of the world we are as a country. It is the 21st century and countries are utilizing new technologies to produce transformative platforms that are competing for global markets. Their national discourse is centred on the merits and cons of the latest products, technologies and businesses. Will Pakistan ever produce such platforms or have a robust debate about their respective merits?

It is the 21st century and we are still dealing with and talking about the same old gas, sewerage and electricity issues. We have not moved with the times. I sincerely wish that one day we will be able to produce businesses and have debates of this kind.

Unzila Tahir Huda
Karachi

Agro revolution?

The present government appears determined to bring about an agricultural revolution in the country. It has recently inaugurated the Land Information and Management System-Centre of Excellence (LIMS-CoE) for this

purpose. The system hopes to utilize millions of acres of low-yield and uncultivated land by providing farmers with real-time data, new technologies and sustainable agricultural practices, according to reports.

There is a lot of barren land in Pakistan, including in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, which if brought under cultivation could bring about a green revolution in the country. We could go from being an importer to an exporter of agricultural commodities and solve our food security issues.

Shakir H Shamim
Skardu

Take stock

The recent desecration of the Holy Quran by an individual in Sweden has offended Muslims across the globe. Many Muslim countries took notice of the incident and are now urging the Western countries to counteract such hateful and malicious behaviour.

In the wake of increasing Islamophobic incidents, stringent measures to counter this trend need to be implemented. Multilateral bodies such as the UN will be crucial in this regard.

Abdul Moiz Dar
Gujranwala

Role reversal

This letter refers to the article "Where no questions are asked" (July 7, 2023) by Dr Sania Nishtar. As a boy, I remember listening to a speech made in Lahore by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar – a leader of the Pakistan movement and a former governor of Punjab – during the early years of Pakistan. He had said that, contrary to predictions made by Indian leaders of the imminent collapse of Pakistan, the country kept progressing in all directions. He also referred to the devaluation of the Indian currency at the time and claimed that one day 100 Pakistani rupees would buy 144 Indian rupees.

If we study the rising trajectory of Pakistan in those days, the decline that subsequently followed is quite shocking. The lack of merit and accountability, the latter being highlighted by the writer, are primarily to blame. To make matters worse, we still cannot shake the grip of political dynasties all anxious to advance their own interests at the expense of the people. We have reached a now-or-never moment in our history and dithering is no longer an option for those with the power to arrest our terminal decay.

SRH Hashmi
Karachi

New power

This letter refers to the news report 'Nepra set to hike base tariff' (July 10, 2023). According to the report, the tariff department has recommended an increase of Rs6.9 per unit. The electricity bills are already so high that even the middle class is struggling to afford them. What impact will this hike have on the lower-income segment? Such flawed policies first scared away commercial users, many of whom established their own captive power plants, and are now scaring away domestic consumers. Those who can afford to do so are switching to solar systems with net-metering connections. This is a serious long-term threat to the viability of DISCOs. An entity that has too few paying customers is doomed to failure – sooner rather than later.

Ayub Malik
Rawalpindi

Water plan

As a resident of Karachi, I have experienced firsthand the impact of the city's water scarcity problem on the lives of its residents. The lack of access to clean water is a serious problem that affects not only our health and well-being but also our economy and environment. The water scarcity issue is caused by a combination of factors including population growth, climate change and poor management of water resources. The government needs to take urgent action to address this issue and ensure that all residents have access to clean and safe water.

One solution to this problem is to invest in water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting and water recycling. These measures can help the municipal authorities to cope with the demand for water and ensure that our water resources are used more efficiently. Another solution is to improve the management of water resources through the use of modern technology and better governance. This could involve the installation of smart meters to monitor water usage and the development of a comprehensive water-management plan.

Urooj Amir
Karachi



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Dr Syed Muhammad Anwar as the Alim Judge of the Federal Shariat Court at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Monday. —APP photo

GB opposition leader steps down

CM candidate Amjad advocate hands speaker his resignation on party's instruction; withdraws no-confidence motion against Speaker Nazir advocate

By Nasir Abbas Sadpara

During the past three months, Amjad has been vigorously pursuing the anti-Imran narrative. He emerged as the PDM's consensus candidate in the recent chief minister's election. However, the central party leadership suddenly instructed him to step down.

According to Rukn-e-Qanoon-e-Saz Assembly Shahzad Agha, the PPP members in the assembly had also submitted their resignations against the central leadership's decision, and were supporting every decision of the provincial president.

The speaker confirmed that Amjad had tendered his resignation as the assembly member in the evening and personally handed it over to him in his chamber.

Amjad was a candidate for chief minister, but Advisor to the Prime Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira asked him to step down.

Following the direction, Amjad resigned from the assembly membership due to internal party differences. Amjad not only prepared the fake degree case against the former chief minister but also pleaded it in the court until decision.

Efforts being made to calm situation in Kurram

Shortage of edibles, medicines reported as tension persists

By Ali Afzal

PARACHINAR: An acute shortage of edibles and medicines was reported as roads remained closed due to the ongoing clashes between the tribes in different areas of the Kurram district for the fourth consecutive day on Monday as fresh efforts were launched to calm down the situation.

Also, the number of dead from both sides jumped to nine and injured to 42 as two more persons lost lives and four others sustained injuries.

Educational institutions remained closed while routine life was paralysed due to the tension.

The clashes erupted between the two tribes in Bohshera and Dandar areas of upper part of Kurram district over a land dispute on Friday, which later spread to Khar Killay, Balishkhal, Pekar, Tari Mangal, Pekar, Para Chamkani, Kunj Alizai and Maqbal areas.

Both sides have used light and heavy weapons against each other since the clashes erupted over the land dispute.

The district administration and police along with elders of the area affected a ceasefire between the warring tribes and got the bunkers vacated but later both sides violated the agreement.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Saiful Islam Shah and District Police Officer Muhammad Imran said that the district administration and police along with elders of the area had again launched efforts to enforce a permanent ceasefire between the warring tribes.

Meanwhile, Pakistan People's Party leader and Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi rushed to his volatile home district and launched efforts for mediation between the infighting tribes.

Talking to reporters, he said that he specially came to Kurram to calm down the situation and settle the issue once and for all.

He said that he along with the elders of the area, personnel of police and security forces and officials of district administration were making efforts to bring peace back to the areas.

Bara Dam to irrigate 48,000 acres of land

KP minister asks officials to address reservations over projects

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Taj Muhammad Afridi and Caretaker Minister for Irrigation Fazal Elahi chaired a meeting on the construction and completion of Bara and Jabba dams in Khyber district including Warsak Canal System.

A handout said the ministers were told in a briefing that one million people would get clean drinking water on completion of Jabba Dam, while 300 cusecs of drinking water and 400 cusecs of water for irrigation will be available with the completion of Warsak Canal System.

It was informed that the completion of Bara Dam will not only irrigate 48 thousand acres of land, but it will also provide 16 cusecs of clean drinking water along with generating 6 megawatts of electricity.

Taj Muhammad Afridi said that he would give priority to projects of public interest so that faster development in the area can be ensured.

The minister called for removing reservations over the projects. He issued instructions to include Malagori and Bakarabad areas in the Warsak Canal System project so that people there were provided with clean water, and do not face any problems in this regard.

He emphasised on surveying other adjacent areas so that wherever water access is possible, they can also be included in the project.

Secretary of Irrigation Department, director general of Small Dams, representative delegations of the areas adjacent to the projects and other relevant officers also participated in the meeting.

Child slaughtered during assault attempt in Swabi

By Muhammad Farooq

SWABI: A six-year old girl child was slaughtered during a sexual assault attempt here, police said on Monday.

District Police Officer Najamul Hussain and Deputy Superintendent of Police Headquarters Jawad Khan told a press conference the crime was committed allegedly by a 17-year-old man, Aman Khan, who was stated to be a neighbour of the victim.

The officials said the incident took place in Saidkhal area of Saleem Khan village, Swabi Tehsil.

They said the accused took the child to a deserted hujra (male guest house). The girl raised an alarm when the accused tried to assault her.

The accused slaughtered her with a dagger to silence her, said the police officials, adding the suspect fled the scene after committing the crime. The body was later recovered from the hujra.

Narrating details of the arrest of the suspect, DSP Jawad Khan said the police party led by him visited the hujra, collected the pieces of evidence and shifted the body to the District Headquarters Hospital for an autopsy.

He said the accused was arrested from his hujra. During the preliminary investigation, he confessed to the crime and pointed to the place where he had hidden the dagger used in the crime.

The police registered a first information report under the relevant sections of the law.

Torching Swat toll plaza 102 PTI leaders, workers arrested

By Tahir Khan Azikhel

BATKHELA: The Levies force arrested 102 leaders and workers of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from the premises after their bail plea was rejected by the Ant-Terrorism Court, Malakand, on Monday.

The arrested PTI leaders included former Member National Assembly Mahboob Shah, former Member Provincial Assembly Humayun Khan, and tehsil chairmen Nasir Ali, Afzal Hussain, Feroz Shah and others and sent them to various police stations.

The Motorway authorities had registered a case against the PTI leaders and workers in Levies Post Allahand for arson, ransacking and burning the Swat Toll Plaza.

Former MNA Junaid Akbar was one of the accused nominated in the case and the court had issued his arrest warrant after he did not appear on last hearing. The arrested workers and leaders chanted slogans in favour of PTI, former prime minister Imran Khan and flashed victory signs while boarding the police vehicles after the arrest.

ATC adjourns case against Qureshi till 18th

By our correspondent

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court on Monday adjourned the hearing of the cases against PTI vice-president Shah Mahmood Qureshi until July 18 after the investigating officer submitted that the investigations were not yet completed since the controversial tweets of the accused were under scrutiny.

The defence lawyer, Ali Bukhari, told the court that no tweet of Shah Mahmood Qureshi was on record.

While ATC judge Abhar Gul Khan extended the judicial remand of PTI leader Dr. Yasmin Rashid for 14 days in the cases of setting the office of PMLN ablaze, the attack on Askani Tower, the setting fire to Shadman police station, and other incidents, the investigating officer told the court that the prosecution needed more time since the challan of cases was being finalised.

NGO's team meets governor

By our correspondent

LAHORE: A delegation from the Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights, led by Chairman Muhammad Ejaz Noori, met with Governor Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House here on Monday. The governor emphasised the importance of teamwork for success during the meeting. He acknowledged the valuable services provided by NGOs for the welfare of society. He praised the efforts of the Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights in promoting human rights, interfaith harmony, justice, and sustainable peace in Pakistani society.

He highlighted the need for collaboration between the government and NGOs to drive improvement in various areas. Chairman Ijaz Noori of the Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights said that the organisation acts as a voluntary coordinator between national and international human rights and social welfare organisations to support the well-being of humanity. He said its aim is to promote justice, peace, interfaith harmony, human rights, and interreligious dialogue. He also presented a shield on behalf of the organisation to the governor.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Uzaib Ghaffar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Memon citizen number 4220184209145 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Anita Ghaffar Memon (Daughter) 2. Fatima Ghaffar (Daughter) 3. Muhammad Uzaib Ghaffar (Son) 4. Fatima Ghaffar (Daughter) 5. Aneesa Begum (Spouse)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Humayun Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Farhan citizen number 4130315438141 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Rukhsana Sarfaraz Lodhi (Spouse) 2. Ammara Khan (Daughter) 3. Muhaammad Hamid Khan Lodhi (Son) 4. Muhammad Humayun Khan (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Faraz Aziz with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Abdul Aziz citizen number 4210122242967 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Faisal Aziz (Son) 2. Naheed Aziz (Spouse) 3. Shumaila Raza (Daughter) 4. Faraz Aziz (Son) 5. Sheraz Aziz (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Saqib Tarveer Bhatti with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Tarveer Hussain Bhatti citizen number 4240122147585 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Muhammad Salman Bhatti (Son) 2. Saqib Tarveer Bhatti (Daughter) 3. Muhammad Usman Bhatti (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Sohail Faraz with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Aslam citizen number 4210196311691 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Komal Adnan (Daughter) 2. Aza Adnan (Daughter) 3. Sohail Faraz (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Saif Mahmood with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Saif Mahmood citizen number 4210196311691 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Saleem Ahmed (Son) 2. Yasmeen Zaki (Daughter) 3. Kaleem Ahmed (Son) 4. Nadeem Ahmed (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Umar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim citizen number 4250152770243 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Umar (Son) 2. Akbar Mahmood (Son) 3. Farhan Nadeem (Daughter) 4. Rahima Iqbal (Spouse) 5. Farida Ibrahim (Daughter)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Asif Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Aslam Khan citizen number 4210196311691 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Umar (Son) 2. Akbar Mahmood (Son) 3. Farhan Nadeem (Daughter) 4. Rahima Iqbal (Spouse) 5. Farida Ibrahim (Daughter)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Kabeer Ahmed with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Naseer Ahmed citizen number 4240121465811 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Saleem Ahmed (Son) 2. Yasmeen Bano (Daughter) 3. Saleem Ahmed (Son) 4. Nadeem Ahmed (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Furqan Ahmed with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Furqan citizen number 4230109990473 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Sumbal Mushtaq (Daughter) 2. Kauser Mushtaq (Daughter) 3. Muhammad Furqan Ahmed (Son) 4. Sundas Mushtaq (Daughter) 5. Muhaammad Arsalan Ahmed (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Waseem Ahmed with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Aslam citizen number 4230109990473 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Sumbal Mushtaq (Daughter) 2. Kauser Mushtaq (Daughter) 3. Muhammad Furqan Ahmed (Son) 4. Sundas Mushtaq (Daughter) 5. Muhaammad Arsalan Ahmed (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Hassan Ali Zakeri with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Hassan Ali Zakeri citizen number 4220174918027 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Mubhammad Zakeri (Daughter) 2. Naseem Zakeri (Spouse) 3. Mohammad Ali Zakeri (Son) 4. Mehreen Zakeri (Daughter)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Amin Razzak with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Syed Saibah Naqvi citizen number 4130385478906 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Nusrat Agha Naqvi (Sister) 2. Syed Agha Rajan Murtaza (Brother) 3. Imran Shah (Sister)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Amin Razzak with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Syed Saibah Naqvi citizen number 4130385478906 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Zebunisa Razzak (Spouse) 2. Saibah Naqvi (Daughter) 3. Nadia Belagom (Daughter) 4. Rubina Feroz Dossari (Daughter) 5. Muhammad Amin Razzak (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

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On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
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INCHARGE SFU, NADRA AWAMI MARKAZ KARACHI EAST-SFU

Ahead of polls

Continued from page 12

of which Rs131 billion or 15 percent will be released in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The funds released against surrendered amount for SDGs during FY 2022-23 will be standing at Rs20.26 billion. The Parliament had passed a resolution at the time of approval of the budget for making SAP funds non-lapsable. The funds released for approved SDGs Schemes for FY 2023-24 stand at Rs41 billion which will also be released in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The available funds for remaining PSDP Schemes during Q1 of FY 2023-24 will be released at Rs60.74 billion so in total, Rs131 billion will be released. Besides there has been misuse of powers as there is one retired officer who was re-hired on a project but he was given an honorarium in alleged violation of all rules in the Ministry of Planning.

While executing development projects PD&SI Division and the Principal Accounting Officer (PAOs) concerned shall ensure implementation of the provisions contained under Chapter-III of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019. The PD&SI Division shall

devise quarterly sector-wise / project-wise/division-wise strategies for the release of funds for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) within the appropriations approved by the National Assembly and included in the Schedule of Authorized Expenditure in terms of Article 83 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Any proposal for change to the limits prescribed at (i) above shall be considered by the Budget Wing, Finance Division on case to case basis and shall require prior approval of the Finance Secretary. The release of funds for approved projects in a Demand for Grant and Appropriation shall be made by the PAO in each Quarter within the above limits. The PAO shall ensure the availability of sufficient funds for Employees Related Expenses (ERE) to Non-ERE heads of account except with the prior concurrence of Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Adequate budgetary allocations on account of the Foreign Exchange Component (Rupee

Cover) shall be ensured by all relevant PAOs and conveyed to Economic Affairs Division and Finance Division. Funds for foreign exchange payments shall require prior approval of the External Finance Wing of the Finance Division. While examining requests for such funds, the External Finance Wing shall consider the availability of Foreign Exchange. Section 23 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019 provides that no authority shall incur or commit any expenditure from the "Federal Consolidated Fund" until the same has been sanctioned by the National Assembly and the expenditure has been provided for the financial year through a) Schedule of authorized expenditure in terms of Article 83 of the Constitution of Pakistan; b) Supplementary grant or technical supplementary grant as per Article 84 of the constitution duly approved by the Federal Government; and c) Re-appropriation as per section 2 (u) and 11 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2019. No direct payment through the State Bank of Pakistan shall be made by any office, except with the prior approval of the Finance Secretary as per Rules 3(2) and 3(3) of the Public Finance Management and Treasury Single Account Rules, 2020.

Dr Syrus Qazi

Continued from page 12

retired in the months of September and October, when a caretaker administration would be in place.

Sources told The News on Monday the incumbent Foreign Secretary Dr Asad would be retired on Aug 17. He remained centre of controversies before taking the charge of the Foreign Office last year, as he was ambassador to the United States in 2021 when the so-called cipher was dispatched by him, implicating a US official from the State Department, who reportedly threatened with serious consequences if the then prime minister was not removed. The secret letter was politically exploited by former prime minister, but later he backtracked on his position.

Dr Asad Majeed was transferred to Brussels as ambassador to Belgium and European Union. He stayed there for few weeks and made foreign secretary last month by the present government. Since then, Dr Asad had

to face complexities on account of his role in last days of his stay in Washington. Sources said the government would announce change of the foreign secretary before promulgation of schedule of general election by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Consultations for bringing new foreign secretary had been completed. Dr Syrus Qazi is an outstanding diplomat, who has vast experience of diplomacy in all departments. He is holding multiple charges in the Foreign Office as special secretary. He has served the country as an envoy to various countries including Turkey.

Senior diplomat Anna Baloch has reached Brussels to assume charge as the ambassador to Belgium and European Union, who was an envoy in Malaysia earlier. She was also among the front runners for the slot of the foreign secretary till recent. She replaced Dr Asad Majeed Khan from where he moved to the headquarters Islamabad last year.

Ahsan Raza has been

appointed high commissioner for Malaysia. Pakistan's new high commissioner for the United Kingdom Dr Muhammad Faisal Chaudhry would be relinquishing the charge as an ambassador to Germany the next week and he would be moving to London for assuming new assignment to replace Moazzam Ahmad Khan. He will be leaving London at the end of the month after completing his extended contractual period of service in the British capital. He would retire from the Foreign Service after returning to Islamabad. Syeda Saqlain currently high commissioner for Kenya is going to take up as an ambassador in Berlin for Germany. In the meanwhile, the government has decided not to change any ambassador or high commissioner in any of the capitals. It was speculated earlier that Pakistan's ambassador for the US and China were being changed. Sources, however, pointed out that Sardar Masood Khan would continue in Washington while Moirul Haq would stay in Beijing. He would be reaching retirement in October this year.

Rana Sana

Continued from page 12

to hold elections, he said while speaking on Geo News programme 'Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Sath' in reply to a question about the ruling party looking to delay elections till November.

He asserted that the PML-N and its supreme, Nawaz Sharif, were clear that assemblies should be dissolved and elections held on time.

Asked whether the intention behind delaying the dissolution of the assemblies was to "facilitate the ECP or politics" so that verdicts were issued in cases against the PTI chief and Nawaz got time for the election campaign after his expected return before the polls, Saranullah said, "I don't think the difference of 20 to 30 days makes much of a difference." "We have been managing matters according to constitutional requirements," he

added. Saranullah's statement comes as the final 30-day countdown to the end of the current parliament's term and the government's tenure is set to begin this week, and the term of the National Assembly, along with the provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan, is set to expire on August 12.

Following the dissolution of the assemblies, a caretaker setup will take over government affairs in Islamabad, Karachi and Quetta.

Similar interim administrations are already in place in Lahore and Peshawar since the dissolution of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies months ahead of their term-end in January.

However, he added that the 90-day period did not mean the ECP would hold elections on the 90th day but could do so at any date of its choosing, "be it after 64 days or 72 days".

Nevertheless, he assured,

"the assemblies will be dissolved after completing their term, after which the caretaker set-up will come and elections will be held in accordance with the Constitution".

The interior minister said that architect and planner of May 9 riots was the PTI chairman. He said he (Imran) used to tell lies forcefully, provoked his PTI workers and activists to create panic and chaos by damaging properties and official institutions and used to say that his arrest would be a red line. Saranullah said that some miscreants came out but not public on his call. He said vandals who were arrested for attacking private and government properties are facing law, the law will take its own course and challans are being submitted in anti-terrorism courts and action is underway against them. Saranullah said those who were involved in looting and burning defence installations should be tried under the Army Act.

No decision

Continued from page 12

Khan was the key planner of May 9 violence.

The military establishment, however, has not yet named anyone including Imran Khan but indirect hints coming from them also suggest what the civil government vocally says.

FIRs are now being registered against Imran Khan in connection with May 9 attacks following the evidence collected by the police and on the basis of statements made by some of the 20 arrested arsonists.

In at least six FIRs, Imran Khan has been nominated. So far Imran Khan has been nominated in FIRs registered in different police stations of Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Mianwali. His name is expected to be included in more FIRs.

When asked if Imran Khan will be tried under the Army Act, the source said that no decision has been taken as yet on this issue.

According to the information provided by the federal government to the Supreme Court recently, a total of 102 civilians, arrested from various parts of the country in the wake of May

9 violence, are with the military authorities for their trial under the Army Act.

None of these 102 suspects include women or children. A media report, a few days back, suggested that no woman or under 18 person will be tried under the Army Act. The custody of all those, to be tried under the Army Act, is handed over to the Army. If a decision is taken to try Imran Khan under the Army Act, his custody will also be handed over the military authorities. In a recent interview, Imran Khan had said that he was willing to face military trial without even the assistance of any counsel.

custody. Buzdar had already obtained bail from the courts in the cases filed against him on charges of making money through appointments for huge sums.

ECP secretary's contract extended for another year

Continued from page 12

the contract period of Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary (BS-22). The Election Commission of Pakistan for further period of one (01)

Govt approves sale of HBFC to mortgage refinance firm

Continued from page 12

Lahore with completion of transfer/mutation process in the name of purchaser M/S Faisal Town Pvt Limited.

According to official announcement made by Ministry of Finance, the Privatization Commission submitted a summary regarding privatization of Services International Hotel (SIH) and updated the committee on its privatization process. The CCoP after detailed discussion allowed Privatization Commission to proceed towards successful conclusion of SIH transaction with completion of transfer/mutation process in the name of the purchaser.

The Privatization Com-

mission tabled a summary related to budget estimates of the commission for FY 2023-24 to the tune of Rs1248.8 million. The CCoP after detailed deliberation approved the summary.

The commission also presented the summaries on privatization of Pakistan Engineering Company (PECO) and privatization of Sindh engineering Limited (SEL) and briefed the meeting on their status. The CCoP after discussion deferred both the summaries with directions that the secretary Privatization Commission, secretary Law & Justice and secretary Industries & Production may hold mutual consultations and come up with future course of action in both cases.

British-Pakistani journalist Saima Mohsin sues CNN

Continued from page 12

wherein her cameraman ran over her foot in a car, resulting in severe tissue damage.

Following the upsetting event, she urged the media organisation to switch her to a physically less demanding role and support rehabilitation, but CNN flat-out refused.

"She also alleges that she asked CNN if she could switch to a presenting role in order to reduce the amount of time spent travelling but was told 'you don't have the look we are looking for,'" The Guardian reported.

Three years later, CNN fired her. The reporter then decided to move the employment tribunal claim, which will hear the case on Monday as CNN refused to support her following her life-changing injury.

"I worked hard to become an international correspondent and loved my job with CNN. I risked my life many times on assignment for CNN believing they would have my back. They did not," she said.

Mohsin alleges that she faced racial and disability

discrimination as well as a gender pay gap during her stint at CNN.

The former CNN reporter also alleged that the managers preferred white American correspondents over her even when she was ready to go live on the ground — giving her less on-air time.

CNN claims that Mohsin cannot bring the matter into a court in London under her contract.

The journalist has made a programme for ITV about the pain of living with invisible disabilities and also presents programmes for Sky News on a freelance basis. "This should cause concern for all foreign correspondents who travel around the world — and take risks to do their journalism in the belief their employer will take care of them," she said. "I'm also taking the opportunity to highlight the racism and gender pay gap issues that I experienced. I was repeatedly let down and denied the ability to achieve my potential while I was at CNN. I am bringing my claim to take a stand and call for change to ensure women journalists, and women journalists of colour, are better protected."

Ramesh sees religious tourism as source of prosperity in country

Continued from page 12

Vietnam here, he said the incumbent government was serious about promoting and projecting the country's tourism to highlight the soft image of the country.

He said that Pakistan was fully safe for tourists and offered the rich cultural heritage of the ancient Gandhara civilisation.

He said the promotion of religious tourism would lead to enhanced commercial activities and bring in foreign exchange. Dr Ramesh said the symposium would also help promote the soft image of the country and provide connectivity with the world.

A three-day international Gandhara symposium would commence in Islamabad on July 11 to showcase the treasure trove Gandhara civilisation and Buddhist heritage in Pakistan, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will address the inaugural ses-

sion of the symposium.

The Buddhist monks from Vietnam lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his government for facilitating Buddhist people and followers of other faiths to explore the Gandhara civilisation and sites of Buddhism in Pakistan. They said there would be more travellers in future to visit the cultural heritage of Pakistan. They urged the media to play its role in promoting the Gandhara civilisation and Pakistan's potential for religious tourism.

The delegation also took a round of the Islamabad museum and showed keen interest in Pakistan's Buddhist heritage.

A number of Buddhist monks from Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal, South Korea and Sri Lanka would attend the symposium. The title of the event is "Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara civilisation and Buddhist heritage in Pakistan". —APP

Contempt plea filed against two senior SC judges

Continued from page 12

of Court Ordinance, 2003.

The petitioner named Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, and the state as respondents.

The petitioner requested the apex court to take legal action against Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood for refusing to sit on the bench hearing the petitions challenging the trial of civilians in military courts.

The lawyer argued that as judges of the Supreme Court, Justice Isa and Justice Masood are obligated to perform judicial and administrative duties entrusted to them by the chief justice of Pakistan within the framework of the Constitution.

The petitioner further submitted that the parliament, in a joint sitting, had passed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 on April 10, 2023. Although the bill was sent to the president for assent, it was challenged in this court through various constitutional petitions.

According to the petitioner, on April 13, the bench stayed the operation of the said Act and ordered that it should not have any effect or be acted upon until further orders.

He said that although the president did not give

assent to the Act, it became law by the lapse of the constitutional period, making the petitioner the first person to challenge it through a constitutional petition titled "Muhammad Shahid Rana Advocate v. Federation of Pakistan".

However, the hearing of the constitutional petitions, including the petitioner's case, was adjourned on June 8, 2023, but the order is still in effect.

The petitioner argued that the respondents, Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, on June 22, 2023, in constitutional petitions related to the trial of civilians in military courts, had refused to abide by the order. The petitioner claimed that their refusal to comply with the order amounts to contempt of court.

He contended that the respondents should be punished for their contemptuous behaviour, as the order is still in effect and their refusal to abide by it is a clear violation of this court.

Furthermore, the petitioner highlighted the concerns about the existing judicial system in Pakistan on national and international levels, saying that the wording used by the respondents on June 22, 2023, which was telecasted, printed in the

media, and circulated worldwide, is sufficient evidence to proceed with the contempt petition.

The petitioner also argued that contempt is a crime against the state, and contemptors should not be allowed to undermine the peace of the country.

He submitted that even without considering the order, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 is in violation of Article 239 of the Constitution. The petitioner requested the apex court summon the respondent judges, who refused to sit on the bench on June 22, 2023, and take appropriate action against them in accordance with the law. On June 22, the nine-member larger bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, resumed hearing the petitions challenging the trial of civilians in military courts. Justice Isa had expressed reservations about the bench and said that he would not recuse himself from the proceedings but could not sit on the bench until the judgment on the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 is announced. Justice Masood endorsed Justice Isa's view. Later that day, the chief justice resumed the hearing with a trimmed seven-member bench.

JS Bank ranked as 'Most Innovative Digital Banking Service Provider'

Continued from page 12

safe and hassle-free digital banking solutions. JS Bank's digital offerings encompass a wide range of secure and convenient services ranging from mobile and internet banking services, to bill payment, investment, loans, and e-commerce solutions.

JS Bank is creating end-to-end paperless banking products such as the JS Mobile App, JS Bot, and JS Internet Banking, which has amplified the bank's digital presence throughout the country.

Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, is another notable initiative that represents the

Bank's commitment to leapfrog the digital banking landscape by providing a first-of-its-kind customizable mobile app that provides seamless payment solutions to its customers.

Waqas Anis, Chief Digital Officer, JS Bank, commented, "We are honoured to be recognised as the most innovative digital service provider, which is a testament to our commitment to providing innovative solutions to our customers. Our teams are continuously striving to provide services that ensure our customers can manage their finances in a manner that aligns with their

preferences and lifestyles."

Furthermore, JS Bank's commitment to innovation extends further with the introduction of the JS Metaverse, a virtual world where customers can explore a 3-D representation of JS Bank for a truly immersive digital banking experience. JS Bank continues to pioneer groundbreaking initiatives that leverage emerging technologies, setting new industry benchmarks and reinforcing its commitment to continuing its journey of impact by providing innovative conventional and digital financial solutions for customers in the years to come.

Zero tolerance for wicked, mischievous elements: Marriyum

Continued from page 12

She said investigation was continuing into May 9 violent incidents which were orchestrated and executed by the PTI chairman.

Marriyum said the PMLN leadership always appeared before the courts and faced trumped-up cases registered during the PTI tenure.

She, however, said the PTI chairman was making hue and cry to deflect accountability.

She said the PTI chairman should appear in courts and respond in corruption cases including Toshakhana, foreign funding and Al Qadir Trust.

The information minister said Imran was a black spot on the national politics who incited the people to violence and preached terrorism.

Responding to a question, the information minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif over the last

one year had made efforts to stabilize the economy and provide relief to the common man. She said the economic revival plan rolled out by the government will benefit the people. To another question, Marriyum said the government will complete its constitutional tenure. She said the party which always gave relief to the people eliminated terrorism and stabilized the economy was not running from elections. —SABAH

LHC dismisses PTI pleas against JIT

Continued from page 12

three-member bench headed by Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh and comprising Justice Farooq Haider and Justice Muhammad Anjad Rafiq, said: "The impugned order is unexceptionable. The government is competent to form the JIT in the cases mentioned therein. These petitions are dismissed." The court ruled that it was still to be determined whether there was any "design" or "purpose" behind the incidents that occurred between Feb 22 and March 19, which might constitute terrorism under Section 6 of the ATA. The court observed that the investigation in the cases was at the initial stage or was yet to begin.

The judgment said: "The petitioners want us to suspend the formation of the JIT and its functioning until proper

rules are framed. We are not inclined to do so." However, the bench directed the federal government to make rules within two months. The bench said the violence damaged public and private property, injured many police personnel and killed at least one person.

It said PTI workers allegedly threw petrol bombs at police as they attempted to execute non-bailable warrants issued by an Islamabad sessions court against Imran Khan.

The court ruled that a thorough probe into the incidents was essential to bring miscreants to justice. It said the caretaker cabinet rightly constituted the JIT to broaden the investigation scope and make it transparent, fair, and credible.

The court said: "The petitioners have failed to demonstrate that the impugned order is mala fide. The court should only

intervene when it is found that the government action is mala fide or that there is a colourable exercise of authority."

The petitioners - Dr Yasmin Rashid, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema and Fawad Chaudhry - submitted that police registered politically-motivated cases against PTI leaders and constituted an illegal JIT for investigations. They said police unlawfully inserted provisions of anti-terrorism law in the cases and asked the court to set aside the notification of the formation of the JIT and also the call-up notices issued to them and other PTI leaders.

The Home Department had formed the six-member JIT with SSP Imran Kishwar as convener. Other members included SP Aftab Phularwan and one each representative from three intelligence agencies.

Govt to collect over Rs3.2tr extra

Continued from page 12

Subsequently, it will be the government's responsibility to fulfill the programme's requirements in the days ahead.

The increase in power tariff is a key condition set by the IMF for providing financial assistance to Pakistan. The Fund has been urging the government to raise the tariff and eliminate power subsidies to reduce the country's fiscal deficit.

The proposed increase, calculated by Nepra, along with an additional 18 percent GST

on bills, could result in a staggering amount being collected from power consumers starting in July 2023. Nepra has already conducted hearings with the distribution companies (Discos) regarding this issue. However, the K-Electric being a privatised company will be insulated, but the price of electricity it drawing from the national grid will become costlier.

Nepra has not yet submitted its working to the federal government to notify it, an official in the power sector informed 'The News' that "the increase in base

tariff will be nearly Rs7 per unit and will be implemented in one go from July 2023. It will have an impact of over Rs3.2 trillion on power consumers. Last year's base tariff increase of Rs7.91 per unit had an impact of Rs2.8 trillion, but it was implemented in three parts at intervals."

If the proposed increase was finalised, the decision would raise the base tariff to Rs31.80 per unit from the current Rs24.80. Notably, nearly two-thirds of this proposed increase in the base tariff is allocated for capacity charges to independent

power producers (IPPs), aiming to significantly reduce the pace of the power sector's circular debt accumulation. The circular debt currently stands at approximately Rs2.64 trillion and continues to grow due to inefficiencies in power generation, transmission, and distribution.

The rise in power tariff will have a significant impact on consumers in residential, commercial, and industrial. Businesses will need to pass on the cost of higher power bills to consumers, leading to inflation. Households will also have to allocate more funds for power, putting a strain

on their budgets.

While the government acknowledges the impact the increase in power tariff will have on the people, it asserts that this step is necessary to revive the power sector and the economy. The government has also pledged to provide targeted subsidies to alleviate the burden on the poor and vulnerable.

As of the end of last month, the government has made a payment of Rs142 billion to over a hundred independent power producers (IPPs). This payment has had a positive effect on power producers, reducing their outstanding dues and improv-

ing their cash flows. The power sector is already grappling with a massive circular debt of Rs2.64 trillion. Additionally, the IMF has called for a 45-50 percent increase in gas tariffs starting from July 1, 2023. Consumers of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) will experience higher gas prices. The government is likely to continue its policy of giving high-end consumers subsidize low-end consumers. The circular debt in the energy sector totals over Rs4.30 trillion, including Rs1.7 trillion in debts from the oil and gas sector.

Finance Ministry and NEPRA officials on Monday spent the day in confusion with regard to the finalization of the increase in base tariff knowing the fact that the IMF board meeting is just one day ahead and will take place tomorrow (July 12, 2023) for approval of the \$3 billion stand-by arrangement program for 9 months period. The regulator's top mandarins continued waiting for the projections about the dollar's value, GDP growth, and inflation from the Finance Ministry to be used to finalize the base tariff. Earlier the tariff department used the dollar value at Rs25 for FY24 with a dip in

sale of electricity growth in 2023-24 projected by CPPA-G. Keeping in view the above-mentioned projections, Nepra worked out the increase in base tariff at Rs6.91 per unit. Earlier it worked out the increase in base tariff by over 4 per unit.

The federal government has made the federal budget with US dollar value of Rs200 billion with GDP growth of 3.5 percent and inflation at 21 percent. However, according to an interview with Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar in private channel, the dollar's actual value stands at Rs240 which the government would try to achieve.



LOS ANGELES: US-German actress Elisabeth Rohm arrives for the world premiere of 'Barbie' at the Shrine Auditorium here on Monday. —AFP wirephoto

Greek police to wear cameras after Syrian migrant shot dead

ATHENS: Greek police minister Notis Mitarachi said on Monday that officers would be retrained and start wearing body cameras after a migrant was shot and killed in a police pursuit.

The death is the latest in a series of controversial shootings involving the Greek police.

"No use of violence on the part of Greek police is acceptable... I have already ordered staff retraining in 2023 on engagement protocols," Mitarachi told state TV ERT.

He said the "aim is to have the proper cameras on officers and in police vehicles, as in most advanced democracies", adding that the issue "will be cleared up in the next few weeks".

The announcement came after a 20-year-old Syrian migrant was fatally shot over the weekend near Larissa, central Greece after allegedly stealing a pickup truck and then attempting to flee on foot after crashing.

Police trade unionist Giorgos Kalliakmanis told ERT that the 45-year-old officer had discharged his weapon after "stumbling" during the pursuit.

"There are very specific police rules... also covering pursuit... our officers must be very well trained in enforcing this protocol," Mitarachi said. —AFP

Israel parliament votes on controversial judicial overhaul

OCCUPIED-AL-QUDS: Israel's parliament began examining a controversial bill on Monday that would limit court powers, in a new political offensive to push ahead with a judicial overhaul that has split the nation.

The changes, proposed by the hard-right government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have sparked one of the country's biggest ever protest movements since their announcement in January.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in weekly rallies, demanding a halt to the planned overhaul of Israel's justice system.

Following stiff opposition and growing international criticism — including from US President Joe Biden — Netanyahu ordered a "pause" in March to allow for talks on the proposals. —AFP

Roadside bomb kills eight family members in Somalia

MOGADISHU: A roadside bombing blamed on the jihadist group Al-Shabaab killed eight members of an extended family in central Somalia, a local mayor said on Monday.

The blast occurred late on Sunday near a village outside Buloburde, which lies about 220-km north of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

"Eight innocent civilians were killed from the same family, among them a woman," Sadam Abdi Idow, the mayor of Buloburde, told reporters.

"Al-Shabaab terrorists planted the mine after they were defeated in ongoing military operations in the region. These terrorists have no regard for civilians."

According to witnesses, seven victims died at the scene, while another died later. —AFP

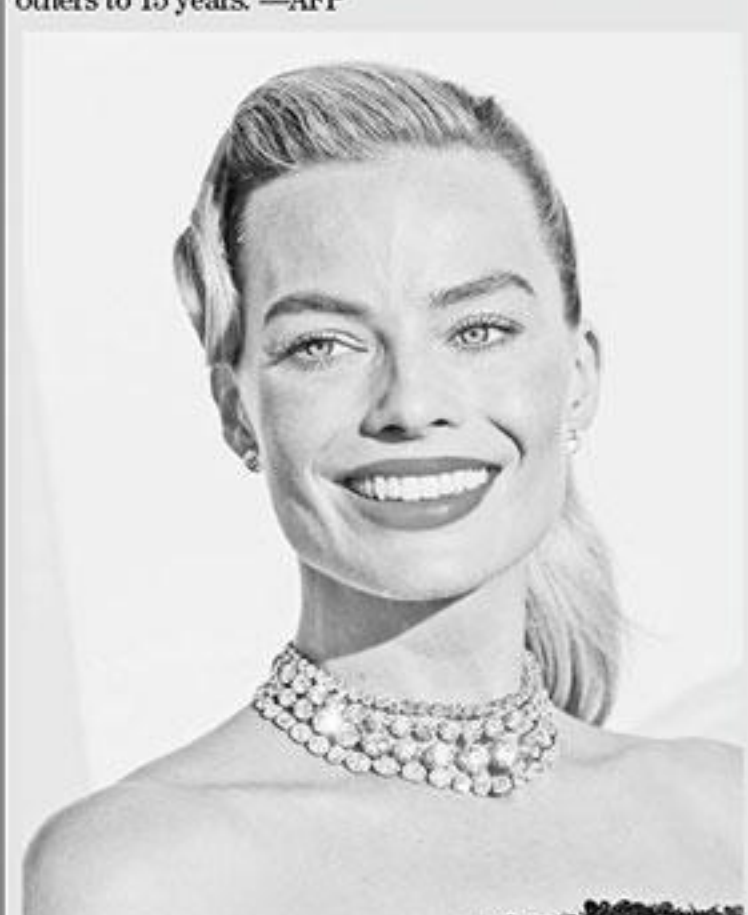
Libya court jails 37 traffickers over migrant deaths

TRIPOLI: A Libyan court has sentenced to prison 37 people convicted of human trafficking over migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, authorities said on Monday.

The North African country is a key departure point for migrants, with many risking the perilous sea journey seeking a better life in Europe.

The appeals court in Al-Bayda, some 800-km east of the capital Tripoli, pronounced the verdict against a "criminal gang" whose members organised for migrants to travel on a "dilapidated boat, resulting in the death of 11 of them", according to statement from the prosecution.

The prosecutor's office, which did not specify the identities or nationalities of the convicted traffickers, said five of them were sentenced to life in jail and nine others to 15 years. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: Australian actress Margot Robbie arrives for the world premiere of 'Barbie' at the Shrine Auditorium here on Monday. —AFP wirephoto

West, Islamic bloc clash expected at UN body over Quran desecration

GENEVA: In the wake of a condemnable incident of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, the Human Rights Council is set to debate a contentious draft proposal on religious hatred on Tuesday (today).

The initiative has underscored major rifts in the UN body and challenged human rights protection practices.

Pakistan presented a draft resolution on behalf of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the council, describing the incident in Stockholm last month as "offensive, disrespectful and a clear act of provocation" that incites hatred and constitutes a human rights violation.

The draft — which condemned "recurring acts of public burning of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries" — has stoked opposition from Western diplomats who argue it aims to safeguard

religious symbols rather than human rights. "We don't like the text," one Western diplomat said of the draft, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council in Geneva on Tuesday.

"Human rights are supposed to be attached to individuals, not to religions."

The OIC initiative also stokes tensions between Western states and the Islamic organisation at a time when the group has unprecedented clout in the council, the only body made up of governments to protect human rights worldwide.

19 OIC countries are voting members of the 47-member council, and other states, such as China, have aligned with their draft resolution.

It remains to be seen whether Pakistan will succeed in rallying all OIC countries behind it. A Saudi-led effort to end a Yemen war crimes probe prevailed in 2021. —Agencies

North Korea threatens to down US spy planes violating its airspace

SEOUL: North Korea on Monday threatened to shoot down any US spy planes violating its airspace and condemned Washington's plans to deploy a nuclear missile submarine near the Korean peninsula.

A spokesperson for the North's Ministry of National Defence said the United States has "intensified espionage activities beyond the wartime level", with "provocative" flights made by US spy aircraft over eight straight days this month, and one reconnaissance plane intruding into its airspace over the East Sea "several times".

"There is no guarantee that such shocking incident as downing of the US Air Force strategic reconnaissance plane will not happen in the East Sea of Korea," the spokesperson said in a statement, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The spokesperson cited past incidents when Pyongyang shot down US aircraft, and warned the United States would pay for its "frantically staged" air espionage.

Late on Monday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong said that a US spy aircraft had violated the country's eastern airspace twice on Monday morning, according to a statement.

Kim Yo Jong said that the North would not respond directly to US reconnaissance activities outside of the country's exclusive economic zone, but warned that it would take "decisive action" if the US military crosses its maritime military demarcation line. —AFP

BBC meets police over presenter's 'explicit pictures' claims

LONDON: BBC representatives met police in London on Monday over allegations that one of the broadcaster's top presenters paid a teenager thousands of pounds for sexual images.

The allegations against the unnamed presenter have made headlines across the British media, including on the BBC, since they were first published last Friday.

They are the latest revelations to rock the publicly funded broadcaster, which is regularly attacked by critics from all sides for political bias.

In 2011, its reputation took a battering after the death of children's television presenter Jimmy Savile, who was unmasked as a serial paedophile.

A police investigation prompted by the scandal saw many household names arrested on suspicion of historic sex offences, including another presenter, Rolf Harris, who was later convicted.

The Metropolitan Police said detectives from its Specialist Crime Command met representatives from the BBC virtually on Monday morning.

"They are assessing the information discussed at the meeting and further enquiries are taking place to establish whether there is evidence of a criminal offence being committed," it added.

"There is no investigation at this time," a statement read.

The BBC on Sunday said it had suspended the male presenter, without revealing his identity. —AFP

Experts assessed 140 target areas established under the Sustainable Development Goals, ranging from access to health care and the fight against climate change to combating inequality and leveling access to energy, the report notes.

On more than 30 percent of the targets, either no progress has been reported or even regression has been noted since 2015, and moderate or severe deviation from the desired trajectory has been seen in about half of them.

For example, the Covid-19 pandemic ended a downward trend in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$2.15 a day.

But at the current rate, 575 million people will still be living in such conditions in 2030, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. That is down 30 percent since 2015, but far from the hoped-for eradication, the report says.

"Shocking, the world is back at hunger levels not seen since 2005," the report says.

Around one in three people (2.3 billion) faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021, and child malnutrition is still a "global concern," it notes.

"Approximately 1.1 billion people currently live in slums or slum-like conditions in cities, with two billion more expected in the next 30 years," it says.



JOHANNESBURG: People take photos as snow falls in Zoo Lake park here on Monday. —AFP wirephoto

Uzbek president cements power with election win

TASHKENT: Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev won a third term that will keep him in charge of the tightly controlled country until 2030 as international observers said on Monday the vote lacked "genuine" competition.

Mirziyoyev, who was running against three largely unknown candidates, won Sunday's election with 87 percent of the vote, according to preliminary results.

A constitutional referendum this year paved the way for the 65-year-old to serve two more presidential terms and increased the mandate from five years to seven, meaning he could stay in power until 2037.

"Uzbekistan's presidential election lacked genuine political competition despite some efforts to reform," an election monitoring mission from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), said in a statement.

They also said that a number of recommendations key to the democratic process "remain unaddressed."

Ursula Gacek, the head of the mission, said her organisation urged the country to "take bolder measures towards a true democracy that includes all citizens."

A former Soviet republic, Uzbekistan is wedged between Russia and China and shares a border with Afghanistan.

Mirziyoyev portrays himself as a reformer creating a "New Uzbekistan" and has said he wants to double gross domestic product to \$160 billion soon.

He has promised to open up Uzbekistan to foreign investment and tourism and implement major reforms in Central Asia's most populous country.

He focused his re-election campaign on the economy and education.

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Mirziyoyev on a "convincing electoral victory."

The win "confirms your high political authority and points to the broad, popular support for your policy of large-scale reforms," he wrote.

The two also spoke on the phone and discussed their "strategic partnership".

Chinese leader Xi Jinping also congratulated Mirziyoyev in a phone call.

"Xi Jinping pointed out, in recent years, under our joint leadership, China-Uzbekistan relations have achieved breakthrough development, and cooperation in various fields has been comprehensively strengthened," state broadcaster CCTV said.

Xi told Mirziyoyev he "very much cherishes the good working relationship and personal friendship with you", CCTV added.

In May, Xi hosted Mirziyoyev and other Central Asian leaders for a summit in the northern Chinese city of Xi'an.

Many voters said they were happy with the outcome but hoped to see positive change down the road.

Dilafuz Khamidova, 24, said she was "happy" with the election result, adding she wanted to see "more opportunities for women in the future." —AFP

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories: Israeli forces on Monday shot a gunman who the army said fired on soldiers in the occupied West Bank, with the Palestinian health ministry reporting the alleged assailant was killed.

The gunman got out of his vehicle then "hurled a grenade, and fired shots at the soldiers" near Deir Nidham village, northwest of Ramallah, the Israeli military said.

The Palestinian health ministry announced the death of Bilal Qadah, 33, "near the village of Deir Nidham", without giving further details.

The incident adds to a surge in violence in the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israeli forces since the 1967 Six-Day War.

Eighteen Palestinians, including militants and children, and two Israeli soldiers have been killed in the territory since July 3, the majority in a two-day Israeli raid on the northern city of Jenin, the largest operation of its kind in years. —AFP

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Six killed in China kindergarten attack

BEIJING: Six people were killed and one wounded in a kindergarten stabbing in southern China's Guangdong province on Monday, local officials said.

"The victims include one teacher, two parents and three students," said a spokeswoman for the city government in Lianjiang, where the incident took place.

She did not offer details about the identities or ages of the victims, nor about the weapon used in the attack.

"One suspect has been arrested," she said. The suspect was a 25-year-old male surnamed Wu, local police said in a statement, adding that it was an "intentional assault".

"The incident was a stabbing," a Lianjiang police spokesman said. Police said they are now trying to verify the identities of the victims.

The attack took place around 7:40 am (2340 GMT on Sunday), the state-backed China News Network reported. —AFP

Before Pakistan acquittal, Suleman Shehbaz was given clean chit by UK in money-laundering case

By Murtaza Ali Shah

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz's son Suleman Shehbaz Sharif has been acquitted by a special court in Lahore in the Rs16 billion money laundering case filed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) but it's relevant to mention that Suleman Shehbaz got clean chit from United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) in September 2021 along with his father after a through money-laundering investigation the UK gov't conducted on request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.

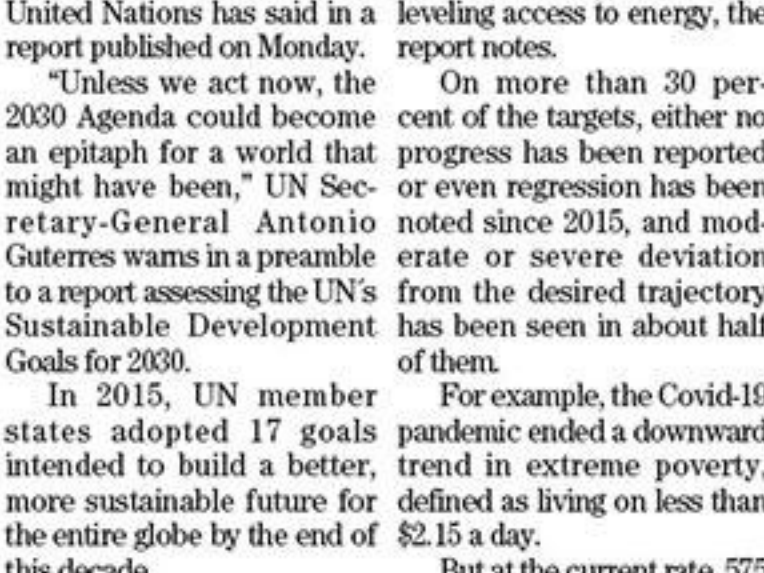
In giving clean chit to Shehbaz in September 2021, the UK NCA also cleared Suleman Shehbaz who was the focus of a money-laundering probe along with his father and British Pakistani millionaire businessman Zulfikar Ahmed.

The NCA — acting on the information provided by Assets Recovery Unit (ARU), FIA, NAB and lobbying by the PTI government as well as Daily Mail's article had investigated Shehbaz Sharif and Suleman Shehbaz for holding assets through offshore accounts and made inquiries in Switzerland, Italy, America and Dubai to determine if Zulfikar Ahmed was holding Sharifs' money in offshore accounts through complex offshore structures, according to court papers released by the Westminster Magistrates' Court. Accounts and assets of the three accused were frozen by the NCA during the investigation.

Global goals on fighting poverty, inequality 'in peril': UN

Decrease in extreme poverty undermined by Covid-19

Proportion of the world's population living on less than \$2.15 a day



Without new measures, only one country in six will reach the goal of universal access to secondary education by 2030, and 84 million children will not attend school, the report says.

In terms of gender equality, the report highlights "too slow" progress, noting that at the current rate, it would take 286 years to close the gap in legal protection and to abolish discriminatory laws, and 300 years to end child marriage.

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WORLD POPULATION DAY 11th JULY



Messages Continued by Main Page

Syed Murad Ali Shah

The project will improve access to quality healthcare services for people living in the vicinity of the selected government dispensaries in remote and peri-urban areas and in the flood-affected settlements in Sindh.

Sindh is facing a double burden of population growth due to natural growth and migration from other parts of the country. The migrants usually settle in slums and peri-urban areas. The Departments of Population Welfare and Health have focused on slums by conducting Family Health Day every week in these areas so as to ensure access to quality family planning and reproductive health services.

Sindh has taken the lead in enacting major legislation for women's and girls' rights, including the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2013, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act, 2013, the Reproductive Health Rights Act of 2019 which is recently amended, and enacted with the incorporation of Marital Counseling, Registration of Nikkah, Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance, and Tele Health. The Education Department has introduced Life Skills Based Education for schools and colleges.

For a stronger and developing Sindh, my government is committed to investing in education, healthcare, clean and affordable energy and is working towards gender equality.

I pledge my persistent support to Population Welfare Department. The People's Government will provide political, administrative, and financial assistance to all women in Sindh in the most equitable and indiscriminate manner possible to achieve family planning and reproductive health rights, and will continue to do everything possible to ensure a healthy and prosperous Sindh

Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho

re-revised the Costed Implementation Plan (CIP), strengthened the Supply Chain System, maintained Contraceptive Commodity Security, holistically engaged private partners, shifted paper-based client data to electronic client recording and last but not least; shifted focus from rural to urban areas where CPR is reported to be low in PDHs 2017.

'Sindh FP2030 Working Group' and 'Sindh Population Task force' meetings are attended by representatives of public and private sector stakeholders to discuss population issues for tangible results. Both departments, Health and Population, under one Minister are fostering functional integration. The Gynae Wards of Tertiary Care Hospitals are providing PPF (Post Pregnancy Family Planning) and PAFP (Post Abortive Family Planning) with the support of the Population Welfare Department. These services will help in improving the health and overall well-being of women.

This World Population Day gives us an opportunity to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to create a safe and healthy environment, where women and girls are empowered to choose if and when to build the families they want and where they have easy and affordable access to Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services.

Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput

practices against women and girls by 2030. Sindh Government is dedicated to achieve the FP2030 targets and is providing full financial and administrative support to ensure that they are met.

I pledge my complete support to the Population Welfare Department, Government of Sindh and expect that the department along with other stakeholders would raise awareness about the sexual and reproductive health needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls.

Rehan Iqbal Baloch

Costed Implementation Plan (CIP): The ADP Scheme namely Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) is Re-revised in 2022-23 to achieve FP2030 goals. Major interventions incorporated are branding of RHS-A Centers and Family Welfare Centers, strengthening coordination at District level amongst the stakeholders through District Coordinators and provision of Mobile Vans to excess clients to hard to reach areas.

Visibility of Service Delivery Points: Branding of 200 FWCs is done which has improved visibility of Family Welfare Centers and FP client's number has also increased.

Monitoring System: Traditional report based Monitoring Mechanism is improved by introducing modern electronic and real time web-based Monitoring system.

Digitalization of Data: The paper-based registration of clients is shifted to the Electronic Clients Record (ECR), embedded in the Contraceptive Logistic Management Information System (cLMIS). The robust data recorded in ECR would be instrumental in evidence-based decision making.

Contraceptive Commodity Security: Since 2016, Population Welfare Department procures contraceptive for all stakeholders (DOH, PPHI and Private Partners). Ours Contraceptive Commodity Security is the best as compared with other provinces. Sindh is the only province that has introduced new methods like Implants (Jadelle) and DMPA (Sayana Press).

Functional Integration: The functional integration with public and private sectors is streamlined for providing Family planning services. Around 350 services delivery centers are re-located to Health Facilities to streamline FP Services.

Post Partum Family Planning: services are

introduced at tertiary hospitals of Health Department. Population Welfare Department Sindh directly provides contraceptives to all Tertiary Care Hospitals of Sindh

Awareness Sessions: For spreading the awareness regarding benefits of Family Planning, Population Welfare Department Sindh is conducting awareness session in universities, colleges, provincial line Departments and shanty areas.

Public Private Partnership: Population Welfare Department Sindh fully supports public private partnership in terms of family planning services. NGOs, private health networks and private health facilities are registered to provide FP services. They are provided free contraceptives and trainings by Population Welfare Department. Currently, 421 private health facilities are registered with PWDS.

The Social Male Mobilization: The Social Male Mobilizers who were working in isolation are activated by regularization of services of 1055 Male Mobilizers. They are referring NSV/ FP Clients during camps.

In addition to that, PWDS is providing FP training to Doctors/Paramedic staff of Health Department. Lady Health Workers (LHWs) are also being trained on use of Sayana Press, a new three-month injectable contraceptive for women, to provide quality family planning services to the people of Sindh at their door step.

PWDS is also working in local communities to find effective and innovative solutions to counter population issues in Sindh. We also collaborate with partners to ensure uninterrupted services in underserved areas.

Today, on the occasion of "World Population Day", I would like to thank my team working at PWDS for providing quality services to the people of Sindh. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our partners in helping us to

achieve our targets. Population Welfare Department Sindh is committed to protect the reproductive health rights of its people and to address the challenges faced by them.

Dr. Natalia Kanem

societies that worry about labour productivity, achieving gender parity in the workforce is the most effective way to improve output and income growth. Meanwhile, in countries experiencing rapid population growth, women's empowerment through education and family planning can bring enormous benefits by way of human capital and inclusive economic growth.

Thirty years ago, the world united behind a shared vision of the future, one that recognized the rights of women and girls as central to global development. The solution is clear: Accelerating the advancement of gender equality - through access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, improved education, appropriate labour policies, and equitable norms in the workplace and home - will result in healthier families, stronger economies, and resilient societies.

That message of gender equality is as powerful today as it was then; our resolve must be as well. Let us unite once more to imagine a world in which every one of us has the equal opportunity to thrive, and let us join forces to ensure a reality in which every nation's real wealth - no matter its size or stage of development - is its people, and that means all people, not half.

UNFPA stands with all 8 billion people so that they may claim their rights and make their own choices. Because only that will lead to a future that will bring equality and prosperity to us all.

Family Planning, A Guarantee of a Prosperous Future

Important steps taken by the Population Welfare Department, Government of Sindh

- Strengthening of Training Centres and making them fully functional
- Strengthening the Supply Chain System
- Improved coordination at district level
- Addition of Service Delivery Points
- Modernizing the Monitoring System
- Taking measures for Contraceptive Commodity Security
- Digitalisation of client Data through ECR
- Focusing of Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives i.e Implants and IUCD
- Supporting Tertiary Care Hospitals for PPF and PAFP
- Functional Integration
- Providing contraceptive medicines to the hospitals
- Conducting awareness sessions
- Supporting the Public Private Partnership
- Social Male Mobilizer



Population Welfare Department



Base tariff hike in FY24
Govt to collect over Rs3.2tr extra from power consumers
 By Israr Khan and Khalid Mustafa

ISLAMABAD: The government is set to collect an additional staggering amount of over Rs3.2 trillion from power consumers, beginning July 2023, as it intends to raise the power base-tariff by approximately Rs7 per unit for the Financial Year 2023-24, according to official sources of the Power Division.

Interestingly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board is scheduled to convene on July 12, 2023, to discuss a nine-month Standby Arrangement. This meeting will serve as the final step in solidifying the agreement outlined in the IMF Staff Level Agreement.

Continued on page 9

Govt approves sale of HBFC to mortgage refinance firm

Also allows conclusion of Services International Hotel transaction

By Mehtab Haider

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) on Monday approved sell-out of House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) to a single source/negotiated transaction.

The pre-qualified single bidder Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company Limited has been named as the single bidder for the HBFC transaction.

Despite getting advice from the Aviation Division for hiring financial advisor for selling out Roosevelt Hotel at New York, the

CCoP discussed the issue and decided to defer the summary. Currently, the government has struck leasing agreement of renting out rooms of the hotel and keeping in view the decreased offering prices it is not the ripe time for selling out Roosevelt Hotel.

The Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) under Chairmanship of Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar granted approval to proceed towards successful conclusion of Services International Hotel (SIH)

Continued on page 9

Racial discrimination, unfair dismissal
British-Pakistani journalist Saima Mohsin sues CNN
 CNN

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Cable News Network (CNN) is being sued by its former reporter for racial discrimination and unfair dismissal after she was severely injured while on assignment in Israel.

The reporter, British-Pakistani Saima Mohsin, was left disabled following an accident when she was reporting from Jerusalem on the Israel-Palestine conflict, The Guardian reported.

She has been struggling to sit, stand, walk, or return to work full time-time after the incident in 2014 —



Continued on page 9

Ahead of polls, govt to release Rs131bn for MPs' schemes

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Under devised strategy for development funds, the government has authorized the release of Rs131 billion, as much as 15 percent of the allocated funds, in the first quarter (July-September) only for Parliamentarians' discretionary schemes of the Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme (SAP).

It will be quite unique that development funds of the SAP programme as discretionary funding for Parliamentarians remains the top priority of the PDM-led regime which would complete its constitutional term on August 12, 2023.

The Office Memorandum (OM) issued by the Ministry of Finance said that in pursuance of the provisions of

the Public Finance Management Act, 2019, Rule 3(9) of the Cash Management and Treasury Single Account Rules, 2020 and Financial Management and Powers of Principal Accounting Officers Regulations, 2021, the funds release strategy for Development Budget for the Current Financial Year (CFY) 2023-24, the funds for Development Budget shall be released by Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (PD&SI) Division. Out of the PSDP allocation for CFY for approved projects, 15 percent of funds will be released in quarter one, 20 percent for quarter 2, 25 percent for quarter 3, and 40 percent for quarter 4.

The Public Sector Development programme (PSDP) stands at Rs950 billion out

Continued on page 9

No decision taken as yet about IK's military trial

By Ansar Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: No decision has been taken as yet whether or not Imran Khan will be tried under the Army Act by a military court.

Informed sources said that although some of the federal ministers suggest that Imran Khan for being the alleged mastermind of May 9 attacks is a fit case for military trial, no decision has been taken in this regard.

There is a general agreement between the civil and military authorities that Imran Khan was the alleged mastermind of the May 9 attacks.

The civil side including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and quite a few federal ministers have already repeatedly said that Imran

Continued on page 9

ECP secretary's contract extended for another year

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: A few months ahead of the keenly-awaited general elections, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja has given a one-year extension in the contract of Election Commission Secretary Omar Hamid Khan.

"In continuation of this Commission's notification No 4 (4) 2017-Estt-I, July 08, 2021 and in exercise of the powers conferred under rules 8 and 11 of the Election Commission (Officers and Servants), Rules 1989 and other all ancillary powers enabling in that behalf, the honourable chief election commissioner has been pleased to extend

Continued on page 9

NAB set to arrest Buzdar under amended law

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has decided to arrest former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar in cases under inquiry, accusing him and his family members of illegally exporting wheat, accumulating assets worth over Rs9 billion and making appointments to government departments after taking bribes.

According to sources, NAB officials are of the view that after the enforcement of

Continued on page 9

Zero tolerance for wicked, mischievous elements: Mariyum

Says Imran orchestrated, executed May 9 violence

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Mariyum Aurangzeb Monday made it clear that those involved in the malicious campaign against the state institutions will not be spared and taken to task as per the law.

Addressing a press conference here, Mariyum said there would be zero tolerance for these wicked and mischievous elements.

Continued on page 9

Assemblies could be dissolved earlier than Aug 13: Rana Sana

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Monday said the assemblies could be dissolved earlier than the scheduled date of August 13 to "facilitate" the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

If the assemblies get dissolved on August 11 instead of August 13, the ECP will get more time — 90 days

Continued on page 9

Ramesh sees religious tourism as source of prosperity in country

Three-day international Gandhara symposium begins in Islamabad today

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairman Prime Minister's Task Force on Gandhara Tourism Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani Monday said the promotion of religious tourism would play a key role in making a roadmap for prosperity and development of the country.

Flanked by a delegation of Buddhist monks from

Continued on page 9

Contempt plea filed against two senior SC judges

By Sohail Khan

ISLAMABAD: A contempt petition has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking to initiate contempt of court proceedings against two senior judges for not hearing pleas challenging the trial of civilians in military courts.

Advocate Muhammad Shahid Rana filed the petition under Article 204(2) of the Constitution, read with sections 2(b), (c), 3, 5, 6(c), 7, 11, and 12 of the Contempt

Continued on page 9

LHC dismisses PTI pleas against JIT

Says govt competent to form investigation team in cases in question

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Monday dismissed various petitions filed by PTI leaders, challenging the formation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) by the Punjab caretaker government to investigate cases of violence including attacks on police teams outside the Zaman Park residence of former prime minister Imran Khan.

In its judgment, a

Continued on page 9

JS Bank ranked as 'Most Innovative Digital Banking Service Provider'

Award recognises Bank's vision to provide its customers with safe, hassle-free digital banking solutions

By our correspondent

KARACHI: JS Bank, one of the fastest-growing banks in Pakistan, has been recognised as the Most Innovative Digital Banking Service Provider in 2023 by the International Finance Awards.

The award is a recognition of the Bank's vision to provide its customers with

Continued on page 9

Dr Syrus Qazi to be new foreign secretary

Faisal Chaudhry to be UK HC in Aug; Anna Baloch to take over as ambassador to EU, Belgium

By Muhammad Saleh Zaair

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Affairs Special Secretary Dr Syrus Sajjad Qazi will be country's new foreign secretary to replace as Dr Asad Majeed Khan who is retiring in four weeks.

In another major decision, the government would not change any ambassador/high commissioner currently posted in various capitals. Several ambassadors are supposed to be changed or

Continued on page 9

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BAKE PARLOR سب ہی کہاتے ہیں

Some day all baking will be done this way



Pakistani singer Natasha Baig performs with Korean band Ensemble Su at the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, on Sunday evening — Photo courtesy: ACP (story on page 14)

Ex-SHO arrested after bail revoked in ransom kidnapping case

Cop accused of holding citizen captive on North Nazimabad police station's roof, demanding Rs5m to release him

By Yousuf Katpar

A former station house officer (SHO) of the North Nazimabad police station was arrested on Monday after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) revoked his interim pre-arrest bail in a case pertaining to the alleged abduction of a man for ransom.

Ex-SHO Abdul Moeed, other cops named Mehboob Kalhoro and Muhammad Asif, and their accomplices Mukhtiar, Asad Raza and Kashif, were booked for their alleged involvement in kidnapping Ismat this March and demanding Rs5 million for his release. The victim was held captive on the North Nazimabad police station's roof.

The ATC-V judge pronounced his order after hearing arguments from both sides. He dismissed the police officer's plea seeking confirmation of the bail granted to him. The judge also rejected co-accused Asif's application seeking a post-arrest bail in the case.

"Reasonable grounds exist to believe that the accused have committed the

alleged offence, and sufficient material is available on record to connect the applicants/accused with the commission of the alleged offence," observed the judge.

He added that the punishment for the alleged offence was the death sentence or life imprisonment, which fell within the ambit of the prohibitory clause of Section 497 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Citing the case record, the judge said the victim was recovered from the roof of the police station, and at that time, Moeed was posted as the SHO, so without his permission, no one could be kept at the police station.

The accused policeman, who was present in court on interim bail, was then taken into custody and sent to the central prison.

According to the prosecution, on March 22 a person named Qadir called Ismat on his mobile phone and told him to reach Block-A of North Nazimabad for a deal of black scorpion.

The prosecution said that the victim, and his friends Saleem and Shoaib reached

the location, but three men kidnapped Ismat and brought him to the roof of the North Nazimabad police station, then demanded Rs5 million for his release.

The kidnappers later agreed to a payment of Rs400,000, the prosecution claimed, adding that the victim's cousin was called to the North Nazimabad police station, where one of the accused led him to the roof.

In the meantime, mentioned the prosecution, an Anti-Violent Crime Cell team, on being informed of the incident, raided the police station to rescue the abducted man and recover the ransom money.

The defence counsel, however, contended that the ex-SHO was on leave when Ismat was abducted and kept on the roof of the police station. Claiming his innocence, he pleaded with the judge to confirm the interim bail granted to the accused.

An FIR was registered under the relevant sections of the Pakistan Penal Code, read with Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Missing Daily Jang reporter Askari returns home

By our correspondent

A journalist associated with the Daily Jang has returned home after an enforced disappearance of a day.

Senior reporter at Daily Jang Syed Muhammad Askari returned home on the night between Sunday and Monday after around 26 hours of detention. He was allegedly picked up by personnel in police uniforms and plainclothes on the night between Saturday and Sunday near Qayyumabad Interchange while he was returning from an event.

His wife Shazia Askari had filed an application at the Baloch Colony police station over his alleged abduction and requested the police for his immediate release.

The complainant stated in her application that personnel in police uniform and plainclothes abducted her husband from a spot near the Qayyumabad Interchange when he was returning from an event along with his friend. She added that those who picked up her husband had their faces covered and they intercepted her husband in a police mobile van and a white vehicle at around 1:15 am on Sunday.

Various journalist bodies had expressed profound concern over the enforced disappearance of Askari.

Continued on page 14

SHC restrains West DC from interfering with builder's 14-acre land

Petitioner says influential land grabbers have encroached upon his land in Manghopir

By Jamal Khurshid

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has restrained the West deputy commissioner and others from interfering with the possession of a private builder's 14 acres of land meant for a housing scheme in the Manghopir area till further orders.

The interim order came on a lawsuit of the private builder against encroachment of his 14 acres of land meant for a housing scheme by influential land grabbers.

The plaintiff's counsel submitted that his client owned 80 acres of land in the Manghopir area that was regularised in June 2011. He submitted that the plaintiff was the owner of a private housing scheme on the subject land but private defendants Ali Hasan Zahri and others with connivance of official respondents had encroached upon 14 acres of the land meant for the housing society.

He also placed documents in support of his claim on the land and requested the high court to declare that the plaintiff was the owner of the land in question and the act of private defendants of encroaching upon the land of

the plaintiff was illegal. He requested the SHC to restrain the official and private defendants from encroaching upon the private land of the plaintiff and issue an interim order.

A single bench of the SHC comprising Justice Mohammad Faisal Kamal Alam after a preliminary hearing of the lawsuit issued notices to the West deputy commissioner and others, and called their comments on the next hearing.

In the meantime, the high court restrained the private and official respondents from interfering into the possession of the land owned by the plaintiff till further orders.

Missing persons
The SHC has also issued notices to federal and provincial law officers, Sindh inspector general of police and others on petitions against disappearance of two citizens, including a woman.

The petitioners, Naheed and Naseer Khan, had submitted that Maqsood Ahmed Mahar and Rubina had been missing from the Malir and Sachal areas and their whereabouts were unknown.

The petitioners' counsel submitted that Mahar was al-

legedly picked up by personnel of law enforcement agencies on June 7 and since then he had not been produced before any court of law.

He said that neither were police disclosing the whereabouts of the detainee nor was he being produced before any court of law.

The SHC, after the preliminary hearing of the petitions, issued notices to the advocate general, prosecutor general and others, and called their comments.

Naseer's counsel submitted that Rubina had been missing since June 14 and police failed to recover her.

The investigation officer of the Sachal police station submitted that the whereabouts of the woman were being looked for. He expressed the hope that she would be recovered. He sought time to submit a progress report.

The SHC directed the investigation officer to file a progress report and produce the woman before the court on the next date of hearing. The high court observed that if the missing woman was not produced, the concerned SSP shall appear before court and explain the position.

Mugging victim shot dead on doorstep in Quaidabad

By our correspondent

A mugging victim was shot dead on his doorstep in the Quaidabad locality, while another man was gunned down and his two minor sons were wounded allegedly over personal enmity in the Lyari area on Monday.

According to details, 26-year-old Ehsan was killed by the firing of robbers in New Muzaffarabad Colony, which falls within the jurisdiction of the Quaidabad police station. After receiving information, police and rescue workers reached the crime scene and took the casualty to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC).

Police said the deceased was the only brother of six sisters, adding that he was associated with the IT sector and was a father of two. Officials said the man was killed on his doorstep.

Police have obtained the CCTV camera footage of the incident that shows the victim sitting on his doorstep talking to someone when the suspects arrived on a motorbike, added the officials.

They said the footage shows one of the suspects jumping off the motorbike as soon as the vehicle stopped and snatching Ehsan's mobile phone, adding that even though the victim was cooperating, the suspect shot him.

Continued on page 14

Online cab driver, passenger killed in DHA road accident

By our correspondent

An online taxi driver and a woman passenger lost their lives in a road accident that occurred near Creek Mart, Phase-VIII, Defence Housing Authority, in the early hours of Monday.

The accident resulted in the death of Ali Raza, 30, and Sheena, 25, while another passenger, Zohaib, 40, sustained serious injuries. According to Station House Officer (SHO) Azam Rajpur of the Sahil police station, the accident occurred when a speeding vehicle collided with a footpath in Defence Phase 8.

The impact was so immense that both the occupants of the vehicle were thrown out, and the vehicle itself was severely damaged. Prompt action was taken, and the bodies of the deceased, as well as the injured individual, were immediately taken to Jinnah Hospital for medical attention.

The victims were identified as 30-year-old Ali Raza, son of Nusrat, and 25-year-old Sheena. While Raza hailed from Multan, Punjab, further verification and details regarding Sheena and the injured Zohaib were yet to be determined. Unfortunately, Zohaib remains unconscious and is currently unable to provide a statement regarding the accident.

Authorities have initiated an investigation into the case, and efforts are underway to uncover all pertinent information surrounding the incident. Preliminary investigations suggested that Raza, the deceased driver, worked for online taxi service Careem. He had picked up Sheena and Zohaib from a location in DHA and was en route to their destination when the tragedy occurred.

Reports indicated that the vehicle was traveling at an excessive speed, which likely contributed to the severity of the accident.

Sharea Faisal renovation expected to be completed in one year

LG Minister Nasir Hussain attends project's foundation stone-laying ceremony

By our correspondent

Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah held a foundation stone-laying ceremony for project for the renovation of 18-kilometre Sharea Faisal on Monday.

In the project, the beauty of the main artery of the city would be enhanced, while its renovation would be done in a modern style, he said while addressing the ceremony on Monday.

The minister said that by implementing the vision of Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto, the government of Sindh was working day and night to build and develop the infrastructure of the city.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and his team were working tirelessly to provide basic facilities in every sector to the people of Karachi, the effects of which had started becoming noticeable, he said.

After the road was renovated, he said, the positive image of the city would be seen prominently in the world, and tourists who entered the city from the airport used Sharea Faisal.

While travelling on Sharea Faisal, Hussain said, one could enjoy the beautiful scenery of the city. The civic agencies had full support for the renovation of the road



Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah speaks at the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the project of renovating Sharea Faisal. Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab is also present on the occasion — PPI photo

from the airport to the metropolis, he added.

The provincial minister said the process of the development of the city was going on, and the Sindh government had successfully completed most of the projects in a short period of time, while the repair work of more than 400 small and big roads was going on rapidly.

Also addressing the ceremony, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab said all institutions were playing their role well to

make the city one of the developed cities. If the development process continued at the same pace, the time was not far when Karachi would be able to achieve a prominent position.

He said the display of banners and wall-chalking would be completely prohibited on Sharea Faisal, and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation would continue its full cooperation with the provincial government.

Director General Karachi

Development Authority (KDA) Syed Muhammad Ali Shah said KDA experts and experienced engineers, officers and employees would fully demonstrate their skills for the renovation of Sharea Faisal and would implement the plan in a short period of 12 months. Plantation, walkways for citizens, establishment of bus stops, street furniture, lane-marking, signage and regularisation of billboards will be allowed on both sides of highway roads

from the airport to Metropole. The project is estimated to be of around Rs195.71 million.

LG Secretary Najam Shah, PPP leader Javed Naguri, Asif Khan, Lal Chand Jakhani, Manwar Wasan, Gul Muhammad Jakhari, Makhdoom Iqbal Wasan, Khalil Hot, Aslam Samu, Chief Engineer Nadeem Iqbal, Member Finance KDA Muhammad Kashif Khan, Executive Engineer KDA Rahat Fahim and other officers were also present on the occasion.

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Korean traditional and modern music captivates ACP audience

News Desk

The Arts Council of Pakistan and the Korean Consul General Karachi jointly organised a Korean fusion music programme, 'Ensemble Su', leaving the audience mesmerised.

Korean Consul General Yi Sungho, Karachi Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Memon, Mirza Ikhtiyar Baig, Executive Director Arts Council Daniyal Umar and a large number of music lovers attended, said a press release issued on Monday.

The event featured Korean traditional and modern music. Pakistan's famous singer Natasha Baig showed the magic of her voice along with Korean musicians.

Addressing the programme, Consul General Yi Sungho said that the exchange of cultural programmes is a good tradition and will promote the cultures of both countries.

He said the cultures of Pakistan and Korea are very different, and such programmes will strengthen their cultural relationship. "It is a proud moment for me that today the Korean group Ensemble Su is performing with Pakistani singer Natasha Baig. I thank the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi who supported this year also."

Commissioner Iqbal Memon said the Arts Council has become a great organisation of arts and culture which we are proud of.

Executive Director Arts Council Daniyal Umar said that through cultural programmes between Pakistan and Korea, people can be brought closer to one another. He hoped that this cultural programme would further strengthen the relationship between Pakistan and Korea.

He further said that art has no boundaries, and such programmes will give the artists of both countries the opportunity to learn a lot.

Daniyal Umar presented a bouquet to the Korean consul general.

Robust response to IT courses at Governor House as one million apply

By our correspondent

A staggering number of one million candidates have submitted their applications to attend the free Information Technology courses, which will be conducted at the Sindh Governor House.

This initiative aimed to empower the youth of the province by equipping them with valuable computer-related skills. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori revealed this information on Monday while inaugurating a new gate near the existing Gate No 4 of the Governor House, designated for the participants of the upcoming IT learning program.

Tessori announced that an aptitude test would be conducted in the near future to select the first phase of 100,000 students from among these one million candidates for the free IT courses. The candidates who had shown interest in attending these courses

come from various regions across the province.

To streamline the process, the lists of roll numbers of registered candidates appearing in the aptitude test would be uploaded on social media platforms. This approach would ensure transparency and accessibility for all applicants.

The selected candidates would have the opportunity to participate in IT courses focusing on the fields of

metaverse, web 3.0, and artificial intelligence. On the day of the aptitude test, proper parking facilities would be made available outside the Governor House to accommodate the candidates and their parents.

The governor also disclosed that several private and public sector universities had expressed their willingness to offer admissions to students who successfully pass the aptitude test, which would be held at

the Governor House. Highlighting the financial aspect of these welfare initiatives, Governor Tessori emphasised that not a single penny from the public exchequer was being utilised for these projects. He expressed his gratitude to the media for their unwavering support in promoting these initiatives, which aim to assist underprivileged families and enhance the IT skills of students from low and middle-income backgrounds.

Other incidents
A man was killed in a firing incident inside his house in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area. His body was taken to the JPMC, where he was identified as 44-year-old Mubashir. Police said that the incident could be suicide, adding that their investigation was under way.

CITY PULSE

Malika-e-Tabassum
The Arts Council of Pakistan is hosting 'Malika-e-Tabassum', a one-hour stand-up comedy performance by veteran artiste Bushra Ansari. The show has been directed by Dawar Mehmood and starts at 8pm. It will run until July 15. Call 03333186299 for more information.



Two suspects sent on nine-day remand in M6 Motorway corruption case

By Aftab Ahmed

HYDERABAD: An accountability court on Monday sent two suspects on a nine-day remand for investigations into the M6 Motorway corruption case.

National Accountability Bureau (NAB) sources said Rafiq Solangi and his driver Ghulam Hussain Korai were arrested during an operation in Punjab. Initially, they were produced before a local court in Punjab. Later, they were shifted from Punjab to Hyderabad.

NAB Prosecutor Jungo Khan confirmed the arrests and explained that Rafiq was the son of Rehmatullah Solangi who was wanted in the mega corruption case as he had allegedly benefitted from corruption in the land purchase funds for the highway.

The two suspects were presented before the Accountability Court No 2 Hyderabad where NAB requested for their remand. The accountability court accepted the request and remanded the two suspects to a nine-day investigation remand in jail.

Four MQM-L men held, 39 others booked in FIR for staging rally

By our correspondent

Police initiated a crackdown and arrested workers on Monday for holding a rally of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-London (MQM-L) in the Korangi area.

The MQM-L staged the rally in support of its founder, The Zaman Town police registered a case and arrested four people on the spot. They also launched a crackdown against the party in Korangi and Landhi areas on the night between Sunday and Monday and detained more than 15 workers.

The MQM-L founder has been named under Section 109 in the FIR, which has been registered on a complaint of the state and includes other provisions related to rioting and shouting slogans.

When the patrolling police approached the workers, there were people in cars and on motorcycles blocking a road and shouting slogans. Eighty to 90 people participated in the rally.

The participants were shouting slogans in support of the MQM-L London founder, the FIR said, adding that when the police tried to disperse them, more sloganeering and rioting took place.

Police arrested four persons, identified as Ali alias Khokhla, Sajid, Javed and Salim, on the spot. Another 39 people are also named in the FIR, police said.

Missing Daily Jang...

Continued from page 13

In a condemnation statement, Crime Reporters Association (CRA) President Kashif Hashmi, General Secretary Rehan Chishti and members of the Executive Council condemned the abduction of the senior reporter.

The CRA president and secretary said in the joint statement that unidentified masked persons had whisked away a senior journalist which was a reprehensible act and the provincial government should take this matter seriously.

They called for early return of Askari and warned that the journalist community reserved the right to protest.

Similarly, an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the Sindh Journalists and Other Media Practitioners Commission was held with its chairman Justice (ret'd) Rashid A Razvi in chair.

The meeting expressed anger and concern over incidents of kidnapping of journalists.

CHARGES OF PROTECTING GANGSTERS

Verdict on plea for withdrawal of case against Dr Asim, others put off to Aug 12

By our correspondent

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) has deferred until August 12 the pronouncement of its verdict on an application filed by the prosecution seeking the court's nod to withdraw a criminal case against former federal minister and Pakistan Peoples Party leader Dr Asim Hussain and other politicians.

Dr Asim has been charged with allegedly treating and harbouring terror suspects, including political militants and gangsters, at the North Nazimabad and Clifton branches of the Ziauddin Hospital at the behest of the PPP's Abdul Qadir Patel, MQM-P's Anis Qaimkhani, former Karachi mayor Wasim Akhtar, Rauf

Siddiqui and Pasban leader Usman Moazzam.

The ATC-II judge was to announce its judgement on the plea on Saturday, but it was deferred till August 12 due to the judge being on leave.

Wasim Akhtar, Anees Qaimkhani, Rauf Siddiqui and Usman Moazzam turned up on bail while Dr Asim and Abdul Qadir Patel were called absent.

The case was adjourned till August 12 with a direction to the accused to appear on the next date for the pronouncement of the order.

In February, the Sindh government, through the special public prosecutor, Muhammad Younus, moved an application before the court seeking its permission

to withdraw the case against the politicians facing the trial. The application was moved under Section 494 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) read with Section 9-A(3)(III) of the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Function & Power) Act, 2009.

The prosecutor informed the judge that the Sindh government wanted to withdraw the case against all the accused persons and sought the court's permission for this purpose. He placed on record a letter dated February 16 written to Sindh Prosecutor General Faiz Shah by the home department giving the go-ahead to the proposal for withdrawal of the case with the consent of the court. The prosecutor said there

was no material on record which may result in the conviction of the accused.

An FIR was lodged at the North Nazimabad police station under sections 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence or giving false information to screen offender), 202 (intentional omission to give information of offence by person bound to inform), 216 (harbouring offender who has escaped from custody whose apprehension has been ordered), 216-A (harbouring robbers or dacoits), 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant or banker, merchant or agent) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code read with various sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

Naeem laments Abbasi Shaheed Hospital's state of neglect

By our correspondent

The Jamaat-e-Islami has warned that due to its state of neglect and the stagnant pools of wastewater in its surroundings, the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital (ASH) in Karachi can spread infectious diseases among its visitors instead of treating their serious ailments.

The warning to this effect was given by JI Karachi chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman as he paid a visit to ASH on Monday to personally observe its plight.

The JI leader said that the sorry state of affairs of ASH was due to corruption in the affairs of the Sindh gov-

ernment and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. He lamented that essential clinical examination facilities, including ultrasound, CT scan and MRI, were not available at ASH.

He said that the ruined state of ASH exposed the tall claims of the provincial government about upgrading public healthcare facilities to match world-class standards.

He demanded that the salaries of ASH's house officers be paid immediately because they had been protesting for not receiving any remuneration for the past three months. He said that the salaries of ASH's house officers should be raised on a par with their counter-

parts at Sindh's public hospitals.

Rehman said that the quality of the healthcare services at ASH should immediately be improved because it was the only public hospital in District Central. He said that poor patients from the East and West districts also came to the hospital for treatment.

He said that being a teaching hospital that had been built 50 years ago, ASH should not have degenerated to such a sorrowful state.

He recalled that ASH had been functioning well, with the provision of necessary healthcare services, during the time of former Karachi mayor Naimatullah Khan.

Other incidents

A man was killed in a firing incident inside his house in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area. His body was taken to the JPMC, where he was identified as 44-year-old Mubashir. Police said that the incident could be suicide, adding that their investigation was under way.

Separately, two people were injured in a firing incident near Sohrah Goth. They were taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital. Police said the injured were identified as Abdul Nabi and Abdul Jabbar. Officials said that the incident could be a result of personal enmity.

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79 intercity bus drivers fined, 13 vehicles impounded

Transport dept imposes fines of Rs56,600 over illegal use of CNG and LPG cylinders

By our correspondent

The Sindh Transport Department fined 79 drivers of intercity passenger buses on Monday for illegally using compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders.

The action was taken across the province. The transport department imposed fines of Rs56,600 on 79 drivers of intercity passenger buses on the directions of Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon.

Under the supervision of Transport Secretary Saleem Rajput, different inspection teams in the province, each led by the relevant Regional Transport Authority district secretary, along with traffic police officials have daily been checking passenger-carrying vehicles.

These private vehicles plying between cities through the highways are being checked to curb the practice of using illegal CNG cylinders and charging fares that are higher than the rates fixed by the government.

The transport department took action in Karachi, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, Larkana, Badin, Khairpur and Thatta, imposed fines worth Rs56,600 on 79 drivers and impounded 13 vehicles.

In Karachi, 32 vehicles were checked and fines of Rs16,000 were imposed over charging excessive fares from passengers, while Rs4,200 was also returned to the passengers of those vehicles.

To provide hassle-free and affordable transportation to the public, Memon had directed Rajput to take special measures for maintaining the writ of the government and ensure that the transporters abide by the official fares.

Rajput said that action against those using illegal CNG cylinders and charging excessive fares would continue on a daily basis. He requested all transporters to follow the rules, and get their vehicle route permits and vehicle fitness certificates renewed on time.

Thirty-two vehicles were also checked in Sukkur, where fines of Rs10,500 were imposed over the use of illegal CNG and LPG cylinders, while four vehicles were impounded and CNG cylinders were removed from two vehicles.

Four vehicles were impounded in Mirpurkhas for the illegal use of CNG cylinders. Twenty-five vehicles were checked in Khairpur, and fines of Rs4,700 were imposed, while five vehicles were impounded over the use of CNG cylinders.

Zindigi by JS Bank bags best Digital Startup Award 2023

KARACHI: Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, is pleased to announce yet another achievement of being recognized as the Best Startup of the Year at the esteemed Pakistan Digital Award 2023.

This recognition comes as Zindigi continues to demonstrate commendable growth in its operations at a brisk pace, promising to make a significant impact in the industry in the near future.

This notable accomplishment adds to Zindigi's series of achievements within just one year of entering the market, building on their earlier success at the Pakistan Technology Excellence Award 2022.

Receiving the Best Startup of the Year award at the Pakistan Digital Award is a testament to the incredible dedication and hard

work of the entire Zindigi team," said Noman Azhar, Chief Officer at Zindigi. "We remain committed to our mission of redefining the financial world for the digital generation in Pakistan. This award motivates us to continue our journey towards revolutionizing the industry and providing innovative financial solutions to our valued customers."

"We are delighted to win as it reflects our wonderful team's commitment and trust of millions of our customers base", said Meena Munawar Khan, Zindigi's Chief Product and Marketing Officer.

Since its launch, Zindigi has made significant contributions to the mutual funds and stocks market. Since its launch, Zindigi has made significant contributions to the mutual funds and stocks market.

US beat Canada on penalties, join Jamaica in Gold Cup semis

MIAMI: The United States beat Canada 3-2 on penalties after their CONCACAF Gold Cup quarter-final ended 2-2 following extra-time in Cincinnati on Sunday.

The USA will now face Panama on Wednesday in their semi-final in Las Vegas while the other tie will see Jamaica take on Mexico.

The Reggae Boyz overcame a determined Guatemala 1-0 to reach the CONCACAF Gold Cup semi-final on Sunday thanks to Amari Bell's 51st-minute goal.

A lackluster encounter between the tournament-favorite Americans and John Herdman's Canada came alive in the 88th minute.

US substitute Brandon Vazquez, playing on his home ground where he performs for FC Cincinnati, rose magnificently to head in a deep cross from the left by DeJuan Jones.

But there was still time for Canada to respond in stoppage time when, after a VAR review, the referee pointed to the penalty spot and Steven Vitoria kept his cool to convert.

The Canadians, who had not won against the USA on American soil since 1957, then grabbed the lead in the first period of extra-time with a brilliant solo goal from Jacob Shaffelburg.

The left-winger, who plays in Major League Soccer for Nashville, picked the ball up in midfield, raced clear of Jesus Ferreira and then unleashed a left-foot drive that deflected off Matt

Miaza on the way to the far corner.

But the USA found a way to force the game to penalties with a fortunate goal six minutes from the end of the second extra period.

A long ball high into the box from goalkeeper Matt Turner was headed down by Miaza and Gianluca Busio's shot was parried out by Dayne St. Clair and flew in off the leg of Canadian defender Scott Kennedy.

American keeper Matt Turner saved the first spot kick from Vitoria but then Vazquez skied his effort high over the bar.

Arsenal's Turner, a penalty saving specialist, then kept out a soft effort from Liam Fraser before Cade Cowell finally found the net for the USA.

There were no further misses until the contest was settled when, needing to score to keep the shoot-out alive, Charles-Andreas Brym blasted his kick against the bar.

USA interim head coach B.J. Callaghan, who remains unbeaten, said his team had shown the right spirit to rise to the occasion.

"There are the moments, these are the high stakes, high impact games that we are looking to play because they test the character of the group and tonight we showed up," he told Fox Sports.

Jamaica have now reached the semi-final stage in four of the past five Gold Cups and have a chance to

make their first appearance in the final since 2017.

It was a frantic start with the Central American side buzzing around the field and there was an early chance for Guatemala's American-born striker Rubio Rubin, but his low shot was comfortably dealt with by Andre Blake.

Full-back Aaron Herrera had another chance for Guatemala, the ball falling to him in space outside the box, but he was unable to get over the rising ball and blasted his effort high.

It was one of Jamaica's Premier League contingent who created the breakthrough with Everton's Demarai Gray showing his close control and awareness as he threaded a defence-splitting pass to Bell, who drilled home from the inside-left channel.

Leon Bailey then brought an excellent save from close range out of Nicholas Hagen, the Guatemala goalkeeper's left leg denying the Aston Villa winger.

But Jamaica had their Keeper Blake to thank for a full-stretch save that kept out a header from Alejandro Galindo which was heading to the top corner.

"It's an amazing feeling to get to the semi-final. It's something we set out to do, but we don't want to stop there."

"We are going to keep on going and go and win the tournament," said Bell, who plays for promoted Premier League club Luton Town. —AFP



CINCINNATI: Canada's goalkeeper Dayne St. Clair fails to stop a goal during the Concacaf 2023 Gold Cup quarterfinal match USA at TQL Stadium here on Sunday night —AFP wirephoto

Jackson completes Jamaican sprint double with superb 200 win

KINGSTON: World-leading performances from world champion Shericka Jackson and Commonwealth Games record-holder Rasheed Broadbent highlighted Jamaica's strength on the track in Sunday's final day of the national championships.

Jackson, the reigning 200m world champion, completed a superb sprint double after she ran what was briefly a 2023 world best of 21.71 seconds (0.5m/s) to win the 200, her second world lead of the weekend after she ran a personal best 10.65 seconds to win the 100 on Friday.

Jackson took charge of the race off the curve and powered her way home, beating her previous season's best of 21.98 seconds.

She passed the 21.86 set by Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Gabby Thomas in the women's 200m semi-finals at the US athletics championships earlier on Sunday.

Thomas answered the challenge later on Sunday in the US meet's women's 200

final, blazing to victory in 21.60 to reclaim the year's fastest global time in the event and setting the stage for a showdown with Jackson at next month's World Championships in Budapest.

Before Sunday, the old mark for the year in the women's 200 was by St. Lucia's Julien Alfred at 21.91. Shelly Ann Fraser Pryce, three-time Olympic gold medal winner, ran a season-best 22.26 seconds, beating the 22.39 seconds she ran in Saturday's semi-finals, while Lanae-tava Thomas was third in 22.55.

Broadbent produced a personal best and world-leading 12.94 seconds (0.7m/s) to win the 110m hurdles in a close contest with Olympic champion Hansle Parchment.

Broadbent took over the world lead from American Cordell Tinch's 12.96 seconds and broke his previous personal best of 12.99 set last year. Parchment was second with 13.12 seconds and Orlando Bennett third in 13.19,

both season-best runs.

Andrew Hudson retained his men's 200m title, running a season-best 20.11 seconds (0.2m/s), beating Rasheed Dwyer- 20.26 seconds and Tyquendo Tracey was third with a season's best 20.48 seconds.

Yohan Blake, the second fastest man over the distance of all time, was fourth in 20.51 seconds and will miss the World Championships.

Olympic Games bronze medalist Megan Tapper produced a superb display of hurdling as she got off to a flying start and held off NCAA champion Ackera Nugent.

Tapper who had run a life time best 12.44 seconds in Saturday's semi-finals, won with 12.64 seconds (-1.9m/s), Nugent clocked 12.67 seconds and former World Champion Danielle Williams grabbed the third spot at 12.82.

World leader 18-year-old Jaydon Hibbert retained his men's triple jump title with a

mark of 17.68m (1.4m/s). Jordan Scott was second with a wind-aided 16.73m (3.0m/s) with Ryan Brown third with a wind-aided 16.03m (2.5m/s).

Hibbert, the NCAA indoor and outdoor champion, also had a wind-aided 17.65m jump (3.2m/s).

Sean Bailey won a highly anticipated battle with Antonio Watson to take his second national men's 400m title, running 44.48 seconds, just off his personal best 44.43 set earlier this season.

Watson lowered his personal best for the second time in just over a month, clocking 44.54 seconds to take second place with JeVaughn Powell third in 45.19.

Nickesha Pryce won her first women's title as she held off hard-charging Janieve Russell, the 400m hurdles champion, to win in a new personal best 50.21 seconds.

Russell also lowered her personal best to 50.76 seconds while last year's champion, Candice McLeod, was third in 51.01. —AFP

Shamael, Rizwan reach 35-plus doubles final

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The pair of Shamael Tajamul and Rizwan Hussain reached the final of 35 plus doubles in the 20th Westbury National Tennis Championships at Karachi Club on Monday.

In the semifinals, Shamael and Rizwan defeated the duo of Ali Imam and Fahad Anwar 8-3.

Parbat Kumar beat Taimoor Ansari 8-4, Ibrahim Ilfat defeated Samer Zaman 8-3, and Farhan Mustafa won against Farhan Altaf 8-5 in the second round of men's singles.

Bilal Soomro thrashed Raheel Shabbir 8-0, Omer Shahid smashed Salman Dinani 8-0, Hasheesh Kumar beat Asaad Ahmed 8-0, Saqib Zia defeated Ali Imam 8-2, and Kashaan Tariq beat Fahad Abid 8-2.

In the second round of under-14 singles, Zayd Zaman overpowered M Noor 5-3, 4-2 and Haziq Areejo beat M Yahaya 5-3, 4-2.

In the first round of juniors under-18 singles, Kashaan Tariq won against Ismail Aftab 6-0, 7-5.

In the first round of men's doubles, Haris and Danish beat Asif and Sulaiman 8-2. Parbat and Kamran thrashed Asad and Salman 8-1, Fahad and Emad won against Saad and Soyan 8-6, and Amir and Mustafa beat Mazhat and Sheeraz 8-4.

Bocce volo coaching course on 16th

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The first national bocce volo coaching/referee course and lecture on doping/sports injuries will be held on July 16.

The event is being organised by Pakistan Bocce Volo Academy at Public School in Hyderabad.

"The instructor is Yassine Ouni from Tunis. He is an international referee in Lyon-aise Boules," said Secretary PBVF Abdus Samad while talking to 'The News'.

He added that this is first of its kind course under the supervision of an international referee.



PEBBLE BEACH, California: USA's Allisen Corpuz celebrates with the Harton S. Semple Trophy during their trophy presentation after winning the 78th U.S. Women's Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links here on Sunday —AFP wirephoto

Shaheens ready for Emerging Asia Cup

By our correspondent

LAHORE: Mohammad Haris-led Pakistan Shaheens will depart in the wee hours of Tuesday from Lahore for Sri Lanka via Dubai to feature in the eight-team ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup.

The 50-over tournament will be played from 13 to 23 July in Colombo.

Shaheens are slotted in Group B with India A, Nepal and UAE A. Shaheens will open their campaign on 14 July with the match against Nepal, after which they play UAE A and India A on 17 and 19 July, respectively. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals which will be played on 21 July. The final of the tournament will be held on 23 July.

Before the team's departure, the 15-member squad along with four non-traveling reserves players took part in the six-day camp, which was held at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore. The players under the supervision of coaching staff led by head coach Mohammad Masroor worked on different aspects related to 50-over cricket including net sessions.

Apart from 22-year-old Haris (five ODIs and nine T20Is), defending champions Shaheens will have the services of seven cricketers who have represented Pakistan. The international players in the squad are: Arshad Iqbal (1 T20I), Kamran Ghulam (1 ODI), Mohamad Wasim Jnr (2 Tests, 14 ODIs, 27 T20Is), Sahibzada Farhan (3 T20Is), Saim Ayub (8 T20Is), Shah-nawaz Dahani (2 ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Tayyab Tahir (3 T20Is).

Squad: Mohammad Haris (captain, wicket-keeper), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain), Amad Butt, Arshad Iqbal, Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Mehran Mumtaz, Mubasir Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Qasim Akram, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Shah-nawaz Dahani, Sufiyan Muqem and Tayyab Tahir.

Pak women's football team tour to Singapore in danger

By our correspondent

LAHORE: Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has shown its inability to process the NOC for the country's women football team's tour of Singapore for two friendly matches because of shortage of time.

The team is scheduled to meet Singapore in friendlies at the latter's backyard on July 15 and 18.

"National Sports Federations are required to submit a complete proposal on the PSB prescribed proforma along with invitation, computer clearance proforma, surety bonds duly attested by Notary Public, undertaking by the president or vice-president, secretary of the federation and departmental NOCs for arranging government clearance, at least six (06) weeks before the departure of Pakistan team. In view of the aforesaid instructions the PSB is not in a position to process the case

at this belated stage," the Board letter it wrote to the PFF NC said.

PSB Director General Shoaib Khoso told 'The News' that the Board has processed its NOC. "There is a specific time for it. All federations have been issued SOPs and they follow a set practice. Only football is not following it. Unluckily there is no federation in football and NC is running it. It does not know the procedure," Shoaib said.

"We have written letters four times that this is the procedure. The PSB does not issue NOC. Interior Ministry and Foreign Office issue NOC. It takes time in the Interior Ministry as it verifies through various agencies the players' data. There is a need of four to six weeks to process the case," he said.

"NC has inexperienced people and they don't know how to handle such matters," he said. "The Board has processed its NOC and now

it is not in our hands when it will be issued," he said.

The PFF NC sources said that NC had immediately submitted the NOC application with the Board after receiving the invitation letter from the Football Association of Singapore on June 26.

"However due to Eid-ul-Azha holidays the PSB received the letter on the first working day," an NC source said.

The women team is training in Karachi. The team is scheduled to fly for Singapore on July 13. An NC source said that one of their representatives would meet the authorities concerned to address the issue.

"The issue is that we were invited by Singapore on June 26 and we submitted NOC document on June 27 with the Board," an NC source told 'The News'.

"Now camp is in progress in Karachi and the players are so disappointed," the source said.

wings to learn new ways on the continent.

Lucy Bronze and Keira Walsh both won the Champions League in their first season with Barcelona.

And she believes that will only make England stronger as they aim to be crowned world champions for the first time.

"You kind of develop as an individual. Me going to Germany I've developed so much on and off the pitch," said Stanway. "On the pitch I've got so much more responsibility. I have like a leadership role which I never expected to happen in such a short space of time."

"In terms of the way I am as a person I'm just so much more open. I went to a country where no one knew who I was and I'd never met anyone. I could be whoever I

wanted to be and no one was going to judge me for that. I think that's so important in a football environment to just be you."

Stanway's versatility has seen her used in various roles by England boss Sarina Wiegman, but she is determined to maintain her standards so she is no longer shifted out of her preferred role alongside Walsh in central midfield.

"I've been consistent in my performances in the position I'm playing in which I've been able to make my own and that only helps me when I come into my environment," she added.

"I need to play well in my midfield position because I don't want to go anywhere else."

Stanway's blistering strike that won a tense Euro

2022 quarter-final in extra-time 12 months ago shot her to fame.

For much of that evening in Brighton, England chased Spanish shadows and trailed until Ella Toone levelled six minutes from time.

Stanway then fired into the top corner from outside the box to complete the comeback in what she sees as a seminal moment in the history of the Lionesses after so many near misses at previous major tournaments.

"Not only because I scored it. If anyone else had scored it I would think it was a really turning point for the Lionesses," said the former Manchester City midfielder. "We'd gone 1-0 down, Spain basically had the whole of the football the whole game and we found a way to win." —AFP

Buoyed by Bayern move, England's Stanway ready to take WC by storm

In-form Australia stay humble in pursuit of home World Cup crown

SYDNEY: Australia have never progressed past the quarter-finals at seven Women's World Cups but with Sam Kerr leading an in-form team in front of their home fans they could go all the way this time. The Matildas have been consistent performers on the international stage, qualifying for the World Cup repeatedly since 1995 and reaching the last eight three times. They fell in the last 16 to Norway at the 2019 World Cup after a penalty shootout but head into this month's showpiece, co-hosted with New Zealand, in ominous form.

The Australians beat Spain early in the year before stunning European champions England 2-0 away in April, ending the Lionesses' 30-game unbeaten run. With Chelsea striker Kerr one of the best in the business, Australia are among the favourites to win the tournament, but coach Tony Gustavsson is preaching humility. "I've always believed in this team, players who are this loyal and committed," said the Swede, who was appointed in 2020.

"But I think it's very important we don't get carried away now. We need to stay very, very humble. "We need to stay in that boring grey area, middle ground to stay grounded and humble -- but we know that on any given day we might not have the best team, but we can beat the best team." If Australia are to lift the World Cup they will need their 29-year-old skipper Kerr firing. Australia's all-time leading scorer is set to be the face of the tournament. One of the world's best women players, the unassuming Kerr admitted a home World Cup brought extra pressure -- but also opportunity.

"It's going to be the biggest honour in the world to represent your country at a home World Cup in front of your family and friends," said Kerr. "We hope this team is remembered forever and we represent Australia in the best way possible and show that Australia can be a real footballing country." —AFP

Djokovic into 14th Wimbledon quarter-final

LONDON: Novak Djokovic breached the previously impenetrable defences of Hubert Hurkacz to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals for the 14th time on Monday.

Defending champion Djokovic, chasing a record-equaling eighth title and 24th Grand Slam, won 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 6-4.

In the fourth set, Djokovic broke for a crucial 4-3 lead, ending Hurkacz's perfect run of 67 service games at the tournament this year.

Victory in his 100th match at the tournament gave Djokovic a 90th win.

He is also on a 32-match win streak at the All England Club, while his 56th Grand Slam quarter-final spot is second only to the 58 of Roger Federer.

"Big credit for Hubert for playing an amazing match, he put up a great performance," said 36-year-old Djokovic.

"Honestly I don't recall the last time I felt this miserable on returning games. He has one of the best serves in the world and it's difficult to read it on one of the quickest surfaces in the sport. It was not enjoyable for me."

Djokovic will face Andrey Rublev for a place in the semi-finals.

That match will take place on Centre Court, where Djokovic has not lost since 2013.

"I feel a great connection with this court. Every match that I win, every time I step on the court I feel more confident to play the match and hopefully the love affair con-

tinues for a long time," he said.

Djokovic had been two sets up overnight when the match was suspended due to a local curfew.

He had squandered five break points in those sets and Hurkacz eventually made him pay by breaking in the 12th game of the third set on Monday.

But Djokovic hit back to break for 4-3 in the fourth and from then on there was no way back for the 17th-seeded Pole despite his 33 aces and 64 winners.

Djokovic will take a 3-1 career lead over seventh-ranked Rublev into their quarter-final on Tuesday.

Djokovic came out on top in straight sets at the same stage of this year's Australian Open.

"He's a different player to Hurkacz for sure," said the Serb.

"Very powerful, very quick ground strokes, loves to dictate. I'm not going to talk to much about tactics - I will to keep that to myself."

World number three Daniil Medvedev reached his first Wimbledon quarter-final on Monday when Czech opponent Jiri Lehecka retired with an injury.

Medvedev was 6-4, 6-2 ahead when his 37th-ranked opponent, who had needed a medical timeout for a right foot injury, retired from their Court One clash.

Former US Open winner Medvedev will face either Stefanos Tsitsipas, the Greek world number five, or un-

seeded Christopher Eubanks of the United States for a place in the semi-finals.

"I saw that his movement was restricted but I didn't see that it was causing any real trouble," said Medvedev.

"But when I saw that he was retiring, I saw that it was different."

"I had no choice but to keep battling until the last point. I feel sorry for Jiri. Hopefully he'll recover and play at many more Grand Slams." Defending champion Elena Rybakina made the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Monday after opponent Beatriz Haddad Maia quit in tears with injury after just five games.

Rybakina was 3-1 up when Brazilian world number 13 Haddad Maia took a medical timeout on Centre Court to treat a lower back injury.

She limped back onto the court but was reduced to walking pace and was in tears as she saw out the fifth game before retiring.

"It's never easy to finish a match like this. I hope it is nothing really serious, it is really unlucky for Beatriz," said Rybakina.

"Hopefully she is going to get better and I am just happy to play another round."

She added: "I was feeling the ball really well even though it was really windy today."

World number three Rybakina will face either two-time champion Petra Kvitová or 2022 runner-up Ons Jabeur for a place in the semi-finals —AFP



LONDON: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz during their men's singles tennis match on the eighth day of the 2023 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Tennis Club here on Monday —AFP wirephoto

Pakistan to host hockey qualifying rounds for Paris Olympics

By Syed Intikhab Ali

KARACHI: The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced that Pakistan, China and Spain will host the Olympic Qualifiers for Paris Olympics 2024 from January 13 to 21 2024.

According to the FIH official website, the qualifying rounds for men's hockey for Paris Olympics 2024 will be held in Pakistan and Spain and for women's hockey in China.

The Asian teams will participate in the Olympic qualifying rounds in Lahore and European teams in Valencia.

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) confirmed that the qualifying rounds for Paris Olympics have been allotted to Pakistan.

It will be the first time that the Olympics qualifying rounds for hockey will be held in Pakistan.

PHF president Brig (rtd) Khalid Sajjad Khokar, when contacted, said that it is a great achievement for Pakistan hockey. "PHF had been making efforts for this purpose for past many months," he added.

He said that besides qualifying rounds for Paris Olympics 2024, other international events would also be held in Pakistan in future.

PHF secretary Haider Hussain said that PHF is ready to organise this event in a befitting manner. A new astro turf has been laid in Lahore for this purpose, he added.

He further said that after 1990 World Cup in Lahore, Olympic qualifying round is the biggest hockey event that is going to be organised in Pakistan.

The top three teams in each of these FIH Hockey Olympic Qualification Tournaments will qualify for Paris 2024.

Aisam to lead Pakistan at Asian Games

By Abdul Mohi Shah

ISLAMABAD: Aisamul Haq will lead Pakistan's medals campaign in the 19th Asian Games to be held in Hangzhou (China) from September 23.

Aisam was forced to pull out of the Wimbledon because of some injury issues. He is expected to regain fitness within the next couple of weeks and will be leading Pakistan at the Games.

Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has named a four-member team consisting of top men and women for the Asian Games.

Aisamul and Aqeel Khan will represent Pakistan in men's singles, doubles and

mixed doubles events while country's two best women players Sarah Ibrahim Khan and Ushana Suhail have been selected to represent Pakistan in the women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles of the Games.

Though the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) was interested in sending a bigger tennis contingent consisting of five men and five women players, due to financial limitations, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) decided to support only four players.

Apart from men's and women's singles, three other gold medals are at stake in the Asian Games tennis event. Men's doubles,

women's doubles and mixed doubles make it five gold medals in total at the Games tennis event.

"We have picked the best team. There is no one better than Aisam and Aqeel in the men category and Sarah and Ushana when it comes to women category."

Both are the best as they proved in trials and later in the National Games," a PTF official said.

"Aisam is an automatic choice because of his vast international experience and his ability to play under pressure. Since the financial resources are limited we cannot afford adding players for international exposure."

He hoped that the pair of Aisam and Aqeel would make their presence count.

"I hope that Aisam and Aqeel will be one of the formidable pairs at the Games. A fit and in-form Aqeel, as he has shown in the recent past, will be the best around."

On Aisamul's absence from Wimbledon, the official said that he had some injury issues.

"He is expected to be fit and ready to start training shortly. Hopefully, the Pakistan tennis contingent will start training together weeks ahead of their departure to China for the Games."

Maaz's knee injury hurts Pakistan wushu medal chances

By Alam Zeb Safi

LAHORE: Injury to the country's premier fighter Maaz Khan, which has ruled him out of this summer Asian Games, and some accreditation issues have diminished Pakistan's medal chances in wushu in the quadrennial event which will be held in Hangzhou.

Experienced Maaz, who was a big medal hope in the Asian Games, has developed a serious knee injury. His MRI report shows that he has torn his ACL.

"I developed a knee injury after Eid. When I started training it aggravated. I could not play in the National Games. Then I went to the national camp where I was feeling severe pain. The doctor at Lahore said that my ACL has torn. I also underwent check-up here at Karachi and the doctor says that my ACL has torn but it has not separated. Dr Sheraz says that it will take four to

five months to recover," Maaz told 'The News' from Karachi on Monday.

"At Lahore I had been told by the doctor that it would need surgery. But here I have been told that there is no need of any surgery and rest and treatment along with some exercises will help me recover," he said.

"It really hurt me. I had planned to win a medal at the Asian Games this time. When I play with Iranian and Chinese fighters I give them very tough time and this time I was very hopeful for a medal but injury at such a crucial stage when my accreditation had also been done is really disappointing," Maaz said.

"Pakistan Wushu Federation's (PWF) president Malik Iftikhar and my family are motivating me. InshaAllah I will make a comeback after recovery and will continue playing for the country," said Maaz, who was part of the Pakistan squad in the 2010 and 2018 Asian Games.

A PWF source told 'The News' that Maaz was spotted at the national camp at Lahore while feeling pain. "He was then sent for a check-up. His MRI was conducted and the doctor said that his ACL had torn and he would need surgery. He said that it would take him one year to recover and after two years he would be able to play again," the federation source said.

"Maaz told us about his injury quite late. Had he informed us well in time then we could have ensured entry of any other fighter in his weight category," the source said.

Now a four-member squad will represent Pakistan in the Asian Games slated to be held in Hangzhou from September 23 to October 9: Abdul Khaliq (WAPDA, -60kg), Abdur Rehman (Punjab, -65kg), Miss Samreen (Punjab, -52kg) and 2019 South Asian Games silver medalist Miss Maira (Punjab, -60kg).

Shehroze Kashif races rivals, hunts funds to chase summit record

LAHORE: Pakistani mountaineer Shehroze Kashif faces sub-zero temperatures and biting winds in his race to scale the world's highest peaks, but his biggest challenge is finding the money.

Kashif, 21, aims this year to become the youngest person to climb every peak above 8,000 metres (26,247 feet), all of which are in Asia, with five in Pakistan.

Summitting Everest set him back around \$60,000, and climbing all 14 "super peaks" can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars - funds that are especially difficult to raise in a country gripped by an economic crisis.

"My father sold my car and a piece of land... that's how I did Everest," Kashif told AFP from his home in Lahore, the sub-tropical, low-altitude city where he was born.

Only around 50 people are believed to have climbed all 14 super peaks, the youngest being Mingma Gyabu "David" Sherpa of Nepal, who summited them all by age 30.

To break this record, Kashif still has three mountains to conquer: China's Shishapangma, and Cho Oyu and Manaslu in Nepal, having to re-climb the latter after a new, higher summit was officially recognised in 2021.

Hot on Kashif's heels is Adriana Brownlee, a 22-year-old British-Spanish mountaineer who is also racing to be the youngest to scale all the eight-thousanders.

Kashif describes Brownlee - the youngest woman to climb the world's second-highest peak, K2 - as "sharing the same stage".

But unlike Brownlee, who has climbed 10 eight-thousanders, Kashif does not have international sponsorship and said he even struggles to get backers in Pakistan. —AFP



CHITTAGONG: Afghanistan's players attend a practice session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here on Monday on the eve of their third One-day International match against Bangladesh —AFP wirephoto

India eye WTC boost from struggling West Indies

ROSEAU, Dominica: India's latest quest for an elusive World Test Championship title gets under way on Wednesday in the lush tropical setting of Windsor Park Stadium in Dominica against a West Indies team expected to struggle to cope with the formidable challenge presented by the visitors in the two-match series.

Rocked by the failure of the two-time winners to qualify for the 50-over-a-side World Cup in India in October-November this year, the Caribbean cricket community is unlikely to find solace in the shape of Kraigg Brathwaite's side in seeking to end a barren run of 21 years without a single Test match victory against the Indians.

ends in Trinidad the following week in what will be the 100th Test between the two teams, marks the start of the next two-year WTC cycle leading to the final in 2025.

Beaten by New Zealand in the inaugural final in 2021 and then outplayed by Australia in the 2023 decider just four weeks ago, Rohit Sharma's team is likely to show no more than three changes from the side that lost the new Test cricket showpiece by 209 runs at The Oval in London.

With veteran batsman Cheteshwar Pujara dropped and pacer Mohammed Shami rested, there are now opportunities for either of the uncapped Yashasvi Jaiswal or Rituraj Gaikwad to make the number three spot their own

while it will be a toss-up between Jaydev Unadkat and Navdeep Saini to fill the breach in the fast bowling department.

Spinning all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin, unlucky to have been omitted from last month's duel with Australia, should have the chance to add to his already impressive record against the West Indies.

In 11 Tests against these opponents he has taken 60 wickets and compiled four of his five Test centuries in averaging just over 50 with the bat.

As disconsolate as they may be by the West Indies' failure to advance to the World Cup, fans in Dominica are anticipating that one of their own, 24-year-old Alick

Athanaze, will make his Test debut in the series opener in the middle-order in place of fellow left-hander Kyle Mayers.

While Mayers has been ruled out of contention due to niggling injuries, two other players who were part of the West Indies' abysmal World Cup qualifying campaign in Zimbabwe over the previous three weeks - all-rounder Jason Holder and fast bowler Alzarri Joseph - are expected to shoulder much of the responsibility to quell the threat of a formidable Indian batting line-up.

Senior pacer Kumar Roach will still lead the attack though, while the decision on whether or not to go with two specialist spinners in Jomel Warrican and the re-

called Rakheem Cornwall or opt for the raw pace but questionable fitness of Shannon Gabriel will be determined by the appearance of the pitch on Wednesday morning.

Windsor Park has generally offered little encouragement for fast bowlers over the years but there is an element of the unknown this time around as the venue is hosting its first Test since Pakistan's historic series-clinching triumph in 2017.

Notwithstanding their obvious underdog status and especially concerns about the ability of the batting line-up to cope with the Indian attack, West Indies batting legend Brian Lara - the performance mentor for the team - is hopeful that the home side, and particularly the younger,

inexperienced players, can offer more than a glimmer of encouragement at time of widespread cricketing gloom in the region.

"It may take some time but obviously as an international cricketer if you are at this stage, it doesn't matter what age you're at, you've got to learn very, very quickly and I think they have that sort of attitude to learn and are willing to listen," said Lara over the weekend in summing up what he has seen so far of Athanaze and another uncapped batsman in the 13-man squad, 22-year-old Kirk McKenzie.

Following the Tests, both squads will then undergo significant personnel changes for the white ball formats which involve three

One-Day Internationals and a five-match series of T20 Internationals with the final two fixtures to be played at Lauderhill, Florida in the United States.

Teams (probable)

West Indies: Kraigg Brathwaite (capt), Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Raymon Reifer, Alick Athanaze, Jermaine Blackwood, Jason Holder, Joshua da Silva (wkpr), Rakheem Cornwall, Alzarri Joseph, Kumar Roach, Jomel Warrican

India: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Ajay Jadeja, Srikrishna Bharat (wkpr), Shardul Thakur, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj, Jaydev Unadkat. —AFP

PHOENIX BATTERIES
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Shuttered banks

People walk outside a branch of the Bank of Khartoum in Sudan's eastern city of Gedaref. Many civil servants in Sudan have been going on without a salary since the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces took up arms against each other. When the first blasts shook Khartoum on April 15, banks there shuttered their doors, and branches nationwide have since struggled to provide services because they are cut off from headquarters in the capital. Since then, the only government salaries that have been paid are the army's. —AFP



EXCHANGE RATE GAP Remittances fall 14pc to \$27bn in FY23

By Erum Zaidi

KARACHI: Remittances to Pakistan from its citizens working abroad dropped by 14 percent in the fiscal year 2023, data from the central bank showed on Monday, as an increased gap between interbank and open market exchange rates prompted the expats to send money home through illegal channels.

In FY23, from July 2022 through June 2023, Pakistan received \$27 billion in remittances, down from \$31.3 billion in FY2022.

In June, the inflows totaled \$2.2 billion, a 22 percent decline from the same month last year. However, remittances rose 4 percent month-on-month in June.

Since October, the nation has had nine straight months of \$2-2.2 billion in monthly remittances. Remittance inflows were significant in August, totaling \$2.7 billion.

The fall in remittances is another blow to Pakistan's economy, which is already experiencing its worst economic crisis in years. The State Bank of Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have dropped to \$4.5 billion, which are hardly enough to cover a month's worth of imports.

The country needs to repay \$25 billion in foreign debt this year.

The figures on remittances came as Islamabad sought approval for a short-term bailout at the Executive Board meeting of the International Monetary Fund on July 12. After a drawn-out review process for the cash-strapped economy since November last year, the country and the IMF finally reached a staff-level agreement on June 29 to release \$3 billion in crucial bailout funds. The IMF agreement has decreased the nation's short-term default risks.

The arrangement is under a stand-by arrangement as the Extended Financing Facility programme, which was agreed in 2019, ended on June 30.

The workers' remittances were diverted to the grey market because analysts claimed the dollar rate there was better.

"Remittances dropped mainly due to an increase in the spread between formal and informal exchange rates," said Fahad Rauf, head of research at Ismail Iqbal Securities.

"It is evident from the fact that remittances declined by a higher percentage from GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] as compared to the developed world" Rauf added.

Remittances from the US were steady while those from countries in the EU fell by 7 percent despite the worsening economic situation in the developed world.

Continued on page 11

OLD TECHNOLOGY

Pakistan needs refinery upgrade to benefit from Russian oil discount

By Tanveer Malik

KARACHI: Pakistan is losing out on the opportunity to pass on the benefits of discounted crude oil from Russia due to the old processing technology of its current refineries, industry officials said.

The country has five refineries, out of which one was established before partition and two were set up sixty years back. The other two that rely on old technology and the one where the government holds 60 percent share, have not been able to attract any new investments for many decades.

Pakistan imported discounted Russian crude oil last month; however the benefits of the cheap oil could not be passed to the end consumers as the old technology at Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) processed more furnace oil than diesel and petrol.

"Other refineries would do the same if

they import the crude oil from Russia as all refineries have old technology," people in the sector revealed.

Pakistan needed to approve the refining policy to upgrade the refining sector if it wanted to benefit from URAL, they said.

Government recently approved Greenfield refining policy to allow establishment of deep-conversion refining; however, it is still withholding Brownfield refining policy for upgradation of local refineries. "It is strange that policy for a new refinery, which will be setup after seven years, has already been approved, whereas the policy needed to upgrade existing domestic refineries remains in limbo," they added.

Tariq Kimmani, chairman of the Board of Directors at PRL, supports a brownfield policy that empowers existing refineries to undertake essential upgrades. "With an estimated investment of approximately \$4-5

billion, this approach would lead to upgrading all existing refineries, eventually resulting in 5 deep conversion refineries, collectively capable of refining around 350,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil," he told The News.

He highlighted the significant advantages of a brownfield policy, stating, "The payback from a brownfield policy far exceeds the benefits anticipated from a greenfield policy."

Even in the face of ongoing economic challenges, he said PRL is committed to its Refinery Expansion and Upgrade Project (REUP), and requires support from the government now more than ever. The REUP involves expanding the crude processing capacity from 50,000bpd to 100,000bpd.

"PRL is committed to adopting a state-of-the-art deep conversion refinery configuration, equipped with advanced technology that adheres to stringent environmental protocols,

including the production of EURO V standard fuels."

He said that while the government has recently approved an attractive refining policy for greenfield refinery projects to woo investments in a new refining complex, which is slated to cost around \$10-12 billion for a refinery of 250,000bpd, a policy for upgrading existing refineries was needed urgently.

Kimmani emphasised that the government must take this initiative to create an enabling environment that fosters growth, incentivizes investments, and promotes objectives of self-sufficiency and energy security.

He said REUP's significant cost savings compared to alternative refinery constructions makes PRL's upgrade project an efficient and effective solution for desired outcomes. However, to fully capitalise on this opportunity, the industry's challenges must be addressed.

Oil steady as demand woes from weak economic data offset by OPEC+ cuts

HOUSTON: Oil prices were little changed on Monday in choppy trading as demand woes after weak economic data from top consumers the United States and China were offset by expected crude supply cuts from Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Brent crude futures were flat at \$78.47 a barrel at 1610 GMT. They touched their highest in more than two months earlier in the session. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was down 4 cents, at \$73.82.

"Oil traders may be cautious ahead of the U.S. CPI (Consumer Price Index) and China's slew of economic data later this week," CMC Markets analyst Tina Teng said of inflation data due on Wednesday.

U.S. data last Friday pointed to the smallest job gains in two-and-a-half years but strong wage growth. The figures strengthen the likelihood of the U.S. Federal Reserve raising interest rates at its July meeting.

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland President Loretta Mester said on Monday that still-strong levels of underlying inflation pressures are pointing the central bank toward more rate rises.

Higher interest rates increase borrowing costs for businesses and consumers, which could slow economic growth and reduce oil demand.

Meanwhile, oil demand from China and developing countries, combined with OPEC+ supply cuts, is likely to keep the market tight in the second half of the year despite a sluggish global economy, the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

That comes as China's factory gate prices fell at the fastest pace in more than seven years in June, according to government data, indicating a slowdown in recovery in the world's second-largest economy.

However, crude prices could rebound after producer group OPEC+ announced plans to reduce supply further, Teng added.

Oil benchmarks gained more than 4% last week to touch their highest since May, rising for a second straight week after the world's biggest oil exporters, Saudi Arabia and Russia, pledged to deepen supply cuts in August.

Saudi Arabia will extend its 1 million barrel per day (bpd) output cut into August and Russia will cut crude exports by 500,000 bpd. Instead of cutting output, Russia will be using the crude to produce more fuel to meet domestic demand, a government source told Reuters on Friday.

"The beginning of July and the implementation of a Saudi production cut help trigger short covering in WTI and fresh buying of Brent," said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

Money managers stepped up net long positions in oil futures and options contracts in the latest weekly data.

"Overall, the combined net long increased by 49,000 contracts to 280,000, still within the range that has prevailed during two months of range-bound trading," Hansen added. —News Desk

Irfan Siddiqui to remain Meezan Bank president/CEO till 2025

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The board of directors of Meezan Bank Limited (MBL) has decided to extend the tenor of Irfan Siddiqui as the founding president and chief executive officer of the bank till December 29, 2025, a statement said on Monday.

Syed Amir Ali will replace Siddiqui after his retirement. Ali is presently serving as the CEO and president of BankIslami.

The bank shared the development via a notice to the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

According to the notice, Artful Islam will continue to act in his present role as deputy CEO until April 18, 2024.

"It is noted that Argil Islam was anticipated to succeed the founding president and CEO as the next president and CEO of Meezan Bank Limited upon the founding president and CEO's retirement. However, on account of recent regulations concerning CEO age limits issued by the State Bank of Pakistan such succession is no longer possible," the notice read. Accordingly, the board has unanimously decided to appoint Syed Amir Ali as the deputy CEO, who is expected to join from October 1, 2023.

Upon retirement of the founding president and CEO, Syed Amir Ali shall succeed the founding president and CEO as the president and CEO of Meezan Bank Limited, according to the notice.

The aforementioned is subject to the receipt of applicable regulatory approvals, including but not limited to Fit and Proper Test clearance from the State Bank of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, BankIslami announced that Syed Amir Ali "does not intend to seek reappointment on completion of his current term of employment on September 28, 2023, and has decided to pursue another assignment outside BankIslami Pakistan Limited". "Amir was appointed as president and CEO on October 1, 2018, and served BankIslami Pakistan Limited for 5 years. With the Blessings of Allah SWT, BankIslami made noticeable progress during this period of his leadership," BankIslami said in a notice to the PSX.

STIMULUS PACKAGE

China on brink of consumer deflation

BEIJING/HONG KONG: China's economy teetered on the brink of deflation in June, adding to calls for Beijing to launch a stronger stimulus package to sustain the country's sputtering post-Covid recovery.

The consumer price index was flat year on year and declined 0.2 percent compared with the previous month, while factory gate prices fell at the fastest pace since 2016 as demand for consumer and manufactured products softened.

Analysts expected the figures to lead China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, to reduce interest rates again, adding to a round of cuts last month that many believe Beijing will have to supplement with fiscal stimulus policies.

"China is still growing — the question is whether it will hit its target," said Heron Lim, economist at Moody's Analytics. "In terms of that recovery, it is still there, but the concern is it's slowing down."

China is targeting gross domestic product growth of 5 percent this year as the economy emerges from draconian Covid-19 controls, but the recovery is proving fragile, with property prices and exports falling.

Consumption is still growing, but there are concerns the government will have to do more to sustain the recovery as global economic growth slows, re-

ducing demand for China's exports.

The weakening economy comes as Beijing is trying to cool tensions with the US, which many blame for a lack of investor confidence in China following a spate of tit-for-tat sanctions.

US Treasury secretary Janet Yellen during a visit to Beijing at the weekend sought to reassure her hosts, including China's number two official, Premier Li Qiang, that the US was not seeking full-scale economic decoupling.

The fall in CPI missed analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll of a 0.2 percent rise.

The producer price index declined 5.4 percent compared with the same period a year ago, accelerating from a drop of 4.6 percent in May and faster than the 5 percent fall forecast by analysts polled by Reuters.

Goldman Sachs analysts said the decline was partly due to weaker commodity prices and continued price cuts due to China's mid-year "618" online shopping festival.

Food inflation rose in June partly because of higher prices for vegetables, which increased 10.8 percent year on year compared with a decline of 1.7 percent in May.

But pork prices were low due to weak demand, falling 7.2 percent year on year in June.

"The ultra-low inflation reading lends supports to our view that

the PBOC is likely to implement two more rounds of policy rate cuts," Nomura economists wrote in a research note.

They added that the central bank might also seek to release more liquidity into the system by further reducing the reserve requirement ratio, which requires banks to retain a certain level of funds as a prudential measure.

Lim at Moody's said few were expecting a "bazooka"-style stimulus. "Despite the fact the economy is quite near deflation, it doesn't look like the PBOC is looking at monetary stimulus of the kind the US Fed or European Central Bank would be doing."

The weakening economic performance comes as Chinese economists are urging the government to shift from its traditional form of stimulus — investing in big-ticket infrastructure projects — to targeting consumers.

"This can more directly correspond to our actual economic blockages and shortcomings," said Cai Fang, a senior economist from the state-run Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, according to a transcript of a business forum published by Chinese news website Cailing.

China's onshore yuan opened at Rmb7.2256 to the dollar and was Rmb7.2339 at midday, slightly weaker than the previous late session close, Reuters reported. —News Desk

Net change 377.82	Closing 44,585.13	Total turnover 440.221m	Intraday high 44,601.78	MAJOR GAINERS 238	KSE-30 Index 15,875.28	% Change 0.45
Percentage change 0.85	Opening 44,207.31	Market capitalisation Rs6,756trn	Intraday low 44,260.11	MAJOR LOSERS 82	KSE-All Share Index 29,821.17	% Change 0.93

Stocks close higher on Fitch rating upgrade, IMF hopes

By our correspondent

Stocks closed higher on Monday after Fitch upgraded Pakistan's long term foreign currency issuer default rating, while a euphoria about IMF loan after signing of a staff level agreement played a catalyst role in the bullish close, traders said.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE 100-share Index closed higher by 377.82 or 0.85 percent to 44,585.13 points against 44,207.31 points recorded in the last session. The highest index of the day remained at 44,601.78 points while the lowest level of the day was recorded at 44,260.11 points.

"Stocks closed bullish amid reports of Fitch rating upgrade on Pakistan's long-term rating foreign currency rating to CCC on improved external liquidity and funding condi-

tions following staff level agreement with IMF," Ahsan Mehanti, an analyst at Arif Habib Corp, said.

Fitch projections for a current account deficit of \$3 billion in FY23 and \$4 billion in FY24, and expectations for IMF release of \$1.2 billion, Saudi Arabia and UAE \$3 billion deposits, \$3-5 billion in other new multilateral funding, and disbursement \$10 billion in aid pledges contributed in a green close at the bourse, according to Mehanti.

The KSE-30 index also increased by 70.80 points or 0.45 percent to 15,875.28 points against 15,804.47 points.

Traded shares increased by 193 million shares to 440.221 million shares from 247.993 million shares. The trading value rose to Rs12.086 billion from Rs8.512 billion. Market capital expanded to Rs6.756 trillion

from Rs6.604 trillion. Out of 342 companies active in the session, 238 closed in green, 82 in red and 22 remained unchanged.

Ali Najib, an analyst at Topline Securities, said equities entered into 2nd week of a bull run initiated post-IMF staff level agreement \$3 billion deal where every nook and corner has been occupied by bulls at PSX by now.

Another positive vibe regarding the likelihood of KSA's \$2 billion funding may land with/sooner than the IMF tranche also assisted the market to maintain firm standing on strong feet, according to Najib.

Banking sector stocks contributed positively on the back of rejuvenated interest in them where BAFL, MCB, HMB, UBL and ABL led the top table by adding 115 points. The highest increase was

recorded in Nestle Pakistan shares, which rose by Rs220 to Rs6,675 per share, followed by Rafhan Maize, which increased by Rs65 to Rs8,355 per share. A significant decline was noted in Shield Corp., which fell by Rs24.37 to Rs300.53 per share, followed by Siemens Pak., which decreased by Rs22.80 to Rs716 per share.

Brokerage Arif Habib Ltd said refineries have maintained their leading position in the KSE-100 index and have been the standout sector for July, with NRL showing a growth of 38.45 percent, ATRL at 24.40 percent, and PRL at 19.91 percent month-to-date.

In addition, it is noteworthy that the auto sector, which had been underperforming, has recently traded below and then bounced back over their respective Covid lows. This in-

dicates a significant bottoming out for even the weakest sector in PSX.

On Monday, GHNI, HCAR, PSMC, and SAZEW all hit the limit-up circuit of 7.5 percent. It advised to view any corrections in the market as buying opportunities.

WorldCall Telecom remained the volume leader with 28.194 million shares which closed higher by one paisa to Rs1.26 per share. It was followed by JS Bank (R) with 27.939 million shares, which closed up by 21 paises to Re0.22 per share.

Other significant turnover stocks included Unity Foods Ltd, TPL Properties, Pak Elektron, Pak Refinery, Telecard Limited, Nenergyco PK, Ghani Glo Hol and Aisha Steel Mill.

Shares' turnover in the future contracts increased to 112.488 million shares from 69.308 million shares.

BRIEFS

Rupee weakens

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Rupee fell 0.68 percent in the interbank market on Monday on increased dollar demand from the importer after the central bank permitted banks to clear import backlogs, dealers said.

The rupee ended at 279.80 to the dollar, down from the previous close of 277.90.

The local unit in the open market lost 1 rupee to close at 283 per dollar, the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP) reported.

"The rupee dropped to 280 to the dollar in the interbank market due to import payments pressure, Malik Bostan, Chairman of the ECAP, said in a video message.

"Although a sudden drop in the value of the rupee is unsettling, it is not as alarming as when people start to worry. The authorities permitted 6,000 import containers to purchase dollars from the interbank market instead of the hawala market," Bostan said.

"The ports no longer have import restrictions. Banks have been instructed by the State Bank of Pakistan to only open letters of credit (LCs) for which they can arrange dollars. They will not oversell dollars or speculate on the exchange rate, as per the SBP's instructions to the banks."

According to insiders with knowledge of the currency exchanges, the grey market was once again active today, and the rate for the US dollar there reached 300. Following a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) later last month, the exchange rate in the grey market shrank, but it has now begun to spread once more. As a result, the rupee was under pressure in the interbank market.

Gold prices up Rs800/tola

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Gold prices increased by Rs800 per tola on Monday.

According to All Sindh Saraf Jewellers Association, gold rates reached Rs209,000 per tola.

Similarly, the price of 10-gram gold rose by Rs686 to Rs179,184.

In the international market, gold rates remained unchanged at \$1,925 per ounce.

Silver rates remained unchanged at Rs2,480 per tola. Similarly, 10-gram silver rates also stood the same at Rs12,126.20. Jewellers said gold prices in the local market remained lower by Rs2,000 per tola compared with rates in the Dubai gold market.

HBL wins digital award

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Asiamoney has awarded Habib Bank Limited an accolade of 'Best Bank for Digital Solutions Pakistan' for 2023, a statement said on Monday.

Asiamoney is a global English-language publication focused on business and finance.

The bank has also won, for a fifth consecutive year, the 'Best Domestic Bank Pakistan' for 2023.

According to the bank statement, Asiamoney cited it as 'Best Bank for Digital Solutions Pakistan' and appreciated for its pursuit of innovation, particularly in digital platforms.

Commenting on the achievements, Muhammad Aurangzeb, president and CEO of HBL, said "The bank continues to provide innovative products and solutions to its customers whose banking needs are moving beyond traditional channels. Digital is and will be, at the heart of how HBL strives to serve its customers even better. These wins are a tribute to our millions of customers' continued trust and confidence in HBL."

Mastercard partners with JazzCash

News Desk

KARACHI: Mastercard has partnered with JazzCash to promote digital payments by introducing affordable acceptance solutions in the country, a statement said on Monday.

The partnership is aimed at launching QR code payments, Pay by Link, and Tap on Phone solutions to facilitate cost-effective and widespread acceptance for merchants at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

The solutions are expected to help enable fast-growing segments, such as freelancers and gig workers, to accept digital payments, in addition to catering to underserved segments, like micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

"At Mastercard, we have pledged to connect 50 million MSMEs worldwide to the digital economy by 2025, with a special focus on 25 million women-owned businesses. Building on our common goal of promoting financial inclusion, our partnership with JazzCash seeks to empower over five million such enterprises to future-proof their businesses," said Dimitrios Dosis, president, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, Mastercard.

Remittances fall...

Continued from page 1

However, despite a strong economic cycle, remittances from the GCC fell by 17 percent, according to Rauf.

"As the gap between formal and informal channels has reduced, we can expect growth in remittances in FY24 to about \$30 billion," he said.

The seasonal uptick in remittances in June over the previous month was brought on by Pakistani expatriates sending extra money home for Eid ul

Azha in order to purchase sacrificed animals, according to analysts.

Analysts also point to other factors, such as Pakistan's economic uncertainty, as well as higher inflation and a slowdown in host-country economies, as contributing to the decline in remittances between July and June.

"Higher open market rate and economic uncertainty affected Pakistan's inward remittances. With IMF's new plan and political stability we may see some improvement in these remittances going forward," said Mohammed Sohail, CEO of Topline Securities.

FPCCI seeks inclusion of 'Ghee' in barter trade to boost exports

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The apex trade body on Monday sought inclusion of some high-in-demand products such as 'Ghee' under the allowed goods for barter trade to increase Pakistan export volumes.

In a move to save the country's foreign exchange reserves, Pakistan recently allowed barter trade with Afghanistan, Iran, and Russia for 57 products, including petroleum and natural gas.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) hailed the government decision, extending support for any efforts for barter trade, border markets, and currency swap mechanisms.

The trade body urged to add more products in the list and also highlighted some teething troubles in the barter trade mechanism.

"The inclusion of some high-demand products under the allowed goods is important and Ghee is one such example, as it can contribute significantly to Pakistani export volumes through barter trade," FPCCI chief Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said.

Sheikh also apprised that the trade body had pitched barter trade, border markets, and currency swap mechanisms in many top-level meetings with the concerned ministries and relevant governmental institutions in last three years.

FPCCI conducted a session across its headquarters and regional offices on the Business-to-Business (B2B) Barter Trade Mechanism, 2023 (SRO. 642 (I)/2023), which saw participation of FPCCI office bearers, business personalities, barter trade stakeholders, government officials - who answered queries of the trade and industry representatives.

Sheikh explained that, as result of the aforementioned SRO, trade of goods under a business-to-business barter trade arrangement will be allowed on the principle of import followed by export.

He stressed that the conditions needed flexibility as "barter trade has been neglected for many years; and, the trading community needs to be taken into confidence in modalities and their implementation."

FPCCI chief further said under the SRO the exports would be allowed to the ceiling of value of imported goods; on the basis of

"The inclusion of some high-demand products under the allowed goods is important and Ghee is one such example, as it can contribute significantly to Pakistani export volumes through barter trade"

the acceptable mechanism provided in the SRO for the concerned exporters.

A Pakistani trader, capitalising on the SRO, will be responsible to equate or net-off value of goods in every quarter; i.e. within 90 days after authorisation is granted. "Ninety days is too short a period for the netting off import and export. Therefore, it should be enhanced to 180 days or 6 months at the minimum."

FPCCI chief reiterated a stance that Pakistan needs to set up commercial banking channels with all its trading partners. "We should fully capitalise on TIR convention, which has opened the doors for land-based cargoes with our neighbors, regional, and sub-regional countries," Sheikh said.

Suleman Chawla, senior vice president of FPCCI, said there should be a currency swap mechanism with Russia to stabilise the rupee and opening-up of new avenues of import for many crucial commodities in large quantities, including crude oil.

"FPCCI advocates setting up of large, organised, secure, and operational border markets with Iran and Afghanistan to boost regional trade," he said.

Chinese investors seek JVs in ceramics

By our correspondent

LAHORE: A Chinese delegation visiting Pakistan has shown interest in entering into joint ventures in the ceramics sector, saying Pakistan has potential to consume a significant share in the global market of ceramic products, Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) stated on Monday.

The Chinese delegation from City of Zibo held a meeting with local industrialists of the ceramics sector at PCJCCI secretariat.

According to the head of the delegation, Zibo is a key transportation hub of China and plays an important role in the country's economy through its rapidly growing manufacturing industries, especially the ceramics sector.

PCJCCI stated that the delegation was impressed by the growth potential of the ceramics industry of Pakistan, and the delegation's head also agreed to relocate ceramic industries from Zibo into Pakistan for sharing the global demand of ceramics products by exploiting inherent advantages of Pakistan and China.

PCJCCI president Moazzam Ghurki informed that that 70 percent work of Chinese ceramic industry was being done under the expertise of Zibo industries and the products produced in Zibo were being exported to US, EU, and other sophisticated markets.

Zibo was ranked as the 34th most competitive city in China, according to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2016, he said, adding that Zibo had a significantly large industry sector that accounted for 47 percent of the GDP in China.

Hanza Khalid, vice president of PCJCCI, said the joint chamber would extend strong support for economic development of the two countries. The joint ventures of Pakistani and Chinese businessmen under China Pakistan Economic Corridor attained a mutual confidence that gave birth to new venues of collaboration in trade and investment areas, according to Khalid.

PCJCCI thanked the Chinese business community to pave way for modern phase of the industrialisation in Pakistan and creating a space for Pakistan in international markets through joint ventures.



SHENYANG: People buy food at an open air market in China's northeast Liaoning province on Monday. —AFP

COMMENT

Plan for progress not elections

By Mansoor Ahmad

LAHORE: It is essential for an underdeveloped country like Pakistan to plan projects that will be completed beyond tenures of every elected government. But this does not happen as all rulers want results during their term to please their electorate.

Pakistan is facing significant challenges in various sectors such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic development. Planning projects that extend beyond the government's tenure allow for long-term development and continuity of efforts.

It ensures that progress is not disrupted when a new government takes office, and development initiatives can be pursued consistently over time.

This policy is not pursued because rulers fear that the credit of the benefits of the projects would go to the government in whose tenure the project is completed and starts giving benefit to the people of Pakistan.

Development projects that create an impact on the economy take a long time to complete; requiring substantial investments of time, money, and resources.

When projects are planned and implemented over a longer timeframe, it provides stability and consistency in their execution.

Continuity in development initiatives fosters confidence among investors, creates a predictable environment for businesses, and helps attract sustained support from international organisations or donors.

Pakistan is facing complex challenges that cannot be resolved within a single govern-

ment's term. Issues like poverty, infrastructure gaps, or systemic problems require a sustained and multi-faceted approach.

Long-term planning allows governments to tackle these challenges comprehensively, considering various factors, engaging multiple stakeholders, and implementing strategies that span multiple years or even decades.

Successive governments have shied away from committing the available resources for development on long-term projects. The governments do realise that some projects are absolutely essential for the economic survival of the country.

They highlight these projects and issues giving an impression that they are concerned. They then launch the long-term project with fanfare. But they do not make efforts to generate resources for the project that might take a decade to complete.

One glaring example in this regard is the Diamer Basha Dam. It was first launched by the Musharraf Regime at the start of this century.

During the tenure of his selected Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, a paltry some of Rs20 or Rs30 billion was allocated every year for a project that even at that time needed Rs1,300 billion for completion.

Then the PPP government that followed again arranged an inauguration ceremony and continued with similar paltry allocations resulting in no real progress on the project. The PML-N government that followed repeated the exercise with no real efforts to accelerate its construction work.

The PTI government again inaugurated the

project, but during its four year tenure failed to provide or arrange funds to accelerate it. This project even if initiated with serious intent today will require another 15 years to complete.

By that time Pakistan would be among the top water starved countries.

Real development is typically an incremental process, achieved through the accumulation of small victories and continuous improvements.

By planning projects that extend beyond a government's tenure, successive administrations can build upon the achievements of their predecessors, leveraging the progress made and taking it further.

This ensures a cumulative impact and avoids the need to start from scratch with each new government.

Planning projects with long-term goals also allow for better accountability and evaluation. Governments can set clear targets, establish performance indicators, and measure the outcomes over time.

This facilitates monitoring and assessment of project effectiveness, enabling adjustments or course corrections as needed. By extending the planning horizon, governments can focus on the broader impact and sustainable outcomes.

Bringing transparency to an economy where planners benefit from a non-transparent system can be a challenging task. Long-term projects undertaken under the scrutiny of lenders, it is difficult to make the amount of money that planners usually do from non-transparent short-term projects.

HEDGE AGAINST INFLATION

Central banks move gold back home after freeze on Russian assets

LONDON: A growing number of countries are bringing their physical gold reserves back home to avoid Russian-style sanctions on their foreign assets, while increasing their purchases of the precious metal as a hedge against high levels of inflation.

Central banks globally made record purchases of gold in 2022 and into the first quarter of this year, as they hunted for safe havens from high inflation and volatile bond prices, according to a survey of sovereign investors by asset manager Invesco. China and Turkey together accounted for almost one-fifth of these purchases.

Concerned by the decision by the US and others to freeze Russian assets, central banks opted to buy

physical gold rather than derivatives or exchange traded funds that track the metal's price.

They also preferred to hold it in their own country as global tensions increased. Invesco's survey found that 68 percent of central banks held part of their gold reserves domestically, up from 50 percent in 2020. In five years, that figure is expected to rise to 74 percent, the survey showed.

"Up until this year, central banks were willing to buy or sell gold through ETFs and gold swaps," said Invesco's head of official institutions Rod Ringrow.

"This year it's been much more physical gold and the desire to hold gold in country rather than overseas

with other central banks... it's part of the reaction to the freezing of the Bank of Russia's reserves," he said.

Just after Moscow began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the EU, US and other G7 countries announced that they would impose sanctions on Russia's central bank and prevent it from accessing some \$300 billion in reserves held abroad. The EU is now considering the legal implications of diverting the interest from these holdings to Ukraine.

According to the survey of 57 central banks and 85 sovereign wealth funds managing some \$21 trillion in assets, many sovereign investors were "concerned" by the precedent set by the confiscation of Russian assets, with 96 percent saying further

investment in gold was driven by its status as a safe haven.

"We increased the exposure eight to 10 years ago and had it held in London, using it for swaps and to enhance yields," one central banker from a western country told Invesco. "But we've now transferred our gold reserves back to our own country to keep it safe — its role now is to be a safe-haven asset."

Global demand for gold hit an 11-year high of 4,741 tonnes in 2022, up from 3,678 tonnes in 2020, driven by central bank purchases and heightened retail investor interest, according to research from the World Gold Council. But while physical gold was in demand, gold ETFs suffered combined outflows of almost 300 tonnes

in 2021 and 2022.

Other countries that have made significant gold purchases include Singapore, India and central banks in the Middle East.

The record central bank buying of gold in 2022 contributed to a powerful rally in bullion prices, although prices have fallen back to \$1,923 per troy ounce in recent weeks due to the prospect of higher US interest rates for longer.

Rate rises dim the appeal of the non-yielding asset compared with other investments.

Net purchases of gold by central banks are expected to soften this year after Turkey turned into a larger seller. The central bank has had to supply gold to satisfy demand from

domestic consumers as they bought bullion to protect their savings from a lira that has been trading at historic lows around the election in May.

In a sign of the move to repatriate gold, holdings at the Bank of England, one of the main storage hubs for official financial institutions globally, have slipped 12 percent from their 2021 peak to 164 million troy ounces at the start of June.

The attraction of holding gold in large liquid hubs such as London has also been reduced by the fact that hedging by gold miners peaked at the turn of the millennium and has since fallen. That has limited the ability for central banks to earn a yield by swapping out bullion stored over seas. —News Desk