

Moonis's warrants issued

LAHORE (INP): A Special Central Court in Lahore on Saturday issued arrest warrants of former federal minister Moonis Elahi in a money laundering case, registered by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). According to details, the special court issued the former minister's arrest warrants on a petition filed by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) due to his non-appearance before the court.



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Forces of evil will continue to face full might of state: COAS

F.P. Report

QUETTA: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Quetta on Saturday, where he was briefed on recent terrorist attacks in Mastung and Zhob.

The briefing was also attended by Federal Minister of Interior, Chief Minister Balochistan and key Provincial Ministers alongwith senior civil and military officials. The participants offered Fateha for the Shuhadas of Mastung, Hangu and Zhob incidents.

COAS paid rich tribute to the Shuhada and remarked "Such incidents of Terrorism on 12 Rabi' al-Awwal, depicts the ill intent of the Khawarij, who have the backing of State Sponsors of Terrorism. These terrorists and their facilitators, having no link with religion and

ideology, are proxies of the enemies of Pakistan and its people. These forces of evil will continue to face full might of the state and security forces backed by a resilient nation. Our operation against terrorists would continue unabated and the Armed Forces, Intelligence and Law Enforcement Agencies shall not rest till the menace of terrorism is rooted out from the country". "These terrorists and their facilitators, having no link with religion and ideology, are proxies of the enemies of Pakistan and its people. These forces of evil will continue to face full might of the state and security forces backed by a resilient nation," COAS Munir said.

The army chief said the Pakistani people have rejected terrorists' "pseudo ideology and propaganda of their backers and they are fully committed to peace, economic progress, and

human development, which indeed is causing [a] lot of distress to forces of evil in and outside of Pakistan". The briefing was also attended by interim Minister of Interior Sarfraz Bugti, caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Ali Mardan Khan Domki, and key provincial ministers along with senior civil and military officials.

COAS visited CMH Quetta, where he met the injured and families of Mastung incident who are being provided full medical care by Pakistan Army. He also lauded the bravery and resilience of Balochistan Police and Law Enforcement personnel. He assured full cooperation and support to the families of shuhada and assured them that terrorists, their abettors and facilitators will not be spared. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Chief Minister Balochistan and Commander Balochistan Corps.

Won't be in govt's control if Imran legally barred from polls: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that it would not be in the caretaker government's control if Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan was legally barred from elections by the courts, after exhausting all of his legal remedies.

"The fate of Imran Khan is not final (as yet). There are judicial remedies available to him... And if all the options are utilised judicially, then yes, there is a possibility that he may legally be barred from that process which is beyond the control of the caretaker government," the prime minister said in an interview with BBC HARDtalk during his visit to London. Also regarding Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif and PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif, he reiterated that if any individual was barred from the elections, it

would not be due to executive decision as that could only be through judicial outcome.

He said that being the caretaker prime minister, he could not undo the judicial outcomes. Asked whether Nawaz Sharif would be arrested on his return from London, he said the law enforcement agencies would have to deliberate whether he had protective bail or any other legal remedies available.

In another interview with BBC Urdu, the prime minister said in the case of Nawaz Sharif, the law should take its course as he went abroad on a court order. However, he said he did not foresee any agitative behaviour on Nawaz Sharif's arrest as instead of indulging in agitative politics, the PML-N leadership would prefer to take part in the elections.

UK Secy of State phones PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Car-etaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday received a telephone call from Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, James Cleverly.

The UK foreign secretary condemned the terrorist attacks in Mastung and Hangu and condoled the loss of innocent lives, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He expressed solidarity with the families of the victims and hoped for the speedy recovery of those injured. The prime minister thanked Secretary Cleverly and the United Kingdom for their expression of solidarity and reiterated his government's firm resolve to bring those responsible to justice and wipe out the menace of terrorism.

‘RAW’ involved in recent terror attacks: Bugti

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti Saturday alleged that India's foreign intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), was involved in the recent terror attacks in Balochistan.

Speaking to the media in Quetta, he claimed: "Those playing the role of a facilitator, whoever is doing this — be it anyone, whatever you may call it — they all are the same for us, all have the same origins, all are being handled from one place, RAW is behind all them." "All incidents that took place before this... they all were unearthed — all major incidents that occurred in Balochistan — and the RAW's involvement has been there behind all those, and the forces that

want to destabilise Pakistan."

He did not provide any proof or evidence to back his statements. Bugti vowed to pursue terrorists to their "dens" and that the policy of appeasement would not "happen anymore". "What we know is that these appeasement policies adhered to, what we saw in the past two to three years, there is no tolerance for that."

He added that the state knew where the terrorists were operating from and asserted, "We will go to their dens, where they are nurtured and which are their safe havens, and we will go against them." Noting that at times an attack would be conducted by one organisation and another would claim its responsibility, the interior minister said the recent

attacks were being investigated.

"Whether it is Daesh or TTP or anyone else... anyone committing violence under any banner... violence will only be exercised by the state," Bugti said while vowing to hunt terrorists. Bugti's remarks come a day after a grisly suicide blast targeting a 12th Rabiul Awwal procession in Balochistan's Mastung claimed the lives of 55 people, including a police officer. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. However, the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), responsible for some of the bloodiest attacks in Pakistan, denied its involvement. The caretaker government of Balochistan announced three days of mourning in the wake of the attack.

Terrorist ring leader killed, soldier martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed a terrorist Ring leader in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Mardan, whereas, a Pakistan Army soldier embraced martyrdom during an encounter with terrorists in the Parachinar area of Kurram province, ISPR said.

An IBO was conducted in the general area of Katalang, Mardan District, which resulted in the killing of a high-value target identified as terrorist ring leader Faisal.

In another encounter with terrorists in the general area of the Parachinar in the Kurram district, the army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. However, Lance Naik Ghairat Khan (age 33 years, resident of Kurram District), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

China trying to control entire Pakistani information space: James

Ja'il Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: Coordinator for Global Engagement Centre of US State Department, James P. Rubin while speaking to the journalists at US State Department stated that there are reports that China is trying to control the entire Pakistani information space by building a censorship operation so they can monitor the whole information space and make adjustments and changes according to their wishes and desires.

The Global Engagement Centre yesterday released a report according to which Chinese Foreign Ministry tries to control the content of independent journalists around the

world and manipulate the content according to Chinese strategies.

James further stated that China is spending billion of dollars to create an eco system where China can project the content it wants the world to see and that this strategy of China has now become a national security threat. James did agree that the US needs to spend more money while countering China false narratives.

"China wants to poison the information space and this is a dark side of globalization" James added. He also said that there is a difference between fact and fiction and every country has the right to speak and suppressing the truth and trying to create digital

authoritarianism by China will be not be accepted the United States and it's allies.

James Rubin while replying to another question said that freedom of press is very dear to America and it is essential for younger democracies around the world to allow freedom of press so that leaders in those countries can learn from constructive criticism by independent journalists.

James Rubin did agree that China's false narratives are not as bad as the Russian narratives but James did agree that dominance in information war has become an "undeclared war" among countries around the world.

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Country’s security situation alarming

PESHAWAR (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Siraj-ul-Haq has said that deteriorating security situation of the country particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan was matter of grave concerned. He emphasized that ensuring a peaceful environment for the citizens was the primary constitutional responsibility of the government.

Talking to media persons outside Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) Peshawar on Saturday, he said that the sitting and the former administrations regrettably failed to fulfil the assigned responsibilities.

Earlier, Sirajul Haq visited the hospital to inquire about the well-being of those injured in the Hangu blast incident. He vehemently condemned the acts of terrorism that occurred in Mastung and Hangu, urging a thorough investigation and the prompt

apprehension of those responsible for these heinous acts. He offered his prayers for the martyrs and a swift recovery for the injured, while demanding compensation to the affected families.

He pointed out that inflation and a fragile security situation are progressing hand in hand, casting a grim shadow over the lives of the people.

He emphasized that while Balochistan and KP grapple with terrorism, interior Sindh and southern Punjab are plagued by lawlessness. Street crimes in major urban centers are escalating, contributing to an atmosphere of fear, he said.

The JI chief called upon the government to prioritize security, especially in light of upcoming elections, so that citizens can venture out of their homes without fear and exercise their right to

vote in the selection of future leadership. He asserted that a transparent and peaceful electoral process would be a significant step towards achieving stability.

In a separate address to party workers, Sirajul Haq highlighted that the life of the Prophet (PBUH) serves as a comprehensive roadmap for the common man seeking success. He expressed concern that the Muslim Ummah has strayed from the path outlined by the Quran and Sunnah, attributing this deviation as a reason for the nation’s decline. He noted that Pakistan was founded in the name of Islam but is yet to fully embrace its principles.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, he affirmed, is dedicated to the transformation of Pakistan into an Islamic welfare state, guided by the principles of faith and justice.

Chief vows resolution of trade issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) acting president Ayub Zakori vowed to utilize all resources and energy for timely resolution of industrialists’ issues and all affairs at the association level will be carried forward on fast-track grounds.

He was chairing a meeting of the executive committee of the Industrialists Association Peshawar held here at IAP Conference Hall, said in a press release issued here on Saturday.

Executive members Adeel Rauf, Sherbaz Bilour, Zarak Khan, Mohsin Wadud, Sajjad Zaheer, Farhad Asfandiyar, Shayyan Imtiaz, Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan and members IAP Riaz Arshed, Haris Mufti, Junaid Altaf and Saad Zahid were present during the meeting.

The executive committee backed and supported acting president Ayub Zakori. The meeting thoroughly discussed the routine business of IAP.

The acting president Ayub Zakori expressed his full commitment to carry the business of IAP with the same pace and energy.



PESHAWAR: Syed Zahir Ali Shah leading rally in connection with Eid Milad-ul-Nabi. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

PAJCCI elects new cabinet for year 2023-24

— Zia Sarhadi re-elected Coordinator KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has been re-elected for the post during election of new cabinet for the year 2023-24.

According to a press statement issued here, the re-election of Zia Sarhadi as Coordinator PAJCCI for KP has been made in recognition of his services for the cause of promotion of Pak-Afghan trade during the preceding year.

The election of new cabinet for the year 2023-24 was held during general body meeting of PAJCCI held in Karachi under chairmanship of Zubair Motiwala.

Junaid Ismail Makda has been elected as President while other cabinet members are Haji Abdul Bari, Senior Vice President for Quetta (Chaman), Shuja Muhammad VP Peshawar, Imtiaz Ali, Director Peshawar, Khalid Shezad Director Peshawar and others.

It merits to mention here that Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi is

associated with Custom Clearing and Forwarding business for the last 50 years.

He has also served as Senior Vice President of PAJCCI for two terms and Director for three years. He also holds the office of Member Advisory Committee of Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) and remained Senior Vice President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Chairman All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association of

gemstones.

Speaking on the occasion, Zia Sarhadi appreciated the services of Chairman PAJCCI, Zubair Motiwala for his efforts to resolve the problems of business community of the country.

He also commended the services of outgoing president of PAJCCI, Qazi Zahid Hussain and expressed the hope that new president would work hard for promotion of commerce and trade in the country and the region.



PESHAWAR: A policeman stand alert during a procession on occasion of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi.

Appointment of Asst. Prof. despite contradiction

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: It is revealed that Najeeb Zada is appointed illegally and unlawfully and recently promoted as Assistant Professor in Islamic Theology at Islamia College University (ICU) Peshawar. The Frontier Post has found contradictions in the claims made by Najeeb Zada during his recruitment as;

The applicant Najeeb Zada had applied for the position mentioned above in 2017. In his application form, he had claimed in writing that he has done his;

He had passed Matric in 1997 with first division from government high School, F.A in 1999 with first division from government college District Dir, B.A in 2001 with second division from UOP, M.A Islamiyat in 2008 with first division and obtained Gold Medal from UOP and PhD in 2016 from University in

Malaysia.

Najeeb Zada was appointed initially a Lecturer in Islamic Theology ICP in the year 2010 on the basis of the academic credentials mentioned in serials 1, 2, 3, 4. The Scrutiny Committee headed by the Ex Dean Prof. Dr. Nisar Muhammad, Prof. Dr. Miraj Ul Islam and Dr. Saleem-u-Rehman as observed in the applicant’s application form. The meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 07/06/2018, has considered his written claimed academic qualification mentioned above and declared him eligible.

Moreover, Additional Secretary of Higher Education Department has also attended the Selection Board and it’s subsequent Syndicate meetings in which Najeeb Zada has been recommended and appointed as Assistant Professor. But from the agenda of the Selection

Board shared in June 2022, it is obvious that the Quantification Committee headed by the incumbent Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Gul Majid, had considered his unclaimed credentials namely;

Matric in 2003 with first division, F.A in 2005 with first division, B.A in 2007 with first division, M. A in 2009 with first division and PhD in 2016.

The unclaimed academic credentials by the quantification committee had not only made the recent appointment of Assistant Professor Najeeb Zada illegal but had also questioned his initial appointment as Lecturer approved in 2010.

The advertisement was floated in 2009 under which Najeeb Zada was appointed as Lecturer. The due date for the position of Lecturer was April 24, 2009. The issuance date of Najeeb Zada’s M.A degree and subsequent transcript is August 21, 2009.

The M.A degree obtained in August 21, 2009 and his appointment as Lecturer in 2009 was possible if for which the due date of add was April 24, 2009?

The evidences justifying that Najeeb Zada was appointment as Assistant Professor in Islamic Theology ICP is illegal and unlawful.

Moreover, The Frontier Post has contacted Vice Chancellor and Registrar Islamia College University Peshawar but didn’t responded to the questions regarding illegalities in the recruitment process in the university.

CTD issues 2nd list of terrorists

PESHAWAR (PPI): Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released the second list of wanted terrorists. According to the Anti-Terrorism Department, a reward of Rs 0.3 - 5 million has been set for the arrest of terrorists.

The list issued by the CTD includes the names and photographs of the terrorists. Fifteen of the wanted terrorists belong to Bannu district, 13 to Lakki Marwat and two belong to Dera Ismail Khan.

According to the current list of KP CTD, the price of the head of terrorist Habibullah belonging to Lakki Marwat has been set at 5 million rupees, while the price of the head of Bannu terrorist commander Maulvi Naimatullah has been set at 4 million rupees.

The names of those giving information about these most wanted terrorists will be kept secret.

Earlier, the CTD had released a list of 135 most wanted terrorists.

Students held protest

PESHAWAR (PPI): Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) students and their parents Saturday staged a protest outside the Peshawar Press Club against the decision to re-conduct MDCAT 2023.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial cabinet decided that MDCAT will be conducted once again. The decision was communicated to the Peshawar High Court.

The students called it an injustice to the successful students who passed the exam and made concessions to the people who failed.

Protestors said that instead of cancelling the test, action should be taken against the mafia, they termed it a ‘victory for the mafia’ while urging for an investigation into the test results.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial cabinet decided on 28 September to re-conduct the MDCAT due to allegations of massive cheating in the exam held on September 10.

Operation continued

PESHAWAR (APP): The operation against the encroachment mafia continued in Peshawar wherein the officials of the Traffic Police and District Administration took joint action by arresting 320 people during the operation.

This was stated by SP City Traffic Saeed Khan while talking to media men here on Saturday. He said on the instructions of Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan, operations against the encroachment mafia continued in Rampura Gate, Hashtnagri, Ghanta Ghar and Riti Bazaar.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi urged the government to take pragmatic steps for promotion of furniture industry in KP and issues businesspeople attached with this sector.

Ijaz Afridi said that the furniture industry has played a pivotal role in economic development and enhancement of the country’s export, which should be lifted up at an optimal level.

He was speaking as chief guest at an inauguration

ceremony of ‘International Furniture and Craft Expo in Peshawar.

Various Pakistani and international furniture stalls set up in the expo here on Saturday.

While praising the organisers for holding international furniture exhibition in Peshawar, Afridi said such initiative is vital to boost investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially revive the country’s ailing economy

The SCCI acting president said huge potential exists to make investment in the furniture sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He asked to create maxi-

mum opportunities for promotion of the furniture industry and investment in the sector.

The SCCI’s acting chief said the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has faced various difficulties due to current economic turmoil and other issues.

Therefore, he urged the government to take serious steps for resolution of businessperson issues attached with the furniture industry.

Like other sectors, he said the furniture industry was not only contributing to economic development but had an important role in improving the country’s

exports.

He emphasized the furniture industry should be incentivized to boost up investment in the sector.

Ijaz Afridi said the business community has always supported the national economy in difficult circumstances.

So, he stressed that traders’ issues should be resolved on priority grounds.

Later, the SCCI’s acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi visited various stalls set up in the furniture exhibition and praised the various arts/designs and high quality of furniture.

Police recover 10 rockets

PESHAWAR (PPI): Police have dug out 10 rocket launcher shells from the agriculture fields of Mithra area of Peshawar on Saturday.

According to police, the recovered rocket launcher shells might be used for targeting the police and security forces in the area.

However, terrorists’ plan has been thwarted by the timely action of the Peshawar cops, said the police.



PESHAWAR: A view of decorated car participating in a religious procession on occasion of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi.

SCN joins IRC, young student activists for plantation drive

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sarhad Conservation Network (SCN) and International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Saturday announced the successful conclusion of “Autumn Plantation Drive 2023.”

This dynamic collaboration for climate change action underscores our unwavering commitment to environmental preservation through strategic tree planting.

Under the compelling theme, “Adopt a Tree for a Greener, Cleaner, and Healthier Planet,” this event brought together students from diverse educational institutions, including PakTurk Maarif International Schools and Colleges, Roots Millennium School, The City School Hayatabad, Zareef Khan Memorial School, and Madrassa Jamia e Farooqia in Shakkas.

These institutions, in partnership with SCN and IRC, demonstrated their profound dedication to environmental conservation and sustainable green practices.

The Autumn Plantation Drive successfully united participants in tree plantation, imparted valuable insights into values and benefits of trees and human obligation to nurture them to provide the planet clean air and reduce climate change impacts.

These events served as an opportunity for the symbolic adoption of individual trees as family. These collective efforts not only served the cause of environmental preservation but also signified the strength of community partnerships in addressing global environmental challenges.

In addition to demonstrations on tree planting and care, the drive facilitated informative sessions elucidating the pivotal role of students in environment preservation through strategic tree plantation.

The initiative fostered networking and collaboration opportunities for students from diverse schools and backgrounds.

Fatima Faraz, 18 year old (A level) student has emerged as the youngest advocate for Climate Change Action, demanded that “the role of youth need to be recognized as the future voice for a sustainable and healthier future”.

Adil Zareef the Convener of SCN and Peshawar Clean Air Alliance pledged support to “work at community level because our people live or work in unhealthy environments, and pollution caused more than 12 million preventable deaths around the world every year. Peshawar has emerged as the 3rd most polluted city in the

world, although it was known as a city of gardens and flowers earlier, adversely impacting their health and livelihoods” he added

The resounding success of this event underscores our shared duty for environmental conservation and the profound impact achievable through concerted action. Youth being the catalysts for a better future are key stakeholders for this transformational change.

As “Autumn Plantation Drive 2023” continues to gain momentum, SCN remains committed to organizing further initiatives with IRC to save the endangered environment through promoting planting of trees as a lifestyle. The next event in this series is scheduled at City School Peshawar and CECOS University Hayatabad with an exciting slate of activities planned for the future.



PESHAWAR: People taking part in a rally to celebrate Eid Milad-ul-Nabi.



In brief

Woman killed in road mishap

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): A woman was killed and her son critically injured in a road mishap while a three-year-old child drowned in Nullah Dek in different areas of Sheikhupura on Saturday. According to details, a reckless driven truck knocked down a motorcycle near Noori Bori stop resultantly Razia Bibi 42, was killed on the spot while Fakhar 22, was seriously injured. The body and injured were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against truck driver started an investigation. Meanwhile, in Dera Rajbah of Khanpur town, three-year-old Huzafa s/o Umer fell into Nullah Dek and drowned to death.

One killed, 14 injured

MALAKAND (INP): One child was killed and 14 other person were wounded when a pick-up plunged into a deep ravine in Malakand on Friday. According to details, the accident occurred in Batkhela area of Malakand where a pick-up fell into a ditch due to brake failure, killed a child on the spot and injuring 14 other people. Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to hospital. According to rescue sources, women and children were among the injured.

Two killed in road accident

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): Two including a woman and a minor killed were killed while a youth injured when an over speeding pickup hit a motorcycle in Minchinabad area of Bahawalnagar. According to details, the accident took place on main highway where a reckless driven pickup knocked down a motorcycle carrying three people. As a result of accident, the woman and minor girl were killed on the spot while a youth was critically injured. The police and rescue teams reached the scene of accident and shifted the bodies and injured to hospital. The police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Man axes wife to death

MIRPUR MATHELO (INP): A man axed his wife to death over property dispute in Mazar Chachar area of Mirpur Mathelo, police said on Saturday. According to details, accused Qadir Bux wanted to get property transferred in his name but wife refused. The furious accused axed wife to death and fled the scene of crime. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case against the murderer started raids for his arrest.

SSP for early release of report

KHAIRPUR (NP): SSP Khairpur Samiullah Soomro on Saturday contacted the Punjab forensic laboratory in Lahore for the early release of DNA test report of 10-year-old maid Fatima Furio, who was allegedly raped and murdered by her employer in Ranipur area over a month ago. Sources said that the SSP had said that since the report was to be used in the challan as an evidence, therefore, it was required as soon as possible. They disclosed that the lab's administration, on the other hand, had assured the SSP that the report would be sent to him in a day or two. The death of the minor girl, daughter of Nadeem Ali Tharso, resident of village Ali Muhammad Tharso, Khanawahan, near Mehrabpur, district Nausheroferoz had come to light after a disturbing video surfaced on social media.

'Sirat e Nabwi is a beacon for life'

Mazhar Iqbal

THE life Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is a model for us and by following this model, we can sure beautify our lives. The Holy Qur'an has declared it as "Asawah e Hasna" for Muslims. This word covers every aspect of human life due to the vastness in the meaning.

Similarly, the word "Sirat" also has a great scope within itself. Sirat is the name of the practical picture of Quranic teachings, Islamic beliefs, Islamic deeds, Islamic morals, individual's life system, society problems, international relations and relations, requirements of peace, laws of war etc.

The last link in the chain of Prophets is our beloved Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) Because of Him, Allah gave the gift of faith to humans. In the beginning, the Prophet of God and his Companions suffered a lot for the sake of Islam, but due to the tireless work of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Companions, extraordinary effort, sacrifice of life and money and love for Allah, this religion of Islam spread. The fragrant winds of Islam began to blow in the villages, streets and corners and even today after fourteen hundred years, Islam has been introduced to its reality in the whole

world. But the tragedy today is that this Islam reached us through the efforts of our predecessors, do we value it or not? And are we Muslims in appearance as well as in reality or not? In this scientific age, where on one hand man is progressing, on the other hand, the reality of Islam, the commands of Allah, the teachings of the Holy Prophet, the instructive events of the lives of the righteous Salaf and the constitution of life created by Allah Almighty. Going away.

In order to promote the teachings of the Holy Prophet and his good life, the federal government organizes the celebration of Milad-un-Nabi throughout the country, in which the central Rahmat-ul-alameen conference and Naat competition and other events, tehsil, district, division and provincial level, special events, conferences are organized regarding the glory of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

The holy month of Rabi al-Awwal is of great importance for all Muslims, in this month our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to this world. The organization of the conference is an effort to highlight the importance of this holy month. In this conference, prize distribution, essays, books, biographies and naats and biographies of the

Prophet (PBUH) will be held. It is organized for the purpose of promotion and publication of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in which well-known Islamic religious scholars from the domestic and foreign worlds participate in such conferences to reduce the differences between the scholars and to create a It provides an opportunity to understand others. This year, the two-day International Seerat-un-Nabi (peace be upon him) conference will be held on 11th and 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. Hadiya Naat will be presented in praise of Prophet (peace be upon him). On the second day of the conference, the main event of the conference will be held, which will consist of two sessions. The first session will be presided over by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. After the recitation of the National Anthem of the Holy Quran and Naat Rasul Maqbool (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Secretary of the Ministry of Interfaith Affairs will present introductory remarks.

The aim of such a conference is to promote religious harmony, tolerance, brotherhood and equality, respect for humanity, non-violence, unity, consensus, reconciliation and the culture of dialogue as much as possible.

Inflation in Pakistan

Abubakar

INFLATION, as an economic phenomenon, is a significant concern for governments and citizens worldwide. As per understanding inflation, inflation occurs when the prices of goods and services rise at a pace that outpaces the growth of wages or income. This situation forces individuals and families to allocate a larger portion of their earnings toward basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and medical care.

Pakistan is no exception. Inflation is a pressing challenge for Pakistan, affecting individuals, businesses, and the broader economy. It has the potential to exacerbate poverty, erode savings, and hinder economic growth.

The consequences of inflation can be profound, such as individuals

find it increasingly difficult to afford essential items and will potentially compromise their well-being. Moreover, it can make it harder for individuals to accumulate financial resources for future needs. In addition, inflation can hinder individuals' ability to make economic progress and get ahead financially, as their wages fail to keep up with rising prices.

However, inflation is a complex economic phenomenon with numerous contributing factors. Including: increase in the supply of goods and services, which pushes prices higher. In Pakistan's context, several factors have been particularly influential in driving inflation rates. The primary driver of Pakistan's high inflation rates is the weakening of the rupee against major currencies, causing price increases for imports, particularly in essential

items like food.

Though inflation affects all members of society differently, with the most vulnerable often suffering the most. For Pakistan's poorest citizens, the risk of falling into poverty and experiencing malnutrition becomes more pronounced. Conversely, wealthier families may employ strategies to protect themselves from inflation, such as investing in assets like property or stocks.

Moreover, to control inflation in Pakistan the government can implement several policy majors, including: reducing government spending, increasing taxes/ duties, implementing price controls, and encouraging investment/ economic growth. By implementing them, government can take steps to control inflation, stabilize economy, and improve standard of living.

People's eyes are also on PPP

F.P. Report

KARAK: Provincial President of People, Lawyers Forum Gohar Rehman Advocate has said that people's eyes are also on People's Party and it is hoped that people will trust People's Party and give PPP a huge majority. Addressing the gathering, he said that by activating the People's Lawyers' Forum

across the province, the angry workers will be brought together so that the People's Party and the Lawyers' Forum can grow in KPK.

They are suffering, but only the People's Party will take the country and the people out of this quagmire, and this ability remains with the PPP. Will The PPP has included plans to provide employment, education, sports and

other welfare opportunities for the youth in the newly formulated manifesto, which will be implemented not unlike the PTI.

He said that PTI is also responsible for the current situation in the country. He said that the people have tested everyone and now it is the duty of the people to compare the performance of PPP and other parties.



HYDERABAD: PML-N leader Nehal Hashmi addressing a press conference.

Local people have first right to all resources of Karak: Hoti

F.P. Report

KARAK: The central leader of Awami National Party, former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Haider Khan Hoti has said that the people here have the first right to all the resources

of Karak, but unfortunately, the factories of Punjab are running on gas here. But where is the justice that the large population here is deprived of gas and it is alleged that there is lawlessness here, if the gas pipe is going ahead and the population here is deprived, then there is no theft here and neither are the people here thieves.

Addressing the meeting, he further said that when he was the Chief Minister, the purpose of allocating the royalty fund for the construction of the university here was that the money received in return for the production here does not go out of Kiruk and is spent on the development of the people here. He also said that the university which was founded in 2012 and operated in a temporary building, till date no one had the courage to build their own building for the university, and said that he does not make false promises, if there is room to increase the royalty, he will definitely do it, but I promise that Kiruk was deprived of billions of rupees of royalty, he will return it to Kiruk.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, our province is deprived of the share of water allocated to it. God willing, we will definitely bring our share of water and settle millions of acres of Panjar land.

He further said that the most important thing is peace if honey canals if it is made, it is of no use, the people will be happy when there is peace and said that Pakhtuns are being massacred in the battle for the seat and once again a war is being imposed on us and said that elections are important.

Nusrat Bibi

'Say there is no God but only one Allah, you will succeed'

WE are very fortunate people of Allah, the Almighty, who are blessed with Quran, the Holy Book of Allah, through His Messenger, the Prophet Peace Be Upon Him. The Quran and Sunnah of Mohammad (PBUH) are the complete guidelines in the life of a Muslim.

Both of these are so complete sources of guidance that we do not need any material or human power help for fulfill our needs but the sole need is our complete faith and strong belief in Allah, that only and only Allah, the Supreme Power has the power to solve our problems.

This strong belief is prerequisite for a Muslim and then following the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah and refraining himself/ herself from all bigger and smaller sins, then certainly Allah will accept our every request and will solve our every problem.

Kashmir Freedom is a well justified right of Kashmiri people but the government of India are not ready to leave Kashmir territory. Although, Kashmir is a Muslim-majority region but the inhabitants of the area are compelled by India to live in slavery since almost one century due to the Hindus illogical and fake occupation in Jammu and Kashmir. No doubt Kashmiri people and Pakistani government have raised this non justified occupation of Indian government on Kashmir and asked every world power to resolve this issue of foreign occupation on Kashmir but no body helped them.

Though they have lost thousand previous human resources, time, capital and passed through an intense psychological trauma, humiliation and harassment by the Indian government and till this date a continued fight of Pakistan on Kashmir with India remains but India uses its power and are not ready to slide for an inch from their stand on Kashmir.

So in my opinion now we all should ask directly to

Allah, the most Powerful to give them their right of self-determination and Allah, the Greatest will surely listen to us because Allah Says "He is the nearest to accept the scream or cry / request of His people when they call Him" so why we ask from people to help us, which is the greatest sin and Allah doesn't like it at all. So, we must say more Astaghfar and offer more prayers to Allah to fulfill our every logical need and give Kashmir back to the Kashmiri People with lots of happiness.

Allah only tests our faith and determination and He is the most Dominant and Full of Wisdom. We must make happy our Supreme Allah, not the world powers because every human is created by Allah and we all are weak, only Allah is the Greatest. Kashmiri people should also change their intentions and determinations from the world instead should direct their channels with their Creator, the Most Powerful Allah. 200 % sure, Allah will soon decide Kashmir in the Kashmiri people favour.

711 FIRS registers against electricity thieves

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Captain (Retired) Abdul Rahman, a meeting was convened at the Deputy Commissioner's office to address electricity theft. The meeting was attended by key officials, including Chief Executive Officer PESCO, Tahir Khan, Superintendent Engineer of PESCO Division, Assistant Commissioner Mardan

Ayesha Tahir, and additional assistant commissioners, along with representatives from law enforcement agencies.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Mardan provided a detailed briefing on the actions taken against electricity theft across the district, with a total of 1,724 complaints sent to respective police stations. Of these, FIRs have been registered against 711 electricity thieves. The crackdown has resulted in a

recovery of PKR 9.756 million in fines imposed for causing losses to the government treasury, and PKR 203.16 million has been collected from defaulters.

Chief Executive Officer PESCO expressed satisfaction with the operations conducted throughout the district to combat electricity theft. He emphasized that the provincial government aims to present Mardan as a role model district, free from electricity theft.

China's remarkable 74-year economic odyssey: From inception to innovation

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

AS the People's Republic of China embarks on its 74th anniversary celebration, it pledges an unwavering commitment to ushering in a new era of economic openness. Focused on achieving high-quality, innovative, coordinated, and environmentally conscious development, China's vision for 2023 marks a pivotal milestone in its economic journey.

In the words of President Xi Jinping, the fifth-generation leader, this year symbolizes the unlocking of China's market for further modernization. This strategic endeavor seeks to align domestic and international imperatives while seamlessly integrating development with security considerations. Over the past seven decades, especially during the four transformative decades of reform under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the nation has achieved remarkable social stability and economic growth. Actually the China's economic transformation is from a humble beginning to 'Global Leadership.'

At the heart of this extraordinary progress, as President Xi underscores, lies the shrewd management of the intricate relationship between reform, development, and stability. In

2022, China's investment in research and development soared to an impressive R7.7 trillion, marking a remarkable 10.1% increase from the previous year. The growth in high-tech industry investments, which surged by 12.5% year-on-year in the first half of this year, and the substantial increase in the added value of critical sectors such as aerospace, equipment, and lithium batteries, exceeding 20% year-on-year, vividly illustrate China's unwavering commitment to coordinated development.

The urbanization rate has skyrocketed from 53% in 2012 to 65% in 2022, significantly reducing the gap in per capita disposable income between urban and rural residents from 2.88 to 2.5. Recent years have also witnessed China's intensified efforts to establish a unified national market, resulting in accelerated development in key regions such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area, the Yangtze River Delta, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, yielding substantial benefits.

Moreover, China's steadfast dedication to green development resonates with global concerns. In addressing humanity's shared challenges, the nation has witnessed significant growth in new energy vehicles, wind power capacity, and charging stations.

Additionally, China's installed renewable energy capacity has now surpassed that of coal, with wind power ranking as the world's leading source for 13 consecutive years and solar PV power maintaining its lead for eight consecutive years.

Foreign investment in China continues to surge, with 24,000 new foreign-invested companies established in the first half of this year, reflecting a notable 35.7% year-on-year increase. Notably, Tesla's Shanghai Super Factory played a pivotal role in the company's global deliveries, producing an electric car every 40 seconds.

It is worth noting China's commitment to BRICS' cooperation, emphasizing its readiness to collaborate with fellow BRICS partners in line with the principles of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation. This new phase of China's economic journey signifies a pivotal moment, not just for the nation but for the global economic landscape.

A glance at China's remarkable 74-year journey

On October 1, 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China marked a historic moment. The Chinese people, who had endured war and suffering, finally stood tall again, astonishing the world.

Reflecting on these 74 years, we witness China's evolution

from the early days of independence when it grappled with severe economic backwardness and societal desolation to the prosperity achieved after 44 years of reform and development. Progress has been profound in science, technology, economy, culture, social development, stability, national unity, and border defense.

Today, the Chinese people enjoy peace and prosperity, and neighboring nations appreciate the unity and progress exhibited by China. The government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a close partner, especially welcome China's development, recognizing the shared history of struggle.

Pakistanis are deeply impressed by China's determination and unity in building a prosperous, democratic, civilized, harmonious, and modern socialist country. As China celebrates its 74th birthday, Pakistan joins in extending its warmest wishes.

China's role in global development

China spearheads monumental projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), aimed at benefiting the entire world. The BRI aims to connect Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America through a vast network of roads and sea lanes, representing a significant portion of the world's

growth and population.

China's commitment to cooperation in the BRI includes policy alignment, infrastructure development, and open trade, with extensive investments from both public and private Chinese institutions. Despite opposition from some Western countries, China remains steadfast in its vision to unite the world through economic competition rather than conflict.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a cornerstone of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), represents a colossal endeavor that stretches across 2,442 kilometers. It spans from the bustling Gwadar port on the coast of Pakistan to the resource-rich region of Xinjiang in China. This ambitious corridor is a testament to China's unwavering commitment to modern development and global economic integration.

As the CPEC and other BRI projects inch closer to completion, China's ascent on the world stage becomes increasingly apparent. Unlike traditional superpowers that have relied on military might to assert dominance, China is charting a different course—one characterized by economic prowess and cooperation. The completion of these grand projects signifies a significant shift in the global power landscape,

with China poised to lead not through force, but through its ability to foster economic growth, innovation, and connectivity.

Crucially, China's journey toward this future is not a solitary one. It is marked by partnerships with nations that share its vision for inclusive development. Pakistan stands as one of the most significant allies in this endeavor. The collaborative spirit between China and Pakistan has been instrumental in overcoming challenges and advancing these transformative projects.

Amidst opposition from certain quarters, often driven by competing interests and outdated paradigms, China remains steadfast in its pursuit of these humanitarian goals. The world is witnessing a paradigm shift in global affairs as China takes bold strides towards a brighter future for all nations involved in the BRI and beyond. The emphasis on economic cooperation and development resonates as a beacon of hope in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

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US imposes fresh round of sanctions over instability in Sudan

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States imposed sanctions on two companies, including one based in Russia, and one person it accused of exacerbating instability in Sudan as fighting has killed thousands and displaced millions of civilians.

The action is the latest round of sanctions imposed by Washington after war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) broke out in April over plans for a political transition and the integration of the RSF into the army, four years after long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in a popular uprising.

"Today's action holds accountable those who have undercut efforts to find a peaceful, democratic solution in Sudan," the Treasury Department's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson, said in a statement. "We will continue to target actors perpetuating this conflict for personal gain."

The Treasury said it targeted Ali Karti, the foreign minister under Bashir, who became leader of the Sudanese Islamic Movement after Bashir was toppled in 2019. He is a prominent figure among

loyalists and veterans of Bashir's Islamist rule who have maneuvered to protect their interests and regained some leverage after a 2021 coup by the army and the RSF.

The Islamists have backed the army in its fight against the RSF, with some, including former intelligence operatives, joining the army's ranks. "(Karti) and other hardline Sudanese Islamists are actively obstructing efforts to reach a ceasefire to end the current war between the SAF and RSF and opposing Sudanese civilians, efforts to restore Sudan's democratic transition," the Treasury said.

Also hit with sanctions was GSK Advance Company, a Sudan-based company the Treasury said has been used as a procurement channel for the RSF. GSK worked with Russia-based military supply company Aviatrade, also targeted on Thursday, to arrange the procurement of parts and supplies, as well as training, for drones previously purchased by the RSF, the Treasury said.

The RSF has long cultivated its closest foreign ties with the United Arab Emirates and Russia. An RSF advisor, Mostafa

Mohamed Ibrahim, told Al Jazeera that the force had no relation with the two sanctioned companies.

Karti's Sudanese Islamic Movement issued a statement saying it sought stability for Sudan and that sanctions imposed by the United States were a "badge of honour". Karti was in Sudan when the war broke out but his current whereabouts are unclear. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a separate statement said Washington had taken steps this week to impose visa restrictions on people believed to be part of efforts to undermine Sudan's democratic transition, including Sudanese Islamists and former officials, as well as others suppressing human rights and involved in other actions.

Thursday's sanctions follow measures taken against the deputy leader of the RSF earlier this month and sanctions the US imposed in June on companies it accused of fuelling the conflict. The action freezes any US assets of those targeted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them. Those that engage in certain transactions with them also risk being hit by sanctions.

US to announce disaster response team

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States will announce it has deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team in the South Caucasus region to coordinate the US humanitarian response to the crisis after Azerbaijan took back control of Nagorno-Karabakh last week.

The team, first reported by Reuters, will assess the situation, identify priority needs to scale up assistance, and work with partners to provide urgently needed aid, US Agency for International Development (USAID) chief Samantha Power will say in a statement seen by Reuters. "The United States is deeply concerned about the safety of vulnerable populations in Nagorno-Karabakh and the more than 50,000 people who have fled to Armenia," Power said in the statement.

Power traveled to Armenia and Azerbaijan this week following Azerbaijan's defeat of the breakaway region's fighters in a conflict dating from the Soviet era. She said Washington would stand in solidarity with Armenia and that it was essential the international community gained access to Karabakh, amid reports of unknown numbers of people being injured and requiring evacuation, or lacking food and other essentials.

"Last week's unacceptable military operation has made an already dire humanitarian situation even worse," Power said, calling on the Lachin Corridor that connects the region to Armenia to remain fully and permanently open. The Armenians of Karabakh - part of Azerbaijan that had been beyond Baku's control since the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union - began fleeing this week after their forces were routed in the operation by Azerbaijan's military.

The Armenians are not accepting Azerbaijan's promise to guarantee their rights as the region is integrated. The Nagorno-Karabakh leadership told Reuters the region's 120,000 Armenians did not want to live as part of Azerbaijan for fear of persecution and ethnic cleansing. Armenia said that, 65,036 people had crossed into its territory.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has pledged to guarantee the safety of Karabakh's Armenians but said his "iron fist" had consigned the idea of the region's independence to history. "Azerbaijan must protect civilians, uphold its obligations to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals in its country, and ensure its forces comply with international humanitarian law," Power said.

Palestinian security force deploys in school compound

SIDON (AP): A Palestinian security force deployed in a school complex in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp in the country's south, replacing gunmen who had occupied it since fighting broke out in late July leaving more than 30 people dead.

The deployment raises hopes that a nearly two-week cease-fire can hold at the Ein el-Hilweh camp near the southern port city of Sidon and that school buildings can be restored. On Sept. 14, members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and two Islamic militant factions, Jund al Sham and Shabab al Muslim, agreed to a cessation of hostilities. The complex includes eight schools. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has been urging gunmen from various factions who had dug into position in around the compound to evacuate the area ahead of the school year that is supposed to start in early October.

In the afternoon, a security force of 55 armed fighters who had been considered neutral in the recent clashes — from factions including Hamas, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Asbat al-Ansar — took over the badly damaged compound. Some of the school walls were riddled with bullets and rockets.

In late July, Fatah accused the Islamic groups of gunning down a



senior Fatah military official, Abu Ashraf al-Armoushi, triggering intense street battles. Several cease-fires were agreed but collapsed. The groups still have not handed over militants accused in the al-Armoushi slaying. The commander of Shabab al Muslim, Haitham al-Shaabi told reporters that "the situation in the camp will soon return to normal." He declined to answer questions related to the handover of suspects in al-Armoushi's killing.

The latest cease-fire agreement, reached on Sept. 14, came after clashes that killed at least 18 people and wounded more than 100. The previous round of fighting earlier in the summer killed at least 13. Earlier this

week, UNRWA had said that more than 11,000 Palestinian children in south Lebanon were in danger of not being able to join their peers at the beginning of the school year on Oct. 2 because of the hostilities at Ein el-Hilweh. That amounted to a quarter of the refugee school children.

UNRWA's director in Lebanon Dorothee Klaus said not only had the schools been taken over by armed groups, but that many of the buildings had sustained significant damage. Since the fighting began in late July, at least 4,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in the camp, with many of them seeking refuge in UNRWA facilities.

Timor president says China military cooperation 'never discussed'

SYDNEY (Reuters): East Timor has not discussed military cooperation with China in its upgrade of diplomatic ties, President Jose Ramos Horta said, adding Australia and Indonesia can "sleep at peace" because the island nation won't be a security concern to its neighbors. China's increasing assertiveness in efforts to form security ties with developing countries in close proximity to Australia have raised alarm bells in Canberra, and a recent shake-up of Australia's defence has re-focused on protecting its northern approaches.

A Comprehensive Strategic Framework signed by East Timor during a meeting between Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao and China's President Xi Jinping in China last week covered development cooperation in agriculture and infrastructure, the Nobel laureate said in a telephone interview with Reuters. The agreement also provided scope for funding from China including government and commercial loans to East Timor, he said.

"Right now we don't have a single loan from China," he said. "In the future we might request a loan from China ... We will not accept any unmanageable, unsustainable loan with too high interest payment." Some Australian politicians expressed concern after China's state media reported on Saturday that Beijing's agreement with East Timor, around 700km (450 miles) north-west of Australia, also covered military

exchanges. China struck a security pact with Solomon Islands, 2,000km (1,200 miles) to Australia's north-east last year, heightening Canberra's wariness about Beijing's naval ambitions.

"It was never discussed in terms of military cooperation, never discussed, and the Chinese side also never raised this issue," Ramos-Horta said. East Timor, also known as Timor Leste, aims to join the Southeast Asian regional bloc ASEAN by 2025 as it seeks to reduce high poverty rates. "We would never bring in a foreign element into Timor Leste that would be viewed by the rest of ASEAN as endangering ASEAN policy of neutrality or peace and security," he said.

"Indonesia and Australia, we can include Singapore and Malaysia they are the countries that are closest to us, can always sleep at peace - Timor Leste is not going to be a nuisance, a concern in terms of security," Timor has extensive security cooperation with Australia, which is also its top aid donor, with Canberra providing military and police advisers and patrol boats, he said. "This is so far only with Australia," he said.

China's support was primarily in infrastructure including government buildings, finance, agriculture and health, he said. A large delegation of Chinese companies arrived in East Timor's capital Dili to continue discussions on potential investment in oil and gas projects, he said. The main focus for East Timor is finalis-

ing a joint venture agreement with Australian company Woodside Energy for the joint development of the Greater Sunrise gas project, he said.

East Timor is looking to start producing natural gas from its Greater Sunrise fields around 2030, which will be critical to the Southeast Asia island nation's economy. Australia has appointed an envoy to speed up negotiations between East Timor and Woodside; Gusmao's government wants gas to be piped to East Timor and not Australia.

Ramos-Horta said food security was a major issue for East Timor, and it needed investment in irrigation and roads, and to provide financial incentives to farmers to "feed its people". Australia, as one of the world's most developed agriculture nations, should commit funds to the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development, to address the agricultural challenges being posed by climate change to small farmers globally, he said. At the Global Citizen Festival in New York last week, Ramos-Horta also supported calls for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty, backed by six Pacific Islands countries, that puts pressure on Australia as a major coal exporter. Australia's relationship with East Timor is "stronger than at any time in the last decade", Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. "Australia is proud to be Timor-Leste's largest development and security partner," a spokesman said.

Lebanese Armenians scuffle with riot police

EIN AAR, Lebanon (AP): Hundreds of Lebanese Armenians scuffled with riot police outside the Azerbaijan Embassy in northern Beirut during a protest against the Azerbaijani military offensive that recaptured Nagorno-Karabakh from the enclave's separatist Armenian authorities.

Protesters waved flags of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and burned posters of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the demonstration in the Ein Aar suburb of the Lebanese capital. Lebanese riot police lobbed teargas canisters at the protesters after they hurled firecrackers toward the embassy building.

The 24-hour Azerbaijan military blitz last week forced Armenian separatist authorities to agree to lay down weapons and sit

down for talks on Nagorno-Karabakh's "reintegration" into Azerbaijan. The separatist government said that it would dissolve itself and the unrecognized republic will cease to exist by year's end after a three-decade bid for independence. More than 50% of Nagorno-Karabakh's population of 120,000 have left the region for Armenia as of nightfall. Though Azerbaijan authorities promised to respect the rights of ethnic Armenian, many fear reprisals. The former head of Nagorno-Karabakh's separatist government was arrested as he tried to cross into Armenia alongside tens of thousands of others who have fled.

During the enclave's independence bid, Lebanese Armenians have sent money and aid, and have actively campaigned in the media in support of Nagorno-Karabakh, which they refer to as Artsakh.

Lebanon is embroiled in an unprecedented economic crisis, which has lately restricted the financial support of the Lebanese Armenians for Nagorno-Karabakh because of banks imposing tight withdrawal limits.

Lebanon, a tiny Mediterranean country of about 6 million people, is home to some 150,000 Armenians. It's one of the largest Armenian communities in the world outside Armenia, most of them descendants of survivors of the 1915 mass killings during the last days of the Ottoman Empire. At the time, an estimated 1.5 million people were killed in the events that are widely viewed by scholars at the first genocide of the 20th century. Turkey denies the deaths constituted genocide, saying the toll has been inflated and that those killed were victims of civil war and unrest.

UN on surge in America's migration

MEXICO CITY (AP): Countries in the Americas are reeling as the flow of migrants reaches historic levels, but international "funds simply aren't there" for humanitarian needs, a United Nations official said.

Ugochi Daniels, deputy director of operations for the International Organization for Migration, said a larger and coordinated regional effort is necessary for a longer term solution to the steady movement of vulnerable people toward the United States. But other global crises — among them the war in Ukraine, conflict in Sudan, Morocco's earthquake — have pulled global funds away, Daniels said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The UN estimated that this year through August, it needed \$55.2 billion to take on compounding global crises, but it received funds for only 71% of that. A growing number of countries like Panama and Costa Rica are pleading for international aid in handling the flood of migrants, though Daniels would not say who should pay the tab.

"Obviously, it's not an issue that can be solved by any one country," she said. "The unprecedented flows in the region require attention — international attention." The flood of migrants to the Mexico-US border has swelled in recent years, with recent days seeing thousands of people crossing daily just into Texas. In fiscal year 2017, US authorities stopped migrants 310,531 times on the border, while in the first 11 months in fiscal year 2023, they record-

ed more than 1.8 million stops.

The crush of people — many of them Venezuelans — is overwhelming Latin American governments, many of which lack the funds to take care of their own citizens. Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves announced a state of emergency due to the number of people entering the country. "We all know that there is a migration crisis throughout the entire American continent. We are fundamentally a country of passage for migrants, people who come, who pass through Costa Rica largely trying to reach the United States," Chaves said.

Lack of aid dollars is not a new problem, and has been especially notable in the mass migration from Venezuela. As more than 7.2 million people have fled the South American nation's economic and political turmoil, the mass migration has received pennies on the dollar in aid compared to other global migration crises like Syria's. For years, countries receiving the bulk of Venezuelan migrants like Colombia, Peru and Ecuador have pleaded for more support. In September, a UN report said that \$400 million was required to address the Venezuelan migration, but that the international body had received only a third of that.

"Aid dollars are clearly insufficient," said Juan Pappier, deputy director of the Americas for Human Rights Watch. "But it's also a reflection of the insufficient attention that Latin America gets, and the

insufficient interest that Latin American governments have in properly addressing this issue," Pappier said the lack of aid to help pay for migrant services generated resentment and xenophobia in many South American nations, which led to more restrictive policies. Such policies pushed Venezuelans to travel north through routes like the Darien Gap, helping fuel the new flood of migration to the US, he said. Analysts and Daniels note the international response has been defined by largely short-term patchwork measures.

Pressures by the US on countries to keep migratory flows at bay and create new barriers has produced temporary pauses of arrivals to the border, but that has been followed by new surges, said Adam Isacson, an analyst with the Washington Office on Latin America. "They're just looking for new ways to keep pushing the numbers down for as long as they can," Isacson said. "It's not permanent, it's super super short term."

Daniels said governments really need to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty, corruption, crime and political repression. But in the meantime, she said, instead of putting up restrictions, governments should do more to help migrants, such as creating work programs. She also urged countries to provide legal pathways for migrants to travel, so they don't have to turn to smugglers, which she said raked in between \$7 billion and \$10 billion a year annually just on the US-Mexico border.

Kadyrov meets Putin

MOSCOW (Reuters): Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov said he discussed his region's contribution to Russia's war effort in Ukraine at talks with President Vladimir Putin that came at a sensitive moment in relations between the two sides.

Kadyrov enjoys wide leeway from Putin to run Chechnya ruthlessly as his personal fiefdom, but he angered even pro-Kremlin hardliners this week by praising his 15-year-old son for beating up an ethnic Russian prisoner in Chechen custody. Kadyrov posted on Telegram that he and Putin had talked about a range of topics including the role of Chechen fighters in Ukraine. He added teasingly that "other issues" were raised, and promised "more on this later."

It was not clear if he was referring to the beating incident last month in which his son Adam kicked and punched a prisoner called Nikita Zhuravel who is accused of burning the Koran. Kadyrov posted a video of the attack on Monday and said he was proud of his son for defending his Muslim religion.

The alleged Koran-burning did not take place in Chechnya but Russian investigators said they transferred Zhuravel to Chechen custody because Muslims there saw themselves as victims of the incident. The beating opened up Putin to accusations that he had handed over an ethnic Russian "to be devoured by the Chechens", former Kremlin speechwriter Abbas Gallyamov, now a harsh Putin critic, said this week.

Village's sole resident, unafraid after 4,000 km odyssey home

DEMENTIIVKA, Ukraine (Reuters): Her yard is pocked by craters from wayward bombs, the vegetable garden lies in ruins and her bees have abandoned their hives.

But Vira Chernukha, 76 and now the sole resident of a northeastern Ukrainian village bombed and depopulated by Russian invaders, has no intention of ever leaving Dementiivka again. When Russian forces bombed the village on the day of their invasion last year, she woke up in a hospital just across the border inside Russia. It took months and a 4,000-km (2,500-mile) odyssey across five countries to get home.

Nowadays, she keeps busy fixing the damage to her yard and tending to a monument to Ukrainian soldiers who died defending the village. "I'm not afraid any more," she says. "I've lived my life."

All she remembers from Feb. 24, 2022, the day the Russians invaded, was waking up a neighbour at 4:20

a.m. to news of war. Then the missile hit. "My kitchen door was open, I was standing next to the stove. I looked through the window, the glass shattered, the door frame flew away and (there was) a black cloud, the earth was lifted up," Chernukha recalled, clad in a pink blouse and white kerchief.

"I only remember I jumped back into the house, it was still standing. I was all covered in blood...I crawled into the street and then I have no idea who found me." When she woke up, she was in a hospital room in Belgorod, a city just over the Russian border. She spent a month there, often in tears, as local officials prepared documents for her departure to a refugee camp. "I said I will not go anywhere, I will sit here in Belgorod on a bench near the train station," she said. "But then my daughter-in-law found me and with the help of volunteers they took me away."

An attempt to cross the border

failed, so they looked elsewhere. "We travelled via Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to Lviv and then Vinnitsya," she said, referring to two western Ukrainian cities. "Seven days of riding buses, but I did get back to Ukraine. There are still five people (from this village) who are in Russia, I do not know where they are."

Ukrainian forces retook much of the country's northeast last year in a lightning counteroffensive that caught Russian troops off guard. Chernukha said she had endured bombs, missiles, even phosphorus bombs that "shone like little lights". Once back in Dementiivka, she considered leaving her village for Kharkiv, the region's main city, which never fell under Russian occupation.

"I walked past what used to be the gate, I stopped and I thought: 'Old lady, I managed to come back. Now, what is going to happen, will happen?'" she said. "And I turned back."

Cuba warns of worsening blackouts as fuel crisis bites

HAVANA (Reuters): Power blackouts in Cuba are expected to increase significantly due to a lack of fuel, officials warned in a nationwide TV broadcast, worsening the country's plight as it deals with food and medicine shortages.

Local governments have already begun announcing restrictions on power usage at state-run companies and other entities, including moves to postpone sporting events and university classes. "We are not going to have the level of fuel we need or what we had in previous months," Energy and Mining Minister Vicente de la O Levy told the broadcast alongside the country's economy minister.

The officials suggested citizens could expect blackouts of up to eight to 10 hours per day starting in October outside of Havana, where residents are usually spared power outages. The Communist-run island has been mired

in crisis and plagued by blackouts and shortages of food, medicine and fuel since the pandemic. Gross domestic product is 8% below 2020 levels and goods production 40% below, according to the government.

Cuba says US sanctions are largely to blame for the crisis, depriving the country of foreign exchange to import most of its fuel, food and other supplies. Washington says the Communist Party is responsible for Cuba's ills and that the sanctions aim to restore democracy and respect for human rights. The officials said Cuba was making daily efforts to secure fuel to keep the country running, without explaining why the situation had gone from bad to worse.

Venezuela, Cuba largest oil supplier, has slightly boosted exports to an average of 58,000 barrels per day (bpd) so far this year, from 55,000 bpd in 2022, with more fuel oil for power generation delivered. Cuba has also seen regular

crude and fuel imports from Russia and Mexico, according to shipping data. But the imports have not been enough to meet the island's rising fuel demand and to compensate for insufficient domestic refining, said Jorge Pinon, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Texas in Austin.

"Cuba has bought more crude and fuel this year, compared with last year. However, the electricity sector's rising demand (has) not been met either by domestic production or by sufficient supply by Venezuela," Pinon said. "If Mexico or Russia cease supply, problems will be bigger," he added. Cuba's crisis has sparked numerous demonstrations, including nation-wide protests in July 2021 that were the largest since deceased leader Fidel Castro's 1959 Revolution. Hundreds of thousands of people have left the country over the past two years, mostly to the United States.

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Terrorism resurrection on poise day

THE so-called Majaheed and self-claimed flag bearer of Islam has turned the birthday of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) into violence and destruction by weighing an undeclared war against innocent worshippers in multiple cities in the country. Yesterday headlines in Pakistani media reported scores of deaths, and hundreds plus injuries, meanwhile, the nation fell in deep grief amid jubilation for Eid Milad-ul-Nabi. According to reports, at least 52 people were killed and over 100 injured on Friday when a suicide bomber hit close to a gathering to mark the Prophet's birthday in Mastung, Balochistan. In another terrorist incident, two suicide bombers attacked a mosque during the Jumma prayer within the premises of a Police Station in District Hangu Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resulting in three deaths and multiple injuries. On the same day, three terrorists were killed and four soldiers got martyrdom in an encounter when the security forces targeted the TTP terrorists who infiltrated Pakistan from Afghanistan at the Pak-Afghan border in Zhob.

The brave Pakistani military, Security and Law Enforcement Agencies are in a war with the banned terror outfit after the TTP unilaterally revoked a ceasefire and initiated a fresh terrorism offensive against the state and the people of Pakistan late past year. There had been a series of terrorist attacks against Pakistani LEAs, state institutions as well as innocent people along with places of worship and recreation, as mosques, temples, churches, religious shrines and parks became prime targets for the enemies of peace and prosperity of the country. The recent upsurge in terrorist activities is the result of a successful Intelligence-based Counter Terrorism Operation that readily whipped out terrorism infrastructure in the country, particularly in Erstwhile FATA and KP districts bordering Afghanistan. Currently, the terrorists are on the run and attempting to harass the Pakistani government through heinous acts of violence at poise occasions and sacred religious places.

The state of Pakistan remained a lucrative grazing field and had served as a launch pad for transnational criminals, terrorist groups and other wrongdoers to boost their illegal businesses and further export them to other countries in the world, while government institutions and their employees only remained involved in money-making through bribes and extortion. Due to reason, Pakistan's tribal area and major cities became a hub of terrorist groups, International smugglers, human traffickers and commodity hoarders, which choked the government system, destroyed law and order and spoiled the country's economy. As the Pakistani government weighed the war against enemies of humanity, the frustrated terrorists turned their guns toward the common public to blackmail the rulers.

The public has always backed their valiant armed forces and never hesitated from any sacrifice essential for the security and well-being of their country. The wicked scheme of terrorist outfits neither weakens the resolve of the public nor harasses them from any backlash or misdeed. Currently, the enemies of peace and Pakistan are camped inside Afghanistan and weigh new disasters against our people every other day from safe havens in that country, while the Pakistani government remains in the ploy of cooperation and joint work with the Afghan rulers, who continued crucial support to their strategic ally and tried to facilitate a favourable accord for them which didn't work. In fact, the nations had been used to funerals of young soldiers, elderly people and talented kids over the past two decades, and wanted to conclude this crusade to its logical end. Hence, the nation demands zero tolerance, no courtesy and no mercy with the death traders, their families and facilitators, so the ruins of peace and prosperity can be revitalized in a terror-hit nation in the coming days.

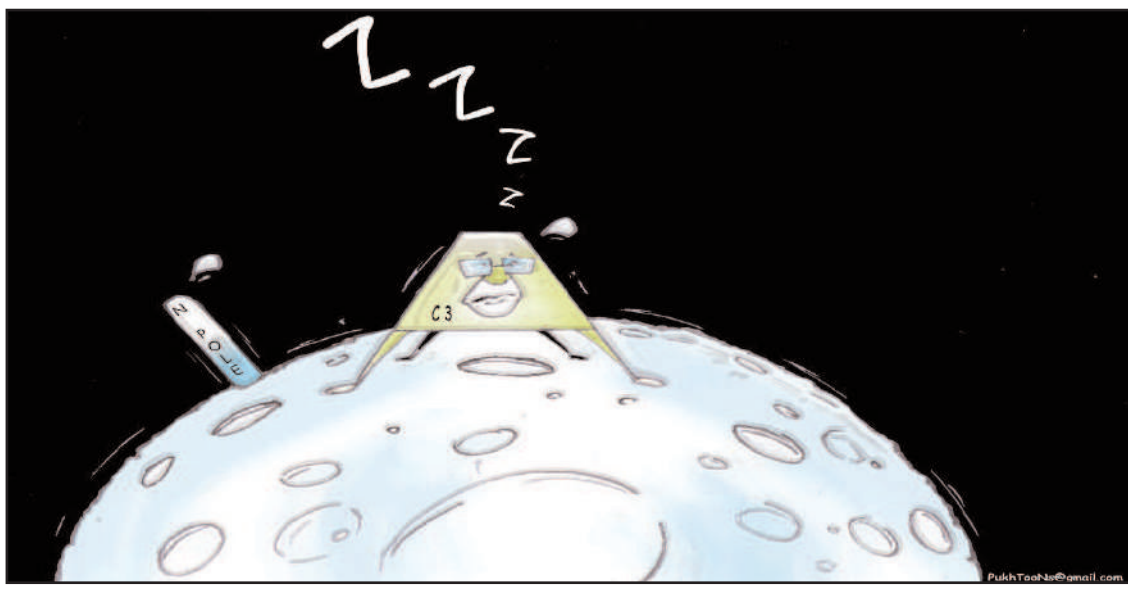
The global information war

THE Global Engagement Centre of the US Department of State has recently released a report according to which the Chinese Foreign Ministry tries to control the content of independent journalists around the world and manipulate the content according to Chinese strategies. The coordinator for Global Engagement Centre has claimed that the Chinese government was trying to control the entire Pakistani information space by building a censorship operation so they can monitor the whole information space and make adjustments and changes according to their wishes and desires. The US Diplomat said that Beijing is spending billions of dollars to create an ecosystem where China can project the content it wants the world to see, while Chinese strategy has now become a national security threat for the United States and Washington needs to spend more money to counter China's false narratives.

The ongoing US-China competition and propaganda campaign is on the rise and this race for supremacy has exceeded all nooks and corners of life. This hybrid warfare is being fought in all seven continents from Asia to Africa and from true North to Far East Australia along with space and cyberspace, yet dragging Pakistan in the battle of two elephants by the American government is something unacceptable for the people of Pakistan. Pakistan has earlier paid a heavy price for its support to western bloc during the cold war and then during the Afghan war against former Soviet Union, the global War on Terror (ToW), while in reward Islamabad received sabotage of F-16 purchase deal, gift of Pressler, Symington and Glen amendments along with terrorizing Pakistan for designation of a terrorist sponsoring state. The US strategists are once again pressurizing Pakistani leaders to join western camp, while multiple direct and indirect tools and tactics are being used to separate the South Asian nation from its first door neighbor and all weather proven friend. In fact, Pakistani nation was embattled with its chronic economic ailments, menace of terrorism and other issues those had been erupted due its previous external and internal policies in the past, and now it was not ready to further indulged in a fresh rigmarole which cause additional problems for the country. So, the belligerent nations must fight their battle themselves, so that Pakistan could tackle its issues and build a peaceful and prosperous future for its populace.

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Russia's 'African villages' are white supremacy in disguise

Oleksandr Polianichev

AN extremely unusual event for Russia's hinterland took place in the small village of Porechye halfway between St. Petersburg and Moscow on Aug. 4. Several dozen people, many of them Black, took part in a solemn ceremony of laying the first stone of an "African village."

The irony of this project is that it has nothing to do with helping Black Africans fleeing poverty and war, despite its name. On the contrary, the initiative betrays Russia's profound preoccupation with "race" and "whiteness", and that it has more in common with the ideology of Western colonialists than it would like prospective African allies to believe.

The presence of local officials signaled that the event was more than just a private initiative. Indeed, as the Agriculture Ministry's official account on VKontakte asserted, the village of Porechye "has become the center of the region's international agenda" to build stronger relationships between Russia and Africa. Reportedly, the program has already received the backing of President Vladimir Putin.

The symbolic establishment of what a local television channel called an "ethnic African village" in the Tver region came on the heels of the African International Congress, a business forum that took place in Moscow in early April, months before the higher-profile Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg. According to congress co-chair and project mastermind Konstantin Klimenko, the village is just the first step in a large-scale settlement project. It envisages the establishment of 30 "African colonies" in different parts of the country, with an expected 3,000 African families coming to start their new life in the Russian countryside. Since 2019, the Kremlin has invested heavily in its charm offensive in Africa, sprinkled liberally with anti-colonial and anti-Western rhetoric - an effort that has only intensified since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. But even against this backdrop, the decision to settle thousands of Africans throughout Russia would seem a bold move. So far, the migration of Africans to Russia has been negligible: in 2022, only 38,885 Africans stayed in Russia legally, 34,360 of whom were students.

Only White settlers are expected to move into these new African villages in Russia. In a March 2023 post on VK, Klimenko made clear that the incomers would be Afrikaner farmers, the descendants of Europeans who settled in South Africa. In Klimenko's view, these people now wish to leave their homes because "times have changed" for Afrikaners

(one may assume, since the end of apartheid) and "everything has become tolerant ... And it is not comfortable, sometimes even dangerous, for the Boers to live with their neighbors." The African village is thus a rescue mission that aims to protect White Europeans from supposed oppression by Black Africans. Klimenko's tolerance has its limits, however. If people of European descent are welcome to come and live in Russia, others are clearly not. Those include migrants from Central Asia who are, in common Russian parlance, not quite White. This is why Klimenko, who earlier called labor migrants in Russia a "threat" to national security and part of the "fifth column," was quick to reassure one of his followers on VK, anxious about the arrival of "tens of thousands of Africans in the Russian land," by stressing that they are Europeans. He added that the real cause for alarm lies elsewhere, given that "50,000 Tajiks become Russian citizens each year."

A public figure who launched a great number of dubious business projects, Klimenko is now mainly active as the rector of the online Eurasian International University based out of Moscow. Its website goes as far as to claim it "should become the leading university in Eurasia." However, Klimenko's accounts on social media are the only available source of information about its activities. One of them is to offer a Russian-language course that Afrikaners are supposed to take before settling in Porechye. Of all places, this seemingly unlikely destination for the settlement of Afrikaner migrants was chosen for a reason. The "African village" in Porechye will be located on a land plot rented by Trofimov Dvor, a large and successful private farm. Its owner, Alexei Trofimov, harbors a sense of nostalgia for the Russian Empire and sees authoritarianism as the model most suited to Russia's needs. Apparently, Trofimov considers his participation in the project as a contribution to Russia's greatness. "Our great President Vladimir Putin set the task: to strengthen the influence of Russia in the African continent," he said in an interview with Vecherniaia Moskva.

The initiators of the project stress that the prospective settlers are white, and of "European" origin. "Just do not confuse Africans and Afrikaners," Klimenko warns on his VKontakte page. Still, for far too many, the difference appears rather vague, sparking deeply racialized anxieties about the coming of "Africans." As one comment under Trofimov's post said, "All fields, farms,

villages have been abandoned, we need to invest in our people - and people will go to the villages if there is work - and not to call the Papuans [papuasy - a word that in colloquial Russian often serves as an umbrella term for the indigenous people of the tropical world]." Remarkably, even some in the Tver regional administration shared the same concerns. Alexander Grishin, a deputy of the region's Legislative Assembly, wrote: "We don't need it to be like in Europe when it got to the point where local residents shy away from migrants ... Let them in here, and you will never evict them. They don't like to work, and they won't. This is another way to enslave long-suffering Russia, according to Western theory."

The Agriculture Ministry's announcement provoked an even bigger outcry among residents of the region. Responses in the comments lament the alleged substitution of ethnic Russians, mobilized for the war against Ukraine, with Africans coming in their stead: "Such a horrible thing... you mean our guys have to go to war, leaving their families, while aliens would live in their motherland? What is the young Russia's gene pool dying for? For African villages?" Trofimov understands the fears reigning in the countryside well, having expressed questionable racial views himself. In 2015, he shared a photo of a chimpanzee next to a photo of Barack Obama on his VK page with the caption "You have remained what you were, Evolution is powerless." As he noted in one of his interviews, Afrikaners will be watched over: "No one will be allowed to turn Russia into Africa." In his most recent interview, Trofimov denied his words had any "racial" connotations, but stressed the program would not lead to "an unlimited number of Africans of various cultural traditions" flooding rural Russia.

If there is anything ironic about the appalling racist anxieties so evident in the reaction to the "African village," it is the fact that the project has been designed with the same concerns in mind - to invite White, European-looking people to compensate for Russia's lack of manpower. The local population dynamics look dire: the Tver region lost more residents in 2022 than any other Russian region, topping the ranking in deaths per capita and losses from rural-urban migration. According to the 2021 census, 2,798 out of the region's 9,532 rural settlements did not have a single inhabitant, while another 3,563 villages had

10 or fewer. Abandoned tsarist-era manor houses and dilapidated churches have become a distinctive feature of the region. Trofimov has firsthand experience of the region's demographic crisis. Even though he offers a salary three times higher than the average one in the Bologoe district, which is around \$150-200 per month, nobody is interested in working on a farm. The arrival of hard working Afrikaners, with a reputation for conservative values that won't conflict with the Orthodox church's moral crusade, is expected to remedy the problem.

This is not the first time that reports about the purported migration of thousands of Afrikaners to Russia have appeared in the media. In 2018, similar talks poured into Russian media after several right-wing White South Africans made a visit to Russia's southern regions to assess the advantages of settling there. The difference was that, unlike today, Russian news outlets were even more forthright, saying White Afrikaners were experiencing a "reverse" or "Black apartheid." This new narrative is a reversal of Soviet rhetoric, which weaponized racial violence in the capitalist United States and apartheid South Africa to show the apparent superiority of the Communist "Brotherhood of Nations." The Kremlin-linked Vozvyad newspaper criticized the newly elected South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018 for the purported persecution of Whites to such an extent that the country "was on the threshold of racial war." The article called for the revision of the Soviet-era propaganda myth that "evil European colonizers" imposed the apartheid regime on "peaceful and kind Black tribes." If anything, the article claimed the Afrikaners were the "historical and lawful owners" of the Cape lands who bestowed a unique and civilized culture to its Black inhabitants.

Taken with recurring attempts to woo Afrikaner farmers to settle in Russia, such efforts to reassess the legacy of settler colonialism in South Africa and its official Soviet portrayal draw from - and contribute to - the far-right discourse about "White genocide." This conspiracy theory, fed by Donald Trump and, more recently, Elon Musk, is making a spectacular appearance in today's Russia under the guise of the "African village." While "For Whites only" signs in public places across South Africa were a sinister hallmark of the apartheid era, the plaque on the foundation stone in Porechye might as well read in a similar way: "There will be an African village here. For whites only."

The Moscow Times

Republican presidential hopefuls, minus Trump, spar sharply at debate

Ken Bredemeier

SEVEN US Republican presidential candidates sparred sharply at a debate Wednesday night, each trying to break from the pack to become the main challenger to former President Donald Trump, who holds a commanding lead for the party's 2024 presidential nomination, even as he faces four criminal indictments.

Trump, as he did last month, snubbed the party-sponsored debate, which immediately drew a rebuke from two of his opponents. "Donald Trump is missing in action," said Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Trump's closest challenger, but still a distant second in national polling. "He should be on this stage to answer why he added \$7.8 trillion" to the national debt.

Former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie jibed that if former president keeps avoiding the Republican presidential debates, "We're not going to call you Donald Trump, we're going to call you Donald Duck." While his opponents appeared at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California, Trump staged a political rally in Michigan, a Midwestern political battleground state where autoworkers are striking against the country's three biggest auto manufacturers.

To cheers from supporters, the former president mostly attacked Democratic President Joe Biden and ignored the Republicans debating to overtake him in the chase for the party's nomination. He accused "crooked Joe of shipping millions of jobs to China" and said Biden was pushing Americans to buy electric vehicles that are too expensive for most US households. Back on the debate stage, the other Republicans fired verbal lasers at each other, hoping to land a knockout punch that might give them an edge and leave them standing to fight another day against Trump. The result at times was a lot of cross-talk as Fox News moderators attempted, often in vain, to regain control of the debate.

Trump strategically figured he had nothing to gain by appearing on the same debate stage as his opponents when national polling compiled by RealClearPolitics shows him with 56% support among Republican voters for the nomination and a 42-point lead over DeSantis. The other Republicans are even further behind the former president. At one point, DeSantis addressed his poor showing against Trump, saying, "Polls don't elect presidents. Voters elect presidents."

After business entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy said he used the Chinese-owned TikTok social media site to reach a younger generation of Americans, Nikki Haley, Trump's former US ambassador to the United Nations, rebuked Ramaswamy, saying, "Every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber for what you say." Haley, a former South Carolina governor, also aggressively attacked her home-state senator, Tim Scott, assailing his performance in US Senate, while he defended his service.

Former Vice President Mike Pence, who was Trump's second-in-command, asserted his conservative credentials and said he was most qualified through years in Congress and as a former governor in Indiana to become president. A long-

shot candidate, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, cited his business acumen. After the first, indecisive debate among the Trump opponents, a nationwide polling showed Trump actually widening his edge, even as he faces the prospect of spending weeks in courtrooms in the first half of 2024 on charges that he illegally tried to upend his 2020 reelection loss to President Joe Biden and illegally retained highly classified national security documents when he left office in early 2021.

With Trump's majority support among the Republican base, his opponents have been hard-pressed to convince voters they are a better choice to run against Biden, a Democrat seeking reelection. Among the debaters, only Christie has pointedly assailed Trump for the criminal charges he is facing, as he did again Wednesday.

Former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, one other Republican contender who has attacked Trump and said he should drop out of the presidential nominating contest, failed to meet the criteria set by the Republican National Committee to be on the debate stage. The requirements included having at least 3% support in two national opinion polls, or 3% in one national and two polls from states holding their nomination contest early in the process - Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

Candidates also needed at least 50,000 unique financial donors and to sign a pledge saying they will support the person who emerges as the Republican nominee. University of Michigan debate coach Aaron Kall told VOA that Wednesday's seven candidates had to "directly take the fight to Trump ... despite his absence, or else they risk simply rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, even if they continue to deliver solid performances. There is no hope for anyone to make up ground against Trump unless they engage him more directly." Throughout the debate, though, the hopefuls aimed as much, or more, of their vitriol at Biden, as if they were in a general election campaign, including attacking him for showing up Tuesday on the picket line, supporting auto workers.

Scott said, "Joe Biden should not be on the picket line. He should be on the southern border" with Mexico to stop illegal migrants from entering the US. Others attacked Biden's handling of the US economy; high inflation during his White House tenure has left millions of US households feeling financially squeezed. Wednesday's debate occurred 3½ months before the first Republican voting-party caucuses in the Midwestern state of Iowa to be followed quickly by contests in other states. One key political date is March 5, when party primary elections are scheduled in more than a dozen states, one day after Trump's trial on election interference charges is set to start in Washington - a courtroom legal battle that could easily last for several weeks. A second trial, on the national security document allegations, is set to start May 20 in Florida. Republicans will formally choose their presidential candidate at a national convention in July.

VOA

Development for all: China's contribution to UNGA 78

Yi Fan

THE high-level 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly took place in September as the world came to a midterm point toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are "woefully off track" to realize the Sustainable Development Goals by the deadline, top UN officials warned. According to the UN official report that monitors global progress on the 2030 Agenda, progress on more than 50 percent of the targets of the SDGs is weak and insufficient, and progress on 30 percent has either stalled or gone into reverse.

UN Secretary General António Guterres has called for strengthening action. "Development cannot wait ... This is a definitive moment." As the theme of the General Debate of UNGA 78 put it, it

is time to "rebuild trust and reignite global solidarity" to accelerate action on the 2030 Agenda. At the General Debate of UNGA 76 two years ago, President Xi Jinping proposed a public good-the Global Development Initiative, which, in his own words at the 2023 BRICS summit, is "precisely for the purpose of calling on the world to stay focused on development and lending impetus to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda."

The eight priority areas of GDI cooperation go well with the SDGs: poverty reduction, food security, pandemic response and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and digital-era connectivity. Two years on, with growing support of and participation by international partners, the

GDI has developed from an inspiring blueprint to concrete projects delivering real development benefits to people around the world, especially in developing countries.

On the sidelines of UNGA 78, China hosted a High-level Meeting on GDI Cooperation. Outcomes under the theme "GDI for SDGs: Actions and Progress," providing any dubious onlooker with a glimpse of the solid facts. On poverty reduction and food security, China has introduced the Juncao (mushroom grass) technology to Papua New Guinea, which has benefited more than 15,000 rural residents in nine provinces of the country. For every 10-square-meter piece of land, some \$4,860 of annual revenue is gained. The Juncao industry has

become the economic backbone of PNG's Eastern Highlands Province.

Funds under GDI cooperation have reached Nepal's Smiling Children Project and Laos' National School Meals Program. Over 3,000 Nepalese children have received food packets filled with rice, beans and cooking oil, and over 130,000 students from some 1,400 schools in remote areas in Laos have come to enjoy nutritious meals. In what Secretary-General Guterres calls "the era of global boiling," China's GDI cooperation with Fiji has enabled more than 30,000 villagers to enjoy solar-powered lighting systems.

As the North-South digital divide widens, China has partnered with the UN in launching a training program on South-South cooperation

in cross-border e-commerce for poverty eradication and global sustainable development. Over 1,000 policymakers, practitioners and entrepreneurs from 93 countries attended the program, and thousands more view the seminar series posted online every day. Through such "small but smart" projects and more, the GDI has contributed its share to galvanizing international focus on the development cause and reinvigorating the 2030 Agenda.

Looking ahead, the GDI is on track to keep up the good work in the global development cause. China has welcomed the participation of more like-minded partners, including developed countries and international organizations, following its established principles of openness and inclusiveness. With efforts of a dozen UN entities, an inter-agency task force on the GDI has

kickstarted effectively.

On a tangible note, China is setting up, on top of the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund and the China-UN Peace and Development Fund, a special fund of \$10 billion dedicated to the implementation of the GDI, as President Xi Jinping announced in August. "Development should be placed at the center of the international agenda, and development benefit should reach every country and individual in a fairer way," said China's Vice-President Han Zheng at the General Debate of UNGA 78. So China advocates, and so it has done for the 2030 Agenda, and more importantly, for the people of the world. Here's to the development of all, by all and for all.

The China Daily

Ukraine’s bumpy road ahead just got rockier

David A. Andelman

THE vast store of goodwill accumulated among the forces of democracy for Ukraine and its courageous and utterly unorthodox president may be running dry. That is the clearest and most present danger to the security of Europe and the entire Western alliance. It is surely also the fervent hope on which Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to pursue his carnage and the reason he has chanced his whole presidency on what once seemed like a sure bet, and is instead turning into a morass of quicksand and violence with no easy exit.

America - and its allies - must under no circumstances allow that to happen. The dangers for Ukraine are even more profound than simply waffling by a handful of right-wing Republicans in Congress over appropriations - those prepared to throw under the bus an entire nation to their overweening ambition and distrust of Democrats. Fissures are appearing across the hitherto united Western front that can only be sending shivers of joy up Putin's spine. The worst of it is that at least some of this has been Ukraine's own doing.

The slow pace of the counter-offensive, the rapidly expanding needs for ever more advanced weapons, the fears of enmeshing all of the NATO alliance in an expanded conflict and a host of more immediate issues have all converged in recent days into what could become a perfect storm of horrors for Ukraine. But first there is the sudden convergence of grain, food and politics. Putin quite rightly appreciated the stakes - and the opportunity - when he first launched his heartless blockade of Ukraine's grain, grain that helps feed not only Europe but also vast stretches of Africa now plunged into the threat of devastating hunger.

But Ukraine was not deterred. It found other avenues for its crops than the embargoed Black Sea ports.

These trade routes, however, were across Ukraine's neighbors Poland and Slovakia, where politically powerful farming interests felt threatened by new, cheaper sources of supply pouring across their frontiers - even if most of it was destined for other markets abroad. Poland has a major parliamentary election coming up on October 15, and the government has recognized its need to pander to the roughly 1.3 million Poles who describe themselves as farmers. They are a powerful voting bloc, dating back to the communist era when it was able to take the pulse of the Polish people by traveling to a chicken farm in the village of Bialobrzegi, 50 miles south of Warsaw, where, even then, one farmer I spoke to was fearless in his disgust of a government he felt had lost interest in him and his priorities. Fast-forward some four decades later, and the Polish government this month reacted quickly to rural concerns. It - along with Slovakia and Hungary - defied the European Union and extended a ban on the import of Ukrainian grain.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, himself a master of the cut and thrusts of political theater, hasn't been reluctant to strike back, telling the UN General Assembly in New York last week that "it is alarming to see how some in Europe, some of our friends in Europe, play out solidarity in a political theater - making a thriller from the grain." The fear he enunciated is that they "are helping set the stage to a Moscow actor." Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki quickly followed with a threat to halt the export of weapons to the country for which it was once a wholehearted supporter. (Poland has since moved to walk back those comments, promising that it will still send weapons it has already committed to provide.) Still, on the sidelines at the UN General Assembly, Polish

President Andrzej Duda compared Ukraine to "a drowning person clinging to anything available."

Nearby Slovakia also has an election coming on Saturday, and it appears as though Robert Fico, former prime minister and leader of the populist Smer Party - which has campaigned on a pro-Russian message - is the front-runner. On the campaign trail last week in the village of Banovce nad Bebravou, Fico proclaimed: "We are a peaceful country. We will not send a single round to Ukraine." Ukraine has only provided its detractors with more verbal ammunition by threatening to file a suit in the World Trade Organization against Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over their grain embargoes.

There is a sense of toxic stasis that has a number of officials in other Western countries worried about how long they can continue to supply Ukraine at the pace to which it has become accustomed. "Ukraine fatigue" is spreading slowly but inexorably. This past week German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced his country would be sending a new round of arms shipments to Ukraine, but without the bunker-busting cruise missiles Kyiv had urgently requested. The problem is that all of this is converging at a delicate time. The EU is weighing up a mammoth four-year, 20 billion euro (\$21.3 billion) fund to finance weapons purchases for Ukraine. It requires, however, unanimous consent of all 27 member states - an increasingly heavy lift. Hungary continues to hew closely to the Kremlin's line and retains what has been an often toxic veto amid the rule of unanimity in all EU decision-making. And with Russia now eyeing up potential weapons deals with North Korea, Ukraine needs the West's support more than ever.

The West has been waiting eagerly and increasingly anxiously for

some significant progress in a still plodding summer offensive before fall rain and winter snow set in. Zelensky may also now be facing other troubles at home. In The Times of London this week, there was a dramatic report of growing threats of desertion, even rebellion by scattered Ukrainian troops, apparently fed up with corruption spreading through the ranks. The report came just as Zelensky is grappling with allegations of corruption in the military and beyond - earlier this month he sacked the defense minister, followed by the dismissal last week of six deputies. (The government gave no official reason for the dismissals.)

What can America and the West do? The simple answer is, stand firm with Ukraine. It may not be easy, especially in the face of polls that show more than half of voters oppose any more aid to Ukraine. Fortunately, there are still some leaders who will continue to lead. "American support for Ukraine is not charity," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday. "It's an investment in our own direct interests. Degrading Russia's military power helps to deter our primary strategic adversary, China." China does still appear to be avoiding tying itself too closely to Russia, congruent politically, but with waning military power that is a potential drag on its own image and capacities.

"When the hard right-wingers attempt in Congress to block renewed aid to Ukraine, they do Putin's work," Robert I. Rotberg, founding director of Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict, wrote this week. "As such, they are Putin enablers."

The same could equally be said for an all-too-rapidly expanding collection of leaders abroad. All parties, more than ever, need to act like allies and continue singing from the same songbook.

CNN

Beijing aims to snatch the entire South China Sea

Tom Sharpe

THE Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once (nearly) said: "The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single dash line". Recent Chinese activities in the South China Sea and Beijing's claims of "indisputable sovereignty" inside the nine-dash line of China's unilateral making show every sign of them taking this mantra seriously.

The latest Chinese stunt was to place a buoyed net around the Scarborough shoal to prevent Filipino fishing there. Almost immediately the Philippine coast guard dismantled it but the minute their fishing boats returned they were aggressively intercepted by the Chinese Coast Guard. In terms of violating internationally recognised laws this is the equivalent of the Danes coming across to the Dogger Bank in the North Sea, throwing a net barrier around it and claiming we, the Dutch and the Germans were no longer allowed to fish there. It would be absurd if it wasn't so serious.

If it's not the Scarborough Shoal today then it's the Second Thomas Shoal tomorrow where Beijing repeatedly and aggressively intervenes in Manila's attempts to shore up and resupply the BRP Sierra Madre, the ageing ship deliberately grounded there for use as a base allowing the Philippines to enforce their rights within their own Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). China claims its activities there are defensive in nature although it is hard to remember the last time a high-powered laser was used to blind someone defensively. Also, objecting to a rusting ship's presence seems cheeky given that China has built dozens of runways in the middle of the sea, each with military infrastructure and advanced anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems installed. Taiwan continues to see a huge increase in military activity. This month alone has seen over 100 aircraft incursions across the median line in the Taiwanese Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). The UK scrambles Typhoon fighter jets to intercept the Russians when they do this with one aircraft. October sees the seasonally calmest seas there, ideal for small boat operations such as landing craft. There will be lots. Those who dismiss all this as something that is 'over there' and therefore not relevant should remember several things.

First, people's livelihoods depend on being able to fish and work in their own EEZs. I'm not talking (yet) about the \$5 trillion of goods that transit through the South China Sea every year, but day-to-day activities on which bordering countries depend to survive and thrive. Fishing is an emotive subject everywhere. Second, we need to uphold international law, the "rules based international order". One would hope that this didn't need defending, particularly in the UK or Europe as there is a bloody example of what happens if ignoring these laws becomes the norm playing out on our doorstep. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the backbone of the internationally recognised architecture that allows the world's economic engine - maritime shipping - to operate. For a complex subject, it is remarkably clear as to how maritime territories should be divided. China, meanwhile, is equally clear that it doesn't care. Beijing has dismissed the 2016 ruling from the Hague that China's unilateral, historic claims to waters inside the nine-dash line were without legal foundation. Lawyers at the time were confident that over time China would acknowledge the ruling. Events since then have shown anything but.

Finally, and this is a consideration that those of us used to working near Iran will be very familiar with, all this pushing and shoving comes with a risk of escalation. Recent videos show how aggressive and unprofessional the Chinese are when conducting these activities. And I don't just mean rigid inflatable boats riding off fishing boats, although that's quite dangerous enough, but fighter

jets conducting close passes on allied aircraft and so on. Sooner or later there will be an international loss of life - what happens then? As ever, what to do about all this remains the issue. Professor Alessio Patalano has described Chinese activities in the South China Sea as 'turning the fluidity of the maritime space into something that is hard territorialisation - without the legal grounding. Something that is deliberately designed to make proportional responses difficult - classic grey zone activity'. Military analysts in the region have known for some time how bleak the 'fight tonight' prospect is there. US alliances in the region are good and getting better, but you can count the number of countries with weapons that would be of use

among those most dependent on Chinese exports. The recent resolution of a twelve year dispute between Indonesia and Vietnam over their boundaries is a good example of what can be done in the face of the adversity in their backyard.

Earlier this month China issued their 2023 "standard map" with a 10 dash line on it, the bonus dash appearing east of Taiwan. It had also stolen parts of India and Russia, so at least they're consistent. Timed to land just before the ASEAN summit in Jakarta and the G20 in New Delhi this is straight out of the Beijing diplomacy playbook - keep the discussions front of mind, apply pressure to participants and do nothing to help resolve them. Or 'normalising illegal', in short. Maps are important and have started many a war, as have autocratic

Western nations must aim at tightening existing maritime legal provisions. We should all work on generating the conditions for economic resilience, especially among those most dependent on Chinese exports. The recent resolution of a twelve year dispute between Indonesia and Vietnam over their boundaries is a good example of what can be done in the face of the adversity in their backyard. Earlier this month China issued their 2023 "standard map" with a 10 dash line on it, the bonus dash appearing east of Taiwan. It had also stolen parts of India and Russia, so at least they're consistent. Timed to land just before the ASEAN summit in Jakarta and the G20 in New Delhi this is straight out of the Beijing diplomacy playbook - keep the discussions front of mind, apply pressure to participants and do nothing to help resolve them. Or 'normalising illegal', in short. Maps are important and have started many a war, as have autocratic regimes externalising their internal woes and lashing out. The Falklands War was a result of these two elements combining and many died as a result. Chinese property market woes, high youth unemployment and sluggish exports might not bear direct comparison to the rampant inflation in Argentina prior to 1982, but considerable confusion as to who owns what does.

'tonight' on one finger. That the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has more ships than the US Navy is not up for debate. The USN wins on tonnage and firepower, but it cannot concentrate most or even much of its strength on the China coast, and when it operates there it is far from its bases. When it comes to logistics and sustainability, a combination of Chinese home advantage and the US currently going backwards in terms of seafit and long-range support is in danger of turning 'fight tonight' into 'fight only tonight'.

Maersk's recent decision to divest its US tanker fleet whilst escalating investments globally, including in China, is a real-time manifestation of this problem. Who that company would side with come the conflict is a whole other discussion. Friends of mine in the infantry used to say that 'logistics is the difference between a "click" and a "bang"'. Frustratingly, US long-term neglect of their Maritime Administration (MARAD) is giving this expression fleet-wide relevance. This leaves three things to work on to counter increasing Chinese belligerence in the region: alliances, 'lawfare' and economic resilience.

Concerned parties within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) need to move towards converging positions so as to strengthen their hand in the current negotiations with Beijing. Western nations must aim at tightening existing maritime legal provisions. We should all work on generating the conditions for economic resilience, especially

regimes externalising their internal woes and lashing out. The Falklands War was a result of these two elements combining and many died as a result. Chinese property market woes, high youth unemployment and sluggish exports might not bear direct comparison to the rampant inflation in Argentina prior to 1982, but considerable confusion as to who owns what does. So what happens next - the 11 dash line? Fewer but longer dashes with gaps that we're graciously allowed to sail through? A solid line enclosing an area of sea larger than the Mediterranean?

If you believe in the rights of countries to operate freely in their own waters and on the high seas - and the international laws that facilitate this - then something needs to be done to stand up to the bully. Showing a united front across dozens of countries, regional and international, backed by US military might remains the best solution for now. If recent escalations are due to increasing Chinese internal problems and/or a belief by Xi Jinping that militarily he now has the upper hand, one wonders for how long restraint can last. I would still maintain that, barring a significant miscalculation, it is in no one's interest for this to flare into conflict. We know from Lao Tzu that China has strategic patience. More likely is that we will continue to do nothing about the creeping normalisation of illegal activity until one day we'll wake up, all the maps will be different and there'll be nothing we can do about it.

The Telegraph

German politics has a built-in firewall against the far right. It’s beginning to crack

John Kampfner

THE Germans have a term for what holds them together: Wehrhafte Demokratie. It roughly translates as fortified democracy, but that does not fully render its meaning. In essence, it refers to the idea that the state has the right to act against those who threaten the liberal democratic order.

Another guarantor of German stability was the postwar constitutional settlement that founded three Volksparteien, big-tent "citizens' parties" operating along carefully regulated parameters, encompassing centre-left, centre and centre-right. None would enjoy absolute power, which required coalitions, compromise and consensus at national and regional levels. As a further safety net, parties with less than 5% of the vote couldn't join parliament, excluding fringe groups. Now, that is all being blown apart. Germany is engulfed in the same populist wave that has swept many of its European neighbours. The far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is surging in opinion polls and sending panic into the system.

One political question dominates: what to do about the AfD? In recent weeks, I have seen people sob when discussing the issue. Some wonder whether it might emerge as the leading party in next June's European parliamentary elections (unlikely, not impossible). In autumn 2024, 35 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the German Democratic Republic, elections in

three eastern states, Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia, could see the AfD triumph. The four mainstream parties (the original three were joined by the Greens in the 1980s) have long maintained a taboo in any dealings with the AfD and other extreme groups. They might have to answer parliamentary questions posed by them; they might have to sit with them on a committee or on a TV chatshow; but they would refuse to cut legislative deals or enter coalition discussions.

Now this brandmauer, or firewall, is cracking. In Bavaria, the economy minister, Hubert Aiwanger, has been caught up in a scandal in which he is alleged to have written a leaflet at the age of 17, mocking the concentration camps. Aiwanger, from the just-about-permitted alt-right party, Freie Wähler (Free Voters), refused to apologise. Even more shocking to most Germans, his popularity ratings rose sharply. With an eye on Bavaria's elections on 8 October, Bavaria's state premier, Markus Söder of the mainstream conservative Christian Social Union party, refused to sack him. This was the latest of several episodes. In June, the AfD candidate was elected head of the district council in the small town of Sonneberg in Thuringia - a first. Shortly after, in the same state, the AfD helped the Christian Democrats (CDU) win an opposition motion on cutting taxes. Amid national uproar, an embarrassed local CDU leader-

ship said the AfD's support had not been sought and was coincidental.

Thuringia may be a special case, but the problem is growing urgent across the country. The AfD might become so dominant in the east that it would need three, possibly all four, other parties to join forces to keep it out of government. The CDU says the firewall will stay, come what may, but some are suspicious of its intentions. And people talking all the time about the AfD is just what it wants: to foster the impression that the others are ganging up against it. The "authentic" voice of "real people" v the amorphous elite.

In this feeble atmosphere, the AfD is also looking over its shoulder at another extreme challenger. Her name is Sahra Wagenknecht, an MP for the Left party, and a former member of the Communist party and its post-reunification successor groups. She has morphed effortlessly into a Covid-sceptical, immigration-obsessed voice who combines far-left economics with far-right identity and social policies. Wagenknecht is expected to launch her (yet unnamed) party in time for the European elections. She could split the AfD vote, but at the same time bring yet more people into the populist-nativist fold. The AfD is also having an influence inside the establishment parties. Positions have already hardened on immigration. It has rallied resistance to recent climate laws and is undermining support for military aid to

Ukraine.

Germany's allies are looking on with concern, yet few European countries are bucking the trend. In 15 of the 27 EU states, support for the hard right is currently above 20%. There is a certain type of British commentator that can't resist marking the Germans' scorecard. But amid the schadenfreude, there is also denial about the extent of rightwards drift in their own back yard to positions that mainstream conservatives would previously have shied away from. Germany's critics fail to see that in its proportional system, where parties of all ideologies operate in the open, the lines between right and far-right are clearly drawn. The German firewall, while threatened, is still holding. In Britain, by contrast, the UK's ruling party has already integrated much of Ukip and other alt-right parties into the fold. On immigration, climate, and other issues, it's hard to see a difference between the Tory right and the AfD.

One little-known example in the heart of Europe speaks volumes. On the Council of Europe, a body that Winston Churchill helped create to defend democracy and of which the UK is still a member, the European Conservatives Group consists of Italy's Lega, Austria's Freedom party, Hungary's Fidesz, Spain's Vox, Poland's Law and Justice party, the AfD - and the Tories. The firewall may be cracking in Germany. It might be argued that in the US, Britain and elsewhere it has already been dismantled.

Britain is uniquely bad at building infrastructure. It’s costing us billions

Philip Johnston

THE Act of Parliament permitting the construction of the Great Western Railway was passed in September 1835. By 1841, the 116-mile line to Bristol had been completed. It is extraordinary to think that virtually the country's entire network was laid down in the ensuing half century. The Channel Tunnel link, or HS1, which opened in 2007, was the first new railway in England for more than 100 years; HS2 to Birmingham will be the second and will take about 25 years from conception to opening, assuming it goes ahead.

Obviously, Isambard Kingdom Brunel's GWR differed from the HS2 project in many ways. The country was emptier, the population smaller, regulation almost non-existent, and labour cheap as the countryside emptied after the Industrial Revolution. But Brunel also faced difficulties, with objections from landowners along the route and from rival transport interests, notably the canal and coach companies. As with HS2, tunnelling and viaducts added mightily to the bill, which ended up, at £6.5?million, double the projected budget. More than 100 of the 4,000 workers involved were killed in its construction. Nor is so-called Nimbysism a modern phenomenon. The arrival of the steam train was greeted with horror, as the railways snaked their way across pristine meadows and tunnels were blasted out of the hillsides. The speed of construction left contemporaries bewildered; nothing quite like it had been seen before, and the literature of mid-Victorian Britain, from Middlemarch to Dombey and Son, reflected popular concerns.

Comparisons with events 150 years ago may not be helpful to an understanding of the way we handle infrastructure projects today, but, in the case of the high-speed rail fiasco, two differences stand out: Brunel's line was funded entirely privately, and he built it from both ends. Had the finance for HS2 been raised through a bond issue, involving private investors and pension funds, there would surely have been much tighter control over costs. Moreover, it was suggested at the outset that construction work should start in the North. Had it done so, there would be no question now of abandoning that part of the link, something ministers are said to be considering.

Rishi Sunak does not want to go to the Conservative conference in Manchester this weekend having just scrapped the HS2 link to the city, so he is expected to delay any final decisions about the future until the Chancellor's Autumn Statement in November. The Prime Minister is said to be appalled by the spiralling costs of the project, now expected to top £100?billion, but he cannot be surprised since it has been apparent for years that the finances were out of control. Nor is this confined to HS2. Britain appears to be uniquely useless at delivering major infrastructure projects on time - or close to the projected date - and within budget, or something approximate to the expected costs. The question Mr Sunak needs to be asking is why infrastructure projects in Britain are so extraordinarily expensive. HS2 started off at £32.7?billion, which seemed steep enough. High-speed lines have been built in France, Japan

and Spain at a tenth of the projected cost of HS2. Even allowing for greater population density in the UK (though Japan is pretty crowded, too) that is an extraordinary cost difference. Heathrow's third runway, should it ever happen, could cost around £19?billion. Even the car park could swallow £800?million. The Dutch built a fifth runway at Schiphol Airport for £300?million. Two Royal Navy aircraft carriers cost more than £6?billion, yet do not have enough fighters. The Hinkley Point C nuclear reactor will cost around £26?billion to construct, with an ongoing public subsidy at one point estimated at £50?billion.

A tunnel for the A303 under Stonehenge, estimated to cost £183?million when first proposed 20 years ago, was recently given the go-ahead by the Government with a price tag close to £2?billion. Does anyone think that that will not be surpassed? A study by the think tank Britain Remade found that the UK is spending up to eight times more on rail and road projects than our European neighbours. Why is this? Sam Dumitriu, head of policy at the organisation, said: "One reason is that we give too much power to people objecting to projects and end up in a situation where schemes are gold-plated. Another is that we don't use off-the-shelf designs as much as we should do. And the planning system requires contractors to do huge amounts of work."

The study showed that France built 21 new tram systems in the past 25 years while Britain only completed a handful. In France the cost ranged from £29?million per mile in

Besançon to £60?million per mile in Orleans. The second cross-city tram in Manchester cost £252?million per mile. Even London's Elizabeth Line, hailed as a shining beacon of infrastructure development, cost more than £18?billion, when adjusted for inflation, making it one of the world's most expensive metro systems. Yet an 81-mile subway network in Madrid cost just £68?million per mile. While the first phase of HS2 may end up costing £396?million per mile, a high-speed rail link between Paris and Strasbourg came in at £31?million per mile.

These are such startling differences that there must be something specifically and seriously wrong with the way these projects are handled in Britain and it is incumbent on the Government to do something to stop it, not just wring its hands when matters get out of control. Among the explanations given are historic under-investment in repairs and renovation of ageing infrastructure; the higher cost of new schemes; a shortage of engineers, which pushes up prices; the cost of land, which tends to be more expensive than in other countries; onerous planning laws; overly generous compensation arrangements; and woefully poor procurement and contract management.

There is also a reluctance to learn from good practice elsewhere or to take up ideas from outside, such as Lord Bamford's suggestion in a letter to the Telegraph to use the HS2 network as a delivery system for the electricity cabling needed to distribute offshore wind power across the country. The National Grid upgrade is the next great infrastructure fiasco waiting to happen unless the Government gets a grip now.



WEXNET 23 exhibition inaugurated

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The largest ever women entrepreneur's exhibition WEXNET 23 was inaugurated by Chief Executive, Zubair Motiwala in a colorful ceremony at Expo Center Lahore. S M Tanveer was also present at the occasion. The event was also attended by Government officials, diplomats, members of trade and women entre-

preneurs. The prominent dignitaries present were Deputy Head & Mission UAE Ms. Ayesha Ali Naqbi, Commercial Counsellor, Saudi Arabia, Mubasher Alshehri and Commercial Counsellor, Uzbekistan Behram Yusuf.

The audience appreciated and enjoyed the colorful cultural show at the venue. The exhibition spread over three days has diverse themes and activities such

as shopping, culinary competition featuring chef Gulzar and a play area for children.

Importantly the exhibition also had sideline events that will assist in capacity building of the women entrepreneurs enabling them to adequately exploit opportunities present in creating a export market for goods.

The opening day witnessed a very vibrant

response from the general public as families streamed into the expo center and enjoyed the ambiance and display of quality products created by women entrepreneurs.

An important aspect of this year's WEXNET is the participation of number of partner organizations like USAID-ERDA, Daachi, Sanatzar, Pakistan Software Export Board, SMEDA and COTHM.



LAHORE: Chief Executive TDAP Zubair Motiwala addressing inauguration ceremony of WEXNET 2023 Exhibition at Expo Center.

Pakistan expects US\$25b cotton exports this year: President ICCI

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that due to the improvement in cotton production, Pakistan is expecting US\$25 billion in exports this year.

He was addressing the ICCI's 39th Annual General Meeting, which was attended by a large number of members. The AGM approved ICCI Audit Report 2022-23 and ICCI Budget 2023-24. The AGM also approved the appointment of ICCI auditors for the year 2023-24.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari highlighted the key achievements of his one-year tenure and briefed the participants about the efforts made to solve the important problems of the business community.

He said that his major achievement was to organ-

ize award ceremonies for the business leaders to recognize their services for the business community and give them respect and honor in society.

He said that business role model awards were organized in ICCI in honor of prominent investors of Islamabad, Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan and Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, and this practice will be continued in the future.

He said that the establishment of the SIFC through the efforts of the COAS is a welcome step to encourage investment in the country. He said that bad times have passed and now we are moving towards a bright future.

The ICCI President said that he has got another year to serve the business community and vowed that he would work harder to address the major issues

and facilitate them in business development.

He said that ICCI has signed an MoU for the establishment of an Expo Centre in Islamabad and added that ICCI would organize more exhibitions including exhibition of women entrepreneurs in the coming year to promote business activities and exports.

He thanked all the participants for attending the AGM and assured that ICCI would continue to work for the welfare and betterment of the business community.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik said that Ahsan Bakhtawari is making great efforts to solve the problems of the business community and hoped that he will deliver up to the expectations of the members in next year. He said that Ahsan

Bakhtawari has given a fund of one crore rupees from his own pocket for the development of markets, while one crore rupees will be given by the ICCI and another two crores will be given by other prominent businessmen.

In this way, the Chamber will start development works in the markets with 4 crore rupees.

He said that for the first time, the sitting President ICCI has been given representation in the CDA board, which is a very positive development.

He said that Ahsan Bakhtawari would work in CDA Board to protect the interests of the business community.

He thanked the members of ICCI for their active participation in the AGM, which reflected their trust and confidence in the Chamber.

FBR systems efficiently ensure tax returns filing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is committed to providing maximum facilitation to taxpayers timely resolve the issues raised by taxpayers.

In a letter addressed to FBR, the Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) has raised certain issues that either are not related to the return filing for tax year 2023 or have been already resolved, according to a press release issued here on Saturday.

FBR has been prompt in timely addressing/resolving issues raised by taxpayers and their representatives, including Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA).

This fact has also been acknowledged in writing by the KTBA/PTBA in their various correspondence with the FBR.

It is further clarified that no issue related to system slow down or system outage has so far been reported by anyone this year.

This reflects the smooth functioning of return filing application on IRIS 2.0 which was ensured in order to avoid any need for extending the date of returns.

The detail of the issues raised by KTBA and their solutions thereof are also uploaded on FBR's website.

WCCIS meeting

SIALKOT (APP): The annual general meeting of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) was held at the SCCI Auditorium.

Stakeholders gathered to engage in an strategic planning session to chart a forward looking course for the organisation. The leadership of the WCCIS took the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of the year and expressed their dedication for the forthcoming initiatives.

The meeting was attended by group leader Sialkot business community Riazud-Din Sheikh, President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahub Jahangir, VP SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh, President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Nouman, Senior Vice President (SVP) WCCIS Gulzaib Waqas Awan, former SCCI President Dr. Nouman Idrees Butt and WCCIS executive committee members.

Shamshad backs SECP's initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, extended her unwavering support to Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP's) initiatives aimed at establishing financial institutions backed private funds to serve as a catalyst for economic revival.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar asked the fiscal and regulatory sides, including the Federal Board of Revenue, the State Bank of Pakistan, and the SECP, to extend complete support to the initiatives of seeking investments from local financial institutions, institutional investors, government DFIs, and corporate entities with the potential to attract foreign capital, said a press release issued here Saturday.

She was chairing the meeting held by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) to discuss proposals for establishing financial institutions backed by private funds to serve as a catalyst for economic revival.

Dr. Shamshad suggested making efforts, particularly to attract climate and ESG-focused international institutional investors. She stressed the urgency of implementing these initiatives to signal Pakistan's readiness for business and economic growth to the global market and foreign investors.

Chaired by, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the meeting brought together leaders from Commercial Banks and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs). Chairman SECP Akif Saeed welcomed participants at the meeting, while Commissioner Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi discussed SECP's commitment to creating an enabling regulatory environment and its active engagement with banks and DFIs.

Habib Bank Limited, representing a consortium of banks, proposed the establishment of a Climate Resilience (CR) Fund under the SECP Private Fund Regulations, 2015. Ms. Khalida Habib, Executive Director Specialized Companies Division at SECP, on behalf of the

DFIs elaborated the proposal for setting of a similar fund backed by DFIs. Whereas, Bank AL Falah presented a promising proposal to create a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the Asset Backed Securitization Regulations, 2022 to securitize rupee denominated debt to dollar denomination.

Chairman SECP Mr. Akif Saeed highlighted that regulatory requirements for effectively structuring a Private Fund ensure that professional fund management teams, independent of financial institutions, oversee fund management, bringing expertise in private equity, structured finance, and green investments. He also noted that the asset securitization proposal can potentially pave the way for unlocking of new avenues in Pakistan's Debt Capital Markets, benefiting all stakeholders.

The meeting concluded with a resounding commitment from all participants, including banks and DFIs, to work together for the greater good of Pakistan's economy.

Over 0.4 million mounds cotton reach markets

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The cotton fields in Bahawalpur produced record crop as over 0.4 million mounds cotton have reached at markets in Bahawalpur division.

Official sources at the office of Commissioner Bahawalpur Division said that the target was set to grow cotton over 2.3 acres of land in three districts of Bahawalpur including Rahimyar Khan, Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar.

They said that according to the statistics, over 0.4

million mounds cotton had reached cotton markets of three districts of Bahawalpur division while more was in the pipeline.

They further said that 170 cotton ginning factories of Bahawalpur had made around one million cotton bales. "The management of Bahawalpur division has made important role to activate cotton growers for timely picking of cotton from cotton fields and later its transportation to markets and cotton ginning factories," said Commissioner Bahawalpur, Dr. Ehtsham Anwar.

missioner Bahawalpur, Dr. Ehtsham Anwar.

Meanwhile, according to a report compiled by Ayyub Agriculture Research Institute Faisalabad, government of Punjab, Bahawalpur is the core area in cotton production in Punjab which used to produce 40 percent of cotton of Punjab and 30 percent of Pakistan.

It is mentioned here that present rate of cotton reaching cotton markets in Bahawalpur division is Rs 7,500 to Rs 9,000 in accordance with their variety and quality.

US dollar ticks down after mixed reports

NEW YORK (APP): The US dollar lost marginally in late trading on Friday, after softer-than-expected inflation data and encouraging consumer sentiment report.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, was down 0.10 percent to 106.1156 in late trading.

Inflation in the United States, as measured by the change in personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, rose to

3.5 percent on a yearly basis in August from 3.4 percent in July, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported on Friday.

The annual core PCE, the Federal Reserve's preferred gauge of inflation, rose 3.9 percent in August, a slightly softer pace than the 4.3 percent increase in July. The University of Michigan also released the final reading of the Michigan Consumer Sentiment report for

September on Friday.

The report indicated that Consumer Sentiment Index declined from 69.5 in August to 68.1 in September, compared to analyst consensus of 67.7. The US dollar climbed back above the 106.00 level after the report. While in the eurozone, consumer prices rose at an annual rate of 4.3 percent this month, down from 5.2 percent in August, the European Commission's statistical arm reported on Friday.

Britain's economy in the three months to the end of June 2023 was 1.8 percent larger than in the final quarter of 2019, the last full quarter before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office for National Statistics said Friday.

In late New York trading, the euro increased to 1.0578 US dollars from 1.0553 dollars in the previous session, and the British pound rose to 1.2206 US dollars from 1.2196 dollars.

The US dollar bought 149.4190 Japanese yen, higher than 1.

Meanwhile, Dow Jones Industrial Average and broad-based S&P 500 both ended the day in the red, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index etched out a small gain. "I think the idea of a potential government shutdown is not a major factor driving stock prices but it certainly doesn't help sentiment at all," Steve Sossnick from Interactive Brokers said.

WB approves USD600m loan to for Philippine

MANILA (APP): The World Bank said on Saturday that it has approved 600 million US dollars in financing for the Philippines to support reforms aimed at increasing digitalization.

The Philippines' First Digital Transformation Development Policy Loan aims to promote the digital transformation of government and digital infrastructure policies, expand financial inclusion through digital finance, and stimulate the growth of digital services.

"It will help the government digitize government operations and service delivery, foster competition in the digital infrastructure markets, and encourage the adoption of digital payments and financial services," the bank said.

It will also facilitate reforms to promote e-commerce, enhance competition and value-added activities in digital services markets, and strengthen skills development in the industry, the bank noted.

"Greater adoption of digital technology can improve the efficiency and transparency of government services, empowering individuals who were previously far away from decision-making centers," said Ndiame Diop, World Bank country director for Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

The bank said widespread adoption of digital payments in the Philippines is essential for developing a digital economy, benefiting millions of citizens and small businesses.

"Digitalization can also drive productivity growth by reducing operating costs for firms and enhancing their resilience and preparedness for future crises," Diop said.

Currently, cash is the dominant form of payment for the country's over-the-counter purchases in grocery stores, government service payments, and government fees and penalties.

"Transitioning to a cashless economy would provide various benefits, especially during climate-related and natural disasters, enabling the government and the private sector to respond swiftly and efficiently," said Smita Kurikose, lead economist in the World Bank's finance, competitiveness, and innovation global practice.

China's lottery sales surge 53.6%

BEIJING (APP): China's lottery ticket sales surged 53.6 percent year on year to about 52.96 billion yuan (about 7.38 billion US dollars) in August, data from the Ministry of Finance showed.

Sales of lottery tickets to support the welfare system stood at approximately 18.64 billion yuan last month, an increase of 47.1 percent or 5.97 billion yuan compared to a year earlier, the data revealed.

Lottery ticket sales to support the sports industry increased by 57.4 percent year on year to 34.31 billion yuan, the ministry said.

Under China's lottery management rules, funds raised from ticket sales are used for administrative expenses and public welfare projects, and to fund prizes.

Walmart changes pay, titles for corporate staff

NEW YORK (Reuters): Walmart (WMT.N) corporate staff are getting new titles and pay packages in the coming weeks to manage labor costs and simplify the structure of the company's workforce, the Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

Starting in November, many corporate workers at Walmart and Sam's Club, its warehouse chain, will be reclassified into fewer groups of possible titles and pay, the report added.

Base pay and total bonus benefits will not fall for any workers. Around 4%, or 2,000, will receive an eventual reduction in stock-option awards as part of the

change, the report said.

The company is making the changes because its corporate roles have become more varied over the past decade through acquisitions and new lines of business such as advertising, Kim Lupo, head of global total rewards for Walmart told the Journal.

The change is "good compensation hygiene," and ensures Walmart is "appropriately rewarding similar levels of work," Lupo said.

Workers who will have their stock options reduced will receive a one-time stock-option grant next year to make up for the immediate reduction in total compen-

sation, but stock options will reset at a lower trajectory longer term, the report added.

Earlier this month, Walmart changed the hourly starting wage structure for entry-level store workers.

The change meant that store workers including cashiers, personal shoppers, stockers, self-check-out helpers and associates manning departments such as sporting goods or electronics would all receive the same hourly starting wages that are paid at the store, instead of different levels previously.

Walmart did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



In brief

PCB wrote letter to ICC

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has written a letter to the Int'l Cricket Council (ICC) over delay in issuance of visas to cricket fans and journalists for ODI World Cup 2023. The PCB said Indian authorities were not receiving visa applications from Pakistani journalists, who intend to visit the neighbouring country for coverage, and fans, causing uncertainty among them as the mega cricket event draws closer. It asked the int'l cricket body to take steps for speedy issuance of visas to fans and journalists as there are only five days left to start of the world cup. The ODI cricket tournament is all set to begin on Oct 5 while Green Shirts will play their first game the next day.

Yusuf Pathan picks Pakistan

KARACHI (Web Desk): Former Indian cricketer, Yusuf Pathan has shared his predictions for the 2023 ODI World Cup semi-finalists. He believes that India, England, Australia, and Pakistan will make it to the semi-final stage of the tournament. Expressing his support for India and closely following the World Cup, Yusuf Pathan revealed his top four picks for the semi-finals through a post on his official 'X' (formerly known as Twitter) handle. "Watching this World Cup closely and backing our #TeamIndia all the way! My top four picks for the semi-finals are India, England, Australia, and Pakistan. Some exciting cricket ahead!" Yusuf wrote on 'X'. India holds the top position in ICC ODI team rankings, with Pakistan and Australia following closely at No. 2 and 3, respectively. Defending champions England are positioned at No. 5 in the rankings. The ODI World Cup is set to commence in less than a week, and teams are currently engaging in warm-up matches to fine-tune their strategies for the upcoming event. The curtain-raiser will feature England against New Zealand in Ahmedabad on October 5 while Pakistan will play against Netherlands in Hyderabad on October 6.

Watkins scores hat-trick

BIRMINGHAM (Agencies): Ollie Watkins scored his second hat-trick of the season as Aston Villa delivered a ruthless display to thrash high-flying Brighton at Villa Park. Watkins gave Unai Emery's side an early lead, finishing coolly into the left corner after Matty Cash had picked out the forward with a low cross. The 27-year-old went close with a rasping drive that flew inches wide, before doubling his personal tally with a low shot inside Jason Steele's right-hand post. Sharper to the ball and stronger in the challenge, Villa were all over Brighton and increased their lead just five minutes later when Moussa Diaby's scuffed shot deflected in off the unfortunate Pervis Estupinan. Half-time substitute Ansu Fati pulled one back as Brighton improved after the restart, but Watkins' third of the game - a powerful drive that took a deflection off Adam Webster on its way in - ended the visitors' hopes of an unlikely comeback. Watkins, who also scored three against Hibernian in Europa Conference League qualifying, is the first Villa player to net more than one hat-trick in a season since Andy Gray in 1976-77. Late efforts from Jacob Ramsey and Douglas Luiz were the icing on the cake for Villa, who move level on points with the Seagulls in the Premier League table.

Zaka lauds fantastic reception of Pak team upon arrival in India for World Cup

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Praising the "fantastic reception" received by the Pakistan team in India for the World Cup, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Interim Management Committee head Zaka Ashraf has expressed hope that the national team would continue to receive the same warmth throughout the tournament, it emerged today.

Zaka's comments follow his recent viral video in which he emphasised the importance of maintaining high morale among players regardless of the country they visit, even if it's "an enemy country where the tournament is being held". Although he didn't explicitly mention India, it was widely interpreted as a reference to the neighbouring country.

In the video, Ashraf was heard saying, "We have granted these contracts to our players with great care and affection. In Pakistan's history, no one has ever allocated such a substantial amount to our players as I have. My aim was to ensure that our players maintain high spirits when they travel to compete, whether it's in an enemy country or anywhere else in the world."

In a statement issued by the PCB on Friday, he appeared to soften his tone. Ashraf was quoted as say-



ing that the "fantastic reception" of the Pakistan men's cricket team in India for the World Cup demonstrated the mutual love between the people of both countries for each other's players.

"Whenever India and Pakistan step onto the cricket field, they emerge as traditional rivals but not as enemies," Zaka said. "Zaka Ashraf personally congratulated the Indians over arranging a reception of this kind," the statement added.

He voiced his optimism that Pakistan cricketers would be welcomed with the same warmth throughout the entire World Cup, and "Indian fans would have the opportunity to witness the best cricket from the Pakistani players."

Ashraf recalled that historically, whenever the Pakistan men's cricket team visited India, they were warmly and cordially

received, much like how Indian teams were welcomed in Pakistan.

He emphasised that cricket had consistently played a unifying role between the two nations, with cricketers from both countries remaining popular and beloved by fans in both India and Pakistan.

Ashraf also underlined that cricket matches between Pakistan and India had consistently captured global attention, making them more significant than other contests in the sport.

He expressed his wish for the revival of bilateral cricketing relations between the two countries and also hoped for a reciprocal visit by the Indian cricket team to Pakistan in the near future, allowing Pakistan to reciprocate the warmth and affection extended by India to the Men in Green.

Currently, Pakistan is in India to participate in the World Cup, an event that takes place every four years. The mega event is scheduled to take place from Oct 5 to Nov 19 in India. Pakistan's opening match in the tournament is set for Oct 6 against the Netherlands in Hyderabad, while the highly anticipated match against arch-rivals India will take place in Ahmedabad on Oct 14.

Stephen appointed Pakistan Football Coach



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) on Saturday, named renowned England-based coach Stephen Constantine as the national men's team's head coach.

The announcement came after the PFF removed the previous manager Shehzad Anwar, due to the national team's poor performance in recent times.

Consequently, Stephen Constantine takes the reigns of Pakistan football, just 12 days before their FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers' first leg in Cambodia on October 12, followed by their home leg on October 17.

"In order to provide Pakistan with the best chance of winning the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers against Cambodia, the Pakistan Football Federation

named Stephen Constantine as the new men's national team head coach," stated in a press release.

"Stephen, who is a legend in South Asia having taken India from 176 to 96 in the FIFA rankings, has also been an elite FIFA instructor since 2000. He brings the very top-tier professional experience and his familiarity with our region allows him to have an immediate impact."

"Stephen has agreed to join PFF with a singular focus for now - to win qualifiers against Cambodia. The away and home-based leg between Pakistan and Cambodia will be played on the 12th and 17th of October in Cambodia and Pakistan, respectively."

"PFF would also like to thank and appreciate Shehzad Anwar, for the

very hard and difficult task of resurrecting Pakistan men's national team football in just one year. Without his hard work and passion, our team would not be ready to rise to the next level."

Stephen Constantine is one of the most accomplished coaches in Asia. He coached the Nepal national team for two years before taking over the Indian football team.

The England-based coach led India to silver medal at the 2003 Afro-Asian Games in 2003 and then to the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship glory in 2016. Under his coaching stint, India also won the Intercontinental Cup in 2018.

Stephen Constantine also coached notable football teams like Premier League's AFC Bournemouth.

Asian Games 2023: Pakistan lost to India, bags Silver in Squash

HANGZHOU (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan lost to arch-rivals India 2-1 on Saturday in the final of the men's squash team event of the ongoing Asian Games 2023.

Pakistan, who put on a dominant show throughout the tournament, came up short in the final against India and settled for a silver medal.

The national squash team got off to a promising start to the blockbuster final, courtesy of Nasir Iqbal beating Mahesh Mangaonkar 3-0 in the first match of the three-match final.

Nasir won the match with the scoreline of 11-8, 11-3 and 11-2.

Saurav Ghosal then scripted India's sensational comeback in the must-win game for his team as he crushed Mohammad Asim Khan after a one-sided affair.

Ghosal brought Pakistan and India level on terms with a statement 11-5, 11-1 and 11-3 victory over Asim.

Pakistan's Noor Zaman and India's Abhay Singh then



competed in an intense five-set final of the Asian Games 2023 squash event which lasted for 65 minutes before India emerged triumphant.

Singh won the first set in a comprehensive manner before Zaman pulled off an astonishing recovery by claiming the next two sets and took a 2-1 lead.

This time it was Singh, who pulled things back with a close-fought victory in the fourth set and forced the match to the decider.

The fifth and final set of the match spanned for 14 minutes. Zaman had attained a 10-8 lead over Singh and moved one point within of bagging a gold

medal for his country but Singh continued to fight and eventually succeeded to win the prestigious accolade for his nation by winning the decisive set 12-8.

The final scoreline of the enthralling clash between Singh and Zaman read 11-7, 9-11, 8-11, 11-9 and 12-10.

Qasim Akram aims for medal in 19th Asian Games

HANGZHOU (APP): Qasim Akram-led Pakistan Shaheens will depart on Saturday night for China to feature in the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. The T20 format will see Pakistan Shaheens starting their journey from the quarter-final stage, after having directly qualified by virtue of being one of the top four ICC ranked sides in the continent.

The quarter-finals are scheduled to take place on Oct 3-4, with Pakistan playing their quarter-final on October 3 at Zhejiang University of Technology Pingfeng Cricket Field in Hangzhou. The semi-finals will take place on Oct 6, while the final and the bronze medal match are

scheduled to take place on Saturday, (Oct 7).

Pakistan Shaheens underwent a five-day camp at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore where players, under the guidance of coaches, engaged in training sessions and featured in match scenarios to get ready for the tournament.

The squad includes 15 players of which seven have already represented Pakistan in international cricket. These include Aamir Jamal (2 T20Is), Arshad Iqbal (1 T20I), Asif Ali (21 ODIs, 55 T20Is), Haider Ali (2 ODIs, 33 T20Is), Khushdil Shah (10 ODIs, 24 T20Is), Shah Nawaz Dahani (2 ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Usman

Qadir (1 ODI, 23 T20Is).

Captain Qasim Akram said: "It is an honor for me to lead the side in the Asian Games. The players have performed well in the past, winning the ACC Emerging Asia Cup recently and I am looking forward to the same performance from the players in the upcoming games."

"We have a good combination and have undergone rigorous training, preparing for whatever challenges spinning wickets may present. So, we are ready for the challenge," he said. "This will be our first tour to China, so we will keep things very simple and aim to win matches for the country," he told media men.

"I will urge the fans to

keep supporting the Shaheens side in the Asian Games," he added.

Pakistan Shaheens squad:
Qasim Akram (captain), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Arafat Minhas, Arshad Iqbal, Asif Ali, Haider Ali, Khushdil Shah, Mirza Tahir Baig, Mubasir Khan, Muhammad Akhlaq (wk), Rohail Nazir (wk), Shah Nawaz Dahani, Sufiyan Muqem and Usman Qadir.

Support Personnel – Shahid Aslam (head coach-cum-manager), Umar Rasheed (bowling coach), Hanif Malik (batting and fielding coach) and Hafiz Naeem ul Rasool (physiotherapist).

No restrictions on hijab in Paris 2024 Games

PARIS (Reuters): Athletes can wear a hijab in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games athletes' village without any restriction, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday, days after France's sports minister banned it for the host country's athletes.

The Olympic body also said it needed to better understand the situation in France and had been in contact with the French Olympic Committee (CNOSF). French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said on Sunday that French athletes would be barred from wearing a hijab during the Paris Games to respect principles of secularism.

"For the Olympic Village, the IOC rules apply," an IOC spokesperson said. "There are no

restrictions on wearing the hijab or any other religious or cultural attire."

The vast majority of the approximately 10,000 athletes at the Olympic Games reside in apartments in the Olympic Village and share common spaces, including dining halls and recreational areas. "When it comes to competitions, the regulations set by the relevant International Federation apply," the IOC spokesperson said.

The sports competitions at the Olympics are organised and overseen by the individual international sports federations. There are 32 sports on the programme of the Paris Games. "Since this French regulation relates to the members of the French team only, we are in contact with the

CNOSF to further understand the situation regarding the French athletes," the spokesperson said.

Home to one of Europe's largest Muslim minorities, France has implemented laws designed to protect its strict form of secularism, known as "laïcité", which President Emmanuel Macron has said is under threat from Islamism.

Some Muslim associations and human rights groups allege those laws have targeted Muslims, chipped away at democratic protections and left them vulnerable to abuse. The French decision to bar its athletes from wearing a hijab was criticised by the United Nations human rights office this week. Paris will host the Summer Olympics from July 26 to August 11 next year.

England vs India warm-up abandoned because of rain



GUWAHATI (Agencies): England's World Cup warm-up against India was abandoned without a ball bowled because of rain in Guwahati.

The toss had taken place, with India skipper Rohit Sharma opting to bat first, before the rain arrived. England named 13 players, with bowlers Chris Woakes and Gus Atkinson missing out from their 15-man squad.

Their second and final warm-up is against Bangladesh on Monday, before they start their title defence against New Zealand on Thursday (09:30 BST).

Monday's game will be the last chance England have to give fast bowler Mark Wood and leg-spinner Adil Rashid some match action, with the pair having not played since 31 July and 8 September respectively because of injuries.

England are going to India as the current holders of the 50-over title after dramatically beating New Zealand on boundary countback following a tie in the 2019 final at Lord's.

New Zealand beat Pakistan by five wickets on Friday with captain Kane Williamson making an unbeaten half-century in his first appearance since March. Williamson, who is recovering from a knee injury, will miss the Kiwis' game against England on Thursday.

Elsewhere, Bangladesh cruised to a seven-wicket win against Sri Lanka, while South Africa against Afghanistan was abandoned.

There are no warm-up games on Sunday, with New Zealand facing South Africa in Monday's other game. The remaining six sides in the tournament play on Tuesday.

North Korea cheer weightlifting world record, Zhang wins tennis gold



HANGZHOU (Reuters): North Korea's Ri Song Gum set a weightlifting world record at the Asian Games where Chinese tennis trailblazer Zheng Zhizhen claimed his nation's first men's singles gold medal in nearly 30 years on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Ri jumped for joy after hoisting a combined 216kg to win the gold medal in the women's 49-kg category, re-writing the record books only a few weeks after

China's runnerup Jiang Huihua lifted 215kg at the world championships in Saudi Arabia.

Ri cried on the podium and saluted as her national anthem played, having won North Korea's fourth gold at the nation's first appearance at a major multi-sport event in five years. "During the COVID period I did a lot of hard training and that's why today I achieved this great result and broke the world record," said Ri.

"When I see my national

flag flying I feel very excited to bring this good news to my people." There was more joy for North Korea in the women's soccer as a late three-goal burst secured a 4-1 win over South Korea in the quarter-finals at the Wenzhou Sport Stadium, with midfielder Ri Hak scoring a double.

Without a FIFA ranking after not playing international football for years due to COVID-19, the North Koreans have come back with a bang in Hangzhou.

In the tennis, Zhang rode a wave of crowd support to beat Japan's Yosuke Watanuki 6-4 7-6(7) in the men's singles final, roaring back from 4-1 down in the first set after a nervous start at the Olympic Sports Centre. The first Chinese man to break into the top 100 in world rankings, Zhang wrapped up the match after Japanese number two Watanuki blew a set point in the tiebreaker with a double-fault.

Zhang tossed his racket away in celebration as home fans erupted and walked around the court draped in the red flag of China. It was the hosts' first gold medal in the men's event since Pan Bing won back-to-back titles in 1990-94.

"It's been a very, very tough week, not just this match, but very tough for the whole week actually, from the first match onwards," said Zhang. "But I'm super happy that from the beginning of the first match, step by step, I've played better and better tennis."

China's Zheng Qinwen won the women's singles title on Friday, overpowering compatriot Zhu Lin 6-2 6-4. An outlier among the traditional east Asian powers of table tennis, Iran savoured it of its finest days in the sport when brothers Nima Alamian and Noshad Alamian thrashed Japan 3-0 in the quarter-finals of the men's doubles. The Iranians already took



a bronze in the men's team event. "I can't even believe it myself now. It's like I'm dreaming. It's amazing," said Alamian, whose father and uncle also played on the national team. "My father is super happy," added his brother, Noshad. "He cannot believe this either."

It was business as usual for China on day one of the diving, however, with Olympic champion Quan Hongchan and Chen Yuxi obliterating their rivals to win the women's synchronised 10-metre platform gold with a total score of

375.30 points, more than 80 better than runners-up Japan. China also won the men's double synchronised 3-metre springboard convincingly, ahead of South Korea.

Japan's Yuko Takahashi became the first athlete to win the women's triathlon back-to-back, five years on from taking gold at Jakarta. Takahashi held off China's runnerup Lin Xinyu and bronze medalist Yang Yifan in the gruelling course in Chun'an county, a day after compatriot Kenji Nener took the men's gold for Japan.



In brief

Eid Milad un Nabi celebrated

ISLAMABAD (APP): The life of the Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW) is an example for the entire humanity, following the good deeds and actions told by the Prophet (PBUH), we can be successful in both worlds," said Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. He was addressing the Mehfil Milad ceremony held in AIOU Faisalabad region yesterday. University celebrated Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (SAWW) with religious enthusiasm, naats were recited and salutations were paid to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Religious scholar, Mufi Yamin Qureshi, well-known Naat Khawan, Muhammad Ayub Bhatti and poet Muhammad Tahir Siddiqui paid tribute and gratitude to the Holy Prophet. VC AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that young generation can achieve success in every field by following the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) way of life. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan, Regional Head AIOU Faisalabad, Dr. Bashir Ahmed Samim and Mufti Yameen Qureshi also addressed the event. They congratulated VC AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Regional Head Faisalabad for organizing a prestigious and spiritual gathering of Milad to promote the love of the Prophet.

171,900 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 171,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 106,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1541.68 feet and was 143.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 57,700 cusecs and 90,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1226.40 feet, which was 176.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 11,600 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 99,000, 88,300, 100,300 and 47,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 18,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Snatcher gang's man arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Sabzi Mandi police team has arrested a wanted member of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of twin cities and recovered cash, mobile phone and weapons with ammunition used in crime from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directions, the Sabzi Mandi police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of the twin cities. The accused was identified as Hassan Javed. Police team also recovered a snatched mobile phone, cash and weapons with ammunition from his possession.

Pervez Ashraf commends security forces' anti-terror operation in Parachinar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Raja Pervez Ashraf on Saturday lauded the valiant efforts of security forces in their counter-terrorism operation in Parachinar.

The Raja Pervez Ashraf conveyed his sympathies to the family of the late Lance Naik Ghairat Khan,

who exhibited exceptional bravery and embraced martyrdom during the operation.

He prayed to Allah Almighty for peace of the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

He said, "The entire

nation stands shoulder to shoulder with our security forces in the battle against terrorism."

Raja Pervez Ashraf said that those who disrupt peace in the country have no affiliation with any religion, humanity, or ethical values.

He said, "The heinous acts committed in Mastung and Hangu, where innocent lives and Friday prayers were targeted, have no precedence in history."

The need of the hour is to combat terrorism with an iron hand, he added.

Baligh stresses for steps to develop IT sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that there was a lot of scope for development in the field of information technology and urgent measures were needed to develop IT sector.

The Governor was speaking during his visit to Jazz Digital Data Park in Islamabad during which he was briefed on the new trends of IT in Pakistan.

Balighur Rehman said that this Digital Park was

an IT platform for freelancers, firms, public and private institutions and was providing them with modern facilities. He said that development was not possible without acquiring expertise in the field of information technology.

He said that Pakistani youth was very talented and there was a need to teach modern IT skills to the young generation so that they can benefit from the opportunities available at the global level. He said

that Pakistan was progressing in the field of IT, but we still have to go a long way to compete with the world.

Governor Punjab said that the IT company should provide its services to students, universities, and educational institutions in the field of IT at affordable rates while fulfilling its social responsibility. On this occasion, Jazz Chief Business Officer Asif Aziz said that Jazz was ready to provide all kinds of support to advance the vision of IT.

17 outlaws arrested: drugs, arms recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 17 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directives, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Ishfaq Masih and recovered 30 liters of liquor from his possession. The Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Rahim Khan involved in illegal refilling gas cylinders. The Kohsar police team arrested two accused namely Danish Shakeel and Ehsan Ali and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession.

Likewise, the Sangjani police team arrested three accused namely Khurram Shahzad, Adil Shahzad and Iqbal and recovered two 30 bore pistols and 1150 gram hashish from their possession. The Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Qasim Ali and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Similarly, the Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Hassan Javed and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Sikandar and recovered an iron punch from his possession. The Kirpa police team arrested three accused namely Sajjad Khan, Irshad Khan and Ismail and recovered two pistols and 10 liquor bottles from their possession.

Moreover, the Humak police team arrested three accused namely Rehman Ullah, Saeed Ali and Shah Nawaz Adil and recovered three 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession. The Pulgran team police arrested an accused namely Hamad and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.



ISLAMABAD: A nursery worker busy in seedling into pots for germination seasonal plants and flowers in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

ANF recovers 89kg narcotics, arrests 10 in various operations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) recovered 89 kilogram narcotics and arrested 10 drug pushers including women during seven operations conducted in seven cities of the country.

According to the ANF spokesman, during search of a suspected car on Super Highway near Jamshoro, 54 kilogram Hashish was recovered from secret cavities of the vehicle and a drug pusher hailing from Shikarpur was arrested.

During an operation near

Windar district Hub, five drug peddlers including two women were arrested after recovery of 18 kilogram hashish from their travel bags. The recovered drug was being smuggled to Karachi from Pishin.

A female drug peddler traveling in a passenger bus was arrested during an action on RCD Highway near Windar. Narcotics including five kilogram methamphetamine (Ice) and 2.5 kilogram heroin hidden in water cooler and being smuggled from Kalat

to Karachi were recovered.

A motorcyclist was held near Al-Fateh Mall Faisalabad with 4.8 kilogram heroin while Ice drug was recovered from a parcel in courier office Peshawar.

He said that one kilogram Ice (Crystal) hidden in boxes of cloth being smuggled to Bahrain were recovered.

The spokesman said that separate cases against detainees were registered against detainees under ANF Drug Act and investigations were underway.

Secure, efficient digital payments govt's priority

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif has said that creating a secure and efficient digital payment ecosystem was top priority of the government.

Talking to a high-level delegation led by Ethan Sun, CEO of Huawei which called on him in Islamabad on Saturday, he said, "Huawei's contribution to Pakistan's ICT infrastructure is a promising step towards a digitally connected future." The meeting discussed the importance of enhancing the digital economy of

Pakistan.

Dr. Umar Saif further said that the combination of ICT infrastructure and a robust digital financial ecosystem indeed offers significant benefits like reducing transaction costs, enhancing security, and promoting financial inclusion. Key stakeholders, including banks, microfinance institutions, fintechs, and telecom companies, are integral to this progress, he added.

"Technology, as exemplified by Huawei's global efforts in mobile money and fintech solutions, plays a crucial role in advancing financial access and creating new opportu-

nities," the minister added. Vice President Huawei Fintech Ravenscroft's emphasis on regulatory support for innovation is essential for fostering a thriving digital financial landscape, as demonstrated by success stories in Kenya and Ethiopia.

The Huawei team was comprised of senior representatives and sector experts including Ethan Sun CEO of Huawei Pakistan, Ian Ravenscroft, VP of Huawei Fintech, Ahmed Bilal Masud, Director of Subsidiary Board and Deputy CEO, Yu Shaoning, Director of Public Affairs and Director Media and Communications Dure Najaf Zaidi.

IESCO apprehends 164 electricity thieves

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has apprehended 164 individuals involved in power theft and imposed fines totaling over Rs 8.78 million.

This significant crackdown on electricity theft has been part of a special anti-power theft drive conducted in various areas of the company said a spokesman.

The operation, which

began on September 7, has seen a meticulous inspection of more than 74,000 meters, revealing 1,285 instances of meter tampering indicative of illegal electricity consumption.

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Chinese vision of global, inclusive development only acceptable way forward: Mushahid



ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed Saturday said that the Chinese vision of global and inclusive development was the only acceptable way forward as Asia of 21st century could bear the brunt of a new cold war.

He was addressing as Chief Guest at the All Pakistan China Overseas Youth Federation (APCOYF) special ceremony held in connection with 74th National Day of People's Republic of China.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said the world is witness-

ing a great transformation, whereas the great poet of the East Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal 90 years ago predicted the rise of the Asian century and China.

"Allama in his poetry talked of springs of hope from the Himalayas and Chinese rising from slumber. Today, the balance of economic, cultural and political power is shifting from the West to the East and we welcome that but I want to warn that many forces are talking of dispute, division, and a new cold war and we reject it as Asia cannot afford a new cold war.

We reject any talk of dispute, containment and division of

Asia," he said. The chairman Senate Committee underlined that China's worldview is on promoting inclusivity and it did not impose its values and hegemony on others but rather advocates for a win-win situation for all nations.

He added that China a decade back invested in Pakistan some \$26 billion in the massive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project that resulted in 8000 MW of power generation capacity, 200,000 jobs creation, and the development of 800 km of new transmission lines.

China, he said had invested in

Pakistan when no country even the Muslim countries was not ready to invest capital due to terrorism. "We have seen Thar women driving dumper trucks, coal power projects, local community development through CPEC," he added.

Women and children (youth) would lead the future as both the leaderships of China and Pakistan namely Chairman Mao and Quaid-e-Azam shared the same thoughts, he said.

Shedding light on the history of China, Senator Sayed said on October 1, 1949 at Tiananmen square Chairman Mao announced the liberation of China, adding, "Chairman Mao said, 'today Chinese people have stood up', and that was the start of the journey of Chinese progress."

The Chinese, he said went through a great struggle from cultural, social and economic progress to come out of feudalism and western hegemony. China had a strategic culture, he said with three key ingredients namely it's peaceful rise as it is the only country that has risen without occupation, colonialization and bloodshed.

Secondly, the Silk Route that was started from China 2,000 years ago and connected Asia, Middle East with Europe which

was the first instance of globalization through culture and commerce.

"Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) some 1,400 years ago said that seek knowledge if you have to go to China. It was a developed civilization then," he added.

Thirdly, he said the Great Wall of China that symbolizes strong defence and resistance to threats against China. "The long march in 1934-35 was participated by 100,000 people with Chairman Mao and only 25,000 survived that showed China's never give up philosophy, patience and perseverance. It had been very clear that China had its culture to defend itself," he added.

Senator Sayed said China had emerged on it's own power and self-reliance, adding, "It is not a country but rather an ancient civilisation 5,000 years old."

Senator Mushahid said CPEC is the pivot and the flagship project of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) initiative. China had spent \$1 trillion on BRI in its three thousand projects and created 450,000 jobs. China is the best friend and strategic partner that had always stood like a rock with Pakistan on every issue and position.

"Pakistan is one country that stands steadfast with China on

its all core issues and interests be it Xinjiang and South China Sea, BRI, Taiwan or any other. We stand with China in all circumstances." The Senator while stating his own experience said he had witnessed the historic transformation of China in the past four decades.

"Pakistan was the first country in 70s to connect communist China with the rest of the world and that China was poor and weak. Today's China is rich, powerful and leading the world and well connected with the outside world," the Senator said.

Prior to the keynote address, cultural performances on Chinese music by Pakistani artists were made followed by the Chinese Song performed by Sherry Khan and a dance performance by artist attired in traditional Pakistani dress of northern area. The cake cutting ceremony was presided by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed and President APCOYF, Aasma Ismail Butt along with others.

In the vote of thanks, President APCOYF, Aasma Ismail Butt said the federation was working on promoting Pak-China Friendship and also celebrate the Chinese National Day to promote love for each other between the two nations.

‘No one to be interfer’

KABUL (Agencies): In a recent interview with the Russian Sputnik News Agency, Yue Xiaoyong, emphasized that no reason should justify interference in Afghanistan’s internal affairs. He asserted that Afghanistan should be allowed to pursue an independent internal policy according to its national conditions and that no external factors should disrupt the sovereignty of an independent nation.

25 Afghan nationals released

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of IEA has successfully facilitated the release and repatriation of 25 Afghan nationals from an Iraqi jail. These individuals were incarcerated due to a lack of legal residency documents. Hafez Zia Ahmad, the Deputy Spokesman of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirmed that the release was made possible through the concerted efforts of the Ministry and the Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Baghdad.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

‘1402 fiscal budget being distributed’

KABUL (TOLONews): The fiscal budget of the current solar year is being distributed to the ministries and provinces, the Islamic Emirate’s Spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid said, without providing information about the scale of the budget.

Zabiullah Mujahid told TOLONews that the scale of the development budget has surged and that a major part of the budget has been allocated for big projects such as dams and road repair.

“The budget of the Islamic Emirate for the 1402 solar year had been signed and its under distribution now. There has been sufficient budget for the ministries. A better step compared to the previous year is that this year, a larger amount has been considered for development budget,” he said.

This comes as the Ministry of Economy said that projects which are being implemented this year will help Afghanistan with self-sufficiency in the long-term.

“The development projects, for which the budgets have been considered this year, are those infrastructure projects which can bring Afghanistan to self-sufficiency in the long-term,” said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy Minister of Economy.

Shams Rahman Ahmadzai, an economist, said that not disclosing the budget to the public is the policy of the Islamic Emirate.

Economist Qutbuddin Yaqobi said that the budget should be modified based on the needs of the people of various provinces.

“Based on the policy of the current government, the officials would announce the scale of the development budgets in the provinces when it is needed,” he said.

Qutbuddin Yaqobi, an economist, said that the budget should be distributed in a fair way to all provinces.

“The development budget, which is currently being considered, should be fairly distributed, so it can be effective. I meant it should be based on the needs of every province,” he said.

The officials of the interim Afghan government said that the development projects are being supported through national revenue and mines.

The office of Deputy of the Prime Minister for economic affairs has recently confirmed 25 economic projects worth six billion Afs.

‘Fund Afghanistan’s reconstruction’

KABUL (Pajhwok): Russia has voiced concern at non-regional players’ attempts to step up their activities in and around Afghanistan.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed Russia’s apprehension in a written address to the Moscow-format consultations on Afghanistan in Kazan. TASS news agency quoted him as saying: “We are concerned about the attempts of extra-regional players to become more active in the Afghan direction.

In a written message, the minister said joint efforts by regional states and NATO were possible only if the alliance admitted the failure of its 20-year military presence in Afghanistan.

Lavrov emphasised on the West to bear the burden of Afghanistan’s post-conflict reconstruction. The freezing of Afghan assets was further complicating the already difficult living conditions for Afghans, he concluded.

US envoy calls for world to help Afghan women

KABUL (Agencies): US Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, Rina Amiri, has called on the international community to equip Afghan women with the resources needed to access education, scholarships, work and other means to counter the restrictions imposed by the Islamic Emirate.

In talks with her counterparts and Afghan leaders and activists in the last month, Amiri said on X Saturday that approaches to improving the “devastating situation” in Afghanistan may differ, but those seeking to advance human rights must reflect the space for civic discourse and tolerance that they hope to engender in Afghanistan.

“We must collectively make clear to the Taliban (IEA) that, even as we engage to try to improve the devastating situation, there will be no progress in normalization unless they respect the rights of the Afghan people,” she said.

“We must continue to ensure that our statements in support of Afghans, particularly women, are matched with concrete support to equip them w/ the resources to access education, scholarships, work & other means to counter the Taliban’s (IEA) extreme & repressive measures,” she said.

Amiri said that there were several high-level events during the UN General Assembly, including a ministerial focused on the situation of Afghan women.

“The message is clear: the Taliban (IEA) cannot expect to be a part of the international community if it does not respect the rights of the Afghan people and erases half of the population,” she said.

She also said that in meetings with representatives of Muslim-majority countries on the sideline of the UNGA, there was consensus that “the Taliban’s (IEA) repressive policies, particularly against women and girls, are out of step with the world and devastating for Afghanistan.”

“We agreed that we must maintain international solidarity in support of Afghanistan and that we must continue supporting Afghan women & girls inside and outside Afghanistan through diplomatic and concrete efforts,” she said.

This comes as the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly stressed that it is committed to ensuring the rights of women and girls according to Sharia.



Afghan embassy in India to stop operations: Source

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi is expected to halt its operations by the end of September, a source told TOLONews, adding that there is only one diplomat remaining in the embassy and all other diplomats have left.

There have been earlier reports of conflict within the Afghan embassy in New Delhi.

A letter recently leaked to the media indicated that the Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi informed the Indian Ministry of External Affairs that “due to unprecedented circumstances, we are compelled to permanently cease all operations by the end of September 2023.”

“This decision stems from our inability to maintain normal functioning due to the absence of diplomatic consideration and systematic support,” the letter said. “The following diplomatic notes over the last six months to the Ministry of External Affairs-NV Number: 385, 386, 400, 402, 403, 404, 742, 770, 776 and 1605 are some instances where no support was extended to any legitimate requests from the embassy.” The source in the Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi confirmed the accuracy of the letter to TOLONews.

Meanwhile, Afghans in India complained that the suspension of the embassy operations will cause them serious problems.

“After publication of this important news about Afghanistan, I became concerned. There are consulate services including the renewal of passports and I hope they get solved soon,” said Bahram Ramish, a citizen of Afghanistan in India.

“It (the Indian government) has not supported the Afghan embassy but also doesn’t support the Afghan refugees in India. The closing of the gates of the embassy creates other problems for the Afghan refugees based in India as well as traders,” said Nisar Ahmad Shirzai, an Afghan citizen in India.

Political analysts said that India is seeking to extend its activities with the Islamic Emirate and so it reduced its support to the Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi.

“India wants to make relations with the Taliban and it is obliged to do so because the previous officials have no authority,” said Wahid Faqiri, international relations analyst.

“It is important to see the realities of the society and an expert and active individual represent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan there,” said Mohammad Ajmal Zurmati, a political analyst.

This comes as the Islamic Emirate has recently appointed Qadir Shah as its ambassador to India; but he has yet to officially take charge.

Haqqani stresses trust-building



KABUL (Agencies): The acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, called for trust-building between the people and the interim government.

His visit to Panjshir was the first since the Islamic Emirate came to power.

“Such meetings will be normal among us so I will feel he is my brother. Then the challenges and problems which exist among us, will solve themselves,” he said.

Haqqani in a visit to Panjshir told the gathering that the doors for the leader of Panjshir are opened based on a “guarantee by the people of Panjshir.”

Haqqani said that the people of Panjshir should not consider themselves strangers and that they will be provided with all Sharia rights.

“You have remained very loyal to your leaders. For your people’s sake (people of Panjshir) and because of your people’s guarantee, all doors have been opened for them (out-of-country leaders of Panjshir),” he said.

Some of the participants talked about the negative impacts of the 20-year presence of western countries in Afghanistan.

“We have sustained severe damages from our politicians who made us victims. They have ignited fighting among us,” said Qiamuddin Hanif, head of the Ulema council for Panjshir.

“In more than 20 years, malicious propagandashas been injected into the minds of people by the enemies of the Islamic government,” said Rohullah Rohani, a religious cleric.

10 Ulema, Hafiz appointed to monitor gold mines

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said that it has appointed 10 Ulema and Hafiz (Quran memorizers) to monitor the extraction of gold mines in Baghlan province.

The MoMP said in a statement that the appointed people are tasked with monitoring and to prevent “arbitrary” extraction from mines, and to prevent corruption in the Qara Zaghan gold mine in Baghlan.

Every individual will be paid a 15,000 Afs salary per month.

“All technical work at the Qara Zaghan gold mine will be conducted by experienced experts and engineers and these individuals will not interfere with the technical work of the mine,” the statement reads.

Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that efforts are underway to alleviate poverty in the country.

“Serious work is underway to alleviate the poverty and unemployment crisis. The ministries are making serious efforts to provide job opportunities for the people. In this regard, a big process is under development in the mine sector, so the people can find jobs,” he said.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Industry and Mines meanwhile said it welcomed the decision as there have always been concerns over corruption in the mines sector.

“The decision was made to monitor the gold mine, we welcome any honest Afghan, whether they are Hafiz or Ulema,” said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, head of the ACIM.

Economists gave various opinions regarding the appointment of Hafiz (Quran memorizers) and Ulema members to monitor the process of mine extraction.

“When we appoint other people to monitor the work of the experts it costs us heavy and may even cause the project to be not practically implemented. The option is to appoint expert people through a process,” said Abdul Zahor, an economist.

“They have appointed these people within a Sharia format. They thus will not engage in corruption and will not take bribes because they are Ulema and Hafiz,” said Shams Rahman Ahmadzai, an economist.

Earlier, the MoMP said that complete transparency exists in the extraction of mines in Afghanistan.

UNAMA, rights activists demand immediate release of Julia, Neda



KABUL (Khaama Press): Following the recent arrest of two women’s rights activists by the de facto administration in the past ten days, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and numerous civic activists have urged the immediate release of these detained women.

UNAMA, in a statement released on Friday, demanded that the Taliban administration put an end to arbitrary detentions. They have consistently emphasized that the Taliban de facto authorities should ensure detainees have access to medication and family visits.

It should be noted that the intelligence forces of the Taliban administration recently arrested Julia Parsi, one of the female protesters, along with her son on Wednesday. This happened shortly after Neda Parwani, with her child, was detained about ten days ago.

These human rights organizations have widely condemned arrests. UNAMA’s office has stated that these detentions are taking place while

of female protesters have been reported, leading to the disappearance of many women’s rights activists.

Monisa Mubariz, a women’s rights activist and influential figure in the women’s protests, expressed concerns about Julia’s well-being in Taliban custody.

Mobariz emphasized, “We are very concerned about Julia’s life,” as the Taliban does not confirm Julia’s detention and does not accept responsibility for any harm that may come to her.

Julia is the founder of the grassroots women’s protest movement in Afghanistan, one of the leaders of the Alliance of Protest Movements, and the founder of a women’s library. Her arrest has raised serious concerns among the protesters.

Mobariz was questioned about the potential for Julia’s arrest to trigger further detentions of female protesters in Afghanistan and whether the leaders of the Alliance of Protest Movements have taken measures to ensure the safety of female protesters in the aftermath of Julia’s arrest.

Ms Mobariz responded that Julia had been under surveillance for some time and had recently stopped using her mobile phone. She changed her residence in Kabul about ten days ago.

She also added that there is no capacity to relocate female protesters within the country, and human rights organizations have not provided any assistance.

According to her, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has repeatedly rejected requests for a “safe house” to protect female protesters from existing threats.

Rasoul Parsi, a university professor, Mortaza Behboudi, a photographer, and Matuillah Wesa, an education rights activist, remain imprisoned by the interim government.

On the other hand, Richard Bennett, the UN Human Rights Reporter in Afghanistan, has referred to these arrests as arbitrary and has called for the immediate release of the detainees.

Previously, Amnesty International had stated that Julia Parsi and other detainees should be released unconditionally.

A group of women protesters in Islamabad, Pakistan, also demanded the immediate release of Julia Parsi in a collective protest.

In response to the arrest of Julia and Neda, women protesters launched a campaign for their release. They called on the international community and human rights organizations to take action for the freedom and safety of women in Afghanistan.

It should be noted that over the past two years, dozens of cases of detention, torture, and mistreatment

Women activists protest ‘gender apartheid’

WUPPERTAL, Germany (Khaama Press): A group of women’s rights activists in Afghanistan have initiated a campaign to recognize “gender apartheid” in Afghanistan officially.

Tamana Zaryab Paryany and other European Afghan activists set up a protest camp in Wuppertal, Germany, inviting Afghan activists in Europe to join the campaign.

In a statement on Ms. Paryany’s social media page, “We call upon the conscience of women and all free individuals in Germany to stand with our sisters in Afghanistan and not allow the regime of gender apartheid to persist in Afghanistan.”

These women’s rights activists had previously gone on a hunger strike by setting up a protest camp in Cologne, Germany, from September 10 to September 22.

They also negotiated with representatives of the German government, the



United States, and the United Nations, but these negotiations have yet to satisfy their demands.

Earlier, Ms. Paryany had issued a statement detailing her meeting with a representative of the German Foreign Ministry. She had passionately conveyed the concerns and messages of Afghan women, but to her disappointment, she has yet to receive a definitive response from the ministry.

This lack of a clear response underscored the urgent need for international attention and action to address the pressing issues facing Afghan women and girls.

US citizenship, immigration services extends help to Afghan nationals

KABUL (Agencies): In a recent announcement, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has taken significant steps to support Afghan nationals by extending and broadening the scope of previously introduced filing fee exemptions and expedited application processing.

These measures are aimed at facilitating the resettlement of Afghan nationals, allowing them to, in many instances, reunite with their families in the United States. One of the key outcomes of these

actions is the expedited processing of requests for employment authorization and/or Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), as well as providing streamlined procedures for long-term status, status for immediate relatives, and associated services.

To take advantage of these critical benefits, the announcement encourages Afghan nationals to explore the eligibility criteria for each specific filing type they may be interested in pursuing. The USCIS website offers comprehensive

information on eligibility details for a wide range of filing options, making it easier for individuals to navigate the application process and access the support they need during this pivotal time.

These extended and expanded fee exemptions and expedited processing services underscore USCIS’s commitment to aiding Afghan nationals as they seek new opportunities and stability in the United States, allowing them to embark on a brighter future.

The announcement

emphasized that Certain Afghan nationals are eligible for the following fee exemptions and expedited processing through Sept. 30, 2024:

Fee exemptions

Re-parole applications and requests to renew employment authorization and/or Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) filed on Form I-131, Application for Travel Document;

Form I-765, Application for Alien Relative, filed with USCIS from inside the United States on behalf of

Afghan nationals who are applying on the basis of being paroled into the United States under INA 212(d)(5) (eligibility category (c)(11));

Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, filed by Afghan nationals seeking to adjust status to that of a lawful permanent resident based on Afghan special immigrant classification;

Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, filed with USCIS from inside the United States on behalf of

any Afghan national with an immigrant visa immediately available;

Form I-601, Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility, filed by any Afghan national with an associated Form I-485;

Form I-824, Application for Action on an Approved Application or Petition, for an Afghan special immigrant visa holder; and

USCIS Immigrant Fee for Afghan nationals.

Expedited processing

Re-parole applications and requests to renew employment authorization and/or

EADs filed on Form I-131;

Form I-765 for those applying for initial or replacement EADs on the basis of parole (eligibility category (c)(11));

Form I-485 for Afghan nationals seeking to adjust status on the basis of Afghan special immigrant classification, and any associated Form I-601;

Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, filed by certain Afghan parolees as described in Section 2502(a) of the Extending Government

Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act;

Form I-130, filed with USCIS in the United States on behalf of an Afghan national (beneficiary) with a visa immediately available, and any associated Form I-601; and

Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers, filed with USCIS on behalf of an Afghan national (beneficiary) with a visa immediately available.

The Information for Afghan Nationals page has additional information for Afghans.



Pakistan Engineering Council

28th Annual General Meeting 2023

Venue: Pegasus Club, Quetta
October 1, 2023, 9:30 am (Sunday)

Dr. Umar Saif
Federal Minister for Science & Technology



Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon
Chairman, Pakistan Engineering Council



Engr. Nayyar Saeed
Senior Vice Chairman,
Pakistan Engineering Council



Engr. Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan
(Pride of Performance)
Registrar / Secretary, PEC



With the objective to promote engineering education as well as regulate the engineering profession to meet the technological needs, Pakistan Engineering Council has built up its reputation over time to rank among the most prestigious professional organizations both domestically and internationally. The present Government is fully committed to put the country on the road of self-reliance through achieving excellence in the field of engineering and technology.

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) plays a vital role through a collaborative effort for achieving this objective of self-sufficiency in the field of technology and innovation. PEC has been continuing its efforts for the highest standards in engineering education in collaboration with stakeholders and international partners.

In the past, PEC has successfully achieved the full signatory status of Washington Accord (WA) and International Professional Engineers Agreement (IPEA) - the highest engineering qualification recognition and standards of practice including cross-border mobility in the world. To better prepare engineering graduates for contributing to their employment and personal skills, there should be greater emphasis on information technology, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms.

I acknowledge PEC's contribution towards socioeconomic development initiatives, particularly its prompt revision of the Standard Procedure and Formula for Price Adjustment in light of the unprecedented price hike and escalation in construction materials otherwise would have disastrous effects on the sector.

I also applaud PEC's joining hands with Government for skill enhancement and professional growth in this high time by financing Final Year Design Projects (FYDPs) relevant to industry and also Graduate Internship Training program (GIT) for young graduates. Moreover, the reforms taken by ensuring quality and regulation of construction industry are also appreciated which will be indeed further strengthened through enforcement and policy support of the Government. I also appreciate the input of PEC for policy making at various issues and playing positive role towards socio-economic growth of the country.

I believe that this AGM will be successful in formulating proposals and realistic recommendations that benefit the stakeholders and PEC in achieving its aims and mandate as defined in PEC Act. The Government would continue to support Pakistan Engineering Council with any possible assistance in order to achieve sustained and fast growth for the nation's socioeconomic development.

I, Professional Engineer, working in construction industry for the last many years, highest tax payer, contested the Pakistan Engineering Council's Governing Body election with a motive to amplify the voice of engineers not only in Pakistan but also at international fora and lead the Council in contributing towards economic growth of the country.

With the use of technological breakthrough, engineers can revolutionize the life of an average person and create a sustainable economy that will lead to a prosperous Pakistan. Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) was established under the Act of Parliament in 1976 to regulate the engineering profession and quality of engineering education in the country. With these main objectives and functions defined in the PEC Act, the Council has played a progressive role by making landmark achievements in all directions of engineering sector ranging from setting highest standards of quality engineering education to practice of engineering in-line with international norms besides extending technical support to the Government as Think Tank in almost all sectors of economic development.

PEC has taken initiatives to ensure the quality of engineering education and professional practice by financing of final year design projects (FYDP) and Graduate Internship Training program (GIT) for fresh graduates. PEC has taken several steps to promote entrepreneurship and support Startups towards innovation and creativity through capacity building, seed-funding and product certification. Moreover, PEC has worked hard to facilitate and improve the Engineers' status in the country and around the globe by declaring substantially equivalent and at par in educational standards, competency, and problem solving approach by all prestigious international forums. Today, PEC stands amongst the progressive professional bodies of the developing world especially after attainment of following accomplishments:

- Full Signatory of Washington Accord (WA) of International Engineering Alliance (IEA) and Authorized Member of International Professional Engineers Agreement (IPEA) of IEA.
- Full Membership status of Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and the Pacific (FEIAP).
- Leading partner of Federation of Engineering Institutions of Islamic Countries (FEIIC).
- Continued pursuance to get approval of "Engineering Service of Pakistan (ESP)" from the Federal Government.
- Acting as International Reviewer, Mentor and leading partner of WA, FEIAP, FEIIC and AAP.

My dear engineers, such other initiatives are on the way for which your strong support is of utmost importance. In the end, I wish you all the best in your life and professional career with the hope to get back the pride of engineers and profession in its true essence.

It is an honor for me to welcome engineers and delegates to the 28th Annual General Meeting of Pakistan Engineering Council in 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the distinguished guests for taking their valuable time out of their very busy schedules. I'm very much pleased with the presence of all the dignitaries especially the Chairman of Pakistan Engineering Council and the engineers. The steps taken by Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon to promote and strengthen the voice of engineers in Parliament to provide leadership to the engineering community are commendable. I congratulate Engr. Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan, the Registrar and other officials of the Council for the successful conduct of the 28th AGM 2023. To provide a platform for national development in the fields of science, engineering and technology, and to adopt new trends in engineering education, the dynamic role of the Council has become more active. I'm pleased to announce that over the past few years, the Council has played an active role. Recent recognition, affiliations, and memberships of the Washington Accord and the International Professional Engineers Agreement (IPEA) are notable achievements. The Council is the sole regulator in the country to implement standards for professional education in the field of engineering.

The efforts of the current leadership are highly commendable in developing codes and standards for various engineering disciplines and updating and developing engineering curricula in accordance with market needs.

I believe that the recommendations of the Annual General Meeting will provide us with an opportunity to learn about national and international initiatives and will play an important role in carrying reforms for active participation in the socio-economic development of the country.

I warmly welcome the Engineers and delegates in the 28th Annual General Meeting of Pakistan Engineering Council. I am grateful to the Chairman, Sr. Vice Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Members Governing Body, AGM Committee and PEC In-House Committee, engineers/ fellows on successful conduct of AGM-2023. PEC leadership is devoted to promote the organization as one of the best organizations at national and international fora. PEC has already achieved significant accomplishments including the membership of all prestigious international forums; became a vibrant body in all their professional activities pertaining to standardization in education and practice, capacity building and professional development to achieve excellence in the profession.

This is being introduced through outcome-based approach in engineering education and professional competency of engineers in collaboration with all national/ international stakeholders such as HEIs, PEC, Industry and various experts' committees working and aligning efforts to the Government vision of socio-economic development as its Think Tank. It is need of the time to adopt modern engineering trends & technologies in the era of fourth industrial revolution by integrating advance knowledge, skills and adopting emerging techniques in an approach of multidisciplinary teamwork environment in engineering, computing and social sciences. To promote such paradigm in engineering education & practice, PEC has started curriculum review of engineering programs in-line with industrial requirements and international emerging trends to facilitate the cross-border mobility of knowledgeable and skillful engineers.

The 4th PEC Deans' International Conference is also being planned in November 2023 at Karachi. The proposed theme is "Engineers as an Engine of Growth". PEC has successfully conducted three Deans Conferences with different themes, and participated by all Member economies, industry, academia and policy makers. PEC being a full signatory of Washington Accord is having its periodic review this year as a regular activity for which PEC is closely working with HEIs to be well prepared for the successful upcoming visit of WA Reviewers.

CPD is therefore taking its new shape under the on-going reforms with the guidance of PEC leadership to abreast with advancements in diverse knowledge and skills for better employment and exploring avenues to become an entrepreneur in respective fields, and broadcasting through PEC Facebook. Registration process is shifted to facilitate online processes for engineers, constructors/ operators and consultants enabling the Council to emerge as an IT driven organization with online real time data sharing and verification to strengthen regulatory framework in collaboration with NADRA, SECP, PPRA etc.

I am sure that the outcomes of this AGM in the shape of motions and suggestions by the engineers will further strengthen the role of PEC towards attaining the excellence in engineering profession with the mandate as given in PEC Act.

Engr. Nasir Majeed
Vice Chairman Balochistan, PEC
Convener, AGM - 2023



Engr. Ejaz Hussain Ansari
Vice Chairman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Engr. Dr. Niaz Ahmed Akhtar
(Sitara-e-Imtiaz)
Vice Chairman, Punjab



Engr. Mukhtiar Ali Sheikh
Vice Chairman, Sindh



It is a matter of great honor for me to welcome all engineers and delegates in the 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) at Quetta "Fruit Garden of Pakistan". I am also very grateful to all dignitaries and especially the Chairman PEC, Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon for providing the leadership and patronage to engineering community for promoting the image and strengthening the voice of engineers. I appreciate Engr. Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan, Registrar PEC and PEC Officials for playing an active role in organizing the 28th AGM as a successful event. I am sure that 28th AGM will provide us an opportunity to learn about the overall progress and major international and national initiatives for the overall socio-economic development of the country.

I welcome all the dignitaries and participants from all over the country to the 28th Annual General Meeting at Quetta. I am very hopeful that the 28th AGM 2023 will help the current management to prepare a strategy and comprehensive planning for the coming years. I pay my heartiest congratulations to the Council for successfully conducting the Annual General Meeting 2023.

At the 28th Annual General Meeting 2023, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Council for resolving longstanding issues of engineers and for establishing new engineering universities. The Council deserves heaps of praise for successfully conducting the Annual General Meeting 2023 at Quetta.

I am congratulating PEC for successful conduct of 28th Annual General Meeting at Quetta. Suggestions and recommendations to be presented at the AGM 2023, are of utmost importance for the national development and welfare of the engineering community. If incorporated in the national planning, these recommendations will pave the way for the rapid development of the country. I pay tribute to the management of the Council for successfully conducting the AGM 2023.

PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

REGULATES THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION IN THE COUNTRY

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is a statutory regulatory body established under PEC Act 1976 by the Parliament of Pakistan. The major functions of the PEC include but are not limited to accreditate the various engineering programs offered by universities/ institutions, registering engineers, consultants, constructors, and operators, and taking steps for the capacity building of engineers to align engineering capabilities and skill sets with the latest trends and technologies. The PEC also serves as Think Tank for the Federal Government and advice on technical matters and national issues to the Federal and Provincial commissions, committees, and professional institutions. Under the Act, PEC also works for the betterment of engineers as well as the overall engineering profession. The PEC is the sole representative of the engineering community in the country that acts as a bridge between government, industry, and educational institutions.

The 28th Annual General Meeting of the PEC is being held on October 1, 2023 to present the annual report, audited accounts, and annual budget for the year 2023. The meeting will also deliberate on PEC's organizational strength, financial stability and allied matters as well as issues and solutions related to engineering education, training, and profession.

This year's edition includes the achievements and efforts of the last year depicting the new initiatives and endeavors, collaboration for graduate internship, financing final year design projects, innovation & entrepreneurship activities, the conduct of CPD courses for the continuous betterment of the engineers, and various other activities with the focus on progression and employability for the young engineers.

Important Activities and Achievements of PEC

- ☞ Graduate Internship Training (GIT) Program for fresh graduates.
- ☞ Financing Final Year Design Projects for engineering universities.
- ☞ Launching of STEM education initiative & PEC E-Library.
- ☞ Fourth PEC International Deans Conference being scheduled in November 2023.
- ☞ Announcement of "PEC Excellence Award" to recognize the outstanding services and worthy achievements of eminent Pakistani Engineers.
- ☞ Relief Package for constructors/operators and consultants.
- ☞ SMS service to update applicants, engineers, constructors/operators, and consultants.
- ☞ Seminars for awareness/ training on price adjustment formula.
- ☞ Launched the "Hire Engineers" portal to facilitate the employer and the engineers.
- ☞ Revision of PEC Bidding documents with latest FIDIC provisions.
- ☞ CAPSTONE Expo Programs in Lahore, Quetta and Islamabad.
- ☞ Launching of PEC E-Gateway for Pakistani engineers and consulting firms.
- ☞ Participation in the International Engineering Alliance Meeting (IEAM-2023), FEIAP, WFEO & NABEAA.
- ☞ PEC Nomination for International Code Council's Global Award 2023 in promoting building safety codes.
- ☞ PEC Collaboration with IFC/World Bank for implementation of Green Building Code and capacity building of stakeholders.
- ☞ Biometric verification to update the engineer's profile using NADRA e-Sahulat.
- ☞ Revised Price Adjustment Formula for the restoration of affected projects due to the recent inflationary situation and suitable planning for the upcoming projects.
- ☞ The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between PEC and various industries and technical organization for graduate internship program.
- ☞ MOU with Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb) aims to provide Arbitration, Mediation, establishing an ADR Centre and developing relevant rules.
- ☞ Establishment of Engineers Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC) and recognition by National Assembly.
- ☞ Short courses, seminars, webinars as CPD activities for the engineers through physical and online/ facebook.
- ☞ MoU with Pakistan Academy of Engineering (PAE) for policy & technical studies.

Pakistan Engineering Council

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