

Army jawan martyred  
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists in general area Mir Ali, North Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged terrorists' location. However, during intense exchange of fire, Lance Naik Jamsheer Khan (age 28 years, resident of District Upper Dir), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

# 1037 killed in Morocco quake

MOROCCO (Agencies): The death toll from the powerful earthquake that struck Morocco has spiked to 1,037, state television quoted the Interior Ministry as saying on Saturday, resulting in extensive destruction and prompting frightened residents and tourists to seek safety in the middle of the night hastily.

The quake struck Morocco's High Atlas mountains late on Friday night, damaging historic buildings in Marrakech, the nearest city to the epicentre, while the most badly affected areas were in the mountains nearby.

The Interior Ministry said 1,037 people had been killed and another 672 injured by the quake, gauged by the US Geological Survey (USGS) at a magnitude of 6.8 with an epicentre some 72 km (45 miles) southwest of Marrakech. In the village of Amizmiz near the epicentre, rescue workers picked through rubble with their bare hands.

"When I felt the earth shaking beneath my feet and the house leaning, I rushed to get my kids out. But my neighbours couldn't," said Mohamed Azaw. "Unfortunately no one was found alive in that family. The father and son were found dead and they are still looking for the mother and the daughter." About 20 men including firefighters and soldiers in fatigues stood atop the ruin of a house in Amizmiz as they tried to remove rubble, bits of carpet and furniture protruding from gaps between pancaked concrete floors.

The quake, which hit at around 11 p.m. (2200 GMT), affected a sweep of the High Atlas mountain range. Tremors were felt as far away as Huelva and Jaen in Andalusia in southern Spain, Spanish television RTVE reported. Street camera footage in Marrakech showed the moment the earth began to shake, as men suddenly looked around and jumped up, and others ran for shelter into an alleyway and then fled as dust and debris tumbled around them.

"Our neighbours are under the rubble and people are working hard to rescue them using available means in the village," said Montasir Itri, a resident of the mountain village of Asni near the epicentre.

The nearest big city to the epicentre is Marrakech, where several buildings — including a UNESCO World Heritage site — collapsed in the old city. Moreover, internet connectivity was disrupted in Marrakesh due to power cuts in the region, according to global internet monitor NetBlocks. US Geological Survey (USGS) said that "the population in this region lives in structures that are highly vulnerable to earthquake shaking."

USGS said: "The epicenter of the earthquake was at a relatively shallow depth of 18.5 km (11.5 miles) and occurred about 72 km (44 miles) southwest of Marrakesh and 56 km west of the Atlas Mountain town of Oukaimeden at just after 11pm local time (2200 GMT)." Morocco experiences frequent earthquakes in its northern region due to its position between the African and Eurasian plates.

"We felt a very violent tremor, and I realised it was an earthquake," Abdelhak El Amrani, a 33-year-old in Marrakesh, told AFP by telephone. "I could see buildings moving. We don't necessarily have the reflexes for this type of situation. Then I went outside and there were a lot of people there. People were all in shock and panic. The children were crying and the parents were distraught."

"The power went out for 10 minutes, and so did the (telephone) network, but then it came back on. Everyone decided to stay outside," he added. Frenchman Michael Bizet, 43, who owns three traditional riad houses in Marrakech's old town, told AFP that he had been in bed at the time of the quake.

"I thought my bed was going to fly away. I went out into the street half-naked and immediately went to see my riads. It was total chaos, a real catastrophe, madness," he said. Video circulating on social media showed part of a minaret collapsed on the famous Jemaa el-Fna square in the historic city, injuring two people.

Fayssal Badour, another Marrakesh resident, told AFP he was driving when the earthquake hit. "I stopped and realised what a disaster it was. It was very serious, as if a river had burst its banks. The screaming and crying was unbearable," he said. The interior ministry said authorities have "mobilised all the necessary resources to intervene and help the affected areas".

Hospitals in Marrakesh reportedly saw a "massive influx" of injured people. The regional blood transfusion centre in Marrakesh has called on residents to donate blood for those injured. In the town of Al-Haouz, near the epicentre of the quake, a family was trapped in the rubble after their house collapsed, local media reported.

It was also felt in the coastal cities of Rabat, Casablanca and Essaouira. "We heard screams at the time of the tremor," a resident of Essaouira, 200 kilometres west of Marrakesh, told AFP. "People are in the squares, in the cafes, preferring to sleep outside. Pieces of facades have fallen."

USGS's PAGER system, which provides preliminary assessments on the impact of earthquakes, issued an orange alert for economic losses, estimating significant damage is likely. Past events with this alert level have required a regional or national-level response, according to the US government agency.

USGS said that "the population in this region lives in structures that are highly vulnerable to earthquake shaking". Moroccan media reported it was the most powerful earthquake to hit the country to date. The earthquake was also felt in neighbouring Algeria, where the Algerian Civil Defence said it had not caused any damage or casualties.

In 2004, at least 628 people were killed and 926 injured when a quake hit Al Hoceima in northeastern Morocco. The 1980, the 7.3-magnitude El Asnam earthquake in neighbouring Algeria was one of the largest and most destructive earthquakes in recent history. It killed 2,500 people and left at least 300,000 homeless.



MOROCCO: Residents taking shelter outside in a square following the earthquake in the city of Marrakesh.

## Body focuses on efforts to improve business

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) resumed the proceedings of the 5th Apex Committee meeting on Saturday here, focusing on efforts to improve business and investment climate in the country.

The second session was arranged to seek input from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Information Technology & Telecommunications, National Food Security & Research, and Water Resources for improving the business and investment climate in the Country.

The meeting was chaired by the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and attended by the Chief of Army Staff, Federal Cabinet, Provincial Chief Ministers and high-level government officials. Ministries presented comprehensive plans, covering milestones, timelines and solutions to overcome major challenges. The committee unanimously decided to take all decisions in the larger interest of the Country and deal with the menace of smuggling, hoarding and market backstop the government's efforts for economic revival of the country.

**Notables from Balochistan call on**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Saturday telephoned Moroccan Ambassador to Pakistan Muhammad Karmoune to express grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and property due to the devastating earthquake in Morocco.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Morocco, Murtaza Solangi said the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the affected families. "Pakistani nation and government are standing by the side of Moroccan earthquake victims at this difficult time," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

Murtaza Solangi said, "Pakistan will provide all possible help and support to the people of Morocco, including health facilities." He said, "Pakistan will not leave the people of Morocco alone in this time of need. The caretaker minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the victims of the earthquake in eternal peace and also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

**Caretaker PM:** A delegation of notables from Balochistan province led by Haji Aziz Hasni, on Saturday, called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The delegation congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office and expressed their good wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing the 5th Apex Committee meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

## Leaders grieved over loss of lives in Morocco quake

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani top leadership on Saturday expressed the grief over loss of lives and property in a severe earthquake that jolted Morocco. In their separate messages, the Pakistan leadership including President Dr Arif Alvi, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, former premier Shehbaz Sharif and former foreign minister and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have expressed their grief over the loss of precious lives and damages caused to infrastructure after a strong earthquake hit central Morocco.

In his statement, President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday expressed his grief over the loss of precious lives and damages caused to infrastructure after a strong earthquake hit central Morocco. Extending condolences to the bereaved families, the president expressed solidarity with the government and the people of Morocco, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

He said that in this difficult time, their sympathies went to the affected people. President Alvi also prayed for the early recovery of the injured.

Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has expressed condolences with the government and the people of Morocco, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release on Saturday. Kakar expressed solidarity with the government and the people of Morocco in the difficult time and extended all possible support to the quake stricken people. The prime minister also condoled with the bereaved families.

Separately, on his X handle, PM Kakar posted, "Our hearts ache for those affected by the severe earthquake in Morocco. Pakistan extends its hand in unity and support to Morocco in this trying time." The PML-N President and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif has also expressed condolences over scores of people killed in the deadly Moroccan earthquake.

In a post uploaded on X Saturday, Shehbaz Sharif said "It has pained me to know about hundreds of casualties due to a terrifying earthquake in Morocco. In these trying times, we stand in solidarity with the people of Morocco. Special prayers for the bereaved families and those injured and trapped under the rubble.

Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and former president Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and property caused by the devastating earthquake in Morocco.

According to the press release issued by media cell Bilawal House, the PPP chairman, who is also a former foreign minister of Pakistan, has said in his message to the government and people of Morocco that he is saddened and shocked by the situation caused by the natural disaster there. He said that his party, PPP, and the people of Pakistan are standing with the people of brotherly Islamic country in these difficult times.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended his condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in the earthquake and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. As per reports the death toll from a strong earthquake that struck Morocco has risen to 632, said the country's Interior Ministry on Saturday. The earthquake has so far injured 329 others, including 51 in critical condition, according to the latest update of the ministry.

## Solangi calls Moroccan ambassador

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Saturday telephoned Moroccan Ambassador to Pakistan Muhammad Karmoune to express grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and property due to the devastating earthquake in Morocco.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Morocco, Murtaza Solangi said the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the affected families. "Pakistani nation and government are standing by the side of Moroccan earthquake victims at this difficult time," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

Murtaza Solangi said, "Pakistan will provide all possible help and support to the people of Morocco, including health facilities." He said, "Pakistan will not leave the people of Morocco alone in this time of need. The caretaker minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the victims of the earthquake in eternal peace and also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

**Elahi's wife appeals to SC for his release**

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf President and former Punjab Chief Minister Pervez Elahi has filed an appeal with the Supreme Court of Pakistan challenging the decision of the Lahore High Court regarding his arrest.

According to sources, in her application, she not only sought the immediate release of Pervez Elahi but also requested preventative measures against any potential future arrests. The Lahore High Court had previously disposed of Pervez Elahi's application, citing ineffectiveness, which has prompted this appeal to the highest judicial authority in the country. The petitioner Qaisra Elahi demanded the apex court to issue orders to halt any potential future arrests of Pervez Elahi, even in unknown cases. Additionally, her plea calls for orders to produce Pervez Elahi before the court. A few days ago, Pervez Elahi was re-arrested despite earlier orders for his release. The Lahore High Court's failure to examine the circumstances surrounding his arrest has added to the legal intrigue.

## Bilawal says not bound by Zardari's advice on constitutional matters

**F.P. Report**

BADIN: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday distanced his party from his father, former president Asif Ali Zardari's statement backing the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold polls after the delimitation of constituencies is completed.

During a press conference in Badin, PPP chairman Bilawal was asked about the difference in his and Zardari's stance on elections. At this, Bilawal told the reporter to ask Zardari about what he meant with his statement.

He recalled the PPP's CEC meeting, headed by him and the former president, where the forum considered both opinions regarding the time of elections and all the party's legal experts told the meeting that the Constitution makes it clear that elections have to be conducted within 90 days of the dissolution of assemblies.

"I am bound to [follow] President Zardari on our family matters but as far as political matters, Constitution and party policy are concerned, I'm bound to [follow] my workers' and my party's central executive committee's decisions," said Bilawal while taking to the media in Badin.

Today, Zardari came to the defence of the ECP, asserting that a fresh delimitation exercise has become obligatory following the notification of the new census. Zardari's statement, conveyed by the PPP through its social media accounts, emphasised the electoral authority's mandate to conduct elections in accordance with the Constitution.

Zardari's statement followed calls from various PPP leaders, including party chairman Bilawal, urging the ECP to announce the date for general polls and adhere to the constitutional requirement of holding elections within 90 days.

The party reiterated these demands during its delegation's consultative meeting with members of the ECP. The decision to hold the consultative process came after uncertainty emerged on when the polls will be conducted.

The Shehbaz Sharif-led government dissolved the National Assembly on August 9, while Sindh and Balochistan assemblies were also prematurely dissolved to allow the electoral authority to hold elections in the country within 90 days instead of 60 days if the legislature completed its constitutional tenure.

However, the ECP may not be able to hold the polls within the stipulated time as the Council of Common Interest (CCI), days before the dissolution of the assemblies, approved the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023. The CCI meeting chaired by then-prime minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the final results of the census reporting the country's population at 241.49 million with a growth rate of 2.55%.

The CCI approval made it constitutionally mandatory for the poll watchdog to hold elections following fresh delimitations in the light of the results of the 7th census. According to Article 51 (5) of the Constitution, the seats of the National Assembly to each province and the federal capital shall be allocated on the basis of population in accordance with the last preceding census officially published.

Subsequently, on August 17, the ECP announced the schedule of new delimitations to be carried out as per the new census approved by the CCI. As per the schedule, the new delimitation of constituencies nationwide will be notified in December this year. The ECP schedule showed that fresh delimitation will take nearly four months, meaning the general elections in the country cannot be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the provincial and national assemblies.

## Biden presses support for Ukraine and an overseas investment plan

NEW DELHI (Agencies): President Biden was hoping to convince the world's largest economies to rally behind Ukraine during Saturday's Group of 20 summit in India while also pressing his case for American investment in the developing world.

The absence of his two chief global rivals — Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin — provides opportunities for Biden to make a more affirmative case at the summit, White House officials said as the gathering was getting underway in New Delhi. He was expected to announce new plans with partner nations in Europe, the Middle East and Asia to construct a transit corridor connecting the regions, a major challenge to China's own efforts at expanding global trade.

And he was unveiling new reforms and investments in the World Bank, which the White House says could unlock hundreds of billions of dollars in grants and loans for the developing world. Still, the divisions within the grouping were apparent as the gathering was getting underway. Diplomats were still working to draft a final joint statement from the leaders, hitting snags when coming up with language about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia, as a member of the G20, would have to agree on any consensus statement.

And it remained unlikely that leaders would agree to any major new steps to combat climate change, even as global temperatures — including in the host city New Delhi — soar. "India calls upon the world to come together to transform the global trust deficit into one of trust and reliance. This is the time for all of us to move together," the summit's host, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said as the gathering got underway.

"Be it the divide between North and South, the distance between the East and West, management of food and fuel, terrorism, cyber security, health, energy or water security, we must find a solid solution to this for future generations," he added. It was a message of unity at a markedly fractured moment for the grouping. While Biden has enjoyed ample success at other summits convincing fellow leaders to step up their military support for Ukraine and tighten their punishment of Russia, many nations, particularly in the Global South, haven't been as convinced.

They view the billions of dollars in western assistance pouring into Ukraine skeptically, and have sought a more balanced relationship with Moscow. Biden's aides say the President welcomes the opportunity to continue making the case for Ukraine, including to audiences that aren't necessarily on the same page.

"Part of what makes the G20 an appealing format for the United States is it gives us a chance to interact with and work with and take constructive steps with a wider range of countries, including some, frankly, that we don't see eye to eye with on every issue," US deputy national security adviser Jon Finer told reporters on Saturday. Biden hopes to use his announcements on new infrastructure and investments as demonstration of US commitment to the developing world, and a better option for partnership than China.

The plans for a new shipping corridor linking India with the Middle East and Europe could potentially transform global trade and directly challenge China's own sprawling overseas development initiative, known as the Belt and Road, which has poured billions of dollars into infrastructure projects each year. Biden along with the leaders of India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the European Union planned to sign a memorandum of understanding laying out the new project on Saturday.

"We see this as having a high appeal to the countries involved, and also globally, because it is transparent, because it is a high standard, because it is not coercive," Finer said. The plans could pose a challenge to China's Belt and Road initiative, which the US says uses coercive lending practices for infrastructure projects in developing countries. Biden's proposals on World Bank reform similarly aim to offer a better deal to emerging economies.

Without Xi attending, Biden will have the implicit opportunity to demonstrate sustained American commitment while questioning China's. American officials said Saturday it wasn't clear to them why Xi decided to skip the G20 for the first time. "I'm not sure we have a clear answer to that question, but really it's incumbent upon the Chinese government to explain why a leader would or would not participate," Finer said.





## Sindh, Punjab Governors discuss establishment of agri based industries

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori met Punjab Governor Mohammed Balighur Rehman at the Governor House Sindh here Saturday.

They discussed the cooperation between the two provinces in various fields, exchange of delegations, measures to increase industrial production and other matters of mutual interest.

They stressed the need specially, for the establishment of agriculture-based industries. The Sindh Governor said that both provinces could benefit from each other's experiences in various fields. He said that mutual cooperation between the two provinces would be beneficial for the economy of the country.

The Punjab Governor said that the efforts of the Governor of Sindh would benefit the industrialists of the entire country. He said that the public welfare initiatives of the Sindh Governor were exemplary.

### Governor directs Interim Home Minister to control street crime

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Home and Prisons Minister Brigadier (Retd.) Haris Nawaz called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House here Saturday and discussed the host of issues including law and order situation, peace measures in Sindh province, elimination

of street crime from Karachi, installation of CCTV cameras and other matters of mutual interest.

The Governor told the caretaker minister that all possible steps should be taken to protect the lives and properties of the people. He said that an effective strategy was necessary to eradicate street crime from the metropolis by increasing the police patrolling. He said that street crime could be controlled with the help of CCTV cameras and the increase in police patrolling.

The Governor appreciated the law enforcement agencies for the best arrangements for the security of Chehnam processions. Earlier, the minister gave a detailed briefing to the Governor about his department.

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Saturday appealed to leaders of G20 nations to play their role to settle down the Kashmir and Palestine issues to maintain the world peace.

### Court Notice

IN the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No.43/13. Institution 2/6/2023. Date of hearing. 27/9/2023. Saifur Rehman VS Amer Akbar Khan etc. Notice to no 4. Gul Mohammad Khan s/o Saeedullah Khan resident of Daggar tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 27/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

He appealed to the leaders of G20 nations to raise their voices against the Indian atrocities being committed against minority communities and urge India to end the cycle of injustices against the people residing in the occupied Kashmir valley, which was currently the world's largest prison.

The entire Muslim Ummah was closely watching the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, currently led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with hopes that it would continue to play a leading role in advocating for the rights of oppressed Muslims in India and the occupied Kashmir, he mentioned.

He outlined that necessary to restore peace. He appealed to the leaders of G20 nations to raise their voices against the Indian atrocities being committed against minority communities and urge India to end the cycle of injustices against the people residing in the occupied Kashmir valley, which was currently the world's largest prison.

He demanded strict legal action against hoarders and profiteers as these

black sheep should be punished for their deeds, adding these were the actual responsible for price hike in the country. He said that all political powers of the country should sit together and reach consensus for the sake of country's development.

Ashrafi extended his heartfelt condolences over devastating earthquake that struck Morocco, claiming the lives of more than six hundred individuals. He expressed his deep sorrow and solidarity with the families affected by the earthquake. He conveyed his sympathies and support to the people and government of Morocco, also offering prayers for the swift recovery of the injured victims.

Ashrafi said the Muslim world expects Saudi Arabia to play a decisive role in advocating for the rights of oppressed Muslims in India and the occupied Kashmir, urging it to continue to champion the just cause of the oppressed Muslims and fulfill its leadership role.

He demanded strict legal action against hoarders and profiteers as these

## Ashrafi seeks world role for resolving Kashmir, Palestine issues



### PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

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SITUATION VACANT NOTICE NO. 24/2023

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority requires services of qualified individuals to fill the following vacant posts on contract basis for three (03) years (extendable) where selection will be made purely on suitability and merit:-

Post	No. of Seats	Prescribed Qualification	Quota & Pay Scale	Age Limit
Deputy Director CNS (EG-03)	(01)	<p>■ <b>Qualification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BE/BS Electronics/ Avionics / Telecommunication/ Electrical Engineering degree from HEC recognized University</li> </ul> <p>■ <b>Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum Experience of 05 years with maintenance upgradation of aviation related equipment (experience on Security Check Equipment/ Baggage Scanning machines)</li> </ul> <p>■ <b>Required Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must possess necessary level 01 and level 02 maintenance / installation skills</li> <li>The candidate may preferably also have experience on Communication, Navigation and Surveillance systems</li> <li>Excellent presentation, Problem solving, Leadership, Decision making and analytical skills</li> </ul>	<p>■ Merit</p> <p>■ Lump Sum Pay Package shall be offered equivalent to Gross Pay of Executive Group – 03 (EG-03) (Negotiable)</p>	<p>■ Maximum 40 years (including all age relaxations)</p>

#### Application Procedure:

- Interested candidates are required to fill & submit Online Job Application Form available at [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) within fifteen days from the date of this advertisement.
- Candidates will be required to upload scanned copies of certificate / degree of the required qualification only of the concerned post as mentioned above and CNIC while applying for the job.
- In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, his/her application will be rejected.
- All the interested candidates must read the Terms of Reference (TOR) mentioned in the detailed notice available at [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) before applying for the post.

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## PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

### EXTENSION IN VALIDITY OF LICENCES OF CONSTRUCTORS, OPERATORS & CONSULTING ENGINEERING FIRMS/COMPANIES

It is to inform to all concerned that the licence validity of all Constructors, Operators and Consulting Engineering firms/ companies (Pakistani and Foreign) registered with this Council which were valid upto **June 30, 2023** and extended upto **August 31, 2023**, has further been extended upto **September 30, 2023**.

No further extension shall be granted. All interested Constructors, Operators and Consulting Engineering firms/ companies have to apply for renewal of their licences in time.

For more details, please visit PEC website: [www.pec.org.pk](http://www.pec.org.pk)

Secretary/ Registrar  
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- BS Emergency Care Technology
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- BS Zoology
- BS Botany
- BS Environmental Sciences
- BS Microbiology
- BS Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering
- BS Biochemistry
- BS Chemistry
- BS Software Engineering
- BS Computer Science
- BS Mathematics
- BS Physics
- BS Geophysics
- BS Statistics
- BS Tourism & Hospitality Management
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
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- BS English
- BS Psychology
- BS Social Work
- BS Criminology
- BS Sociology
- BS Journalism & Mass Communication
- BS Pakistan Studies
- BS Islamic Studies
- BS Philosophy
- BS Disaster Management
- BS Forestry
- BS Political Science
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- Doctor of Physical Therapy (05 years)

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- BS Environmental Sciences
- BS Microbiology
- BS Biotechnology & Genetic Engineering
- BS Biochemistry
- BS Chemistry
- BS Software Engineering
- BS Computer Science
- BS Mathematics
- BS Physics
- BS Tourism & Hospitality Management
- Bachelor of Business Administration
- BS Accounting & Finance
- BS English
- BS Psychology
- BS Economics
- BS Social Work
- BS Sociology
- BS Journalism & Mass Communication
- BS Pakistan Studies
- BS Islamic Studies
- Bachelor of Education
- BS Statistics

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- BS Medical Lab Technology
- BS Zoology
- BS Computer Science
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
- BS English
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- BS Psychology
- BS Emergency Care Technology

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**KUST ONLINE ADMISSION SCHEDULE FOR UNDERGRADUATE (BS) PROGRAMMES**

Last date to apply for online admissions: **October 02, 2023 (Monday)** up-to 04:30pm

Scrutiny of Admission forms (by scrutinizers): **October 03-05, 2023 (Tuesday-Thursday)**

Display of General list (for queries): **October 06, 2023 (Friday)**

Queries to be addressed (on request of candidates): **October 09, 2023 (Monday)**

Display of First Merit list: **October 10, 2023 (Tuesday)**

Collection of Fee Slips after Documents Verification (From concerned department): **October 10-13, 2023 (Tuesday-Friday)** up-to 04:30pm

Display of 2<sup>nd</sup> Merit list: **October 17, 2023 (Tuesday)**

Collection of Fee Slips after Documents Verification (From concerned department): **October 17-20, 2023 (Tuesday-Friday)** up-to 04:30pm

**Commencement of classes: October 23, 2023 (Monday)**

**PhD Admission (Limited Seats) FALL 2023**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PhD Management Sciences</li> <li>PhD Pharmacy</li> <li>PhD Mathematics</li> <li>PhD Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PhD Biotechnology &amp; Genetic Engineering</li> <li>PhD Chemistry</li> <li>PhD Physics</li> <li>PhD Social Work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PhD Botany</li> <li>PhD Biochemistry</li> <li>PhD English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PhD Microbiology</li> <li>PhD Zoology</li> <li>PhD Economics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PhD Environmental Sciences</li> <li>PhD Computer Science</li> <li>PhD Islamic Studies</li> </ul>
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**ELIGIBILITY:**

- Merit for admission to PhD shall be established on the basis of relevant academic record of MS / M. Phil. with CGPA of 3.00 / 4.00 and a valid score 60% in the GAT / GRE (Subject) / ETEA / HEC HAT / KUST Internal Test & Interview marks.

**KUST Online Admission Schedule for (Ph.D) Programmes**

Last date to apply for online admissions: **October 02, 2023 (Monday)** upto 4:30pm

Scrutiny of Admission forms: **October 03, 2023 (Tuesday)**

Display of General list (for queries before interview): **October 04, 2023 (Wednesday)**

Scrutiny of Admission forms (by scrutinizers): **October 05, 2023 (Thursday)**

Display of general list with interview marks added (For Queries, if any): **October 06, 2023 (Friday)**

Scrutiny of Admission forms: **October 09, 2023 (Monday)**

Display of Merit list: **October 10, 2023 (Tuesday)**

Collection of Fee Slips after Documents Verification (From concerned department): **October 10-13, 2023 (Tuesday-Friday)** upto 4:30pm

**Commencement of classes: October 16, 2023 (Monday)**

**Schedule of Internal Test (GAT / GRE Subject Type) to be held at KUST for (Ph.D) Admission - Fall 2023**

Last date to apply for the Internal Test: **September 18, 2023 (Monday)**

Test Date & Time: **September 20, 2023 (Wednesday) (9:30am)**

Result Announcement: **September 22, 2023 (Friday)**

**Venue for the Test: Ifthikhar Auditorium (KUST)**

Note: for the Test Registration: Please download challan form from KUST website: ([www.kust.edu.pk](http://www.kust.edu.pk)) After depositing fee in the bank, the Candidates must submit the deposited fee challan in hard form to Admission office KUST & in soft form to be emailed ([admissions@kust.edu.pk](mailto:admissions@kust.edu.pk)) upto 04:30pm / September 19, 2023

Please contact Admission Office: 0922-52914418 , 0922-52914791 , 0922-52914795  
[www.kust.edu.pk](http://www.kust.edu.pk) Email: [admissions@kust.edu.pk](mailto:admissions@kust.edu.pk)

Designed by: Yasir Habib





# SUPARCO delegation meets with Add Secretary

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level delegation from the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) met Additional Secretary, Higher Education Department, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah in Peshawar and discussed with him matters pertaining to advancing educational technology and improve strategic collaboration for the development of an advanced higher education management information system.

“The purpose of this momentous meeting was to forge a strategic collaboration between SUPARCO and HED for the develop-

ment of an advanced Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) integrated with a state-of-the-art geo-tagging system”, said an official on Saturday.

He said that the partnership also included the establishment of a dedicated control room within the higher education department.

“The meeting, which saw productive discussions and a shared commitment to advancing educational technology, resulted in a unanimous decision to proceed with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the next scheduled meeting”, he claimed.

The official said that this pioneering initiative underscored the dedication of both SUPARCO and HED to harnessing cutting-edge technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education management.

“The proposed HEMIS geo-tagging system will provide valuable insights and data for streamlined decision-making processes, while the control room will serve as a hub for monitoring and coordination, ensuring the seamless integration of these innovative solutions”, he maintained.

He said that the collaboration between SUPARCO and HED held immense promise for the future of

higher education in our region, and the forthcoming MOU signing marks a significant step towards realizing this vision, adding that both parties eagerly anticipate the positive impact of this partnership on the higher education sector.

The Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) is Pakistan’s national space agency, dedicated to the peaceful use of space technology for the socio-economic development of the country. SUPARCO has a rich history of space exploration and technological advancement, contributing to various sectors, including education, agriculture, and communication.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting of PEDO Policy Board.

# Snap checking to be made more effective at entry points

PESHAWAR (APP): SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi Saturday said that snap checking has been made more active with a new strategy to prevent drug and other illegal smuggling at the Peshawar Motorway Toll Plaza.

Talking to media men, SSP Operation Kashif Aftab Abbasi said that checking of all types of vehicles coming to

Peshawar from both sides of the motorway, i.e. outside Peshawar and from cities outside Peshawar, has been made mandatory.

Checking of cargo vehicles including passengers, public transport and all other vehicles continues till late night, he added. He said strict security arrangements have been made on the motorway blockade while monitoring is also

being done through CCTV cameras.

The purpose of comprehensive checking with the new strategy is to make Peshawar a peaceful city, but also to ensure the prevention of smuggling of drugs and other illegal items, SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi said.

Strict legal action will be taken against smugglers of drugs and other illegal goods,

as well as strict departmental action against bribery, criminals and officials having links with smugglers, SSP Operations informed.

Special checking is being done by putting the security on high alert at the entry and exit routes of the city, he said, adding, “Citizens, travelers and guests from other cities are requested to cooperate with the police on duty.”

# VC, Minister intervention: Joint Action Committee postponed proposed strike



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising of teaching, clerical and class-IV staff at University of Peshawar (UOP) has postponed proposed strike on 11th September following assurance from Vice Chancellor and Caretaker Minister for Higher Education, on Saturday.

This was announced by JAC president Dr. Muhammad Uzair along with others including Class-IV president Imdad Khan, Class-III president Abdul Malik and sanitation

staff president during press conference at Peshawar Press Club.

The speakers claimed that UOP facing crisis due to negligence and wrong policies of government during last decade which has lead the varsity to current situation. They claimed that pension has been increased from Rs30 corer to Rs1.2 billions during last decade.

The speakers also demanded establishment of Provincial Higher Education Commission like Punjab and Sindh for redressal of varsities grievances to ensure quality

research education. They further argued to ensure comprehensive plan for higher education for long term in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for next generations.

JAC paid thanks to Caretaker Minister for Higher Education Muhammad Qasim Jan and Vice Chancellor UOP Professor Jahan Bakht for their positive role in redressal of issue.

The speakers also demanded increase in salaries because UOP’s employees are still receiving 2021 based salaries despite the unprecedented inflation.

# Lawyers hold protest demonstration

PESHAWAR (APP): The lawyer’s community staged a strong protest demonstration against current unstoppable inflation which created hardship for the middle and lower middle class families who are unable to run their daily home affairs.

Lawyers took out a protest rally from Judicial Complex to Assembly Square and sit-in at Assembly Chowk as a result the main Khyber Road closed for all kinds of traffic. The protesters reject the increase in the prices of electricity, gas, petroleum products.

They demanded the government to withdraw the price hike immediately. The movement against inflation has started now, General Secretary High Court Bar said while addressing the protesters.

According to the constitution, we also demand elections in 90 days, General Secretary High Court Bar Lajabr Khan Advocate said, adding, “If there is supremacy of constitution and law in the country, then the country will develop.”

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-day training for journalists held on Fundamental Concepts for Local Media, New Initiatives and Citizen Journalism to counter misinformation, disinformation and mal-information in the era of information technology.

The training covered a vast range of information including the importance of

diversity and inclusivity for journalists as well as Reporting versus fact-checking was taught with in-depth knowledge. The Fact-Checking procedure is used as a tool to debunk false info, to provide accurate information and for accountability of powerful people.

The trainers named Tayyab Afridi and Iftikhar Khan addressed participants on importance of

fact-checking while added that false information could be categorized into misinformation, disinformation and mal-information to ease the procedure.

The fact-checking concludes in three stages as media monitoring, reporting and writing to debunk misinformation, disinformation and mal-info for holding powerful accountable. The official claims,

viral misinformation, historical misinformation, hoaxes, conspiracy theories and propagandas should be fact-check to inform public with accurate information.

Moreover, predictions, projections, promises, people’s intention shouldn’t be fact-checked. The fact-checking initiate from truthfulness and falsity of statement, to inquire sources, the context and who’s said it.

## OWP expresses grief over earthquakes

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday expressed grief and sorrow over the deaths of the people as a result of a devastating earthquake in Morocco.

In a statement issued here, the QWP chief said, “I am saddened to hear about the terrible earthquake, destruction and deaths of hundreds of people in Morocco and all my sympathies are with the bereaved families.”

It is time for the government to immediately send rescue troops and aid to the Moroccan brothers and sisters to support them in this difficult time, he added.

## Child sexually assaulted, one held

PESHAWAR (APP): A 10-year-old deaf and dumb child was sexually assaulted in Shaheedabad area, Police said here Saturday.

According to details given by the Police, one alleged accused Shahzad sexually assaulted a deaf and dumb child named Bilal on his way back from school. Taking quick action, the Police succeeded in arresting the alleged accused, Police said.

A case has been registered against the accused in Tehkal Police Station. The accused belongs to the Christian community, Police said.

# FIA apprehends 127 suspect

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) during crack-down on illegal currency and dollar smuggling operations, 127 suspects were apprehended and the arrests have led to the recovery of a staggering sum of Rs679 million during last three months, said the spokesman of FIA on Saturday.

On the directives of Director Nisar Ahmad Khan Tanoli, the FIA teams has initiated 109 cases against individuals involved in dollar smuggling and illegal currency trading in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.

During these operations, 127 suspects were apprehended, and cases have been registered against 109 individuals. The arrests have led to the recovery of a staggering sum of 679 million Pakistani Rupees.

The seized currency included not only dollars but also various foreign currencies, Director Nisar Ahmad Khan Tanoli has reaffirmed the FIA’s commitment to eradicating these unlawful financial activities, emphasizing the importance of curbing currency smuggling and its adverse effects on the country’s economy.

# Funds released

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department Saturday released worth Rs. 2 billion released for Sehat Card Plus Program, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Advisor Dr Riaz Anwar said here.

The facility of free treatment for the poor and middle class remains on the health card, Riaz Anwar said, adding, “Health Card treatment for poor patients has not been stopped now.”

The treatment of salaried employees up to Rs 32000 is free, Health Advisor Dr. Riaz Anwar said. He said more than 32,000 salary and unemployed will pay part of expenses.

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Trainers at a training workshop urged the participants to utilize the skills get on Child Protection Case Management and Referral System aimed at protecting the children at risk in the society.

The five days training workshop organized by Directorate of Social Welfare for Merged Areas in collaboration with UNICEF for the staff of newly established Child Protection Units in Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) and six sub-divisions.

The main aim and purpose of the training was to equip the staff of Child Protection Units with essential skills and knowledge to coordinate and provide child protection services effectively, including addressing the needs of children on the move and Afghan refugees.

The 40 participants from merged tribal district and other staff including Program Manager – PMU, information Management Officer, Child Protection Officers, Social Case worker, Psychologist of NMDs and Child Protection and Welfare Commission KP attended the workshop.

Senior Planning Officer Hamayun Khan was chief guest of the closing ceremony

while Chief Protection Officer Ijaz Khan, Deputy Director Ubaid Ullah and Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF Sohail Ahmad also addressed on the occasion.

In his concluding remarks Hamayun Khan expressed his appreciation for the dedication and commitment of all participants to the cause of Child Protection in NMDs, including addressing the unique needs of children on the move and Afghan refugees. He encouraged them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the training in their respective roles, thereby safeguarding the rights of all children, and to actively engage with parents and communities in their efforts.

He also stressed the importance of collective action in addressing the complex challenges of child abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect. He urged all relevant line Departments to closely collaborate with the CPUs in NMDs and also emphasized the significance of building strong partnerships with parents and communities to create a protective environment for children.

“This training program represents a significant



stride, first of its kind, towards protecting the rights and well-being of all children in NMDs, regardless of their circumstances, and reaffirms and UNICEF’s commitment to ensuring a safer environment for every child” he concluded.

Ejaz Khan highlighted the importance and implementation of the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2010 emphasizing that it provides essential protection for all children in the province, irrespective of their status and nationalities.

Sohail Ahmad also underscored the critical importance of engaging parents and communities in the child protection process. He emphasized that CPUs must connect with parents and communities to build a strong support network for ensuring the protection and welfare of children. “Parents and communities

play a vital role in identifying and reporting child protection issues and providing a safe environment for children. Their active involvement is essential to the success of child protection efforts” he further said.

He said that the training focused on enhancing the capabilities of CPU staff in identifying and registering cases of children at risk, including those on the move and Afghan refugees. “It covered conducting assessment, monitoring and following up on interventions and referrals, and facilitating the rehabilitation of children who have suffered various forms of abuse” Sohail said.

He also highlighted the importance of the Child Protection Information Management System (CP-IMS), which will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Case Management and Referral System, ensuring that chil-

dren on the move and Afghan refugees receive the support they need.

The Directorate of Social Welfare Merged Areas is mandated on the Child Protection issues in the communities, for the purpose, Department has approved PC-I on the establishment of Child Protection Units and Provision of Support to Orphans (including home based care) in NMDs.

To Protect and ensuring the Protection, welfare, rehabilitation and reintegration of the Child at Risk, 09 Child Protection Units are established in Merged Areas namely, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Orakzai, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Bajaur, Sub division Peshawar and Sub Division Lakki.

At the end of the training workshop certificates were distributed among the participants of 5 days training course.

# Fast completion of energy projects vital to avert threats of desertification, food insecurity

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspite of 30,000megawatt power potential, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was prone to desertification and drought due to climate change’s challenges and fast completion of an under construction power projects were imperative for sustainable economic growth and agricultural development.

While traveling on Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway and Indus Highway in southern districts of KP, a visitor would be disappointed to see thousands acres of barren lands at Mardan, Swabi, Kohat,

Bannu, Karak, DIKHAN and Lakki Marwat that was eaten by the desertification, drought and land degradation.

Dr Zilakat Malik, Ex Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar told APP that Pakistan was among 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change and desertification and if these challenges were not tackled on priority basis the country may face hunger like situation after a few decades due to rapid population growth.

“The dry-lands of Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab are facing increased problems of desertification due to climate change impacts, improper land use practices, over-grazing, deforestation and excessive removal of vegetation for fuel.”

He said Pakistan was heading towards a situation of water shortage and food insecurity due to fast melting of glaciers, poor investment in agriculture, flooding, rapid population growth and water loss.

National Water Policy 2018 has revealed that the per capita surface water availability had declined from 5,260 cubic meters

per year in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016 and this quantity was likely to further drop to about 860 cubic meters in next few years, marking our transition from a “water stressed” to a “water scarce” country.

The policy disclosed that the minimum water requirement to avoid food and health implications of water scarcity was 1,000 cubic meters per capita per year and the situation underlined the need for rapid development and management of the country’s water resources especially completion of construction of dams of

Mohmand and Diamir Bhasha to conserve the precious commodities for future generation.

To combat desertification and land degradation, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has completed seven hydel power projects with 162 megawatts capacity generating huge financial revenues for the government kitty.

The spokesman of KP Energy Department Organization (PEDO) told APP that besides collecting of Rs47 billion of revenue so far from power projects executed under

(PEDO), the government accelerated work on additional five hydel power projects that after completion would generate 216MW electricity with positive impact on agriculture and industries development besides addressing the growing problem of desertification and energy shortfall.

The hydropower projects which entered into last stage of completion include Gorangol Mataltan of 84MW, Lavi 69MW, Jabori 10MW, Koto 40MW and Karora 11MW.

Moreover work on, two others projects namely

Chari Charkhel 13.5MW and Mujagideen of 6.9MW was in advanced stage.

With cooperation of Asian Development Bank, PEDO has started implementation on 300MW Balakot hydro power project while practical work on Gabriel Kalam of 88MW and Madain project of 157MW would commence soon.

Civil Secretariat, Chief Minister house and CM secretariate were converted on solar energy to conserve conventional energy.

Similarly, 8000 schools, 187BHUs and 4000 mosques have been converted into solar energy in settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In merged areas, 300 mosques and other worship places and 100 villages were solarized.

Similarly, work on solarization of 7000 mosques and other worship places were underway in KP.

Similarly, 356 mini macro hydropower projects were completed during phase 1 in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while work on establishment of 291 mini macro hydropower projects was underway under phase 2 in the province.





## In brief

### Polio eradication steps discussed Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir here Saturday chaired a meeting to discussed measures to achieve targets of anti-polio campaign. The meeting was also attended by District Police Officer Farhan Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance, Reena Suhrawardy, Assistant Commissioner Kohat, Assistant Commissioner Lachi, District Health Officer and concerned officials of education department. The meeting discussed steps being taken to achieve targets of anti-polio campaign and reviewed measures to ensure safety of polio staff. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kohat urged people of Kohat district to vaccinate their children and save them from permanent crippling. He also urged people to provide assistance and help to polio teams keeping in view significance of vaccination process in eradication of polio.

### Action against land mafia sought F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT: A widow Khatoon named Alhabchai, resident of Burera Colony in Qamber, protested against the influential estate agency people along with broker Tawfiq Ahmad Bureroin front of the press club. residence will be located near the zam zam marriage hall estimated to be two crore rupees. While I have the original documents and evidence of the house sold, he further said that while the said broker has issued false documents in my name for a government-owned plot without any documents and papers, which is pure. It is a government property for which influential people threatened me daily for leaving my private house. Therefore, I request the caretaker chief minister of Sindh to take legal action against the people of as stated State Agency and register a case at the police station for threatening to kill me. Meanwhile, a resident of Qamber Shahdadkot district, Shabir Ahmad Bilidi was killed on the spot after resisting armed men during the robbery in Ghazi Goth, a suburb of Karachi. On the way, unknown armed men tried to rob, but when they resisted, the robbers started firing, on which the young man was blocked by a bullet. No case has been registered in any jail till now.

### 3 drug peddlers arrested F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Dera police during ongoing anti drug campaign arrested three more drug peddlers and recovered ice and heroin from the possession of the arrested persons in the limits of Dera Town and Cantt police stations on Saturday. According to the police spokesman, On the direction of Regional Police Officer Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti under the command of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, police team of Dera Town police station under the supervision of SHO Faheem Abbas arrested two drug peddlers. The accused have been identified as Kamran son of Abdul Qayyum resident of Daraban Kalan and Khalidullah son of Amir Shah, resident of Tiken. The police claimed to have recovered 660 grams of ice, and 230 grams of heroin from their possession. While SHO Cantt Gul Sher Khan arrested one accused and recovered 532 grams of ice from his possession.

# Three killed, four injured in old rivalry

F.P. Report

WANA: As many as three killed and four injured including passerby at Toi Khullagh area of South Waziristan district, in exchange of firing between the families of Mashad Khan and Shamiran Dottani, on Saturday. The two families have been feuding for the past 7 years with minor recurrences, and even earlier both the families have killed each other's in Waziristan and Punjab. Station House Officer (SHO) Toi Khullagh Qutab Khan Dottani said that the armed men of Shah Miran Dottani's family were already sitting in wait, that when the members of Mashad Khan's family were passing by, Shah Miran's family opened fire on him.

Due to which two members of Mashad Khan's family, Naseeb Khan, Mashal Khan, died, while Hikmat and Zahir Shah were injured. In retaliatory firing, Mashad Khan's men killed Naem of Shah Miran's family and injured one person.

According to SHO Qutab, the feud between the two families had been going on for 7 years on a

minor basis, the incident is an indication of the old rivalry. "We have started an investigation, and an FIR will be registered as per law," the police said.

However, political and social circles have expressed regret over this incident, local people have expressed deep grief over this sad incident. Local lawyer Ajmal Wazir Advocate has described this incident as sad and said, as such incidents have occurred in recent days, the Government and administration should take concrete steps to remedy such incidents.

**Grand Jirga held:** A grand jirga of nine tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir was held at Govt high school Wana which was called by the Wana Welfare Association, on Saturday.

The representatives Olsi Pason also participated. Feasibility report to make Waziristan drought-proof, therefore, the survey teams are coming to Wana on Monday, for which the support of all tribes is needed to make the environment favorable. On this occasion, members of the nine-member committee of the nation, Malik Saeedullah, Malik Muhammad Aslam and Malik Alam Jan said

that the Zali khel tribe has unanimously decided that wherever the site for the small dam is selected for the feasibility report, Zali khel will not take any commission, but full security will be provided to the survey teams.

Apart from this, Malik Shehryar from Khojail Khel tribe has also assured full cooperation. Malik Jameel and Malik Shaukat and Sidra Noor of the Gangi Khel tribe said, "The efforts of the organization are commendable and they have no room for doubt, but they asked for a two-day respite so that the rest of the tribes can take a unanimous decision like Zali khel and Khojail khel after consulting with their tribesmen. Muhammad Ayaz while talking to the media said that all political parties involved in Pason will fully cooperate with the site selection and survey teams for the small dams.

It should be noted that the water level in the Lower Waziristan district is falling rapidly, due to which all nations urgently need to construct small dams to avoid drought, so as to address the concerns of the people involved in the agriculture sector.

## JI blames PTI, PDM for whole mess in country

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami provincial chief Prof Ibrahim Khan has said that it is the responsibility of the election commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold general elections in the country within 90 days after dissolution of the assemblies.

He said the JI would announce its future course of action if the ECP failed to announce the elections soon. He was speaking at a news conference at the Ahyal Uloom Balambat here on Saturday. The JI provincial general secretary Abdul Wasee, district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, former MNAs Maulana Asadullah,

Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, former MPA Saeed Gul and others were also present on the occasion.

Prof Ibrahim said the country was facing constitutional, political and economic crises, and former rulers were responsible for it. He announced that the JI would stage a protest sit-in outside the Governor's house in Peshawar on Sept 18 against inflation and increase in power tariffs and prices of petroleum products, gas, sugar and other items. He asked the party workers to participate in the JI proposed sit-in against inflation and price hikes.

He said that prices of the

daily use items had increased many folds during the PDM government. He said the JI chief Sirajul Haq had frequently met with the then prime ministers, Imran Khan and Mian Shabbaz Sharif in order to steer the country out of the crises and to convince them for general elections on the same day. The JI leader said that Imran Khan wanted elections in the presence of Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial while Shabbaz Sharif wanted to delay it. He said that both the leaders' plans had failed. He said the ECP wanted to conduct next elections after delimitation of constituencies.

## Provision of edible items including sugar assured on controlled prices

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdur Rehman, held a meeting regarding controlling sugar prices across the district and controlling hoarding and artificial inflation in which District Food Controller (DFC) along Assistant Commissioners including Mardan, Takhtbhai, Headquarters along with representatives of sugar mills and related departments and Anjuman Tajran were present, on Saturday.

On this occasion, administration officers and food department made detailed inquiries regarding the current situation and price of sugar in sugar mills and open market across the district. A detailed briefing was given on the measures taken

against hoarders and profiteers. DC issued instructions to the officers of the relevant departments including the administration in the light of the orders issued by the provincial government said that to ensure the uninterrupted supply of essential commodities to the citizens at fixed rates, small and big warehouses and dealers across the district. Inspections should be carried out and hoarding and profiteers should be closely monitored and strict legal action should be taken against those involved.

The Deputy Commissioner further said that the main objective is to provide relief to the public by controlling artificial inflation. On this occasion, Anjuman Tajran assured full cooperation from the district administration to ensure the

provision of relief to the people.

**Sports competition held:** District Sports Office Organized by hockey tournament, martial arts and hockey, cricket, wheelchair race competitions for "special persons" were organized in Mardan Sports Complex.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Sami-ur-Rehman was the special guest District Sports Officer Saeed Akhtar, District Youth Officer Usman Khan, Saqib Khan and Forest Department officers were also present. On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Planning Sami-ur-Rahman, DSO Saeed Akhtar, DYO Usman Khan, started the regular plantation drive by planting saplings in Mardan Sports Complex.



SAKHAKOT: Provincial president of ANP Aimal Wali Khan wearing caps to newly joining party members during a public gathering. — F.P. photo

### Elevated electricity bills Maryam Azhar

**IN recent months, an unsettling trend has emerged, causing concern among many households: a sharp increase in electricity bills. As we flick the switch and watch our appliances come to life, we're met with a disconcerting reality: the numbers on our electricity bills are climbing higher than ever before.**

This unanticipated surge has left many wondering: What exactly is behind this sudden rise in the cost of keeping the lights on? Various factors contribute to the complex landscape of energy pricing, and understanding these intricacies is crucial for consumers to make informed decisions. I explore some of the key elements driving this phenomenon i.e. Supply and Demand Dynamics, Fluctuating Fuel Costs, Infrastructure Upgrades, Policy and Regulation and Technological Advancements.

As we navigate the period of heightened energy prices, it's an opportune moment for communities, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue. Together, we can work toward sustainable solutions that balance the needs of consumers, the environment, and the economy.

In conclusion, the recent surge in electricity bills underscores the intricate web of factors influencing energy pricing. By staying informed, making conscious choices, and advocating for transparency, we can collectively address this challenge and pave the way for a more affordable and sustainable energy future.

## Selection of educational institution for students

Dr. Muhammad Sarwar

**WHEN selecting an educational institution for a 4 or 5-year degree program after completing intermediate education, students should carefully assess various critical factors to ensure a well-informed decision. The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, stands out as a distinguished choice when considering the following essential criteria:**

Firstly, Accreditation: The institution and its programs boast accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies, guaranteeing adherence to defined quality standards.

Secondly, Academic Program: The University offers a comprehensive range of degree programs and majors that align with diverse career aspirations and personal interests. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to provide a well-rounded education.

Thirdly, Reputation: With a strong standing in the academic community, the University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, has earned recognition for its faculty expertise, successful alumni and a historical track record of excellence.

Fourthly, Location: Situated in a strategic location, the campus offers options that cater to individual preferences. Its proximity to your home, accessible transport facilities and opportunities for internships or part-time work make it an attractive choice.

Furthermore, Financial Considerations: The University is committed to affordability, with competitive tuition costs and a range of financial aid, scholarships and grants to support students in their educational journey.

Moreover, Facilities and Resources: The campus boasts state-of-the-art facilities, well-equipped libraries, advanced laboratories and cutting-edge technology resources, ensuring a conducive learning environment.

Class Size and Student-to-Faculty Ratio: The institution prioritizes personal education with smaller class sizes and a lower student-to-faculty ratio, fostering meaningful interactions with professors.

Alumni Network: The University's extensive alumni network provides valuable connections and opportunities for career advancement, reflecting the institution's commitment to student success.

Support Services: An array of support services, including academic advising, career counselling and tutoring, is readily available to assist students in achieving their academic goals.

Extracurricular Activities: The campus offers diverse extracurricular activities, including clubs, organizations, sports teams and cultural events, enabling a well-rounded and enriching university experience.

Internship and Job Placement Opportunities: The University has a proven track record of assisting students in securing internships and job

placements in their chosen fields, facilitating a smooth transition to the workforce.

12. Diversity and Inclusion: The institution is dedicated to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion, ensuring an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students.

13. Graduation Rates: High graduation rates reflect the commitment to student success, ensuring that students typically complete their degrees within the expected time frame.

14. Career Services: Quality career services and job placement assistance are provided to students and graduates, enhancing their employability and career prospects.

15. Personal Preferences: The University accommodates personal preferences, offering class schedule flexibility, a diverse campus culture and a willingness to address unique needs and requirements.

In conclusion, selecting the right educational institution is a significant decision that should align with your academic and career goals while considering personal preferences and financial circumstances. Thorough research, campus visits and guidance from counselors, mentors and current students are valuable steps toward making an informed and original decision. The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, stands as an excellent choice that embodies these crucial criteria.

*The writer is Professor, The University of Sargodha Campus.*

## Police performance report issued

F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: The Bahawalpur district police have released their performance report for the month of August 2023, highlighting their significant accomplishments during this period.

According to media reports, in a detailed report issued by the district police, it was revealed that a total of 761 suspects were apprehended in the course of August, a remarkable achievement that underscores the commitment of the Bahawalpur police to maintaining law and order in the region. Among these arrests, a staggering 371 individuals were proclaimed offenders, known

for their involvement in criminal activities. The report proudly announced that the district police had successfully taken notorious gangs and criminals, including proclaimed offenders, into custody. In addition to these arrests, the police also managed to recover a substantial amount of cash and stolen goods with an estimated value exceeding 16 million rupees from the possession of the apprehended suspects.

Furthermore, the Bahawalpur district police's efforts extended to combating narcotics-related crimes, with 272 suspects being arrested in drug-related cases. A significant quantity of illicit

drugs was seized from these individuals, including 236 grams of methamphetamine ("ice"), over 134 grams of hashish, more than one kilogram of heroin, a substantial 56 kilograms of cannabis, 100 grams of opium, and a staggering 8203 liters of illegal liquor.

The report highlighted the recovery of weapons from the possession of the accused, further emphasizing the dedication of the police force in ensuring the safety of the community. A total of 45 pistols, two rifles, three revolvers, six repeaters, one Kalashnikov, and four guns were confiscated as part of these operations.

# Transforming former British colonies: Breaking free from colonial governance legacy

Dr. Amna Suharwardy

**THE British Empire, at its zenith, ruled over a vast array of colonies and territories across the world, leaving behind a legacy that continues to shape the political, social, and economic landscapes of former British colonies. One of the most profound aspects of this legacy is the governance models established by the British colonial authorities, primarily the Northern Ireland and London models. As these nations gained independence, they faced unique challenges and opportunities associated with these governance paradigms.**

The two primary models of governance employed by the British were based on Northern Ireland and London, each with its unique characteristics. After gaining independence, former colonies such as Kenya, India, Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Uganda, and Fiji continued with slight variations of the Northern Ireland model, while countries like Australia, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, and white-majority South Africa

were more closely aligned with the London model.

The Northern Ireland model, characterized by authoritative control, limited public participation, and an unwavering focus on loyalty to the British crown, had far-reaching consequences. All these countries where the Northern Ireland Model of governance was installed by the British share similar kinds of institutional diseases and governance problems embedded in government culture. Administrative structures often prioritized the interests of colonial masters, leading to extractive policies and governance systems. Landlords and political elites cultivated or influenced by the colonial administration wielded disproportionate power, and corruption became pervasive. The judiciary and police, originally designed to protect the colonial elite, struggled to transition to serving the broader interests of newly independent nations.

In contrast, the London model adopted a more inclusive approach, incorporating elements of parliamentary democracy and representation. Countries following this model

tended to have institutions that were somewhat more accountable to the local population, and political processes were influenced by democratic norms.

However, even decades after gaining independence, many former colonies still grapple with the enduring governance issues stemming from these models. Challenges persist in land reform, political representation, corruption, and the effectiveness of public institutions. Transitioning from extractive governance to inclusive and accountable systems is a complex and ongoing process.

To address these challenges and build strong, resilient post-colonial nations, we must embark on a multifaceted approach:

1. Long-term Vision and Commitment: Recognize that addressing the legacy of extractive governance is a long-term endeavor. Sustain political will and commitment to reforms, even in the face of challenges and setbacks.

2. Civil Services & Political Reform and Inclusivity: Promote political and civil services reforms that encourage

inclusivity and participation among all segments of society. Implement electoral systems that ensure fair representation and reduce the dominance of political elites.

3. Land Reform and Resource Redistribution: Prioritize land reform programs to address historical land injustices and inequities. Develop transparent mechanisms for land redistribution to benefit marginalized communities.

4. Anti-Corruption Measures: Strengthen anti-corruption agencies and institutions to combat graft effectively. Encourage whistleblower protection and citizen engagement in monitoring corruption.

5. Judicial and Police Reforms: Revamp the judicial system to ensure impartiality, efficiency, and accessibility for all citizens. Train and professionalize the police force to focus on serving and protecting the broader population.

6. Transparency and Accountability: Enhance transparency in government operations, budgeting, and public spending. Establish mechanisms for citizens to hold public officials

accountable for their actions.

7. Public Education and Awareness: Promote civic education and public awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Encourage active citizen engagement in the democratic process.

8. Civil Society Empowerment: Support and empower civil society organizations to advocate for good governance and social justice. Foster an environment where civil society can collaborate with the government to drive positive change.

9. International Support and Partnerships: Seek international support and partnerships for capacity-building and technical assistance in governance reforms. Engage in peer learning and knowledge exchange with countries that have successfully transitioned to inclusive governance models.

10. Youth Involvement: Actively involve youth and women in political and governance processes to diversify leadership and decision-making. Create opportunities for mentorship and leadership development

among underrepresented groups.

11. Constitutional Reforms: Consider constitutional amendments or revisions that reinforce democratic principles, human rights, and equitable governance.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of governance reforms to ensure their effectiveness and adaptability.

Overcoming the legacy of the Northern Ireland model of governance in former colonies like Kenya, India, Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Uganda, and Fiji is a complex and challenging task. However, with a concerted effort from governments, civil society, and the international community, these nations can transition towards more inclusive, accountable, and equitable governance systems that better serve the interests of their citizens and foster sustainable development. It's time to break free from the shadows of colonialism and forge a brighter future for these nations.

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## UN report says the world is way off track to curb global warming

NEW YORK (AP): With the world far off track on its 2015 pledge to curb global warming, a new United Nations report central to upcoming climate negotiations details how quickly and deeply energy and financial systems must change to get back on a safer path. "The window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all is rapidly closing," report warned.

The globe has to cut its emissions of heat-trapping gases by 43% by 2030, compared to 2019 levels, and 60% by 2035, the report said. To get there, the report said, "the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels is required," using a phrase international climate negotiators have shied away from before. It also said phasing out the internal combustion engine would be a huge help. And the way money flows — such as investments, subsidies, loans, grants and payments for people and places hurt by warming's extreme weather — also has to change, the report recommended. It said countries need to stop \$450 billion in annual subsidies for coal, oil and natural gas.

"Halting and reversing deforestation" and adopting better crop-growing practices are critical to fighting climate change, the report said. It noted that about 95% of deforestation is in the tropics, but global consumers drive the tree loss. "We must urgently disrupt business as usual and unite like never before to move from ambition to action and from rhetoric to real results," upcoming international climate negotiations president Sultan Al Jaber said in a statement.

The first of its kind report, called the "global stocktake" on climate-fighting efforts, put such an emphasis on change that it used variations of the word "transform" more than 50 times in 47 pages. "The report really puts a spotlight on that kind of transformation of systems that needs to take place," said David Waskow, international climate initiative director at the World Resources Institute. "We're past the point of incremental type of change if we're going to take seriously what needs to be done."

Former US Vice President Al Gore said on social media, "This latest report shows that we are failing, not because we don't know the answers — but because we aren't doing our homework." This comes as leaders of the top 20 economies, responsible for 80% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, meet in India. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told them to act quickly on warming because "the climate crisis is worsening dramatically."

In 2015, as part of the landmark Paris Agreement, the countries of the world agreed to try to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) or at least 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees

Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times. It's already warmed about 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since the mid-1800s. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees is another window of opportunity that is rapidly closing, the report said. Earlier this year, the World Meteorological Organization said there's a two-out-of-three chance that in the next five years, Earth will exceed that threshold for a year.

The report "feels like a final warning," said Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare, a climate scientist. "If you guys don't get your act together, we're going to cook." The world just baked through the hottest summer ever recorded, and ocean temperatures keep smashing records. The way the Paris agreement works is that every country makes its own carbon pollution pledges and efforts — and every five years they are supposed to ratchet them up. Key is that between those five years, climate negotiators come up with what's like a midterm grade for the world's efforts and a roadmap for preventing more dangerous warming.

That's the "global stocktake" released. After three years of work by scientists, government officials and others, the United Nations' climate agency came up with a technical report that is supposed to lead to something bigger this December when world leaders and climate negotiators convene in Dubai. Negotiators plan to use this report and discussions later this year to figure out what nations and the world as a whole will do next to fight climate change.

"This global stocktake report provides clear direction on how we can meet the expectations of the Paris agreement by taking decisive action in this critical decade," said Al Jaber, an oil executive. "To keep 1.5 within reach we must act with 'ambition and urgency' to reduce emissions 43% by 2030." Two years ago, climate negotiators battled over adopting language calling for an end or phase-out of unabated coal use — where emissions are not captured and stored — and instead opted for weaker "phase down" language. Then, last year, a proposal to phase out or down all fossil fuels was made, but never was put on the agenda or officially debated.

"There's no question that the 'phase out' language is an important marker," said Waskow of the World Resources Institute. The report does highlight progress made on renewable energy and other efforts to combat warming. But "the progress isn't enough," said Tom Evans, a senior policy advisor at the European think tank E3G. "We're off track. We are nowhere near where we need to be." "The takeaway from the report shouldn't just be that we're off track," Evans said. "The takeaway from this report needs to be: This is what we can do about this."

## Lebanese PM warns Syrian refugees

BEIRUT (AP): Over a thousand Syrian refugees each week fleeing to Lebanon from their country's worsening economic and financial conditions "could create harsh imbalances" in the small Mediterranean nation, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati warned.

Over the past months, thousands of Syrian citizens made it to Lebanon through illegal crossing points seeking a better life. But Lebanon is going through its own four-year meltdown, with a drowning economy pinning its hopes on tourism and crumbling infrastructure where electricity and water cuts are widespread. In the early years after conflict broke out in Syria in March 2011, Lebanon received hundreds of thousands of refugees. That changed in later years, especially after Lebanon's economic crisis broke out in October 2019.

The Syrian conflict has killed half a million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million, including more than 5 million Syrians who fled the country, mostly to neighboring countries. Refugees usually pay smugglers to bring them to Lebanon through the long, shared border. The Lebanese army said in a statement that it prevented 1,200 Syrians from crossing into Lebanon this week alone. It said another 1,100 Syrians were prevented from reaching Lebanon the previous week.

Speaking at the start of a Cabinet meeting in Beirut, Mikati said what is worrying about the influx in refugees is that most of them are young men and women. "That threatens our entity's independence and could create harsh imbalances that could affect Lebanon's demographic balance," Mikati said.

The demographic in question may be religious affiliation, as the vast majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslims. Lebanon, known for its religious diversity in the region, has struggled to keep peace between its 18 religious sects. Today, Christians make up nearly a third of the population, while the other two-thirds are almost equally split between Shiites and Sunnis. Mikati said another Cabinet session will be held next week with the commander of the army and heads of security agencies to discuss refugees.

Lebanon hosts some 805,000 United Nations-registered Syrian refugees, but officials estimate the actual number is far higher: between 1.5 million and 2 million.

Issam Charafeddine, Lebanon's caretaker minister of the displaced, told a local radio station that 8,000 Syrian refugees entered Lebanon through illegal crossing points since the beginning of August. He said 20,000 refugees have crossed since the beginning of the year. Living conditions are worsening in Syria, where inflation surged after President Bashar Assad's decision in August to double public sector wages and pensions.

## Australia, Philippines strengthen ties as China Sea disputes heat up

MANILA (AP): Australia and the Philippines elevated their seven-decade ties to a strategic level to broaden an alliance underpinned by their rejection of China's increasingly provocative actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Philippine Ferdinand Marcos signed the pact upgrading their ties in Manila. They also agreed to hold an annual meeting of their defense chiefs. Aside from an aim to further boost trade and economic engagement, Albanese said their countries "have common views about the need to uphold international law, and Australia's position on that will continue to be consistent, as we have always been, including recently over issues relating to the South China Sea."

China and the Philippines, along with Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have been locked in a decadeslong territorial standoff in the disputed waterway. It's a key passageway for global trade and is regarded as an Asian flashpoint. It's also where China has repeatedly had tense face-offs with Philippine vessels.

Marcos said he and Albanese "acknowledge that our shared values, the democratic principles and mutual respect for international law, have been instrumental in fostering a strong partnership." "Our commitment to these ideals has guided our path forward as we address the complex challenges facing our region and the world at large," Marcos said. In just-concluded summit talks attended by Albanese, Marcos, and several other Western and Asian leaders in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, the Australian premier underscored Canberra's recognition of — and the need to uphold — a 2016 arbitration ruling by a tribunal set up under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea that invalidated China's expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea on historical grounds.

The Philippines sought the arbitration after China forcibly took control of a disputed shoal after a tense 2012 sea standoff. China did not participate in the arbitration, rejected its outcome as a sham, and continues to violate it. Marcos thanked Albanese for renewing Australia's position during the Jakarta summit talks, where Chinese Premier Li Qiang was also in attendance. "You have made very clear that the claims that are being made upon our Philippine maritime territory are not valid and have not been recognized, and not in conjunction or consistent with international law,"



Marcos said. "To have friends like you and partners like you, especially on that subject, is very gratifying and encourages us to continue down that path." Australia, along with the United States and Japan, immediately condemned an Aug. 5 action by a Chinese coast guard ship that used a water cannon to block a Philippine boat delivering food and other supplies to Filipino forces stationed at the Second Thomas Shoal. China also claims the atoll and has surrounded it with Chinese coast guard ships and militia vessels in a yearslong standoff.

While Albanese and Marcos were meeting in Manila, two Philippine supply boats en route to the Second Thomas Shoal were blocked by a Chinese coast guard ship and other Chinese vessels, but managed to breach the blockade and reached the Filipino sailors stationed in a long-marooned and rusting navy ship, Philippine security officials said. The Philippine government condemned the Chinese coast guard's actions and vowed it would not be deterred by the aggression and continue the supply missions. An inter-agency government body dealing with the territorial disputes said it "strongly deplores and condemns the continued illegal, aggressive, and destabilizing conduct of the Chinese coast guard and Chinese maritime militias within our nation's Exclusive Economic Zone."

Meanwhile, the Philippines condemned China's coast guard and "maritime militia" for what it described as "illegal, aggressive and destabilising" behaviour towards its boats during a routine rotation and resupply mission in the South China Sea. Vice Admiral Alberto Carlos said that despite the Chinese actions supplies were delivered to Philippine troops stationed on a warship that had

been deliberately grounded on an uninhabited atoll more than two decades ago to support a sovereignty claim in the disputed Spratly Islands. The Philippines task force for the South China Sea, an inter-agency government body, said in a statement the supply boats had reported "harassment, dangerous manoeuvres, and aggressive conduct" of Chinese vessels as they carried out a "legitimate" operation.

China's coast guard said two Philippine supply boats and two coast guard ships entered the waters adjacent to the shoal without permission from the Chinese government. It said its vessels followed the Philippine vessels and issued a stern warning, repeating China's "firm" opposition to the transportation of "illegal" construction materials.

The latest incident comes in the wake of rising tensions following a confrontation on Aug. 5, when Chinese vessels fired water cannon at a Philippine boat delivering supplies to troops on the Sierra Madre warship grounded on the Second Thomas Shoal. Manila has rejected Beijing's calls for it tow the World War Two-era warship off the atoll, which lies within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. The Philippines' name for the atoll is Ayungin, while China refers to it as Renai Reef.

Relations between the two countries froze over the South China Sea under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., with Manila pivoting back to the United States, which supports the Southeast Asian nation in its maritime disputes with China. The Southeast Asian nation also upgraded bilateral ties with Australia to a strategic partnership amid rising security challenges, including China's stronger presence in the South China Sea.

## US-backed Kurdish fighters say battles with tribesmen ended

BEIRUT (AP): A US-backed Syrian force declared its operations in eastern Syria completed after almost two weeks of fighting with local tribesmen left dozens of people dead. The Syrian Democratic Forces said the fighting ended with its recapture of areas in Deir el-Zour province that the Kurdish-led force had lost during the battles triggered by the militia's arrest of a rival US-backed commander.

The clashes were among the worst in recent years in the region along the border with Iraq where hundreds of US troops have been based since 2015 to help in the fight against the Islamic State group. Many feared the fighting between the rival Syrian militias that broke out on Aug. 27 would affect the efforts to combat IS. Earlier this week, the SDF took control of the areas it lost during the recent clashes.

The SDF said the fighting left 25 of its fighters dead in addition to 29 members of rival groups and tribal gunmen. It said nine civilians were also killed and accused government forces of helping to incite the violence. The Kurdish-led force said it

captured 21 fighters. Earlier, the SDF said its fighters had detained a senior official with the Islamic State group who was in charge of financing and arming sleeper cells.

Despite the Islamic State group's defeat in Syria in March 2019, IS sleeper cells still carry out deadly attacks in Syria and in neighboring Iraq. The extremists once controlled wide areas and declared a caliphate in the two countries. The SDF said its militia members, with the support of the US-led coalition against the Islamic State group and the Counter Terrorism Group in Iraq's Kurdistan region, apprehended senior IS financier Abdul-Ghafour Taber al-Diab, also known as Abu Amir.

He was detained in the northern Syrian city of Raqq, which was once seen as the capital of the extremists, according to the SDF. "He was responsible for financing the ISIS terrorist cells and their terrorist acts in the region, supplying them with weapons," the militia said in a terse statement. In other parts of Syria, hundreds of people took part in anti-government protests in the southern city of Sweida, tearing down pictures

of President Bashar Assad from a state institution. The demonstrations were sparked by worsening living conditions and inflation that surged after Assad's decision last month to double public sector wages and pensions.

The protests in Sweida province, where Druze people represent the majority of the population, are now in their third week. Surging inflation and the war-torn country's spiraling economy initially drove the demonstrations but quickly shifted to marchers calling for the fall of Assad's government. Sweida province has largely avoided the fighting of Syria's 12-year civil war, which has killed a half-million people, wounded hundreds of thousands and left parts of the country destroyed. The conflict has displaced half of Syria's prewar population of 23 million, including more than 5 million who are refugees outside the country. The Druze, followers of a 10th century offshoot of Shiite Islam, made up about 5% of Syria's prewar population and are split between supporters and opponents of President Bashar Assad.

## Arrest, detain, repeat: Russian war critics caught in jail 'carousel'

MOSCOW (Reuters): Timofei Rudenko can't seem to stay out of jail. The 30-year-old was arrested and detained five times in the space of two months over the summer for a series of misdemeanours including swearing at passers-by and disobeying police officers, according to Russian court records.

On each day he was released, after serving sentences of between 10 and 15 days at a petty crimes jail in Moscow, he was promptly picked up for a new minor offence and returned to custody, a review of the publicly available documents shows. Rudenko's mother Yulia Kiselyova said she saw her son being apprehended for the fifth time on July 7, seconds after leaving the jail: "They put him in a car right there and took him to a new court," she told Reuters, insisting he hadn't done anything wrong and was targeted because he'd posted criticism of the war in Ukraine on social media in recent months.

Two weeks later, the stakes leapt. Rudenko, a former Russian military psychologist, was arrested for a sixth time on July 21 - this time for allegedly justifying terrorism on the internet, a more serious crime punishable by up to seven years in prison, according to court records, which give no further details about his alleged offence pending a trial. Kiselyova said her son, now locked up at a pre-trial detention facility in Moscow, denied all the alleged

crimes.

Reuters was unable to independently verify Kiselyova's version of events or to contact Rudenko in detention. Rudenko's lawyers declined to discuss his case, while Russian police and prosecutor authorities didn't respond to requests for comment. A Reuters review of Rudenko's social media account on Telegram didn't find any messages critical of the war. "There are no posts anymore," Kiselyova said, without elaborating.

Three Russian human rights lawyers described Rudenko's experience as an example of "carousel arrests" - multiple busts for minor offences, with each arrest carried out on the same day a suspect finishes serving a jail term, keeping them in near-constant custody. They said the practice was one of the tools being deployed by Russian authorities in their clampdown on popular dissent against the 18-month-old conflict in Ukraine. Russia's top investigative body, the Investigative Committee, the Interior Ministry and the Prosecutor General's Office didn't respond to requests for comment on the phenomenon of carousel arrests or individual cases.

Consecutive jailings aren't illegal, as Russian law allows judges to order "administrative" detentions of up to 30 days for minor infractions. Nonetheless, carousel arrests can buy investigators time to dig into a person's

past and online activity to potentially open more serious criminal cases, according to Russian rights group OVD-Info, whose data on detentions of anti-war protesters is widely cited in international media and provides a rare independent barometer of the scale of Russia's crackdown.

"The pressure on opposition-minded and anti-war activists is growing before our eyes," said Ivan Vtorushin, who oversees a team of more than 400 volunteer lawyers defending freedom of expression cases at Moscow-based OVD-Info. A Reuters review of Russian court records identified seven cases of carousel arrests this year, with the suspects involved arrested and jailed between two and five times in succession.

Valeriya Vetoshkina, a lawyer with First Department, a Russian rights NGO specialising in the legal defence of people accused of espionage or treason, said she knew of about 10 examples of carousel arrests so far in 2023, including the seven identified by Reuters. She added that the true figure was likely to be higher. Since Russia invaded Ukraine - in what Moscow describes as a special military operation - its laws have been tightened to curb public criticism of the conflict. For example "discrediting the army" and spreading "fake news" about alleged Russian atrocities in Ukraine, two new crimes placed on the statute book in March 2022, can land dis-

senters in prison for years.

In December, opposition politician Ilya Yashin was sentenced to more than eight years in prison for spreading fake news about the army over a YouTube video released in April in which he discussed evidence uncovered by Western journalists of a Russian massacre of Ukrainians in Bucha, near Kyiv, and cast doubt on Moscow's claim that such reports had been fabricated. In April this year, Russia's parliament voted to extend the punishment for treason to life imprisonment from 20 years, with lawmakers citing unprecedented threats to Russia from Ukraine and its Western allies. Justifying terrorism, the charge levelled at Rudenko, criminalises public comments supportive of groups or individuals deemed terrorists by Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, when asked by reporters in late July whether he was alarmed by the arrest of Russians who had "doubts" about the war, suggested the crackdown on dissent was justified at a time of national peril. "I think that there should be a certain attitude towards those people who harm us inside the country," Putin said. "We must bear in mind that in order to achieve success, including in the conflict zone, we need to follow certain rules."

Carousel arrests aren't a wholly novel phenomenon, according to the three lawyers who said the practice

was less common before the war and largely confined to dissidents such as Alexei Navalny, opposition politicians like Yashin and members of punk protest group Pussy Riot, rather than ordinary citizens. The use of carousel arrests reflects how authorities are experimenting with different tactics to curb dissent though remain intent on prosecuting cases by the book, said Lauren McCarthy, an associate professor of legal studies and political science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who has researched wartime protest laws in Russia. "Russian authorities aren't dragging someone off the street and sticking them with a criminal charge," McCarthy told Reuters.

Leniye Umerova, a marketing executive for a fashion brand in Russian-annexed Crimea, was arrested and detained four times between December and May for a series of minor, or administrative, offences including disobeying a police officer's request and border-crossing violations, according to court records. Then on May 5, the Federal Security Service (FSB) flew her to Moscow and arrested her on espionage charges, the documents show.

The 25-year-old's brother Aziz Umerov said she was now in Lefortovo prison in the capital. He said his sister, who had declined to take a Russian passport after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, was innocent of

any wrongdoing and he believed she had been targeted because she had criticized the Ukraine war online and had posted information on social networks about the persecution of Crimean Tatars in Crimea after the annexation. "Even after the very first administrative arrest in December last year, I knew that all this would not end quickly for my sister," he told Reuters.

Reuters was unable to contact Umerova in detention or independently verify her brother's assertions about the reasons for her arrests. The FSB didn't respond to questions about her case. A Reuters review of Umerova's Instagram account found several messages critical of the Russian invasion and supportive of Ukraine. "The world has to stop Putin. Right now is the time to act," she said in one post on Feb. 24 last year, the date of the full-scale invasion. Her page also featured pictures of people killed in the war and footage of a pro-Ukraine rally.

Not all "carousel" arrests lead to more serious criminal charges, and for some detainees, time spent behind bars is frightening enough. Gevorg Aleksanyan, a Moscow-based lawyer working with OVD-Info, defended a man arrested in May after he tied helium balloons to a flag of the Freedom of Russia Legion, designated a terrorist organisation by Moscow, and set it aloft. A video of the stunt went viral on social media.



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## National kitty versus leaders, adjudicators nexus

**P**AKISTAN'S economic crisis continuously worsens as the ruthless waves of inflation, energy price hikes and volatility of the currency have made new records in the country's history. The interim rulers have expressed utmost patriotism and sympathy with the country and its poor masses, vowing to tackle all economic and security challenges through courage and sagacity. Interestingly, the non-elected leaders who reached high offices due to nepotism, have adopted king-like habits and are currently busy in image building at public expense. Punjab caretaker government is mercifully using public money on irrelevant accounts such as the renovation of religious shrines, up-gradation of public graveyards, and construction of roads and streets that might serve their political motives but do not fall in the domain of interim rulers. The Punjab caretakers' government has recently approved a case for interest-free loans of millions to 11 judges of the Lahore High Court for personal purposes, which has shored up utmost public uproar against the incumbent rulers. Almost the same kind of governance and self-aimed rules flourish in the centre as well as in other provinces of the country.

Realistically, unethical and politically motivated governance had always been a major issue in the country, which not only wasted the national resources but proved to be counterproductive and ended up in further degradation of the nation. A majority of the mega development projects, energy generation, Special industrial zones, construction of airports and initiation or closure of air flight or railway routes had always been decided on political grounds which met failures and ended in a loss to the state and the institution. Due to those reasons, green cultivated land turned barren and state-owned entities were shut down to facilitate private businesses, IPPs, airlines and private cargo services, whereas hundreds of thousands of government employees, vast infrastructure and machinery became a liability for the government.

Constitutionally, the caretaker setup had always a thin mandate, a mere supervisory or oversight role by the appointed non-elected leaders to impartially sail the country through the election period. However, such highly sensitive national responsibility has now become a lucrative opportunity for the individuals who exponentially invested and lobbied for powerful quarters to ultimately receive reward for the spoonerism.

Unfortunately, the conduct of the highly privileged adjudicators was also highly condemn-able who regularly receive hefty payments, bulk of allowances along with countless incentives from the government and even then demand extra ordinary favour from the government which otherwise was not available to common citizens. Currently, the government has imposed about 20-25% interests on loans for the public while the top judges claim exemption from the law that does not suit their stature. In fact, such practice is against the law and code of conduct of the judges also amounted to discrimination and inequality.

In the prevailing situations, when the people of Pakistan are embattled with high inflation and serious economic crises, the Punjab government must withdraw its proposed order which authorises free of interest loan to a few judges and must review its policies of appeasement and nepotism. Meanwhile the apex court must take notice of the issue by advising learned judges to maintain sanctity of their profession and autonomy of their institution which seriously undermines through exemptions that are not available to others members of the society. Realistically, Pakistan could not progress, until and unless, our leaders and bureaucrats learn to live in their coats and observe honesty in public and governmental affairs.

## Biden's betrayal to human rights

**U**S President Joseph R. Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have pledged to deepen ties between their two countries, as the leaders held direct talks ahead of a Group of 20 summit in New Delhi at the weekend. In a joint statement, the US and India vowed to jointly work in multiple domains of their common interest and reaffirmed their support for a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific region that has become a global arena for contesting nations. As Biden shared the stage with Narendra Modi, India's capital was besieged by heightened security, the human rights activists, religious machinery and pro-democracy movements were banned from raising their voices against the BJP's fascism and RSS's hyper-nationalism that has made the life of Indian Muslims, and Christians miserable. Similarly, Kashmiris and Sikhs observed the black day as POTUS abandoned his self-coined legacy of human rights, and democracy by firmly supporting Modi's authoritarianism, Hindu fanaticism and RSS apartheidism in so-called secular India.

Historically, US Democrats had always supported impoverished individuals and marginalized societies and advocated for civil liberties across the globe in the past. President Biden specifically announced its pro-migrants agenda, and worldwide plans for the promotion of democracy, rights rights and freedoms at the beginning of his presidential election campaign in 2020. After landing at the White House, Biden championed his legacy at selected locations including China's autonomous Xing region, Hong Kong, Myanmar etc. which suits US foreign policy at large. Biden blatantly took a mum approach over serious human rights abuses in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir, Israeli war crimes in Palestine, rising hate crimes and Islamophobia in Western nations including the mainland United States. The OHCHR and global human rights organizations have categorically mentioned New Delhi's state atrocities and gross human rights violations in Kashmir that have no mention in Biden's speeches and media interactions during his maiden visit to India. It is a matter of shame for US strategists that poor nations are marginalized societies have lost their confidence in American morals, which became worthless before the political and economic agenda of American leaders.

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## Regional polls could expose cracks in Kremlin's stability narrative

Andras Toth-Czifra

**O**N Sept. 8-10, Russia is going to hold regional elections in 49 of its 83 regions - as well as in Crimea and the four Ukrainian regions it occupies - and several municipal votes across the country. In spite of the war, neither in 2022 nor 2023 did the authorities create a legal pretext to cancel elections.

This year, this is partly out of a desire to show force. Elections in the occupied regions of Ukraine will likely be falsified as the 2022 referenda to annex them were, with the purpose of demonstrating that Russia unequivocally rules these territories. But domestically, there is a genuine worry that the votes could undermine the Kremlin's narrative of stability. So why is holding these votes important for the Kremlin, and are they at all competitive?

The first obvious comparison is with 2018, the last time that most of the regions holding elections this month last voted. The contrast could not be starker. A wave of discontent over the Kremlin's pension reforms, falling living standards and in some regions general anti-Moscow mood brought about four surprising electoral upsets for United Russia and gave a boost to electoral movements promoting strategic protest votes country-wide. This year, campaigners are nearly back to square one. Opposition organizations, including Alexei Navalny's FBK, merely suggest voting for any non-United Russia candidate due to increased repression which has made almost all other forms of resistance impossible.

These electoral upsets - which the authorities punished - convinced the Kremlin to stop experimenting with pluralism in the regions and prompted a series of legislative changes. These were aimed at uprooting grassroots opposition movements, extending the authorities' control over the electoral process and, in general, strengthening the vertical of power over regions and municipalities.

Old, time-tested methods such as the "municipal filter" allow the authorities to prevent gubernatorial candidates from getting onto the ballot. The vertical control of electoral committees, which can disqualify undesired candidates, was kept and strengthened. New methods such as online voting - initially championed by Moscow and gradually expanded to other regions - were added to the toolbox. While not a magic button to change any electoral outcome, online voting

arguably provided another way for the authorities to exert administrative pressure on voters, as public employees were reportedly pressured to register and know little about the system itself. A package of legislative amendments in May further restricted the access of observers and independent media to the votes. Overtly repressive legislation at a regional level, such as the Primorye region banning independent candidates outright, also emerged. As the independent observers at Golos pointed out, remnants of pluralism have retreated visibly in regional elections. They are increasingly pushed back to the local level - in places where they exist at all. The second comparison is with the 2022 regional votes. The contrast here is less obvious. If we compare their voting patterns based on the 2021 State Duma elections, the profiles of the regions voting last year and now are not entirely different. In both years, we find elections in regions that showed unusually high support for United Russia, e.g. Bashkortostan and Kemerovo in 2023, and North Ossetia and Saratov in 2022, as well as regions where the party's support is significantly lower than official countrywide figures (e.g. Yaroslavl, Tomsk or Mari El) This can be due to the dominant position of a systemic opposition party representing local elites, or to grassroots opposition activity, or both.

In 2023, however, intrigues abound as the effects of the protracted war in Ukraine on finances and governance force domestic politics onto new trajectories in some regions. Most of these intrigues concern regional chapters of the Communist Party. In past years, they have become the main collectors of protest votes. Local elites and activists who did not want to join non-systemic structures - and their local campaigns often build on this. They often reflect how the consequences of the war put a strain not just on resources, but also the understandings underpinning the vertical of power. In the Novosibirsk region, as part of the domestic clampdown on pluralism, Kremlin-appointed Governor Andrei Travnikov upset a power-sharing deal with the Communist mayor of Novosibirsk, local politician Anatoly Lokot. Travnikov's move to scrap direct mayoral elections - which threatened to replace Lokot with a successor more closely aligned with

United Russia - prompted petitions from activists and independent deputies for a referendum on the subject. The local opposition is far from united, and it says a lot about the Kremlin's increased repression that Lokot is still not running against Travnikov personally. However, the dispute introduced an element of grievance into the campaign. In the Altai region, the Communists did try to get a leading local politician, Duma deputy Maria Prusakova, onto the gubernatorial ticket. United Russia prevented this using the municipal filter. In the Primorye region, the Communists hinted that they would boycott the elections outright after their representatives were forced out of local electoral committees, as just the latest in the series of repressive acts against the local party chapter by Governor Kozhemyako.

Apart from issues concerning local self-governance, bread-and-butter issues championed by local politicians such as rising utility bills, have also led to protests in several of these regions (such as Altai and Novosibirsk). These issues are relatively easier for the authorities to handle by throwing money at them, but they remain a concern due to their mobilizing potential. In the republic of Sakha (Yakutia), a relatively pluralistic but economically depressed region, the mere fact that the former Yakutsk Mayor Sardana Avksentyeva - one of the country's most widely known former municipal leaders - personally took part in the campaign to help her party, New People, reportedly caused anxiety in the regional government. What shaped up to be the most interesting and competitive election was the gubernatorial election in Khakassia, where Communist Governor Valentin Konovalov, the last winner from the 2018 upsets still in office, would face off against the Kremlin's candidate, Sergei Sokol. However, Sokol withdrew from the election days before the vote due to his hospitalization with peritonitis. Since this came after reports that Sokol's numbers were not looking good, some speculated that the Kremlin was simply trying to avoid an awkward defeat. Sokol, a Duma deputy who participated in the war, was probably the Kremlin's most high-profile test case for the integration of a "war veteran" into domestic politics. But his veteran credentials seemingly did not help, and may

even have harmed his campaign. In recent months, Konovalov tried to rally local elites on his own side by depicting Sokol as an outsider.

The campaign included a series of highly anticipated debates featuring both Sokol and Konovalov, which is unusual among sitting governors. Both candidates "poached" high-level officials from each other's side. The conflict took over the region's electoral administration as well: the Communists unsuccessfully tried to disqualify Vladimir Grudinin, a gubernatorial candidate from the "Communists of Russia" party whose name seemed deceptively close to that of Pavel Grudinin, a popular former presidential candidate from the Communist Party. Konovalov's government opted out of online voting - as did six other regions - which many see as an opaque way to facilitate ballot stuffing in support of the ruling party. However, it could not prevent the region from holding its elections over three days, which has in the past been shown to facilitate rigging and complicate the work of observers. This can still have an impact as voters in Khakassia also elect the regional legislature, Sokol's eventual withdrawal notwithstanding, the struggle around "administrative resources," local elites and electoral tools highlight what is probably the most important reason why these elections matter to the Kremlin. They don't just legitimize the system, but test how it responds to unstable circumstances. The vote that really matters to the authorities in Moscow is the 2024 presidential election, which will likely see President Vladimir Putin run for a fifth term. From the Kremlin's point of view, it should be a ringing endorsement of the war.

It is thus imperative for the local authorities that no loyalty issues emerge. It needs to make sure that the local elite, company bosses and public officials they rely on to administer the votes can be trusted or replaced. This, at a time when the federal government is distracted from domestic politics. The massive restructuring of the wartime economy is also forcing the authorities to sharply reduce expenditures allocated to investment projects, including important infrastructure in Russia's regions. For this reason, the September votes will be closely watched for the lessons that they offer. But for the same reason, the system's fault tolerance has also been lowered.

*The Moscow Times*

## Putting the poor in prison won't stop wildlife crimes

Kumar Paudel

**W**ILDLIFE crimes are among the biggest challenges for biodiversity conservation, and there is interest worldwide in curbing it. Recently, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), the world's leading body in this arena, highlighted in its biannual report for 2021-2022 that despite global gains, the threat of illegal wildlife trade remains significant. It recommended that countries significantly increase their focus on investigations, prosecutions and convictions.

Yet, while prosecution is indeed important, it is mainly targeted at poor and vulnerable communities in the biodiversity-rich Global South which are not often responsible for driving international illegal wildlife trade. Hundreds of people across Nepal are in prisons, convicted for wildlife crimes. Most of them are poor and illiterate. The demand for exotic species that is central to the horror of wildlife crimes originates from wealthier communities and countries. But when arrests are made, it is primarily low-level actors from local communities - people who are easily replaceable in the trade supply chain - who face the force of the law. When poor people have money, they buy bread, not a tiger head.

The global illegal wildlife trade is largely facilitated by organised criminal networks. For instance, pangolins are poached extensively in Asia and Africa to meet the demand arising from China. Research shows many other endangered species from the Global South end up reaching the Global North. For example, a recent study found that there were at least 292 seizures of illegally traded tiger parts at United States ports between 2003-2012; the majority of them from the wild in Asian countries, where tigers still roam free. The over 6,000 wildlife seizures reported by European Union member states in 2018 represent 16,740 specimens of species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and mostly originated from the developing world. Clearly, local harvesters in poor countries are not the ones organising complex transnational operations to transport wildlife parts across international boundaries. The international kingpins and an extensive network of smugglers run this nexus. If the aim is to break this cycle of crime, it is these networks that need to be disrupted; it is the consumers they feed who need to be penalised.

International enforcement agencies like Interpol have been making efforts to clamp down on criminal networks for many years, but many governments have ignored in-country influential consumers who not only create demand for trade but can also be inadvertent promoters of illegal wildlife parts. The biggest challenge to protect biodiversity today remains to bring the powerful under the ambit of the law. For example, the continued display of ivory and other wildlife parts at British royal residences despite Prince William's strong commitment to curbing wildlife crime proves the difficulty of dealing with the powerful. This can be construed as a double standard in attitude towards wildlife

crime. This disparity can be seen everywhere around the world. Even in a country like Nepal, which has set an exceptional record in controlling poaching to bring back rhinos and tigers from the brink of extinction and has one of the world's strongest punishments for wildlife crime, the government is unable to enforce laws fairly. Nepal's stringent laws prohibit the illegal harvest and use of wildlife, imposing fines of up to 1 million rupees (\$7,500) and prison sentences of up to 15 years. However, enforcement has consistently focused on Nepal's poorest and most marginalised communities involved in illegally harvesting and trading wildlife.

Meanwhile, wildlife ownership by Nepal's rich and powerful - a traditional practice for many among the country's elite - is overlooked. After the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 banned the private possession of wildlife parts, the government requested citizens to surrender or secure permits to retain historical collection legally. It received no applications. This means all wildlife parts in private possession and display today in many elite residences across the country are illegal. Yet, there's no fear of the law - people with privilege brazenly flaunt wildlife hides even on national television and in magazines. A tiger pelt is on proud display in a former prime minister's house. The Supreme Court of Nepal has recently acknowledged this injustice and pronounced a landmark verdict ordering the government to correct it immediately, based on my petition regarding unequal enforcement of wildlife laws in Nepal. Most illegal wildlife trade is secretive and used in traditional medicines in visually unrecognisable forms. However, some trade is also to meet the demand for ostentatious displays, such as mounted animals, pelts, ivory and horns, outside of educational and research purposes. Since the latter is visible and in recognisable form, even after reaching the consumer, it should be easy for enforcement authorities to investigate and seize such illegal wildlife parts. But owners of such items, usually rich and powerful, have largely been given a free pass.

Normalising such showcasing of wildlife parts adds to the appeal of owning them. It can further motivate people to secure wildlife parts as a status symbol by any means, which may include poaching and illegal trade. If our ultimate goal is to protect biodiversity, governments must focus on breaking the criminal networks and mechanisms that enable and facilitate wildlife crime, and setting an example by punishing those who believe they are above the law. Those, like Prince William and many in Nepal's elite, who are genuinely concerned about nature conservation, should lead by example: They should surrender any wildlife parts that adorn their properties or wardrobes to governments and reject their use as status symbols. Nature is where wildlife belongs. If governments and their law enforcement agencies are serious about keeping it there, their task is clear: Go after those who illegally keep wildlife on the mantelpiece or in the medicine cabinet and the criminals who get it to them.

## Under Biden, Covid hysterics will never end

Samuel Mangold-Lenett

**J**OE Biden has once again been spotted reaching for a face mask, following on from the news of First Lady Jill Biden's positive Covid test. During a Tuesday briefing, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre confirmed that, despite testing negative and displaying zero symptoms, the president "will be masking while indoors and around people, in alignment with CDC guidance."

It's an odd move. In continuing to test for Covid (and publicly responding to the threat of inspection) Biden is signalling that his administration continues to see the disease as significant threat. He's not afraid to put his money where his (covered) mouth is, either, having awarded in August over \$1.4 billion to develop the "a new generation of tools and technologies to

protect against Covid-19 for years to come" as part of Project NextGen. New Covid variants - like the catchily-named "EG.5" - are a likely catalyst for action, conjuring hysterical visions of mass infection. But such conspicuous fearmongering isn't backed up by the science. The World Health Organisation has stated that "the public health risk posed by EG.5 is evaluated as low", and most Americans seem to agree. According to a recent Gallup poll, just 3 per cent of respondents described themselves as "very" concerned about catching the virus.

It's unfortunate, then, that Biden's policy decisions are no longer guided by reality. Our institutions have committed themselves to reviving morbid Covid nostalgia, and seem to be soft-launching yet another round of restrictions. First

up is masking: officials in New York City have begun to encourage residents to cover their faces, following the lead of a slew of corporations, colleges, and hospitals. Of course, masking is no panacea to Covid.

Recent studies have suggested that masking had little impact in slowing the spread of the disease, even at the height of the pandemic. It's hard to get a concrete answer on whether restrictions achieved their stated goals of halting the disease - but we certainly have a clear picture of their downsides. Mask mandates, and the lockdowns that often accompanied them, have resulted in some of the most damaging public consequences ever experienced. It's important not to forget that wealth and education disparities, suicide rates and substance abuse issues all

skyrocketed after their enforcement.

Policies championed by Leftist government officials and their allies in the professional-managerial class led to outlandish spending which has decimated the American economy, contributing to the out-of-control inflation we are currently embroiled in. They cheered on extreme censorship of speech on social media under the guise of fighting disinformation, and inflicted educational disturbances on an entire generation of school children. We were told every part of this process was necessary to protect public health. Three years have passed, and it's hard to see what good has come from Covid hysteria. The median American is poorer, sicker, and less free. Perhaps mistakes were inevitable in 2019 - but to

continue to stoke panic in 2023 is unforgivable. Dangerously authoritarian impulses, fostered by pandemic-era special legislative powers, have proven to be remarkably durable. It seems that the powers that be simply cannot let Covid go. The only method of recourse we have is to put faith in the legislative process. Luckily for us, some have already begun the fightback. J.D. Vance, the Republican Senator from Ohio, has introduced legislation that if passed and signed into law would prohibit President Biden from implementing mask mandates on public transit and in schools.

Vance's Freedom to Breathe Act is an encouraging movement towards common-sense public health policy. But it's unfortunate that such an intervention even had to be made. Despite living in a nation

with resistance at the heart of its ethos, considerable portions of the American public are now conditioned to roll over for the collective if they are told something is in their best interest. The only way to effectively put an end to Covid hysteria is to elect people who are committed to a regime of radical transparency. We must push back upon the federal bureaucracy of the petty tyrants who seek to rule us by edict.

Given the entrenched power of the lockdown-philosophies, this revolt will likely prove difficult. But Biden's dwindling popularity is cause for hope. The 2020 election was shaped by a botched Presidential response to a public health scare, allowing an opposition candidate to position himself as a representative of sanity and reason. Let us hope that 2024 will follow the same pattern.

*The Telegraph*



# The ‘rising superpower’ myth about China

**T**HERE isn't much of anything that the polarized politicians of Washington, DC agree on, but there is a large degree of bipartisan consensus around one big, supposed threat: China. The purportedly rising nation with a plausible plan to replace the US as the dominant superpower. The Biden administration's 2022 National Security Strategy describes China as "the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to advance that objective." Similarly, the Trump administration said in 2020 that the United States was taking action to protect itself and its partners "from an increasingly assertive China." In fact, by many measures, China is on the decline.

It's an error American leaders are prone to making. After 9/11, the US overestimated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq and waged a war there based on false assumptions about Saddam's purported weapons of mass destruction program and ties to al Qaeda. Some Americans also initially overestimated Russia's ability to quickly seize and subdue Ukraine a year and a half ago. As a result of the perceived threat of a rising China, the US and some of its allies are now undertaking a large retooling of virtually every government sector - from militaries to intelligence and security agencies, diplomacy and economic relations, trade regulations, higher education funding, social media oversight and more. The Biden administration's record \$842 billion budget request for the Pentagon for fiscal year 2024 is "driven by the seriousness of our strategic competition with the People's Republic of China," according to US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin.

But is this vast reorientation designed to counter a threat from China that could fizzle out in the next decade or so? An examination of China's dire demographic trends, intensifying economic woes and polling suggesting declining international standing certainly suggests so. The demographic problem is arguably the long-term trend that should most alarm Chinese officials. China's "one child" policy, one of history's boldest experiments in social engineering, which was officially inaugurated in 1980 and ended in 2016, now has produced what it was designed to produce: a sharp, inexorable contraction of the country's population. China's fer-

tility rate dropped to a record low of 1.09 last year, according to the country's Population and Development Research Center, making it the lowest level among countries with a population of more than 100 million. China's aging population will present significant problems for Chinese military power. China can now draw from an enormous reservoir of manpower to serve in the large armed forces President Xi Jinping has been building - but that reservoir is shrinking rapidly.

The US Census Bureau estimates China today has about 350 million males aged 15-49, the demographic cohort spanning the bulk of its military. That's a steep drop from China's 2012 peak of about 400 million in the same category, and by 2040 that number will drop to just over 299 million. By contrast, key Chinese rival India already has about 402 million males aged 15-49, and by 2040 that figure will grow to 424 million, according to US Census Bureau figures. Manpower is not the only important measure of a country's military potential. The United States, for example, has only about a quarter of the same military-aged male population that China does. (Though that 15-49 year-old bracket, unlike China's, is predicted to steadily rise in the coming decades.)

But in China's case, the accelerating contraction of the 15-49 population group is an unprecedented problem - not just in the military sector but in the whole of the Chinese labor force. By 2050, almost 38% of the Chinese population will be over 60, and the country's elderly population will outnumber its military-aged population by that point, estimates the US Census Bureau. It's difficult to see how the Chinese economic model that requires constant growth can sustain itself as its productive population collapses. Then there are China's myriad of economic problems, many of which are self-inflicted from Xi's rigid "zero-Covid" policy. (After a rapid spurt of activity following the lifting of Covid-19 lockdowns earlier this year, China's economy is now flagging.) Such problems are particularly acute among the young. Unemployment among Chinese 16- to 24-year-olds in urban areas was at a record 21.3% in June. After that, China's National Bureau of Statistics said it would suspend publishing youth unemployment data in the future.

A large-scale real estate crash also appears to be brewing. Evergrande, one of China's largest

real estate developers, started collapsing in 2021. It is the world's most indebted developer, according to the Financial Times, with over \$340 billion in liabilities. Last week Evergrande's shares crashed by more than 70%. These financial failures are important because real estate plays an outsized role in the Chinese economy. In some years, real estate has accounted for a quarter of China's GDP, yet the most recent available figures from 2018 indicated that about one-fifth of Chinese apartments were vacant, more than 130 million units, according to a study by China's Southwestern University of Finance and Economics. At the same time, China's imprisonment of more than a million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, according to the United Nations citing "credible reports," has resulted in an economic and political cost for Beijing as the US has imposed trade restrictions on Chinese companies that have any alleged connection to these policies. (China has called the accusations of mass imprisonment "completely untrue").

Meanwhile, China's expansive "Belt and Road" investment policies worldwide have proven to be a financial drag as billions of dollars' worth of loans haven't been repaid to China. China has worked hard to position itself as an international peacemaker, as when it brokered a rapprochement agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran earlier this year. But on balance, China is losing friends and international standing. Last year, Pew Research Center found "negative views of China remain at or near historic highs in many of the 19 countries" where the organization polled. What does it signify that China's national power, which today is vast, is almost certain to be weaker in the future? The jury is out on whether Beijing, seeing a closing window of opportunity to achieve its goals by military means, could become more aggressive in the immediate term.

It's true that declining powers have grown aggressive at times in the past, notably the late 1970s USSR and contemporary Russia. Russia's Ukraine invasion is a caution to China and everyone else about the danger of overconfidently going to war with a military that lacks recent experience of a major conflict. Aside from brief clashes with Vietnam in 1979 and India in 1962, the last time China fought a major, protracted war was seven decades ago

in Korea. Conversely, it is not hard to envision China in 2035 or 2040 being too overwhelmed by its own socioeconomic crises to project power abroad. After all, the weight of China's elderly population on the rest of its society, economy and state will be truly crushing just a few years from now. Other societies in modern history, such as Italy and Japan, have grown as old as China's population is becoming, but never on such a vast scale and never as a result of an intentional policy of depopulation. China is now offering incentives for having children such as tax deductions for families and strengthening maternity leave, but they seem to have had scant impact so far.

Beijing seems to have no real, workable plan for steering away from the demographic cliff or for managing the end of the Communist Party's economic growth model. If Xi and his strategists have a feasible plan for nimble averting China's demographic doom, they are keeping very quiet about it. What's more likely is that no such plan does or can exist. This brings us back to the question of national security strategies for the United States and its allies. Declining or not, China poses clear strategic dangers for the near term. There's its longtime theft of American intellectual property, its massive cyber breaches of US government institutions, its aggressive efforts to transform the South China Sea from international waters into a Chinese lake, its saber-rattling over Taiwan, its suppression of democracy in Hong Kong and its overall large-scale military buildup. As a result of some of these trends, the previous Trump administration's National Security Strategy made the case that China "actively competes" against the United States and is a "revisionist power." Trump imposed tariffs on a wide range of Chinese goods. The Biden administration has largely kept the Trump-era tariffs on Chinese goods in place, and last month, it prohibited or restricted a range of American investments in advanced technologies in China, including in AI and quantum computing.

It's fair to criticize the US and its allies for underestimating the dangers from China for most of the past quarter-century, and it's right and reasonable to refocus on deterring Chinese aggression in the near term. But what comes after the near term? It's a strategic error to underestimate an adversary, but it's just as great an error to overestimate one.

CNN

## Taiwanese divided on US military sales

William Yang

**T**HE US has renewed efforts to help Taiwan strengthen its defense capabilities in recent weeks, approving a series of million-dollar military sales to Taiwan and promising to resolve the \$19 billion backlog of Taiwanese defense purchases from the US.

The latest moves received mixed responses from the Taiwanese government and the Taiwanese people. Taiwan's Presidential Office characterized the latest US transfer of weapons to Taiwan under the Foreign Military Financing mechanism as the fulfillment of Washington's commitment to Taiwan's security.

However, some Taiwanese people are suspicious about the timing and motives behind the latest announcement. "While the Ukraine War makes me realize US military sales to Taiwan are necessary, I don't think the US government respects the requests that Taiwan has made over the years," Kai Wang, a 46-year-old woman working in the pharmaceutical industry, told VOA in a phone interview.

In her view, Taiwan rarely has the autonomy to decide what types of weapons it wants to purchase from the US. Rather, the deliverables often seem to have been "decided" for Taiwan, which deepens public suspicion toward the motivation behind US military sales to Taiwan. "There should be more public discussions about the Taiwanese government's policies related to US military sales," Wang added. Other Taiwanese citizens think there are often deeper political meanings behind US military sales to Taiwan.

"If the US intends to support Taiwan through these military sales, they should be conducted more discreetly, rather than publicly announcing these programs," Peter Yang, a 36-year-old salesperson, told VOA in a phone interview. Instead of continuing to acquire expensive military aircraft from the US, Yang thinks Taiwan needs more concrete international support and foreign investment.

"Receiving two fighter jets from the US won't suddenly turn Taiwan into a military power," he said. During a visit to Taiwan, Rob

Wittman, vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, promised to resolve the \$19 billion dollar backlog of Taiwan's defense purchases from the US and reiterated that Washington would come to Taiwan's defense in the event of a Chinese invasion.

"Know that any hostile provoked attack on Taiwan will result in a resolute reaction from the US," he said during a speech ahead of his meeting with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen on Sep. 1. Apart from the suspicion expressed by some Taiwanese people, several opinion polls in recent years also show contradicting views on US military sales to Taiwan and Washington's security commitment to the island among Taiwanese people.

According to American Portrait, a study of Taiwanese people's perception of the US released by Academia Sinica in January, 66.5% of the respondents support US military sales to Taiwan. Additionally, more than 60% of Taiwanese people say when US officials visit Taiwan or pledge to come to Taiwan's defense publicly, their confidence in the US military coming to Taiwan's defense increases. Some analysts say Taiwanese people's political leaning is an important factor that influences their attitude toward US security commitment. "Among the 66.5% of the public who support US arms sales to Taiwan, the percentage of supporters of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is about three times that of supporters of the main opposition party Kuomintang (KMT)," Pan Hsin-Hsin, a political scientist at Soochow University in Taiwan and one of the authors of American Portrait, told VOA in a written response. Data from the survey also shows that while a certain percentage of Taiwanese people think the US is untrustworthy, they believe Washington's security commitment to Taiwan is credible, Pan added.

Another survey conducted by Global Views Monthly in 2021 found that 43.1% of respondents think US military sales to Taiwan will further increase tension across the Taiwan Strait. Whereas 37.8% of the

respondents think US military sales to Taiwan can help maintain peace between China and Taiwan. In recent years, China has increased its military aggression against Taiwan by constantly deploying military aircraft and naval vessels to areas near Taiwan and holding large-scale military exercises as responses to high-level engagement between Taiwan and foreign countries. Some Taiwanese people told VOA that as the US provides more offensive weapons for Taiwan through military sales, they believe it increases the risks of prompting a potential Chinese military attack on Taiwan.

"If the DPP government falls for Washington's conspiracy and acquires more offensive weapons, it will prompt Beijing to launch an attack on Taiwan and a war would break out across the Taiwan Strait," Denise Luo, a 56-year-old housewife, told VOA in a phone interview. Instead of viewing US military sales to Taiwan purely as an instigator of potential military conflicts across the Taiwan Strait, Albert Lin, a 47-year-old banker in Taiwan, thinks it's important to consider it as part of Washington's strategy to maintain the status quo across the Indo-Pacific region. "I believe US military sales to Taiwan is part of Washington's strategy to maintain a balanced environment in the Indo-Pacific region," he told VOA in a phone interview. Despite the concerns expressed by some Taiwanese people, experts don't think "American skepticism" will become a mainstream topic in Taiwan, especially as the island gears up for the presidential election scheduled for next January.

"The best to know that is by looking at what political parties are saying during presidential elections," Lev Nachman, a political scientist at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, told VOA in a phone interview. "Every Taiwanese presidential candidate just did or will do a big trip to the US, and from the electoral perspective, no presidential candidate will say anything that promotes American skepticism. They know the US-Taiwan relationship is Taiwan's most important relationship," he added.

VOA

## If the Last Night of the Proms goes, nothing else is safe

David Frost

**T**HE BBC Proms 2023 season is in its last week, the moment, as it seems to me, when summer finally becomes autumn. The season has had its high points, as it always does - this year in Simon Rattle's farewell with Mahler's Ninth, one of the few serious Proms the BBC allowed us to see on TV, a remarkable occasion which even the Albert Hall's unique acoustic could not dampen.

But one can't entirely suppress some doubts. Is high culture really safe in the BBC's hands? The attempt to kill off the BBC Singers earlier this year hardly suggests it. This Proms season had a slightly down-market feel, with no truly world-class overseas orchestras, a bit too much Horrible Histories and Northern soul, and not enough serious music. William Byrd, whose 400th anniversary was supposedly being marked, got one concert in Londonderry and one four-minute piece in a "Mindful Mix".

As so often, one feels the BBC doubts the appeal of the Western civilisational and cultural tradition, and instead prefers to give people what it thinks they can cope with. Of course, for many, the Proms are the Last Night, that annual festival of flags and fun. And once again there is the usual whiff of controversy surrounding Saturday's event, a tradition by now almost as

long-standing as the Proms themselves.

On the one hand there are the unreconciled Remainers. Once again the "EU Flags Team" will be handing out EU flags to be waved in the Hall on the night. George Orwell called this phenomenon "transferred nationalism". He wrote that those who abandon loyalty to their native land still feel the need for a place to focus their emotions. Having chosen somewhere (in his day it was usually Russia), they could be "more nationalistic, more vulgar, more silly" than they ever could be about anywhere about which they had real knowledge. The transferred nationalist can then "wallow unrestrainedly in exactly those emotions from which he believes he has emancipated himself. God, the King, the Empire, the Union Jack?... can reappear under different names?... and be worshipped with a good conscience." Still that's fine by me, if that's what they want. The Last Night can easily accommodate those of all nationalities who love their own country, and even those who claim to love an international organisation instead.

Much more troubling is the evidence that the BBC, and at least parts of the musical world, doesn't really like the core of the event at all. This actually goes back much

further than you might think. As early as 1969, the BBC tried to drop Land of Hope and Glory, to make the programme "attractive to 40 million viewers in Europe" as the then Controller of Music put it. But even The Guardian, a more robust newspaper than then now, criticised the decision, and it was rapidly reversed. In 1990, the conductor Mark Elder was swiftly dumped from the Last Night when he suggested that the brewing war in the Gulf meant the tone should be changed. But 10 years later, in 2001 after 9/11, it did seem necessary to adjust the traditional programme and I admit it felt entirely appropriate. But over the past decade the sensitivities have grown faster and faster, as in every other area of our national life. The Finnish conductor Sakari Oramo, who wore a Union flag waistcoat in 2014, preferred not to in 2016. By 2019, the mezzo Jamie Barton was waving the Pride Flag not the Union Jack.

By 2020, Black Lives Matter was turbo-charging the criticism, with its supporters claiming that Rule, Britannia backed slavery and Land of Hope and Glory fuelled racism and Empire nationalism, a view which is now pretty common-place in certain places. So the BBC tried to get away with playing the music without the words, until

ridiculed out of it by Boris Johnson. Last year Elizabeth II's death resulted in the cancellation of the whole evening, though many thought a rejigging of the programme, as in 2001, would have been better. And this year, tiptoeing carefully through the controversy, but no doubt reflecting the views of much of his generation of musicians, the cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason told the Radio Times he'd prefer more folk tunes to Rule, Britannia. It's hard to escape the conclusion that the spirit of the age is unsympathetic to the Last Night and that the BBC would like to change it if it could get away with it. Does that really matter? I think it does. So many of us feel strongly about keeping the Last Night unchanged, not because we are obsessed with waving flags, but because we feel "if they can take that, what can't they take?" The Last Night, unchanged, provides at least one evening of nostalgia, of self-deprecating humour, and of harmless, inclusive patriotism, all things which were thought, until recently, to be entirely and characteristically British. When the new cultural forces feel strong enough to scrap it, or turn it into the usual modern mush of celebrating diversity and inclusion, then we will know we have lost the culture war. At the moment they don't feel strong enough. Let's keep it that way.

The Telegraph

## ROK should first do its bit for regional peace

Li Yang

**T**ALKING about ROK-China-Japan relations in an interview to local media outlets before leaving for Indonesia on Tuesday, Republic of Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol said Seoul will make every effort to revitalize the trilateral cooperation. Also, in a recent written interview with The AP, Yoon urged Beijing to use its leverage over Pyongyang to persuade the latter to give up its nuclear and missile projects. He stressed that China, which has a responsibility to maintain international peace and stability as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, should make constructive efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

It is good to see Yoon talk of resuming trilateral communication and cooperation. It is also good to see that he hopes the Korean Peninsula issue can be resolved amicably at an early date. However, apart from paying lip service, has the ROK government made any contribution to fulfill these goals? On the one hand, Seoul's one-sided pro-Washington strategy is to blame for the souring of Sino-ROK relations, which used to be a ballast for regional stability in East Asia. If the Yoon government really wants to mend trilateral ties, it must take concrete action to prevent the Sino-ROK ties from slipping to a record low first.

On the other hand, the worsen-

ing of conditions in the Korean Peninsula should mainly be attributed to the fact that Seoul gave up the ROK's long-term strategic autonomy in handling the issue, and chose to become a pawn of the United States in geopolitical games. It is ridiculous that Seoul is trying to put the onus on Beijing for its own strategic misjudgment. As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning pointed out, the current situation on the Korean Peninsula does not serve anyone's interest, nor is it to China's liking. The process started in 2018 to address the Korean Peninsula issues came to a standstill because the US refused to respond to the denuclearization measures taken by the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Neither has the US taken the DPRK's legitimate concerns seriously or shown readiness to address these concerns.

The US needs to draw lessons, correct course, step up to its responsibility, stop heightening the pressure and sanctions, stop military deterrence, and take effective steps to resume meaningful dialogue. It is becoming increasingly clear that, like Washington's two-sided China policy, Seoul is also taking a carrot-and-stick approach to deal with relations with Beijing. The ROK's lack of sincerity means it will neither be able to broker reconciliation in trilateral ties, nor can it facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Korean Peninsula problem.

The China Daily

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The China Daily

The influential parliamentary committee warned in its report that the government decision to invest more in its security and economic focus on the China-dominated region should not sacrifice the UK's relationships with other regions that have been nurtured over many decades, if not centuries. In a recent interview, committee chair Alicia Kearns even said: "I feel the tilt to the Indo-Pacific was a tilt away from the Middle East and there hasn't been sufficient focus on the Middle East and North Africa." She added that London risked alienating

As a foreign correspon-

dent based in London for decades, I could not fail to notice the impact the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had on the country, particularly its international posture and its tilt away from assuming its responsibilities in multiple theaters simultaneously, such as the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. Retreating from any region could see Russia and China filling the gap, as witnessed recently in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Also, one cannot fail to notice how austerity has weakened the domestic resilience of society, due to the weakening of cash-starved state institutions across the board. Not to forget Brexit, of course, and the UK single-handedly peeling itself away from the EU's family of states and the clout that afforded Britain on the international stage for many years. The warnings of the Foreign Affairs Committee could not be more timely, as the country is likely to go to the polls next year. This presents the UK with an opportunity to not just refresh, but possibly to recharge and reboot, in the hope that it can tilt back and regain some of its balance after 13 years of Conservative Party populism that have eroded the standing of the country, primarily among its long-term allies. This will only work if Britain, like any state, is seen to be upholding the rule of law and evading double standards, which is a criticism often leveled at it and other Western powers, especially in countries that were, until recently, seen as part of their sphere of influence in Africa and the Middle East.

The alternative, as one expert on UK and Arab affairs recently told me, is that the UK, after Brexit, "has been weakened permanently." As far as Britain's influence in the Middle East is concerned, he claimed that it has never recovered since the Suez Crisis of 1956, when British and French forces invaded Egypt in collusion with Israel. Despite its success, the invasion unleashed a political storm and led to a humiliating retreat that dealt Britain's global prestige a severe blow.





## Paracha appointed new PBF Chairman KP chapter

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Chairman Nowshehra Industrial Estate and Vice Chairman of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Muhammad Ashfaq Paracha has been appointed as new Chairman of PBF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). According to the notification issued here on Saturday a copy has been sent to the Chief Secretary office wherein Muhammad Ashfaq Paracha replaced Muhammad Atif Haleem. The PBF has started restructuring in the province for better coordination with all the stakeholders so as to be better prepared for the effective advocacy forum by one of the largest private sector businesses and conglomerates.

PBF designated KP Chairman Ashfaq Paracha said the future of

Pakistan lies in economic diplomacy and outreach to the world. Economic stability cannot come at the cost of military security and human security. In this KP province could play a pivotal role.

He said the challenge is too big to overcome and needs a broader national response.

Pakistan must reorient the thrust of its diplomatic efforts towards economic benefit and prosperity of the masses.

He said, "Economic Diplomacy is not just a buzzword, but a blueprint to leverage our diplomatic assets in the service of our development agenda."

A serious shift towards increasing trade and investment stakes of regional partners may well be the only answer to reviving

growth and stability.

It is a real test for the leadership to maturely and sensibly manage this transition from a security-led engagement to leveraging regional economic potential for shared prosperity and the possibility of catching up with the income levels of emerging Asia.

In addition to the state, the most important actors of economic diplomacy include regional organizations, financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, private companies and non-governmental economic bodies.

Most recent literature closely links economic security with national security priorities where the role of economic diplomacy becomes crucial in neutralizing the security threats emerging from weak eco-

nomic fundamentals.

No wonder that a country of over 220 million people is struggling to come up with a serious growth policy with an inexperienced conflicted team of generalists. The point is simple: without creating space for top-class economists, sector experts and people of international standing, a mindset shift will not happen.

"Economic diplomacy requires visible signals of a new approach to reposition Pakistan in a rapidly changing world."

He said: "I may ensure that I will call upon all stakeholders to come forward and play a United role for the betterment of the province. Including a seasoned team will be appointed in all major districts of the province."



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif addressing during 'Invest in Pakistan Conference'.

### China express delivery sector expands in Aug

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's courier sector registered expansion in August, according to a monthly industry index. The State Post Bureau said the monthly express delivery development index came in at 361.5 in August, up 16.2 percent year on year.

The sub-index for service quality grew 27.1 percent from a year earlier, the sub-index for development scale picked up 10.6 percent year on year, and the sub-index for development capacity went up 3.6 percent year on year.

The operation of China's courier sector is relatively stable, and the market size continues to grow, said the State Post Bureau.

The index is compiled based on data from major logistics firms' operating delivery services. It reflects the overall business activities and trends in the country's courier sector.

Meanwhile, China imported 71.65 million tonnes of soybeans in the first eight months of this year, up 17.9% from a year earlier, customs data showed.

In August alone, the country's soybean imports reached 9.36 million tonnes, down from 9.73 million tonnes in July and 10.27 million tonnes in June but more than the 7.17 million tonnes imported in the same month last year.

### New US-Pak diaspora investment

## United States mobilizes \$44m

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States announced the mobilization of more than \$40 million in new US-Pakistani diaspora investment at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) 'Invest in Pakistan' conference here Saturday.

Four diaspora partners concluded four new Memoranda of Understanding with the USAID valued at \$44 million, increasing total diaspora commitments to nearly \$200 million.

The new investment commitments include SERVINTZ Limited, \$5 million for restoring livelihoods in flood-affected areas; Pakfoods LLC Group and NUST \$9 million for technology; Jaxeri Investment Corporation \$25 million for electric vehicle local manufacturing; and Global Semiconductors Group \$5 million for training youth in semiconductor and chip design technology.

Addressing the participants at the closing ceremony, US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome highlighted the valuable contributions of the US-Pakistani diaspora.

"I want to congratulate our four diaspora partners, SERVINTZ Limited, Pakfoods LLC Group, Jaxeri Investment Corporation, and Global Semiconductors Group, for signing these MOUs. You are helping unlock Pakistan's investment potential. I look forward to seeing the benefits these partnerships will bring to the Pakistani economy and the Pakistani people," the Ambassador said.

"The three themes discussed at the conference today – Artificial

Intelligence, electric vehicles, and semiconductor technology investments – are key to Pakistan's economic growth and future prosperity," he added. The 'Invest in Pakistan' conference aimed to catalyze investment between US investors and Pakistani companies.

More than 300 participants attended, including US Ambassador Donald Blome, USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri, Umar Saif, Minister IT, members of the US-Pakistani diaspora, and prominent Pakistani business leaders.

Today's conference is one in a series of diaspora-centered conferences. In the past 10 months, US Mission Pakistan supported the mobilization of nearly \$200 million in US-Pakistani diaspora-led investments and contributions.

## US dollar heads for eight straight weeks of gains

NEW YORK (Xinhua/APP): The US dollar ended nearly flat in late trading on

Friday, amid resilient US consumer and labor markets. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, was up 0.03 percent to 105.0866 in late trading, heading for eight straight weeks of gains, the longest such streak since 2014.

Analysts and investors believe that positive economic data from the United States in recent weeks, along with a resilient economy, have helped boost the dollar's value.

"We remain modestly positive for USD near-term despite finding it overvalued," Bank of America analysts said in a report. "This is in line with the weaker eurozone data and, more broadly, our view that the market pricing of 2024 Fed cuts is excessive."

In the eurozone, the consumer price index (CPI) of Germany, Europe's largest economy, remained unchanged in August for a third straight month.

On a yearly basis, the CPI was confirmed at 6.1 percent year on year, down a notch from 6.2 percent, while core CPI remained unchanged at 5.5 percent year on year. Food and energy prices rose but there was a bit of good news as

services inflation ticked lower to 5.1 percent, down from 5.2 percent in July.

Meanwhile, European and US stock markets advanced Friday despite lingering concerns about further aggressive central bank actions as natural gas prices jumped on news of a strike in Australia.

Friday's gains came at the end of a lackluster week for equities in the wake of persistently high Treasury bond yields. US economic data has generally outperformed expectations, raising hopes a recession can be avoided, but adding to worries of more Federal Reserve interest rate increases. "It seems that a lot of people are just waiting to see how quickly this economy cools," said Oanda's Edward Moya, who described the current stretch as "a little bit of a choppy period."

The S&P 500 finished at 4,457.49, up 0.1 percent for the day but down 1.3 percent for the week.

Among individual companies, Apple advanced 0.4 percent, a partial recovery after two straight losing sessions on worries over reports of a China ban on iPhones at government offices.

### Improving taxpayer's facilitation:

## Newly constituted advisory body of FTO discusses measures

PESHAWAR (APP): The newly constituted advisory committee of Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) for the year 2023-24 met to discuss measures to improve taxpayers' facilitation through early redressal of issues raised by traders and public at large. The meeting held under the chairmanship of Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jan (Hilal-i-Imtiaz) (Sitara-i-Imtiaz), also launched job description book of the office of FTO, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, Media Coordinator FTO for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed.

In a press statement issued here on Saturday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said the meeting decided to distribute refund cheques among the complainants of Pak-Suzuki case.

During the meeting, FTO Asif Mahmood Jan apprised members that in a number of complaints, the issues raised by the Complainants, were resolved on telephonic discussion or by forwarding SMS to the relevant tax functionaries under the FBR, by exercising the

powers under Section 33 of the FTO Ordinance, 2000.

As one of the major complaint of overseas Pakistani, Dr. Muhammad Naveed Khan, who is working as a medical doctor in Saudi Arabia since 2010, decided to take up the tax maladministration case to FTO.

Dr. Naveed provided his FBR proof of being employed in Saudi Arabia since 2010 and told that he never stayed in Pakistan for a period beyond the limit that could make him a "resident" under the statute.

He also provided the FBR department's proofs of banking channel remittances received in TY-2016 and onwards.

The department kept sending notices of demand, repeatedly, to the family of Dr. Naveed and, on receipt of the demand notice of 7.5 million rupees, the mother of Dr. Naveed suffered cardiac arrest, eventually leading to her death.

The FTO directed the Chief Commissioner-IR and Commissioner-IR, Sargodha to conduct a departmental review of the

facts of the complaint and rectify any wrong done to the complainant, for the purpose of correction in notices plus the redressal of maladministration, which was not followed by the FBR department.

The FTO informed that the concerned officers of FBR department, namely Shakeel Ahmad Shakeel (CIR-Sargodha), Azmat Hayat Ranjha (CIR-Sargodha) apologized to Dr. Naveed for harsh treatment and maladministration.

He also informed that the recommendations have been issued to the FBR for resolution of refund related issues raised by the members of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the same were complied with by the FBR.

He further added that the internees have also been appointed who were performing their duties well in FTO Law wing, for door-to-door visit to the taxpayers for their awareness of FTO Office and for facilitating the people at door steps". He stated that after joining the Office as FTO, the average number of

complaints' registration has gradually increased within two years which showed the confidence of the taxpayers had increased on the Office of FTO Secretariat.

He expressed that the "suggestions and recommendations to improve tax system and resolution of taxpayers' grievances, provided by the Members of the Committee, will be warmly welcomed, as this Office is the only institution, who provides cost free, transparent justice in a very short period of time".

The advisory committee members lauded the performance of FTO, apprised tax related queries and gave an emphasis to share FTO's publications/latest decisions/own motion cases with the members of Advisory committee via "Whatsapp Group" to promote tax awareness.

Internees also took part in the proceedings and emphasized the need for focusing on youth in outreach program as the potential taxpayers.

The participants appreciated the FTO's forum for listening the complainants.

## IESCO assures to resolve electricity related issues of business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Saturday said that open and hanging electric wires in the markets always pose great danger to the shopkeepers, while fire incidents due to short circuit of electricity cause loss of millions of rupees to the plaza owners as well as the shopkeepers.

Therefore, IESCO should address this issue on priority to save the traders from further losses, said a press release issued here.

He said that 5,000 traders are doing business in the Blue Area, but there have been fire incidents 6 to 7 times due to the short circuit of electricity in this biggest commercial center of Islamabad, which have caused huge losses to the

business community. Therefore, ISCO should develop its infrastructure on modern lines besides improving the wiring system in all markets, he said.

Talking to Abdul Rasheed Sarki, XEN, F-6 Division of IESCO during his visit to ICCI, Ahsan Bakhtawari said that when a transformer burns in a market, there was no back up for it and it takes many days to repair the burnt transformer.

Due to this situation, the perishable items get spoiled causing losses to the traders. He stressed that IESCO should come up with a better solution to this problem to save the traders from further losses.

He said that the repair charges of commercial transformers are too high and should be reviewed.

He said that the ICCI

will nominate market-wise committees for F-6, F-7 and Blue Area to liaison with his office and he should fully cooperate with them for timely solution of the electricity problems of the traders in their respective areas.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI highlighted the issues of MDI meters and net metering faced by the business community and proposed their better solution.

He said that the cabinet doors of some transformers are left open which leads to short circuits so ISCO should take steps to address this problem. He said that deep freezers, refrigerators and other appliances of traders often get burnt due to fluctuation in electricity voltage, so IESCO should look into this issue for redress.

Abdul Rasheed Sarki,

XEN, ISCO's F-6ix Division, speaking on the occasion, said that every possible effort would be made to solve the issues highlighted by the business community.

He said that if any person visits markets or shops for inspection, he should be handed over to the police as ISCO has not assigned this responsibility to anyone.

He welcomed the proposal of ICCI for the nomination of market-wise committees to liaison with his office and assured that he will cooperate with the committee members for the early solution of the electricity-related issues of their respective markets.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan Zafar Bakhtawari said that last year the total revenue of Pakistan was Rs 7500 bil-

lion while the total revenue of the electricity companies was PKR 12000 billion but still many electricity companies are incurring losses, which should be a cause of concern the government.

He said that IESCO should solve the electricity problems of its customers, including the business community, on a priority basis, which will reduce the problems of the customers and improve the revenue of IESCO.

Asad Aziz President of F-7 Markaz Jinnah Supermarket, Yusuf Rajput, former President Blue Area, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, Khalid Chaudhry, Faseeh-ullah Khan, Nasir Chaudhry and representatives of other markets also highlighted the electricity related issues of their respective areas and stressed for their early solutions.

## From advancement to ashes: Explore possible aftermath of World War-III and modern nuclear realities

Salwa Khokhar

Amidst the turbulent currents of history, there are moments when humanity stands on the precipice of profound transformation. In the realm of speculation, we embark on a journey that traverses the spectrum of possibilities from the pinnacle of advancement to the sobering descent into ashes. Our canvas is the aftermath of a conflict yet to occur: World War III.

As we explore the delicate interplay of hypothetical scenarios and modern nuclear realities, we cast our gaze upon a tapestry of what might be in a world where advancement and ashes entwine. Examining the escalating conflicts that are surfacing across the globe, it becomes apparent

that the world is, once more, inching its way towards a precipice of a global conflict. Characterizing this impending conundrum as a "nuclear war" would indeed be an accurate assertion.

Amidst our trajectory towards the precipice of perilous conflict, particularly of the nuclear variety, it becomes paramount that we cultivate a lucid comprehension of the cataclysmic ramifications that such a war could potentially unleash. In the current global landscape, the presence of nuclear weapons has become a stark reality. Presently, there exist nine countries that hold these immensely destructive arms, introducing an intricate level of concern. Of particular worry is the fact that these nations, each

armed with the destructive power of nuclear weapons, have not historically maintained friendly relations with one another.

If a third world war were to occur, it would mark the culmination of a final battle fought alongside human technology - an ultimate conflict that could once again thrust humanity into the depth of despair, the clash of nations armed with advanced technology could propel us into an era where the devastating impact goes beyond conventional warfare. The culmination of centuries of technological progress could ironically lead to a regression, plunging humanity back into a stone-age - like existence. The advancements that were meant to elevate our society might instead become instruments of self-inflicted

destruction, casting us into an era where the darkness of the past overshadows the potential of the future.

Amidst these grave possibilities, the Domsday Clock stands as a sobering reminder of the world's vulnerability. Set by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the clock symbolizes the proximity to a global catastrophe. Each tick of the clock echoes the urgency of addressing the perilous factors that threaten humanity's existence, including the specter of nuclear conflict.

In the face of such potential devastation, the clock's hands inching towards midnight draw our attention to the unparalleled destructive power of nuclear weapons. As our understanding of these weapons has evolved, we

now possess the ability to calculate their potency with alarming precision. If a nuclear blast were to occur, the temperature at the location could rise to levels comparable to the surface temperature of the sun. The rapid expansion of a fireball quickly consuming vast distances within mere seconds underscores the instantaneous and catastrophic nature of a nuclear detonation. This knowledge goes beyond the immediate impact; the consequences of nuclear conflict can extend far and wide. Radioactive fallout follows the winds, potentially spreading through rivers that traverse multiple countries and threatening ocean life. In our interconnected world, these radioactive particles may infiltrate our food and water supply,

highlighting the enduring global ramifications of such an event.

The chain of destruction will not end here; instead, in the days to come, the acts of devastation will likely increase further. According to well-known climatologist Professor Alan Robock, if a nuclear war were to begin, it is estimated that within a single day, a hundred and fifty million tons of smoke would disperse throughout the Earth's atmosphere, resulting in a phenomenon known as "Nuclear Winter".

The condition of semi-darkness, killing frosts, and subfreezing temperatures combined with high doses of radiation from nuclear fallout. The extreme cold, high radioactive levels, and the widespread destruction of industrial, medical and

transportation infrastructures along with food supplies and crops would trigger a massive death toll from starvation, exposure and disease.

Scientists envision billions starving to death in a nuclear winter. Consequently, a nuclear war would spell the ultimate demise of humanity on Earth. Over the past sixty years, what has kept humanity from engaging in global conflict is cutting-edge nuclear technology. However, it wouldn't be incorrect to say that humans have, with their own hands, prepared the tools of their own destruction. Some might believe that nuclear warfare is undertaken to protect their own people, but in the process, the entire world could become entangled in the catastrophic aftermath

of nuclear detonations, including them.

Nations possessing nuclear power should draw a lesson from the 'Montreal Protocol.' When scientists discovered a hole in the ozone layer caused by a gas called CFC, they realized its potential to completely destroy the ozone layer. In response, approximately 200 countries convened and collectively agreed to cease the production and use of such harmful CFCs. Consequently, these substances are no longer in use, and the ozone layer issue was successfully resolved through global cooperation. The power of unity demonstrated by these countries in addressing environmental challenges showcases the potential for similar concerted efforts to prevent nuclear conflict and foster worldwide peace.





In brief

Pakistan to partake in int'l beach volleyball championship

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's volleyball team is set to make its international beach volleyball debut next week when it will partake in the Central Asian Women's Beach Volleyball Championship in Bangladesh. An official of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) confirmed to Geo News that the Pakistan Women's volleyball team is set to fly on Sunday to participate in CAVA Women's Beach Volleyball Championship. "Yes, we are sending a team that will be comprised of two players, Azra Farooq, and Muqddas Bukhari, they will fly to Bangladesh tomorrow via Doha," Chaudhary Yaqoob, the chairman of PVF said. Mohammad Zahid will travel with the team as coach. The event will be held at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh from September 13 to 15. Other than the hosts Bangladesh and Pakistan, teams from India, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan will participate in the event. The PVF chairman added that the team participated in a preparatory camp ahead of the event in Islamabad along with other members of the Pakistan women volleyball team. He hoped for a better show by the Pakistani squad in the championship.

Commissioner inaugurates first squash complex

SARGODHA (APP): Commissioner Sargodha Mohammad Ajmal Bhatti Saturday inaugurated the first squash complex in the division. In this regard, a ceremony was held at squash complex, in which Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Capt (ret'd) Shoaib Ali, Director Colleges Sarfraz Gujjar, Divisional Sports Officer Tariq Nazir, President Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sajid Tatar, Vice Chairperson Sargodha International Dry Port Dr Atiqah Rehan, Chief Warden Civil Islamabad Mehah Shahid Iqbal, President Sargodha Press Club Asif Hanif, General Secretary Rana Sajid Iqbal and local players participated in large numbers. The commissioner said that two courts had been built in the squash complex adjacent to the sports stadium where 500 spectators could sit and enjoy matches. A total of Rs 10 million had been spent on the construction of the squash complex, which had been spent from the municipal corporation's sports funds. Secretary Sargodha Division Squash Association Malik Tariq Awan requested the commissioner to include squash in the Sargodha board sports. He also demanded the heads of Sargodha University and private colleges to set aside quota for squash players in sports admissions. Talking to the media, Commissioner Ajmal Bhatti said that the government was taking various steps to promote sports. He said Pakistan ruled squash in the world for two decades, in which the names of Jan Sher Khan and Jahangir Khan are worth mentioning. The commissioner expressed the hope that through the establishment of the squash complex in Sargodha, the country would once again get real talent in this sport. Later, the commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret'd) Shoaib Ali also planted saplings at the entrance of the squash complex under the ongoing "One Plant for Pakistan" campaign.

# Pakistan have an edge over India: Babar Azam

COLOMBO (AFP): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said Saturday his side will have an edge over India in their Asia Cup Super Four clash, with a bowling line-up ready to win matches and tournaments.

The arch-rivals meet again in Colombo on Sunday after their group match was abandoned due to rain, which has played havoc with the 50-over tournament that is a precursor to the upcoming ODI World Cup in India.

Pakistan won their opening match of the Super Four stage and a second win will further enhance their chances of making the final on September 17. But rain

in the Sri Lankan capital is expected to play spoilsport again in the match, for which a reserve day has been kept aside.

"You can say we have the edge as we have played back-to-back cricket here (in Sri Lanka) and in Pakistan," Azam told reporters. "It has been two-and-a-half months in Sri Lanka including the Test series, Lanka Premier League, Afghanistan series, and now the Asia Cup.

"So you can say it will be an advantage (for us)," Pakistan's pace trio of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, and Haris Rauf have stood out with 23 wickets between them and played a key role in the

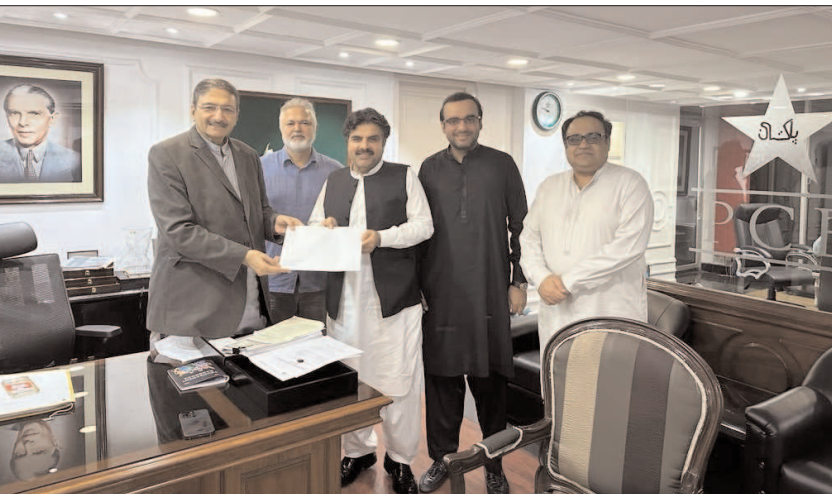
team's performance so far.

Shaheen, a left-arm quick who leads the bowling, rattled India with his opening burst in the group match, taking the key wickets of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Azam said the team believes their bowlers can win them titles. "Proud to have the fast bowlers that we have. One of the best (in the world)," said Azam.

"Fast bowlers win you tournaments and matches and I have total belief (in) them. The line-up that we have including Naseem and Faheem (Ashraf) is the best lot that we have. They have the belief and how they bowl in partnerships.

# PCB issues NOC for Sindh Premier League



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board has issued an NOC to the Sindh Premier League. With this new development, a wave of happiness has spread among the players, team owners, and officials of Sindh.

The first edition of SPL was held with dignity, and preparations are underway.

Sindh Premier League President Arif Malik, along with former provincial minister of Sindh Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, met Chairman PCB Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf at PCB headquarters.

In the meeting, PCB issued an NOC for the Sindh Premier League. PCB Director Domestic Nadeem Khan and other officials of PCB were also present.

On this occasion, former provincial minister Nasir Hussain Shah said that SPL is being organized in accordance with the vision of People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In the light of his instructions, players who never had a chance to showcase their

talents should be included in this league.

He further stated that the People's Party Chairman is showing special interest in organizing this first Sindh league. His instructions are not only to highlight the cricket talent of Sindh but also to showcase the culture of Sindh through this league. This will not only represent Sindh but also the beauty of Pakistan and its culture to the world.

He expressed happiness that PCB has issued the NOC for SPL. He credited former Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the entire cabinet for their efforts in bringing SPL from its initial idea to its current state. He expressed hope that SPL would become a successful league in Pakistan from its very first edition.

Chairman PCB Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf expressed hope that the successful hosting of SPL would undoubtedly contribute to a new chapter in the sports history of Sindh and continue to play a pivotal role.

President SPL Arif Malik

considered obtaining the NOC as an important step towards their success. He mentioned that everyone would witness a renewed enthusiasm in their preparations for organizing this league successfully.

He acknowledged that while the NOC approval brings joy, it also places pressure on them to organize the league brilliantly, ensuring that cricket fans can enjoy the best and most competitive cricket. They are thankful to PCB for appreciating their efforts and granting the NOC.

He believed that obtaining the NOC for SPL has boosted their morale, and he viewed it as significant news not only for them but also for all team owners, officials, and players associated with SPL. Players like Shahid Afridi, Misbah ul Haq, and Abdul Razzaq joining them signifies that the SPL journey is heading in the right direction.

He added that team formation trials are ongoing, and the player draft will be announced soon.

# Djokovic on revenge mission as history beckons in US Open final

NEW YORK (Agencies): As Novak Djokovic again stands on the verge of history at the US Open, he has a score to settle with Daniil Medvedev after his loss to the Russian in the 2021 final cost him a calendar Grand Slam.

Medvedev defeated Djokovic in straight sets two years ago to prevent the Serbian from becoming the first man to win all four Grand Slams in the same year since Australian great Rod Laver in 1969.

On Sunday the 36-year-old Djokovic goes in search of a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles title against Medvedev, who unseated reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz in a gripping semi-final.

Djokovic will return to world number one next week, but he is wary of being swept up by the significance of the occasion in New York. "Every time in a Grand Slam final it's another shot for history, you know, and I'm aware of it, and of course I'm very proud of it," said Djokovic.

"But again, I don't have much time nor do I allow myself to reflect on these things or think about the history too much in this sense. "Because when I did that in the past, like, '21 finals here I was maybe overwhelmed with the occasion and the opportuni-

ty and I underperformed. "So I don't want this to happen again."

Djokovic fell agonisingly short of matching Margaret Court's all-time mark for most Grand Slam singles titles when he lost to Alcaraz in five sets in the Wimbledon final in July.

That remains his only defeat at the majors since a quarter-final loss to Rafael Nadal at the 2022 French Open. He is 33-1 at the Slams since then.

Djokovic is the first man in the Open era to play in 10 finals at two different Grand Slams. He has a perfect record at the Australian Open, but New York is the site of some of his biggest disappointments.

"Age is just a number" - He is just 3-6 in US Open finals but could become its oldest men's champion in the modern era, surpassing Australia's Ken Rosewall who was 35 when he won in 1970.

"Physically I have been as fit or as prepared, as strong as, I don't want to say as ever, but, I mean, as good as I have been in years and years," said Djokovic, who swept past 20-year-old Ben Shelton in the last four. "Age is just a number, that phrase is resonating at the moment with me. And, you know, I don't want to even consider leaving tennis or

thinking about an end if I'm still at the top of the game. "I just don't see a reason for that." Medvedev avenged his Wimbledon semi-final whipping by Alcaraz to reach his fifth Grand Slam final.

The 27-year-old Russian lost a five-set classic to Rafael Nadal here in 2019. He was also beaten by Djokovic in Melbourne two years later before going down to Nadal at the following Australian Open.

"If I lose on Sunday, the tournament, it's like it's a good tournament but I'm going to be hell of a disappointed. That's how tennis is," said Medvedev.

Djokovic leads the head-to-head 9-5 but Medvedev knows his rival wants to set the record straight after the 2021 final defeat which left him in tears. "I think the only way I can use it is, as I say, thinking that Novak, when he loses, he's never the same after," said Medvedev. "So he's different. It's just a different mentality. That's why he has 23 Grand Slams, whatever, Masters 1000s, weeks at number one."

"So I have to use it knowing that he's going to be 10 times better than he was that day. And I have to be, if I want to still beat him, 10 times better than I was that day."



COLOMBO: Litton Das is caught behind, Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh.

# Sri Lanka edge Bangladesh to register first Super 4s win in Asia Cup 2023

COLOMBO (Agencies): Sadeera Samarawickrama's blistering 93-run knock, followed by a combined bowling effort led Sri Lanka to a 21-run victory over Bangladesh in the eighth match of the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 on Saturday.

Set to chase 258, Bangladesh could accumulate 236 runs before being bundled out in the penultimate over despite Towhid Hridoy's gutsy 82.

Bangladesh openers Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Mohammad Naim laid a solid foundation for the run chase with a brisk 55-run partnership but Dasun Shanaka struck twice in his successive overs to script Sri Lanka's comeback as Bangladesh slipped to 60/2.

Miraz scored a 29-ball 28 while Naim played a cautious 21-run knock in 46 deliveries. Bangladesh then coped two more blows to their run chase after experienced batter Litton Das (15) and skipper Shakib Al Hasan (3) perished cheaply.

With the visitors reeling at 83/4 in 18.5 overs, Hridoy put together an anchoring 72-run partnership with wicketkeeper batter Mushfiqur Rahim.

The pair had stabilized Bangladesh's innings before Dasun Shanaka once

again drew an important breakthrough, dismissing Mushfiqur in the 38th over. He scored 29 off 48 balls.

Hridoy then stitched brief partnerships with Shamim Hossain and Nasum Ahmed before finally perishing in the 44th over when Bangladesh needed a further 61 runs.

Towhid Hridoy remained the top-scorer for Bangladesh in their must-win Asia Cup 2023 fixture with a 97-ball 82 which featured seven boundaries and a six. Following his dismissal, Nasum and Hasan Mahmud kept Bangladesh in the hunt by scoring valuable runs at the backend but their heroics were not enough to guide their side to glory.

Nasum scored a run-a-ball 15 while Mahmud scored 10 not out off seven deliveries. For Sri Lanka, Dasun Shanaka, Maheesh Theekshana and Matheesha Pathirana bagged three wickets each while Dumith Wellalage made one scalp.

The 21-run victory over Bangladesh not only marked Sri Lanka's first win in the Super 4s stage of the Asia Cup 2023 but also extended their unbeaten streak in the ODIs.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, are now on the verge of elimination and

would need a miracle to make it to the final. Put into bat first, Sri Lanka managed to put a commendable total on the board, courtesy of Sadeera Samarawickrama's late fireworks and Kusal Mendis's anchoring half-century.

The home side had a shaky start to their innings as they lost their opener Dimuth Karunaratne (18) cheaply with 34 runs on the board in 5.3 overs. Mendis then joined opening batter Pathum Nissanka in the middle and the pair anchored the innings with a sensible 74-run partnership which lasted with Nissanka's dismissal in the 24th over.

Nissanka fell 10 runs short of his half-century, scoring 40 off 50 deliveries and hit five boundaries. Mendis also followed Nissanka back to the but two overs later as Sri Lanka slipped to 117/3 in 26 overs.

Sri Lanka then lost two more wickets in quick successions as Charith Asalanka (10) and Dhananjaya de Silva (six) walked back after making modest contributions. With the home side reeling at 164/5 in the 38th over, Sadeera Samarawickrama was joined by his captain Dasun Shanaka and the pair scripted an astounding recovery by knitting a crucial 60-run partnership.

# Devastating spell against India was just a start, warns Afridi

COLOMBO (AFP): Pakistan pace ace Shaheen Shah Afridi has warned his devastating spell against arch-rivals India that set the Asia Cup alight is just the start, with the World Cup only weeks away.

The left-arm fast bowler rattled the Indian top-order in their Group A clash last week, taking 4-35 — including the wickets of star batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

That match was washed out but they meet again in Colombo on Sunday in the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup, a precursor to the 50-over World Cup that kicks off next month.

And Shaheen told AFP there is more to come.

"Every match against India is special and people watch this a lot," the 23-year-old said Friday. "I used to wait for this match as a fan before I played under-16 cricket. "I can't

say this has been my best spell so far. This is just the start and there will be many more, so the best is yet to come."

With his ability to move the ball both ways, Shaheen leads one of the most potent pace attacks in the world.

"If you play all the three formats at such a young age for Pakistan and handle the new ball, people expect you to perform like that," he said. Shaheen and his fellow fast bowlers Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf have picked up 23 wickets between them in the Asia Cup so far. "We know our roles with the new and old ball," Shaheen said.

"Haris is quicker than us and impacts with his pace. Naseem and I try to get early breakthroughs." The "communication is good between us," he added. "And that's our success."

Afridi advice Shaheen, who stands at 6

feet and 6 inches (1.98 metres), suffered a serious knee injury last year but returned strongly in Sri Lanka in July.

"It's your match time that helps you improve. These Test matches against Sri Lanka recently made me improve as I bowled long spells and fielded all day," said Shaheen, who has 105 wickets in 27 Tests. "So that cleared all doubts about the knee injury."

Shaheen has never played cricket in India — bilateral cricket ties are frozen because of political tensions between the neighbours. He is keen to do well when Pakistan take on hosts India in the hotly anticipated World Cup match in Ahmedabad on October 14.

"All the foreign players who have played in the IPL (Indian Premier League), we had discussions with them. I think our Pakistan wickets or Dubai pitches will be similar," he said.

"Spinners will get more help, maybe. We will hit good lengths. Our team performance is going well as the number one (ODI) team. We have prepared well." Shaheen is married to one of the daughters of former captain Shahid Afridi, and said he speaks to the former all-rounder before every big match.

"I try to pick his brains before a big game and include it in my plans as he was a big-match player," said Shaheen. "He talks simply and says: 'Just play your cricket'."

A fan of legendary left-arm fast bowler Wasim Akram, Shaheen said he keeps his focus on the field by avoiding cricket off it. "I don't go out much and stay in my room. Just stay indoors, make green tea... and talk about anything other than cricket," he said. "That keeps me relaxed."

# Two-goal Neymar breaks Pele's record as Brazil crush Bolivia 5-1

BELEM (AFP): Neymar surpassed Pele as Brazil's all-time top scorer with two second-half goals in a 5-1 win over Bolivia in South America's 2026 World Cup qualifiers on Friday.

The 31-year-old striker went into the game level with Pele on 77 goals and had a golden opportunity to break the record in the 17th minute when Brazil were awarded a penalty.

But he looked distraught after his soft spot-kick was easily saved by Bolivia keeper Guillermo Viscarra to keep the scores goalless. Seven minutes later, Brazil got in front when Rodrygo reacted quickly to slot home after a shot from Raphinha was parried out by Viscarra.

Brazil doubled their lead just after the break when Raphinha cut in from the left and his low shot took a slight deflection as it flew into the bottom corner. Neymar had a hand in Brazil's third, with a clever chipped pass that was flicked on by Bruno Guimaraes into the path of Rodrygo who confidently drilled home.

Then came Neymar's moment to enter the history books as he pounced on a loose ball inside the box and tucked away his 78th goal in his 125th game for his country — raising his hands and his gaze to the skies.

Victor Abrego pulled a goal back for Bolivia, bustling through a disorganized Brazil backline before blast-

ing an unstoppable shot past Ederson.

But there was still time for Neymar to extend his record tally, connecting with a low ball from Raphinha in stoppage time to complete the victory and a memorable night for the forward. The 31-year-old former Barcelona striker recently moved from Paris Saint-Germain to Saudi Arabian club Al Hilal.

Pele, who died in December aged 82, scored 77 goals for Brazil in 92 appearances between 1957 and 1971.

The win was the perfect start for new coach Fernando Diniz, who took over from predecessor Tite in the wake of the Selecao's World Cup quarter-final exit last year.

Diniz paid tribute to Neymar, whose role in the squad has been under scrutiny. "Many did not know what he would come to do, and he came to do what he did: have fun, score two goals and break the record," he said. "He is a very big idol, people must recognize him and accept him," he added.

— Uruguay turn on style —

In Friday's other game, Uruguay turned on the style, under new coach Marcelo Bielsa, as they beat Chile 3-1. Argentine Bielsa, who had previously coached Chile between 2007 and 2011, opted for a youthful line-up without veteran strikers Edinson Cavani and Luis Suarez.

Bielsa was rewarded with an enter-

taining display from his new charges with River Plate attacking midfielder Nicolas de la Cruz scoring twice.

De la Cruz opened the scoring with a fine left-foot strike in the 38th minute before Real Madrid midfielder Federico Valverde doubled the advantage on the stroke of half-time.

De la Cruz broke down the left before switching to Valverde, who made space before burying a shot into the far bottom corner. The third goal, in the 71st minute, came after a fast break down the left with Liverpool striker Darwin Nunez pulling the ball back into the path of De la Cruz who made no mistake from close range.

Chile pulled a goal back three minutes later with Arturo Vidal scrambling the ball home after a Diego Valdes header came out off the bar.

Bielsa was delighted with the display from his new charges.

"I like the style of the Uruguayan players," he said, "The style of play is imposed by individuals not the coach. The first ten minutes were not good but then we progressively generated goal opportunities and wore down the opponent," he added.

The qualification process for the expanded 48-team World Cup, to be held in the United States, Canada and Mexico in 2026, offers two extra places for South America with six teams qualifying directly.





## In brief

### Couple shot dead in Capital

ISLAMABAD (INP): Armed men gunned down two including husband and wife here on Saturday while a minor child narrowly survived in the firing. Police said that two culprits sprayed bullets at a couple, near I-11 Super Store, Islamabad. As a result of firing, Zafar Iqbal and his wife Rehana Sardar hailing from Rawalpindi were killed on the spot while their two-year-old child narrowly escaped. The accused fled the scene of crime. Police said that the attackers were brother and nephew of the killed woman but reasons behind the dual murder could not be ascertained. The bodies were shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case against culprits started raids for their arrest.

### Police initiates crackdown against beggars

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police have initiated a massive crackdown against professional beggars and their handlers in the city to curb this menace, a public relations officer said. He said that, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, ordered the all zonal DPO's to take action against professional beggars and handlers in their respective areas adding that cases should be registered against them. He reiterated that the parents who send their children with these criminals will also face action according to the law, adding that criminals in the guise of begging were found involved in different criminal activities. During the ongoing crackdown, the Islamabad Capital Police Noon, Golra, Karachi Company and Koral police station teams arrested 07 professional baggers and registered cases against them under the beggar act. Citizens are also urged to discourage these professional beggars and give their charity to the needy people and are also requested to inform police about any suspicious activity through Pucar-15 and join hands with police to curb this menace from the city.

### Police Khidmat Markaz issued 71,064

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Police Khidmat Markaz of Islamabad Capital Police have facilitated citizens with different services like issuance of character certificate, foreigners' registration, registration of tenants and domestic servants, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the Islamabad capital police is taking all possible steps to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad adding that several steps have been taken by the police in this regard. He further said that Police Khidmat Markaz has received 71,302 applications for a general police verification certificate during the ongoing year. On which 71,064 general police verification certificates were issued to the citizens after complete verification by concerned police stations while the work on remaining applications were under process. For general police verification certificates, applicants must bring his/her original CNIC. In case, the Islamabad address is not mentioned on applicant's CNIC, he must bring residential proof or rental agreement. For citizen's facility, police mobile facilitation van service has also been working, while Khidmat Markaz in various areas including sectors F-6, G-10/4, H-11, Bani Gala, Swan Garden, Khanna and at different police stations were also facilitating the citizens.

# Aneeq Ahmad emphasizes religious harmony for peace in country

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Aneeq Ahmad says Islam is a religion of peace and provides protection to all minorities.

Talking to newsmen in Lahore on Saturday, he urged need of inter-religious harmony in this era. He said many issues can be resolved through inter-religious harmony.

He emphasized need to promote inter-faith harmony for peace in the country. He said desecration of Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) is unacceptable and intolerable.

Aneeq said blasphemy of Holy Prophet peace be upon him and Holy Quran will not be tolerated.

Also, he added, protection of minorities was included in the government priorities, and Islam teaches respect to all religions.

The caretaker minister said that without accepting the previous holy books, the faith of Muslims was not complete. "The blasphemy of Quran will not be tolerated. Even if there is blasphemy of verses on flags, it will not be allowed," he said and added that "our flag is not complete without the white part, which represented the minorities".

In response to a question, he said there would be no increase in last year's Hajj expenses. He said the government was formulating a new Hajj policy.

The minister said he wanted to take action for a better change in his ministry as well as society at large so that he was remembered in good words in history. He said the positive outcomes of the government actions were reaching people now. He said the caretaker prime minister

was working with great dedication and vision.

The federal minister for religious affairs raised a question that "if our Muslim brother belongs to another sect, why do we consider him an enemy? We all believe in Allah, Holy Prophet and Holy Book Quran".

He called ulema and Islamic scholars the crown of knowledge. "Through them, we receive knowledge of Holy Quran," he added.

Speaking at the press conference, Dr. Raghib Hussain Naeemi said implementation of the law could establish peace and security. No individual, group, or organisation was above the law, he made it clear.

"Sectarian and political rivalry in various parts of Pakistan is extremely dangerous. The government should focus on this issue and find out a solution," he added.

## Caretakers not carrying the baggage of PDM: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid said that the caretaker government is not ready to carry the baggage of decisions made by the PDM.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), the seasoned politician said that all the 13 parties of PDM took decisions jointly during the last 16 months and now they are accusing each other for the bad decisions.

"They distributed sweets after signing deal with the IMF but the caretakers are not carrying their burden anymore," the veteran politician said.

All these 13 political parties are responsible for destroying the economy, he added. They came in the name of saving the state and left after ruining it economically, AML chief said.

The former minister said that all the parties except for PML-N are

demanding to hold elections within 90 days. The reality is that no one is ready to go into polls to face the public, he added.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Rashid said that most of the sugar mills are owned by former presidents, prime ministers and other former cabinet members. "They make decisions according to their own interest and people are suffered resultantly," Rashid said.

## Health research critical to making progress in medical field



ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Shallwani on Saturday emphasized prioritizing health research as it is of critical importance to making progress in the health sector.

Inaugurating the two-day National Health Research Conference, he said that evidence-based decision-making is of pivotal importance in meeting the challenges that confront us in the provision of health care to the masses.

He was addressing top health research experts and public health leaders from across the country.

Top public health leader Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta Chairman Board of

Governors National Institute of Health (NIH) delivered his keynote address making a strong case for priority to health research.

The two-day National Health Research Conference has been jointly organized by the National Institute of Health, the Higher Education Commission, the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, and the Pakistan Science Foundation.

The main objective of the conference is to promote collaboration and networking among funding agencies, researchers, policymakers, and allied stakeholders and also to provide a platform for research funding agencies to present their experiences and

research.

This conference is a unique opportunity for researchers, healthcare professionals, academicians and policymakers to come together to share knowledge, discuss the latest trends in health research and explore new ideas and collaborations.

The conference covers a wide range of topics including health research contextualization and prioritization, emerging areas of research, pharmaceutical research, and drug development besides formulating a draft Islamabad Declaration for Health Research prioritization and capacity strengthening in Pakistan.

## 13 outlaws arrested: drug and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 13 outlaws during the last 24 hours from different areas of the city 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 (ICCP) 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 Margalla police team arrested an accused namely Ayub and recovered one 30 bore pistol with

ammunition from his possession. The Golra police team arrested two accused namely Usama Iqbal and Awas involved in illegally selling petrol and gas refilling in cylinders.

Likewise, the Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Arshad Hussain and recovered 2200 gram hashish from his possession. The Sangjani police team arrested an accused namely Abdul Majeed and recovered 160 gram hashish from his possession.

Similarly, the Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Riaz Masih and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Khanna police team

arrested an accused namely Naveed Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Moreover, the Koral police team arrested an accused namely Abbas and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Kirpa police team arrested two accused namely Azhar Mehmood and Raja Rameez and recovered 515 gram hashish and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

Furthermore, the Sihala police team arrested an accused namely Siraj Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Humak police team arrested an accused name-



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal H.E. Frederico Silva visiting the different stalls during the Inaugural ceremony of Crafts Bazaar "Empowering women and communities through indigenous crafts" at local hotel. —APP Photo

### Monkeypox suspects escape from ambulance

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Four suspected monkeypox patients who were being shifted from Islamabad International Airport to PIMS Hospital have escaped on Saturday.

Due to the negligence of the Border Health Services staff, the monkeypox suspects who were deported from Libya disappeared from the ambulance which was transporting them to the hospital.

The sources said that the suspected Pakistani patients were sent back to their country in a special flight which landed at the Islamabad Airport on the night of September 8. Medical staff traced monkeypox systems in the four Pakistanis during the screening and they were separated from other passengers.

The four suspects were identified as Rehman Tariq, Ali Hamza, Zulqarnain and Naeem. They disappeared from the ambulance along with their medical files prepared by the staff at the airport. The Border Health Services officials are keeping mum on the incident.

### Dengue tally reaches 366 cases

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi's dengue total tally had reached 366 positive cases with the arrival of 21 more patients during the last 24 hours.

Chief Executive Officer, of District Health Authority Dr. Ijaz Ahmad, said that 12 patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, four from Chaklala Cantonment, two from the Municipal Corporation area and one from Kalar Syeda, Tret(Murree) and Wah area.

He informed that 303 confirmed patients had been discharged after recovery while 80 patients were admitted to the district's health facilities of which 63 were positive cases.

During the last 24 hours, Dr Ijaz said that the district administration had registered 50 FIRs, issued tickets to seven, sealed four premises, and a fine of Rs 188,500 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs.

The CEO asked the residents to adopt precautionary measures as September and October were crucial for dengue spread.

He also urged the residents to remove stagnant water, especially after rain in outdoor and household settings to stop mosquitoes from breeding.

ly Imran and recovered 541 gram heroin from his possession. The Bhara Kahu police team arrested an accused namely Talah Javed and recovered 210 gram hashish from his possession.

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

Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and ensured the safety of lives and property of citizens on priority basis.

## Dialogue vital to, counter modern-day challenges: Shah

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Minister for Culture and National Heritage Jamal Shah has said that dialogue hold key importance to resolve the issues and counter the prevailing challenges faced by the country.

In an interview with Radio Pakistan's News and Current Affairs Channel on Saturday, he said we should also hold discussions and organize interactive sessions for promotion of cultural diversity so that people particularly the young generation can understand each other.

Jamal Shah said such dialogue and sessions will also help curb growing tendencies of intolerance and hatred in the society.

All informed decisions making, particularly of the past four decades was the real cause of prevailing unrest, intolerance and bigotry in different sections of society, he added.

He said the last sermon of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah Khatam-un-Nabiyeen

SAWW, which is the guiding document, is the solution of all odds in the society particularly religious extremism.

Replying to a question, Jamal Shah said he was basically a sculpture maker and following May 9 incidents, in which memorials and artifacts of Shuhada were destroyed, torched and disgraced, he was requested by the Capital Development Authority to make sculpture portraits and design monuments of Shuhada.

He said poetry in all languages, spoken in the country including Urdu, has been written at the monuments to pay homage to the valiant Shuhada, who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the motherland and also to apprise the coming generations about valor of Shuhada.

To another question, the Minister said although their mandate is limited, however, he is focused to streamline some fundamental things to propagate art and culture because these values enable the society to look into

themselves and towards their corrective perspective.

He said he will also make his best efforts to develop a robust infrastructure to foster different branches of art and culture and enable artist community to serve the nation in a better way and to facilitate them in earning their livelihood in a dignified manner.

To yet another query, the minister said Pakistan can lead from the forefront and make a significant headway if youth are engaged to give them utmost clarity of mind as our survival is in clarity in all spheres life.

About the role of Radio Pakistan in inculcating the positivity and building state narrative, Jamal Shah said Radio Pakistan has a vast outreach and a significant role which can be utilized effectively and this power cannot be miscalculated. The Minister said he also sung many songs for Radio Pakistan for which he was also rewarded in terms of cash royalty.

## Flood damage compounds education woes: 3M kids out of school

ISLAMABAD (APP): Education Advisor for Save the Children Sahar Taimor said that recent floods had destroyed 30,000 schools and deprived three million students of education while rebuilding schools and re-enrolling students presents an enormous challenge.

Talking to APP here Saturday, she highlighted, "Major issues plaguing Pakistan's education system including lack of access, poor quality, and weak governance."

She said, "Rural areas lack proximate schools due to which over 2 crore children are unable to attend the school." "Pakistan has about 70,000 primary schools, but there are far fewer middle and secondary schools," Sahar said.

"The government must ensure school availability to address security risks that stem from long commutes."

She said that existing schools often lack trained teachers and basic facilities required for quality education. She underlined, "Only 1.7% of GDP is allocated to education compared to other nations – far below what is required."

Explaining the efforts of Save the Children, Sahar said, "Currently they are working in over 100 institutions and concentrating efforts on flood-damaged schools." "Both formal and informal education models are being used to reach displaced children", she added.

She said, "Save the Children runs enrollment drives with officials to bring kids back to school."

She said, "Officials also focus on teacher training programs designed globally but tailored for Pakistan."

She said, "Their organization is leading the joint Education Sector Working Group with UNICEF and they have dedicated resources that are allocated to identify damaged schools where deployment of teachers is needed."

She highlighted, "Civil society organizations and international NGOs are participating in these collaborative programs to address the urgent education crisis." Sahar lauded the government for allowing Save the Children to operate in state schools over the past 40 years and called for improving governance by ensuring the transparency about utilization of funds.

## PAC organizes Mehfil-e-Mushaira in connection with Defence Day

RAWALPINDI (INP): Punjab Arts Council (PAC) in collaboration with Sh a h b a z a n - e - A d a b Pakistan on Saturday organized a Mehfil-e-Mushaira in connection with Pakistan Defence Day.

Renowned famous poet and critic Dr. Waheed Ahmad presided over the Mehfil-e-mushaira, while Rehan Abbasi and Habiba Rathor was the host of the Event. Akhtar Usman, Ahmed Atta Allah, Shakeel Jazeb participated in the Mushaira as guests of honor. The organizers of the Mushaira included Nawai Sarosh Ahmed, Muhammad Munir Qasim, Anjam Salimi and Nasir Ali Nasir.

In his presidential address, Dr. Waheed said that the mention of Pakistan

Defence Day warms hearts, raises enthusiasm and refreshes faith. We salute the martyrs who laid down their lives for the defense of the motherland, he said adding that the brave sons of the country fought fearlessly against the enemy and created a bright chapter in history. In the war of 1965, the people fought alongside the Pakistan Army, we will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to defend our beloved motherland, to maintain its freedom and independence.

Dr. Waheed Ahmed paid tribute to the martyrs through his poetry. Mehboob Zafar, Saeed Raja, Afzal Khan, Dr. Sajid Rahim, Javed Jadoon, Nargis Jahanzeb, Fareeha Naqvi, Ayesha Shafaq,

Waqasullah Waqas, Dr. Mehboob Kashmiri, Ijaz Naumani, Faza Batul, Mahosh Ahsan, Fida Shirazi, Dr. Faisal Shahzad, Maryam Safa, Zeeshan Murtaza, Shahzad Nayer, Wajahat Baki, Khalid Mustafa, Shakir Kundan, Nasir Abbas Chaudhry, Nisar Mahmood Taseer, Ahmed Naseer, Fayaz Hussain Shah, Musoor Abbas, Musab Saud, Shafaq Hayat, Atif Mirza, Lareeb Kazmi, Dr. Akhlaq Awan, Iftaq Butt and other poets Ikram paid tribute to the martyrs in poetic style. The participants remembered the eternal sacrifices of the September war.

A large number of people from the twin cities participated in the Mehfil-e-Mushaira.



Suhail meets Japanese envoy

KABUL (Agencies): Head of Political Office of IEA in Doha Suhail Shaheen met with Japanese ambassador for Afghanistan Takashi Okada. Shaheen stated that during the meeting, he and his team members discussed topics of mutual interest and bilateral relations with the Japanese envoy. The head of the Islamic Emirate's political office in Qatar also mentioned that the Japanese ambassador expressed his country's support for a peaceful and dignified Afghanistan.

Road accident kills one

KAPISA (Xinhua/APP): One commuter was killed with 14 others injured in a road accident in Kapisa province on Friday evening, the provincial police said in a statement on Saturday. Police said that two cars collided on a road in Tagab district, leaving one dead on the spot and 14 others injured, including eight women, with some in critical condition. A day earlier, two commuters were killed and 10 others injured in a similar road accident in neighboring Laghman province.

Afghan business attaché to Turkey introduced

KABUL (TOLONews): The spokesman for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) said that a new business attaché has been introduced to Turkey.

The spokesman for the MoIC, Akhundzada Abdul Salama Javad, said since the Islamic Emirate came to power, it has introduced business attachés to Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, and Turkey.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said that the presence of the

business attachés will improve Afghanistan's trade with foreign countries.

"It is the job of our embassies to work in the economic sector so our country will improve. It is the priority of our ambassadors in every country to work on our economy," said Twakal Ahmadyar, Director General of the ACCI.

The deputy minister of the Economy, Abdul Latif Nazari, said that the presence of business attachés is important for trade rela-

tions with the international community.

"The business attachés are important for the economic development of Afghanistan with several countries," he said.

"The business attachés which are being introduced to the countries, they are in fact the representatives of business sector," said Shamsulhaq Shams, an economist.

The MoE said efforts are underway to introduce more attachés to various countries.

Afghanistan loses millions

KABUL (Agencies): Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) says the closure of Torkham crossing into Pakistan has cost the economy millions of afghanis (AFN) over the past three days.

The closure of the border came at a crucial time specifically for exporters of fresh produce, especially fruit. The ACCI said the longer the trucks sit at the closed crossing the more produce perishes.

"This is not the first time that we are treated like this at the border. We request the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to find a solution to this issue," said Khanjan Alkozi, a member of the ACCI.

"When a political and security issue arises, a way should be found for the people and the trucks to pass with safety and security, which has not been done so far," he added.

"Our request to the government is that they should provide an alternative crossing border for farmers and traders instead of Pakistan," said Mirwais Hajizadeh, deputy director of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) says efforts are underway to solve the problems that have arisen and they are trying to resolve the issue in such a way that security and political challenges do not create problems in the process of trade and commerce.

100 Afghan refugees return home from Iran



KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan has confirmed that approximately 100 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran.

The Afghan Ministry said on its social media platform, X, that around 871 Afghan migrants had re-entered the country via the Islam Qala

border. Whether these refugees were forcibly deported or returned to the country voluntarily is unclear.

According to the ministry's report, these returnees have been referred to the International Organization for Migration's office for receiving food and non-food assistance.

This comes when the

expulsion and return of Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan has risen.

Previously, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan had also reported the return of 2,289 Afghan migrants from Iran and 23 others from Pakistan. Many returnees cite the lack of job opportunities and worsening eco-

nomical conditions in neighbouring countries like Iran and Pakistan as their primary reasons for returning.

Since the Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan, many factors, such as persecution, security risks, economic decline, and unemployment, have compelled people to flee the country.

22nd anniversary marked of Massoud's murder

KABUL (TOLONews): Saturday, September 9, (18 Sunbula) is the 22nd anniversary of the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud, Jihadi commander. Ahmad Shah Massoud was killed on this day in an explosion in Khajwa Bahawuddin district of Takhar.

The High Council for National Reconciliation's former chairman Abdullah Abdullah and former president Hamid Karzai issued public messages on X social media platform marking the day.

"Ahmad Shah Massoud was a great mujahid and patriot of our country who fought an unforgettable battle for the independence and freedom of Afghanistan up until his martyrdom," Karzai said.

"Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was one of the wisest figures in Afghanistan, believed with all of his heart that the solution to the country's problems lies in ensuring equal rights for all of the country's citizens," Abdullah said.

"Ahmad Shah Massoud was a mujahid without a doubt; he fought with the Soviet Union and did good deeds, but some differences among the parties hurt the spirit of the society," said political analyst Sayed Moqadam Amin.

Ahmad Shah Massoud, son of Colonel Dost



Mohammad Khan, was born in the Jangalak area in Panjshir district in September 1953.

He spent his childhood days in Panjshir and started school at the age of five. As a young boy he moved to Herat with his family and then to Kabul where he continued his studies.

Massoud enrolled at the Polytechnic University in Kabul in 1973 and at the same time received membership in the Nahzat Islamic Afghanistan party. Two years later, in 1975, he led the first rebellion of Panjshir residents against the government of that time.

"He was a strong Muslim man who kept his word," said Sayed Ishaq Gilani, head of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan.

Ahmad Shah Massoud then left the university in

the middle of his studies to fight the Soviet Union.

This former jihadi leader declared a truce in order to maintain peace with the Russians; this ceasefire gave Massoud the chance to establish Shura-e Nazar, or the "Nezar Council," a coalition of Afghan Mujahideen military groups that was thought to be one of the strongest military and guerilla organizations against the Soviet Union.

"As far as I studied it, he was anti-Pakistan and did not want foreign groups to come to Afghanistan, and he was really a Muslim," said Mohammad Matin Mohammadkhail, a military analyst.

Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated by two suicide bombers posing as journalists in Khajwa Bahawuddin district of Takhar in September 2001.

Artifacts worth \$27 million seized from smugglers

KABUL (Agencies): A number of ancient artifacts worth \$27 million have been discovered and seized and three suspected smugglers have been arrested, the Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Defense said on Saturday. The ministry said in a statement that items discovered on Friday included two statues, two mummified bodies, a gold crown, five boxes, two swords and a book with 17 pages written with gold. Based on the statement, the artifacts were discovered based on intelligence reports of the 209th Fatah Army Corps Command in Mazar-e-Sharif and in coordination with the intelligence officials of Bamiyan, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif provinces. The artifacts have been handed over to the National Museum of the country. The Ministry of Defense added that several other people have also been arrested in connection with the sale of these items and are being interrogated.

Prime Minister's absence from meetings raises questions

KABUL (TOLONews): Two months after coming back to Kabul from Kandahar, Mullah Moha-

mmad Hassan Akhund, the prime minister of the Islamic Emirate, has not been reported to have visited with officials of foreign countries or participated in significant meetings.

The Islamic Emirate's Prime Minister left Kandahar on July 17, 2023, and returned to Kabul after two months of rest and medical treatment.

The IEA's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid said that he is still sick and is resting. "His deputies continue their activities, and, in

the gatherings that you mentioned, his deputies have been seen giving speeches. Once again, I say that he might have needed to rest because of his health condition and that is why he has not participated in the meetings," Mujahid said.

The Islamic Emirate's PM was not present at the events marking the two-year anniversary of the Islamic Emirate on August 15, 2023, and on August 19, 2023, the nation's 140th anniversary of independence. However, the Islamic

Emirate's high-ranking officials were there. According to some political analysts, the presence of the PM in meetings and meetings with representatives of countries is important.

"Throughout the world, when a meeting is held, its elders hold a press conference after the meeting and make the details of the meeting public, and this causes the gap between the government and the people to decrease and brings transparency," said Wahid Faqiri, a political analyst.

209 schools without buildings in Baghlan



P U L - I - K H U M R I (Pajhwok) Education Department officials in northern Baghlan province say 209 out of 527 schools in the province have no buildings and as a result their students face serious problems.

Maulvi Mohammad Noor Azizi, director of education, said about 337,000 students, including girls, were studying in 527 schools in the province.

He said 209 schools had no buildings and more than 51,000 students were attending classes under the open sky.

Azizi added they had talked to some aid giving organizations about buildings for these schools, but practical work was yet to be seen. He said some of these schools were provided tents and they were striving to solve all problems crippling the education process.

Fazl Rahman Ansari, principal of Abdul Rahman bin Auf school said that students of the school had been attending classes under the shadow of trees and walls for years.

Also, principal of Bibi Anna High School Noorul

Haq told Pajhwok that the school had only five classes and around 100 students attended lessons under the open sky.

He said due to the lack of a building, he had reduced the teaching hours period from 45 minutes to 30 minutes.

Also, a student of Abdul Rahman Bin Auf School, Noorullah, told Pajhwok that his school had no building and students had to face many problems.

He urged the government to resolve the issues as soon as possible.

Herat gardeners convert most of grape produce into raisins



HERAT CTIY (Pajhwok): Gardeners in western Herat provinces say they convert most of their grape produce into raisins due to lack of standard cold storages,

domestic market and export facilities.

Ahmad Zia Yousufi, a gardener, told Pajhwok Afghan News they were forced to process grapes

into raisins due to lack of standard cold storage facilities and suitable market.

According to him, most gardeners supply only 10 percent of the fresh fruit to

the market and 90 percent are turned into raisins due to lack of market.

Jalil Ahmad Habibi, another grower, said their products were not exported to foreign countries due to lack of air-corridors. He urged the government to facilitate the export of their harvest and also establish standard cold storages.

Bashir Ahmad Bahador, director of Herat Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, hoped that next year the Islamic Emirate would create air-corridors and issue visas for traders so they could export their products abroad.

He added this year fruit merchants were not given visas to export their products abroad.

Bashir Ahmad Ahmadi, director of the Agricultural Department, said there were currently more than 1,400 raisin processing centers in the province and grapes remaining from export

could be converted into raisins and then exported.

Herat is a major grape producing province and hundreds of thousand tons of grapes are produced here every year.

Ali Ahmad Mohammadi, a professor at Herat Province University, believes agriculture growth needs government's support and this in turn has a direct impact on the economy of the people and farmers in Afghanistan.

According to Mohammadi, because more than 90 percent of Herat's land is arable, it is necessary for the local administration to work in agreement with the central government on a regular plan in the framework of a long-term plan in the market sector for selling agricultural products, establishing air corridors, creating cold storage facilities and providing the environment for labor export.

Woman in Bamyān offers free education amid child labour crisis

BAMYAN (Khaama Press): Afghanistan is a country facing a severe child labour problem. Millions of children in this country are forced into labour, and some go to school hungry. After the resurgence of the de facto administration, this crisis has escalated, creating even worse conditions for children.

In Bamyān province, a woman and her husband and friends established the "Child Foundation"/ "Kudac Organization" in response to growing concerns about the increasing number of child labourers and the detrimental consequences, such as physical and psychological harm and lack of education. This organization provides free education to several child labourers and orphans.

Maryam Halimi, the founder of the "Child Foundation," said in an interview with Khaama Press News Agency that she established this organization over a year ago to support children and has provided free

education to more than 60 child labourers and disadvantaged children.

Ms. Halimi said, "In recent years, I noticed an increase in child labourers in Bamyān. I decided to create an institution to educate them because if instead of books and pens, they have garbage heaps in their hands, the future of the country will be bleak and irreparable."

According to statistics from the Child Labor Support Organization (HASCRO), the number of child labourers in Bamyān has increased by about 35% in the past two years. The increase in child labour is not limited to Bamyān province, and this crisis has engulfed Afghanistan.

She views these children: "Children are the most important segment of society. They must receive an education because the country's future depends on them. If children spend their days and nights in difficult labour, without a doubt, the future will be worse than the present."

After the government banned women from working in government and non-governmental organizations, child support organizations like Save the Children suspended or significantly reduced their activities throughout Afghanistan. This reduction in the activities of child support organizations has profoundly impacted the economic status of families, which has deteriorated significantly over the past two years, affecting the well-being of children in Afghanistan.

Maryam, the former owner of a restaurant in Bamyān city, exclusively hired female staff. However, after the rise of the Taliban, she was forced to close the restaurant due to pressure and restrictions against women.

She is now actively supporting working children; her spouse and friends assist her. Recently, video clips of students from the children's organization have been shared on social media, showing them engaged

in literacy education. These children can now communicate their message to the world in English.

The Children's Foundation adds that children study English, Persian, Pashto, and mathematics. The organization's officials focus on English language education to send these children to other countries through scholarships in the future, where they can have a better quality of life.

Ms Halimi continues, "65 working and orphaned children are busy studying in our organization. We intend to increase the number of these children and, in the future, have a network in 34 provinces to cover at least 1,000 children in each province."

Every year, from the twelfth month of June, we are reminded of the International Day Against Child Labor. The International Labor Organization said in its recent report that 3 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in some form of work, a fundamental protec-



tion concern in Afghanistan.

However, the report from the Head of the National Workers' Union of

Afghanistan in 2022 indicates that 6 million children in Afghanistan have been forced to work.



Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023

# Govt files review petition over SC decision

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Law has filed a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict on Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023. The law ministry has pleaded to the apex court to review its August 11 verdict.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar had declared the legislation as void in its verdict. Justice Munib Akhtar had also written an additional note in the verdict on the legislation. The law ministry has sought 15 days' time from the court for submission of additional documents. The Registrar Office granted the plea, sources said.

The apex court had nullified the Supreme Court

(Review of Judgments and Orders) Act on August 11, 2023. The Supreme Court in its short verdict remarked that the parliament had no power to enact such legislation. An affected party had given right to appeal against court decisions of the cases under Article 184 (3) of the Review of Judgments Act.

The Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act was challenged by Riaz Hanif Rahi advocate and others, pleading with the court to declare the new act of law as void. According to petitions, the Supreme Court Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023 contravenes the Constitution.

Article 188 of the Constitution empowers the Supreme Court, subject to the provision of any Act of

Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) and any rules made by the Supreme Court, to review any judgment pronounced or any order made by it. The law provides the right to file a review petition to an aggrieved person against whom an order has been made under clause (3) of the Article 184 of the Constitution, prior to this legislation. It says that the petition shall be filed by the person within sixty days of the commencement of this legislation.

It proposes that a review petition shall be heard by a bench larger than the bench which passed the original judgment in order. It suggests that the review petitioner shall have the right to appoint any advocate of the supreme court of his choice for the review petition.

## Zardari hopes ECP to hold polls as per constitution

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has expressed his confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan hoping that the electoral body will hold general elections in the country according to the constitution.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the former president said that the ECP was bound to hold fresh delimitations of the constituencies after the new census. "We repose full confidence in the chief election commissioner and ECP members," he added.

Zardari called upon the interim government to put the country on the road to progress after completing projects under the Special Investment Facilitation Council at the earliest. The PPP leader was of the view that the country was passing through an economic crisis, urging everyone that we should take care of the economy first instead of our politics. "If the country exists then we will exist," Zardari exhorted.

Meanwhile, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will launch his public meeting campaign starting today in connection with the forthcoming general elections in the country. The former foreign minister will reach Hyderabad after passing through District Thatta and Badin. According to the PPP spokesperson, the party chairman will visit different districts of Sindh today. He will hold a press conference at Mandhero House in Badin at 3 p.m. Then the former foreign minister will leave for Hyderabad.

## Court issues warrants for Arshad's wife

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a surprising move, a local court in the federal capital issued on Saturday non-bailable arrest warrants for Samia Arshad, the widow of senior journalist Arshad Sharif.

The senior journalist and former anchor was killed in Kenyan capital Nairobi on October 23 where he was living in self-exile. The warrants were issued against Samia Arshad and 18 others by Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah over their non-appearance before court as witnesses in the Arshad Sharif murder case. Arshad Sharif's wife, son, producer Ali Usman and 16 others are among the witnesses in the FIR registered on behalf of the state into the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif.

As per the slain journalist's family, the FIR was registered on behalf of state not at the request of Arshad's family and they already rejected the FIR. Earlier, Kenyan investigative journalist Brian Obuya raised concerns over the delay in the probe findings into the senior journalist Arshad Sharif murder case. Brian Obuya said that the investigators have spent a very long time completing the probe into the Arshad Sharif murder case. He criticised that neither any report was issued after the probe into the journalist's assassination case nor the names of the accused Kenyan policemen were disclosed.

## Judge hearing cipher case still on leave

ISLAMABAD (INP): The court proceedings on the post-arrest bail applications filed by former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan and party Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher leaking case once again could not be held on Saturday as the Official Secrets Act Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain is still on leave.

The case was adjourned without holding any proceedings. The court staff fixed the case for hearing on September 11. On Thursday, the PTI lawyers appeared in the Special Court hearing cases registered under the Official Secrets Act. They requested the court staff to fix their petitions for Sept 9. But the staff told them that Judge Zulqarnain would be back on duty on Monday (Sept 11) and it would be better if their petition was fixed for Monday.



BADIN: Pakistan People's Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing party workers.

# KP CM stresses to increase power generation capacity

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here Saturday stressed to increase power generation in KP and said that completion of ongoing power generation projects would not only add electricity to national grid but also help increasing income of the province.

He was chairing the 13th policy board meeting of Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO). The meeting was also attended by caretaker minister for energy, Ahmad Jan, Additional Chief Secretary, Zubair Asghar, Secretary Finance, Ayaz Khan, Secretary Law, Shagufta Naveed, Secretary Energy, Tashfeen Haider , Chief Executive Officer PEDO, Engr. Naeem Khan

and concerned officials.

On the occasion, Chief Minister was presented annual report of PEDO for the year 2022-23. Caretaker CM expressed satisfaction over PEDO performance expressing hope that PEDO would ensure timely completion of energy generation projects to enhance energy generation capacity of the province and provide cheap electricity to people.

The meeting also approved current budget estimate of PEDO for 2023-24 and reviewed budget for 2022-23. The meeting was told that revenue of Rs. 47 billion has been generated by energy projects of PEDO and seven hydropower projects of 162 MW have been competed under PEDO while five power generating projects are in final stage of completion.

The meeting was informed that

work is in progress on 13.5 MW Chappari Charkhel project and 6.9 MW Mujabdeen hydropower projects while work has been started on 300 MW Balakot Hydropower project with financial assistance of Asian Development Bank. The work would soon start on 88 MW Gabral Kalam project and 157 MW Madayn hydropower project.

Participants of meeting were briefed that Civil Secretariat, CM House and CM secretariat has been converted to solar power while 8000 schools, 187 Basic Health Units and 4000 mosques have also been converted to solar power. PEDO has also converted 300 mosques of merged districts to solar power. It was told that 356 mini micro hydropower projects are completed in Phase I while work is underway on 291 power projects under Phase II.

# Illegal electricity connections unearthed

LAHORE (INP): With the countrywide crackdown on power theft slowly gaining momentum, the officials of power distribution companies (Discos) assisting in or failing to curb the practice are also on radar as 248 of them have so far been sent to the headquarters and another 1,914 transferred.

In this connection, Energy Secretary Rashid Langrial said it was only the beginning and the ongoing action would be ruthless sans any forgiveness for anyone. He said over 2,000 power theft cases involving four million units of electricity had so far been unearthed, resulting in at least 21 arrests and fine of over Rs160 million.

Like other regions, Iesco (Islamabad Electric Supply Company) has also launched an operation that is spread over Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Attock and other areas. In

Punjab, three committees have been formed to check power theft and monitor the situation as different Discos are taking action against the culprits.

As far as the southern Punjab is concerned, the Mepco (Multan Electricity Supply Company) found 319 consumers involved in the practice and registered 316 cases. Meanwhile, 4,690 illegal connections were suspended by Hesco (Hyderabad Electric Supply Company) during the past 48 hours.

The Hesco has to recover an amount of Rs169 billion from consumers and is among the worst performing companies in terms of line losses, theft and revenue recovery along with Pesco (Peshawar Electric Supply Company), Sepco (Sukkur Electric Supply Company) and Qesco (Quetta Electric Supply Company). Similarly, the

## Joint Naval exercises commences

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Major joint Naval Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV and Deraa Al Sahil between Pakistan Navy (PN) and Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) commenced at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia. The exercises are aimed to consolidate bilateral relations and enhance interoperability between the two navies and Special Ops Forces. The maritime drills include range of naval operations covering traditional & non-traditional warfare domains.

For participation in exercises, PN Flotilla comprising Pakistan Navy Ships SAIF, HIMMAT, DEHSHAT and MUHAFAZ reached Al Jubail port of Saudi Arabia. The ships were warmly welcomed by senior RSNF officials and Pakistan's Diplomatic Staff at Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Naval Ships, Special Operations Forces & Marines of both the navies, helicopters and aircraft of Royal Saudi Air Force are participating in the exercises. During the harbour phase, both sides exchanged views on professional subjects and finalised the planning of sea exercises. Harbour phase activities included workshops on tactical procedures, seminars, simulators training, exchange visits and coordination meetings prior conduct of exercises at sea.

Exercise Naseem Al Bahr is biennial naval exercise that has evolved over three decades. The exercise is a manifestation of Pak-Saudi strategic relations and mutual resolve to enhance cooperation in naval domain to jointly deal maritime challenges.

## 6-grade girl abducted

Anees Takar

MARDAN: An unidentified kidnapper has tragically abducted a 12 years old and class 6 student Aisha, while she was going to school in the morning in Iranabad Par Hoti Mardan.

According to the provided details, the distraught father of the young abducted student, Wajid Gul, promptly reported the incident to the Par Hoti police. Gul informed them that his daughter had left their home at 7 a.m. yesterday morning but was subsequently kidnapped by an unknown gang while en-route to her destination. Heart-wrenchingly, the little girl was seen being forcibly taken by a female accomplice. Her father further disclosed that Aisha failed to return home at the usual time, prompting immediate concern.

# Imran files constitutional petition in Apex court

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Saturday filed a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court (SC) against the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Official Secrets (Amendment) Act, 2023.

In his petition, filed through Advocate Shoaib Shaheen, the PTI chairman prayed the court to declare both the Acts 'unconstitutional' since President Arif Alvi had not signed them. He further prayed to the court to suspend both the laws unless it gave verdict in the case.

Imran said that the Acts in question were contrary to Articles 8, 10 and 19. Three days ago, on September 6, 2023 (Wednesday), the

Sindh Bar Council (SBC) had approached the SC against the trial of civilians in military courts. The SBC, in its petition, had stated that the charging the accused persons in relation to the various acts of violence on May 9 and May 10 throughout Pakistan under the Official Secrets Act 1923 and the Pakistan Army Act 1952 is, apart from being unconstitutional, patently beyond the scope of the said acts and is a colourable exercise of power and without jurisdiction.

The petitioner had urged the court to declare that the trial of civilians under military laws and before military tribunals was not only in violation of the Constitution but also of

Pakistan's international treaty and convention obligations and could not be countenanced under any circumstances. The development came days after President Dr Arif Alvi's statement on August 20, 2023 that he had not signed the bills led to a controversy.

The president had attributed the confusion to his staff's actions. The revelation plunged the country into a state of chaos. In a social media post, the president vehemently denied giving his assent to the two bills. He, however, admitted that his staff had failed to return the bills to parliament within the stipulated 10-day time period as mandated by Article 75 of the Constitution.

# Pakistan, WB discuss to expand collaboration

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and World Bank on Saturday discussed and reviewed the overall performance of the World Bank ongoing portfolio in Pakistan, and different options were discussed to further expand collaboration in different priority areas to help boost the economic activities in the country.

Country Director World Bank called on Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Privatization, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, said a press release issued here. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, while welcoming the World Bank team, reiterated that Pakistan values its development partnership with the World Bank. She appreciated the efforts of the World Bank management, especially the country team in Islamabad in the economic

development of Pakistan.

The Country Director World Bank Najy Binhassine, while briefing the Finance Minister on the ongoing portfolio, indicated that the World Bank Management, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Privatization, is making efforts to not only improve the implementation performance of the ongoing portfolio but also to maximize the volume of disbursement of foreign resources. He indicated that the joint efforts are targeting disbursements of around US\$2.0 billion during the current financial year, i.e., 2023-24.

The Finance Minister shared the reform agenda of the government and the ongoing efforts to stabilize the economy. She also informed that the Government of Pakistan is cognizant of the fact that

implementation of reforms in the priority sectors, particularly in the energy sector, will allow Pakistan to unleash the growth potential, therefore introducing Policy Reforms in this sector will remain the prime focus of the government.

The Country Director briefed the Finance Minister on the progress under the RISE-II Development Policy Financing Program, which has recently been negotiated by the World Bank with EAD. The Finance Minister commended the immediate support of the World Bank during the 2022 floods. However, considering the enormous post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the country, the Finance Minister asked the Country Director to extend further World Bank support to better cope with the emergency needs of the country.

# ANP blames six personalities for all mess

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Awami National Party central spokesman and former senator Zahid Khan has said that two former chief justices, two key politicians and two retired generals were responsible for destroying the country who, according to him, should be tried under article 6 of the constitution.

Addressing a party gathering and later talking to media in Badwan on Saturday, the ANP leader alleged that justice Saqib Nisar and justice Asif Saeed Khosa, retired general Qamar Javed Bajwa, retired general Faiz Hameed, PTI chief Imran Khan and PML-N president Mian Shahbaz Sharif all were involved in overthrowing Mian Nawaz Sharif's government. The workers were also addressed by the ANP tehsil president advocate Allah Dad Khan, Iqbal Khan, Mukhtiar Khan and others.

Zahid Khan said that the country would have progressed if Nawaz Sharif would have not replaced in 2017. He said the people

had taken to the streets due to hike in prices of petroleum products, electricity, gas and other daily use items.

He alleged the leadership of both the PTI and PDM was responsible for the current inflation and devaluation of Pakistani currency. The ANP leader said the role of Imran Khan had finished. He demanded of the election commission of Pakistan to ensure timely election as it was the only solution to the problems faced by the nation. He said the ANP supported the determination of the sitting army chief to hold people accountable but it should be beyond politics.

**Two killed:** A ward attendant of the district headquarters hospital Timergara identified as Sher Zada was killed when a pistol he was buying went off in an arms' store at the Timergara Shaheed Chowk here on Saturday, officials of Rescue 1122 said. They said the Rescue 1122 medical team rushed to the site and shifted the body to the DHQ hospital Timergara. The Timergara police reg-

istered a case and started further investigations.

## Maryam Nawaz likely to visit Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz is expected to visit Sindh this month, it was learnt on Saturday.

According to sources, the PML-N chief organiser is likely to visit Karachi and Hyderabad later this month for the reorganization of party in Sindh "The schedule of her visit to Karachi and Hyderabad is being prepared," sources say.

The announcement of the new office-bearers of PML-N Sindh is also expected during her visit to Sindh. In this connection, party's provincial chapter has started making preparations for the proposed visit of Maryam Nawaz. Sources said that many notable personalities from Sindh would join PML-N during her visit.