

#### SHC restrains NAB

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court on Tuesday heard a petition of former Sindh minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla and others against harassment. Former excise and taxation minister of Sindh Mukesh Kumar Chawla and excised department officers had filed a plea in the high court against harassment of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in an inquiry related to misuse of power and corruption.



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GILGIT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar interacting with school students at the display stalls of various science, technology and artistic projects at Chief Minister Secretariat.

## Pakistan condoles with Libya

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has conveyed condolence to people and State of Libya over widespread loss of lives and properties after flood hit the Northern parts of country.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Foreign Office spokesperson said, "The Government and people of Pakistan extend heartfelt condolences to the people and State of Libya on the devastation caused by the deadly floods in the Northeastern part of Libya." The loss of lives and the sufferings endured by the survivors were deeply saddening and we stand in solidarity with the Libyan people during these difficult times, the FO spokesperson added. "Our Embassy in Libya is monitoring the situation and is in contact with the local authorities for possible assistance and support to the community," the spokesperson added.

## Court okays Bushra Bibi's bail

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A court in Islamabad on Tuesday approved bail to Bushra Bibi, former first lady and wife of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, in Al-Qadiri Trust case.

Bushra Bibi's lawyer Latif Khosa submitted the pre-arrest bail today which was accepted by the court, ordering the former first lady to submit surety bonds of Rs100,000. The court also issued notices to the respondents for September 26 in the Al-Qadiri Trust case. The court also extended Bushra Bibi's interim bail to September 26 in Toshakhana case.

The IHC Tuesday adjourned a plea against the bugging of former first lady Bushra Bibi's calls and harassment of her by the institutions till September 18. The court heard the plea against an audio leak of Bushra Bibi and Zulfi Bukhari and clubbed it with Najam Saqib's plea against phone tapping that was already pending in the court. "We are taking notice of your petition. We will hear it with another case of the same nature," Justice Babar Sattar of the IHC said to PTI's lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa. "Khosa Sahib! What petition do you have filed?" he asked.

# IHC reserves verdict in cipher hearing case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the petition filed by former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan against the hearing of US cipher case against him at District Jail Attock.

IHC Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq heard the case. During the hearing, assistant to Imran's lawyer Sher Afzal Khan Marwat told the CJ that the latter was busy in another court, and he would be here shortly. "I request the prosecution to go ahead with its arguments in the case since I am here on his behalf," he said. CJ Farooq asked the assistant to call Marwat. Soon, counsel for the PTI chairman turned up in the court and read out the notification issued by the Ministry of Law.

He asked as to under which law the ministry shifted the court to Attock Jail. "How can the ministry shift the court from

Islamabad to Punjab?" he asked, adding, "As per law, it is the Supreme Court (SC) which has the power to order shifting of the court." He argued that the PTI chairman could not be kept in the Attock Jail after the suspension of his sentence in the Toshakhana reference. He was the view that the court was shifted with a bad intent. "The purpose of issuing a notification in this regard was to ensure that Imran could be kept in jail as long as possible," Marwat said, and added, "The trial of civilians under the Official Secrets Act is held in special courts."

PTI chairman's lawyer went on to say that Islamabad was not part of any province; in fact it was a separate territory. He further said that there was a law that dealt with shifting of the court. "If venue of the hearing had to be changed, the trial judge ought to have been taken into confidence prior to that," Marwat argued. Speaking on the occasion, Additional

in the country.

TFP also asked Matthew Miller whether the US is aware that the Afghan currently has become four times more stronger than the Pakistani currency, Miller stated that the U.S. will continue to support Pakistan to make its economy stronger and stable.

One of the other story which was discussed in detail during today's briefing was about the MOU signed between the US, India, Saudi Arabia, UAE Israel and the European Union to create water, rail and digital connectivity between these countries.

While not mentioning China's OBOR (One Belt One Road) project, Miller said that this project will be far more transparent, sustainable and will have far more economical benefits for nations and the region. When asked whether this MOU will normalize ties

between Saudi Arabia and Israel, Matthew stated that he does not want to speculate anything at the moment because at present only MOU has been signed and that he was not aware of the complete details of this project.

It is pertinent to mention here that TFP has contacted the US Embassy in Islamabad to seek comments of Ambassador Blome with regard to his meeting with CEC. In its questionnaire TFP has asked whether the Ambassador met the Pakistani CEC on his own description or wherever he was asked from Washington DC to hold such meeting. The Ambassador has also been asked whether the Ambassador believes that the people to people relations between Pakistan and the US have improved since last one year or has it decreased.

will fulfil its responsibility fairly.

The London meeting was attended by Suleman Shehbaz, Hassan Nawaz, former federal minister Khawaja Asif, Malik Mohammad Ahmed Khan and Nasir Janjua. The party's strategy regarding the election, Nawaz's return and the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) stance on the elections came under discussion. Meanwhile, former federal minister and party spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb also confirmed Shehbaz's statement on a post on microblogging site X.

Important statement of former prime minister and president of PML-N Shehbaz Sharif — the architect of Pakistan and the leader of the people Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will return home on October 21," She also said that the PML-N supremo would be warmly welcomed upon his return. Last week, Nawaz himself for the first time confirmed his homecoming next month, during his interaction with his party workers and supporters at Stanhope House.

## SC rejects appeals of two army colonels

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected appeals of two former army officers who were awarded jail sentences after convicted of involvement in conspiracy to overthrow the Benazir Bhutto government in 1995.

Upholding the jail sentences, apex court's Justice Munib Akhtar read out the judgment reserved on February 15, 2022, dismissing the appeals of Colonel (ret'd) Azad Minhas and Colonel (ret'd) Inayatullah Khan. Both officers had moved the Supreme Court in 2016 after the Lahore High Court had rejected their pleas against the decision of the Field Court Martial which sentenced Colonel Minhas to two years and Colonel Inayatullah to four years in jail. The Field Court Martial also ordered their removal from service.

A three-judge SC bench comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Sayyed Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi had reserved judgement on Feb 15, 2022 after hearing Additional Attorney General (AAG) Sajid Ilyas Bhatti as well as both colonels. Both the army officers were arrested along with retired Maj-Gen Zaheerul Islam Abbasi, now deceased, and Brig Mustansir Billah on Sept 26, 1995 on charges of plotting to storm a meeting of corps commanders scheduled to be held on Sept 30 that year at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

The "conspirators" planned to assassinate then prime minister Benazir Bhutto and army chief Gen Abdul Waheed Kakar, senior cabinet ministers and military chiefs, besides proclamation of the Islamic system of Khilafat with Maj-Gen Abbasi as amir. According to media reports, the details of the conspiracy were revealed after Qari Saifullah Akhtar, one of the conspirators and chief of his breakaway faction Harkat-ul-Jihad al Islami, turned an "approver". On the basis of his testimony, the FGCM had sentenced Maj-Gen Abbasi to seven years and Brig Billah to 14 years in jail.

## Elahi bail delayed again

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ex-Chief Minister Punjab Pervaiz Elahi's bail in the Judicial Complex attack case had to be delayed once again after police failed to submit relevant records in court.

Elahi was represented by a junior associate of his lawyer Sardar Abdul Razzaq. The court instructed police once again to submit the relevant records on Wednesday and said that the matter would be put off for one day. However, Elahi's lawyer argued for the case to be fixed for September 14. The judge fixed the hearing for September 15, citing a busy schedule. The Islamabad High Court also wrapped up a case regarding Elahi's arrest under MPO.

Islamabad's DC appeared in Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangir's court in person and said that the arrest orders issued against Elahi under the MPO had been withdrawn. Elahi was not brought to court from jail for the hearing.

# PM for action against elements spreading chaos

F.P. Report

GILGIT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to identify the elements spreading chaos in the name of religion in Gilgit, and take strict action against them.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss development projects, and law and order situation in Gilgit-Baltistan, said the security of every citizen was the state's responsibility. In the meeting, the prime minister was briefed about the progress on projects in information technology, health, education, and other sectors, as well as the issues.

He was told that steps had been taken to identify and address the problems confronting the education sector in all the GB districts, particularly Diamer and Astore. The measures taken for the promotion of education sector included the provision of food to the students, reconstruction of buildings and rehabilitation of dilapidated structures, professional training of teachers, and establishment of smart schools.

The prime minister was also apprised of the projects in GB health sector, including the establishment of a 24-hour helpline to address the issue of mental health. Besides the performance of the environment and tourism sectors, the prime minister was also briefed about the sowing of wheat and subsidy on the crop, production and potential of hydel power in GB as well as the budget.

Prime Minister Kakar directed the GB administration and leadership to assess the scope of the ongoing development projects and give a special focus on those of a crucial nature. Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti and Information and Broadcasting Minister Murtaza Solangi, GB Governor Syed Mehdi Shah and Chief Minister Gulbar Khan, GB chief secretary and Inspector General of Police, and senior officers attended the meeting.

CM Gilgit Baltistan briefs PM Kakar about development projects: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and apprised him of the

progress on the ongoing uplift projects. The chief minister also briefed the prime minister about the public welfare projects, particularly in education and health sectors, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was given a briefing on the development of tourism sector in Gilgit Baltistan. On the occasion, the chief minister presented the traditional tunic and a cap of Gilgit Baltistan to the caretaker prime minister.

PM lays wreath on martyrs' monument: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar arrived here in Gilgit Baltistan on a two-day visit. Accompanied by Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti and Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi, the prime minister laid a floral wreath at the monument of martyrs at the Chief Minister's Secretariat. A contingent of GB Scouts presented a guard of honour to the prime minister.

The caretaker prime minister was briefed by Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Mohyuddin Ahmen Wani on various matters. Later, the prime minister visited an exhibition of science models by students of local schools. He evinced a keen interest in the innovative models made by the students and interacted with them. The students presented various models depicting power generation from hydel and solar sources to mitigate impact of the climate change. The prime minister lauded the abilities of the children and said Pakistan had a bright future ahead due to its talented youth. He appreciated the knowledge of young girls and boys on environmental issues.

PM assures GB, Diamer elders of early completion of delayed projects: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar assured the political elders of Gilgit-Baltistan and Diamer of his government's support to ensure the early completion of delayed projects in the region.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of political elders of GB and Diamer, instructed the formation of a consultative platform to promote interfaith harmony in the country. The delegation welcomed the prime minister on arrival in the GB and discussed the law and order situation and other matters.

# 2,300 dead in 'epic' Libya floods as 10,000 missing

TRIPOLI (Agencies): At least 2,300 people have died, and 10,000 are missing after Storm Daniel dumped devastating rain on Libya's northeast, reportedly bursting two major dams and overflowing the already heavily inundated areas of the country. Tamer Ramadan, head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) delegation in Libya, stated that "the death toll is huge and around 10,000 are reported missing."

Othman Abduljalil, the health minister in Libya's eastern parliament-backed government, reported that as many as 6,000 people are missing in the city of Derna alone, describing parts of it as a "ghost town." The floods have overwhelmed several cities in the country's northeast, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, including Derna, which has been hit particularly hard.

Hichem Abu Chkiouat, the minister of civil aviation

and a member of the emergency committee in the eastern region, painted a grim picture, stating, "The situation was catastrophic... The bodies are still lying in many places. There are families still stuck inside their homes, and there are victims under the rubble." The floods have been attributed to a powerful low-pressure system that developed into a tropical-like cyclone, referred to as a "medicane," after causing catastrophic flooding in Greece. This extreme weather system, similar to tropical storms and hurricanes, has wreaked havoc in Libya, a nation already grappling with political divisions and the aftermath of a decade-long conflict.

The scale of the disaster has prompted concerns that aid efforts may be hampered by Libya's political fractures. The country has been divided between rival administrations since 2014, and the UN-backed Government of National

Unity (GNU) in the capital, Tripoli, is in opposition to the eastern-based government led by commander Khalifa Haftar. The floods have affected multiple cities, leading to the destruction of bridges and entire neighbourhoods. Rescue and relief efforts have been complicated by the heavy destruction, lack of phone lines, and inadequate preparedness for such a catastrophe.

Osama Aly, head of Libya's Emergency and Ambulance authority, admitted that "Libya was not prepared for a catastrophe like that. It has not witnessed that level of catastrophe before." Several countries, including Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, have offered aid and assistance to Libya in the wake of this devastating natural disaster. The United States and the United Nations are also coordinating efforts to provide support and relief to those affected by the floods.

# Level-playing field not available to all parties: PPP

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has demanded that there should be a level-playing field for all political leaders, maintaining that the political leaders are deprived of equal opportunities to contest the upcoming general elections.

He stated this while responding to a question regarding the level-playing field available to his party as the two political bigwigs — PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and PTI chief Imran Khan — are currently ineligible to contest upcoming general elections owing to convictions in separate corruption cases. "There is not a level-playing field for everyone and that is my objection," said the former foreign minister during his visit to slain journalist Jan Muhammad Mahar's house in Sukkur on Tuesday.

Nawaz — who has been in self-imposed exile in London since November 2019 owing to health reasons — was disqualified for life in 2017 by the Supreme Court for not declaring a receivable salary. He is expected to return to Pakistan in October this year to lead the election campaign of his party.

Meanwhile, Khan has been imprisoned in the Attock jail since his conviction in the Toshakhana case on August 5 for failing to properly declare gifts he received while in office. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) overturned a lower court's decision to jail him for three years with an Rs100,000 fine — a judgment that kept him from contesting upcoming elections — he remains behind bars due to his judicial remand in the cipher case till September 13.

Speaking about Mahar's

murder — who was shot dead by unidentified armed motorcycleists in Sukkur on August 17 — Bilawal said that a joint investigation team has been formed to probe the case. "I have come here to offer my condolences to Jan Muhammad Mahar's family and we stand by them," said the PPP chairman.

Bilawal also took a jibe at former prime minister Imran Khan — who was overthrown through a no-confidence motion in April 2022 — saying that the terrorists from Afghanistan were allowed to enter Pakistan during Khan's tenure. He said that a plan was made that the terrorists would be allowed to settle in Pakistan once again, questioning whether Khan and former spy chief Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hameed knew that these militants would attack Pakistan's Army once again.





## CM directs for resumption of suspended work on Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge

KARACHI (PPI): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar has directed the Works & Service Dept to resume the suspended work on the Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge within a week and instructed law enforcement agencies to provide security to the crew working there.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting of the Works & Service Department to review the progress of ongoing uplift schemes here at CM House. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhr Alam, Chairman P&D Shakil Maqnejo, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatoti, Secretary Works Nawaz Sohoo, and other concerned officers.

Secretary Works Nawaz Sohoo told the CM that Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge project has been launched on PPP mode for Rs33995 million. It would have a four-lane Bridge over the River Indus. The project length is 25 km and the 1.2 km bridge length.

Giving the progress of the work

on the bridge to the CM, the Secretary of Works said that it was started from both sides, Ghotki-Kandhkot, but due to the kidnapping of two employees of the project work was suspended in June 2023.

The CM was told that the 18.7 km approach roads to the bridge have been completed. He added that the construction of Thull Link Road connecting N-55 to Thull Road has also been completed by 95 percent and now the work has been suspended temporarily due to law and order problems.

The CM expressing his displeasure on the stoppage of the work said that it would not only escalate the cost of the project but cause inconvenience for the people of the area and on top of it the project would lose its purpose of initiating.

Justice Baqar directed the Chief Secretary to ensure the security of the workers engaged there, and get the suspended work started again within a week and report him. The CM was

informed that the handing over of Land for the construction of the Admin building, Toll Plaza, Toll Collecting Staff room, and Weigh Bridge still awaited from DC, Ghotki due to the delayed disbursement of compensation the landowners were obstructing the ongoing site activities.

The Chief Minister directed the Chief Secretary to talk to the Senior Member of the Board of Revenue (SMBR) to ensure compensation for land acquisition and start the work. Link Road (M-9) (Project: The CM was told that Link Road, M-9 National Highway was a 22 km, four-lane dual carriageway. The project has been started on PPP mode for Rs1.96 billion.

Work on the project has been completed, excluding interchange (M9 interchange) by 90 percent. The project is being executed by NHA. The CM directed the Works dept to resolve the design issues of the interchange and complete the project at the earliest.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Aniq Ahmed, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. —INP Photo

## Hafiz Naeem discusses issues of local bodies, water board with CM

KARACHI (NNI): A delegation of Jamaat Islami led by its Ameer of Karachi Hafiz Naeem Rehman called on Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar and discussed the issues of local bodies, water board, and illegal construction in the city.

The delegation comprised Monem Zafar, Saifuddin, Saleem Azhar, Sadruddin, and Zahid Askari. Hafiz Naeem said that the transition period of newly elected local bodies has come to an end officially but even then, the elected bodies have not been given power to function in the

public interest.

At this, the chief minister said that he was taking necessary measures to strengthen local bodies all over the province. "We are strengthening them so that they can work in the interest of the people," he said.

Hafiz Naeem complained against KE and said that neither they have controlled power theft nor made investments to improve the generation and distribution system. At this, the CM said that he held a meeting with the KE authorities on Monday and urged them to improve their system.

The Jamaat delegation

took up the issue of illegal construction in the city. The CM told them that illegal construction could never be allowed in the city. "I have given instructions to SBCA and the district administration to keep an eye and take action against illegal constructions," he said.

Discussing the issue of water theft in the city, the CM said that he has told the water board to improve its system and ensure a proper supply of water to the citizens. He added that under the World Bank-funded projects water board was being overhauled.

The caretaker CM said

that once the local bodies representatives took over properly and strengthened, they would be able to look after the people of their areas in terms of cleanliness, garbage lifting, and improving water and sanitation systems.

Justice Baqar told the Jamaat delegation that he had activated the Complaint Cell, 919 in the CM House and it would be receiving public complaints which he would resolve personally. The Complaint Cell has two phone numbers: 99207568 and 99207349 to register complaints.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman and Re-elect President of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi addressing the 24th meeting of AOA General Assembly Meeting held at Kazan.

## Asian Ombudsman Association re-elects Ejaz Qureshi as its President

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi was re-elected unopposed as President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) at Kazan (Republic of Tatarstan).

The elections to the various positions in the AOA Board of Directors were held at the 17th Meeting of the General Assembly. In addition to the election of Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi as President of AOA, the General Assembly elected Heads of Ombudsman Institutions in Azerbaijan, Hong Kong and Iran as Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association respectively.

Heads of Ombudsman Institutions in China, Japan, Korea, Tatarstan and Turkiye were elected as members of the Board of Directors. Following his election, Mr. Qureshi thanked the General Assembly for expressing confidence and trust in Pakistan's contribution in promoting the cause of Ombudsmanship and the ultimate goals of good gov-

ernance and the rule of law in Asia and beyond.

The Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) is a major non-political, independent and professional body of international character representing more than two thirds of the world population. Its current membership is 46 ombudsman institutions from the Asian Region. The Association's permanent secretariat is hosted by the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat at Islamabad. The Association was established following the First Asian Ombudsman Conference held on 15-16 April 1996 at Islamabad.

The General Assembly meeting was followed by an International Conference on the "Effective Practices of Ombudsman: National Features and Universal Approaches" which was attended by a large number of international delegations and representatives of international bodies, academia and the civil society. In his address to the Conference, Mr. Qureshi highlighted the centrality of ombudsmanship as an

effective mechanism for promoting the rule of law, good governance, justice and fair play in the daily life of a common man.

He added that the ombudsman institutions constitute a universal fraternity that makes a strong case for greater interaction and mutual cooperation in pursuit of their common goals and aspirations.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi stated that the ombudsmanship has taken firm roots in Pakistan. The Office of Federal Ombudsman was established on 24 January 1983 and the concept has been replicated in other areas of governance including banking, insurance, taxation and harassment of woman at workplace.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Institution over the last forty years has established its credentials as an effective instrument for providing speedy and inexpensive administrative justice to the people against any acts of maladministration by the Federal agencies. He added that over 1.8 million households have benefited from the services of this

institution since its inception.

The number of complaints handled last year was 164,173 while during the first eight months of the current year, the total receipts has touched the figure of 123,519 and is projected to reach 185,533 by the end of the year. Mr. Qureshi further stated that the objectives and purposes of the establishment of the ombudsman institution have a direct bearing on the realization of the overall goals of the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and good governance in all spheres of life.

He assured the international partners that Pakistan remained ready to share its experiences and best practices in promoting professionalism in the work of the ombudsman institutions for the benefit of the Asian regional fraternity.

The Board of Directors meeting of AOA decided that next meeting of BOD will be held in 2024 at Istanbul (Turkey) while China offered to host the General Assembly and BOD meeting in 2025.

## Customs foil smuggling bid

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Customs on Tuesday claimed to have foiled a smuggling bid for a huge quantity of foreign-brand cloth worth millions. According to a spokesman for Customs, the Anti-Smuggling Organization (ASO) of the Collectorate of Customs Enforcement, Karachi, on a tip-off intercepted a trailer at the Mochko check post and during its checking recovered a polyester fabric. Upon inquiring about the documents of the cloth, the driver showed irrelevant documents.

## Dr. Sohail Rajput assumes charge as Secretary BoI

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dr. Mohammad Sohail Rajput (PAS), Ex- Chief Secretary Government of Sindh After assuming the charge of the Secretary Board of Investment visited Board of Investment Regional office Karachi for an interaction meeting with Officers/Officials of BOI IFC Karachi on 11.09.2023. Secretary Board of Investment was briefed about the role of BOI IFC Karachi and its achievements since last one year.

Secretary BOI was briefed that Karachi is the commercial hub of busi-

ness opportunities in Pakistan. Hence, the role of BOI IFC Karachi is very important to attract the FDI and to attract investors to invest their capital in different sector of economy. He further emphasized that BOI IFC Karachi may increase their efforts to resolve investor's grievances in Karachi and provide them a conducive environment to attract investment in the country.

The Secretary Board of Investment directed that weekly and monthly meetings may be arranged with different stakeholders to point out the issues of investors, with instruction to work with due diligence to achieve KPIs in

the field of trade and investment and focus on "BE READY PROJECT" in Sindh province to fulfil the international commitment of Ease of Doing Business. Dr. Mohammad Sohail Rajput said that here is a huge potential in Dhabjee Special Economic Zone for attracting FDI in the country. He directed BOI IFC, Karachi to increase liaison with private sector of Karachi and Business community of Karachi like KCCI, FPCCI, OICCI and KATI. He said that BOI IFC Karachi can play vital role in bridging gap between BOI Headquarter and Business community of the Karachi.

## OGDCL commences production from Nashpa-11 well Karak

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Tuesday announced the successful testing, completion, and commencement of production at the Nashpa-11 well in District Karak, KPK Province.

This achievement stands as a testament to OGDCL's commitment to bolstering Pakistan's energy sector and meeting the escalating needs of both domestic consumers and industrial enterprises. OGDCL is diligently pursuing a harmonized approach to exploration, drilling, and development activities with a focus on optimizing production on a fast-track basis.

This development is the result of OGDCL's in-house expertise. The well was drilled to a depth of 4,485 meters, targeting the hydrocarbon potential within the Lumshiwal, Hangu, and Lockhart formations. Presently, these formations are yielding 830 barrels per day (BPD) of oil



and 1.0 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas through a 32/64" choke at a well-head flowing pressure (WHFP) of 520 PSI. As of September 11, 2023, the well has been connected to the OGDCL Nashpa plant through a 1.8 Km flow line, and gas is being injected into the SNGPL network.


This venture is a collaborative effort where OGDCL stands as the oper-

ator, holding a 56.45% stake. The partnership also involves Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), which holds a 28.55% share, and Government Holding Private Limited (GHPL) with a 15% share.

It is worth noting that the first discovery at the Nashpa structure was made in September 2009. Currently, out of 12 drilled wells, 10 are in production, collectively producing

11,300 BPD of oil, 91 MMSCFD of gas, and 395 MTD of LPG.

The Nashpa-11 well marks a significant addition to the hydrocarbon reserves base of OGDCL, PPL, GHPL, and the country, promising notable savings through import substitution. The enhancement in oil and gas production aims to address the increasing demands of both domestic consumers and industry.



**PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA  
REGULATORY AUTHORITY  
HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD**

**NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING  
FOR AWARD OF CABLE TV LICENCES**

Reference advertisements published in the national dailies on **2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023** and thereafter, **21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2023**. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) is conducting **"Public Hearings"** of all the eligible and successful bidders at its **Regional Offices** as well as at **PEMRA Headquarters, Islamabad**, as per following schedule:

Sr. No.	City Name	Date & Time
1	Faisalabad & Gujranwala	Wednesday, September 18, 2023 at 11:00 am
2	Islamabad, Sargodha & Hyderabad	Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 11:00 am
3	Lahore, Multan & Sukkur	Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 11:00 am
4	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North) & Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (South)	Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 11:00 am

Addresses of all the PEMRA Regional Offices are available at PEMRA Website i.e. **www.pemra.gov.pk** List of all the partners / directors of the eligible and successful bidders will be placed at **"PEMRA Website"** as well as **"Notice Boards of the respective Regional Offices"** minimum **three days**, prior to date of Public Hearing.

**Director General (Licensing-Distribution)**  
**PEMRA Headquarters, Mauve Area,**  
**Sector G-8/1, Islamabad**  
**Tel: +92(51)9107115, Fax: +92(51)9107140**  
**www.pemra.gov.pk**

PID(I) 1635/23





PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing participants of awareness session on land registration in merged districts.

## FLA arrests 6 accused of Hawala Hundi

PESHAWAR (APP): In its ongoing crackdown on people involved in 'Hawala Hundi' and illegal foreign exchange, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested 6 accused including an Afghan national from various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to FIA Spokesman, the actions were taken on intelligence bases information in Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Abbottabad districts of the province. He said an accused,

named Zaheer Ullah involved in Hawala Hundi was arrested from Lakki Marwat while two accused namely Abdul Malik and Abdullah Nazir were arrested from Kohat. Two other accused identified as Badsah Noor and Jahanzeb were arrested from Dera Ismail Khan while another accused, Izzat Ullah, an Afghan national was arrested from Abbottabad.

The spokesman said the arrested accused Badshah Noor and Jahanzeb were

doing the illegal Hawala and foreign exchange business in the garb of a cloth's dealers in Dera Ismail Khan.

He said in total an amount of over Rs0.8 million, 1090 Qatari Riyal, 500 Saudi Riyal and 300 Dollars including the receipts of Hawala Hundi and mobile phones were recovered from the accused. The FIA has registered cases against the accused and started further investigation.

## Inquiry against DC demanded F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) claimed that the legal fraternity stood behind protests of lawyers and public against Deputy Commissioner Shangla due to his corrupt practices, here on Tuesday.

KPBC vice chairman Zar Badshah and chairman Executive Committee Syed Mubashir Shah condemned Deputy Commissioner Shangla Hassan Abid attitude with lawyers and public.

KPBC argued government to hold inquiry against DC Shangla Hassan Abid on public complaints regarding corruption allegations. KPBC also argued Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to transfer DC Shangla otherwise CS will be responsible for the situation in this regard.

Moreover, KPBC annoyed Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) call for strike on 14th September regarding inflation and observed that legal fraternity will appear before courts.

Meanwhile, KPBC vice chairman Zar Badshah and chairman Executive Committee Syed Mubashir Shah said that lawyers will appear before courts on 14th September across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stated in their press statement.

## Security beefed up in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The City Capital Police on Tuesday beefed up security measures across the provincial capital following the special instructions of CCPO Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar.

Ashfaq Anwar urged people to cooperate with the police and security forces at pickets and during snap-checking to maintain peace in the city.

According to SP Cantt Waqas Rafiq, the divisional SPs along with other units were deployed to monitor the checking process at the blockades, and police officials were directed to take indiscriminate action against the use of tinted glasses in vehicles, unregistered vehicles, and pillion riding.

He said that Ababeel Squad and officials of City Patrolling were assisting the police on pickets and at special checking points in different parts of the city, adding that suspicious persons and undocumented Afghan refugees were also being checked.

## Alleged drug smugglers arrested F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police arrested two alleged drug smugglers and recovered 10 kilograms hashish in the premises of Badabbier police station, on Tuesday.

SP Saddar circle Fazal Wahid Khan deployed teams under supervision of DSP Zia Ullah to bust drug smuggling on intelligence reports.

SHO Nasir Farid conducted two separate actions in the premises of Badabbier police station. Police has registered FIRs against the culprits and started further investigation.

The alleged culprits were identified as Iran Gul and Haji Muhammad while the smugglers confessed their involvement in the drugs during interrogation as well as disclosed other names in the gang.

## Governor for awareness on land record registration

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali actively participated in an awareness session on land registration in the merged districts on Tuesday.

In a dedicated session on land registration, hosted by the Revenue Department's technical assistance unit in collaboration with USAid, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali emphasized the need for practical initiatives aimed at making land registration

more accessible to the public.

He stressed the importance of resolving land disputes, preventing corruption, and ensuring transparency in land records.

Haji Ghulam Ali also underscored the necessity of extending support from the Revenue Department's technical assistance unit to rural areas to address land-related issues.

He particularly highlighted the urgency of

establishing land registration facilities in major cities, including Peshawar.

He announced that by streamlining the land registration process, 70 percent of pending court cases related to land disputes could be resolved efficiently.

Haji Ghulam Ali also stressed the importance of raising awareness among the public regarding land inheritance and the need for fair distribution to avoid legal disputes.

In his closing remarks, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali called for the enforcement of land record projects in strict accordance with the law and emphasized the significance of honesty and integrity in the process.

The session aimed to pave the way for practical solutions to address land registration challenges, reduce land-related conflicts, and promote transparency in the province's land records.

## Involvement in electricity theft: Strict action against influential mafia, big fishes to be taken

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it has been decided to take strict action against the influential mafia and big fishes involved in illegal use of electricity and Kunda culture, while lists of various factories, hotels, commercial plazas, wedding halls, shopping malls, shops and illegal housing societies in the province involved in electricity theft have also been prepared.

Soon a cracked down on a large scale will be launched against those culprits. The domestic consumers have also been warned to give up the Kunda culture immediately and come to use electricity legally, otherwise strict action will be taken according to the law.

The defaulters of electricity bills should also cooperate and pay their arrears early so that the country can be brought out of the current crisis.

A decision was taken in a first meeting of the Provincial Task Force headed by the provincial interior secretary that constituted for the ongoing

campaign against illegal use of electricity and recovery of dues from electricity consumers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per the priority of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

In the meeting, head of the task force, Secretary Interior Abid Majeed, Secretary Energy Zulfikar Ali Shah, Commissioner Peshawar Zubair Khan, Commissioner Malakand Shahid ullah Khan, Deputy Secretary Industry/Commerce Magbool Khan, PESCO Chief Fazal Rabi, Additional Secretary Power Division Arshad Majeed Khan, Commissioners of various divisions, regional police officers and others were present in the meeting.

It was told in the meeting that during one week from September 5th this month, a total of 518 raids were conducted across the province, 925 illegal users involved in electricity theft were removed, 684 cases were registered in different police stations, 28 people were arrested and warnings were issued to 338 consumers. In addition to this, Rs. 4 million have been recovered during one

week. According to CEO PESCO, there are Rs. 190 billion dues from electricity defaulters in the province, for which teams have been formed to recover.

Additional Secretary Power Division Arshad Majeed Khan expressed his dissatisfaction with the performance of PESCO and said that the most electricity theft is in Mardan, Charsadda, Bannu, Peshawar while the recovery targets are also slow. In the meeting Bannu, DI Khan, Kohat, Bannu, Hazara Divisional Commissioners and Regional Police Officers (RPOs) informed about the measures for recovery and prevention of electricity theft in their respective districts. In the meeting, emphasis was also placed on using the campaign under the Whistle Blower Act to make it successful.

In the meeting, Secretary Interior Abid Majeed, the head of the provincial task force, expressed his indignation at the lack of public awareness campaign and weak communication by PESCO

during the prevention and recovery campaign of illegal use of electricity. He directed PESCO chief Pana-flex to be displayed in streets, Mohallas and markets immediately. He also directed to start awareness campaign on TV channels and newspapers. He emphasized to take strict action against illegal housing societies including posh areas of the province.

He directed the deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and police officials of the province who are included in the task force committees at district and tehsil levels to share data on daily basis to PMRU that is performing as monitoring duties of such operation.

Secretary Power Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah also presented important suggestions for the success of the campaign in the meeting. Appreciating the personal interest and cooperation of the Additional Secretary Power Division, he has expressed hope that the above initiative will help in the power crisis in the province.



PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Caretaker Minister Irshad Qaiser visiting Central Jail.

## PHC seeks reply from BRT contractors

PESHAWAR (APP): On the request of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), a two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday sought a reply from the contractors of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in an alleged corruption scam.

The bench, comprising Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah, also sought details of amended NAB rules to check the jurisdiction of

the bureau to investigate the matter.

The lawyer of the petitioner informed the court that the Public Accounts Committee had ordered NAB to investigate the matter despite the fact that the PAC did not have the mandate and Peshawar High Court (PHC) had also declared the project legal.

The counsel of NAB informed the court that the bureau had completed the investigation into the scam

and prepared a reference as well.

He said that PHC had issued a stay order against filing the reference and requested that the court allow the filing of the reference against the accused.

The court ordered the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) lawyer to present the new NAB rules in the next three days and also adjourned the hearing of the case till September 21.

## Sugar price reduces up in couple of days

PESHAWAR (APP): Following a serious action against hoarders of sugar, the price of the commodity has witnessed a significant fall of Rs 50 to 55 per kilogram in the markets of the district.

According to the local market, the sugar was now available at Rs 162 to 165 per kilogram. Shopkeepers said a strong check on sugar smuggling and closure of the border with Afghanistan has caused a tangible fall in the prices of sugar.

On the other hand, the citizens, while commending the government efforts in controlling the prices of sugar and actions against hoarding mafia, have demanded gearing up actions against the sugar mafia to further bring down its prices. A cut in prices of 50kg sugar sack was also reported in the market as dealers said control on sugar smuggling and closure of the Torkham border have helped reduce the price of sugar.

The price of sugar had reached to Rs 220 per kg in the markets of Peshawar that was reduced to Rs 170 per kg a couple of days ago. However due to concentrated efforts and actions against hoarding mafia, the sugar price was now reduced to Rs 162 per kg and hopefully would further reduce.

## PFUJ condoles over Sameen death F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) expresses deep sense of sorrow on the sad demise of senior journalist Sameen Jan.

In a statement issued here Sunday, president PFUJ-Workers Shamim Shahid, Secretary General Raja Riaz, members of FEC and office bearers of the affiliated units said that the demise of Sameen Jan is a big loss to the journalist fraternity. He was a dedicated, hardworking and committed media person who always observed the good norms in profession.

"We deeply express sorrow on Jan's device and pray to Allah to bless the departed soul with the highest place in Jannah and give courage to his family to bear the loss" the statement concludes.

## Minister opens Culture Complex Nishtar Hall

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Minister for Tourism and Information, Syed Feroz Jamal Kakakhel here Tuesday inaugurated Culture Complex Nishtar Hall to promote cultural activities and inform people about rich heritage of the province.

Expressing views after the inauguration ceremony, he said that inauguration of complex was aimed to highlight rich traditions of KP and inform people about its cultural heritage.

He said that government is making incessant efforts to provide all the necessary facilities to tourist and boost tourism related activities in the province. He said that we want to acquaint youth with centuries-old heritage and his-

tory of KP province.

He said that culture complex would help promote rich traditions of KP besides creating opportunities for local artists.

He told that national and international events would be held in the culture complex that would also be used to attract tourist and promote culture of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

We want to create happiness among people and provide them chances of recreation and enjoyment, he said and added that endowment funds rules have been approved for artists and very soon amount would be released to them.

Caretaker minister said that endowment fund has been approved for artists and funds would be released soon.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Caretaker Minister for Tourism and Information Syed Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel inaugurating Culture Complex Nishtar Hall.

## 5 districts declared high risk zones

PESHAWAR (APP): In the wake of a surge in dengue fever cases, the authorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday declared five districts as high-risk zones.

According to the authorities in the Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, five districts including Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda and Battagram were among the risky zones with regard to dengue fever spread.

The number of people affected with dengue virus has reached to 165 in the province, the health authorities said adding that in Peshawar district 38 cases of dengue virus infection were reported followed by Mardan with 32 cases, Swabi 19 cases, Charsadda 14 cases and Battagram with 12 dengue cases.

Till date, the authorities said the cases of dengue fever have been reported from 20 districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A few cases of dengue in some of the districts including Bannu, Hangu, Lakki Marwat, Khyber, Tor Ghar and Haripur were also reported in the last couple of days.

The caretaker advisor for health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has directed stern preventive measures in sensitive districts of the province.





## In brief

### Mayor Alpuri arrested F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Police has arrested tehsil Alpuri Mayor Waqar Ahmad Khan under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) while raids are continued for arrest of three other Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf (PTI) leaders, on Tuesday. According to sources, police has arrested Waqar Ahmad Khan from his native village Shahpur and shifted to Saidu jail from police headquarters Alpuri. It is worthy to mention that tehsil mayor Waqar Ahmad Khan returned from Saudi Arabia recently. The arrest warrants of PTI's workers identified as tehsil Poran Mayor Abdul Mulla, district general secretary Habib-u-Rehman Tufan and Rizwan Munir issued under MPO. Although, dozens of PTI's workers were nominated in different cases in vandalism after arrest of Imran Khan on 9th May.

### Police held 134 drug dealers F.P. Report

BANNU: Police arrested 134 alleged drug dealers and seized 67.4 kilograms of weeds in the region claimed by Regional Police Officer. As per details, on the direction of Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Regional Police Officer Qasim Ali Khan and District police officer Iftikhar Shah arrested 134 drug dealers and seized 67.4 kg of weeds, 26kg of ice, 5.5kg heroine, 3 bottles of alcohol. The police registered 139 cases against them. RPO Qasim Ali Khan while talking to The Frontier Post, appealed the people of the area to help out in identifying of such persons in elimination of such heinous crimes and criminals.

### Electricity theft reporting cell Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The administration has established District Electricity Theft Reporting Cell at Office of Deputy Commissioner Kohat to counter line losses as per directives of government, on Tuesday. This proactive initiative aims to curb electricity theft and extend full support to the District and Tehsil Enforcement Committee in their mission to ensure fair and equitable access to electricity resources to all residents. Citizens can contact District Electricity Theft Reporting Cell by calling 0922-920032, where they can register information and complaints regarding electricity theft. This user-friendly approach ensures that reporting is hassle-free and efficient.

### Man killed over land dispute

SARGODHA (INP): A man was killed in Sillanwali area Sargodha on Tuesday over a land dispute, police said. The victim, identified as Zafar Iqbal, was going to Sillanwali on a motorcycle with his companion when he was shot dead by his opponents. The police said that the victim had a land dispute with the suspects, who had been threatening him for some time. The police have registered a case against the suspects and are conducting raids to arrest them. The body of the victim has been shifted to the THQ hospital for an autopsy. The incident has caused widespread anger and resentment among the people of the area. They have demanded that the police take strict action against the suspects and bring them to justice. The killing of Zafar Iqbal is a reminder of the growing problem of land disputes in Pakistan.



HYDERABAD: FIA official escorting arrested culprits of money laundering during raid on a house in Latifabad.

## Police arrest 8 including murderer

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police arrested eight alleged culprits in Mardan district. This was claimed by Superintendent of Police (SP) Investigation Muhammad Suleman while talking to media personnel and said that the alleged murderer was involved in killing of four persons from one family over land dispute.

According to details, Sheraz, the main suspect had killed his mother-in-law, brother-in-law, his wife and their son Tafil Azan on 2nd September. In the second murder case, Shahbaz Garhi police station traced the double murder case and arrested the main accused within 72 hours. Fawad, Hilal, Mudassar and Zeeshan confessed their crime and said that the victims along with Hussain and Waqas. We have an old enmity due to which we killed them.

Similarly, in the third murder case, accused Wajid Ali also killed 02 brothers of deceased Mushtaq Ali and Wajid Ali due to old enmity. 01 Kalashnikov, 02 pistols and the vehicle used in the incident were seized from the arrested accused

and the accused was arrested by the police. Chora police station arrested 02 accused of raping little girls. Arrested suspects Hamza and Adam residents of Gujarat committed adultery.

Taking strict notice of the incident, DPO Najib-ur-Rahman issued orders to arrest the accused involved in the incident under the supervision of (Division) SPs, Circle DSPs and concerned SHOs. On which the district police, with the instructions of SP Investigation Suleman, the supervision of Divisional SPs Muhammad Ijaz Khan and the leadership of the relevant SHOs, reached the accused involved in the incidents with the help of modern scientific equipment and professional strategy Got arrested.

**BISE appoints member from schools:** Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Mardan has appointed one member of the Board from among Headmasters/ Headmistresses of Government and Private High/Higher Secondary Schools and Principals of Male and Female Degree and Post Graduate Colleges

announced the election schedule for the election.

According to a press release issued by the Secretary Board, only Principal Headmaster Headmistresses are eligible to be candidates and vote for these elections. According to the press release, Vice Principals, In-charge Principals, In-charge Headmasters and In-charge Head Mistresses are not eligible to participate in the Board Membership Election. As per the schedule, notices for voter list and nomination papers will be issued on September 20. Objections to voter list can be submitted till 10 October 2023.

While the voter list will be checked on October 11, Nomination papers can be submitted with a receipt of Rs 100 on October 17 while the list of candidates will be released on October 18 and the scrutiny of these papers will take place on October 19. As per the schedule, nominations can be withdrawn on October 20. Ballot papers will be released on October 25 and received on November 14, while the declaration of results will be released on November 15.

## Students' learns in open sky at rented building

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The claims of educational emergency in Tehsil Rustam proved to be false, the boundary wall of Government Primary School (GPS) Machi has completely collapsed. Children are quenching their thirst for education under the open sky in rented buildings. The future of children is at stake due to the continuous negligence of the education department of Mardan.

According to the details, the Government Boys Primary School, built in 1978, the wall and the building of Machi had collapsed in many places. The wall and the building of the school were completely demolished, a house for around 400 children was rented for 12500 rupees, where the children are enjoying their education under the open sky in the hot summer.

In this regard, it was learned from the sources that the owner of the house



where the school children are studying has demanded to increase the rent, so the children will now shift to another rented building. A teacher of the school said that it is our duty. And even in the storm they will come to school and teach the children, but the concern is for those innocent children who are sitting on the ground without furniture in the heat.

Social activist Yasir Aman said that the local elders and the parents of the children have met the former MPA Tufail Anjum many times in connection

with the reconstruction of the school, but nothing but false promises and consolations have been received even though this school is in his native village.

Located in Union Council Machi, dignitaries and parents of the children demanded the caretaker Chief Minister, Secretary Education and District Education Officer Mardan to issue orders for the reconstruction of the said school so that the innocent children are provided with modern facilities. Can get basic education.

## One killed due to alleged police torture in custody

F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT: In Shahdadkot, 20 days ago, under the leadership of CIA in-charge Manzoor Chandio, the police arrested Farzand Rind on the charge of calling gambling by raiding a gambling den. He was in a coma due to police violence and passed away yesterday at a private hospital in Karachi.

As soon as the body of the deceased youth reached Shahdadkot, the relatives of the deceased protested against the police by keeping the body at the Mukiya Koto Moto Chowk of

Shahdadkot. Addressing the sit-in held for five hours on this occasion where slogans were raised against Daya and the police, the heirs said that CIA in-charge Manzoor Chandio along with the police officials attacked the 27-year-old snooker shop located on Qubo Road in the city. Farzand Ali Rand was arrested unjustly and tortured the deceased youth so much that he passed away after keeping him in a coma for a few days.

CIA in-charge Shahdadkot Manzoor Chandio and other involved police officials should be

arrested and a case of murder of the youth should be registered against them, so that the soul of the deceased can get peace.

**Protest against inflation:** A protest demonstration was held in front of the press club by the Communist Party of Pakistan unit Larkana and civil society against the increasing inflation and unrest in the district in taluka Nasirabad of Qamber Shahdadkot district. Activists Comrade Rashid Noonari, Anwar Dingarai, Azim Machhi and others protested and said that the country.

## Crackdown against power thieves

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich has said that crackdown on electricity pilferers is continuing in the district indiscriminately and 187 cases have been registered against electricity pilferers so far in the district.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at District Complex Hafizabad, on Monday. ADCG Ishfaq Rasul, AC Hafizabad Munawar Hussain, AC Pindi Bhattian, police, GEPCO and officers of other concerned departments attended the meeting. DC directed the officers to expedite crackdown on electricity pilferers and recovered all longstanding arrears. He also directed the officers to disconnect connections of all defaulters without any discrimination and legal action also be taken defaulters.

Meanwhile, In-charge Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Hafizabad Muhammad Adil Ashraf said that action against gas pilferers is underway in the district Hafizabad and four special teams of SNGPL is raiding different places in the district and taking action against gas pilferers. He said that the connections were being disconnecting those people who were using domestic connection for commercial purpose. He said that cases were also being gotten registered against those people who were pilfering direct from pipes.

## 2000 sacks of sugar recovered

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Launching a crackdown on directives of federal authorities, teams of district government recovered more than 2000 sacks of sugar from various areas of the district.

According to Deputy Commissioner Office, officials of district administration raided various markets in Shewa Adda and recovered more than 2000 sacks of sugar from hoarders. Three godowns were sealed and cases were registered against owners for hoarding and selling the commodity on inflated rates. Deputy Commissioner Swabi, Gohar Ali has warned action against hoarders and said crackdown would continue to curb illegal practice and ensure provision of sugar to people.

## 994 bags of sugar, ghee, flour seized

FAISALABAD (INP): The district administration during a crackdown against hoarders seized 994 bags of sugar, ghee and flour here on Tuesday.

A team headed by Assistant Commissioner Sadder Fazal Abbas in three different raids recovered 394 bags of sugar, 200 cartons of ghee and sealed three warehouses besides arresting three hoarders. Meanwhile, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Khurrianwala Imtiaz Ali Randhawa during raids seized 400 bags of sugar and flour, sealed godown and registered a case against the owner.

# Construction of expressway on river's bank sought

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Swat Qaumi Jirga demanded to construct Swat expressway on the bank of river instead on agriculture land in a crowded press conference at press club, on Tuesday.

Swat Qumi Jirga will start a full-fledged movement by uniting the people against forcible taking of land from them they warned. Mukhtiar Yousafzai, Al haj Zahid Khan, Sher Bahadur zada Khan, Khwaja Muhammad Khan, Irfan Chattan, Ahmed Shah, Akhtar Ali Khan, Sadiq Aziz, Sher Shah Khan, Fazal Ahad, Salahuddin and other elders of Swat Qumi Jirga while addressing a press conference at Swat Press Club.

The speakers said that terrorism in Swat is not tolerable in any way, terrorists are regrouping in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially Swat, which causes concern among the people. They said that it is the responsibility of the state to improve the law and order situation, due to the negligence of the security agencies, there is an unsatisfactory law and order situation across the province, but our only issue is to give us peace and make our lives safe.

The jirga said that the previous government had negotiated with the Taliban through Barrister Saif, unsuccessfully tried to give the terrorists a way to come here again. They said that Swat Expressway should be constructed on the banks of

the river instead of agricultural lands and fertile lands should be protected. They said that forcibly taking land from the people of Swat should be avoided, illegal arrests under three MPO should be stopped.

The residents said that the people of Swat have fought for the survival of Pakistan in every era and have gone through all kinds of difficult situations, but continuous unemployment and inflation have also taken away their right to life. He said that if peace is not established and inflation is not stopped, the people of Malakand division, including Swat, will take to the streets and start a protest movement.

**RPO inspects modern software tracking system at DPO office:** Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand Muhammad Ali Khan visited District Police Office including emergency helpline 15, vehicle tracking system, media cell, Zainab Alert, Women Safety App, Pakistan Citizen Portal, Complaint Management System, Human Resource Management System, Hotel Watch, E-Gadget, Vehicle and Criminal Verification System, CDR and modern software is well as modern cameras installed at the entry and exit points of Swat district, on Tuesday.

RPO made a detailed review about the Weirs and praised the performance of the youth. He also inspected the CCTV cameras installed in the entry and exit check post of Swat and

various markets of Mingora Bazar through the screen installed in Command and Control. He issued instructions to keep a special watch on the security of Swat district through the cameras installed in the markets including the entry and exit routes to prevent street crime.

RPO said that according to the vision of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan, like Swat district, command control will be established in other districts of Malakand division and by installing CT cameras at sensitive places, timely prevention of crimes will be possible. He said that the purpose of setting up the command and control center is to equip the people with the latest software of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and we will improve it and provide better facilities to the people.

The center is a modern requirement in which police personnel can sit in one room and monitor the situation of the entire district, monitor the police patrolling and also provide timely assistance to the callers on Emergency Help 15. RPO Malakand also reviewed the open court held at the DPO office and met Silen. I appreciated the initiative to listen to them and fulfill the demands of immediate justice and said that it is our aim to give justice to the oppressed, so justice should provide to the oppressed in 'Kuli Katcheri' Without delay.

## RPO stresses unity among Muslims to ensure peace

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ismail Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti on Tuesday stressed the need of unity among Muslims to ensure peace and order situation in the region. He expressed these views during an introductory meeting with leaders and scholars belonging to Sunni and Shia schools of thought held here at his office.

The meeting was among others attended by Qari Khalil Ahmad Siraj, Allama Muhammad Ramzan Tauqeer, Mufti Qari Muhammad Omair, Syed Nazakat Hussain Gilani, Sahibzada Muhammad Rabnawaz Abid Farooqi, Jamshed Shah Gilani, Ansar Zaidi and Syed Fayyaz Hussain Bukhari. The RPO said "the provision of peaceful environment and a better future to our future generations

should be our priority." He said the role of religious scholars from both Sunni and Shia schools of thought was admirable and commendable.

He said the religious leaders played a positive role as always for peaceful conduct of recent Muharram and Chehlum in the region. He expressed the hope that the leaders of both sects would work shoulder to shoulder along with the administration and security forces for peaceful conduct of upcoming Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (SAWW). The RPO said the miscreants who were few in numbers and wanted to sabotage peace on foreigner cues but the law enforcement agencies were strictly monitoring the situation.

He directed the participants to keep a close watch on the miscreants in their ranks and play their role in maintaining peace in all situations.

He said the incitement and sectarianism must be avoided as peace was a guarantee to development and progress of any area. "We should respect the feelings of each other.

Being a Muslim, we should respect the beliefs of each other," he said and added that the sectarianism was also forbidden in Islam. He opined that the teachings of Islam must be followed for success in the goals of life. He asked the religious leaders to avoid publication of provocative material and hatred speeches in your Masajid, Imambargahs and Madrasas. At the end of the meeting, the participants prayed for lasting peace and tranquility in Dera region. They reiterated the commitment that all the people of Dera Ismail Khan would play their role in maintaining unity among their ranks.

## World physiotherapy day observed in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Deputy Commissioner Iftikhar Ahmed along with the Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdul Wali Khan on Tuesday visited the Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD) center at Talash to participate in the World Physiotherapy Day function. The HHRD district coordinator Muhammad Bilal briefed the officials about various projects and ongoing activities of his organization. The DC visited various units of the centre.

Bilal said the HHRD

was currently working on four major projects in Lower Dir including the rehabilitation program for physically challenged children, orphan support program, health and nutrition program, and Olive plants' project.

He said that 200 disabled children were registered with the Helping Hand and free of cost OPD services to women in the area were being provided. Talash Center. He said that a lady doctor, an LHV and a nurse were providing medical services in health and nutrition programme. Mr Bilal said that a total of 82 farmers had been registered with

the HHRD in the district and so far about 8000 olive trees had been planted with their help.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdul Wali Khan distributed kits and laptops among 6 physically challenged children, while 2 children were given shields and certificates of appreciation for their best performance. Some food packages were also given to orphans on this occasion. The DC appreciated the efforts of the HHRD for serving the needy and suffering humanity and providing them with medical facilities at the centre.

## SDGs key for human resource development globally

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In a significant step towards sustainable development, the United Nations, in collaboration with the local district administration, hosted the sixth dialogue out of twelve, at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Tuesday.

These dialogues bring together over 1,000 local leaders from 12 major cities across Pakistan's provinces and territories. The aim is to address the pressing develop-

ment challenges faced by these communities and how they impact economic and social progress. Julien Harneis, UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, expressed, "These dialogues bring the United Nations closer to the people and the local governments that we serve. We are actively listening to their concerns and ideas, working together to bridge inequalities and reduce poverty."

In Mardan, discussions were centered on four key topics chosen by the participants: women's voice and

participation, nutrition, food security, and humanitarian emergency preparedness. Nearly 100 local leaders, including women, men, and youth, engaged in these crucial conversations alongside senior Mardan officials and UN representatives. These dialogues revolve around pivotal development issues, such as access to basic social services, gender equality, climate change, sustainable economic growth, and governance, all of which are vital for Pakistan's progress towards achieving the SDGs.





## Egyptians divided over recent Niqab ban at schools

CAIRO (Agencies): The Egyptian government has banned female students from wearing the niqab, a face-covering veil, at schools, according to state-owned media. Education Minister Reda Hegazy's statement, released on Monday and quoted by the government-owned Ahram newspaper, said students have an "optional" right to choose if they will cover their hair at school. The statement, however, added that the hair covering cannot cover their face.

"Any form of hair covering that contravenes the condition of the face being visible is not acceptable and the hair covering should be in the colour chosen by the ministry and local education directorate," it added. The decision will be enforced starting from the academic year on September 30 and continue until June 8, 2024. Egyptians, speaking to Al Jazeera on the condition of anonymity, expressed mixed opinions over the ban.

M A, a 33-year-old marketing manager from Alexandria, said he is against the niqab being worn at schools because it obscures what should be a "transparent" educational process. "Anything that obscures teachers from properly reading the student's body language and facial expression to be able to help them or show necessary attention should not be allowed at schools," he said. M M, who also agreed with the government's ban, said the implementation of this decision is necessary from a security perspective.

"School authorities should be able to identify people going in and out of schools," the 38-year-old architect, who is also from Alexandria, said. He said niqab-wearing students are largely alienated in schools, be they mixed or segregated ones. On the other hand, he believes the ban might lead some parents to transfer their children from mixed schools to female-only ones.



According to the ministerial statement, a student should make the decision to cover her hair "based on her own personal desire without any pressure or force from any person or any other entity other than the parents", in an apparent reference to local religious groups and movements. The statement said parents should be informed of their daughter's choice and added that authorities will verify the guardians' knowledge of the student's choice over the issue. Writer F A, 45, from Cairo, thinks the government's decision is the latest case of how women are used as "punching bags ... socially, politically and economically".

"Doesn't matter under what pretext, or none ... females always pull the short straw," she said. "A story as old as time and one that continues to be written and many applaud/decry it depending on which lens they have slapped on to see the world." She said: "With France banning the abaya and the burkini, Egypt following suit with the niqab ban and before that the US Supreme Court overturning Roe v Wade and the Taliban continuing to severely constrain and constrict females from basically living – the

policing of women's bodies continues."

I A, a 33-year-old civil engineer, also expressed support for women wearing niqab at schools "as it is part of everyone's freedom". "Egypt is a Muslim country," he told Al Jazeera, adding that he believed it would be difficult to erase the country's identity with such a decision. The government took this decision "to enhance security in all the fields, which I find to be against human rights", I A said.

The hijab, which covers women's hair but not the face is widely worn in Egypt, while the niqab is worn more by people from ultraconservative backgrounds. There have been fierce discussions in Egyptian society over wearing niqab in public spaces and educational institutions for a long time. Various educational institutions in the country autonomously impose bans on niqabs. In 2015, Cairo University introduced a niqab ban for its staff, which was upheld in later years by the Egyptian judiciary in 2016 and 2020 despite appeals. Niqab ban proposals introduced in the Egyptian parliament in recent years were either withdrawn or rejected.

## UN food agency warns of 'doom loop'

ROME (AP): The World Food Program warned Tuesday that humanitarian funding cuts by governments are forcing the UN agency to drastically cut food rations to the world's hungriest people, with each 1% cut in aid risking to push 400,000 people toward starvation.

The agency said the more than 60% funding shortfall this year was the highest in WFP's 60-year history and marks the first time the Rome-based agency has seen contributions decline while needs rise. As a result, the WFP has been forced to cut rations in almost half its operations, including in hard-hit places like Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Haiti. In a statement, WFP warned that 24 million more people could slip into emergency hunger over the next year as a result.

WFP's executive director, Cindy McCain, said with starvation at record levels, governments should be increasing assistance, not decreasing it. "If we don't receive the support we need to avert further catastrophe, the world will undoubtedly see more conflict, more unrest, and more hunger," she said. "Either we fan the flames of global instability, or we work quickly to put out the fire."

The WFP warned that if the trend continues, a "doom loop" will be triggered "where WFP is being forced to save only the starving, at the cost of the hungry," the statement said.

## Murderer Danelo is armed

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP): Authorities warned that an escaped murderer who has evaded capture in southeastern Pennsylvania for nearly two weeks was armed and urged residents Tuesday in the area where he was being pursued to lock up, secure vehicles and remain indoors.

Pennsylvania State Police posted on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, that the department was pursuing Danelo Souza Cavalcante in South Coventry Township. Police also asked that the public call 911 if Cavalcante is seen and not to approach him. At least one nearby school district announced early Tuesday that it would close all schools and offices for the day and another in the area planned to keep students indoors. Police closed roads in the search area. Video from a roadblock showed law enforcement officers stopping and checking vehicles leaving the area.

On Monday, state and federal officials pushed back against questions about whether they blew a chance to catch Cavalcante, saying that the area where hundreds had been searching included heavy woods, underground tunnels and drainage ditches. They also said it took more than two hours for news to reach them that he had been spotted outside of the perimeter for the first time, Cavalcante slipped out of the 8-square-mile (13-square-kilometer) search area over the weekend, stole a dairy delivery van that had been left unlocked with the keys in it. He abandoned it more than 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of the search area, after unsuccessfully seeking help at the homes of two former colleagues late Saturday, police said.

Lt. Col. George Bivens, of the Pennsylvania State Police, declined to say how he thinks Cavalcante slipped through the perimeter, but he said no perimeter is completely secure. Cavalcante is desperate because he is reaching out for help from people with whom he hasn't spoken in years, he said.

"The fact that he has reached out to people with a very distant past connection tells me he doesn't have a great network of support," Bivens said. "So I think he's desperate and I've characterized him as that all along. And I think the longer we push him, the more resources, the more tools we bring to bear, we will ultimately capture him. He doesn't have what he needs to last long-term." Bivens has said state police are authorized to use deadly force if Cavalcante isn't actively surrendering and noted other agencies involved in the search may have their own rules.

## Morocco earthquake: 'We need help from whoever will give it'

MOROCCO (BBC): In the tiny village of Algou, high in the Atlas Mountains, screams came from under the rubble in the terrifying moments after the earthquake. But as the hours passed and with no specialist rescue teams appearing to assist the desperate efforts of the villagers, the screams turned to silence.

Three days on, the Spanish firefighters who were the first professional teams to reach the devastated community hoped time had not run out. As they briskly picked their way through caved-in streets and collapsed archways their experience told them there was, however, no hope. The grim reality was reinforced by the reaction of their dogs. Igor and Teddy had been trained to bark when they found signs of life.

The silence was deafening. "There is nothing we can do here," said Juan Lopez, a firefighter responding to his second-ever earthquake. The first was when his team scrambled to Turkey back in February after the devast-

tating earthquake there. The significant international response helped bring about some incredible moments of the trapped being prised from under the rubble, even days later. "Here in Morocco, the houses are built from rocks. In Turkey they were made with steel and are much more strong," Mr Lopez said.

"We won't find anyone here," he said, as his colleagues gently shook their heads in agreement. We followed the team as they moved on to the next village. There is no good place for an earthquake to strike but there are few worse than Ait Hmid. It already teetered on the edge of the mountainside, but what is now left is slumped above the precipice. It is hard to comprehend that this mangled mound of bricks and stone was home to 28 people. Only seven survived.

As we clawed our way up to the top of the pile of rubble, Omar Ait Mahdi looked out vacantly across the valley. Behind

him, 20 men were working with pickaxes, shovels and hands. Omar's wife was in hospital. He had still not found his two daughters: Hanane, 17, and Khadija, 14. Suddenly there was a burst of activity and an eruption of prayer. The girls' bodies had finally been found.

As blankets and a stretcher were passed up towards the summit of the debris, Omar told us in a quiet voice he wanted to send out a message. "I want people to help me. I want the world to help me. I lost my kids, my home, everything I own," he said. The Moroccan authorities are under pressure to accept help from more countries. So far assistance from only four nations has been taken and others, including France and Germany, have been declined. Hanane and Khadija's uncle Hamid arrived to offer consolation, but he himself dissolved into tears. "We need help so badly. And we need it from whomever will give it," Hamid said.

## US-Mexico border world's deadliest land route

GENEVA (Reuters): The US-Mexico border is the world's deadliest land migration route, according to UN migration agency figures published on Tuesday, with hundreds losing their lives attempting to make perilous desert crossings.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) documented 686 deaths and disappearances among migrants on the frontier last year, but the actual figure is likely higher due to missing data, including from the Texas border county coroner's offices and the Mexican search and rescue agency. In a landscape of sweeping desert, canyons and cactus-studded hills, migrants fall prey to heat stroke in summer and hypothermia in winter, US border offi-

cials have said. Some bodies are never found.

Paul Dillon, spokesperson for IOM, said that the figures recorded "represent the lowest estimates available." "The alarming figures are a stark reminder of the need for decisive action to create regular legal migration pathways," he told reporters in Geneva. IOM said that nearly half of the deaths recorded last year were linked to the crossing of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts.

The number of deaths and disappearances documented by IOM along the border represents nearly half of the 1,457 cases recorded throughout the Americas last year. "One of the most concerning trends that IOM has seen in the Americas was the increase in deaths on migration routes in the Caribbean,"

Dillon said. He said that 350 deaths had been documented in 2022, compared with 245 in 2021 and less than 170 recorded in prior years. Most of the victims on Caribbean migration routes were people from the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

The Darien Gap, a jungle border crossing between Panama and Colombia, saw 141 documented migrant deaths last year, according to IOM. "The remote and dangerous nature of this area and the presence of criminal gangs along the route means that this figure likely does not represent the actual number of lives lost," Dillon said. Panama announced new measures last week to curb rising migrant crossings through the Darien Gap, which reached an all time high this year.

## Giant fresco advocates for world without weapons

GENEVA (Reuters): On the square across from the United Nations in Geneva, Swiss-French artist SAYPE has used eco-friendly paint to create a giant fresco intended to draw attention to the plight of civilians in armed conflicts.

Working with the Handicap International charity, the 34-year-old painted a gigantic hand on a grass canvas using chalk and coal that, from above, can be seen repairing a huge wooden sculpture known as the Broken Chair. The three-legged Broken Chair, a work by Swiss artist Daniel Berset erected on Place des Nations in 1997, was designed to raise awareness about the impact of landmines on civilians in

conflict zones. "The idea was to paint a hand that comes to fix the broken leg," SAYPE told Reuters as he stood near his fresco, which is called "All Of Us".

"In my mind, this hand represents the whole world and that we can all get involved and help Handicap International in its fight." Handicap International was founded in 1982 to assist Cambodian refugees who had lost limbs and it co-founded the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in 1992, which won the Nobel Peace Prize. It assists vulnerable populations around the world, including civilians who have lost limbs due to armed conflict.

The issue of landmines even more topical due to the war in Ukraine, SAYPE said. The number of people killed or wounded by cluster munitions has increased massively and the destruction in June of the Kakhovka dam and resulting flooding has most likely displaced many mines, creating more danger for civilians. "For most of my projects, I try to use art to spread messages," SAYPE said. "I like to say that I impact society without impacting nature." SAYPE is mostly known for his "Beyond Walls" series in which he spray painted giant hands clasping each other in cities including Berlin, Istanbul and Cape Town.

## Iran confirms detention of Swedish EU worker

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran's judiciary confirmed on Tuesday that a Swedish national working for the European Union had been detained, the latest known case of a foreign national being held in Iran amid political tension with the West.

Sweden and the European Union Commission said last week a Swedish national was being detained in Iran. Sweden said Johan Floderus was detained in April 2022 for what his family said was alleged spying. "The Swedish national has been lawfully imprisoned following a preliminary inquiry and the results of a full investigation into his case made by the prosecutor's office will be sent in the coming days to a competent court," Iran's judiciary spokesperson, Masoud Setayeshi, said. The spokesperson did

not detail the precise charges faced by Floderus. Relations between Sweden and Iran have been tense since 2019 when Sweden arrested a former Iranian official for his part in the mass execution and torture of political prisoners in the 1980s. He was sentenced to life in prison last year,

prompting Iran to recall its envoy to Sweden in protest. In May, Iran executed a Swedish-Iranian dissident convicted of leading an Arab separatist group Tehran blames for a number of attacks including one on a military parade in 2018 that killed 25 people.

**Putin, China's vice premier to discuss high-level contacts for end of year**  
BEIJING (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing will discuss during their meeting bilateral contacts at the "highest-level" by the end of the year, Russian agencies cited Kremlin's spokesman as saying on Tuesday. Putin is to meet the Chinese vice premier in Vladivostok where Russia is holding a major economic forum this week. "[This is] another opportunity to quickly compare notes, including in the context of bilateral contacts at the highest level planned before the end of this year," Russian agencies cited spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying. Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov said in July that Putin planned to visit China in October at the time of its third "Belt and Road" forum, responding to an invitation issued by Xi during a high-profile state visit to Russia in March.

## Why is Egypt worried about Ethiopia's dam on the Nile?

CAIRO (BBC): Egypt has accused Ethiopia of threatening its supply of water from the River Nile. Ethiopia has confirmed that it has finished filling the reservoir at its giant new dam, which uses water from the Nile. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Gerd) is on the Blue Nile tributary in the northern Ethiopia highlands, from where 85% of the Nile's waters flow.

Gerd is 19 miles (30km) south of the border with Sudan and is Africa's biggest hydroelectric dam project. It is more than a mile long and 145m high. It is not quite complete yet, but has already involved 12 years of construction. The reservoir behind the \$4.2bn (£3.8bn) dam has a surface area the size of Greater London. Ethiopia wants the dam to produce electricity for the 60% of its population who currently have no supply.

It is hoped this will eventually double Ethiopia's electricity output, provide businesses

with constant electricity supplies and boost development. It could also provide electricity for neighbouring countries including Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti and Eritrea. Egypt, with a population of about 107 million people, relies on the River Nile for nearly all of its fresh water.

It needs it for households and agriculture - especially for growing cotton, which requires a lot of water. Nile water is also used to fill Lake Nasser, the reservoir for Egypt's own hydroelectric power plant, the Aswan High Dam. Sudan, with a population of 48 million people, is also heavily reliant on water from the Nile.

Both countries question whether Ethiopia will let enough water flow downstream to them in future. "Ethiopia's unilateral measures are considered a disregard for the interests and rights of the downstream countries and their water security," Egypt's foreign ministry said. It has argued that a 2% reduction in

water from the Nile could result in the loss of 200,000 acres of irrigated land. Low river levels could also affect transport on the Nile.

"The primary worry of Egypt has always been the long-term operation of Gerd following the initial filling phase," says Mohammed Basheer, from the University of Toronto. "There is no agreement on how Gerd should be managed during and following periods of drought. Ethiopia might adopt an approach that maximizes electricity generation following droughts, which would be unfavourable for Egypt." Ethiopia filled the dam over the course of three years, dismissing Egypt's argument that it should take 12 to 21 years as unacceptable.

Although Sudan is affected by water levels on the Nile as Egypt is, its response to the dam has been restricted by conflict in the country. The dam has been a source of disagreement between the countries since its construction began

in 2011. A treaty from 1929 (as well as another treaty from 1959) gave Egypt and Sudan rights to almost all the Nile's water.

It also gave them the right to veto projects by countries upstream (such as Ethiopia) that would deprive them of their share of water. Ethiopia said it should not be bound by these old treaties, and it decided to start building the dam during the Arab Spring, when there was political turmoil in Egypt. Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia signed a new treaty in 2015, but talks over how Ethiopia uses Nile water to fill the dam have repeatedly broken down. In 2019, the International Crisis Group - an organisation which works to prevent wars - warned that armed conflict was possible. The US intervened in 2019, to try and reach an agreement between Egypt and Ethiopia, but with little success. Talks only restarted three weeks before Ethiopia announced it had finished filling the dam.

## Putin knocks prosecution of Trump, says US system is 'rotten'

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin knocked the criminal cases against former President Trump on Tuesday, calling them a demonstration of the "rottenness" of the American political system.

"As for the prosecution of Trump, for us what is happening in today's conditions, in my opinion, is good because it shows the rottenness of the American political system, which cannot pretend to teach others democracy," Putin said during a speech at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia. He argued that "everything that is happening with Trump is the persecution of a political rival for political rea-

sons." "That's what it is," the Putin continued. "And this is being done in front of the public of the United States and the whole world." Trump currently faces dozens of criminal charges across four different cases in Georgia, Florida, New York and Washington, D.C. The former president and some of his supporters have argued that these charges are politically motivated as Trump continues to lead the GOP by a wide margin in the 2024 presidential race.

Both during and after his four-year term in the White House, Trump pointed to his seemingly friendly relationship with Putin. In recent months, he has also repeatedly claimed he

would be able to end the war in Ukraine in 24 hours. Last month in an interview on Fox Business, the former president claimed Putin "would have never gone into Ukraine" if he were still in the White House, adding he was the "apple of his [Putin's] eye."

"We hear that Mr. Trump says that he will solve pressing problems in a few days, including the Ukrainian crisis. Well, this cannot but bring happiness," Putin said Tuesday. He added that he does not expect Russia's tense relations with the US to significantly change no matter who becomes president in 2024.

"What to expect from the future, no matter who

the president is, it's hard for us to say, but it's unlikely that anything will change radically," Putin said. The Russian president then knocked President Biden, arguing he has instilled a strong bias against Russia and "it will be very difficult for them to somehow turn this whole ship" in the other direction. Despite his various legal challenges, Trump continues to maintain a strong lead over his 2024 Republican rivals. Recent polling from Morning Consult shows the former president with 57 percent support, compared to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis — anticipated to be the president's biggest competitor — who pulled in 14 percent support.

## Colombia potential cocaine output rose 24% in 2022: UN

BOGOTA (Reuters): Coca crops in Colombia covered 230,000 hectares (568,000 acres) in 2022, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said on Monday, up 13% from 2021 and at its highest level in more than two decades. Also at a more than 20-year high was potential cocaine output, which rose 24% to 1,738 metric tonnes.

Coca is the chief ingredient in cocaine, whose production has fueled the Andean country's six-decade armed conflict, which has killed at least

450,000 people. "It is worrying that each year there is an increase in coca crops in the country," said UNODC Regional Director Candice Welsch during a presentation of the report. The uptick was due to an increase in crops in Putumayo province, along the border with Ecuador, Welsch said. Production elsewhere was relatively stable.

President Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first leftist president, has pledged to shift the focus of the fight against drugs toward public health, instead of what he says is a

failed militarized strategy. Petro's government wants to help rural communities voluntarily substitute some 100,000 hectares of coca crops over the next four years, an official told Reuters recently. The president has also promised more social investment in production areas and ruled out a restart to aerial fumigation with herbicide glyphosate.

The fall in the annual growth of coca crops to 13% from 43% in 2021 "gives elements to continue on with this stabilization, and hopefully decreases,"

Justice Minister Nestor Osuna said at the presentation. The government wants to reduce cultivation areas to 150,000 hectares and production capacity to 900 metric tonnes by 2036, Osuna said. Some 13% of Colombia's annual deforestation is linked to illicit crops, Environment Minister Susana Muhamad told a drugs conference last week.

Last year, Colombia's deforestation hit 1,235 square kilometers (477 square miles), down 29% from 2021.



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## Election saga and political polarization

**T**HE calls for timely nationwide general elections as well as the concerns regarding the non-implementation of the constitutional decree by the interim rulers gained a significant upsurge in recent days. Interestingly, the coalition partners including the PPP, ANP and others who earlier played a crucial part in framing different electoral codes expressed reservations regarding the election time frame and urged the interim rulers to abide by the law. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and President Dr. Alvi are more concerned regarding the timely holding of elections as the former ruling party moved its henchman to exercise his constitutional power in this regard. The CEC and interim law minister told the President that it was the sole prerogative of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to announce the time frame for polls. At the time, the entire society, law bodies, intelligentsia, media and as well as the public were divided and highly polarized regarding the current political situation and linked it with the prevailing economic crises in the country. Unfortunately, neither the caretaker Prime Minister nor the ECP's Chieftain ever endeavoured to forge a consensus among the civic groups and other stakeholders regarding the schedule of forthcoming polls so the prevailing uncertainty came to calm and political groups could initiate lobbying and election campaigns.

The months-long political turmoil and internal chaos could not settle down, even after the PDM coalition government relinquished its charge and an interim setup took the reins of the government. Although, the election could not be held within the 90-day stipulated time frame that falls in November this year. The ECP has announced the delimitation plan and things are moving toward an election and any unlimited delay in polls neither suits to establishment nor politicians. However, doubts among the masses, give birth to rumours and propaganda by YouTubers, social media activists and political analysts, surely hurting the political fraternity and the conducive environment necessary for the election. The state of Pakistan is seriously agonized by selfish policies and antagonism of its leaders who blatantly pursue their political agenda through biased assessment of certain laws, and constitution, which continuously incite perturbation and anxiety in the masses and weaken their confidence in the country. As of now, the warring political groups, the Electoral watchdog and the Country head quote certain clauses of the constitution to argue their case, however, no one acknowledges other pleas and everyone claims righteousness by walking the part of the petitioner, respondent, judge and jury simultaneously.

The ongoing political, economic and security situation does not portray an encouraging portrait of the country which slides into a blind alley. Realistically, the current political dismay and antagonism might suit an individual, a civic group or an institution but it surely has devastating effects on our social fabric and the country's democracy. We have not yet missed an opportunity for a national consensus that is the essence of democracy, national cohesion and unity. The electoral process is a legal and constitutional issue instead of a power-sharing formula. The country has paid a heavy price for rigid politics and the aggressive behavior of its leaders and it can not afford such practices anymore. The nation demands political fraternity, the rule of the law, equal space and a level playing field for all political groups irrespective of their manifestos, political sloganeering and legacies in the past. No institution, no leader and no political group claims sole representation of the 230 million populace. The current situation merits political wisdom, sagacity of the leaders and tactfulness of the institution that smoothly steers the nation through such precarious conditions. Therefore, all relevant stakeholders including the President, the ECP and the incumbent government together with all political groups must sit together to deliberate on the present scenario, the legal implications and political constraints that might arise in the aftermath of elections. The country needs free, fair, timely and credible elections, equally acceptable to all political groups because that practice costs billions of rupees and would never come about with the desire of any individual, civic organization or pressure group. The history records movements of powerful figures and awaits their statesmanship which makes and breaks the nation.

## Pak-Afghan ties, clashes and talks

**T**HE bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan have been largely soured since the headline faction took control of the neighbouring country. There were wide-ranging expectations that the group would forge friendly ties with the nation that hosted the then globally designated terror group in contrast to the international community and proactively lobbied worldwide on its behalf besides paying a heavy cost for its unhindered support and unceasing hospitality over the past decades. Previously, Afghan Republicans supported Pashtun nationalists to undermine Pakistan's security interests while the current regime openly facilitates and supports anti-Pakistan terror outfits who are blatantly waging a war against the Pakistani state, institutions and common populace. There had been recurrent cross-border attacks on Pakistani border checkpoints along with armed ambushes, terrorist attacks and suicide bombings on Pakistani Security Forces by the TTP terrorists presently camped inside Afghanistan. The shutdown of border crossings, recurrent halt of transport convoys, and Exchange of statements between top government officials is customary, and the situation is worsening every other day without any signs of remorse, remedial or improvement from either side in sight so far.

Recently, a large number of TTP terrorists attacked a Pakistani checkpoint while an intense armed clash between two militaries occurred at the Torkham border checkpoint, which led to a week-long closure of border crossing and a military stand-off between troops on either side of the border. High-level contacts failed to resolve the issue and tension still prevails and seriously affects the bilateral trade and economies of the two nations. Recently, the Pakistan Foreign Office has pressed Afghan interim authorities to make the Durand line a border of peace and a symbol of friendship and cooperation and for that end, the neighbouring state must ensure that its territory is not used as a terror haven and launching pad for terrorist attacks against Pakistan. The Spokesperson urged Afghan rulers to be mindful of Pakistan's concerns and respect its territorial integrity. Realistically, hosting terrorists, fueling hostility, and dispatching bomb-laden individuals are neither ethics for good neighbourliness nor could be a reward for decades-long hospitality and brotherhood. Pakistanis and Afghans are all-time brothers and friends, and their pleasures and griefs are shared. Hence The Afghan interim rulers must not trash those centuries-long bonds for the sake of their purblind objectives that will never be accomplished any time in future.

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## The ‘rising superpower’ myth about China

Peter Bergen & Joel Rayburn

**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.

There then 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,

China's fertility 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,

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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.

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in Korea.

Conversely, it is not hard to envision China in 2035 or 2040 being too overwhelmed by its own socio-economic 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 nimbly 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

## US should replicate the Iraqi awakening in northeast Syria

Dr. Dania Koleila Katib

**T**HE area to the east of the Euphrates in Syria is witnessing an uprising of Arab tribes. This was perhaps expected due to American policies that favored one faction over the other. The uprising is not the result of one incident - the arrest of Abu Khawla, as the Syrian Democratic Forces claims - but rather the outcome of an accumulation of grievances that have built up over the years.

A similar situation existed in Iraq following the 2003 American invasion, leading to spiraling violence. The situation was stabilized when Gen. David Petraeus was entrusted with the troop surge in 2007. Despite the fact that the SDF last week vowed to meet tribal demands, the US needs to have a major correction in northeast Syria similar to the surge in Iraq.

Startled by the rise of Daesh, the Americans needed a quick fix. They were also suffering from the failure of their training program for "moderate" rebels, as some US-trained fighters cooperated with extremists. The Kurds were seen as a safe bet. In Washington's perception, they were a faction that was not prone to indoctrination. Hence, they would not turn their weapons against their benefactors. Though the SDF is supposed to be composed of Arabs and Kurds, the PYD, which is affiliated with the terrorist PKK, is the main force. And though there are elected local councils running the affairs of people in the northeast, it is the "kados," or members of the PYD, who run the show.

The Americans always look for quick fixes. Empowering the Kurds at the expense of the Arabs was the quick fix needed to fight Daesh. But is this deja vu? Following the invasion of Iraq, the US started supporting Shiites over Sunnis. From a pragmatic perspective, the Shiites were the most likely to support the Americans, as they had liberated them from the cruelty of Saddam Hussein. As for moral justification, the US perceived that the Shiites, who were a majority, had been subjugated by Saddam and the Sunni minority, meaning it was their time to rule. By this simplistic logic, the US ruled Iraq.

They made the situation worse with their misguided de-Baathification policy. At the stroke of a pen, 400,000 Baath Party members became outlaws. While Shiites were granted exemptions and were allowed to keep their jobs, the Sunnis were not. This created grievances, from which the fundamentalists greatly benefited.

The American invasion led to a revival of Al-Qaeda. Violence was escalating. However, the US administration realized it was doing something wrong; this was when Petraeus was tasked with the surge that stabilized Iraq. Petraeus realized that empowering one faction over another would not

lead to stability - on the contrary, it would feed existing sectarian tensions. He realized that the key to stability was to address people's grievances. He engaged with the Sunnis through the "awakening." This was the most effective way to dry out the social incubator of Al-Qaeda.

When members of the Sunni community started refusing to give Al-Qaeda fighters refuge, they had nowhere to go. They became isolated. The awakenings were working well. This was only reversed due to the premature American exit from Iraq and after Nouri Al-Maliki took advantage of this ill-advised withdrawal to renege on all the promises and guarantees given to the Sunnis by the Americans.

Today, we see the same scenario in northeastern Syria. The Arab tribes, which feel subjugated by the SDF, are rising up. The only way to solve this problem is to adopt a more balanced policy between the Arabs and the Kurds. The US should engage with the Arab tribes the same way it engaged with Sunnis in Iraq. The biggest American concern in Syria is Daesh. Creating grievances from which Daesh will benefit is certainly not the logical way to fight the terrorist group. The best way to fight it is to get to the root of the problem: the grievances that push people to support it. Drying up the social incubator is the most effective and sustainable way to fight terrorism. So, a similar policy to the awakenings should be applied by the coalition in the northeast of Syria.

The US should not fall for the false accusations of the SDF, which is claiming that the Arab tribes are connected with the regime and the Iranians. This is untrue. Deir Ezzor was one of the first provinces that fought Bashar Assad and that suffered from the regime's brutality. This definitely does not mean abandoning the Kurds. It means adopting a more balanced policy between the two ethnic components of the community. Adopting such a policy would lead to reconciliation and social cohesion between the Arabs and the Kurds. Assad has been benefiting from Arab-Kurdish tensions.

Now, the US has an opportunity to correct this. Instead of helping the SDF suppress the Arab tribes, soft diplomacy is required. The US should send delegates to engage with the Arab tribes. In parallel, it should put in place governance structures that are representative of the communities, as opposed to today, where the kados are in control.

This is a golden opportunity for the US to win over the Arab tribes and to eradicate terrorism in a sustainable manner. America needs to reconcile with the Arab tribes that feel disenfranchised in order to make them part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. It is time to revisit the awakening in Iraq, learn lessons from it and apply them in northeast Syria.

Arab News

## Cooperation resolves Cyprus' storm in a teacup

Yasar Yakis

**T**ENSIONS rose in Cyprus last month in the village of Pyla, on the border between the Turkish and Greek parts of the island. Pyla is inhabited by about 500 Turkish Cypriots and 850 Greek Cypriots. The origin of the conflict goes back to UN Security Council Resolution 186 of March 4, 1964, which authorized the introduction of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, known as UNFICYP.

The hope that the two parts of the island may eventually be reunited is fading away with each passing day. Former UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw last week wrote for Politico that a two-state solution was the only reasonable way to solve the Cyprus problem.

On Aug. 18, a tiny piece of land measuring just 2 sq. km adjacent to the village Pyla became the scene of physical clashes between the UNFICYP and Turkish Cypriot security forces. The area

accommodates four different sovereign territories or claims: Turkish Cyprus, Greek Cyprus, the UN-controlled buffer zone and the British sovereign base area. Pyla was given special status because of its mixed population, thus constituting an exemplary cohabitation of the two communities. So far, there have been no major incidents that have caused intercommunal clashes in this village.

There are two Turkish Cypriot villages close by, Beyarmudu and Yigitler. Beyarmudu is connected to Pyla by a relatively good quality road, but it crosses the sovereign British base. Therefore, passengers who want to travel from Beyarmudu to Pyla have to go through checkpoints, which causes delays and congestion for two reasons. One is the number of foreign tourists who want to cross the border and visit the Turkish Cypriot side. The other is the Greek Cypriots who travel to the Turkish part of Cyprus to

buy cheaper gasoline. In order to alleviate this congestion, Turkish Cypriot authorities have for decades been asking the UNFICYP for authorization to improve the road that would allow them to circumvent the British base when traveling from Beyarmudu to Pyla. This request has been rejected each time.

The area looks like a wide corridor and several dairies operate there. Most of the island's special cheese, halloumi, which is a protected trademark for the Turkish Cypriots and a major export item, is manufactured in this corridor. The majority of the dairies are owned by Turkish Cypriots. The UNFICYP claims that this corridor is under its control and that Turkish Cypriot authorities should not be allowed to carry out construction work there. The latter contests this argument and uses the existence of a checkpoint at the

end of this corridor as a sign to prove that it is part of the Turkish Cypriot-controlled zone. After the requests of the Turkish Cypriots repeatedly fell on deaf ears, they eventually decided to cut their own umbilical cord and started construction of the road from Yigitler to Pyla. The UNFICYP blocked the construction work. This is nothing but a storm in a teacup. Even if the area was a contested zone, the UNFICYP should be expected to mediate, as the improvement of the road was going to relieve a transport problem for Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and foreigners alike. This incident was blown up and physical clashes took place between the Turkish Cypriot security forces and UN peacekeepers. Some peacekeepers were taken to hospital for minor injuries and some UN cars were damaged. The UN released a statement blaming Turkish Cypriots.

It is difficult to explain why international peacekeepers could not find a conciliatory way to solve such a minor issue. At the end of the day, it was a question of improving the standard of a road that Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and foreigners could all use. Fortunately, the Pyla crisis was eased two weeks later through silent diplomacy. Colin Stewart, UN special representative for Cyprus and head of the UNFICYP, visited Tahsin Ertugruloglu, the Turkish Cypriot foreign minister. Teamwork was conducted on the basis of approved maps. It was agreed how the checkpoints would be managed once the road from Yigitler reached the village of Pyla. Their agreement will be reflected in a document that will be finalized soon. The land in this corridor will be promoted by the common accord of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Another meeting is scheduled with the participation of the mayors and head-

men of the villages.

Now enters the EU. There is another problem that may arise because of the involvement of the EU in the Cyprus conflict. During Turkiye's military action in 1974, a belt of 180 km - going all the way from the east end of the island to the west, covering an area of 346 sq. km - was left under the jurisdiction of the UNFICYP as a buffer zone (a sort of no man's land) between the Turkish and Greek parts of the island. After the accession of the Greek Cypriots to the EU in 2004, the EU adopted a document called "Protocol 10," which considers the Turkish part of Cyprus as well as the buffer zone to be part of the Republic of Cyprus, but outside the scope of the "acquis communautaire." We have to wait and see whether the thaw in relations between Turkiye and Greece will play a positive role in the improvement of relations between the Turkish and the Greek parts of Cyprus.



# UK on course to lose what is left of its influence in the Middle East

Mohamed Chebaro

**THE UK before the economic crisis of 2008 was very different from the UK that emerged from the global financial meltdown and its repercussions, which have shaped, or rather failed to appropriately shape, the priorities of the country ever since.**

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the subsequent strategic reviews that initially saw Britain's role in the world minimized to suit its size as "a small island," as a British official once told me. Later, this stance got even worse, when populist, right-wing members of the ruling Conservative Party pushed for the country to leave the EU, persuading voters that being a member of that bloc had held Britain back from its "global potential." However, Brexit has further limited the country's tools for growth and prosperity, as well as its ability to set out clear long-term objectives in a world tilting in all geostrategic directions and where ignoring one global issue could simply backfire and damage other aspects of the national or international interest. An in-depth report published in July by the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee criticized the government's "Integrated Review" and its subsequent "Integrated Review Refresh," as the called-for strategic tilt toward the Indo-Pacific would risk Britain losing ground in other areas where it has historic relations and has kept many interests, such as the Middle East.

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 has-n't been sufficient focus on the Middle East and North Africa." She added that London risked alienating friends and, as a result, Britain would lose its voice and influence in the region.

The Integrated Review of 2021 has, it seems, failed to list and address all the threats. This pushed Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to call for a refresh, to fill gaps left by the previous review, especially since the world has witnessed a tilt in states' approaches in pursuit of their interests, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Such changes have threatened to create "a world defined by danger, disorder and division, and an international order more favorable to authoritarianism," according to Sunak. In his overview, the prime minister also listed long-standing threats from terrorism and serious and organized crime, which are enduring and evolving, in addition to transnational state and nonstate-aided challenges such as large-scale migration, the smuggling of people, narcotics and weapons, and illicit finance.

As a result, the 2023 refresh

called on the UK to harness its responses in four areas: to build on its core Euro-Atlantic security and prosperity, despite Brexit; to recognize the importance of deterrence and defense; to ensure the resilience of the economy and society; and to surge investment into science and technology. This left out the need to build on relationships with existing long-term allies in the Middle East, which have felt neglected, according to the Foreign Affairs Committee's report, as a result of the UK's decision to retreat and seek smaller, cheaper soft and hard power roles for itself. The committee's assessment of Britain's recent stance could not be more accurate, as the policies adopted by successive Conservative governments - including their austerity drive and small-state attitude to governance - have eroded UK influence on the world stage and harmed the country's reputation as one of the world's leading economies and a veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council.

As a foreign correspondent 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.

# Taiwanese divided on US military sales amid growing Chinese threats

William Yang

**THE 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 unprovoked 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-Tawian relationship is Taiwan's most important relationship," he added.

VOA

# How to stop Yemen's vicious cycle of violence and misery

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**VISITING Yemen last week provided a stark reminder of the combustive volatility of the truce between the government of Yemen and the Houthi rebels. While the truce has been informally maintained since April 2022, it is on shaky ground, as the Houthi side has so far failed to deliver on the commitments it made to the UN last year. Violence is escalating with no perceptible move toward a formal ceasefire or a political solution, while the economy is crumbling and the humanitarian crisis is deepening.**

The informal armistice has not translated into a formal ceasefire, let alone a peace agreement, with no sign that the Houthis will sit at the negotiating table any time soon. The government of Yemen has delivered on the promises it made at the start of the truce to open Sanaa's airport for direct international flights and increase the flow of goods, including fuel, through the port of Hodeidah. However, the Houthis have failed to live up to their commitments. The Houthi siege of Taiz is now in its ninth year with no end in sight, while the rebels continue to increase military pressure on other provinces.

Earlier hopes that the Saudi-Iranian diplomatic breakthrough would lead to positive movement in Yemen have been dashed so far, according to the Yemenis I met during this visit, as the Houthis have escalated their attacks on several fronts in recent weeks. In his July briefing to the UN Security Council, Special Envoy Hans Grundberg said that although the overall fighting had decreased since the start of the truce, the front lines are not silent. Armed clashes have taken place in Dhale, Taiz, Hodeidah, Marib and Shabwa provinces. He expressed his fear that "these continued sparks of violence,

alongside public threats to return to large-scale fighting, increase fears and tensions."

Since Grundberg's July briefing, there have been further attacks by the Houthis against several areas under government control. In the last few weeks, the Houthis have again attacked Marib, Lahij, Dhale and Taiz provinces, targeting civilians, homes and camps for the internally displaced, including three simultaneous missile attacks on such camps in Marib on Aug. 30. Houthi snipers have also resumed their attacks along disengagement lines.

The large-scale siege strangling Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, is one of the most pressing humanitarian concerns for the Yemeni government and relief agencies. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor recently reported that 3 million residents there are suffering from a lack of basic necessities, including food and medication, while being in constant danger of being killed or injured by shelling and sniper fire. It described the siege as a "form of collective punishment against civilians that may amount to a war crime" under international law.

Instead of implementing their side of the truce bargain, the Houthis have upped their demands and used force to put pressure on the government to pay public employee salaries in Houthi-controlled areas. They have also asked for a share of the oil revenues collected by the government, without sharing the revenues they collect in the areas under their control.

The Houthis do not provide information on the different levies they collect, including personal and corporate taxes, customs, port fees and surcharges on public utilities and

telecom companies. The government has offered to pool revenues and remit them to the central bank, which the Houthis have so far rejected.

To force the government's hand, the Houthis last October shelled ports under government control, including oil-exporting terminals, thus shutting down oil export capabilities. Without oil revenue, the government has been unable to balance its books. If it were not for Saudi Arabia's emergency funding of \$1.2 billion announced last month, the government would not have been able to meet its basic commitments. This is of course temporary and cannot be sustained for the long run, making it imperative to resume oil exports.

There have also been severe fuel shortages as a result of Houthi shelling, prompting Saudi Arabia to send emergency fuel supplies to power stations to keep homes lit and hospitals and schools running. The government's reduced capacity has limited its ability to provide Yemenis with basic necessities. Millions of Yemenis are facing a growing humanitarian crisis, especially vulnerable communities such as the internally displaced, who are estimated to be at least 2 million in Marib alone. The humanitarian crisis has been made worse by international aid cuts, including by the World Food Programme.

Economic development has almost come to a standstill. The government's ability to fund development projects has been critically curtailed and the lack of progress toward a political solution has discouraged many donors, who have decided to wait out the conflict instead of continuing development assistance in the face of political and security uncertainties. Most traditional donors to

Yemen have either frozen their development aid or drastically scaled it down, focusing instead on immediate relief or diverting aid to other parts of the world, something many Yemenis are bitter about. The Houthis appear to be cynically using military pressure on government-controlled areas and the worsening humanitarian crisis to force the government and the international community to cave in.

During last week's visit, very few expressed hope that the situation would improve any time soon without pressure to compel the Houthis to deescalate, live up to their commitments and move toward a negotiated settlement.

Yemenis are counting on the UN to move faster on the political track, but count on donors, including those in the Gulf Cooperation Council, to help them weather this crisis. Reduced international aid is coming at exactly the wrong time.

Movement toward peace in Yemen will need a concerted effort on at least four fronts. First, the UN needs to deliver quickly on the political track and not get bogged down in the Houthis' growing demands. Second, Yemen and its partners need to find a way to resume oil exports to help fill the government's funding gap. Third, international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, need to up their efforts to help reform and augment government finances. Fourth, aid agencies need to scale up aid to Yemen to meet the needs of the rapidly growing numbers of people in need. But to achieve these goals, Yemen needs unity within government factions and closer coordination among donors and friends. Without that unity and coordination, the Houthi rebels will continue to block any movement toward an effective solution to Yemen's agony.

# Hezbollah's catch-22 situation as UNIFIL mandate renewed

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

**THE renewal of the mandate for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon - a peacekeeping force deployed along the Israel-Lebanon border - was agreed last Thursday by the UN Security Council. The initial vote was delayed as permanent UNSC members the US and the UK objected to the resolution drafted by France, as it was perceived as restricting UNIFIL's movement. Of course, Hezbollah does not want the UN force to move freely and uncover its hideouts and arms depots. However, the more Hezbollah is perceived as being in control of southern Lebanon, the more it is prone to a strike by Israel.**

Last year's mandate renewal included a provision that allowed UNIFIL troops to carry out patrols without prior coordination with the Lebanese army, in addition to those previously announced. However, Lebanon wanted to change that provision this time around. Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib also refused a provision that would have transferred the UNIFIL's mandate from Chapter VI of the UN Charter to Chapter VII. While Chapter VI calls for resolving conflict using peaceful means, Chapter VII is used when the situation is disastrous and the use of force is required. In this case, when a state represents a danger to its citizens and its neighbors, the UNSC can use forceful means to establish order.

While the Lebanese government, which is under Hezbollah's influence, used sovereignty as a pretext to reject this provision, the issue is actually far more complicated than that. Do we remember the tragic death of a young Irish UNIFIL sol-

dier in the south of Lebanon last year? While the story that Hezbollah tried to spread was that a clash occurred between a patrol and residents of Al-Aqbiya, the talk that circulated in the town was that the luckless soldier went where he was not supposed to go. Perhaps he uncovered a Hezbollah arms depot.

The soldier's death created embarrassment for everyone, but particularly for Hezbollah. Lebanon's military court has charged five members of the group with killing the Irish peacekeeper. Ten days after the incident, Hezbollah surrendered a man suspected of being the main assailant. Does it want to see similar incidents occur in the future? Of course not. That is why restrictions on the movement of UNIFIL troops are required: to maintain the security of the group's infrastructure for its own survival. While Culture Minister Mohammed Al-Murtada made a statement dismissing the likelihood of Chapter VII being introduced, it has turned out to be quite possible and the vote was actually passed. Though the text includes a clause about "coordination with the army," it uses strong language regarding permitting UNIFIL to have free movement in the south.

The UK issued an especially harsh statement on the mandate. After the vote, the Foreign Ministry stated: "It is unacceptable that UNIFIL is still unable to access some locations along the Blue Line border, including Green Without Borders sites. Particularly given Hezbollah's self-acknowledged stockpiling of weapons in violation of Resolution 1701." While Green

Without Borders is supposed to be an environmental initiative, it is rumored to be an undercover intelligence-gathering operation for Hezbollah. The project was last month sanctioned by the US as it was judged to be providing support for the group. Hezbollah is in a delicate position. It trusts no one. Its closest ally, the Christian Free Patriotic Movement, in June turned its back and allied itself with the Lebanese Forces by backing Jihad Azour, the International Monetary Fund's Middle East director, to be Lebanon's next president. Even though the whole drama was staged so that Free Patriotic Movement leader Gebran Bassil could extort more concessions from Hezbollah, the group now knows that even its closest allies can blackmail it.

The group has three centers of gravity: the south, the Bekaa and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Will it allow any of these centers to be exposed? Of course not. Hence, with increased insecurity comes an increased need for control, particularly the control of its facilities. This control now seems elusive, threatened as it is by UNIFIL's freedom of movement. The group certainly does not trust the UN with its facilities, but it also does not want to incite a confrontation with Israel. UNIFIL's restricted movement worked well for Hezbollah. It prevented a strike by Israel while allowing the group to operate quietly. This is now changing. Israel is no longer content with a restricted UNIFIL. It wants either greater enforcement of the UN force's mandate or it wants to solve the problem by its own hand.

A confrontation with Israel is not in Hezbollah's interest, especially not now. Today, there is rising anti-Hezbollah sentiment in Lebanon. The group feels it is being pushed into a corner. There is a strong Christian-led movement against it. The Christian street is talking about partitioning the country and federalism. Is it the time for a fight with Israel? Not really. A fight would reinforce Christians' demands for federalism, as they would not want to be constantly under threat of a strike by a belligerent neighbor. Israel has no interest in a confrontation with Lebanon. It has enough internal problems already. It does not need another Gaza on its northern frontier. It also does not want chaos in Lebanon, as this would have a spillover effect. However, if there was any perceived danger, security comes first, meaning it would strike.

Hezbollah needs to maintain the prestige it has among the Shiite community as a resistance force - hence all the muscle-flexing in the south. But it needs to avoid crossing the threshold that will cause a reaction from the Israeli side. So, in a way, the UN vote decreases the threat of a potential Israeli strike. The more that Israel feels that Hezbollah is contained, the less insecure it is and the less it contemplates a strike. UNIFIL's presence is needed to prevent another strike. Nevertheless, the vote put Hezbollah in a catch-22 situation: It cannot afford to get exposed by UNIFIL, but it also cannot afford a confrontation like the one with the Irish soldier. Though Hezbollah reportedly belittled the decision and said it would remain "ink on paper," the group is in a difficult situation. However, this is a test to show how much it can push the limits.

**JOE 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 restric-

Samuel Mangold-Lenett

tions. 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 fight-back. 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-philies, 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





# SCCI warns protest against illegal raids on trade sites

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi expressed anguish over harassment and arrest of traders, associated with tea business and warned of the protest if the illegal actions were not stopped forthwith.

He was speaking to a delegation of Pakistan Tea Association led by its provincial chairman Ishfaq Ahmad during a meeting here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

Delegation consisted of the chamber's senior member Nadeem Rauf, association's members Mubashir Hassan, Siddique Ahmad Paracha, Suleman Sawal, Muhammad Zubair, Saeed Ahmad and others.

Ishfaq Ahmad and other members of the association apprised the meeting that

traders attached with business of tea were harassed and arrested by various government departments concerned during the ongoing crackdown against currency dealers in Chowk Yadgar Peshawar city, which was completely unjust and illegal, and should be stopped immediately.

They expressed anger that guests in shops and offices were also taken away by authorities concerned during the actions, which is a highly inappropriate and irresponsible act and strongly condemnable.

Tea association delegation appealed to the military chief, prime minister and chief minister along with high-officials of authorities concerned to let them do business.

"We are not against the ongoing combined crackdowns that have been launched by various gov-

ernment departments",

They, however, said the authorities should take the dignity of traders' community into account while carrying out actions in markets and business hubs and premises.

He said scrutiny of businesses should be conducted by following a proper mechanism and system.

Tea association delegation made it clear that if authorities should not have taken care of traders' dignity then Pakistan and the economy couldn't have flourished.

Ijaz Afridi during the meeting assured the delegation of Pakistan Tea Association that the chamber will take up harassment and arrest of traders' with authorities concerned in an appropriate manner.

He said the illegal arrest and harassment of traders were intolerable. He asked

the authorities concerned to review their anti-business policies and put them in the right direction.

Otherwise, he warned the SCCI will compel on protest along with the traders community.

Ijaz Afridi on the occasion stressed the need for forging unity among the traders community.

He said SCCI is a solely forum of the traders, which had always played a key role in resolution of business community issues.

The SCCI chief viewed that doing business in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is less than a holy war "Jihad".

He informed that a concrete coordination system was established between relevant government institutions and the Sarhad chamber through which business community issues were resolved.



PESHAWAR: Acting president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ijaz Khan Afridi presenting a shield to provincial chairman Pakistan Tea Association Ishfaq Ahmad. — F.P. photo

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, MSC Rania, Maersk Boston, Ice Fighter and Limra scheduled to load/offload Containers, Condensate and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal and SSGC Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Maersk Columbus and Hafnia Pegasus carrying Containers and Gas oil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 Hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, three ships, MSC Rania, Maersk Boston and Limra left the port on Tuesday morning, while an edible oil carrier Hua Wei 8 is expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo throughput of 180,983 tonnes, comprising 119,211 tonnes imports cargo and 61,772 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,419 Containers (1,456 TEUs Imports and 1,963 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 10 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Maersk Columbus and Chem Bulldog & two more ships, Chemroad Rose and OM carrying Containers, Palm oil and LPG are expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Multipurpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal and SSGC Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

## PSX turns loses 357 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 357.33 points, a negative growth of 0.78 percent, closing at 45,508.40 points against 45,865.73 points the previous trading day.

A total of 126,341,546 shares were traded during the day as compared to 213,198,283 shares, whereas the trading value of shares was recorded at Rs4.987 billion against Rs8.194 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 294 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 73 of them recorded gains and 196 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Hubco Power Company with 11,871,442 shares at Rs82.02 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 9,781,098 shares at Rs1.14 per share and Treet Corporation with 7,144,408 shares at Rs16.41 per share.

Reliance Cotton witnessed a maximum increase of Rs40.50 per share price, closing at Rs580.50, whereas the runner-up was Ibrahim Fibres with Rs8.99 rise in its per share price to Rs259.99.

Unilever FoodsXD witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs1,573.00 per share closing at Rs21,255.0; followed by Mari Petroleum with Rs21.36 decline to close at Rs1,591.46.

**Rupee gains Rs1.28 against US Dollar:** Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained Rs1.28 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs299.88 against the previous day's closing of Rs301.16.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buy-

ing and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs297 and Rs30 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.53 to close at Rs321.49 against the last day's closing of Rs323.02, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost 01 paisa to close at Rs2.04, whereas a decline of Rs2.73 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs374.44 as compared to the last closing of Rs377.17.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 35 and 34 paisa to close at Rs81.64 and Rs79.95 respectively.

## Gold rates up by Rs.5,600 to Rs.215,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs5,600 and was sold at Rs215,000 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs209,400 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs5,058 to Rs184,585 from Rs179,527 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs168,967 from Rs165,544 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price per tola increased by Rs50 to Rs2,550 whereas that of 10 grams of silver went up by Rs42.87 to Rs2,186.21.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$15 to \$1,911 from \$1,926, the Association reported.

## Healthx Pakistan and Jubilee Life Insurance sign MoU



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Healthx Pakistan, a multinational healthcare management company, announced a pioneering partnership with Jubilee Life Insurance, Pakistan's largest private sector insurance company. Under this partnership, Healthx shall be introducing its data-driven, "phygital" (physical + digital) healthcare management model to streamline risk identification for Jubilee Life Insurance employees and their families.

Under the partnership, Jubilee Life Insurance will also get access to Healthx's signature Disease Management Program which offers comprehensive, data-driven healthcare solutions, with a primary focus on prevention, early intervention, and risk mitigation from the impacts of prolonged ailments. The collaboration is a testament to Healthx's unwavering dedi-

cation to the well-being of the staff at Jubilee Life Insurance. Employees of the company along with their families will have access to state-of-the-art primary healthcare services, available round the clock through Healthx's IVR number or a user-friendly mobile app in addition to need-based and pre-aligned in-person care through this program.

Healthx's internationally trained in-house team of healthcare practitioners will ensure continuous monitoring, offering timely outbound interventions (both digitally and on-ground) and robust support to optimize the health outcomes of all concerned.

Khaqan Sikander, CEO of Healthx, articulated the profound significance of this collaborative endeavor, stating, "Our partnership with Jubilee Life Insurance marks a transformative moment in the health insurance industry

of Pakistan. The health insurance industry has historically suffered from two primary issues, one, lack of increase in the private insurance coverage penetration and two, high costs (health claim ratios + admin costs) leading to tight profit margins. This partnership aims to resolve both these issues with an internationally tested model that is incentivized for keeping policy holders healthy leading to gradual reduce in the intensity and frequency of health claims brought about via implementation of Healthx's evidence based preventative medicine model. Kudos to Jubilee for being one of the largest and yet the fastest movers of the industry in this right direction."

Javed Ahmed, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited, noted: "Employee wellbeing has been a long-standing priority for Jubilee

Life Insurance. Our partnership with Healthx is a personification of our efforts to ensure that our team has robust and unrestricted access to quality healthcare that includes modern solutions supported by state-of-the-art technologies. We strongly believe in delivering the finest solutions and services to all stakeholders across the board."

Healthx Pakistan is a multinational healthcare management company dedicated to delivering innovative, data-driven, and human-centered healthcare solutions across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Jubilee Life Insurance is a renowned insurance provider in Pakistan, committed to safeguarding and enhancing the lives of its customers through a range of insurance products and services.

## SBP to announce monetary policy on Thursday

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce Monetary Policy on Thursday (14th Sept) in a meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee. The Monetary Policy Committee of SBP will meet on Thursday, September 14 at SBP Karachi to decide about the Monetary Policy. Later on, SBP will issue the Monetary Policy Statement through a press release on the same day.

## HCCI praises govt for launching crackdown against power theft

HYDERABAD (APP): President Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) Adeel Siddiqui has appreciated the initiative of the caretaker government to launch a massive crackdown against power theft. In a statement here on Tuesday, he, however, emphasized the need to incorporate the represen-

tatives from the business community in provincial task force and divisional level committees so that they could give their input in eradicating the menace of power theft on a permanent basis.

He said action should be taken against those black sheep within HESCO which abetting in power pilferage. He said that a crackdown would help increase the revenue of HESCO and reduce line losses adding that this would certainly help save electricity.

The President of HCCI

said that a campaign against power theft should be launched with the support of masses adding that defaulters should be made to pay liabilities as it would enable to reduce circular debt. He stated that power would certainly be saved through this action.

Adeel Siddiqui said that saving electricity and reducing load shedding would prove the success of the crackdown launched by the caretaker government against power thieves.

The President HCCI said the caretaker government should make efforts to erad-

icate power theft from society once and for all from the society for which all possible laws should be enacted. He pointed out that power theft and load shedding affect traders and the business community the most.

He proposed that the mechanism being devised to curb power theft must have representation of the business community and added that the community's inclusion in divisional-level committees for eradicating power theft would be helpful in improving the working of power distribution companies.

## Court Notice

In the court of Mr. Rasheed Ullah Kundi Additional District Judge/Ezafi Zilla Qazi, Malakand at Bathkela, Case No 10/13 of 2023, Next date: 20/09/2023, Mr. Fazal Rahman Versus Mr. Muhammad Zarin and others, Proclamation Against Legal heirs: (14/3) Khan Baqi (14/6) Khan Nabi s/o Muqadma Khan (Late) resident of Inzargai Agra District Malakand (28) Rupy Gul s/o Gujar Khan (L) (34) Akhtar Hussain (36) Sadam Hussain (37) Sirat Hussain s/o Fateh Said resident of Inzargai Agra District Malakand In the above title case the service of you above named defendants is not possible with ordinary means, hence you are hereby informed through this proclamation to attend this case on 20/09/2023 at 08:00am in person or through appointed agent/attorney or through counsel, otherwise you shall be placed and proceed against ex-parte.



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the launch of the fundraising campaign for Pakistan's third Shaikat Khanum Memorial Cancer

Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC), the management of the Hospital said that supporting the Hospital is our collective responsibility and the hos-

pital is expected to open next year.

Updating on the project, the management said, "These are challenging economic times for Pakistan,

and it would be wrong to say that we have been unaffected by inflation, devaluation and other issues which have beset us as a nation, of late. Nevertheless, we remain steadfast in our conviction to deliver a world-class facility in Karachi as soon as practically possible.

The physical structure of the Hospital was completed in November 2022 and finishing work at the site in DHA City continues at speed. In total, we need Rs. 21 billion to complete the finishing work and to help install the state-of-the-art equipment for diagnosis and treatment of our patients in Karachi."

They further added, "Building a cancer hospital in a resource-constrained environment is a huge chal-

lenge. Keeping such a facility running, year-on-year, enabling it to grow and develop, to remain at the cutting edge of technology and science, and to continue to treat an ever-increasing number of patients for free, however, is a challenge of an altogether greater magnitude.

The people of Pakistan from all across the world rallied together to build the nation's first Shaikat Khanum Hospital in Lahore in 1994 and their continued support has ensured the hospital has grown from strength to strength over the last three decades.

The 2nd SKMCH&RC opened in Peshawar in 2015, since close to 30% of the patients seen at SKMCH&RC, Lahore were

from KP and Afghanistan. While there are a number of facilities in Karachi that offer quality cancer care, Pakistan's largest city needs a state-of-the-art tertiary care cancer centre which ensures equal access to all patients, irrespective of their ability to pay. In order to bridge this gap and to provide free and high-quality cancer care to as many people as possible, we have undertaken the enormous task of constructing our third and Pakistan's largest cancer hospital in Karachi.

At twice the size of our hospital in Lahore, this hospital will serve not only the city of Karachi, but also patients from elsewhere in Sindh, as well as from Southern Baluchistan."

In a message to the pub-

lic, SKMCH&RC management said, "Shaikat Khanum belongs to all the people of Pakistan - they built it, they support it and it is only with their ongoing support and generosity that we will see the fruition of the dream of a third cancer hospital, in Karachi.

Each one of you has a vital role to play in fulfilling this dream, and in helping those less fortunate than you to fight the scourge of cancer in Pakistan. You can create a lasting legacy by becoming a Founding Donor or by dedicating rooms in memory of loved ones. Each rupee counts! You can pledge a regular contribution for SKMCH&RC, Karachi, and make an ongoing commitment to help equip the hospital.





## In brief

## Shahnawaz, Zaman called

LAHORE (INP): After the injury of Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah, the Pakistan cricket team management called Shahnawaz Dhani and Zaman Khan as backups. The Pakistan Cricket Board has said that considering the fitness of the players for the World Cup, Dhani and Zaman have been called. If Shah and Rauf will not be part of the tournament then Dhani and Khan will replace them. The two have been called up after Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah picked up niggles in the match against India. This is only a precautionary measure keeping in mind the fitness and well-being of the players ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup next month. Haris and Naseem will continue to remain under the observation of the team's medical panel. The team management will only request replacement from the ACC technical committee if Naseem or Haris are ruled out for the next seven days.

## T20 Wheelchair Cup in October

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second edition of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023 will be held from October 2 to 8 at the neutral venue of Kathmandu, Nepal. Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council. "The event, being hosted by Pakistan was earlier scheduled to take place in July but was pushed to October due to the rainy season in Kathmandu," President PWCC Rookhsana Rajpoot told APP. According to Rookhsana, the PWCC was all set to host the event in Pakistan but due to some travelling issues of Indian team it was decided to shift it to Nepal. She said every effort would be made to make the event a real success. "We'll be trying to ensure that fans enjoy exciting contests during the event," she said. Teams from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will participate in the Asia Cup. The tournament will be played at Kathmandu's Mulpani Cricket Ground. Rookhsana said geographically Nepal was the best destination for all the participating teams to arrive. "The inaugural edition of the tournament was also held in Nepal in May 2019," she said. Pakistan are the reigning champions as they defeated India in the final to lift the trophy. Rookhsana said the PWCC would be responsible for covering the event cost, while Nepal's National Disability Sports for All Organization and Physically Challenged Cricket Association of Nepal would provide logistic support.

## FIH name Olympic

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Hockey Federation has confirmed the names of the technical delegates, technical officials, umpire managers, umpires, and medical officers appointed to the Olympic Games Paris 2024. The selection has been made by the FIH Technical Officials and Umpiring Committees, chaired by Sheila Brown (South Africa) and Roger St. Rose (Trinidad and Tobago) respectively, according to a press release. Continuing hockey's drive towards maintaining gender equality in the sport, there will again be a 50-50 split of the officials at the Games across Umpires and Technical Officials. This was a key target for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) which aims to achieve this across all sports at the Olympic Games Paris 2024.



COLOMBO: Kuldeep Yadav turned the ball a long way to hit Sadeera Samarawickrama's stumps.

## Babar Azam bags ICC Player of the Month award

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's skipper Babar Azam was crowned ICC Men's Player of the Month when the International Cricket Council revealed the latest winners from a host of stellar international performances during August.

Babar Azam has been crowned ICC Men's Player of the Month following a scintillating series of scores last month, which included notable run-scoring feats against Afghanistan and a glittering century against Nepal.

The win means Babar becomes the first men's player to win the award on three separate occasions, after previous triumphs in April 2021 and March 2022, said a press release.

Dynamic Ireland seamer Arlene Kelly claimed the ICC Women's Player of the Month award thanks to prolific wicket-taking spells as her side recorded a 3-0 series victory over the Netherlands in the T20I format. Kelly's bowling heroics included a Player of the Match performance in the first outing where she returned career-best figures.

Babar and Kelly take home the prizes following votes cast by global fans registered at icc-cricket.com and a specialist panel comprising ICC Hall of Famers, former international players, and media representatives.

Babar has enjoyed plenty of individual accolades in recent months, and his performances in August

capped a surge in momentum ahead of the eagerly anticipated ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which begins next month.

The Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy holder may have started the ODI series against Afghanistan quietly, however, his form returned in the last two fixtures, where scores of 53 and 60 helped secure the series sweep for Pakistan.

On the back of these strong displays, Babar then saved his best performance for his last August outing – the opening Asia Cup fixture against Nepal in Multan. At one stage 25 for two, he displayed control and flair in stabilizing the Pakistan innings, before launching a wave of aggressive strokes to propel them to a mammoth 342 score, eventually ending with 151 from 131 balls.

In total, Babar's 264 runs in the month came at an average of 66 and at a strike rate of 92.30.

Reacting to his award win, Babar said, "I am delighted to be named ICC Player of the Month for August 2023. The past month has been extraordinary for my team and me as we have put in some terrific performances. With the Asia Cup coming to Pakistan after such a long time, it was great to play in front of the passionate and cricket-loving crowds of Multan and Lahore. That I scored my second ODI score of 150-plus in front of my own people in Multan doubled the joy."

"I am looking forward to making the most of the form as we head into an exciting phase of cricket with the backend of the Asia Cup nearing and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup around the corner. My team and I are eager to bring joy and happiness to the millions of Pakistan fans," he added.

Babar wins his third prize edging out compatriot Shadab Khan, who excelled with the ball in the same fixtures, and the primary architect of the West Indies' T20I series victory over India, Nicholas Pooran.

In the Women's category, Arlene Kelly won her first Player of the Month award after her efforts helped Ireland blitz the Netherlands 3-0 in Amstelveen.

With ten wickets across her three T20I matches at a phenomenal average of 4.30, Kelly was a constant menace to a competitive Dutch lineup. Among a number of performance highlights, Kelly's stand-out spell came in the first duel, where her sharp and accurate deliveries produced career-best figures of 5-12 as the tourists won by ten wickets.

The pacer then followed up this performance with more wickets, taking three for 11 runs in the second match, and two for 20 in the final outing. Kelly said, "I'm honoured to win the award for the month of August and grateful for the opportunities that cricket has provided."

## Simona ban for four years

NEW YORK (Agencies): Two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep has been banned for four years following breaches of the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme.

An independent tribunal determined the 31-year-old Romanian had committed "intentional" anti-doping violations.

Halep said in a statement she intends to appeal against the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"I am continuing to train and do everything in my power to clear my name of these false allegations," she said.

Halep tested positive for the use of roxadustat at last year's US Open.

She was also found guilty of using an unspecified prohibited substance or method in 2022 after irregularities were found in her biological passport.

The tribunal accepted Halep's argument she had taken a contaminated supplement, but decided that would not have resulted in the concentration of roxadustat found in her urine sample. The panel also stated they had no reason to doubt the unanimous "strong opinion" reached by three independent experts that "likely doping" was the explanation for the irregularities in her biological passport.

Halep has been provisionally suspended since October 2022, which means she will be able to play again on 7 October 2026, by which time she will be 35.

The findings of the tribunal, however, can be appealed against and Halep indicated that she would challenge the verdict.

She said: "The last year has been the hardest match of my life, and unfortunately my fight continues. I have devoted my life to the beautiful game of tennis."

"I take the rules that govern our sport very seriously and take pride in the fact I have never knowingly or intentionally used any prohibited substance. I refused to accept their decision of a four-year ban."

Halep said she "adjusted" her nutritional supplements on the recommendation of her team before the hard court season in 2022 and that "none of the listed ingredients included any prohibited substances".

However, she acknowledged that "one of them was contaminated with roxadustat" and she also planned to "pursue all legal remedies against the supplement company in question". Halep added: "I was tested almost weekly after my initial positive test through early 2023, all of which came back negative."

"I believe in a clean sport and in almost two decades as a professional tennis player, through hundreds of tournaments and two Grand Slam titles, I have taken 200 blood and urine tests to check for prohibited substances - all of which have been clean."

Halep, who won the French Open in 2018 and Wimbledon the following year, is the highest-profile tennis player to fail a drugs test since Maria Sharapova in 2016. She has won 24 WTA tour singles titles and earned £32.2m (\$40.2m) in prize money and was ranked number one in the world in 2017 and 2018.

## India thwarts young Wellalage to beat Sri Lanka and reach Asia Cup final

COLOMBO (AP): India reached the Asia Cup final by thwarting 20-year-old Dunith Wellalage's all-round brilliance to beat Sri Lanka by 41 runs on Tuesday.

After claiming 5-40 with his left-arm spin to help bowl out India for 213, Wellalage kept Sri Lanka in the game with an unbeaten 42 before he ran out of partners and Sri Lanka got dismissed for 172 in 41.3 overs.

"The pitch got slightly better towards the end so we had to hold our nerve and bowl consistently," Indian skipper Rohit Sharma said. The defeat broke Sri Lanka's 13-match winning streak and it must now beat Pakistan in its last Super 4 game on Thursday to qualify for the Sunday's final. Pakistan also has two points like Sri Lanka after both beat Bangladesh in the Super 4 stage, but lost to India.

Wellalage and Dhananjaya de Silva put the small chase back on the track on a tricky spinning wicket after the top-order got flattened against India pace and spin and slumped to 99-6. Wellalage used his feet well against India spinners and also smacked spinner Kuldeep Yadav over mid-wicket for the only six in the Sri Lanka innings before Ravindra Jadeja (2-33) provided India a much needed breakthrough.

With only 52 required off 76 balls, de Silva couldn't resist and holed out at mid-on before Yadav ran through the tail to finish with 4-33 that left Wellalage stranded on a 46-ball knock. India was playing for the third straight day after its Super 4 game against Pakistan was stretched into the reserve day because of rain before it

thumped its archrival by 228 runs.

Sharma (53) became the second fastest batter to complete 10,000 ODI runs behind teammate Virat Kohli as he played aggressively against fast bowlers in a dominating 80-run opening partnership with Shubman Gill, who scored 19. But the introduction of Wellalage in the 11th over saw Indian top order struggling to read the left-arm spinner as the ball started to grip on the wicket. Wellalage clean bowled Gill off his first ball that turned enough as Gill tried to defend. Kohli, who scored his fourth successive ODI hundred at the R. Premadasa Stadium on Monday, fell cheaply to Wellalage and Sharma got beaten with a straight delivery that skidded through the Indian skipper and hit the stumps.

K.L. Rahul (39) and Ishan Kishan (33) shared a half-century stand before Rahul gave a tame return catch to Wellalage. With the wicket started favoring spinners, Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanka brought on his part-time offspinner Charith Assalanka and Wellalage plucked a brilliant two-handed catch over his head at mid-wicket which got Kishan dismissed.

Wellalage rounded his spell when he had Hardik Pandya caught behind off his final delivery as Assalanka got through the tail. Axar Patel (26), who replaced Shardul Thakur in the playing XI, added a valuable 27 for the last wicket with Mohammed Siraj before the left-hander holed out at long off in the final over as Sri Lanka bowled out the opposition for its 14th successive ODI.



KARACHI: Commander Karachi, Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem tees off at the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship. —INP Photo

## CNS Open Golf Championship kicks off at Karachi Golf Club

KARACHI (INP): The Opening Ceremony and Media Brief of the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Open Golf Championship were held at Karachi Golf Club (KGC) on Tuesday.

Chief guest of the ceremony, Commander Karachi, Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem formally inaugurated the championship. On the occasion, Patron Pakistan Navy Golf (South), Cdre Rashid Mehmood Sheikh apprised on significance of the championship scheduled from 13 to 16 Sep 23 and its conduct in various categories.

This year the Golf Championship will be played in professionals, senior professionals, junior professionals, amateurs, veterans, ladies and juniors categories. For professionals and amateurs categories, the tournament will be contested for 72 holes and 54 holes matches respectively. 36 holes each by KGC professional, senior and junior professionals and 18 holes matches for seniors and ladies whereas 9 holes matches will be contested among juniors category 'A' and 'B' and veterans.

In 1995, Pakistan Navy instituted Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship at Karachi Golf Club (KGC) to add a national level golf event in

the calendar of Pakistan Golf Federation. Ever since, it has become a regular and major event of national golf circuit. Such events provide a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to the world as a peace and sports loving nation. This also helps in generating healthy activities in the society. The regular conduct of this event is the manifestation of PN's commitment towards the promotion of golf at national and international level.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by civil & military dignitaries, sponsors, golf players and media representatives.

## Portugal knocks down Luxembourg with record 9-0 win

FARO (INP): The Portugal overwhelmed the Luxembourg with record win of 9-0, and Bruno Fernandes ran the show for his team Portugal giving suspended talisman and all-time top goalscorer Cristiano Ronaldo.

Roberto Martinez's side have now won all six of their qualifying games, without conceding a single goal and scoring 24 themselves, with this the country's largest-ever victory. Portugal lead the Group J standings, five points clear of Slovakia in second place, whom they beat in Bratislava on Friday. Luxembourg are third, three points behind Slovakia.

Manchester United player-maker Fernandes, who scored Portugal's winner against Slovakia, laid on three goals as the Selecao filled their boots and scored one himself.

Goncalo Ramos, Diogo Jota and Goncalo Inacio struck two goals each, while Ricardo Horta and Joao Felix also scored.

Martinez, who replaced Fernando Santos after the

Qatar World Cup, has a 100 percent record at the helm to date. "We are still at the beginning of a new era with a new coach and we are still taking on board the coach's ideas," said Jota.

"Today we set a reference point match (to look at in the future)." Sporting Lisbon defender Inacio sent the hosts ahead in the 12th minute with a header from Fernandes' exquisite cross with the outside of his foot.

Paris Saint-Germain striker Ramos drilled home the second five minutes later after Fernandes pressed high to win the ball back.

The 22-year-old striker then grabbed another goal in the 33rd minute with a clever turn and clinical finish for his sixth goal in eight appearances for his country.

Liverpool striker Jota hit the crossbar as Portugal dominated at the Algarve stadium near the country's south coast. Inacio headed home his second goal from another Fernandes cross on the stroke of half-time and Jota struck early in the sec-

ond half for the fifth, set up by the Red Devils midfielder again.

Portugal thrashed Luxembourg 6-0 in their first clash in the Grand Duchy and Horta rifled home from the edge of the box for their sixth of the night to match the haul, Jota, who set up Horta, walloped home the seventh as Portugal continued pushing on without remorse, and Fernandes capped his virtuoso display by netting the eighth.

That matched their previous best win, 8-0 on three occasions, but substitute Felix struck a superb ninth from the edge of the box to set Portugal's new record.

"We have a great group of players, we take every game very seriously," said Horta. "We're on the right track, but we have things to improve. Against Slovakia we played a game that was not at the level this team (can offer)."

Martinez's side can qualify for Euro 2024 on October 13 if they beat Slovakia and Luxembourg fail to beat Iceland.



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant move to revive Pakistan's squash's golden era, the Bank of Khyber has officially launched the second season of the U13 squash talent hunt program.

This initiative, conducted in partnership with the Directorate of Sports, Government of KP, is scheduled to take place at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex, Qayyum Stadium in Peshawar from September 12th to September 20th, 2023.

Players from across KP have enthusiastically joined the talent hunt program. Ultimately, six top players will be selected—three boys and three girls—for a three-year period. These talented individuals will receive a monthly stipend from BOK, in addition to receiving specialized coaching and international-standard playing kits.

The launch event was graced by the presence of senior officials from both the Bank of Khyber and the sports department.

The Bank of Khyber, as

part of its corporate social responsibility, is committed to promoting healthy sports activities that have a positive impact on our society.

By taking the lead in KP and collaborating with the Directorate of Sports and the KP Squash Association, BOK aims to promote squash in Pakistan and contribute to both national and international sports arenas.

The bank stands at the forefront in organizing such events to foster sports and discover new talent.





## In brief

### 11 drug peddlers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 11 accused on recovery of over 16 kg charras. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police rounded up Shahzaib for having 1460 grams charras, Jibran for carrying 1310 grams charras and Qasir Naseer with 1440 grams charras. Rattaamral police rounded up Abdul Ghafoor for possessing over 2.2 kg charras while Gujar Khan police netted Ibrar with 2.4 kg charras. Saddar Wah police arrested Suleman for having 1380 grams charras. Morgah police nabbed Najeebullah for possessing 1265 grams charras while Gungmandi police recovered 1250 grams charras from the possession of Jamshaid. Sadiqabad, Westridge and Race Course police also seized 3700 grams and netted Faisal, Hamza and Sher Khan. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.

### VC addresses ceremony

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Vice-Chancellor (VC), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Tuesday emphasized the need to provide maximum opportunities to youth in entrepreneurship for the development and economic stability of the country. Addressing the prizes and certificates distribution ceremony of best business ideas in entrepreneurship activities, he said this era belonged to skills and education as countries are making amazing products through recycling used plastics to support their economy. The VC said, "Our young generation is very skilled, all they need is a guideline to make the best use of their potential." Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) Executive Director, Dr. Latif Gondal said we received 100 applications for the Big Ideas 2021 competition, and 18 students were shortlisted. He said prizes were given to the five best ideas. ORIC Additional Director, Dr. Saima also addressed the ceremony. AIOU VC, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood presented the prizes and certificates to the students. Deans, professors, faculty members, and a large number of students attended the ceremony.

### Car lifter arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Wah Cant police have arrested a car lifter and recovered two stolen vehicles from his possession, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that Wah Cantt police arrested a car thief namely Arif involved in stealing vehicles from different areas. During interrogation the accused confessed to stealing vehicles from different areas, the police said adding that he was a member of a gang operating in Wah and adjoining areas. Police recovered a Suzuki Carry and Mehran Car from his possession. The accused also disclosed the identification and whereabouts of his other accomplices and efforts are in progress to trace and arrest them, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Interim Federal Minister for Commerce Gohar Ejaz, Ambassador of Ethiopia, and others cutting cake to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year at Ambassador residence. —INP Photo

## Education; key for empowering women: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday emphasized that the provision of basic facilities to educate women and girls would provide them with better socioeconomic opportunities.

"Women are more than half of the country's population and without their participation in the socioeconomic sector, the country cannot progress," said the NA Speaker addressing to delegation of students and faculty members of the Government Associate Degree College for Women Manghot, Gujar Khan.

"Educating women would render them a more productive and contributive segment of society," he remarked. The delegation of students and faculty members of Government Associate College for Women Manghot, Gujar Khan were on an official

visit to express their gratitude and thankfulness to Raja Pervez Ashraf for his dedicated efforts to provide a bus and two Hiaces to their college.

While expressing his gratitude to Allah Almighty for enabling him to fulfill his promise of provision of one bus and two Hiace for transportation of girl students of Government Degree College for women Manghot, he said, "The prime responsibility of parliamentarians being public representatives is to resolve challenges faced by common people."

He said the facility of transportation would enable female students from far-flung areas to get higher education. He also expressed his resolve that he would leave no stone unturned to resolve the challenges faced by the daughters of Gujar Khan, especially in matters of

education and health.

Principal Government Associate College for Women Manghot, Gujar Khan Samia Nishat expressed gratitude to Raja Pervez Ashraf for the provision of one bus and two Hiace for students and faculty members.

She said that this would prove instrumental in changing the future of girls and women of Gujar Khan and would ensure their bright future. She also added, "The provision of transportation facility indicates the dedication and resolve of Raja Pervez Ashraf to address the challenges being faced by people of Gujar Khan."

The Principal also presented a letter of thanks for his dedication and commitment with which he fulfilled the promise of provision of transportation facilities to Government Associate College for women Manghot Gujar Khan.

## 'IPP believes in democracy'

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Spokesperson Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Tuesday that her party believes in democracy.

Addressing a press conference, Ms Awan said, "It is at the top of our priorities to address the masses' problems." Speaking about the flood-hit people, Ms Awan said: "IPP patron-in-chief Jahangir Khan Tareen has extended his support to the flood-stricken people. The IPP will continue to stand by the flood-hit people."

Meanwhile, expressing his thoughts following the party's CEC meeting, IPP leader Ishaq Khakwani said: "The general elections should be held after the delimitations. Our party represents the masses' expectations in the real context." Few days back, Mr Tareen vowed that his party will provide relief to the masses.

Mr Tareen held a meeting with the party leaders. On the occasion, the IPP bigwigs underscored the matters in line with the party and future strategy. Mr Tareen said, "The IPP will form the collective strategy in a bid to take the country out of the crisis."

[We will represent the masses in a real context. The IPP will take part in general elections with verve on the basis of its party manifesto.

Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Saeed Akbar Nawani, Mohammad Shah Khagga, Ishaq Khan Khakwani, and Awn Chaudhry.

Last month, the relief goods were distributed among flood victims in Jhok Janan area of Punjab on behalf Mr Tareen.

IPP leaders including Nazir Baloch and Kainat Raza, distributed ration, shelters, and essential relief materials to the victims.

Local leaders of the party including Nadeem Khan Ghallu and Malik Shah Nawaz Kaliyar were also present.

Mr Tareen's spokesperson said that more relief goods would be distributed in other flood-hit areas tomorrow. He also assured the flood-affected people of full support from the IPP.

## Bilateral relations in focus as Turkish team visits NHD

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Turkish delegation, led by Ambassador Prof. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, met with Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah at the National Heritage and Culture Division to discuss mutual interests and bilateral relations. During the event, Federal Minister Jamal Shah stressed that the profound connection between Pakistan and Türkiye signifies an unmatched display of brotherly bonds and affection, setting it apart from all other relationships.

Jamal Shah expressed that Pakistan highly regards and honors the enduring partnership with Türkiye, as these two fraternal nations consistently offer support to one another in times of need. The Minister expressed a keen interest in enhancing collaboration in literary, cultural, cinema, film, tourism, and other areas of mutual

interest. This aims to deepen and strengthen the effectiveness and recognition of this relationship.

Turkish Ambassador Prof. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci emphasized the significant importance of Türkiye's relationship with Pakistan. He also highlighted the immense potential for enhancing cooperation in cultural and literary domains between these two fraternal nations. He mentioned that the Turkish Embassy plans to host a two-day celebration in Islamabad on October 29, 2023, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic.

He extended an invitation to the minister to join in marking this significant milestone in Türkiye's history—the centenary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. In reply, Shah pledged the complete support of the National

Heritage and Culture Division in arranging the two-day festivities for the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic.

He extended invitations to the Turkish Ambassador and Dr. Halil Tokar from the Yunus Emre Culture Center to participate in a national conference organized by the National Heritage and Culture Division, along with its affiliated departments, aimed at promoting folk literary heritage. Both parties agreed to enhance bilateral relations by launching cultural and literary exchange initiatives.

The delegation included Murat Yagis, who served as the First Secretary, and Dr. Halil Tokar from the Yunus Emre Culture Center. Federal Secretary Humaira Ahmed from the National Heritage and Culture Division was also in attendance during the meeting.

## ANF seizes 429kg valuing US\$10.4m, arrests 36 in countrywide operations

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 428.943 kilogram drugs worth US\$ 10.411 million in international market, arrested 36 persons including a woman and impounded seven vehicles during 35 counter narcotics operations conducted the country.

The seized drugs comprised 79 kg opium, 14.346 kg Heroin, 325.168 kg Hashish, 9.758 kg methamphetamine (Ice), 660 grams Weed and 11 grams Ecstasy Tabs (18 x Tablets).

According to details, the ANF Punjab recovered 148.694 kg Drugs in 10 operations while arrested 19

persons including a woman involved in drugs smuggling and impounded two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 49.200 kg Opium, 12.750 kg Heroin, 77.600 kg Hashish and 9.144 kg methamphetamine (Ice).

The ANF North recovered 106.638 kg drugs in nine operations while arrested 12 persons involved in drugs smuggling and impounded four vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 14.800 kg Opium, 1.116 kg Heroin, 90.048 kg Hashish, 614 grams methamphetamine (Ice) and 60 grams Weed.

The ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recovered 79.011 kg drugs in 11 operations while arrested two persons involved in drugs

smuggling. The seized drugs comprised 480 grams Heroin, 78.520 kg Hashish, and 11 grams Ecstasy Tabs (18 x Tabs).

The ANF Sindh recovered 30.600 kg drugs in two operations while arrested the drugs smugglers and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 30 kg Hashish and 600 grams Weed. The ANF Balochistan recovered 64 kg drugs in three operations. The seized drugs comprised 15 kg Opium and 49 kg Hashish.

Separate cases in all incidents were registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 (Amended 2022) and further investigations were under process.

## Leaders urged to play due role for Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Human Rights, Mishal Hussain Malik Tuesday appealed to the world leaders, participating in the G20 Summit in New Delhi to play their due role in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and to hold India accountable for human rights violations.

"Kashmiris are facing unabated extrajudicial killings, custodial torture, and death, arbitrary detentions, burning and looting of houses to inflict collective punishment, and other worst forms of human rights abuses", she said while talking to a Private news channel. Pakistanis always stand by the "Kashmiris in their self-determination struggle and will continue to highlight the dispute to the international community, she mentioned.

Replying to a question, she replied Indian government is suppressing every voice raised for freedom, the right to self-determination and justice in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

She further called on the G20 leaders to help stop imperialist measures like the occupation of people's lands and properties and the confiscation of houses and other properties in Kashmir. Modi Prime minister was trying his best to hide the truth, but the world want to hear the truth, she mentioned.

To another question, she called upon the international community to take cognizance of the grave human rights violations being perpetrated by Indian troops in the occupied territory.

She asked G20 members should realize that India's ulterior motives behind holding the groupings meeting in IIOJK is nothing but to hide its anti-Kashmir agenda and demand of the UN resolutions by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## 23 more dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (INP): As many as 23 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 438 in the district, said DCEPC, Dr Sajjad Mehmood on Tuesday.

He said that among the new cases, 15 cases had arrived from Potohar town urban, five from Chaklala Cantonment, and one each from Municipal Corporation and Rawalpindi Cantonment area.

Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 53 FIRs, issued tickets to 16, sealed eight premises, and a fine of Rs 43,500 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

He said that during indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours the teams checked 10,041 houses, and larvae were found in 536 homes. Similarly, he added that while checking 2,703 places, the teams found larvae at 88 sites during outdoor surveillance.

## Civil society, media urged to safeguard prestige of martyrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a seminar to commemorate Defence Day and the Death Anniversary of the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah urged civil society and media to safeguard the prestige and honour of the martyrs and national heroes for transferring the true guiding examples to the coming generations.

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ-Dastoor) organised a special roundtable seminar to highlight the importance of national heroes, founding leaders and martyrs in national building. The welcome remarks were delivered by the former President of National Press Club Islamabad and President PFUJ Dastoor Haji Nawaz Raza.

On the occasion, he said the purpose of observing the two separate days together was to create unanimity among broader concepts for advocating the true

essence of national cohesion and honour of their founding leaders and heroes among the youth.

He said every year he used to pay visits to the Mausoleum of Nishan-i-Haider Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed but this time he invited his nephew to share his thoughts and interact with the journalist's fraternity to apprise them of the Martyr's life.

While opening the roundtable discussion, Journalist, Ali Jabir Malik said the country was at the crossroads of history where it was facing an onslaught of intruding ideologies creating despair and confusion among the masses to give up its true ideology of Pakistan. He said the martyrdom of the valiant martyrs of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and other security agencies was a guarantee of a peaceful and stable Pakistan.

The nation should not only esteem its martyrs but rather learn from their lives to seek passion for national service, he added.

"Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah gave the motto of Faith, Unity and Discipline with a deeper vision in its roots as he knew the nation in times to come would have to stand firm against mightier challenges posed by its adversaries. It demands from us to renew our pledge with the motherland and wholeheartedly embrace the advice and principles of Mr Jinnah to resurrect as a resilient nation from the ashes of the crises," he added.

Senior Journalist, author, and historian from the Independent Urdu, Sajjad Azhar who has written Rawal Raj expressed his candid views during the roundtable. Azhar said, "We have failed to adopt and implement the ideology and teachings of Quaid-e-Azam among our nation which needs to be done on a war footing."

He regretted that the youth was unable to associate with the history it was taught which should be improved and reinforced with major historical events with clear backgrounds.

Quaid's first speech to the first legislative assembly of Pakistan on August 11th, 1947 devised the foundations of the true Muslim state, he added.

The government, he said needed to promote that speech and like the Objectives Resolution it should be made an unalterable part of the Constitution, he said.

Nephew of Lance Naik Mehfooz, Asad Maroof while sharing his thoughts said his martyred uncle had a soul full of inspiration and movement to do something unique and different.

"He had a different and unique personality. My father used to tell me that Shaheed Lance Naik Mehfooz used to stand out among all the siblings as a man of unmatched quality and traits. He was highly motivated and ambitious to do something big and exalted," he said.

During the exhumation of the martyr's grave, his coffin to another place for creating a separate mausoleum for the Nishan-i-Haider as per its decorum, the

body and blood were found fresh like the day one of his martyrdom. "I am proud to share that I belong to the family of a martyr. As it is said in Holy Quran, Shaheed, are alive and all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country are the benefactors of the nation," he added.

Senior Journalist, Dr Abdul Wadood Qureshi said the martyrs of this nation are our heroes and every nation has its heroes and they are proud of them. "Those nations remain alive who respect their martyrs," he added.

Dr Qureshi said "We need to reset our course and keep our house in order and break the vicious circle of economic decline," he added. Secretary General of the Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA), Naveed Akbar said there was a need to review our history and learn lessons from events like the 1965 War.

"The Security Forces are rendering huge sacrifices for the motherland. The love of the nation for the Armed Forces of

Pakistan is unmatched as the martyrs' loss had created a huge impact on their families and nation," he said.

"There is no country in the world where so many soldiers are lost on a daily basis. We have faced a prolonged conflict due to the war on terror," he added.

He emphasised that it was high time to focus on solutions to our problems as a nation. "Nation should recall the vision of the Quaid and revitalize the passion to further strengthen the country," he added.

Senior Journalist, Khawar Nawaz Raja said, "We pray for our martyrs and esteem them as our pride. We should defend the honour of our country and our martyrs come what may."

Senior Journalist Rashid Malik from APP said every sacrifice of a martyr has a purpose either meant for achieving a country or to ensure its protection. The nation should remember, respect and follow suit their heroes to achieve success, he added.



### School destroyed in fire

TAKHAR (Agencies): A group of unknown men set fire to a secondary school in the Dasht Qala district in Takhar province on Tuesday. According to the district head of education, Qadratullah, Engr. Hamidullah Shahid Secondary School local residents tried in vain to extinguish the blaze. Janan al-Din Ansar, head of anti-crime department of Dasht Qala District Police Command, confirmed the fire and said that the fire started at 8pm on Monday night and lasted for several hours.

## The Frontier Post

Saffar 26, 1445 — Wednesday, September 13, 2023

### 28 Afghan prisoners freed

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has announced the release of 28 Afghan prisoners from neighbor country jails. These individuals, including children, have been transferred back to Afghanistan. Abdul Jabbar Takhari, the Afghan Consulate General confirmed that these prisoners were released from prisons and returned to Afghanistan via the Chaman port.

## Drivers complain of high price of fuel

KABUL (TOLNews): Drivers criticized the rise in the price of fuel in the markets of the capital and said that the increase in the price of fuel is affecting their work.

Drivers called on the Islamic Emirate to pay attention in this regard.

"If we find 1000 money daily, we will pay 600 for fuel for our car, 400 is no work," said Mohammad Sharif, a driver.

"The price of fuel has risen almost 10 Afghanis, it was 67 Afghanis recently, and now it is 78 Afghanis," said Mohammad Esa, a driver.

Meanwhile, some fuel sellers said that most oil is

imported from the north of the country and the blocking of the Salang highway has caused its price to increase in the markets of the capital.

"A lot of northern oil used to be imported to Kabul, now that Salang highway is closed, the imports have decreased," said Shafiq a fuel seller.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that after the blocking of the Salang highway, they are trying to import more fuel from other routes.

"The price that has risen is because a number of companies have raised prices, or especially oil

prices have been raised, the effect is due to the road being blocked, but measures have been taken to increase our business through Torghandi and Herat," said Khanjan Alokozai, a member of the ACCI.

According to the information from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Afghanistan has more than four oil fields, and currently oil is extracted from the Amu River oil field.

According to the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, the amount of oil does not meet the needs of the country, and traders import oil and gas from Russia, Iran, and Central Asia.

### Takharis want faulty solar streetlights fixed

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Residents of Taloqan, the capital of northern Takhar province, say solar streetlights installed in 15 streets of the city two years ago have been out order.

Enayatullah, a resident of Taloqan city, told Pajhwok Afghan News that two years ago, solar streetlights were installed on roads of the city at a huge cost by the previous government, but these lights were now dysfunctional.

"Because of darkness in the city, people cannot move easily at night. We want the current government to take action and fix the lights."

Sultan, a shopkeeper in Taloqan city, told Pajhwok before the Islamic Emirate's takeover, solar streetlights were active on the city's roads and people would easily commute at night and businessmen carried on their work under these lights, but now the lights were out of order.

Amanullah, another resident, also said the lights became faulty due to lack attention by the authorities concerned.

Police headquarters did not comment on the issue, but the municipality said it had appointed a team of engineers to fix the lights.

Hayatullah Safari, a spokesperson for the municipality, told Pajhwok the Taloqan municipality was working hard to keep the city clean and confirmed some solar lights on roads of the city have been out of order.

He added: "We have decided to fix the solar lights and for this purpose, we have appointed a team of professional engineers to check and survey the lights. Once the survey is completed, the lights will be repaired or replaced."

### Promoting domestic medicine:

## FDA, MSF discuss drug quality and production



KABUL (Agencies): Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, the Acting Head of the National Food and Drug Administration, recently held a meeting with representatives from Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

The focus of their discussion was the quality and

use of drugs produced within Afghanistan.

Dr. Omar emphasized the importance of healthcare institutes, including MSF, using domestically produced medicine. The meeting also covered the import of foreign medicine to Afghanistan and adre-

ssed challenges and sugges-

tions put forth by MSF. Filipe Ribeiro, the representative of MSF in Afghanistan, acknowledged the importance of using Afghan-produced drugs and committed to discussing this issue with other officials within the organization.

It's worth noting that several drug production companies have been established in Afghanistan in recent years. These companies operate in accordance with international standards, demonstrating the potential for high-quality domestic drug production.

## ARCS facilitates treatment for 48 children



KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has taken a significant step towards addressing pediatric heart health in the country.

The charity has facilitated the admission of 48 children diagnosed with Ventricular Septal Defects (VSD), a type of heart defect, to

two hospitals within the country for treatment.

According to an ARCS statement, the cost of surgery and treatment for these children is covered by the charity. However, there are still approximately 12,000 children with VSD registered with ARCS who are awaiting their turn

for treatment.

Over the past 14 months, ARCS has introduced 1,771 children with heart defects to various hospitals for treatment and surgery. Of these, 1,500 children have successfully recovered and returned home, while the rest are still undergoing treatment.

## Football players call for AFF full support

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some football players have asked the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) to support them and hunt new talent.

The Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) also pledged full support to the players in different parts of the country.

Yama Wafa, a player of the Hunarhaei Zeba Institute in Kabul with 15 years of experience in Football, said there was need for more local tournament to be organized and importance should be given to them.

He said in the past two years positive and negative changes had occurred in the country's football, adding that more importance should be given to the youth and their talent so they could earn pride for the country.

He said Afghanistan's football level was very down in the world but if opportunity is provided

for the talented youth they could improve themselves and the level of our football.

He recalled Afghanistan Premier League annually organized and currently it is not being held which could leave negative impact on the country's football.

Wali Mohammad Hamidi, member of the Hunarhaei Zeba team, said from the past eight years he was playing football. The AFF ignore football players and there is no facilities provided to the local football players.

Asadullah Muradi, one of the Maihan Club's players in Sar-i-Pul province, said that AFF official should pay attention to the football players and encourage them.

Farhad Nasimi, a football coach, said that talent hunt start from the grounds and urged local players should be given chance to play in the national team.

He said AFF officials should participate in the local tournaments and from there they should attract players for the national team.

He added in the past two years more positive changes had occurred in the country's football.

Din Mohammad Safi, senior advisor of the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF), told Pajhwok Afghan News after the political change in the country at least 285 football players along with the AFF secretary general had left the country, some of them were not sportspersons.

He said the AFF organized itself according to the FIFA standards and during meetings with the world football body it assured that money provided to them will not go in the pocket of acting Afghan government.

He said the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) conducted 22 international

visits in the past two years and it has football ties with 211 countries.

He assured despite lack of resources the AFF moral support for national teams was there and greater development schemes had been put in place.

He said: "The 'Attack Energy' team, having global standards, will participate in club competitions at the Asian level, representing Afghanistan, and the Afghanistan Premier League will start again soon."

Safi pledged the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) support for from domestic tournaments and added players from local tournaments are also picked for the national teams.

This comes that the Fall Football Tournament of the Education Department kicked off in which 14 school's teams are participating.

## Crimes against women condemned by UN Human Rights Council

KABUL (Khaama Press): On the first day of the fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Afghanistan was the main topic of discussion. Farzana Abbasi, a human rights researcher focusing on Afghanistan, said during this session that some of the actions by the Taliban administration in Afghanistan against women are considered examples of crimes against humanity.

Ms Abbasi emphasized in her statement that women have been systematically removed from public spaces over the past two years, losing their fundamental freedoms. She further pointed out that human rights observers have found evidence of female rights activists arbitrarily detained and tortured by the Taliban regime.

The human rights watchdog's statement also asserts, "The Taliban, for the past two years, have systematically violated the rights of women and girls, including severe restric-

tions on their freedom of movement, education, and employment, essentially excluding them from public life. Women's rights activists have been arbitrarily detained and tortured, with some of these abuses amounting to crimes against humanity and sexual violence."

Richard Benett, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, presented his latest report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan at the session. He highlighted that despite some Afghan women resorting to hunger strikes, the current authorities in Afghanistan continue their "brutal repression" against Afghan girls and women.

Benett called on the de facto authorities to cease human rights violations, particularly the blatant violation of women's rights in Afghanistan. He said, "Some Afghan women have gone on hunger strikes in Europe. This under-

scores the urgent need to address gender apartheid in Afghanistan."

It is worth noting that Tamana Zaryab Paryani, a former detainee of the Taliban administration and the initiator of these hunger strikes, has entered her twelfth day of fasting, with several other human rights activists supporting her cause. This protest has gained momentum in several countries, including Germany, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, and women's rights activists.

Tamana Paryani is demanding that the German government, international human rights organizations, and the global community officially recognize gender apartheid in Afghanistan and refrain from any engagement with the Taliban regime. She lost consciousness on the ninth day of her hunger strike and was transported to a hospital.

Ms. Paryani, in an interview with Khaama Press News Agency on her fourth day of the hunger strike,

expressed frustration that the world has been unsuccessful in defending Afghan women's rights. While women continue to fight for their freedoms and become victims, the world has chosen to engage with the Taliban government.

In a parallel effort, Hoda Khamosh and Mina Rafiq, two women activists on hunger strikes for seven days, are urging the international community to recognize gender apartheid in Afghanistan and bring its perpetrators to the International Court.

Parwana Ebrahimkhel, a former detainee of the Taliban administration, called on the United Nations in Geneva yesterday to take practical actions against the interim government. This comes despite the Taliban labelling its imposed rules on women as Islamic Sharia and not having rescinded any restrictive policies or orders in the past two years, despite global condemnation for their oppressive nature.

## Energy delegation to visit Iran for electricity solutions in Herat

KABUL (Agencies): A delegation from the Ministry of Energy and Water of Islamic Emirate is set to visit Iran with the aim of addressing the electricity shortage in Herat province.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Energy and Water, Minister Mullah Abdul Latif Mansour discussed the extension of the electricity import contract from Iran and the electricity shortage in

Herat province in a phone call with Ali Akbar Mehrabian, the Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The statement further revealed that it was decided during this call that an Islamic Emirate delegation would travel to Iran to closely discuss these issues. Ali Akbar Mehrabian, Iran's Minister of Energy, has pledged his cooperation in resolving these problems.



## Afghan women thrive in entrepreneurship amid restrictions, challenges

KABUL (Khaama Press): Despite the ban on girls' education, Husna Raoufi, nearing the completion of her journalism and public communications studies at Kabul University, did not

give up. She established a small tailoring workshop, offering 13 women and girls independent income opportunities.

Husna does not necessarily need the income

from the workshop, but she must make her own decisions, work, and take responsibility for any mistakes she might make.

She believes in personal growth and independence,

yet she is grateful for her family's support as she navigates the trials and errors of individual development. In a cultural and traditional context where many Afghan families discourage their daughters from pursuing their goals, Husna's family stands firmly behind her, a valuable source of support.

With faith in herself and the power to convey significant ideas, Husna says the importance of supporting women in Afghan society. She believes that if every family focuses on their daughters' abilities and financial independence, everyone can work independently and achieve substantial progress. Drawing from her experience as an entrepreneur, she emphasizes that limitations are not always permanent, and individuals can progress even in challenging circumstances.

In less than a year, Rainbow Workshop has grown a lot. They make

things sold not just in their own country but also in other countries. The workshop's success comes from the hard work of girls who want to be independent and have strong friendships.

Another reason Rainbow Workshop has achieved this level of success is that many of its employees are students or graduates from various fields of study. Their educational backgrounds have elevated the workshop's work level and improved the quality of its products. All of this has happened while the Taliban administration has issued more than 70 separate decrees to exclude women from society and confine them to their homes.

With the re-emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, women and girls faced more restrictions. Sports, which ensure personal health, were banned for them. Consequently, concerns

about women's health and their mental well-being increased. This affected women and girls who were professionally or regularly engaged in sports.

Nevertheless, some women like Saghar Fazli, who had achieved significant success in the Judo section, maintained their courage. Saghar, deprived of sports, discovered her talent in the field of design and started working at the Rainbow Workshop. She is responsible for designing clothes there and generates independent income through this work.

Saghar is a four-year student of Law and Political Science. However, like Husan Raoufi, she has also been deprived of continuing her education and is now working on projects to produce women's clothing at the Rainbow Tailoring Workshop.

According to her, women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan face numer-

ous limitations but can achieve their goals with determination, willpower, and proper support. There are many examples of entrepreneurial women in Afghanistan who, with spirit and effort, have succeeded in advancing and managing their businesses under challenging circumstances.

However, to increase the role of women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, there is a need to change the culture and attitude of society and the government. Financial support, education, providing resources, and more opportunities for women entrepreneurs can help them realize their full potential.

The government can create a conducive environment for the growth and development of women entrepreneurs by establishing supportive policies and programs specifically tailored to them.

Additionally, providing entrepreneurship skills education to women and girls in schools and educational centres is a step that can assist them in achieving their goals.

Furthermore, the community can contribute to women's progress by changing attitudes and supporting women entrepreneurs.

Increasing awareness of the importance of women's roles in the economy and society, encouraging purchases from women-owned businesses, and creating opportunities for collaboration and partnership with women entrepreneurs can motivate women to succeed in their businesses.

With the efforts and determination of women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan and appropriate support for them, the role of women in Afghanistan's economy and society will improve, and they will be able to achieve their goals fully.







ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate of China, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, presenting his diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## SBP expected to hike rates

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Seeking to tackle sky-high inflation and bolster diminished foreign exchange reserves that have sent the rupee to record lows, Pakistan's central bank is expected to hike rates when it meets to decide on monetary policy on Thursday.

Economic and political crises have seen the State Bank of Pakistan lift its benchmark rate by 12.25% points to 22% since April 2022, although it held the rate steady at its last meeting in July. A Reuters poll of 17 analysts shows that 15 are forecasting a rate hike. Of those, nine predict an increase of at least 150 basis points (bps). The other two analysts expect the rate to remain unchanged.

The South Asian nation is trying to navigate a tricky path to economic recovery under a caretaker govern-

ment in the wake of a \$3 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan programme, approved in July, which helped avert a sovereign debt default. Reforms set out as conditions for the loan have complicated the task of keeping price pressures and declines in the rupee in check. An easing of import restrictions and the removal of subsidies — both conditions of the bailout — have fueled spikes in energy prices.

Although overall inflation fell slightly to 27.4% in August, food inflation remains elevated at 38.5%. The rupee has also slid to all-time lows, falling 6.2% in the last month alone, although it has recovered some ground in recent days after a crackdown on illegal foreign exchange transactions.

"The recent currency depreciation is also a key reason why another rate

hike is likely, especially since the use of foreign-exchange reserves which are still very low is not a viable option," said Shivaan Tandon, economist at Capital Economics. He added that while import controls have been relaxed, the move has pushed the current account back into a deficit, which pushes up the costs of imports and paying debt. "Since import controls are no longer an option as well, due to the IMF agreement, policy-makers may have to resort to tighter monetary policy to curtail demand and rein in the deficit," he said.

Pakistan's central bank said in July that it expects inflation to be on a downward path over the next 12 months. Analysts also noted that rises in cut-off yields in treasury bill auctions — the highest yield at which a bid is accepted — indicate that market participants expect a rate hike.

## PIA's financial crunch worsens

ISLAMABAD (INP): The financial crisis of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has worsened further as employees have not been yet paid the salaries of August.

The Finance Ministry has denied the reports of non-payment to PIA but funds for have not been released and if the national flag carrier doesn't receive financial assistance from the government, it will be completely grounded in a few months.

According to research of INP, the financial position of PIA has become very poor the employees of the airline who earlier used to get salary by 05 of every month have not paid salary of August despite passage of about two weeks of September. PIA had requested the government to provide financial assistance, on which the ECC formed a committee on the matter instead of releasing the fund.

Finance Ministry has not yet released money even to provide temporary relief to PIA. The PIA had sought an immediate payment from the government for the arrears of leases, aircraft rentals and ground services. Sources told this news agency that if the government does not provide financial support, the entire PIA will be grounded within a few months. The PIA spokesperson did not respond when contacted to get his viewpoint in this connection.

## Iranian CG calls on KP Governor

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Consul-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ali Banafshehkhah called on KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the Governor KP and Iranian Consul-General discussed the strengthening and promotion of bilateral and trade relations between both the neighbouring countries. On this occasion, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali congratulated the Iranian Consul-General on assuming the responsibilities of the Consul General of Iran on a permanent basis and said that Iran is a brotherly neighbouring Islamic country, the people of both countries are tied in the bonds of love and respect for each other.

He stressed need for the exchange of the delegations of trade, journalistic, youth and skilled women, which he said will not only further strengthened the bilateral relations, rather will also promote the soft image of both countries. He also emphasized that small and large scale commercial activities between Pakistan and Iran should be promoted and said that joint venture in trade sectors between Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey will be a positive initiative.

Talking on the occasion, the Iranian Consul General, while welcoming the proposals of the Governor for the exchange of delegations in various fields including promotion of trade activities between the two countries said that Iran is willing to have bilateral cooperation in all fields including trade in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that Pak-Iran Gas Line project is a very important project for both countries, the completion of which will start the era of prosperity in the region.

## Three killed in Bolan tribal clash

BOLAN (INP): At least three people were killed and another injured in armed clash between two tribes, Levies sources said on Tuesday.

Armed men of two tribes embattled in suburban village of Bolan and fire exchange continued for about 16 hours. In cross firing, three people were killed and another sustained injuries. The deceased and injured hailed from Abro and Lehri tribes. District administration seems to be control tribal clashes and ensure rule of law as the recent fire exchange continue for over half an day.

# Senate committee seeks details of persons detained under blasphemy law

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights on Tuesday sought details of persons detained under the blasphemy law from the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR).

Senator Walid Iqbal chaired a meeting of the committee. According to an official handout, the body adopted the recommendation to constitute a national coordination committee within the Ministry of Human Rights to draft standard operating procedures for "effective control on issues that cause suffering to minorities". The committee condemned the Jaranwala incident, when a violent mob destroyed dozens of houses and churches over allegations of blasphemy, and also deliberated on the steps taken in the aftermath, the handout said.

The handout said that the committee "repeatedly expressed concern over the abuse of blasphemy laws" and observed that incidents like Jaranwala were a cause for shame for the nation. "The committee chair sought details of persons detained under blasphemy law in the next meeting," the handout said.

Speaking to media, Senator Iqbal said that the committee had sought details of blasphemy cases from the NCHR. "We have asked about how many people are being tried under the blasphemy law, how many people are in jail and how many people have been sentenced," he said. He said that the committee had also sought complete details about the cases being

tried under the blasphemy law. "If the law was used against Muslims, then details on this should also be provided," he said, adding that the NCHR would submit these details at the committee's next hearing.

During the hearing, Ministry of Human Rights Secretary Allah Dino Khawaja briefed the committee on the Jaranwala incident. He said that two Christian youths had been accused of desecrating the Holy Quran. He further said that mob violence had caused damage to dozens of homes, adding that it had been decided that 92 families would be compensated for the rampage. The secretary said that there was a lack of coordination between the federation and the provinces. He proposed forming a national coordination committee, adding that there was also a need for improving policing.

The committee agreed with the secretary's view regarding the formation of a national coordination committee to prevent such incidents from taking place in the future. During the meeting, PTI's Seemee Ezdi suggested revisiting the blasphemy law. "Earlier, such incidents did not happen so frequently," she said, adding that it needed to be examined whether "something was left out".

"Many people are also afraid to talk about this," she said. PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui, however, disagreed with Seemee's view. "If there is no law, then there will be no way to curb it," he said. "There should be a law to prevent every incident," he said, adding that the "path should not be blocked".

At this, Seemee said, "The path will not be blocked. We will review the law." Speaking to media separately, Seemee said that there had to be a reason why such incidents (of mob violence) were taking place with such frequency. "People think that if they do this, they will go to heaven. We only have to revisit the blasphemy law, not change it," she said. "We have to look at how we can make it better."

The senator reiterated that people were afraid to talk about the issue and a decision in this regard had to be taken after much consideration. "The matter could not be decided during today's meeting. Let's see what happens in the next meeting," she said.

During the hearing, PTI Senator Falak Naaz Chitrali raised the issue of the arrest of the party's women workers. She said that 35 PTI women were in jail. The committee then decided to call a meeting on the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and the party's women workers. Senator Iqbal said that the committee would call a meeting for this month. He said that the meeting's agenda would have the arrest of the PTI chief and the party's women workers on the agenda.

The committee also decided to meet Imran and the incarcerated workers. "The women have been arrested for the past several months without any (charges)," Chitrali said, calling for meeting the women in jail. At this, Senator Iqbal said, "Okay, we will go and meet them in jail. I will also talk to the Senate chairman regarding this matter."

## President emphasizes to enhance coop with China

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for further strengthening the cooperation with China in the areas of trade, economy, culture and defense. This was remarked by him on Tuesday during his meetings with the Ambassadors-designates of China, Venezuela, and Colombia, who presented their diplomatic credentials to the President and separately called on him in Islamabad.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that China is a reliable and tested friend and Pakistan wants to further strengthen the strategic relations with China for the mutual benefit of the two countries. Welcoming the Ambassador-designate of the Venezuela Mr. Jose

China to Pakistan, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, he said Pakistan highly values its ties with China as it has always stood by Pakistan at difficult times.

The President while highlighting the importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) said that it would greatly contribute to the socio-economic development of Pakistan. He said Pakistan was fully committed to timely completion of all projects under CPEC. He expressed his gratitude for China's unflinching support to Pakistan's socio-economic development as well as its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

In his meeting with the Ambassador-designate of the Venezuela Mr. Jose

Rafael Silva Aponte, Dr. Arif Alvi said Pakistan places special emphasis on improving trade and economic relations with Venezuela. He highlighted that the Venezuelan investors can benefit investment-friendly policies of Pakistan. While talking to the Ambassador-designate of Colombia, Mr. Julio Anibal Riano Velandia, the President underlined the need for further enhancing economic, culture and trade relations with Colombia. President Alvi congratulated the envoys on their appointments and expressed the hope that they would play their role to further enhance bilateral cooperation between their respective countries and Pakistan.

## KP govt to crackdown against power theft mafia

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided stern action against the influential mafia involved in illegal use of electricity and Kunda culture.

In this connection, lists of various factories, hotels, commercial plazas, wedding halls, shopping malls, shops and illegal housing societies allegedly involved in electricity theft have also been prepared and a large-scale crackdown against them would be launched against them soon.

A decision in this regard was taken in the maiden meeting of the Provincial Task Force constituted by the provincial government for the purpose. The Task Force headed by the Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs is carrying out a campaign against the illegal use of electricity and recovery of dues from consumers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per

the priority of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Besides, head of the task force, Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs Abid Majeed, Secretary Energy Zulfikar Ali Shah, Commissioner Peshawar Zubair Khan, Commissioner Malakand Shahid ullah Khan, Deputy Secretary Industries/Commerce Magbool Khan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) Chief Fazal Rabi, Additional Secretary Power Division, Arshad Majeed Khan, Commissioners of various divisions, regional police officers and others attended the meeting.

The domestic consumers have also been warned to give up the Kunda culture with immediate effect, otherwise stern action will be taken against them under the framework of the law. The defaulters of electricity bills should also cooperate and pay their arrears early so that

the country can be brought out of the current crisis. The participants of the meeting were told that since September 5, 2023, a total of 518 raids have been conducted across the province, 925 direct connections using illegal electricity were removed.

684 cases of power theft have been registered with different police stations while 28 people arrested and warnings were issued to 338 consumers. An amount of Rs. 4 million have been recovered from defaulters during last one week. According to CEO PESCO, there are Rs. 190 billion dues outstanding against defaulters and teams have been constituted for their recovery.

Additional Secretary Power Division Arshad Majeed Khan expressed his dissatisfaction with the performance of PESCO and said that most of the electricity theft is registered in Mardan, Charsadda, Bannu, Peshawar while the recovery targets are also slow.

## PHC CJ visits Central Jail

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court, Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on Tuesday visited Central Jail Peshawar and issued immediate release orders for 115 different categories of prisoners.

He was accompanied by Caretaker Provincial Law Minister Justice retired Irshad Qaiser, District and Sessions Judge Peshawar, Ashfaq Taj, and IG Prison Usman Mehsud Usman Mehsud, Jail Superintendent along with other judicial officials. Chief Justice visited the Women's Barracks, where he applauded the provision of video-link facilities for female inmates.

He attentively listened to the issues faced by female prisoners and issued immediate instructions for their resolution. The Chief Justice toured the newly

constructed ward within the jail premises, which functions as a hospital. He paid visits to ailing inmates and ensured their medical care.

Additionally, he visited a factory within the jail where prisoners are involved in leatherwork, shoemaking, and stitching, imparting valuable vocational skills. Furthermore, the Chief Justice attended a handicraft and painting class within the jail premises. Addressing the officers of the jail, the judiciary, and other officials, Chief Justice Khan emphasized the need to initiate accountability from within and then extend it to the respective departments.

He declared that his office doors are open at all times, and if required, he would take action against up to 80 percent of his own staff to ensure the integrity of the system. Chief Justice expressed his dedication,

mentioning that during his 31-year journey from Additional Sessions Judge to Chief Justice, he never made decisions under any pressure.

Moreover, he issued directives for the swift transfer of numerous foreign act detainees to their home countries under the 14th Act. Chief Justice Khan acknowledged the need to adopt modern technology for the provision of justice and emphasized the expeditious hearing and resolution of cases under sub-judice in connection with prisoners. CJ Ibrahim commended the adoption of new technology by Sessions Judge Peshawar, Ashfaq Taj, for the provision of justice and praised his efforts in conducting video-linked discussions with judges from various courts to enhance the efficiency of the system.

## Pak Navy, Royal Saudi Naval forces hold exercise

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Major joint Naval Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV between Pakistan Navy (PN) and Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) culminates at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia. The sea phase of the exercise was conducted in Arabian Sea.

During the naval drills, PN Ships PNS SAIH, HIMMAT, DEHSHAT and MUHAFAZ whereas RSNF Ships BADR, HITTEEN, AL SIDDIQ, OQBAH and AL JAWF, aircraft of Royal Saudi Air Force as well as Special Operations Forces & Marines of both the navies participated. The Exercise included a wide range of operational maneuvers encompassing major facets of Anti-Surface, Anti-Air, Mine Warfare and Special Operations in simulated multi threat environment to provide optimum training value.

Concurrent to PN ships' visit and conduct of Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV, Flag Officer Sea Training Pakistan Navy, Rear Admiral Shifaat Ali Khan also visited KSA. During his visit, the Flag Officer called on Commander RSNF Eastern Fleet, Rear Admiral Majid Bin Hazza Al Qahtani and other senior RSNF officers and attended the Closing Ceremony of the exercise. During interaction matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed.

Earlier, during harbour phase of the exercise at Al Jubail, Flag Hoisting ceremonies were conducted on board PN ships to celebrate Pakistan's Defence Day. Exercise Naseem Al Bahr is a biennial Operational exercise which over two decades has evolved as a manifestation of Pak-Saudi strategic relationship and mutual resolve to enhance cooperation in dealing with maritime threats.

## 72 new Corona cases reported

ISLAMABAD (INP): Health officials on Tuesday said that 72 new coronavirus cases were reported during the last week across the country. As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.85 percent while two patients were in critical condition. No death was reported from the coronavirus while 8,458 Covid-19 tests were conducted.

Meanwhile, the official of the Ministry for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination said that the government had strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of COVID-19. He said that there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports.