

Sri Lanka reach Asia Cup final

COLOMBO: Charith Asalanka displayed nerves of steel to lead Sri Lanka to the Asia Cup 2023 final with a thrilling two-wicket victory over Pakistan. Pakistani bowlers fought back in the final overs and took back-to-back wickets, however, Charith Asalanka made no mistake and led his team to the Asia Cup final on the last bowl of the final over.

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Shamshad removed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has removed Shamshad Akhtar as Minister for Privatization. The caretaker government has taken major steps regarding the authority to negotiate agreements with other countries. Sources said that the Finance Minister has also been removed as head of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkiye, Mehmet Pacaci called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

PM for expediting PIA privatization process

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar on Thursday directed Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hasan Fawad to oversee the process of privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and complete it on a fast track basis.

Chairing a meeting on matters related to PIA, the prime minister said process needed to be expedited urgently so as to provide a reliable service to the users and to raise the standards of the national flag carrier to match the global airline standards.

He directed all the relevant stakeholders to find an immediate solution to the matters related to the privatization. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the progress of the privatization process of PIA. He also welcomed the new caretaker privatization minister Fawad Hasan Fawad to his team.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Commerce Minister Gohar Ijaz called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and discussed matters relating to mutual interests. During the meeting, the commerce minister briefed the prime minister about measures being taken to promote the country's exports. The prime minister directed to finalize the measures with respect to access of the domestic

products to the international markets in specified period.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar expressed the government's resolve to take stern action against all those involved in smuggling and illicit trade.

He said the officials and political personalities involved in smuggling and illegal trade activities have been identified at federal and provincial level. The Prime Minister said the relevant authorities are securing evidences against them which would be produced before the courts of law and lead to their conviction.

He said a number of bureaucrats and political figures are involved in the Iranian oil smuggling issue. About a question regarding illegal trade of dollar, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said it has been stopped through stringent measures and enforcement of contemporary laws. He expressed the optimism that Pakistani rupee would be further strengthened. About holding of elections in the country, the Prime Minister opined that the polls can be held in mid or by the end of January next year. However, he said it is upto the Election Commission of Pakistan to take a decision in this regard.

PM Kakar to address UNGA on 22nd: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will address

the annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session on September 22, 2023 (Friday).

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch speaking at the weekly news briefing here on Thursday, said that the caretaker premier would be accompanied by interim Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani during the visit to New York. She said the Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar would outline Pakistan's perspective on a range of regional and global issues of concern, including Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which was amongst the long-standing unresolved items on the UN Agenda. He would elaborate on the significant measures being taken by the caretaker government to consolidate Pakistan's economic recovery and efforts to mobilize domestic and external investments, the spokesperson added.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the interim prime minister would also participate in a summit on the sustainable development goals and other high level meetings to be organised under the auspices of UNGA. She said these would afford valuable platforms to deliberate on effective measures required at the global level to addressing the most pressing economic and development challenges confronting the global South in the wake of Covid-19, geopolitical contestations and climate change.

ECP has authority to announce election date: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: (APP):Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had the authority to announce a date for the general elections. The caretaker government would fully facilitate and assist the ECP in holding free, fair and transparent elections, he said while talking to a private channel. The minister said the Election Commission had already announced that the delimitation of constituencies would be completed by November 30, and soon after that it would hopefully announce the election schedule. He underlined the need for reposing trust in the ECP which was a constitutional institution. Responding to a query, Solangi said the ECP had been actively working on election since the approval of the result of fresh census by

the Council of Common Interests. He said it was clearly stated in the Election Act that all the parties would be given 54 days for the election campaign. "We fully abide by the Constitution and the law," he added. According to legal experts, he said, it was the ECP which had the authority to announce the date of election. The minister maintained that actions against power thieves would ensure reduction in electricity prices. He said both the ministries of Finance and Energy had been working the initiatives that would ensure provision of relief to the masses in electricity prices. The minister said measures had been taken to curb dollar smuggling and illegal money exchanges that had helped the rupee strengthen further. Crackdown had also been launched against those who were involved in hoarding of sugar. To a query, he said the prices of petroleum products were linked with the international market.

SBP keeps policy rate unchanged at 22%

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan, Thursday, decided to maintain the policy rate at 22% owing to declining inflation, improving agriculture outlook and economic activity, and positive impacts of administrative and regulatory measures against price hike and speculative activity in commodity and forex markets.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) that met here at SBP, stressed on maintaining a prudent fiscal stance to keep aggregate demand in check and termed it necessary to bring inflation down on a sustainable basis and to achieve the medium-term target of 5 - 7 percent by the end-FY25. The MPC vowed to continue monitoring the risks to the inflation outlook and take appropriate action, if required, to achieve the objective of price stability, said a statement issued here by the central bank following the MPC meeting. The MPC decided to keep the policy rate unchanged while taking into account various factors including the latest inflation outturn that reflected a continuing declining trend in inflation from its peak of 38 percent in May to 27.4 percent in August 2023. Even though global oil prices have risen recently and are now hovering

over the \$90/barrel level while the rise was being passed on to consumers through adjustments in energy prices, inflation is projected to remain on a downward trajectory, especially from the second half of this year, the MPC observed adding that real interest rates continue to remain in positive territory on a forward-looking basis as well. The committee was confident that the expected ease in supply constraints owing to better agriculture output and the recent administrative measures against speculative activity in the FX and commodity markets would also support the inflation outlook. The MPC observed that administrative and regulatory measures aimed at improving the availability of essential food commodities and curbing illegal activities in the foreign exchange market have begun to yield results and it has helped in narrowing the gap between the interbank and open market exchange rates.

The MPC noted that the agriculture outlook has improved, based on the latest data on cotton arrivals, better input conditions, and satellite data indicating healthy vegetation of other crops while the current account posted a deficit in July after remaining in surplus for the last four months, partly reflecting the impact of the recent ease in import restrictions.

JUI-F's Hamdullah among 11 injured in blast

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) leader Hafiz Hamdullah on Thursday sustained injuries in a blast that took place in Mastung. Balochistan. According to initial reports, the blast took place near a vehicle which injured Hamdullah and several others.

Police rushed to the site of the incident and cordoned off the area. The official said the JUI-F leader was provided initial medical aid in Mastung before being shifted to the provincial capital for further treatment. He said the JUI-F leader's condition is out of danger.

Speaking to media, JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri said Hamdullah sustained injuries but his condition is not critical. "He hasn't been critically injured. His gunmen and two of Hamdullah's party colleagues have also been injured but their condition is stable," he added. Ghauri said that Hamdullah was travelling from Quetta to Kalat when he came under attack.

He also expressed ignorance about the nature of the blast. According to a health department spokesperson, the 11 injured were shifted to Shaheed Nawab Ghous

Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital in Mastung. The spokesperson added that one of the persons is in critical condition. The Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Mustang said 11 people including Hamdullah injured in the blast. The nature of the Mustang explosion is being ascertained, the senior police official added.

Mustang Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq Sasoli said several people were injured in the Mustang blast and added that the three injured including the JUI-F leader had been shifted to a hospital in Quetta.

Meanwhile, former president Asif Ali Zardari, Balochistan Interim Home Minister Zubair Jamali and Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqir strongly condemned the incidents. Balochistan Interim Home Minister Zubair Jamali directed the relevant authorities to submit a report in this regard. He asked the district administration for providing best possible treatment to injured besides praying for their swift recovery. He said that all possible resources would be utilised to eliminate terrorists.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information

and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi strongly condemned the Mastung blast injuring JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah and others.

The minister, in a statement, said the attack on the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader was highly condemnable. "Targeting innocent citizens and political figures of the country is a cowardly act," he maintained.

Solangi said elements involved in terrorist acts did not deserve any leniency and the whole nation was united against the scourge. The minister prayed for the speedy recovery of the persons injured in the blast.

Asif Ali Zardari prayed for early recovery of the injured and said, "Terrorists and facilitators involved in terrorism should be brought under the law." Interim Sindh Chief Minister retired Justice Maqbool Baqir expressed grief over the people injured in the incident. Praying for their swift recovery, he said, "The nation stands united against terrorism."

Meanwhile, Sindh police chief Riffat Mukhtar directed the provincial police to remain on high alert in light of the blast in Mastung, and to carry out their duties with utmost vigilance and diligence.

SC returns PTI's petition seeking polls in 90 days

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court Thursday returned the constitutional petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold general elections in 90 days. The Supreme Court's Registrar office objected that the petitioner did not approach any relevant forum before coming to the Supreme Court.

Moreover, the President cannot be made a party to the petition as per Article 248 of the Constitution, the court said. It is not mentioned in the petition that which basic right of the petitioner was affected. The requirement of Article 184/3 to approach the Supreme Court directly in the petition was not fulfilled. PTI had filed a petition through senior lawyer Ali Zafar, seeking to hold elections within 90 days and set aside the decision of the Council of Common Interests.

CEC convenes meeting today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has convened a consultative meeting today on the proposal of the date for the general elections by President Dr Arif Alvi. Sources in the ECP said that CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja has not yet decided the time of the meeting. The meeting participants would review the letter written by the president.

The legal team will give a legal briefing and expert opinion on the president's proposal. Four members and the relevant wings will also participate in the meeting. After the consultation, the electoral watchdog will respond to the president's proposal regarding the general elections.

Petrol price may increase

ISLAMABAD (INP): The inflation-hit masses are all set to get another shock, as the prices of petroleum products are expected to see a staggering rise over the weekend. A proposal prepared to increase the prices of petrol and diesel from September 16 has come to light. A working paper has been prepared for making changes in the prices of petroleum products.

According to the working paper, the prices of petroleum products are proposed to be increased by Rs20 from September 16, sources say. It suggests that the price of petrol would be raised by Rs20, high speed diesel Rs14 per liter, kerosene oil Rs10 and light diesel Rs9, the sources added. It has also been proposed to increase the ex-refinery price of petrol by Rs13.5, the sources added, after which the ex-refinery price of petrol would rise from Rs228.59 to Rs242.10.

An increase of Rs13 per liter has been proposed in the ex-refinery price of diesel as well, according to sources. In case the tariff hike is approved, the price of petrol will increase from Rs305.36 to Rs321.35, while that of high speed diesel from Rs311.84 to Rs325.50 per liter.

Imran, Qureshi's bail pleas rejected in cipher case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A special court on Thursday rejected bail applications of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and the party's vice chairman Shah Mahmood Asad Umar yet. Asad

Special court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulfarnain heard the bail applications and reserved the verdict after PTI's counsels completed their arguments. Later, the judge announced the reserved verdict, rejecting the post-arrest bail pleas of the PTI leaders.

Meanwhile, a special court set up under the Official Secrets Act accepted the pre-arrest bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umar against Rs50,000 surety bond in the cipher case, here on Thursday. Special Prosecutor Shah Khawar intervened when Asad's lawyer Salman Safdar was arguing the case and told the court that there was no evidence of his involvement in the case. So his arrest was not required in the case.

Advocate Babar Awan requested the court to con-

firm Asad's bail if FIA did not have any evidence against him. Judge Abul

Hasnat Zulfarnain accepted his plea and announced decision in the court. The judge observed that according to the prosecution, there was no evidence against Asad Umar yet. Asad offered to join investigation but the prosecution did not initiate inquiry. According to FIA, Asad Umar's arrest is not required.

The judge ordered the FIA to proceed according to the law. If his arrest was required, FIA would inform him before taking action. The Assistant Special Prosecutors intervened and requested to start the hearing at 12 noon. But, Judge Abul Hasnat refused to oblige him and said the court would not follow his wish.

The assistant interrupted the judge and argued that Asad had to go to the FIA and it was not the FIA to approach him. Asad should have submitted the documents and gone to the investigating officer, he added. Judge Abul Hasnat said that the law follows merit. The court would not follow your wishes. If you want to question him, do it

in the court room. The court would dispense justice.

Asad came to the rostrum and told the court that the FIA summoned him twice, in December last and recently. He was interrogated for one and two hours, respectively. After questioning him, the FIA declared that he had no role in the cipher case, the leader continued. The judge turned down prosecution's request for adjournment and said he would decide bails of Asad Umar, PTI Chairman and Shah Mahmood Qureshi today. "File as many applications you want, I will announce the decisions on all the requests today."

The Assistant Special Prosecutor then requested that the arguments on the three bails be heard together. The judge said that two bails and one pre-arrest petitions would be heard separately. He asked the prosecutor if Asad has no role in the case, why he was nominated in the case. "Why is Asad Umar's bail application being opposed? Give a solid reason. There will be no compromise on the bail application," the judge said.



QUETTA: People shifting an injured person to hospital after blast in Mastung area.

Decision on reopening Torkham border to be taken in view of upcoming developments: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday that the closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Torkham border was "temporary" and a decision on reopening it would be taken in view of developments in the upcoming days. During a question and answer session at a weekly press briefing on Thursday, FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan had been implementing the Afghanistan and Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement — signed in 2020 — "in good faith". "We have facilitated our landlocked neighbour in their access to the rest of the world in terms of trade and we will continue to do so." However, she said Pakistan had some concerns regarding the misuse

of the transit trade agreement on which it would engage with the Afghan government. "Our major concern is that sometimes the exports that are meant for Afghanistan are diversion back to Pakistan and the customs duties and taxes are not paid as they should be. So, there are certain concerns of our customs authorities that people are misusing the bilateral provisions that allow for trade with Afghanistan," Baloch added. "We believe that such incidents embolden the terrorists and that is why it is important for the Afghan interim authorities to ensure that Afghan territory is not used to threaten Pakistan," she maintained. The FO further added that action against Afghan refugees "harboring terror links" will be taken

as per the laws. Meanwhile, in a statement issued on Thursday, Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Pakistan's Chargé d'Affaires (CdA) to Afghanistan Ubaidur Rehman Nizamani met Afghan FM Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul. During the meeting, the leaders discussed the recent hike in terror incidents, the closure of the Torkham border, and arrests of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Deliberations were also held on the bar on the transit of goods of Afghan traders in Karachi. The statement said Muttaqi and Nizamani stressed taking immediate steps to find solutions to the aforementioned problems and vowed to prevent such incidents in the future.



Muhammad Imran appointed as DG IPR

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Following approval from Election Commission of Pakistan Muhammad Imran is posted as Director General Information and Public Relation.

In this regard, Election Commission of Pakistan issued an notification on 13th September along with two other transfer orders.

LDA seals more 17 illegal properties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Thursday, during its ongoing anti-encroachment operation, sealed another 17 illegal properties on Wahdat Road, Allama Iqbal Town and Sabzazar.

In accordance with the directives of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the teams took action under supervision of Additional DG Housing Captain (R) Shah Mir Iqbal. The owners of properties had been issued multiple notices and action taken following non-compliance of the notices.

PPP CEC taking up inflation and elections: Shazia Marri

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Central Executive Committee (CEC) of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been deliberating upon the ongoing political situation, inflation and elections, Shazia Marri said on Thursday.

Flanked by Faisal Karim Kundi and Shehzad Saeed Cheema, Shazia told the media that the CEC moot was a continuation of the Karachi sitting and it will held another session tomorrow as well.

Chaudhary Manzoor was asked to submit a report on the flood, she said, adding that various proposals are being given in the CEC and the final decision will be taken after deliberations.

"In Pakistan People's Party, everyone, including the workers, has the right to give their opinion."

About the election, she said the PPP talked about elections in 90 days under the constitution. The PPP leader lashed out at the president for, what she called, playing a game.

"The president does not have the authority to give

an election date. He should act under his constitutional domain instead of issuing controversial statements."

"The Election Commission has the authority to give an election date and the PPP is stressing that the commission should do so. "We want the elections to be held in accordance with the constitution."

"Bilawal Bhutto Zardari formed a committee and said that everyone should take a decision on the matter but at that time the PTI leadership showed

stubbornness," she recalled. "All parties except the PTI agreed that the elections should be held in one day."

Faisal Karim Kundi said all four provinces have caretaker government.

"Development projects have been banned in Sindh, but development projects are ongoing in Punjab and KP," he rued.

The PPP always played the role of opposition in Punjab, Shahzad Cheema said but it has been deprived of its due share in Punjab.

CM Sindh condemns Mastung bomb blast

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar has strongly condemned the Mustang bomb blast leaving JUI leader Hafiz Hamdullah and others injured.

According to the statement issued by the CM House on Thursday, the chief minister said that he was in a grief and sorrow over the injury of former federal minister Hafiz Hamdullah in a bomb blast incident.

Justice Baqar said that Pakistani nation was united against terrorist activities.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Shah visits exhibition titled 'The North' held at ICD Brookfield Place

F.P. Report

DUBAI: Minister of State for Tourism and Chairman Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation Wasi Shah visited the exhibition titled 'The North' held at ICD Brookfield Place, Dubai. Imad Mian, curator of The North, briefed the Minister about the concept of the event.

North aims to showcase the diverse landscapes of Pakistan as explored by three artists, Louis Sapri, Sarah Knapp and Phoebe Stewart Carter. The artists visited Pakistan under Daastangoi Gallery's residency program and spent 10 days in September 2022 exploring and photographing the beautiful landscapes of Pakistan. The work of these artists is on display at Brookfield Place until September 2023



Minister of State Wasi Shah appreciated this unique idea and admired the work of the artists. He added that this work is of cultural and economic importance for Pakistan and globally and is a beautiful way to showcase Pakistan's beauty through painting.

Pakistan's Ambassador to UAE Faisal

Tirmizi was also accompanied by Minister of State Wasi Shah while on this occasion Namira Salim, who made a name for herself in space tourism, was also present.

On this occasion, the Minister of State had also invited many Emirati businessmen so that they can see the natural beauty of

Pakistan and make up their minds for investment in the tourism sector.

On this occasion, Hussam Mobid, who is the CEO of MTC Group, expressed his desire to visit Pakistan in the coming days and invest in the tourism sector. MTC, GCC is considered a large company with twenty years of experience in distribution of IT hardware and software.

It should be noted that Minister of State Wasi Shah while addressing the Pakistanis in an event shared that the Government of Pakistan incurred zero expenses on his trip to Dubai and all the expenses were borne by the organizers of his Mushaira. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Wasi Shah had extensive meetings with many tour operators, businessmen and the Pakistani community.

CASS organizes seminar on Indian Electoral Politics

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, successfully concluded a seminar on 'Indian Electoral Politics: Unpacking India's Pre-Poll Dynamics & Implications for the Region.'

Distinguished speakers included Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Pakistan's Former High Commissioner to India; Air Marshal Waseem ud Din, HI(M), SBT (Retd), Former Director, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad; and Dr Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, Assistant Professor at Quaid-i-Azam University.

Air Marshal Ashfaq Arain (Retd), Advisor to CAS on CASS Affairs, delivered the Concluding Remarks; while Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan, Advisor on Aviation to Caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan & President CASS, delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The speakers examined India's political climate, Modi's re-election bid and its impact on regional stability. The discussions emphasised the importance of a multifaceted approach for Pakistan, highlighting the need for strategic diplomacy, robust military preparedness, and an empowered media landscape.

Panellists converged on the view that given India's potential for leveraging security issues for domestic electoral gains, Pakistan must remain vigilant and proactive to safeguard its national interests. It was pointed out that while a military provocation by India might bolster the BJP's re-election bid, it would spell disaster for ordinary Indians as Pakistan would respond

with impunity. Air Marshal Farooq Habib (Retd), Senior Director at CASS and the seminar's moderator, set the stage for the proceedings and highlighted the challenges Pakistan historically faced due to its proximity to India, accentuated by her hegemonic aspirations.

He cited past incidents, including the Mumbai attack and the Pulwama incident, as examples where such strategies provoked anti-Pakistan sentiments benefiting incumbent Indian governments. Furthermore, he commented on recent belligerent remarks from Indian leaders and warned of potential escalatory measures in diplomatic and military spheres. He also pointed to the role of the Indian media in stoking these tensions, suggesting that it fit the BJP's electoral narrative.

Speaking on 'Indian Electoral Politics: Implications for Diplomacy and Options for Pakistan', Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi discussed Prime Minister Modi's anticipated approach towards the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, while agreeing that he would certainly leverage the security narrative against Pakistan. Ambassador Qazi noted past instances where Pakistan was blamed for attacks in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) region, predicting that such tactics were likely to be amplified in the run-up to the elections.

He further predicted attempts by India to exploit internal issues in regions like Gilgit-Baltistan. Reflecting on global reactions, he highlighted the lack of support from the Western political and secu-

rity community for Pakistan, particularly post-Pulwama, Balakot, and the annexation of IIOJ&K, attributing it to India's burgeoning reputation as an ascending global power.

Delineating Pakistan's strategic options, Ambassador Qazi argued that proactive diplomacy alone would not be sufficient to counter Indian escalations. He contended that international apathy to India's alleged exploitation of the security narrative for electoral mileage would persist unless Pakistan focused on internal governance reforms.

Air Marshal Waseem ud Din (Retd) discussed the complex dynamics of the India-Pakistan relationship, emphasising the potential risks and outcomes of a false flag operation by India. Drawing lessons from the past and considering India's strategic outlook, he warned that it may undertake a false flag operation such as a terrorist attack on a military installation to a violent act targeting civilians.

In the wake of such an incident, he anticipated an Indian media onslaught and a coercive diplomatic campaign. He firmly stated that non-retaliation was not an option for Pakistan. Highlighting the role of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), he expressed confidence in its capabilities and readiness to counter any aggressive move. He further underscored the importance of a combined tri-service approach for an effective response. At the national level, he called for a proactive strategy reiterating political unity, economic revival, and national cohesion.

Dr Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal shed light on the proliferation of Hindu nationalist themes via television,

Bollywood, and diverse media outlets. Furthermore, the recurring theme of anti-Pakistan sentiment had become a prominent tool for mobilisation in India, according to Dr Afzal.

He presented insights into the strategic use of war hysteria against Pakistan around major electoral periods. Dr Afzal proposed that Pakistan adopt a proactive stance, while asserting its non-negotiable position as a sovereign nation, not merely an 'electoral pawn.' He emphasised the imperative role of the Pakistani media in unveiling the electoral stratagems of India to the global community.

In his Concluding Remarks, Air Marshal Ashfaq Arain (Retd) was of the view that India's economic strength and international support contrasted sharply with Pakistan's current economic and political vulnerabilities. This disparity benefited the BJP's agenda, leading to state-managed incidents, punitive actions, and misinformation campaigns. He concluded that the best strategy for Pakistan was 'to avert, respond, and put our house in order.'

Delivering the Vote of Thanks, Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd) expressed satisfaction that CASS, through such seminars, continued to foster informed discussions on pressing issues, equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and strategies needed for a peaceful and prosperous future for Pakistan and its neighbours.

The seminar was attended by a diverse group of individuals, including academics, retired Armed Forces officers, policymakers, researchers, and media professionals; and concluded with an interactive Q&A session.



KARACHI: Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar presides over a cabinet meeting at CM House. —APP Photo

Abdullah Sumbal remembered in condolence reference at Secretariat

LAHORE (APP): A condolence reference for former federal interior secretary (late) Abdullah Khan Sumbal was held at the Civil Secretariat here on Thursday.

Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman, the senior member board of revenue, additional chief secretary, additional chief secretary (home) and administrative secretaries of all the departments attended the condolence reference while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

The condolence reference began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. The Administrative Secretaries' Committee paid tribute to Abdullah Khan Sumbal for his services in civil service.

The Chief Secretary Punjab said that Abdullah Khan Sumbal was a hardworking and capable officer as well as a very good human being and his services in civil service would always be remembered.

He remarked that the sudden death of Abdullah Khan Sumbal is a great loss for his family and the civil service. At the end of the reference, Fateha was offered for late Abdullah Khan Sumbal.

Governor Punjab chairs UET Senate meeting

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman chaired the 40th meeting of the Senate of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), which approved the university budget for the year 2023-24, here on Thursday.

During the meeting, industry-academia relations and other issues of the university were also discussed. The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor UET Lahore Prof Dr Habibur Rehman, Registrar Muhammad Asif, members of UET Senate, faculties, deans and chairpersons of various departments.

The vice-chancellor highlighted the steps taken for betterment of students, faculty members, staff, and the university. The Punjab governor said the UET was one of the prestigious educational institutions of the country.

He said that the UET graduates were proving their mettle at national and international level. He said that developing links between academia and industries is need of the hour. He promised full cooperation to solve the problems, raised by the Senate members in the meeting.

Change of name

I have changed my daughter's name from Laiba to Maymoona Bibi so correct in Form B and other educational documents. Asghar Shah son of Qabil Shah resident of village Pulosi Talarzai Peshawar

Chinese CG calls on Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Consul General of China in Karachi Yang Yundong called on the Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab in KMC head office on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

On this occasion, China's Vice Consul Xie Shuyue and M. Zheng Chao, Assistant Consul Chen Weilong were also present. Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab welcomed the Consul General of China and the accompanying guests on their visit to KMC.

He said that Pakistan and China have good neighbourly relations,

China has helped Pakistan in every tough time, China's cooperation with Pakistan in various fields is a great example of friendship.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation is trying to provide quality civic facilities to the citizens and for this purpose, development works being done in different areas of the city.

Along with residential areas, industrial zones are also being developed, Karachi is the commercial hub of Pakistan and the centre of industrial and

commercial activities.

The City of Karachi welcomes China's cooperation for infrastructure development and wants to learn from China's experience in local government affairs and urban development. Chinese investment companies will be provided with all possible facilities in Karachi.

The Consul General of China said that Pakistan and China are proud of their deep friendship and fraternal relationship, and the development of Karachi will open new avenues of stability and prosperity for Pakistan.

196 FIRs lodged as K-Electric cracks down on power theft

KARACHI (INP): Amid the Government of Pakistan's directives and a nationwide focus on curbing power theft, K-Electric is also acting against power theft and lodged 196 FIRs in police stations across the city against theft of 2 million units and 123 million rupees.

About 1.5 million of these two million units are accounted for by only 20 customers who have been charged with electricity theft. These include illegal hydrants and generator

mafias illegally stealing electricity and reselling to various areas.

"Timely and swift action is critical to curb electricity theft. Not only is this hindering the provision of uninterrupted supply to areas, but also hurting the national exchequer and contributing towards circular debt. Penalizing this crime is essential for improving supply and protecting customers," said Moonis Alvi, CEO K-Electric, "We thank the Government of Sindh and

law enforcement agencies for their support in ensuring that this crime does not go unpunished, thus paving the way to a progressive sector."

Since the start of the year, KE has conducted over 14,000 kunda removal drives.

The total weight of the wires removed is exceeding 130,000 kilograms. KE appeals to its customers to support the company and take a stand against power theft to ensure an uninterrupted supply of electricity.

Tourist places should be promoted: Kamran

KARACHI (APP): Wali Mohammad at Governor House here on Thursday.

Steps to promote tourism in the province, provision of better facilities for tourists, minimizing affects of climate change and protecting natural environment were discussed in detail on the occasion.

The Governor Sindh said that there were many tourist spots in the province, including Gorakh Hill,

which need effective publicity.

He asked the caretaker minister to activate Sindh Tourism Development Cooperation (STDC) for highlighting the places of interest of Tourists.

Especially, trained guides should also be assigned Moen-Jo-Daro and Makli graveyards to inform the visitors about their historic importance, the Governor added.

31 new cases of dengue in city

LAHORE (APP): As many as 31 new cases of dengue were reported in the city during the last 24 hours and anti-dengue efforts have also been ramped up.

Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider came to field besides gathering data from 1,034 locations.

She personally reviewed anti-dengue operations in Defense Phase III. Two houses were identified with dengue larvae and promptly treated, including surrounding areas with spray.

Rafia engaged with residents to discuss performance of dengue teams and

assessed their micro-plans and tally sheets. She also emphasized the importance of clearing weeds and grass from vacant plots in the area. Separately, in UC-72 Anarkali, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Adnan Rashid warned the DDH about duty delays.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Umar Maqbool assessed anti-dengue activities in UC-115 Samanabad.

Larvae were discovered in L-Block and H-Block, leading to immediate dengue spraying in affected houses and their surroundings. Administrative officers would continue to intensify their efforts in monitoring dengue response and surveillance in the field, DC Rafia Haider said.

PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD

CORRIGENDUM

Reference advertisements published in the national dailies on **13th September, 2023** regarding Public Hearing for Award of Cable TV Licences. Public Hearing date for **Faisalabad & Gujranwala** is correct but the day may be read as **Monday** instead of Wednesday.

Director (Licensing-Distribution)
PEMRA Headquarters, Mauve Area,
Sector G-8/1, Islamabad
Tel: +92(51)9107115, Fax: +92(51)9107140

EDU/1603/23



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting of Provincial Apex Committee. Corps Commander Peshawar Lt. Gen. Hassan Azhar Hayat also present.

PEC KP notifies Voters Education Committee

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has notified a Provincial Voters Education Committee (PVEC) to address the changing needs of the voter groups and challenges in promoting civic awareness and voter engagement in the country.

The Provincial Election Commissioner has been nominated as Chairman

whereas Spokesperson to Provincial Election Commissioner will be the convenor of the Committee. The initiative is part of the comprehensive National Civic and Voter Education Plan.

The committee is consist of the representatives from different departments of Provincial Government including Higher Education, Elementary & Secondary Education, Archives & Libraries, Auqaf, Minorities & Religious Affairs,

Social Welfare, Culture, Tourism, Archeology & Museums, Health, Local Government & Rural Development, representative of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women, NADRA, Islamia College University, President Peshawar Press Club and Civil Society Organizations.

Main purpose of the committee is to collaborate with stakeholders including political parties, media out-

lets, civil society organizations, and various other private and public sector stakeholders by adopting innovative approaches utilizing traditional and digital platforms by conducting wide scale mass awareness and voter education activities.

ECP aims to achieve a higher and inclusive voter turnout in upcoming General Election and foster a culture of civic responsibility and democratic engagement across Pakistan.

Tribal youth completed training F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In order to enhance the capacity of youth in tribal districts, Frontier Works Organization in collaboration with Frontier Corps KP North completed three months duration short courses for 185 students from Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber & Chitral at Construction Technology & Training Institute (CTTI).

The courses started on June 15, 2023 and concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony on September 14, 2023. During the session, students were given training in Mining Operation & Techniques, Mines Survey, Health & Safety Environment in Mining, Auto Mechanic, Auto Electrician, AutoCAD & Computer Operating. Certificate Awarding Ceremony was held in CTTI Islamabad.

Director MEDO along with Official of Pak Army awarded certificates to the students and appreciated the training given at CTTI Islamabad. The Chief Guest highlighted the importance of mineral resources and their utilization for economic growth of the area.

The ceremony was attended by the parents & relatives of the students, faculty members and other guests. 1st phase of the courses were held in the 1st quarter of the current year in which 150 students from Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber successfully completed the course.

Malgary Doctoran offered condolences F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the 3rd day of the demise of our dear friend and colleague, Dr Shams Ul Haq, Malgari Doctoran visited his family to offer their condolences. They also visited his grave and offered prayers for his departed soul.

Dr Haider Ali, the Central President of Malgari Doctoran, led the delegation. He was accompanied by Dr Muhammad Shahzad, the Central Information Secretary, Dr Hamid Iqbal Bangash, the Senior Vice President, Dr Bashir, Dr Saleem Bacha, Dr Saeed Ur Rahman Wardag, Dr Kashif, Dr Hameed Katozai and Dr Ashfaq.

The delegation expressed their deep sorrow at the loss of Dr Shams Ul Haq and prayed for his family to bear the loss with patience. They also remembered his services to the medical community and said that he will be remembered for his dedication and commitment to his work.

Syed Aqeel secures 3rd position



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hadaf College Peshawar student named Syed Aqeel Bacha secured 3rd position in MDCAT test arranged Education and Teaching Evaluation Agency (ETEA).

The successful candidate dedicated his success to hard work of teachers and prayers of parents.

It is worthy to mention that 46 thousand 439 candidates were appeared for MDCAT test arranged by ETEA at Peshawar.

Secretaries directed to proposed projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and Caretaker Provincial Minister for Merged Districts Amir Abdullah here Thursday chaired a meeting to ponder over measures needed to expedite development initiatives and stimulate growth in merged district.

The meeting formed a working group with caretaker minister as its chairperson and members including special secretaries from Planning and

Development (P&D), Health, Education, Home and mineral.

The primary aim of the working group is to ensure expeditious execution of development projects within the merged districts, bolster investment across various sectors and address critical issues.

On the occasion, Chief Secretary reiterated provincial government's commitment to develop merged districts. He underscored the importance of capitaliz-

ing on opportunities within tourism, minerals, mining, agriculture, livestock, and other sectors.

He also directed secretaries of relevant departments to brief caretaker minister regarding both ongoing and proposed projects within the merged districts.

He also directed Independent Monitoring Unit to take proactive measures to identify ghost schools and monitor attendance of teachers.

PAJCCI demands to resolve border issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Closure of Torkham border for passage of all kind of traffic between Pakistan and Afghanistan for the last seven days has caused lining up of thousands trucks laden with goods in both the countries.

"The impasse following a firefight between security forces over construction of an unlawful structure at zero point has inflicted a loss of around three million US dollars on businessmen by destroying perishable goods including fresh fruit, vegetable, poultry, meat, eggs, juices and others," claims Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Ziaul Haq Sarhadi in a press statement issued here on Thursday.

From Torkham zero point to Landi Kotal, more than 1500 to 2000 trucks are parked in queue on both sides of the road waiting for opening of the border, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi said.

Similarly on Afghanistan side, the number of stranded trucks are more than 2000 to around 2500

because of season of fresh fruit export to Pakistan. Ziaul Haq Sarhadi said big quantity of perishable goods loaded in trucks including fresh fruit like grapes, banana, citrus, melon dew and vegetable like lady finger, tomato have become rot.

Apart from transit trade goods, a large quantity of import and export goods from both the countries has become wasted and is stranded due to closure of border.

Around 150 to 200 trucks of soap stone and 100 trucks of coal come on daily basis to Pakistan from Afghanistan. The number of trucks carrying fresh fruit and vegetable are more than the above mentioned figure, he went on say.

While large number of trucks cross border to Afghanistan carrying export goods from Pakistan like cement, structural iron (sarya), poultry, meat, eggs, banana, potato etc, he continued.

Director PAJCCI urged the quarters concerned to take measures for early resolution of dispute because

permanent closure of border is not a solution and is detrimental to the economies of both the countries and regional trade as well.

He said some elements are raising allegation of misuse of transit trade facility and smuggling of exported goods back to Pakistan.

Ziaul Haq Sarhadi said four to five different departments are working over border security and its their duty to increase surveillance and monitoring of incoming and outgoing goods instead of complete closure of commercial activities.

Director PAJCCI added that export of Pakistan to Central Asian countries is dependent on passage through Afghanistan and closure of border is not only affecting bilateral trade but also the regional trade.

Apart from businessmen, border closure has also affected a large number of ailing Afghans who come to Pakistan for treatment and are stuck at border in deteriorating condition, he added.



PESHAWAR: Station Director Radio Pakistan Peshawar Syda Ifat Jabar with Dr. Khalid Mufti and Maryam Bibi at Thalassaemia awareness session.

Steps taken to protect minority communities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial

Caretaker Minister for Law and Religious Affairs, Justice Retired, Syed Arshad Shah has said that steps have been taken to protect lives and property of minorities as ensuring all the rights to minority community members is among priorities of provincial government.

He was addressing a ceremony that was organized by Provincial Auqaf Department and Churches Association of Hazara. The ceremony that was aimed to

promote interfaith harmony was held in Saint Lucas Church Abbottabad.

Caretaker minister expressed satisfaction over spirit of mutual coexistence in Hazara and said that provincial and federal government is committed to protect minorities and their properties.

He said that minorities are safe and enjoying their rights in the country and added that certain forces are fomenting strife and trying to wedge difference between majority and minority. He said that government is fully aware of

these activities and resources are being utilized to wipe out enemies that are hidden and disguised.

He also directed to construct damaged wall of Saint Lucas Church and assured steps to protect religious places of minorities. He said that matters would be reviewed about protection of temples and illegal allotment cases.

The ceremony was also attended by minority community leaders, religious figures, deputy commissioner, District Khateeb and pastors of all the churches of Hazara.

AKF organizes mass wedding ceremony

PESHAWAR (INP): Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) organized a mass wedding ceremony for 21 destitute couples of the five districts of Malakand division.

The mass wedding ceremony of the orphans and destitute couples was organized in Riway Wedding Hall at Thana town of district Malakand, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

More than 800 guests including the relatives of the couples attended the Walima ceremony. So far 497 families have benefited from the mass wedding facility under the auspices

of the foundation. Provincial president, AKF KP, Khalid Waqas presided over the ceremony while Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) Siraj-ul-Haq was chief guest on the occasion.

Prominent among those who attended the Walima of mass wedding ceremony were included vice president AKF Pakistan, Zakirullah Mujahid, General Secretary Haji Rizwanullah Mohmand, Mohammad Haleem Bacha, former KP minister Shah Raz Khan, former MNA Syed Bakhtiar Maani and officials of the Foundation from all dis-

tricts of Malakand.

On this occasion, each newly wedded couple was presented an amount of Rs.150,000/- in cash and household items including bed, washing machine, pedestal fan, dressing table, sewing machine, iron, water, tea, dinner and other essential items of the daily used in gift.

The expenses of the mass wedding ceremony were sponsored by the opulent personalities. Gifts were also presented to all brides in a separate gathering arranged under the auspices of the Al-Khidmat Women Trust.

AIG Prions chair 4th Superintendent Jail Conference

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional Inspector General (AIG) Prisons said that problems identified by Superintendents in the jails will be addressed on a priority basis and ordered the establishment of a comprehensive plan for security an end to the smuggling of drugs and mobiles to confinement centres, on Thursday.

This he said while chair-

ing review meeting and fourth Superintendent Jails Conference. During the meetings AIGs of prisons, headquarters, security & judicial, Deputy Inspector Generals Regional Prisons Offices, Commandant Prisons Staff Training Academy along with all superintendents from KP and erstwhile Fata were present.

The participants presented Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) while all

Superintendents are directed to take concrete steps for security of prisons with coordination of local administration and criminal justice coordination committee.

Establishment of complaint boxes for both inmates and staff, superintendents to visits barrack on weekly basis to ensure welfare and protection of rights of prisoners in the jails, decided in the meeting.

The provision of renewal of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) facility within the jails, ensuring discipline among watch and ward staff as well as provision of education and health facilities.

The meeting also decided to ensure timely renovation of security equipment and its functionalization as well as tactics for good governance by nominated officers.

Provincial Ombudsman to open more regional offices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat will focus on to open more regional offices at regional level and also in merged districts of Peshawar (former FATA) for the relief of common people to ha e an easy excess to lodge their complaints in regional offices of Provincial Ombudsman, said Syed Jalalud Din Shah provincial Ombudsman while presiding over monthly meeting at Ombudsman Secretariat, on Thursday.

He lamented that after opening of regional offices

at Abbottabad, Swat and DI Khan, we have received very positive response from these areas as locals have started lodging complaints at their respective regional offices.

He was informed that during month of August total 235 complaints of different nature were admitted while 137 cases were disposed off.

The Provincial Ombudsman Syed Jamalud Din Shah also thanks the Provincial Chief Secreatay and heads of all departments for their cooperation with Ombudsman Secretariat in connection with implementation of cases.

Jamal Shah also directed that Awareness campaign may be extended to Ex Fata areas ie District Khyber, Kurram Agency and other areas. The first conference to be held at Landikotal college to launch awareness campaign.

The media awareness campaign also played a pivotal role to create more awareness among the common people to approach for resolution of grievances at regional level and the burden is also shifting from main Secretariate to regional offices.

Every regional office has their Deputy Registrar and advisors to solve the com-

plaints at earliest time.

We are also requesting the Govt to allow more staff to strengthen regional offices to overcome the shortage of investigation officers.

We have also started training workshop and lectures for our investigation officers to improve their performance and enhance their investigative experience, remarked Jamal Shah, Shah who served in various capacities ie Secretary established, secretary local govt, commissioner kohat before posting here is keen to strengthen the working and capacity of Ombudsman Secretariat.

Fawad seeks UN asylum amidst father's accusations of criminal history

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Syed Jamaat Ali Shah made a public statement on Thursday, expressing his concerns about his son, Fawad Ali Shah.

He claimed that Fawad is spreading false information about government agencies, officials and bureaucrats from other countries.

Speaking at a press conference held here at Peshawar Press Club, he accused his son of using social media to spread lies and disrespect authorities and institutions.

"Fawad Ali Shah, who identifies himself as a jour-



nalist, was also accused of blackmailing people, him deeply disappointed him

and brought shame to their family," Syed Jamaat Ali said.

He revealed that there are cases pending of attempted murder against his son.

Syed Jamaat Ali Shah declared that he also has disowned his son through newspaper advertisements.

He urged the concerned institutions and authorities to take note that his real son Syed Jawad Ali Shah is the support of his old age.

He appealed to law enforcement agencies to take action against Fawad as he is seeking political asylum from the United Nations.

He also urged the agencies for his son's arrest and punishment.

KP Excise Department lacks protocol cars, proper raid vehicles

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Excise Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is facing a critical challenge in its mission to curb smuggling activities within the province. It has come to light that the department lacks protocol cars and proper vehicles for conducting raids and ensuring security during operations, raising concerns about the effectiveness of its anti-smuggling efforts.

On one hand, the federal government has been inten-

sifying its crackdown on smuggling across the country, considering it a significant threat to the nation's economy and security.

However, the provincial excise authorities in KP seem to be struggling to match the federal government's zeal due to a combination of factors, including a lack of interest from key officials.

One glaring issue plaguing the KP Excise Department is the absence of protocol cars. These vehicles play a crucial role in facilitating the move-

ment of department officials, enabling them to carry out their duties efficiently.

Without proper transportation, officials face logistical challenges in responding to incidents and conducting inspections.

The absence of protocol cars not only hampers the mobility of department personnel but also affects their ability to engage with the public and maintain a visible presence in the community. This gap has raised questions about the department's commitment to its

mission of combating smuggling.

Another significant concern is the lack of suitable vehicles for conducting raids and ensuring security during operations against smugglers.

Effective raids require specialized vehicles equipped to handle challenging terrains and high-speed chases, especially in the rugged and often hostile terrain of KP. Furthermore, providing security to the personnel engaged in anti-smuggling operations is paramount.



In brief

Fertilizer, sugar, wheat seized F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Assistant Commissioner Pindi Bhattian Rashid Iqbal has seized heavy quantity of fertilizer, sugar and wheat illegally stocked in Jalapur Bhattian area. According to details, AC Pindi Bhattian was raided at white gold rice mills, Hussain rice mills and recovered 20415 sacks of sugar, 17000 bags of sugar and 500 bags of urea and 600 bags of DAP Fertilizers form warehouses of the both mills worth millions of rupees stocked by Haq Nawaz Bhatti and Husnain Nawaz Bhatti. AC sealed the warehouses and get register cases against owner Haq Nawaz Bhatti and Husnain Nawaz Bhatti. DC Umar Farooq Warraich said that recovered fertilizer, sugar and wheat would be sold official prices in the market. DC committed for actions against profiteers and hoarders would continue without any discrimination for protecting rights of people and implementation of the district's government's policy and agenda. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich inaugurated newly constructed parking shed by the District Bar Association Hafizabad at district courts. ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig, President Bar Malik Waqas Raza Awan, Secretary Bar Muzammil Azizi gujjar, ex-president Bar Amanullah Sandhu and other senior lawyers attended the ceremony. DC said that renovation of district courts and provision of different facilities for lawyers and visitors was a laudable step of the office bearers of the Bar.

DPA announces boycott F.P. Report

HANGU: The District Paramedical Association (DPA) Hangu announced a boycott from 18th September from provision of services as a protest in favor of their demands, on Thursday. The was taken in an emergency meeting of DPA Hangu chaired by Luqman Gul Orakzai while general secretary Haji Abdur Rehman presented agenda of the event as per provincial association directions in this regard. DPA Hangu added that paramedical staff will not participate in any activities including trainings and anti-polio campaigns from 18th September. The association argued government to end discriminatory among public servants.

PRCS conducts workshop

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), AJK Chapter under its Climate Advocacy & Coordination for Resilient Actions (CACRA) project and with the generous support of the German Red Cross concluded a comprehensive two-day training workshop aimed at enhancing the understanding of climate change, climate-smart disaster risk management (DRM), and small grant proposal development. The training was held here at a local hotel and was attended by fifteen volunteers of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society from five districts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (Neelum, Jhelum, Valley, Rawalakot, Haveli and Mirpur. The training program was part of the PRCS AJK Chapter's ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of local communities to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change and to build resilience against natural disasters.



HYDERABAD: A view of sewerage water accumulated on road outside Railway workshop.

JSQM hold protest against WAPDA

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A protest was held at the Lahori regulator in the suburbs of Larkana against the filing of an FIR by the Jai Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) on the alleged illegal installation of Kandi system on the citizens of Larkana and slogans were raised against the wrong actions of WAPDA. On this occasion, the central leader of JSQM, Athar Soomro, Azizul Rehman Sheikh, Aftab Ali Jatoti and others said that the government officials of WAPDA department have continued the series of cruel actions on the citizens of Larkana. The series of bills has been continued while the electricity bill of a tehlila driver's house will be issued for lakhs of rupees per month.

While no officer of

WAPDA has held any open hearing to correct the excess electricity bills, millions of rupees worth of electricity is being used illegally in many places in the city, but no relief has been given to the poor people. He further said that WAPDA officials are taking bribes of millions of rupees and putting the burden of these illegal connections on the citizens.

Meanwhile, under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Shahida Parveen, the secret agencies in Larkana raided two floor flour mills located in the suburbs of Larkana, Sindha Small Industries, where there are non-standard types of flour that are harmful to human health. After exporting more than 30 thousand sacks of wheat, Makh flour mill and Madina flour mill were sealed and cases were

registered against the flour mill owners at the border police station.

During the grinding of flour at the mentioned flour mills, there is a large amount of mixing of unhealthy and deadly and non-standard types of wheat, which has been going on for a long time. Gram, while grams used to be sold in the market after reducing the weight from a 40 kg bag, in this regard Assistant Commissioner Larkana said that after raiding the flour mills by the secret agencies of the country, they have been completely sealed. After more than 30,000 sacks of non-standard and unhealthy wheat were recovered, cases have been registered against the involved flour mill owners while the investigation has been started.

AKF holds mass wedding ceremony F.P. Report

MALAKAND: Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) organized a mass wedding ceremony for 21 destitute couples of the five districts of the Malakand Division. The mass wedding ceremony of the orphans and destitute couples was organized in Riway Wedding Hall at Thana town of district Malakand, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

More than 800 guests including the relatives of the couples attended the Walima ceremony. So far 497 families have benefited from the mass wedding facility under the auspices of the foundation. Provincial president, AKF KP, Khalid Waqas presided over the ceremony while Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) Siraj-ul-Haq was chief guest on the occasion.

Prominent those attended the Walima ceremony mass wedding ceremony were included vice president AKF Pakistan, Zakirullah Mujahid, general secretary Haji Rizwanullah Mohmand, Mohammad, Haleem Bacha, former KP minister Shah Raz Khan, ex-MNA Syed Bakhtiar Maani and officials of the foundation from all districts of Malakand.

On this occasion each newly wedded couple was presented an amount of Rs.150,000/- in cash and household items including bed, washing machine, pedestal fan, dressing table, sewing machine, iron, water, tea, dinner and other essential items of the daily used in gift. The expenses of the mass wedding ceremony were sponsored by the opulent personalities. In a separate gathering arranged under the auspices of the Al-Khidmat Women Trust also presented gifts to all brides.

Sugar dealers issued guidelines F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Following directives issued by the Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower, Iftikhar Ahmad all the sugar dealers in the district have been issued guidelines that would strictly be followed to ensure the sufficient availability and sale on prescribed rates of the commodity.

According to a notification issued on Thursday, the sugar dealers have been directed to share the stock of sugar available with them, with the office of District Controller/Special Price Control Magistrate before 09:00 a.m. The traders were further directed to maintain the record of sale of the sugar on a daily basis and update the record of sugar stored at their godowns.

The traders were made bound to display a sign-board on the front of their godowns inscribed with their names and mobile phone numbers and share the addresses of their other godowns with the Food Controller Office. The stock of the sugar available at their godowns must be shared with the food office in separate WhatsApp groups before 09:00 a.m.

Amendments in LG Act to empower councils: Mayor

F.P. Report

MARDAN: City Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar stated during the City Local Council meeting that under the Local Government Act, meetings are being held to address local government issues through amendments in the Act. These amendments will be implemented following approval from the Election Commission and the Governor, and they will enable provincial governments to allocate funds to local governments and resolving various issues.

The Local Council Session was presided over by Elected Chairman Hashim Khan. While Elected members government officers and Journalists Participated in meeting. Mayor Mayar mentioned that during the previous government of the Awami National Party, a unique project for 220 acres of Zomung Park was approved with a budget of 17 crore rupees. However, this project was halted during the PTI government, and an NAB inquiry was initiated. He further stated that after the NAB inquiry, the project was cleared. TMAs Pay 34 lac for park lease last year, and this year it's 48 lac, with expected increases in future expenses.

Mayor Mardan emphasized that National Logistics Cell had committed to completing this project within 6 months, but even after 7 years, it remains incomplete. Zomung Park is a significant and unique project for the public's recreation, and its formal opening is scheduled for September 15th, inviting people from the surrounding areas.

Regarding recent incidents of child exploitation, Himayatullah criticized the delayed response by the police and the lack of effective action against the criminals involved. He stressed that Mardan police are not taking effective actions against drug abuse, and society is heading towards moral degradation. Most of the youth are being



adversely affected.

Mayor Mayar also mentioned that with the permission of the provincial government and National Highways Authority, Underpasses would be Established in front of the Medical Complex on N-45 and other locations. This initiative aims to not only facilitate road crossings but also increase revenue for the TMA and City Local Government Through Shops Rent in Under passes. During the meeting, elected members shared their views on the agenda and other important matters.

AWKUM 27th finance& planning meeting held: The 27th meeting of the Finance & Planning Committee of the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan was held under the Chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zahoor Ul Haq.

The meeting was attended by the Pro Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Sultan Ayaz, Dean Faculty of Physical & Numerical Sciences, Prof. Dr. Saeed Islam, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Zahir Shah, Dean Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir, Deputy Secretary Higher Education Department, Azhar Zahoor, Deputy Secretary, Finance Department Govt of KP, Sahibzada Abbas, Director Planning & Development, Kamran Khan, Associate Professor, Dr. Yassar Shah, Registrar, Sayim Sohail, Deputy Registrar, Hassan Khan and Treasurer, Dr. Shaista Irshad Khan.

The meeting discussed fee restructuring of academic programs, hostels, examination fee (pharmacy) and annual affiliated college fees. The meeting also discussed establishment of Squash Academy and Resource Centre at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, a project awarded by the HEC to the University. The project entails establishment of State of the Art International level Squash Academy at AWKUM.

The forum decided that the cost over & above the allocated budget shall be borne by the University. Moreover, the forum also endorsed solarization & upgradation of electric system of administration, academic blocks and street lights of the University. The members of the meeting appreciated and congratulated the Vice Chancellor and his team for successful execution of the import of IT equipment, a component of the University's PSDP project, through LC.

During the meeting, the Vice Chancellor reiterated that financial sustainability is one of the strategic goals of the University. He added that we need to adapt to the changing circumstances nationally and globally and ensure that the University is financially stable. Moreover, the Vice Chancellor also reiterated that those Universities who have taken necessary reforms in order to come out of financial abyss towards financial soundness, they should be applauded in the form of financial support from Provincial government.

Female teachers demanded action against official

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Five female teachers have demanded authorities concerned to take stern departmental action against a female Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mardan for her rude and insulting one behaviour with those teachers during a quiz competition.

In this regard, the five female teachers who were belonging to government girls' higher secondary school No.1 had written a complaint to her school principal narrating their insulting story.

As per the written complaint, the five female teachers stated that they went to Government Post Graduate College on the directions issued from the DEO office Mardan to perform checking duty in a "Maths Quiz competition". They said that the maths quiz competition was conducting in the post graduate college Mardan with the facilitation of AC Ayesha Tahir with very poor management as she herself was very late.

The commencement time of Maths quiz was 10.00 a.m. on last Monday but it was started at 12:35, they said. After arrival of AC Ayesha Tahir, her behaviour was rude and insulting towards them, the teachers said, adding that they simply asked the AC about their duty as they were called verbally on urgent basis without any prior notice as what should be their duty during the

quiz competition. The teachers deplored that the AC answered in an insulting way as saying that you were not supposed to ask her about anything, whatever she directed you teachers, do it as it was otherwise she was authorised to stop their salaries.

The AC was rudely directing them on mike in front of the whole district's students and male staff of deputy commissioner office and teachers, they blamed. They said that they were really aggrieved over their that insult. No teacher could tolerate their insult before students. The teachers demanded of the relevant high-ups to order for carrying out an impartial inquiry in to the matter and then take departmental action against the said AC.

When this correspondent contacted the AC Miss Ayesha Tahir on her cell number seeking her point of view, she rejected the allegations levelled against her by the female teachers. She said that they requested the DEO male and female to send their teachers staff for performing their duties during Mathematics Quiz competition.

AC said that the female teachers came to the quiz competition but they were not performing their duties properly. She said that the teachers considered it a matter of their insult when she asked them why were they not performing their duty properly in maths quiz competition.

SLO orientation ses-

sion held: An orientation session on upcoming Student Learning Outcome (SLO) based examination and On Screen Marking (OSM) was conducted on Wednesday at Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan for the female teachers in district Mardan.

Director Finance Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Dr Shaista Irshad was chief guest on the occasion. The relevant officials said that as per vision of Honorable Chairman BISE Mardan Farid Ahmed Khattak BISE Mardan was the first who was taking the initiative of taking the knowledge to gross root level. Dr Tariq Mehmood Director ORIC AWKUM, Mr Zulfiqar Ali SSS GHSS Ismaila Swabi, Mr Ateeq Ahmed Representative RED Markers and Miss Zeenat Shakeel Regional Head peace group of school and college were the resource persons. They said that around 170 participants from different parts of Mardan district attended the session.

Addressing the participants Chairman BISE Mardan, Mr Farid Ahmad Khattak stressed on the importance of taking the educational approach according to the needs of the new age and the statistical analysis of students. Controller of Examination BISE Mardan Mr Ishrat Ali addressed the participants briefing about the innovations in the examination system.

53 metric ton sugar recovered from hoarders at Karak

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division, Muhammad Ali Shah Thursday said that 53 metric tons sugar has been recovered from Karak while more than one million rupees have been confiscated from

money changers

According to a statement issued, Commissioner said that six metric tons sugar and one million rupees have been recovered from various money changers of Kohat. He said that fourteen FIRs have been registered

against power pilferers, 167 illegal connections were removed and 5.7 million rupees have been recovered from Kohat. He said 28 FIRs have been lodged in Karak and 25 cases have been registered against pilferers in Hungu.



MOROCCO: Rescue searching through the rubble of an earthquake-damaged house in Imi N'Tala village near Amizmiz.

China, Venezuela sign agreements on economy, trade, tourism

BEIJING (Reuters): Chinese President Xi Jinping and Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro have signed bilateral cooperation agreements in areas such as economy, trade and tourism, state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) reported. The two nations also signed deals on science and technology, civil aviation and aerospace, CCTV reported.

The pair met during Maduro's first visit to Beijing in five years against a backdrop of China's testy relations with the West and energy and debt repayment talks. China is the world's largest oil importer and oil-rich Venezuela's largest creditor. China and Venezuela have long-standing warm ties seen in China's regular oil purchases despite US sanctions and financial support it bestows upon the cash-strapped Latin American country via loan-for-oil deals and investment. China upgraded relations with Venezuela to an "all-weather strategic partnership", typically reserved for a select few nations. The world's second-

largest economy is owed over \$10 billion by Venezuela, independent data showed. Xi said the two countries are "good friends with mutual trust" and common development, state media reported.

He also noted that next year will be the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the pair's diplomatic relations. Maduro said Venezuela supports China's Belt and Road Initiative to boost trade infrastructure. Chinese media said, referring to a related conference in China next month. China has said it has Belt and Road cooperation agreements with more than 150 countries and over 30 international organisations. He also said Venezuela is willing to closely communicate and cooperate with China within multilateral frameworks such as with the BRICS group and United Nations. Venezuela is courting membership of BRICS - a group of major emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - which recently favoured expansion.

A joint statement issued by China's foreign ministry on Thursday stated that Venezuela is willing to join financial institutions and financing cooperation initiatives such as the New Development Bank set up by BRICS, and will continue to support the internationalisation of the yuan. Venezuela in the statement said, as a reliable supplier with the world's largest oil and fourth-largest natural gas reserves, it can make important contributions to BRICS' energy agenda. China said it is willing to support construction of special economic zones in Venezuela and both countries agreed to further develop bilateral trade and "enrich the variety of trade goods". In the statement they also said agreements on aviation and aerospace include future flights between the countries and cooperation in spaceflight. The countries also agreed to deepen cooperation between legislative bodies to strengthen exchanges on legislation and governance.

Lavrov says situation has changed since North Korea was hit by UN sanctions

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (Reuters): Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the geopolitical climate had changed completely since the United Nations imposed sanctions on North Korea, and he accused the West of breaking pledges on humanitarian support for Pyongyang.

Lavrov was speaking to a Russian TV reporter as President Vladimir Putin hosted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a summit in Russia's far east. Since 2006 North Korea has been under UN sanctions, which Russia supported, over its banned nuclear weapons and missile programmes. "Sanctions against North Korea were adopted in a

completely different geopolitical situation when there were problems establishing dialogue (with Pyongyang), when there were quite serious debates in the Security Council," Lavrov told Russian TV reporter Pavel Zarubin.

He said the reason that Russia and China had blocked a further US-drafted sanctions resolution against North Korea last year was that the West had given a false promise at the time of the original sanctions on humanitarian aid for the country. "That was another lie. We, the Chinese and the North Koreans were deceived," Lavrov said. In a separate clip posted by Zarubin on

social media, the reporter raised the sanctions issue again with Lavrov and asked him to comment on Western media reports that the Putin-Kim meeting could lead to Russia supplying arms to North Korea, or vice versa. Lavrov did not reply directly, but said the West had broken contractual agreements by providing Soviet-era weaponry to Ukraine - a reference to arms supplied to Kyiv by central and eastern European countries which once belonged to the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact but which are now members of NATO. Lavrov said this violated "every possible contractual obligation"

because the weapons had been originally supplied by Moscow with end-user certificates that prevented them from being transferred to third parties.

Lavrov's assertion that sanctions on North Korea were the product of a different global situation and of bad faith from untrustworthy Western powers were significant at a moment when Russia's own adherence to them is under close scrutiny. Earlier, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia maintained its commitments as a member of the UN Security Council but this would not be an obstacle to developing its relations with North Korea.

Haitian officials meet in Dominican Republic to prevent border closings

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP): Haiti's government announced that it met with Dominican officials in the Dominican Republic to talk about a recent threat by that country's president to close all borders in response to a row over the construction of a supposed canal. The brief statement by Haiti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not provide much detail, except to say that both sides were trying to find a "fair and definitive" solution to

squabbles over the use of the Massacre River that runs along the border both countries share on the island of Hispaniola.

The Dominican Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the meeting and said that talks would continue on Thursday. Simmering tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic deepened when Dominican President Luis Abinader announced that he had suspended issuing visas to

Haitians and threatened to shut down land, air and sea traffic if the conflict over the canal wasn't resolved before Thursday. The excavation of a supposed canal on Haitian soil began recently, but it wasn't clear who, if anyone, authorized the digging. It already prompted Abinader to shut the border last week near the northern town of Dajabon, an economic lifeline for Haitians who buy and sell goods there several times a week. Dominican

officials claim that the canal would divert water from the Massacre River and hurt farmers and the environment. The river is named after a bloody battle between French and Spanish colonizers in the 18th century. The Dominican Republic last fully closed its border with Haiti following the July 2021 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. Since then, it has at times closed parts of the border for security.

'Hanoi ties upgrade is not a 'cold war' move'

HANOI (Reuters): The United States' move to upgrade relation with Hanoi is not a Cold War move against China, a US National Security Council official said. "The idea that this is in any way any kind of Cold War move, and also the idea that this diplomatic opening is any kind of effort to choose between Vietnam and China, because I don't think it is either one of those things," Mira Rapp-Hooper, National Security Council Director for the Indo-Pacific, said at a digital news briefing.

Vietnam and the United States upgraded their relationship to the highest diplomatic status during a visit to Hanoi by US President Joe Biden. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning called on the US to "abandon hegemony and Cold War thinking," in her response to the Vietnam-US relation upgrade. "We demand that the United States, when dealing with relations with Asian countries, must respect the common aspiration of regional countries for stability, cooperation, and development, abide by the basic norms of international relations," Ning said. Rapp-Hooper said the upgraded partnership with Vietnam is a dynamic, open, inclusive partnership that is intended to support Vietnam and its technological, economic, and development aspirations. "This relationship isn't about anyone else," she said. "It's about our two countries and the intrinsic value this relationship has in terms of our shared prosperity, our shared security, our shared interests in a free and open Indo-Pacific, in a free and open South China Sea." The US and China are Vietnam's largest trading partners. Vietnam and China have for years been embroiled in a dispute over the potentially energy-rich stretch of water, called the East Sea by Vietnam.

HK shuts schools as it issues heavy rain warning

HONG KONG (Reuters): Hong Kong closed schools on Thursday after authorities issued the second-highest rain signal and warned of extensive flooding, just days after the Asian financial hub was drenched by the heaviest rain since records began 140 years ago. The city's weather observatory issued the "red" signal before 6 a.m. local time, saying rain exceeding 50 millimetres in an hour is falling and likely to continue.

"Heavy rain will bring flash floods and flooding is occurring or expected to occur in watercourses," it said. Hong Kong's stock market will remain open unless the highest "black" signal is issued.

The heavy rain comes as the city is still repairing damage caused by torrential rain linked to typhoon Haikui which passed nearby in recent days. Many areas of the mountainous city still have a high landslide risk after the unusually wet weather. Some areas of the city such as Tsueng Kwan O and Sai Kung were still struggling with flooding from earlier in the week.

Russia's rift with old ally Armenia deepens doubts

LONDON (Reuters): A public falling-out between Russia and Armenia, one of its oldest and closest allies, is deepening doubts about Moscow's ability to maintain and project power across parts of the former Soviet Union when it is focused on waging war in Ukraine. Armenia hosts a Russian military base which includes garrisons in two locations and an airbase, and is Moscow's only strategic ally in the volatile South Caucasus, a region crisscrossed with oil and gas pipelines.

Ties have warmed and cooled over the years, but in recent weeks, Armenia has in effect declared it has no confidence in Russia's ability to protect it under a defence pact and sought other partners as strains escalate with neighbouring Azerbaijan, against which it lost a short war in 2020. Russia's perceived absence could open the door for other players - be it Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, China or the West - to try to take its place in the South Caucasus or other ex-Soviet territories it openly considers its sphere of influence. "Russia's abject performance in Ukraine has left former clients looking for other more dependable protectors," said Anthony Brenton, former British ambassador to Russia. "I am sure they (the Russians) will do what they can to reassure others (notably Syria) of their continuing support," Armenia says, for example, that Russia cannot provide the weapons it has traditionally supplied because it needs them for Ukraine, and so Yerevan has turned to India instead. While pointedly refusing to allow a Russian-led military bloc to hold manoeuvres on Armenian soil, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan this week authorised the hosting of a rare joint exercise with the United States, Ukraine's biggest backer.

"Russia is now distracted and doesn't want to get involved in any other problem or crisis other than Ukraine," said Olesya Vartanyan, senior South Caucasus analyst at International Crisis Group (ICG), a conflict prevention organisation. "Russian officials have been telling their Armenian counterparts: 'Please wait, we're busy with the war in Ukraine'." She questioned what resources Moscow had to tackle other problems if it was unable to repair relations with Armenia, its sole strategic partner in the region. Ties with energy-rich Kazakhstan, which has refused to back Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine, have also cooled. Moldova had to cope with a huge influx of refugees from the war in Ukraine and has a pro-Western government trying to cut its dependency on Moscow. The situation in Georgia, a fifth of which is garrisoned with Russian troops supporting breakaway territories

after a war in 2008, is more nuanced; the authorities take some decisions favourable to Moscow even as some voters strongly object. But others have come closer. Belarus, whose authoritarian president Alexander Lukashenko meets Russian President Vladimir Putin several times a year, became a launch pad for the invasion in 2022, and now hosts Russian tactical nuclear missiles. Iran's sale of drones to Russia has further cemented relations, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is due for talks in Russia this week. Ties with India, Brazil and South Africa remain strong, but Moscow looks like the junior partner in a burgeoning 'no limits' partnership with China that has allowed Beijing, at steep discounts, to buy oil and gas that Russia can no longer sell to the West.

How Russia deals with Armenia is likely to be watched closely. Pashinyan has publicly questioned the will and ability of Russian peacekeepers to lift a nine-month de facto Azerbaijani blockade of the ethnic Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh enclave and lamented the "mistake" of relying solely on Moscow for security. ICG's Vartanyan said Yerevan fretted that Azerbaijan might use Moscow's perceived weakness to seize control of territory, notably in the enclave. "Armenian officials were saying in the summer that, by the time Russia has time to help us, there will be no country left to help," she said. "They are in crisis mode." Moscow accused Pashinyan of behaviour bordering on insolence, and on Friday summoned Armenia's ambassador to protest against "hostile steps". Armenia's move to fully sign up to the International Criminal Court (ICC) - because it wants to bring war crimes charges against Azerbaijan - is another source of tension. The ICC has issued an arrest warrant for Putin on war crimes charges, so the step raises the prospect that he may not be able to visit a close ally. Pashinyan, who has called the ICC move an "unfortunate coincidence" in the context of Russia, has also defended his wife's recent delivery of aid to Ukraine.

An unnamed Russian diplomat accused Pashinyan, via the state news agency TASS, of acting like a tool of the West in trying to push Russia out of the South Caucasus. Putin played down the rift though, saying he did not think Yerevan had turned its back on Moscow, while accusing it of rejecting Russian proposals for peace with Azerbaijan. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week that Russia "plays a consistent, very important role in stabilising the situation in this region", and was not going anywhere.

Japan's Kishida shuffles Cabinet and party posts

TOKYO (AP): Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida shuffled his Cabinet and key party posts to strengthen his position before a key party leadership vote next year, bringing in a new defense minister and the country's first female foreign minister since 2002. Kishida appointed five women to the 19-member Cabinet, part of his attempt to buoy sagging support ratings for his previous male-dominated Cabinet, which had only two women. The five females match the number in two earlier Japanese Cabinets - in 2014 and 2001.

One of the five, former Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa, who approved the hangings in 2018 of a cult leader and six aides for a deadly 1995 subway nerve gas attack, was appointed foreign minister, replacing Yoshimasa Hayashi. Minoru Kihara, who has been serving on the governing Liberal Democratic Party's national security committee, was selected defense minister, replacing Yasukazu Hamada. Kishida said the new Cabinet reflects his

determination to adapt to recent rapid economic, security and technological changes and turn those into national strengths. "There is a huge flow of change in front of us," Kishida said at a news conference after the Cabinet's swearing-in ceremony. "We cannot stand still just watching all these changes." Kishida said three pillars of his policy goals are an end to deflation, stronger diplomacy and security, and measures to address Japan's rapid aging and declining population.

It is the second Cabinet shuffle since Kishida took office in October 2021, when he promised a fairer distribution of economic growth, measures to tackle Japan's declining population and a stronger national defense. Russia's war in Ukraine, rising energy prices and Japan's soaring defense costs have created challenges in his tenure, keeping his support ratings at low levels. Kishida's three-year term as the conservative LDP's president expires in September 2024, when he is expected to seek a second term. His faction in the party is the fourth

largest, so he must stay on good terms with the others to maintain his position. He distributed Cabinet posts to reflect that balance of power, with nearly half of the positions going to the two largest factions associated with assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former leader Taro Aso. Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki, Digital Reform Minister Taro Kono and Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi were among six ministers who stayed. The LDP supports traditional family values and gender roles, and the low number of female politicians in leadership positions is often criticized by women's rights groups as democracy without women. US Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel welcomed the new Cabinet. "These appointments will bring a level of freshness, a level of energy and purposefulness in that endeavor that started two years ago" as Japan and the United States continue to elevate their security ties, Emanuel said in a telephone interview.

Slave descendants vow to fight on after Georgia county approves larger homes for island enclave

DARIEN, Ga. (AP): Descendants of enslaved people living on a Georgia island vowed to keep fighting after county commissioners voted to double the maximum size of homes allowed in their tiny enclave, which residents fear will accelerate the decline of one of the South's few surviving Gullah-Geechee communities.

Black residents of the Hogg Hummock community on Sapelo Island and their supporters packed a meeting of McIntosh County's elected commissioners to oppose zoning changes that residents say favor wealthy buyers and will lead to tax increases that could pressure them to sell their land. Regardless, commissioners voted 3-2 to weaken zoning restrictions the county adopted nearly three decades ago with the stated intent to help Hogg Hummock's 30 to 50 residents hold on to their land.

Yolanda Grovner, 54, of Atlanta said she has long planned to retire on land her father, an island native, owns

in Hogg Hummock. She left the county courthouse wondering if that will ever happen. "It's going to be very, very difficult," Grovner said. She added: "I think this is their way of pushing residents off the island." Hogg Hummock is one of just a few surviving communities in the South of people known as Gullah, or Geechee, in Georgia, whose ancestors worked island slave plantations. Fights with the local government are nothing new to residents and landowners. Dozens successfully appealed staggering property tax hikes in 2012, and residents spent years fighting the county in federal court for basic services such as fire-fighting equipment and trash collection before county officials settled last year. "We're still fighting all the time," said Maurice Bailey, a Hogg Hummock native whose mother, Cornelia Bailey, was a celebrated storyteller and one of Sapelo Island's most prominent voices before her

death in 2017. "They're not going to stop. The people moving in don't respect us as people. They love our food, they love our culture. But they don't love us." Hogg Hummock's population has been shrinking in recent decades, and some families have sold their land to outsiders who built vacation homes. New construction has caused tension over how large those homes can be. Commissioners raised the maximum size of a home in Hogg Hummock to 3,000 square feet (278 square meters) of total enclosed space. The previous limit was 1,400 square feet (130 square meters) of heated and air-conditioned space. Commissioner Davis Poole, who supported loosening the size restriction, said it would allow "a modest home enabling a whole family to stay under one roof." "The commissioners are not out to destroy the Gullah-Geechee culture or erase the history of Sapelo," Poole said. "We're not out to make more money for the

county." Commission Chairman David Stevens, who said he's been visiting Sapelo Island since the 1980s, blamed Hogg Hummock's changing landscape on native owners who sold their land. "I don't need anybody to lecture me on the culture of Sapelo Island," Stevens said, adding: "If you don't want these outsiders, if you don't want these new homes being built ... don't sell your land." County officials have argued that size restrictions based on heated and cooled spaced proved impossible to enforce. County attorney Adam Poppell said more than a dozen homes in Hogg Hummock appeared to violate the limits, and in some cases homeowners refused to open their doors to inspectors. Hogg Hummock landowner Richard Banks equated that to the county letting lawbreakers make the rules. "If everybody wants to exceed the speed limit, should we increase the speed limits for all the

speeders?" Banks said.

Hogg Hummock residents said they were blindsided when the county unveiled its proposed zoning changes on Aug. 16. Commissioners in July had approved sweeping zoning changes throughout McIntosh County, but had left Hogg Hummock alone. Commissioner Roger Lotson, the only Black member of the county commission, voted against the changes and warned his colleagues that he fears they will end up back in court for rushing them. Two attorneys from the Southern Poverty Law Center sat in the front row. Attorney Anjana Joshi said they had "due process and equal protection concerns" about the way the zoning ordinance was amended. "In our view, this was not done correctly," said Joshi, who added: "We're just getting started." Located about 60 miles (95 kilometers) south of Savannah, Sapelo Island remains separated from the mainland and reachable only by

boat. Since 1976, the state of Georgia has owned most of its 30 square miles (78 square kilometers) of largely unspoiled wilderness. Hogg Hummock, also known as Hog Hummock, sits on less than a square mile. Gullah-Geechee communities are scattered along the Southeast coast from North Carolina to Florida, where they have endured since their enslaved ancestors were freed by the Civil War. Scholars say these people long separated from the mainland retained much of their African heritage, from their unique dialect to skills and crafts such as cast-net fishing and weaving baskets. Hogg Hummock earned a place in 1996 on the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the United States' treasured historic sites. But for protections to preserve the community, residents depend on the local government in McIntosh County, where 65% of the 11,100 residents are white.

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What next after President's verdict

THE weeks-long low-level brawl burst into a large-scale volcano on Wednesday when President Dr Arif Alvi appointed November 6, for the arrangement of countrywide elections in a letter addressed by the Presidency to the Election Commission of Pakistan. In a response to the previous ECP's letter to the Presidency, Dr Alvi categorically told the electoral watchdog that Article 48(5) of the constitution empowered him to appoint a date not later than 90 days from the date of dissolution of assemblies, for holding of a general election to the assembly. The President stressed that the National Assembly was dissolved by him on the advice of the then-prime minister Shehbaz Sharif on August 9, and he was the competent authority to choose the date for the next polls.

The nation has plunged into a new constitutional crisis after the President who also acts as the head of the State has unilaterally suggested a date for nationwide General Elections in contrast to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and incumbent rulers who steer the government temporarily. The tug of war between the personalities has shaped into a serious clash between the state institutions because of the mockery of the law and the self-centred appraisal of the constitution. Currently, the President and the ECP are quoting selected clauses of the constitution to argue their cases but are not ready to lessen each other's viewpoint or to search for a middle way to escape further anarchy in an already fragile nation.

Previously, the President invited the Chief Election Commissioner for consultation who refused to call on the President and claimed sole mandate for the arrangement of the nationwide polls. Meanwhile, the CEC maintained that after the publication of Census 2023 on August 7, the duly notified delimitation of constituencies was in progress as required by Article 51(5) and Section 17 of the Elections Act, 2017. The latest development to the ongoing controversy around the timing of general elections has clearly sensitized the nation that the people sitting in high chairs are more loyal to their political and ethnic affiliations than official obligations or national interests, as their antagonism brings catastrophes to the Pakistani nation every other day.

Interestingly, the caretaker Law Minister voiced the same opinion and supported the ECP case during his recent meeting with the President, while all provincial interim setups are comfortable with the extension of their tenures. The President has used his honourable office and unilaterally fixed the date for elections opening up a new Pandora's box, a fresh constitutional dispute regarding prerogatives of high offices and a burning topic of discussion for prime-time talk shows on news channels in our country. The new development would further shore up the prevailing uncertainty, political chaos, and social polarisation in the country and add to the judicial work of the apex courts which are the sole forum for the resolution of such kind of constitutional disputes.

The current situation was long expected to emerge in our nation because of a years-long tussle between the warring political groups, politically motivated legislation in the past years together with a heightened PTI-establishment tussle that erupted in the aftermath of the May 9 violence. Historically, our nation has missed the opportunity for a national consensus that is the essence of democracy, national cohesion and unity, while our leadership failed to exercise political wisdom and national sagacity. Presidential verdict has pushed the country into a constitutional disorder and the ball has now entered the Adjudicator's enclosure. In the current scenario, all contesting political groups and national institutions must hold their belief in the Country's judiciary and wait for the final verdict that would not only solve the puzzle but likely to set the political direction of the country.

Putin-Kim alliance and global peace

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un shared the stage with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday at a Siberian Space facility and announced his country's alliance with the Russian Federation and vowed to provide full and unconditional support for Moscow's sacred fight to defend its security interests. According to the North Korean leader, Pyongyang will always stand with Moscow on the anti-imperialist front. Kim called North Korea's relations with Russia the priority. Meanwhile, Russian Strongman President Vladimir Putin welcomed Kim to Russia and emphasized deep economic and security cooperation between their nations.

The two globally isolated leaders met face to face after a long time as their desperation and love for each other was at the peak because of shared hostility toward the West, shared pain simmering out of long-held economic sanctions imposed by the Western nations as well as diplomatic and trade embargo that seriously affects their nations over the past years. There had been wide-ranging speculation about military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang that took momentum after multiple high-level contacts and the Russian defence minister's visit to North Korea in July. As of now, the security and defence cooperation between Russia and the DPRK has shaped into reality. It seems to be a two-way necessity as Pyongyang is in dire need of technological assistance from Moscow to send its military satellite into space, that was a longstanding desire of Pyongyang's leader. While clever Putin intensified his thrust by hosting him at the historic space center that has great fame in this field.

Ostensibly, North Korean weaponry will shortly start reaching Ukrainian fronts and is likely to boost Moscow's war efforts against its staunch enemy who refused to subdue before the Kremlin and resolutely defend its frontiers. Similarly, Pyongyang will send its lethal military ship into space which would not only strengthen Kim's defences but would create grave security risks for Europe and mainland US. Although Washington and its allies are threatening their enemies not to corroborate against the western interests, but the West has played all its cards and the Putin-Kim alliance has become a dreadful dream for Western strategists. The US-Russia tussle and war in Ukraine has brought tremendous destruction to the world while every other action of the warring bloc creates further volatility and chaos. The UN and its executive arm, the UN Security Council must come to senses until and unless a deadly global war breaks out, that would be a dreadful day for universal peace and survival.

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The unimaginable has happened in Libya

Ethan Chorin

THIS week, the worst storm in recent memory pounded the Green Mountains in eastern Libya with rain, pushing two poorly maintained, half-century-old dams to their limit. Just before 3 a.m. on Sept. 11, the first dam collapsed. An enormous wall of water surged into a riverbed that bisects the coastal city of Derna. It stalled briefly at the second dam eight miles downstream and then scooped that and everything else up in its path, tossing the debris into the sea. By dawn, a third of the city was gone, leaving thousands missing. The number of dead may reach as high as 10,000, Libyan aid coordinators say.

Many people in Libya are calling what happened a tsunami, not a flood, to attempt to capture the physics and power of the devastation. Derna's nearly 100,000 residents, now stranded, urgently need shelter, food, water and medical care. They need temporary bridges to replace those that were washed out and engineers to rebuild all the roads and fix parts of the city's operational but battered port. They need cell-phone service to reach family members and friends and body bags for the corpses being pulled out of the sea. Thousands are homeless, and officials fear other dams in the area may also burst.

The scale of destruction would be daunting for any well-run and well-equipped country to handle. For Libya it will be impossible, given the disaster zone's sudden isolation, lack of equipment and depth of the country's political dysfunction. Since 2014, Libyans have lived with two competing governments locked in a power struggle that will almost certainly slow the large-scale recovery effort to come. On Wednesday the Egyptian military was on its way with heavy equipment, as well as at least one amphibious craft carrier from Italy, Libya's former colonial power. But it's the United States' unique and tragic history in Libya, its technical expertise and depth of resources in the region, that create a moral obligation for America to step into this breach.

Many Americans will

ask: Why should we care?

In 2011, the United States spearheaded the international effort to save the city of Benghazi from attack by Libya's longtime dictator, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, a well-intentioned move that fell into the trap of mission creep. Eventually, a NATO-led intervention overturned Mr.

under Mr. Gaddafi's repressive rule, Derna had become a hot spot for radical opposition. It was no surprise that the Qaeda-affiliated group that participated in the 2012 Benghazi attack was from Derna or that two years later, ISIS briefly set up what it called an Islamic emirate in the city. Since then, residents of

One need look no further than the city of Derna for proof. Famous in Libya for its natural beauty, waterfalls and azure waters, Derna in the 1950s and '60s was a center for education and the arts. But by the late 1990s, under Mr. Gaddafi's repressive rule, Derna had become a hot spot for radical opposition. It was no surprise that the Qaeda-affiliated group that participated in the 2012 Benghazi attack was from Derna or that two years later, ISIS briefly set up what it called an Islamic emirate in the city. Since then, residents of Derna and eastern Libya as a whole have felt - as they have historically - abandoned, especially when it comes to infrastructure, like the dams, which many feared would fail them one day.

Gaddafi's regime. The United States left most of the rebuilding to its European allies. It focused its efforts on promoting democracy over state building, a decision that ironically helped pull down Libya's early democratic gains.

Security across the country quickly deteriorated, enabling the 2012 Qaeda-affiliated attack on the US diplomatic mission in Benghazi. With the domestic political blowout that followed, the United States retreated - first from Benghazi and then from Libya. The political split between the east and west of the country emerged in the turbulence, a rupture that ordinary Libyans have paid a heavy price for ever since.

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Derna and eastern Libya as a whole have felt - as they have historically - abandoned, especially when it comes to infrastructure, like the dams, which many feared would fail them one day.

At a time of profound need, the Derna catastrophe affords the United States a rare opportunity to once again take a side - not with one or the other of Libya's political factions but with the Libyan people. It is a chance for Washington to return to the grounded idealism that once motivated the United States to join NATO in the first 2011 intervention: a desire to protect civilians from harm. On Tuesday, President Biden announced that the United States would be sending emergency funds to Libya via relief organizations and "coordinating with the Libyan authorities and the United Nations to provide additional support," Mr. Biden added, "We join

the Libyan people in grieving the loss of too many lives cut short."

The latter sentiment is perfectly on pitch. The former, however, suggests that the Biden administration prefers to keep Libya at arm's length, presumably out of an abundance of caution, given the devastating effect of the Benghazi political scandal on American domestic politics.

While some international aid is now on the way, no other country is currently able to provide the same degree of relief as the United States, whether now or two weeks from now. There are risks associated with any aid mission - radical groups, for instance, remain active in the region - but those risks can be managed. What Washington can provide immediately and over the coming weeks is technical know-how, embodied by groups like the Army Corps of Engineers and the Seabees, and heavy equipment like landing craft and helicopters to move large amounts of aid into Derna by sea and air. The United States may have lost its opportunity to be a first responder, but the reconstruction needs will continue for weeks, months and even years.

Substantial American assistance will also be welcome - even if quietly - to the warring political camps, who are now under tremendous pressure from their own citizens to provide help. This kind of surgical approach to aid is consistent with the concept of "expeditionary diplomacy," to which Ambassador Christopher Stevens, who was killed in Benghazi, subscribed: the idea that targeted, mission-driven efforts with a relatively low footprint can produce outsized diplomatic payouts. This idea drove Mr. Stevens to try to draw US government attention back to the city before it fell to extremists and he was killed.

After years of treating Libya as a problem to contain and keep at bay, the United States has an opportunity, now, through this disaster, to re-engage directly with the Libyan people. We should embrace it, first and foremost for Libyans' sake but for our own long- and short-term regional interests, as well.

The New York Times

Biden impeachment inquiry nothing more than a Trump vendetta

Norman Eisen

HOUSE Speaker Kevin McCarthy's announcement Tuesday of an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden's purported involvement in his son Hunter's business dealings is factually unfounded and legally baseless. That should be no surprise considering that a consistent proponent of this inquiry was former President Donald Trump. The twice-impeached ex-president demanded earlier this summer on Truth Social that Republicans in Congress impeach Biden, writing that "These lowlives impeached me TWICE (I WON!), and indicted me FOUR TIMES - For NOTHING! Either IMPEACH the BUM, or fade into OBLIVION. THEY DID IT TO US!" Trump clearly seems to view impeaching Biden as payback for both his prior impeachments and his current criminal prosecutions.

In a sense, Trump is right - revenge is all it is because there is no constitutional basis for proceeding here. I make that judgment based on my work as a scholar of impeachment and also as a practitioner who helped lead the first Trump impeachment and trial as counsel to the House Judiciary Committee. According to the Constitution, impeachments must be based on "high Crimes and Misdemeanors." But the evidence here does not even amount to allegations of ordinary crimes, much less high ones.

Other Republicans have signaled that they believe the same, with several Senate Republicans questioning the strength of the purported evidence offered by their House counterparts. McCarthy himself has dragged his feet on the issue. The more extreme members of his caucus have been pushing for impeachment for months while he had, before this week, declined to commit. Now that some of them are openly threatening McCarthy's speakership, it appears he caved. Moreover, he recently said that he would not proceed without a formal vote on the inquiry, but there was no mention of that at all in his announcement of the inquiry Tuesday. Without such a vote, impeachment lacks the force of law. McCarthy bitterly - and now hypocritically - criticized former Speaker Nancy Pelosi for announcing the first Trump impeachment before a vote (she later scheduled one).

It is true that the younger Biden seems to have attempted to leverage his father's stature, based on the transcript from the closed-door testimony of Hunter's former business partner Devon Archer, whom Republicans called to appear on July 31 before the House Oversight Committee. Archer claimed that Hunter would, for example, put his father on speakerphone with potential clients to woo them (plus there have been a couple of similarly non-substantive in-person events). But according to a source familiar with Archer's appearance who spoke to CNN, Hunter's former business associate did not provide any evidence connecting Biden

senior financially to any of his son's foreign business dealings. Making passing small talk in meetings - which is all Joe Biden's participation seems to have amounted to, according to Archer's testimony - does not come close to a high crime or misdemeanor. The White House has denied that President Biden had any involvement with his son's business deals on multiple occasions, responding that the House Republicans' "own witnesses appear to be debunking their allegations." A lawyer for Hunter Biden similarly denied the allegations on his client's behalf.

Moreover, years of searching have yet to yield any support at all for the allegation that Biden personally profited off his son's foreign business dealings. For example, when I was working on the first Trump impeachment for the House Judiciary Committee, we looked in depth at the issue with respect to Hunter's business dealings in Ukraine. We focused specifically on Trump's accusations that, in calling for the removal of a special prosecutor there, Biden had leveraged his role as vice president to benefit a Ukrainian energy company on whose board his son sat. But there was no there there. We concluded that Biden had "acted in accordance with and in furtherance of an official United States policy." The history of impeachment also offers no basis for proceeding in this regard. That includes examples like the inquiry into President Richard Nixon and the second Trump impeachment. Nixon was an unindicted co-conspirator in his case over serious criminal allegations of conspiracy and obstruction of justice, among others.

In contrast, the evidence unearthed by the congressional investigations so far suggests no such wrongdoing on the part of Joe Biden. If the Republicans had more evidence, we would likely know about it. So far, all signs are that they have a comparative nothingburger. As if to confirm the rightness of Trump's second impeachment, the former president Trump was later charged with a litany of offenses, including conspiracy to defraud the United States through post-election misconduct along with other federal and state crimes. (Trump has maintained he did nothing wrong.) If all that were not enough, there's another legal infirmity in an impeachment charge. The elder Biden's involvement with his son's business occurred when he was vice president, not president.

An impeachment proceeding based on this conduct would be the first in our nation's history not premised on conduct occurring during the subject's presidency. These are untested legal waters, and it's far from clear that the framers of the constitution intended for impeachment to cover activity from before a presidency begins and that is unrelated to winning it. The proposed Biden impeachment is a revenge mission and nothing more. Like many things born in retaliation, it is fatally flawed. It should not proceed.

CNN

Morocco: When earthquakes leave more than cracks

Fawaz Turki

SHOCK-AND-AWE, we one and all know by now, is a concept formulated by analysts at the US Defense Department in 1996 that refers to a military strategy based on the use of overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force intended to scare the bejesus out of the enemy, inflict great destruction on his property, visit mayhem on his land, paralyse his perception of reality and destroy his morale.

But the devastation wreaked by that strategy, widely shown during the 2003 Iraq War, pales before the shocking and awesome devastation that an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8, such as the one that hit Morocco on Friday, can wreak in less than 10 seconds on an unsuspecting community whose members had innocently been preparing to go to bed a few minutes after the hour struck 11pm. That is when the quake also struck, with its centre being the Atlas

Mountains, inhabited by Berber farmers since Neolithic times, a region whose self-given name is Amazigh. And it was there, in the region's isolated and hard-to-access towns and villages, where the worst material destruction and human suffering took place.

The magnitude of the quake was strong enough to drive its way to the ancient city of Marrakesh - an economic hub and popular tourist destination about 45 miles due southeast of the mountains, founded in 1070 by Emir Abu Bakr Ibn Omar, a Berber chieftain - and rip through its centuries-old quarter, Medina, a UNESCO World Heritage site, irreparably destroying uncounted historical structures. Look, a long list of natural disasters, like floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, forest fires and, in this case, earthquakes, have been common occurrences in human history - indeed long before human history began to be written by humans about their

existence on this planet they conceivedly call their own.

But among all these calamities, earthquakes stand out, characterised as they are not so much by their fury - though that clearly packs a punch - but by their dreadful suddenness and unpredictability. After all, all it takes for an earthquake to wreak havoc, install terror, topple buildings and erase whole towns from the face of the Earth, while it went about snuffing out countless human lives, is mere seconds. The death toll in Morocco has grown into the thousands as has grown in equal measure that of the injured. And pledges by the international community have poured in.

Disasters strike nations all the time, and in our time nations are founded on the principle that it is a nation's responsibility to protect, among other things, citizens' lives and property. In the US, for example, the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) is the living embodiment of that principle, namely, the government's core responsibility to promptly come to the aid of its citizens in moments of crisis, in particular when natural disasters hit. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the world's largest humanitarian organisation, active in more than 191 countries and bringing together more than 16 million volunteers "for the good of humanity", many developing nations in the Global South just do not have the resources to adequately deal with the massively complex problems that arise in the wake of a natural disaster, which is where international aid becomes both crucial and indispensable, helping a nation, to bury its dead, heal its wounds, rebuild its infrastructure and, well, recover from the shock and awe inflicted upon its national soul.

All that is fine. It's all well and good. What passes some-

what unnoticed by us, however, as we review the charred landscape left in the wake of calamitous disasters, anywhere in the world, is the enduring emotional pain suffered by the survivors - pain that dogs them for years, even decades. The way traumatised people experience that kind of trauma, we are told by psychologists who specialise in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), gives rise to a complicated dynamic in the victim's consciousness, which these researchers have chosen to call "dissociation" - the attempt by the mind to dissociate itself from the unbearable, unspeakable truth of what it had stored in its memory bank.

But the more these survivors try to "dissociate", to exorcise these tormenting images clinging to them like barnacles clinging onto the hull of a ship, the more they find themselves reliving the terror of what they had been witness to through nightmares in their sleep and haunting flashbacks in their

waking hours. "The percentage of people who reported symptoms of psychological distress and shock was considerable", we read in a report released in March by the World Health Organisation (WHO), about the state of mind of survivors of the recent quake in Turkey and northern Syria. "The symptoms included a tendency to burst into tears, fits of rage, eating disorders and changes in their sleeping habits, often punctuated by horrific recollections of the traumatic events they had witnessed or themselves experienced". As I write this, the first 72 hours that followed the quake in Morocco - the most critical period for finding people trapped in the rubble before life expires out of them - have long passed. The chance of finding survivors there still clinging to life has diminished considerably. We are left then only with those other, traumatised survivors, clinging to life in their own way, to save.

Gulf News

Palestinian authoritarianism has its roots in the Oslo Accords

Yara Hawari

ON September 13, 1993, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn, flanked by a smug-looking US President Bill Clinton. They had just signed an agreement that would be hailed as a historic peace deal putting an end to the decades-old "conflict" between Palestinians and Israelis. Around the world, people celebrated the deal, which came to be known as the Oslo Accords. It was perceived as a great feat of diplomacy. A year later, Arafat and Rabin were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Many Palestinians were also hopeful that they would finally get a sovereign state, even if it were on less than 22 percent of their original homeland. Indeed, that was the promise of the Oslo Accords - a phased process towards Palestinian statehood. Thirty years later, the Palestinians are as far away from statehood as they have ever been. They have lost even more land to illegal Israeli settlements and are forced to live in ever shrinking bantustans across colonised Palestine. By now, it is clear that Oslo was meant only to help Israel consolidate its occupation and colonisation of Palestine.

Worse still, what the Palestinians did get out of the Oslo Accords was a rather pernicious form of Palestinian authoritarianism in the territories occupied in 1967. One of the terms of the agreement was that the exiled leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) would be allowed to return only to the territories Israel occupied in 1967 - the West Bank and Gaza - and would be permitted to create an interim government known as the Palestinian Authority (PA) for a period of five years. The PA, which was made up of members of Arafat's party, Fatah, assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Palestinian people while the Israeli military occupation remained in place. With the backing of the international community and the Israeli regime, Arafat pursued gov-

ernance based on patronage and corruption that had little tolerance for internal dissent.

Arafat's successor, President Mahmoud Abbas, continued down the same path. Today, at the age of 87, he is not only one of the world's oldest leaders but is also more than

merged all three branches of government - the legislative, executive and judiciary - so that there are no checks on his power. Having absolute control over Palestinian affairs, he rules by decree. In recent years, this has resulted in increasingly absurd decision-mak-

These regular false promises of elections temporarily satisfy the international community's appetite for what it calls "democratisation" of PA institutions. But the reality is that the system is so deeply rigged - in large part thanks to the Oslo Accords - that elections would inevitably result in either a continuation of the existing power structures or a new authoritarian leader coming to power. Apart from having a distaste for polls, Abbas has also been working hard to erode any democratic spaces in the West Bank.

14 years past his legal mandate despite ever dwindling support for his rule among Palestinians. Since coming to power, Abbas has made numerous disingenuous calls for elections, the last of which was in January 2021. That year, the polls were ultimately cancelled after the PA accused the Israeli regime of refusing to allow Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem to participate. These regular false promises of elections temporarily satisfy the international community's appetite for what it calls "democratisation" of PA institutions. But the reality is that the system is so deeply rigged - in large part thanks to the Oslo Accords - that elections would inevitably result in either a continuation of the existing power structures or a new authoritarian leader coming to power.

Apart from having a distaste for polls, Abbas has also been working hard to erode any democratic spaces in the West Bank. He has

ing. Last year, for example, he dissolved the Doctors' Syndicate after medical personnel went on strike. He then created the Supreme Council of Judicial Bodies and Authorities and appointed himself the head of it, thus consolidating his power over the courts and the Ministry of Justice. More recently, on August 10, he forced 12 governors into retirement without informing them. Many of those dismissed learned about their forced resignations from the local media.

To maintain his grip on power, Abbas also wields an extensive security apparatus. The internationally funded and trained PA security sector employs 50 percent of civil servants and takes 30 percent of the total budget of the PA - more than education, health and agriculture combined. It is responsible for a monumental amount of human rights abuses, including the arrest of activists, the harassment

of journalists and the torture of political detainees. In many cases, repression by the PA security apparatus complements those by the Israelis. For example, in 2021, during what became known as the Unity Intifada, many activists were arrested and violently interrogated by PA security forces. This year, after the invasion of the Jenin refugee camp by Israeli regime forces, the PA arrested many of those in the camp who were previously incarcerated by the Israelis in a practice known as the "revolving door". Indeed, one of the caveats of the Oslo Accords was that the PA had to fully cooperate with the Israeli regime on matters of "security". To fulfil this provision, the PA's security apparatus has worked hard to suppress any activity deemed threatening by the Israeli regime.

It regularly hands over surveillance information about Palestinians to the Israeli army and does nothing to counter its regular deadly attacks on Palestinian villages, towns and camps. Effectively, the PA security forces work hand in hand with the Israeli regime to quell Palestinian resistance. Indeed, given the provisions of the Oslo Accords, the PA could not have turned out any differently. A governing body that is accountable to international donors who bankroll it and the Israeli regime, which maintains ultimate control, was never going to serve the Palestinian people. Remarkably, the notion that the Oslo Accords were a well-intentioned but failed peace process still holds strong sway in some circles in the West. The truth is that the architects of Oslo were not interested in Palestinian statehood or liberation but rather wanted to find a way to get the Palestinian leadership to quietly agree to capitulation and suppress any further resistance at the grassroots. They have encouraged and supported Palestinian authoritarianism because it falls in line with these goals. In the end, Oslo did not bring peace to the Palestinians but yet another major obstacle to liberation.

Aljazeera

Biden is becoming dangerous

Allister Heath

YOU are not supposed to say so in polite company, but Joe Biden is no longer fit to be President of the United States. It would be a lot better for America, and for the rest of the free world, were he to step down early for reasons of ill-health, or at the very least not stand again for the presidency.

Such thinking is anathema to the US coastal elites, who are terrified that it could let a Right-wing Republican - either Donald Trump or a more competent but equally radical rival - into the White House. So, they pretend not to notice Biden's gaffes, blunders and tragic signs of rapidly deteriorating capacity and ignore that he seems to be protecting his wayward son, Hunter, from the full force of the law. To the Left-wing establishment, denying such deeply uncomfortable realities amounts to a noble lie in the Platonic tradition, a case of the ends justifying the means; to many others, it looks more like a case of misplaced cruelty, a callous decision to keep an 80-year old man in office when he would be far better off enjoying his retirement.

The incidents are accumulating daily. Biden announced he was "going to bed" before being cut off mid-sentence by an aide at a press conference. He walked out of a ceremony, leaving a war hero alone on stage. He appears to speak in riddles, or proffers strange quotations in answer to questions. He seems wedded to reading from notes, and unable to ad lib on any difficult issue. Watching old videos from the 1970s and 1980s, it is almost impossible to recognise the brilliant Biden of yore in today's shockingly diminished president. Ronald Reagan, whose health was permanently damaged after an assassination attempt and who went on to suffer from Alzheimer's, was never in anything like such a bad state while in office.

Biden's job is that of CEO of the most powerful country in the world, the leader of the free world, not the chairman emeritus: it is a complex and responsible managerial and executive role, and not just because his hands are hovering over the nuclear button. We all have an interest in the role being exercised by a competent

president. The sort of delegated decision-making we are now seeing "works" in the sense that decisions are evidently taken, presumably by conventionally competent technocrats, but many will be rightly sceptical that they are truly Biden's choices. This is undermining the US system of government, and encouraging despots in China or Russia to dismiss Western claims of moral superiority. In the meantime, Biden (or his close associates) are busily trashing America's rule of law and allowing critics to depict the entirety of the West as deeply hypocritical. I'm no fan of Donald Trump - he was good on tax, regulation and the Abraham accords, but was inflammatory and disorganised, failed repeatedly in many other policy areas and terminally disgraced himself by refusing to concede his obvious defeat.

He probably broke some laws, but the Biden administration looks to be abusing its power by weaponising the Justice Department to destroy him. The presidency should be determined through elections, not court cases. America is turning into the sort of banana republic in which all previous rulers are prosecuted for deeds during their time in office. Perhaps most toxic of all, the American election is thus based on a fundamental untruth: the claim that Biden will be president until 2028 if he is re-elected next year. Given the apparent speed of his deterioration, there must be very little chance of him lasting more than a couple more years in the White House. By 2025 at the latest, even The New York Times - a newspaper which devotes more time to attacking Brexit than to investigating the somewhat more important matter of the health of its president - will surely be forced to admit that the game is up. He will eventually resign leaving Kamala Harris to become president for two or three years.

It would be much better to end this charade today. Biden should announce that he isn't standing after all, and either Harris or somebody else would be selected as the Democratic candidate. This would also radically shift the Republican dynamic. Trump

might beat Biden, and certainly Harris, but he may not be so well placed against Gavin Newsom, the Governor of California, or another leading Democrat. America's politics is stuck in a disastrous replay of the 2020 election, with two greatly sub-optimal candidates fighting each other. Removing Biden might allow the Republicans to reconsider whether they really want somebody who might be in prison this time next year to be their candidate.

A more radical possibility would be for Biden to resign before his term is up and hand over to Harris. She would be an even worse president than Biden but at least she would be in full control of the administration. It would be preferable to have her in power for a year than for a lot longer in a second Biden-Harris term. If, as currently seems likely, Biden and his family resist any of this, the Democrats should rebel to force their hand and seek to reopen the Democratic primaries. There is another, even more extreme scenario that was widely debated during the second half of the Trump presidency, and one which Democratic politicians should now actively consider. Under Section 4 of the US Constitution's 25th Amendment, the vice president and a majority of cabinet can agree that "the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office". The president has the right to contest this, and the final decision would require a two-thirds majority vote in Congress. One would assume that plenty of Democrats would support removing Biden were such a course of action supported by a majority of his cabinet. At the very least, it could help convince Biden not to stand again in 2024. The reality is that America is likely to flunk it. The Democrats will probably stick with Biden, and the current, half-hearted Republican attempts to impeach him will surely fail. Trump, another gerontocrat, remains on course to be the Republican candidate. The rest of the democratic world needs America to be a beacon among nations, and so we watch on in despair at the slow but inexorable decline of its political culture.

The Telegraph

Gulf states' mediation could rescue Black Sea grain deal

Dr. Diana Galeeva

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in Sochi last week for discussions on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the UN-brokered agreement that allowed Ukraine to export grain to help fight world hunger during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. With Russia's withdrawal from the deal in July, this matter has become crucial in the geopolitical context. However, in a sense, food security has become only one of several issues related to the deal, as the personalities of the key negotiators have also taken on a major role. What are the key differences in the discussions this time and what are the prospects for a renewal?

The Putin-Erdogan meeting in Sochi was the first time the two leaders had met since Erdogan's narrow reelection victory in June, while it also marked their first private conversation after almost a year of silence. The Kremlin did not announce the specific topics of the meeting, instead confining itself to a statement that the discussions entailed "bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation" and "an urgent international problem." For his part, Erdogan addressed the grain deal directly in his recollection of the meeting, repeating his willingness to continue playing a key role

in the negotiations. Türkiye is geographically close to many of the countries that are most vulnerable to soaring food prices (including those in the Middle East and North Africa), so the issue is a security matter for Ankara as well as a humanitarian one.

Was this a return to business as usual for the two leaders? During the meeting, Putin reportedly offered to supply up to 1 million tons of Russian grain per month to Türkiye, which could then export it to the states that need it the most. Furthermore, Qatar was expected to play a leading role in financing these activities.

Doha has recently deepened its involvement in humanitarian efforts relating to the Ukraine war, including offering \$100 million of aid to support health, demining and education efforts in Ukraine. This offer was discussed during a July meeting between Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. In addition to a discussion of Zelensky's 10-point peace plan, they also talked about Qatar's investment in Ukraine's potential reconstruction and the Black Sea grain corridor.

In its attempts to mediate peace,

Qatar follows the path of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, both of which have shown willingness to address the issue as neutral mediators. In September 2022, with the help of Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, Russia and Ukraine carried out a prisoner swap involving about 300 people, including foreign volunteers from the UK, the US and Morocco. And just last month, Saudi Arabia hosted an international summit in Jeddah calling for further dialogue regarding Ukraine's territorial integrity. The Kingdom in February also finalized its offer of \$400 million of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, \$100 million of which was for humanitarian aid and the remaining \$300 million offered in the form of energy resources.

The UAE has also shown an active interest in offering humanitarian aid, along with involvement in further prisoner exchanges. During a visit to St. Petersburg last October, Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan reportedly offered to mediate between Ukraine and Russia. Throughout the conflict, Abu Dhabi has also sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Only last week, it sent a ship carrying 23 ambulances to Ukraine to support the country's health sector. As part of its aid program, the UAE aims to send a total

of 50 ambulances to Ukraine, in addition to a pledge of \$100 million in humanitarian aid the UAE made in October 2022. The renewal of the grain deal is not impossible to conceive of, but there are clear obstacles that must first be overcome. The deal might be signed with the involvement of Türkiye and potentially the UN - it is difficult to see a solution that does not involve both parties. However, Russia will likely seek to add its own provisions to the deal, helping to facilitate the export of its own grain. Furthermore, it is possible that a new external actor will be brought in to help fund or enforce the deal; in that case, it is most likely that a Gulf state will fill the role.

The grain deal is not the only problematic issue of the war and its renegotiation might result in parallel diplomatic efforts to find solutions to other sticking points. The Ukrainians (and the West) clearly hope that diplomacy might eventually offer a clear plan for the reconstruction of Ukraine, with a possible united strategy from Kyiv's Gulf partners to help fund the rebuilding of its infrastructure. These efforts are much more likely to succeed if the Gulf states coordinate their efforts. They have already demonstrated they can achieve notable results in comparison to other global actors.

Turning challenges into opportunities

He Yun & Shi Zhiqin

A recent article in Foreign Affairs accuses China's Belt and Road Initiative of saddling developing countries with unsustainable debt while fulfilling China's geopolitical ambitions. However, a closer look reveals that it is a distorted narrative aimed at politicizing the Belt and Road Initiative while ignoring its considerable benefits.

The article claims China has dispensed \$1 trillion in potentially problematic loans. Yet, it fails to provide the source for such a figure. A report by Green Finance & Development Center states that by 2019, China's total outstanding lending to 52 Belt and Road countries stood at \$102 billion. According to another report by the Guardian, researchers from Aid-Data have identified \$385 billion in loans that 165 countries owe to China for Belt and Road projects. These numbers vary, but stand far below the \$1 trillion figure provided but not substantiated in the article. No doubt, Belt and Road lending is substantial, but its sum hardly constitutes global domination.

The article demonizes the Belt and Road Initiative's role in the debt crises of some countries. However, the Center for Global Development, after analyzing debt risks across 68 Belt and Road countries, found that only eight countries faced high debt distress. Crucially, these countries were already at high debt risks even before their participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, meaning they likely could not have found financing for their infrastructure projects otherwise. In this sense, the Belt and Road Initiative actually provides develop-

mental lifelines, not debt traps. Even critics of the Belt and Road Initiative admit that many of its projects have been successfully completed to the advantage of the host nations.

For example, after initially halting the project, Malaysia revived the East Coast Rail Link, recognizing its value for national development. In truth, China has demonstrated flexibility when problems arise. It has restructured, canceled or forgiven troubled Belt and Road debts.

Though China's bailouts are still smaller than those provided by the International Monetary Fund, it has offered key relief to high-debt countries nevertheless. The IMF leadership has applauded China as a development partner. In the words of its managing director Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF and China have a "strong partnership". The claims that accuse China of seizing strategic assets are baseless. A March 2018 report released by the Center for Global Development found that between 2001 and 2017, China had restructured or waived loan payments for 51 debtor nations. Long-term leasing is on the basis of negotiations and mutual consent, and the purpose is precisely to avoid seizing state assets.

Above all, the Belt and Road Initiative meets the vital needs of participating countries. According to a report by the World Bank, when completed, Belt and Road transport projects can reduce travel time along economic corridors by 12 percent, increase trade by anything between

2.7 and 9.7 percentage points, increase income by up to 3.4 percentage points and lift 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty, delivering major social economic gains. In addition, developing countries face a significant infrastructure gap, with an estimated \$1-1.5 trillion needed annually to meet their infrastructure needs. The Belt and Road Initiative is one way by which China helps address this gap by investing in infrastructure projects in developing countries. This is why it has been endorsed by the African Union as a tool for achieving its Agenda 2063. For example, the Maputo-Katembe Bridge project in Mozambique that connects the capital city of Maputo on the northern bank with the district of Katembe on the southern bank has significantly reduced commute time to Maputo and boosted regional trade and economy. Before the bridge was built, the only way to cross the bay was by ferry, which could take up to two hours. With the completion of the bridge, travel time between Maputo and Katembe has reduced to just a few minutes. This means tens of thousands of people who work in Maputo can now live with their family at Katembe.

This is not to say the Belt and Road Initiative is without flaws. There are instances of corruption and loose lending, but such issues plague Western development projects, too. The difference is that when China encounters problems, it takes a proactive approach to addressing the problems and averting broader crises. For

instance, when Malaysia faced unsustainable costs for the East Coast Rail Link, China agreed to cut the project cost by one-third, showing flexibility to address the host country's concerns. After Sri Lanka fell behind on Belt and Road loan payments for the Hambantota Port in 2017, China negotiated a debt-for-equity swap, helping Sri Lanka avoid default. With cooperation and open-minded engagement, China and international partners can build on the Belt and Road Initiative's successes while addressing the issues for improvement. But a politicized narrative that exaggerates challenges while dismissing benefits will only breed mistrust when mutual understanding is needed. Ten years since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is time to move beyond distortions and recognize the initiative's constructive role in advancing sustainable development.

As Winston Churchill once said: "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." By actively working to resolve issues through negotiations and mutually beneficial solutions, China and its Belt and Road partners have turned challenges into opportunities for greater cooperation. With this constructive problem-solving approach, anchored in hope rather than despair, the Belt and Road Initiative's immense potential for shared development can be fully unleashed. What matters are not the inevitable setbacks along the way, but the vision to persevere in pursuit of greater human progress.

The China Daily

means people tend to expect that someone else will foot the bill and make the sacrifices needed. Leaders need to be honest, though honesty is often at odds with the world of politics and does not usually win elections, just like boring, uncharismatic leaders in this era.

Mohamed Chebaro

Britain left the EU, with all the losses to the economy that came with that. The Tories' austerity program has, as is evident today, degraded public services in exchange for, at best, marginal gains in deficit reduction.

Since the Conservative Party came to power in 2010, local authorities and councils have borne the brunt of their cuts, which have reached 40 percent of their annual funding in real terms. To deal with their dwindling funds, the councils, which are referred to as the invisible workhorses of public life in Britain, have had to cut their budgets dedicated to maintenance and repairs.

In civilized countries, the reward for citizens and voters paying taxes without complaint is, due to the social contract, that the state and its public organs will manage the basics competently on their behalf. This means people do not have to worry about who will collect the garbage, service the roads or run schools and hospitals, and that public transport will reliably serve their needs.

The next general election will most likely be won by the Labour Party. But unlike in 1997, it will inherit a country with an empty public purse. And, due to the mess left behind by successive Tory leaders, the pressures to spend more on an aging population will only increase. What no party that is seeking to gain power in the democratic world would dare say is that taxes need to be raised. After cleaning up the mess left by this Tory government, Labour will not be able to rely on growth - even if it comes quickly enough by force of a miracle - to generate the revenues needed to spend on cash-starved public services. The Institute for Fiscal Studies explained in a recent report that, without tax rises, UK public services and social benefits will not be able to cope with demand. But how can one persuade the average Briton that something has got to give? Human instinct

For years, the Conservatives have tried to hedge their bets on low taxation and a small state to win elections, privatizing key industries only to later subsidize them through one form of state grant or another. Today, what Britain should yearn for is responsible leadership - one that is not just worried about the numbers in the polls, but rather about the services delivered to the public. Contrary to what has been assumed, the British public wants more state, not less, according to a recently published report and survey by Michael Ashcroft, the former Conservative Party deputy chair. This finding can only point to the death of the small state, as championed by the current Tory government, as even a substantial number of Conservative voters agree with the statement that "Britain is broken - people are getting poorer, nothing seems to work properly, and we need big changes to the way the country works, whichever party is in government." The data in that report also pointed out that the small state impulse so drummed up by this government is not widely shared, as those surveyed responded that they preferred government to big business and that they trusted regulation and the green movement more than the free markets and capitalism, as well as supporting the public ownership of utilities. Any new leader should, therefore, have the courage to be radical, try to rebuild the state institutions and resort to whatever means necessary to fulfill the public's right to security, well-maintained infrastructure and safe schools - even if that means raising taxes, which are currently low in comparison to most other Western European countries.

Arab News



Welfare and education of orphan children: SCCI and Zamung Kor sign MoU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Model Institute of State Children 'Zamung Kor' has signed a memorandum of understanding with Zamung Kor, aiming to support the education and training of orphan children under its social corporate responsibility and collaborate in common interest initiatives.

In this regard, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by SCCI acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi and Zamung Kor Director Naja Mus Sahar during a ceremony held at the Model Institute

of State Children on Thursday.

On the occasion, secretary social welfare department, government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ziaul Haq, Secretary General of the chamber Sajjad Aziz, officials from Zamung Kor and Social Welfare Department were present.

According to the agreement, the both institutions will promote activities of mutual interests, building of academia and industry linkages along with joint training sessions and collective efforts for education of orphan children.

On the occasion officials briefed the acting president of SCCI Ijaz Khan Afridi

regarding the Zamung Kor in an elaborate manner.

Ijaz Afridi while addressing the agreement signing ceremony appreciated Zamung Kor for services and initiatives for state children, their welfare and education.

He hoped the MoU will play a vital role in the welfare of orphan children through joint working.

Besides, he said efforts would be initiated to build up industries-academia linkages and job-based/skill training programs for orphan children.

Ijaz Afridi said SCCI had so far signed a memorandum of understanding with more than 16 public

and private sector universities and government relevant institutions.

He said today's agreement with Zamung Kor was part of our initiative toward promotion of linkages between government institutions. He stressed the promotion of linkages between industries-academia and institutional cooperation was the dire need of the hour.

Later, the SCCI acting chief paid a visit to various sections of Zamung Kor.

On occasion, Ijaz Afridi along with Secretary Social Welfare Ziaul Haq inaugurated a state of art new model block and also inspected various parts of the newly built model block.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of prominent businessmen from Lahore and Karachi meeting with Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce Dr. Gohar Ijaz.

Pakistan keen to enhance trade with Iraq: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that Pakistan wants to strengthen its bilateral trade and investment relations with Iraq in the traditional and non-traditional sectors that would be mutually beneficial for both countries and Pakistan embassy in Iraq should cooperate with the business community in achieving this goal.

This was stated by him while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Iraq Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, during his Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) on Thursday.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iraq have good potential to develop strong cooperation in diverse fields including trade & industry, agriculture, tourism, energy, health, defence production. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Iraq including textiles, pharmaceuticals, rice, food products and can import oil from Iraq.

The ICCI President stressed that the Pakistan embassy in Iraq should identify the demand for Pakistani products and manpower in the Iraqi market and share such information with ICCI so that the business community could capture better market share in Iraq.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed said that he would make all possible efforts to explore new avenues for promoting Pakistan's trade and exports with Iraq. He said that Iraq is developing as a new market for investors. China has made big investments in Iraq and Pakistani investors should also explore Iraq for business partnerships and investment.

Pakistan's Ambassador-designate said that Iraq is in a reconstruction phase with huge demand for skilled manpower and Pakistani skilled workers can find good opportunities in Iraq. He said that ICCI should share a list of sectors that have good potential to do business with Iraq.

Addressing the German delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Germany have great potential to increase bilateral trade in many areas as the current level of two-way trade of around US\$ 4 billion is not matching with the actual potential of both countries.

He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items as Pakistan's main exports to Germany include textiles, leather goods, sports goods,

PSX's 100-index gains 59 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 59.13 points, a positive change of 0.13 percent, closing at 45,650.06 points against 45,590.93 points the previous trading day.

A total of 45,590.93 shares valuing Rs2.77 billion were traded during the day as compared to 102,767,509 shares valuing Rs3.80 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 316 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 148 of them recorded gains and 138 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 18,078,085 shares at Rs1.90 per share; Al-Shaheer Corp with 18,007,987 shares at Rs11.32 per share and SEARLR2 with 16,376,256 shares at Rs1.60 per share.

Premium Tex witnessed a maximum increase of

Rs26.00 per share price, closing at Rs378.10, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with Rs20.00 rise in its per share price to Rs670.00.

Allawasaya Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs110.00 per share closing at Rs1,560.00, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs85.00 decline to close at Rs7,015.00.

Steady recovery continues; Rupee gains 87 paise against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed the seventh consecutive recovery session as it gained 87 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs297.95 against the previous day's closing of Rs298.82.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs297 and Rs300 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.08 to close at Rs319.88 against the last day's closing of

Rs320.96, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at closed at Rs2.02, whereas a decline of 48 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs372.12 as compared to the last closing of Rs372.60.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 23 paise each to close at Rs81.12 and Rs79.43 respectively.

On September 5 rupee against dollar in the inter-bank trading was at Rs307.09 and by September 14 it came down to Rs297.95, price of the Euro declined to Rs319.88 from Rs330.13, British Pound to Rs372.12 from Rs385.22, Emirate Dirham to Rs81.12 from Rs83.60 and Saudi Riyal to Rs79.43 from Rs81.87. Whereas the buying and selling of the dollar in the open market came down from Rs320.8 to Rs297 and Rs324 to Rs300 respectively.

German companies keen investment in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of German companies led by Muhammad Usman, Country Representative for Pakistan of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and showed interest in joint ventures and investment in Pakistan in areas of their respective fields.

The delegation was representing various sectors including telecommunication, automobile, construction, logistics, energy and financial services, said a press release issued here Thursday.

Addressing the German delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Germany have great potential to increase bilateral trade in many areas as the current level of two-way trade of around US\$ 4 billion is not matching with the actual potential of both countries.

He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items as Pakistan's main exports to Germany include textiles, leather goods, sports goods,

footwear and medical instruments, and its main imports from Germany include machinery, chemical and electrical goods, motor vehicles and iron goods. He stressed that both countries should strengthen business linkages between their private sectors to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that over 40 German companies are doing successful business in many sectors of Pakistan's economy including telecommunication, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobile, automotive, wholesale and stressed that more German companies should explore JVs and investment in Pakistan, which is a huge market of over 240 million consumers.

He assured that ICCI would connect German investors with the right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the representatives of German companies said that Germany wants to diversify foreign trade and the purpose of their visit to Pakistan is to develop networking with Pakistani

counterparts and explore potential areas of joint ventures and investment.

They said that the world's leading agriculture machinery trade fair AgriTechna will be held in Hanover, Germany from November 12-18, 2023 and invited the ICCI delegation to participate in it to discover new innovations, technologies and machinery in the agriculture sector.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that German investors from automobile and other sectors should transfer technology and set up business partnerships in Pakistan to export their products to Central Asia and other markets.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan has huge potential for foreign investment in the construction sector and German companies should take advantage of these opportunities.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed direct air links between Pakistan and Germany that would help in promoting trade relations between the two countries.

SECP witnesses 21% growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,847 new companies in the month of August 2023, taking the total number of registered companies in the country to 200,629.

The incorporations recorded 20.6 percent increase as compared to the same period last year and 99.7 percent were registered online, said a press release issued here Thursday.

The total capitalization of these companies was recorded at Rs. 3.5 billion. Moreover, as a result of the integration of the SECP's registration system with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and various provincial departments, 2,776 companies were registered with the FBR for registration of National Tax Number (NTN), 83 companies with EOBI, 46 companies with PESSI/SESSI and 49 companies with excise and taxation department.

Out of the total incorporations, the information technology sector took the lead with 415 companies, followed by trading with 392, real estate development & construction (357), services (324), tourism (125), mining and quarrying (119), e-commerce (111), education (98), food & beverages (90), corporate agricultural farming (83), textile (59), marketing & advertisement (58), engineering (47), transport (43), healthcare (42), pharmaceutical (41), chemical (41), power generation (38), cosmetics and toiletries (34), auto and allied (30), lodging (29), broadcasting and telecasting (27), communications (22) paper and board (22), cables and electrical goods (13) and 191 companies were registered in other sectors.

Foreign investment has been reported in 69 new companies, with foreign investors from Afghanistan, Australia, China, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE, the UK, the US, and Uzbekistan.

A major chunk of investment was received from China with investment in 33 companies, trailed by the US with 9, Afghanistan and the UAE with 4 each, Australia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Norway, and Russia with 2 each, and investment in 7 companies from other countries.

Strong performance in 1st half of 2023: State Life's proactive strategy paying off

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan's (SLIC) growth momentum continues with progress already evident in its strong half-yearly January to June 2023 results.

Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO of SLIC said, "State Life continues to deliver exceptional business results and we have achieved it once again for the first half of 2023, increasing our premium income by +27% compared to the same period in 2022.

Insurance becomes even more important during challenging times and difficult circumstances, and behind these incredible results lie the true essence of our work, which is to provide security and protection to Pakistanis across

all strata of society."

On implementation of the State Owned Enterprises Act, Sulaiman Mehdi accepted the position of Chairman Board of Directors earlier this month. Shoaib Javed Hussain has assumed charge as the first Chief Executive Officer of State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan.

Since March 2021, Hussain has stood at the helm of the corporation and by outperforming each subsequent year he has enabled SLIC to achieve close to 70 percent of market share.

Through his proactive, dynamic, and results driven leadership approach SLIC total premium sales witnessed a growth of 67 percent year-on-year in 2022, while the new business sales incurred a staggering growth of 143 percent.

State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, established in 1972, stands as a pillar of reliability and excellence in the insurance industry.

With a commitment to securing the future of individuals and families nationwide, State Life's comprehensive range of insurance products caters to diverse needs.

With 69 percent of market share, the corporation's total premium sales witnessed a growth of 67 percent year-on-year in 2022, while the new business sales incurred a staggering growth of 143 percent.

This growth makes SLIC the leader in the industry and one of the most successful state-owned entities which is continuously adapting to meet evolving needs of Pakistanis.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Ellen and Cap Andreas, carrying Containers, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal on Wednesday.

Meanwhile two more Container ships, Starry and MSC Tia-II also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim on Thursday.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, MSC Ellen

and ICE Fighter left the port on Thursday, while three more ships, Chem-Road Rose, Chem Bulldog and Maersk Pelepas are expected to sail on Thursday.

A cargo volume of 96,228 tonnes, comprising 56,419 tones of import Cargo and 39,809 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,911 Containers (2,073 TEUs Imports and 1,838 TEUs export) was handled during the last 24 hours.

There are ten ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, MSC Tia-II, Seaspun Beacon, No. 2 Ocean Pioneer and Hafnia Pegasus & another ship, XT Pioneer are expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal Oil Terminal and Multi-Purpose Terminal on Thursday, while two more container ships, Lana and SSL Mumbai are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.



KARACHI: Rashid Jamal, Regional Head, Asia at Solus Labs with Faizan Laghari, Director, National Incubation Centre, Dr. Muhammad Farukh, Associate Professor, FAST NUCES, Tehreem Fatima, Co founder, Metaflash, Ayesha, Co founder, Metaflash, Kanza Zehra, Co founder, Metaflash.

Wall Street mixed after inflation data as European bourses dip ahead of ECB

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stock indices moved in opposite directions Wednesday after a mixed inflation report as European bourses dipped ahead of a European Central Bank decision.

US consumer inflation accelerated to 3.7 percent in August, up from 3.2 percent in July, an increase fueled by higher gasoline prices.

US stocks wobbled in morning trading as investors mulled over the data and its implications for the Federal Reserve, which meets next week on interest rates.

But by the end of the session, both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq were narrowly higher while the Dow

edged lower.

"While US prices have risen at a faster pace over the last month, stocks have nonetheless taken comfort from the drop in annual core inflation," said Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at online trading platform IG.

"Overall, there is nothing here to change the Fed's plans to hold interest rates unchanged at next week's... meeting," said Andrew Hunter, deputy chief US economist at Capital Economics, which expects core inflation to fall as the US economy slows.

Ben Laidler, global markets strategist at financial services firm eToro, said the CPI reading will force the Fed "to keep interest

rates at a 20-year high until it sees more progress in the last and hardest yards to get inflation firmly on track towards its 2 percent target."

The US central bank has insisted that its decision-making on monetary policy will be data-driven as it assesses next steps.

A recent run of strong data, particularly on the jobs market and the services sector, has revived talk that more rate hikes could be on the way, with a surge in oil prices to 10-month highs adding to those concerns.

Both Paris and Frankfurt stocks closed lower ahead of an interest-rate decision Thursday from the ECB.

The central bank is

walking a tightrope between still-high inflation and a darkening eurozone outlook as it decides whether to lift interest rates again or finally pause its historic hiking cycle.

On the corporate front, shares in British oil giant BP fell 2.8 percent after chief executive Bernard Looney unexpectedly resigned, having admitted to not being "fully transparent" about historical relationships with colleagues.

Looney, 53, has left after less than four years in the role, having seen the firm through a tumultuous period that included huge swings in prices owing to the Covid pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



In brief

Cricketers to wear protectors

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Australian cricketers will have to wear neck protectors on helmets when facing fast or medium pace bowling from October as part of changes to playing conditions for the 2023/24 domestic and international seasons. Governing body Cricket Australia had recommended the use of neck protectors since the death of Phillip Hughes in 2014 but a number of top batsmen, including David Warner and Steve Smith, have resisted wearing them. They will now have to wear them from Oct. 1 when playing at home or in international cricket overseas or face sanctions under rules to be introduced by CA. "Protecting the head and neck is extremely important in our sport," CA's Head of Cricket Operations & Scheduling Peter Roach said in a statement. "The neck protector product has come a long way in recent years and the decision to make them mandatory comes off the back of a lot of advice and consultation with a wide range of experts and stakeholders." The mandate comes a week after Australia all-rounder Cameron Green was struck by a Kagiso Rabada bouncer on the neck guard fixed to his helmet and was substituted out of the first ODI against South Africa with concussion. It was one of a raft of changes to playing conditions, which include scrapping the automatic six runs given to batters who hit the roof of Melbourne's Docklands Stadium during Big Bash League matches. Umpires will now decide to award a six if they judge the ball would have cleared the boundary. The use of COVID substitutes, who replaced players testing positive for the coronavirus, has also been scrapped.

Jabeur crashes out of WTA

LOS ANGELES (AFP): Anastasia Potapova stunned top-seeded Tunisian Ons Jabeur 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to reach the quarter-finals of the WTA San Diego Open on Wednesday. Potapova, ranked 27th in the world, said patience was the key against the world number seven, who reached her third Grand Slam final at Wimbledon this year. "Ons is very tough to play," said Potapova, who had edged Alicia Parks in three sets in the first round as Jabeur enjoyed a first-round bye. "She is truly one of the best in the world and with her style it's very uncomfortable. I'm really happy and proud to get this win." Jabeur was coming off a fourth-round showing at the US Open, where she battled illness in the opening rounds. Potapova notched her sixth career victory over a top-10 player and lined up a quarter-final meeting with 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, a 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 winner over fellow American Katie Volynets. Potapova converted six of her 11 break chances, breaking the Tunisian at love to seal the opening set. Jabeur served for the second set at 6-5 but was broken. Potapova racing to a 4-0 lead in the tiebreaker before Jabeur bore down to knot it at 4-4. Jabeur's ninth double fault of the match gave Potapova a double match point, and Jabeur fired wide with a forehand to end it. Second-seeded Caroline Garcia of France was due to open her campaign later Wednesday in a challenging second-round meeting with Sloane Stephens.



KARACHI: Sidra Ameen and Bismah Maroof added 110 for the second wicket, South Africa vs Pakistan Women, 3rd Women's ODI.

Pakistan to face Indonesia in Davis Cup World Group-II tie on Sept 16

ISLAMABAD (APP): The two-day Davis Cup World Group-II tie between Pakistan and Indonesia will kick off on Saturday at Aisam-ul-Haq Tennis Pavilion, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. The Pakistan team, spearheaded by seasoned Aisam ul Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan, also includes Muhammad Shoaib, Muhammad Abid, and debutant Barkat Ullah, a Pakistan Tennis Federation spokesman said on Thursday.

Former Davis Cup player Mushaf Zia is the coach of Pakistan team, while Muhammad Shahid will be the team physio. The Indonesian Davis Cup team, comprising three players, one captain and one coach arrived in Islamabad on September 11. The team consists of David Agung Susanto, Ignatius Anthony Susanto and Gunawan Trismuwantara. Wirjawan Sugiharta is the playing captain, whereas Suharyadi (Manager), Robby Sudrajat (Strength and Conditioning Coach), and Suharto (Masseur) make up the squad. The ITF Referee, Hany Hamied Ali ElKhafief from Egypt arrived on September 12 to supervise the tie. Chair umpire Gianluca Moscarella from Italy arrived on Thursday,

whereas the second chair umpire Ivan Yovchev from Bulgaria will be arriving Friday. Chief of umpires Essam Maher Mohammad Saleh is scheduled to arrive later today (Thursday).

President PTF Senator Salim Saifullah Khan visited the Davis Cup venue and interacted with the Pakistani and Indonesian teams and conveyed his best wishes for the tie. He expressed satisfaction at the overall organizational arrangements, including the security coverage by Islamabad Police.

He also thanked Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination and Pakistan Sports Board for their support for the event.

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7th Sudent Olympic Games

KARACHI (APP): In 7th Student Olympic Games, Beacon Light School won the title of Futsal Boys Juniors, the final of Junior Girls Throwball was won by DHA Phase Four School and the title of Junior Boys Throwball went to The City School PAF Chapter.

According to a communique here on Thursday, in the futsal competition which was played at the airfield of MC Sports Complex, Beacon Light School Maymar beat The City School PAF Chapter by one goal to become the champions.

Muhammad Rayan scored a goal, Habib Public School won the third position in the event, Habib Public School beat Happy Home School by 2-0 goals, Mikael and Mansab scored goals each for the winning team.

The Throwball competition was held at the Indoor Gymnasium Hall of Pakistan Sports Board Karachi Center where the Junior Girls Throwball title was won by DHA Phase Four, easily defeating The City School PAF Chapter 2-0 in straight sets in the final, in the third place match, The City School Derakhshan Campus win over the rival team Beacon Light School Maymar by 2-0 sets.

The City School PAF Chapter won the first position in the Throbball Boys Juniors, In the final, they defeat The First Step School team number one by two sets to one. The Academy School won the match First School team won third place by defeating number two, the winning team winning straight sets 2-0.

The 7th Student Olympic Games, girls' catch ball competition will be held at Pakistan Sports Board Karachi Center from 9 am to 5 pm on Friday.

Ameen, Maroof fifties lead Pakistan to consolation win

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Half-centuries from Sidra Ameen and Bismah Maroof led Pakistan to an eight-wicket win in the final ODI and prevented South Africa from sealing a 3-0 series sweep. After failures in the first two ODIs, Pakistan's top order came good, taking charge of a chase of 186 and completing the task in just 38 overs.

Ameen put on a 39-run opening partnership with Safaf Shamas, before Maroof joined her in a 110-run second-wicket stand that put Pakistan firmly in control. Both reached their half-centuries before Ameen was lbw to Nadine de Klerk for 68 off 82 balls.

Aliya Riaz's entry was a cue for Pakistan to hurry to their target; she hit three fours in a Masabata Klaas over and raced to an unbeaten 19

off 14, while putting on an unbroken 37, off just 31 balls, with Maroof, who finished not out on 60 off 98. It was the former Pakistan captain's 19th ODI fifty.

South Africa chose to bat, and lost their captain Laura Wolvaardt before they had put a run on the board, with Sadia Iqbal bowling her in the first over. Tazmin Brits and Laura Goodall steadied the innings with a 35-run partnership off 41 balls, but the complexion of the game changed when Goodall retired hurt in the eighth over.

By the time Goodall came back in the 17th, South Africa had lost Brits and Sune Luus, and the returning No. 3 was out just two balls later to leave South Africa 64 for 4.

Marizanne Kapp and de Klerk helped them recover somewhat with a

36-run stand for the fifth wicket, but Pakistan kept a lid on the scoring; there was only one boundary hit from the 14th to 30th overs. It was in an effort to break out of this strangle that Kapp fell, failing to clear mid-off off Iqbal.

Delmi Tucker added a further 37 with de Klerk, but the innings began to unravel thereafter, as South Africa slipped from 137 for 5 to 145 for 8, with a run-out costing them the wicket of keeper-batter Sinalo Jafta.

Nos. 10 and 11 stuck around at the crease, with Ayabonga Khaka and Klaas spending a cumulative 29 balls at the crease while adding 15 and 25 with de Klerk, who was last out for 60 off 95 balls. South Africa were bowled out in 48.1 overs, with Sadia, Nashra Sandhu and Nida Dar picking up two wickets apiece.

Pak hockey team to leave for China on Sep 21

ISLAMABAD (APP): The national hockey team would depart for China on September 21 to feature in the Asian Games scheduled to be held in China.

The training camp of the national team to prepare for the mega event was underway here at the Pakistan Sports Complex.

The National Hockey Team Manager Saeed Khan said for better results in the Asian Games, the training camp of the national team was ongoing in two sessions at the Naseer Banda Hockey Stadium.

Khan said under the supervision of head coach Olympian Shahnaz Sheikh, special attention has been given to the players and we are hopeful that the Pakistan hockey team will be displaying top-notch performance in the Asian Games.

To a question, Khan said the team management has requested the for replacement of the unfit players but no decision has been made yet in this regard.

In the event starting from September 24, Pakistan and traditional rival India teams were included in Pool A, while Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore and Uzbekistan were in Pool B. Pakistan team would play Singapore on September 24, Bangladesh on September 26 and Uzbekistan on September 28.

The match between traditional rivals Pakistan and India was scheduled for September 30, while the Green Shirts would play the final pool match against Japan on October 2. The semifinals of the Asian Games men's hockey event will be played on October 4 and the final on October 6.

Women to referee at men's Asian Cup for first time

DOHA (AFP): Women including Japanese trailblazer Yoshimi Yamashita will referee at the men's Asian Cup for the first time next year in Qatar, officials said Thursday. Yamashita, who was also selected for the 2022 men's World Cup in Qatar, has been chosen alongside four other women for the regional championship in January-February. "For the first time ever, women match officials are poised to make their debut at Asia's most prestigious men's national team competition," the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said in a statement. The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system will also make its "full debut" at the tournament, the AFC said. The Asian Cup will have 24 teams for the first time and hosts Qatar are the reigning champions. Japan and South Korea will also be among the favourites after reaching the World Cup last 16 in Qatar.

SWA, KP delegates visits media houses



PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of the Sports Writers Association (SWA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa paid a visit to different media houses, sports academies, Olympic Stadium and various historical places in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan.

During the visit, the delegation headed by the Secretary Sports Writers Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahid Afridi, was informed about digital sports journalism, various sports and historical places, a news release said. The delegation is currently on a week-long visit to Baku, Azerbaijan attending a Digital Media Course organized jointly by Azerbaijan Sports Journalism Association and Sports Writers Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The delegation was briefed about the facilities of the Digital Media Network in various sections besides being taught in educational institutions to meet the present-day challenges of the Digital World besides equipping the upcoming journalists according to the need.

The delegates visited different sections of the institution and the news director of the news agency Fawad Hassan Ali gave them a briefing about journalism and the relations between the two countries Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Later, the delegation also visited the modern-day

Martial Arts Academy managed by the Azerbaijan Sports Journalists Association. The delegation was told about the international standing coaching and training facilities in order to develop the visit in Martial Arts so that they could be able to compete at the national and international levels. In the second phase of the training session, the delegation also visited the Baku Olympic Stadium. Many international football matches have been held in this stadium. This stadium has also hosted famous football players.

Later, the delegation of sports journalists went to the indoor gymnasium where Baku's top-ranked basketball, boxing and judo players were practising. During this time, the manager gave a detailed briefing about the practice and the players in order to understand his responsibilities to the sports journalists.

Located in Asia, Azerbaijan is bordered by four countries – Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Iran. The east of the country is bordered by the Caspian Sea. Swans, flamingos and pelicans all flock to this region. Much of the north and west is covered by the Caucasus Mountains, where roe deer, brown bears and lynx thrive.

Sport in Azerbaijan has ancient roots, and even now, both traditional and modern sports are still practised. Freestyle wrestling

has been traditionally regarded as Azerbaijan's national sport, however today, the most popular sports in Azerbaijan are football and chess. Other popular sports are gymnastics, judo, futsal, weightlifting, and boxing.

Azerbaijan's mountainous terrain provides great opportunities for the practice of sports like skiing and rock climbing. Water sports are practised on the Caspian Sea and in inland waters. Competitively, Azerbaijan has been very successful at chess, weightlifting, and wrestling at the international level.

Azerbaijan is also an active member of the International Sports Community, with full membership in the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), European Athletics Association (EAA), International Olympic Committee (IOC), among many others.

It has also hosted the first European Games and the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games. Azerbaijan is one of the leading volleyball countries in the world and its Azerbaijan Women's Volleyball Super League is one of the strongest women's leagues in the world. Its women's national team placed fourth at the 2005 European Championship.

Men, Women Badminton trials under PM Youth Talent Hunt held

PESHAWAR (APP): Men and Women Badminton Trials under Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Program held under the aegis of University of Swabi (UoS) and Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) in Peshawar Region wherein large number of women and men players turned up.

Former international athlete and Coordinator Higher Education Commission for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Regions Bahre Karam, Registrar University of Swabi Asfandiyar Khan Khalil, Dr Noorzada, Director Distance Studies, Director Sports Kohat University Science and Technology (KUST) and former national athlete and level-III Athletic Coach Muhammad Wajid and gold medalist of the South Asian Games in Javelin throw and Director Sports University of Swat Altaf Hussain Shah, selectors including Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Hayat Ullah and Miss Bushra, Zubaira Butt, Miss Azra Naz, Miss Nooren Nawab, players and officials were also present.

The ceremony started with the recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by the National Anthem and March Past of all the participating girls and boys players from Peshawar, Charsadda, Khyber, Mohmand, and Sub-Division Peshawar.

Both Bahre Karam and Asfandiyar Khan Khalil formally inaugurated the day-long trials wherein a total of 121 boys and 61 females took part.

Muhammad Nadeem Khan said that they held Men trials at the international standard indoor hall of the Hayatabad Sports Complex.

Altaf Hussain Shah disclosed that the University of Swat is holding Men Badminton trials while KUST is holding the Women's Badminton trials in all five regions including Mardan, Swat, Bannu, Peshawar, Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan on different dates given by the Directorate General Sports Higher Education Commission, Islamabad.

He said that the Vice Chancellor University of Swabi Prof. Dr. Nasir Jamal also extended valuable support to him to facilitate the players participating in the trials. He said in the first phase they conducted open trials in all five regions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and players from 15-year-old to 25-year-old are eligible to take part.

He said all arrangements had been made well in time and hopefully good talented players would come up to represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National League soon after the provincial league. Altaf Hussain said that they have started the trials from August 31 from Mardan, followed by Swat on September 4-5, trials at Hazara, Abbottabad Committee Hall on September 11, followed by Hayatabad Sports Complex, Peshawar. Soon after such trials, they would visit Bannu Sports Complex, Bannu on September 20, 2023.

When contacted Director Sports KUST and former national athlete

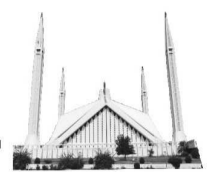
Muhammad Wajid told media men that they had been given the task of holding Women Badminton Trials in all five Regions for which all arrangements have been made.

He said the trials process with different dates after Mardan trials on September 7-8, 2023 in the Indoor Hall of the Makan Bagh, Mingora, Swat, in Hazara Region, which has been divided into two phases – one on September 11 at Kalabat Township Hall, Haripur and in second phase trials the trials was held on September 12 at Hazara University, Mansehra.

He said, soon after the trials at Hayatabad Sports Complex, Peshawar, the trials in Bannu were divided into two phases – one at Kohat Sports Complex, Gulshanabad Chowk, KDA, Kohat on September 21 and one at Bannu Sports Complex on September 22.

Muhammad Wajid said that Vice Chancellor KUST Professor Dr Sardar Khan is fully supporting the process and directed him to ensure all facilities to the women players in five different regions. The open trials, he said, are being purely organized on merit and the selection committee nominated by HEC thoroughly shortlists the players before monitoring their performances in the trials.

He said they are holding women trials in collaboration with HEC, Islamabad wherein colourful opening ceremonies were held at Sports Complex BISE, Swat and Hazara, followed by trials at Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu.



In brief

36 dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 36 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 534 in the district. District Coordinator Epidemic Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Sajjad Mehmood said on Thursday that 21 of the new cases came from Potohar Town Urban, five from Rawalpindi Cantonment, four from Municipal Corporation and three from Chaklala Cantonment. He said that 98 patients were admitted to district hospitals, out of which 73 were confirmed while 461 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad said that during the last 24 hours, the district administration registered 63 FIRs for violations of dengue SOPs, issued tickets to 15, sealed two premises and fined Rs 89,000. During the indoor surveillance, the teams checked 18,145 houses in the last 24 hours and larvae were found in 802 houses. Similarly, he added that out of 6,036 locations checked, teams found larvae at 122 locations during external surveillance.

Police arrest three criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Thursday arrested three street criminals and robbers and recovered Rs 18,000 cash, a mobile phone, a rickshaw, a weapon and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Taxila police arrested two members of a gang including Kamran, ringleader, Hamza and Amin, wanted in various cases. Police recovered Rs 18,000 cash, mobile phone, a rickshaw, weapon and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Muhammad Waqas Khan appreciated the police team and directed them to accelerate operations against street criminals and other lawbreakers.

261600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 261600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 229400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1545.04 feet and was 147.04 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 124100 cusecs and 125000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1236.70 feet, 186.7 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 13700 cusecs and 45000 cusecs respectively.

13 bootleggers holders netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): The police in an action against suspected bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday managed to arrest 13 accused besides recovering over 65 liters liquor, six pistols and ammunition from their possession. According to a police spokesperson, Naseerabad, Mandra, Pirwadhai, Chontra, Saddar Baroni and Westridge police arrested Yousaf, Bilal, Israr, Abid, Waqas, Farhan, Sajid, Saqib, Rashid, and Ahtesham and recovered 65 liters liquor, six pistols and ammunition from their possession. Meanwhile, R.A.Bazar, Taxila, and Gungmandi police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up three proclaimed offenders namely Saeed, Asif and Shehzad wanted in different cases.

Bugti, Sanjrani discuss country's prevailing law & order situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Interior Minister, Senator Sarfaraz Bugti, called on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, at the Parliament House and discussed with him the prevailing law and order situation in the country.

During the meeting, Senator Bugti assured Chairman Senate that the caretaker government was committed to maintain peace and stability in the country. He emphasized that no one would be allowed to disturb the peace and security of the country under his watch.

Senator Sarfaraz Bugti, emphasized the need for collaboration and unity

among all stakeholders to address the pressing challenges Pakistan faces. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani acknowledged the importance of a collective effort in ensuring a stable and prosperous Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani acknowledged the vital role of intra-institutional cooperation among government bodies and security agencies to effectively address Pakistan's challenges. He stressed that collaboration, information sharing, and coordination among institutions are paramount in maintaining national stability and ensuring the safety

and security of citizens.

Furthermore, the leaders discussed steps taken to restore peace and promote development in the region of Gilgit Baltistan. Senator Bugti shared insights into the ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing security and improving the socio-economic conditions in the area.

In response, Chairman Senate lauded the efforts of Senator Bugti in addressing the critical issues related to law and order. He expressed his utmost confidence in the abilities of the Caretaker Interior Minister to effectively manage and oversee the security situation in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Interim Interior Minister, Sarfraz Bugti called on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House. — APP Photo

Mushaal vows to continue to raise issue of oppressed people of IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick Thursday vowed to continue raising issues of oppressed people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) at all international forums.

Addressing 'Pehchan Pakistan' conference here at a private university, she said Kashmiris were struggling for the past seven decades for their inalienable right to self-

determination as promised by the United Nations.

Mushaal Mullick said India had miserably failed to suppress voice of Kashmiris for freedom despite deployment of more than a million troops in IIOJK.

She said nobody was safe in the occupied valley as women and children were being disgraced, and freedom lover youth and other people were being severely tortured.

The special assistant said fake and expired medicines were being sup-

plied to continue genocide of Kashmiri people.

She said there was no political, religious and social liberty in IIOJK and massive human rights violations by the occupation Indian forces were routine matter.

Mushaal Mullick urged the people in Pakistan and Pakistani Diaspora to support Kashmiri people in attaining their right to self-determination under the United Nations Security Council's resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

12 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons with ammunition recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 12 outlaws during the last 24 hours from different areas of the city and recovered drugs, liquor and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directives, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Ahmed and recovered 20 liters of liquor from his

possession.

The Kohsar police team arrested an accused namely Shahzad Masih and recovered 575 gram heroin from his possession.

Likewise, the Golra police team arrested an accused namely Jameel Ullah involved in illegally cylinder gas refilling. The Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Qadeer and recovered 310 gram heroin from his possession.

Similarly, the Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Sail and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Shams colony police team arrested two accused namely Shahid Ahmed and Javed and recovered 155 gram

hashish and one iron punch from his possession.

Moreover, the Shahzad Town police team arrested two accused namely Nasir Mahmood and Asif Khan and recovered two 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession. The Khanna police team arrested two accused namely Waqas and Ahmed Ali and recovered 262 gram heroin and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from their possession.

Furthermore, the Humak police team arrested an accused namely Hassan Akhtar and recovered 447 gram heroin from his possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

Police finalize foolproof security arrangements for Chehlum procession

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police here on Thursday finalized foolproof security arrangements for the Chor Chowk procession of Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) to be taken out on 28 Safar-ul-Muzaffar.

According to a police spokesman, the police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani finalized foolproof security arrangements for the procession.

He informed that the CPO had directed the police officers to ensure foolproof security arrangements for the procession and utilize all available resources to provide tight security cover to the mourners.

More than 14,00 police personnel would be deployed for the security of the procession while 176 Traffic Wardens and City Traffic officers would also be on duty to regulate traffic on city roads, he added.

The police spokesman said tight security would be provided to the procession, and walk-through gates would be installed at the entry points of the procession, he said adding, the participants would be allowed to join the main

procession after a full body search.

According to CPO, under the security arrangements, no one would be allowed to stand on the rooftops of commercial and residential buildings situated along the procession route. Snipers would also be deployed for the security of the main procession, he said.

The CPO informed that searching and sweeping of the main procession route would be carried out and streets, roads, diversion points and other routes along the main procession route would be sealed.

All available resources are being utilized to ensure foolproof security for Chor Chowk Chehlum procession, the CPO added.

According to a CTP spokesman, the Traffic Police, on the directives of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, had finalised all the arrangements to regulate traffic and facilitate the road users on September 15 in Chor Chowk area.

He informed that a comprehensive traffic plan had been devised to ensure security and facilitate the mourners as well as the road users.

Chairing Cross to Pirwadhai Mor Road would remain closed from morning to conclusion of the 'Chehlum' procession.

Diversion points would be set up in the circle to ensure security and facilitate the motorists. Saddar to Peshawar bound traffic would move through Westridge Road, Atta ul Haq Road, Najam Shaheed Road, Westridge-III Road, APS School, Marble Factory and IJP Road, while the traffic coming from Wah, Taxila towards Saddar would use Pirwadhai Road, IJP Road, Carriage Factory Road, Gunjmandi Mor, Bakri Chowk, Romi Road, Transit Camp and Akram ul Haq Road.

The road from Chor Chowk to Range road would also remain closed during the procession. Similarly, Hali road from Chor Chowk to Najam Shaheed Chowk would also remain closed for all kind of vehicular traffic. Traffic of Marble Factory road to Chor Chowk would also be provided alternative route from Tanki Chowk towards Westridge Mor, he added.

Traffic police would place diversions to facilitate the procession, the spokesman said.

17 outlaws held in last 24 hours

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) apprehended 17 outlaws including six professional beggars during the last 24 hours from different areas of the city and recovered liquor and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

A Public Relations Officer (PRO) Thursday said, "Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city."

Following these directives, the Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Usama Usman, and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Arslan Masih involved in illegal cylinder gas refilling, he added.

Likewise, the Ramna police team arrested an accused namely Bharam Khan, and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Hakeem and recovered 550 gram hashish from his possession.

Similarly, the Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Safer Ahmed, and recovered 640 grams of hashish from his possession. The Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Ayaz and recovered 312 grams of heroin from his possession.

Moreover, the Kirpa police team arrested an accused namely Nasir Ahmed, and recovered 1100 grams of heroin from his possession.

The Humak police team arrested an accused namely Zarak Khan involved in illegal cylinder gas refilling. Furthermore, the Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Zeeshan Latif, and recovered one 30-bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

The Bani Gala police team arrested an accused namely Atif Hussain and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. During the special campaign against professional baggers and their handlers, the police team arrested six professional beggars. Cases had been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation was underway.

Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials to effectively crack down against the accused involved in criminal activities and to ensure the safety of lives and property of citizens on a priority basis.

Democracy best form of govt, says NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly and former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that democracy had rendered itself as the best form of government across the world.

The speaker, in his message on the International Day of Democracy, said the countries which cherished and implemented democratic values had reached the height of prosperity and development.

"Pakistan has been blessed with energetic and talented youth bulge which will lead Pakistan on the path of development and progress," he added.

He said the nation would always remain indebted to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for their historic struggle and sacrifices for ensuring democracy in the country.

Raja Pervez expressed that they firmly believed that all powers to determine the destiny of the nation rest with the people and it was well documented in the annals of history that they never compromised on it.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the one who bestowed this nation with the first democratic and unanimous Constitution, he said, citing Shaheed BB who always said "Democracy is necessary to

peace and to undermine the forces of terrorism."

While reflecting on the theme of this year's democracy day 'Empowering the Next Generation', he said that Pakistan was blessed to have young and dynamic leaders like Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. "He is a hope of a prosperous and democratic future for the country. As his forefathers, he always advocated for peaceful, progressive, prosperous, democratic Pakistan," the speaker remarked.

He stressed that election was a key to ensuring the continuity of the democratic process in the country.

"The Constitution lays clear guidelines regarding elections and it is incumbent upon every institution to follow them in letter and spirit." "As the primary and supreme representative body of the general populace, Parliament must be in charge in a democratic system," he noted.

He reiterated that Pakistan had always upheld democratic principles while dealing with other nations and expects others to follow suit. "It is unfortunate that India, the so-called biggest democracy of the world, has been usurping the democratic right of self-determination of people in Indian illegally Occupied

Jammu & Kashmir," the speaker regretted.

He said that the world must take cognizance of the plight of Kashmiris and must raise their voices to stop Indian aggression and tyranny. It is pertinent to mention that the National Assembly of Pakistan has been forefront of launching programs for the inclusion of youth in the democratic system. It was the first parliament which opened doors for children, women, minorities, youth, transgender, and other marginalized segment of the populace on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Constitution.

First-ever summer internship for young children, the establishment of the first-ever Parliamentary caucus on Child Rights, the first-ever session of the children's Parliament and Internship programs for university students have been undertaken in the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the inauguration of a constitutional monument, Bagh-e-Dastoor, postal stamps, display of original script of the constitution book exhibitions, and launching of Constitutional App was also undertaken for the inclusion of youth in the democratic and parliamentary process.

Ashrafi extends condolences, prayers to Moroccan envoy in aftermath of earthquake



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Thursday met with Moroccan Ambassador Mohamed Karmoun and expressed deep condolences for the losses suffered in recent earthquake and offered heartfelt prayers for the departed souls.

Ashrafi who is also the president of International Interfaith Harmony Council, fervently prayed to Allah to elevate the status of the deceased and grant health to the injured, beseeching the Almighty to bestow His blessings upon those affected by this natural disaster.

In response, Ambassador Mohamed Karmoun conveyed his gratitude for the solidarity shown by the Pakistani government, armed forces, people, and scholars during these challenging times. He acknowledged the warmth and support extended by Pakistan in the wake of the earthquake in Morocco.

Islamabad Police launch 'School Chalo' initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police have officially initiated the "School Chalo" campaign to address the issue of students who are frequently absent from their educational institutions and can often be found wandering in recreational areas and other public spaces.

In a proactive move under the guidance of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the "School Chalo" campaign specifically targets students who are found absent from school or college, often seen loitering

in recreational areas, markets, and other public spaces identified through the city's Safe City camera network.

These students are swiftly escorted to various police stations with the support of Dolphin squads and Safe City smart vehicles.

Moreover, during school and college hours, more than twenty students discovered visiting various recreational venues have already been safely transferred to different police stations. Police teams have diligently reached out to the parents of these students and promptly

reunited them.

ICCP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has emphasized that students who are absent from educational institutions and found wandering during school hours will be brought to the attention of the authorities.

He further underscored that students represent the nation's future, and safeguarding their well-being remains of utmost importance.

The Islamabad Capital Police is fully committed to ensuring a bright and secure future for these young individuals.

100 Afghan refugees freed

KABUL (Agencies): Over the past five days, 120 Afghan refugees have been released from Pakistani prisons due to the efforts of the Ministry of Refugee Affairs in Quetta, the ministry of Refugees said. According to a statement, more than 500 documented and undocumented Afghan refugees have been arrested and imprisoned by Pakistan's security agencies in the past seven days. The source added that as a result of continuous efforts, 120 people who had legal documents were freed.

Minister met UK investor

KABUL (Agencies): Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, has held a meeting with British investor Anthony Redd. The discussion centered around the investment opportunities available within Afghanistan's mineral resources sector. According to a statement from the ministry, the two parties discussed the creation of a conducive environment and security measures across the country to attract foreign companies to Afghanistan.

IEA committed to ensure women rights

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Higher Education Neda Mohammad Nadim says securing the rights of women and girls, especially their right to education, is one of the obligations of the Islamic Emirate, but it takes time to provide educational grounds based on Islamic Sharia.

Speaking in an interview with state TV-RTA, Nadim said that they will not make decisions contrary to Islamic Sharia and will not obey foreign orders.

According to Nadim, there are currently about 500,000 students enrolled at universities in Afghanistan, and that almost 450 professors have



returned to the country.

He stated that the curriculum of many fields has been revised and efforts are underway to standardize the country's education system. He added that they intend to invite professors from the region and neigh-

boring countries to teach at the country's universities.

He, however, said that Afghan students in India are facing problems and the efforts are ongoing to resolve these problems by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hanafi met influential Shiites

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs met with a number of influential Shiites.

In the meeting, Shiite influential figures shared details about the social, economic and local governance situation. They said that security was fully secured in all parts of the country, and all the people of Afghanistan, especially the people of the central provinces, are happy.

They spoke about the cooperation of the people in various fields with the officials of the Islamic Emirate and reminded that during various programs, they were able to identify the people's problems and inform the officials. Influential Shiites called on the leadership of the Islamic Emirate to pay serious attention to the issues of the people in various fields.

Mawlawi Hanafi, thanked the efforts and activities of the influential Shiites in identifying the challenges of the people, added that with the establishment of the Islamic system in the country, the long-standing dream of the Afghan people, which was the end of the war and security in the country, was realized, and this is a great blessing for the people of Afghanistan, and the Islamic Emirate does not spare any effort to solve the problems of the people in all parts of the country.

700,000 Afghan migrants return from Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that in the first half of the current calendar year, approximately 710,000 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

The organization emphasized in its report published on Wednesday that the number of migrant returns during a similar period has increased by 16% compared to the previous year.

According to the UNHCR, 310,000 are migrants detained in Iran without legal residence and travel permits. They have been deported due to "law violations," and 400,000 have returned voluntarily.

The UNHCR has highlighted that Afghan migrants in Iran face various challenges, including physical violence, lack of access to food, water, adequate sanitation facilities, healthcare, verbal abuse, prison overcrowding, family separation, and loss of property and money.

According to the report, Iranian authorities have not commented on the violation of the human rights of Afghan migrants so far.

The organization added that Afghan migrants had entered Iran due to a lack of access to healthcare facilities, job opportunities, high living costs, passport or visa extensions for return, fear of detention and deportation and extortion by the police or government officials.

Meanwhile, the UN reports that from mid-May to the end of June, approximately 1,200 to 1,500 Afghan citizens without documentation have entered Iran.

This is happening while, according to reports, around five million Afghan citizens live in Iran.

Rights of women, girls in Afghanistan concern of UN

KABUL (TOLOnews): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a press conference that the situation of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan will be an issue that "will be very much on the agenda" of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly meeting. World leaders will address the United Nations General Assembly on September 18 and 19 in New York.

"The rights of women and girls in Afghanistan is absolutely central to all concerns and will be one of the issues that will be very much in the agenda," Guterres noted.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate said that women's rights are ensured in Afghanistan within the framework of Islamic principles. The Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, asked the world to respect Islamic values in Afghanistan and to not interfere in the country's internal affairs.

"The issue of human rights is an excuse that is used. In reality, the people of Afghanistan have rights given to them by Sharia law. Nobody can show that someone else's rights have been violated. All individu-



als have rights, including men, women, children, and the elderly," said Mujahid. According to some university lecturers, participation of all the citizens, including women, in the political sphere is important.

"It is the responsibility of the government to provide facilities for the people, provide services. We are like the two wings of a bird in the society, and our sisters are the one wing. If we want to have a developed society, we should provide the rights of work,

education and political participation," said Zaki Mohammadi, a political analyst.

Previously, the UN special rapporteur for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, at the UN Human Rights Council called on the "Taliban to reverse their draconian, misogynist policies and allow women to work and run businesses, including delivering essential services through NGOs and the UN."

Speaking at the 54th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council,

Bennett said 60,000 women have lost their jobs due to recent restrictions of the interim Afghan government.

"Recently the Taliban has restricted women's activities even more. Beauty salons have been prohibited, eliminating approximately 60,000 jobs, depriving them of one of few remaining women's only safe spaces," he said.

Upholding women's rights in Afghanistan is one of the world's demands for the recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

Monthly income of 78% of Afghans decreased: CARE

KABUL (TOLOnews): CARE in a report said that the monthly income of 78% of Afghans has decreased.

The organization conducted a survey of 381 people in 9 provinces and asked them about their monthly income, and 73% of them said that their monthly income is less than 5,000 afghani, or 59 US dollars.

"78% of people say they are earning less than they were in September 2022. 73% of people are earning less than 5,000 AFN (\$59) per month."

Meanwhile, some Kabul residents said that they are currently facing economic

problems and the Islamic Emirate should pay attention to this.

Yasser is busy working in the capital city, he said that he works for less than six thousand afghani in a month and this money cannot solve all their economic problems.

"The people of Afghanistan are currently living below the poverty line. There is unemployment. Relief organizations and foreign organizations should help the people of Afghanistan and the people need help in this difficult situation because there is a lot of unemployment," said

Yasser, a Kabul resident.

"In these two years since the Islamic Emirate came to Afghanistan, unemployment has increased, the economy has become very bad, and the condition of the people is also bad," said Omidullah, a Kabul resident.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy said that the per capita income of the country's citizens is estimated at 37,418 afghani and the ministry has plans for the growth of the economy in the country.

"Currently, the per capita income is approximately 37,418 afghani due to the economic growth, the

increase in gross production and the opportunity for work -these are the main drivers of the regional connection. In the field of infrastructure projects, domestic and foreign investments and support for domestic production are in the plans of the ministry," said Abdul Rahman Habibi, spokesman for the Ministry.

Earlier, the International Organization for Migration said in a report on the collapse of the economy in Afghanistan that 70% of the citizens of the country are currently below the poverty line.

Herat welcomes increase in foreign tourists to province

HERAT (Agencies): Herat residents have welcomed the increase in foreign tourists visiting their province over the past few months and say that the improved security situation has led to an increase in visitors.

Recently a group of 11 tourists from Thailand visited historical sites in the province and were able to experience Afghan culture and local cuisine.

This group was just one of many as residents report they have had many foreigners from across the world visit their city and province.

But one Thai visitor expressed delight at being able to visit the country.

"Actually, I like to see people and visit historical places, especially Bamiyan Buddha. I really like the people here. Afghanistan is a very beautiful country and has good people," he said.

"I came from Bangkok, Thailand, and we have been in Afghanistan for fourteen days, and this is the first time I have come here. I am very happy to be here, and these people are really



beautiful," another Thai visitor said.

The Department of Information and Culture of Herat says that the number of foreign tourists visiting the province continues to increase.

"So far we have had 300 foreign tourists who have come here from 30 different countries, and they are mostly interested in visiting Akhtaruddin Fort, Herat Mosque, Grand Mosque, and the minarets of Herat; fortunately, the necessary

facilities are available and security measures have been taken by the relevant organizations," said Rahmatullah Mohammadi, the head of tourism of Herat's Department of Information and Culture.

Afghanistan, which is steeped in history, is fast becoming a destination of choice for foreign tourists, who are specifically interested in historical sites, many of which date back hundreds of years.

Seyyed Ruhollah

Bahunar, a guide for foreign tourists, says that: "Most of our history, the different culture of our people, local foods, they attract the attention of foreign tourists, especially Band-e-Amir in Bamiyan, which is one of the most visited areas for foreigners, and the majority of tourists visit this lake."

Officials say that they have seen a marked increase in foreign tourists visiting Herat in the past six months.

NRC chief urges uplift aid for Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Norwegian Refugee Council's Secretary General emphasized that Afghanistan requires urgent development aid alongside emergency assistance, which is crucial for addressing its challenges.

Jan Egeland emphasized on his social media platform X that the people of Afghanistan currently need the international community's help more than ever.

Egeland added that Norwegian Refugee

Council personnel, including women, successfully delivered emergency aid directly to individuals in Afghanistan. However, he did not provide additional specifics regarding these operations.

Egeland also mentioned that senior officials from aid organizations convened a meeting on Wednesday to discuss Afghanistan's increasingly alarming humanitarian situation.

It has been reported that the World Food Programme

declared yesterday that one billion dollars are needed to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan.

According to the report, the World Food Programme can provide food assistance to one out of every five needy citizens in Afghanistan due to budget constraints.

This comes as humanitarian and relief organizations in Afghanistan have consistently warned about the rising poverty and hunger in the country.

1m Afghanis donated for school building



LOGAR (Agencies): Homayun Bahadur, a local resident, is donating one million Afghanis to construct a school in the Haroun Khel area of Pul-e-Alam, located in Logar province.

This initiative is expected to provide hundreds of male and female students with a suitable educational

environment. Previously, these students had to study outdoors or under tents due to a lack of classroom facilities. The Education Director of Logar province expressed appreciation for Bahadur's generosity.

The new school building will comprise six classrooms and an administra-

tive room. Construction is expected to be completed within two months, after which it will be ready for use by the students.

This development has been met with joy by the students, who are looking forward to studying in a conducive educational environment for the first time.

WFP deputy director in Brussels urgently seeks funding for Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): UN World Food Program (WFP) Deputy Executive Director Carl Skau will urgently appeal for funding during a Brussels meeting on Thursday focused on Afghanistan. The aim is to prevent a potential winter catastrophe in the country.

Before the EU Commission-hosted meeting, Skau said, "I'm in Brussels for a senior official meeting on Afghanistan, along with partners and donors, generously hosted by the European Commission."

The meeting's purpose is to

devise a plan and strategy to support the Afghan population during the upcoming winter, as outlined by Skau. Due to financial constraints in recent months, WFP has been compelled to reduce its vital aid efforts in Afghanistan.

"The operating environment is challenging, but we can deliver in a principled and effective way."

"So my message to donors today is that we need more assistance and money to assist Afghanistan through the winter."

"But we also need to work in a

new way. We need to work with Nexus. He said that we need to have sustainable solutions and bring in the development actors working with communities," he said. The World Food Programme (WFP) declared that \$1 billion is needed to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan.

According to the World Food Programme, 10 million Afghans have been denied humanitarian aid this year. Additionally, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

has cautioned in its latest report about reducing and ceasing essential health services in Afghanistan due to budget limitations.

The World Food Programme needs \$1 billion to aid 21 million people, while more than 20 million Afghans face the risk of starvation.

Humanitarian groups warn of funding cuts and a deepening crisis in Afghanistan as poverty and hunger worsen. Only \$1 billion of the needed \$3.23 billion for humanitarian aid has been received, according to Khaama Press.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Annual Ambassadors' Dinner, organized by Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Solid measures for prevention of illegal activities directed

KP Apex Committee for coordinated efforts to deal with the issue of illegal spectrums

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee was held here on Thursday with the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair.

Caretaker provincial minister for finance, Ahmed Rasool Bangash, Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and other civil and military high ups attended the meeting. Important matters related to the implementation of National Action Plan under the umbrella of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Security Architecture (KPISA) came under discussion with special focus on illegal spectrum, says a handout.

It was decided in the meeting to take concrete measures for the effective prevention of illegal activities that are helpful in promoting terrorism including illegal mobile SIMs, explosives, extortion, Hundi-hawala, illegal arms, smuggling, fake documents, drugs trafficking etc. The forum directed that relevant federal and provincial entities and intelligence agencies would make joint and coordinated efforts to effectively deal with the issue of illegal spectrums.

It was also decided in the meeting to take stern actions against those civil servants found involved in facilitating such illegal activities. The forum directed the concerned quarters to take steps for collecting data of

Afghan refugees illegally living in the province besides mapping their properties/businesses. Similarly, the meeting discussed in detail matters related to the registration of Madaris and non custom paid vehicles and made important decisions to this effect.

The forum termed the use of social media for defaming the state institutions as an intolerable act deciding that strict action would be taken against those involved in such activities. Reiterating the commitment to effectively deal with the elements involved in extortion, the forum decided to set up a special unit under the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) for the purpose.

Participants of the forum were briefed about the progress so far made by Provincial Security Secretariat with regard to the implementation of the National Action Plan. The forum expressed its satisfaction over the progress and underlined the need to have integrated efforts by the relevant federal and provincial agencies for further improvement.

The forum also urged upon the need of effective and close coordination between the Provincial Apex Committee and the district level committees for effective implementation of the decision taken by the Apex committee. The forum appreciated the actions being taken against the elements involved in Hundi Hawala and urged upon the need to make the relevant laws more stringent, and making banking transactions more

easier so that people would prefer banking transactions instead of illegal means of Hundi hawala.

Issues related to the federal agencies to curb the menace of illegal spectrums would be taken up with the caretaker Prime Minister, and the PM would be requested for a special meeting to this effect, the forum decided. It was further decided to establish joint check posts and improve the boarder management system in order to effectively control smuggling of various items.

The forum also decided to have a vigilant eye on the supply of narcotics in educational institutions further deciding that crack down would be carried out against the big fishes involved in drugs manufacturing and supply. Addressing the participants, the chief minister directed the concerned quarters for putting in place an effective mechanism of follow-up in order to ensure implementation of the decisions taken in the meetings of the Apex Committee.

He said that defaming state institutions on social media platforms was an intolerable act, and directed that strict actions should be taken against the elements involved in such anti-state activities. Expressing his concerns on the increasing trend of using drugs in the province specially in youth, the chief minister stressed the need of serious approach to effectively deal with the menace. He also directed the Counter Terrorism Department to have special attention to actions against extortionists in the province.

Peace a must for country's development: President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday while calling the international responsibility for peace a foundation for trade, urged the world to ensure equitable development across the world to address the issue of brain drain from developing countries.

Addressing the Annual LCCI Ambassadors' Dinner 2023, the President exemplified Europe saying that by enhancing mutual trade, the world had moved towards peace but it required enhanced efforts to create an enabling atmosphere all around. He said Pakistan, being the fifth largest country in the world did not need any charity but the trade with the international world.

He said Pakistan desired the developed world to share its expertise in information technology with Pakistan as pursuing the ideals of "one humanity", they should spend their resources for the betterment of the people outside their borders too.

President Alvi said the brain drain made the nations lose competent individuals despite having spent huge resources on their education. The provision of equitable development would help such individuals to contribute to their own countries. Recounting Europe's journey to get rid of war, the president said women and children had always been the major casualties of conflicts, and the establishment of peace required the elimination of exploitation.

Highlighting the double standards, the president said the signing of peace conventions and their violations could not go on simultaneously. He said the world must focus on enhancing cooperation for the betterment of the next generations as all the world religions preached human service. President Alvi said that as artificial intelligence was impacting human decision-making, it required timely efforts to tackle the challenge before it got out of

control. He urged the diplomats to persuade their respective business communities to take advantage of Pakistan's renewed commitment to attract investment with a particular focus on a few sectors through a one-window facility.

Calling for attention to human development, the president advised the business community to enhance employment opportunities for women and persons with disabilities. He said the information technology had eased bank account opening and financial transactions for women, it was the business community's responsibility to create a conducive atmosphere for women's physical movement.

Similarly, he also asked the corporate sector to focus on the welfare of their workers as well as environmental protection to leave behind a better world for future generations. He said Pakistan, being rich with youth bulge could do wonders by investing in education and health sectors as the country's tremendous success during the COVID-19 pandemic manifested its commitment to achieve the goals.

Earlier, President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar said the LCCI had been striving to strengthen trade relations with the world and lauded the diplomatic community's continuous cooperation. He said Pakistan was emerging as a safe place for investment and through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) platform, the country had decided to mainly focus on agriculture, information technology, mining, and defense sectors.

The LCCI president urged the diplomats to spread the message to their respective business communities to invest in Pakistan and extend their support in building partnerships. He told the gathering that Pakistan's private sector was also extending its every possible support to provincial and federal governments to create ease of doing business and remove hurdles in investment.

Sindh to launch military operation against dacoits

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Caretaker Sindh Government has decided to launch massive operation against dacoits in Sindh's Katcha area with the help of Pakistan Army, Police and the Rangers to eliminate menace of kidnapping of the innocent people.

The decision was made in a cabinet meeting held here at Chief Minister House on Thursday with Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar in the chair. The cabinet also accorded approval for extension of Rangers stay for another 6 months in Sindh from September 14, 2023 to February 2024.

The Inspector General Police Sindh Riffat Mukhtar briefed the Cabinet about overall law and order situation in the province with special reference to kidnapping for ransom cases and informed that during current year 2023, as many as 218 people had been kidnapped so far of them 207 have so far been recovered. There are 11 people still under the

captivity of the kidnappers, the IG told the meeting and said of these 11 people seven were from Larkana, 3 from Shaheed Benazirabad and one from Sukkur districts.

The IG told the cabinet that Naveed Lashari were kidnapped from Jacobabad, Sagar Kumar from Garhi Yaseen, Qadeer, Zaheer, Gulbahar from Jashmore and Shahid and Jabbar from Sukkur, Soomar from Qasimabad Hyderabad and Farhan and Shahid were made hostage by dacoits from Nausheero Feroze. The Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar asked the IG Police and other law enforcement agencies for early release of all remaining hostages from their captors.

Justice Baqar also asked the IGP to keep in touch with the family members of the hostages and make them aware about the efforts being made for their release. The Caretaker CM also directed concerned authorities for immediate suspension of internet services in the Katcha area of

the province.

There are 238 villages in Sindh's Katcha area where 8 Police stations and 20 Police Checkposts were established by the Sindh Police to provide security to the people, the cabinet was told. The Sindh Chief Minister also asked for the posting of honest and reputable police officers in the Katcha area and those who could not perform well should be removed from the posting. The CM also sought detailed reports regarding the status of 11 hostages and ordered them to start construction work on Ghotki - Kandhkot bridge over the Indus River so that the law and order situation could be improved.

The cabinet also decided to launch a Police operation against dacoits and drug mafia in Katcha and other areas of the province with the help of the Pakistan Army, Rangers and Anti Narcotics Force as it was the duty of the government in office to provide a peaceful and secure environment to the people of the province.

PPP issues show cause notice to Latif Khosa

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has issued a show cause notice to Sardar Latif Khosa, its Central Executive Committee (CEC) member and senior lawyer on Thursday. Latif Khosa and Aitzaz Ahsan, have been at odds with the party leadership over their support to former prime minister Imran Khan in his legal troubles.

Earlier, both senior lawyers were invited to attend the CEC meeting in Lahore on September 14 (today). "Latif Khosa has been a member of the People's Party's CEC but without informing the party assisting the head of another party in legal cases, who has been convicted under corruption charges," according to the show cause notice.

"You have criticized the state over cipher in lawyers' convention." "Deliver your reply of this show cause notice within 7 days, in case of no-reply, action will be taken as per the rules and your basic membership of the party can be terminated," Khosa has been warned. The PPP's secretary general Nayyar Bukhari has issued the show cause notice to Latif Khosa.

Latif Khosa and Aitzaz Ahsan were also invited to the previous CEC meeting in Karachi as well. While Ahsan attended that sitting, Khosa chose to abstain from it. Sources said that Khosa was also served a show cause notice earlier for giving a statement in favour of the PTI chairman. Former president Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will head the PPP central executive committee meeting at 3:00 PM in Bilawal House in Lahore today. Elections and the party's position in central Punjab will be part of the agenda of the Lahore meeting.

Mansha Bomb held

LAHORE (INP): Mansha Bomb was arrested on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on land-grabbing allegation on Thursday. Lahore police retrieved land worth billions of rupees during a joint operation with the Lahore Development Authority (LDA).

The chief minister listened to the public complaints during a visit to the LDA One Window Cell. He ordered Lahore Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamyana and LDA authorities to take action against the land mafia and retrieve properties of the people.

Kidnapping of youth by policemen ATC issues arrest warrant of 3 SHOs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Anti-terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Jahanzeb Shinwari ordered arrested Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Tariq and Station House Officer (SHO) Bilal Hussain due to failure in producing personal sureties in kidnapping of a youth of 17th year age, on Thursday.

During hearing ASI Tariq and SHO Bilal Hussain appeared before court while ACT Judge Jahanzeb Shinwari ordered to sent them to jail for didn't appearing personal sureties. However, police has arrested ASI Tariq from the court's premises while SHO Bilal Hussain runaway while ATC ordered registration of First Information Report against Bilal Hussain at East Cant police station.

Special ATC Judge also

issued nonbailable arrest warrants of other SHOs named Ijaz Nabi and Abdul Ali while ordered departmental actions against SHO CTD Peshawar. The court ordered to forward copy of order sheet to police high-ups. It is worthy to mention that SHOs including CTD Peshawar, Bilal Hussain, Ijaz Nabi and Abdul Nabi along with ASI Tariq were involved in kidnapping of 17-year youth from Pakha Ghulam area of provincial metropolis.

Moreover, the mother of abducted youth has approached ATC for probe into the matter while the five policemen didn't appearing before court and yesterday (on Thursday) SHO Bilal Hussain runaway from the premises. PHC releases alleged human trafficker: Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim of Peshawar High Court has

ordered release of Afghan citizen named Muhammad Yasin allegedly involved in human trafficking.

According to prosecution, Muhammad Yasin has received Rs2 lac and 30 thousand from Ajmal for sending his son to Europe via Iran-Turkiye but he return back to Pakistan. Federal Investigation Agency has initiated inquiry on the complaint of Ajmal and registered case of human trafficking while Muhammad Yasin was taken into the custody.

The counsel Asim Shamshad Advocate argued that the case is baseless and prosecution has no evidence against the petitioner. He added that lower court has turndown bail plea and the petitioner approached PHC for relief. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim ordered release of Afghan citizen on bail after conclusion of arguments.

Court accepts Yasmin, Cheema's request

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Thursday ordered jail authorities to get the PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid and Umar Sarfraz Cheema treated at hospital for their health issues.

Anti-Terrorism Court Administrator Judge Abbar Gul Khan approved request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former minister Dr Yasmin Rashid for her treatment. Rashid had sought permission to get her examined for cancer at the Services Hospital, on which the court ordered jail authorities to conduct her cancer tests at the Services Hospital. In this regard, the court asked that the prison authorities to take Rashid to the hospital for a cancer test. It should be noted that Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Rashid is in jail in the May 9 arson and siege cases. Separately, the anti-terrorism court of Ab har Gul Khan ordered PTI leader and former Punjab Governor Umar Sarfraz Cheema to be transferred to the hospital for treatment.

There has been significant progress in the petition for the treatment of PTI leader and former governor Cheema. Lawyers had filed an application on behalf of Cheema, in which it was said that PTI leader was presented in court in a wheelchair.

They said their client was suffering from other ailments including back pain and the court permission was required for his treatment outside the jail. Administrator Judge Gul, accepting petition filed by Cheema for treatment, ordered the jail authorities to immediately conduct a check-up of former governor at the hospital. It should be noted that former governor Cheema is in jail in May 9 arson cases.

Ali Zaidi's counsel submit reply

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former federal minister Ali Zaidi's counsel appeared before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in NCA £190 million scandal. The NAB had summoned four former federal ministers in National Crime Agency (NCA) £190 million scandal (Al-Qadir Trust Case).

The anti-graft watchdog had summoned former federal ministers Ali Zaidi, Faisal Vawda, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Farrogh Naseem in NCA case on Thursday and Friday. They were advised to appear before a joint investigation team along with concerned record. Ali Zaidi's counsel Abdul Qadeer advocate visited the NAB office and submitted his client's written statement.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui could not appear before NAB owing to political engagements in Karachi. Faisal Vawda and Farrogh Naseem could not appear in NAB office in their personal capacity. All four former federal ministers were members of former PM Imran Khan's cabinet which had okayed the decision for settlement of £190m deal. The NAB had launched an investigation against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi and others for the alleged gain of hundreds of canals of land in the name of Al Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer.

Sara's case: Father among 3 arrested by UK police

LONDON (Agencies): A big development in the murder case of little Sara Sharif as the UK police arrested three wanted suspects on their arrival at London's Gatwick Airport. Family sources said that the Surrey Police were interrogating them in connection with the murder case.

They disclosed that those taken into custody were Sara's father Urfan Sharif, her uncle Faisal Malik Sharif and stepmother Beinash Batool. Yesterday all three of them had fled to Sialkot after during the police. From there they boarded a flight for Dubai and then to London.

UK police on Wednesday arrested the three British-Pakistani relatives of the 10-year-old Sara on suspicion of her murder, moments after the trio landed back in Britain following a month on the run in Pakistan. Sara Sharif's body was discovered at the family's home near Woking, southeast England, on August 10. A

post-mortem examination revealed she had sustained "multiple and extensive injuries" over a sustained period.

UK Police had said Urfan Sharif, 41, his partner Beinash Batool, 29, and his brother Faisal Malik, 28, fled to Pakistan to take refuge with relatives before Sara's body was found, sparking an international manhunt. "This evening... three people were arrested in connection with this investigation at Gatwick Airport," Surrey Police detective superintendent Mark Chapman said in a televised statement. "Two men, aged 41 years and 28 years, and a woman aged 29 years were arrested on suspicion of murder after disembarking a flight from Dubai," he added, without naming the trio in line with UK police practice.

The suspects flew from Pakistan to Britain via the gulf hub. "They are currently in custody and will be interviewed in due course." A Pakistan police spokesman had earlier said

that Sharif, Batool and Malik had voluntarily returned to Britain with the prior knowledge of authorities. "I confirm that they have not been arrested but they left voluntarily," Raja Haq Nawaz, a lawyer for Urfan Sharif's father, also told foreign media. Earlier this month, Sharif and Batool appeared in a video distributed to media, in which Batool said they were "willing to cooperate with UK authorities and fight our case in court".

"All of our family members have gone into hiding as everyone is scared for their safety," she said, alleging malpractice by the Pakistan police hunting them. In the two-and-a-half-minute low-quality video there was little mention of Sara's death, which Batool called "an incident". Surrey Police have said the fugitive trio were thought to have flown to Islamabad on August 9, the day before Sara was discovered at the family's home in the village of Horsell, just outside Woking.

Rival govts cooperate to aid Libya's flood victims

TRIPOLI (Agencies): It has now been more than three days since Libya's eastern port city of Derna was practically flattened as Storm Daniel unleashed its wrath on a city that was mostly fast asleep. Usama al-Husadi, a 52-year-old driver, has been searching for his wife and five children since the storm struck on Sunday night, bursting dams above the city, the resulting floods engulfing everything in their path.

"I walked around, searching for them ... I went to all the hospitals and schools but no luck," al-Husadi said sobbing, dialling his wife's number over and over, only to get no reply. "We lost at least 50 members from my father's family, between missing and dead," he said. Like al-Husadi, many people have lost dozens of relatives to the disaster.

More than 6,000 people are dead and that number is likely to double or even quadruple, Islamic Relief

warned. The Libyan Red Crescent said on Thursday morning that a further 10,000 people are missing, a tally that could be higher. "This gives you an indication of the limited infrastructure in Libya. The storm hit Greece as well as Libya. But in Greece, there were six deaths and in Libya 6,000," Salah Aboulgasem, deputy director of partner development at Islamic Relief, told Al Jazeera.

Before arriving in Libya, Storm Daniel had struck Greece, killing 15 people and causing widespread destruction. Domestic efforts to aid survivors gathered momentum on Thursday despite political fractions. A ministerial delegation left Tripoli late on Wednesday to assess the damage in Derna and other nearby cities hit by the disaster, according to Al Jazeera's Malik Traina, reporting from Tripoli.

"It seems like the authorities are able to cooperate,"

said Traina. The overall situation in Libya is complicated by deep political fractures in the country of seven million people that has lacked a strong central government and has been embroiled in conflict on and off since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. An internationally recognised Government of National Unity (GNU) is based in Tripoli in the west, while a parallel administration operates in the east, including Derna.

While the floods are a catastrophe, "it could perhaps be something that unites the rival politicians", said Traina. A global effort to assist Libya's countless victims also gathered pace on Thursday. On Wednesday evening, a Turkish ship carrying equipment to set up two field hospitals in Libya with 148 medical staff left the city of Izmir, according to Turkey's Health Minister Fahrettin Koca.