



CM announces free public transport for students

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab CM Mohsin Naqvi Saturday said that the students are being burdened due to the increasing oil prices and announced free transport for them on orange-line, metro train and metro busses.

Mohsin Naqvi visited the Lahore Ring Road Southern loop three project being constructed from Multan road till Adda plot. He said that this is a major project which has been launched after a long delay of 12 years and it is expected to be completed by December 31.

Reviewing the earthwork of the project from grand mosque Bahria town to Adda plot, he directed the authorities to utilize the additional resources and necessary machineries and complete the construction process.

He said the traffic coming from Multan comes into Lahore and this project will reduce the traffic on Multan road and Thokar Niaz Beg by giving them the route from outside the city and ultimately regulating the traffic in Lahore.

Talking about the public transports, Mohsin Naqvi said that the students are very burdened by the

increasing oil prices. Everyone is preferring public transports over their own, hence, plans are underway with the private sector to increase the number of vehicles.

The metro and orange-line ticket prices have not been raised despite the hike in oil prices. Air conditioners of various metro busses have been fixed and the situation at metro stations is better now.

CM approves upgradation of Lahore Zoo, Safari Park: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has accorded approval for upgradation of Lahore Zoo and Safari Park in order to provide recreational facilities of international standard to citizens, under which new animals and birds would be brought to these two recreational places.

He was presiding over a meeting at CM's Office on Saturday. The meeting decided that other animals and birds including panda, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, African pigeon, black jaguar, puma and chiltan markhor [screw-horned goat] would be added to the Lahore Zoo and Safari Park.

New species of python and snakes would also be brought to the Lahore Zoo. An elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, zebra, ostrich and various kinds of deer would be shifted to the Safari Park. Around 142 kinds of aquatic animals would be placed at the aquarium of Lahore Zoo and Safari Park and cages of an international standard would also be built for animals.

African zone, desert and salt range would be made in the Safari Park. Night Safari would also be launched. Citizens could also stay in the specially built huts of Safari Park.

CM Mohsin Naqvi, while issuing directions for introducing e-ticketing system in Lahore Zoo and Safari Park, said these two recreational places would be upgraded to international standards. Other facilities in the Lahore Zoo and Safari Park would also be increased.

Chief Secretary, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Chairman Planning and Development (P&D), secretaries forest, finance, communication and works, P&D, Director General Wildlife and other officials attended the meeting.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed talking to media persons after meeting with the Mufti Muneeb ur Rehman and Ulama at Jamia-e-Naimia.

MQM delegation calls on interim Caretaker CM

KARACHI (APP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan's (MQM-P) delegation called on Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar here at CM House on Saturday.

The MQM delegation, headed by its convenor, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and consisting of central leaders Dr. Farooq Sattar and Syed Mustafa Kamal, discussed the overall situation, including the holding of general elections.

The Caretaker Chief Minister, Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar, while

talking to MQM leaders, said he would never allow injustice in the urban areas of the province in terms of development, employment, and importance.

"Karachi is my city, and other urban areas of the province such as Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, and Larkana would be looked after properly", he assured the MQM delegation.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool told Justice (ret'd.) Maqbool Baqar that they had expressed satisfaction and support when his name was recommended for caretaker chief minister.

The CM thanked them and said he would serve everyone regardless of any consideration.

The delegation raised the issue of urban areas, for which he assured them of his personal attention to resolve the issue. The CM added that the main job of his government was to support the Election Commission of Pakistan in holding free, fair, and transparent elections.

The MQM delegation took up the issue of increasing street crime in the city. The CM said that he has directed the city

police to control street crime by enhancing patrolling and vigilance and starting operations against street criminals and the drug mafia.

Justice Baqar said that a major reshuffle has been made in the administration, including the police. 'I am sure the new administration will make a difference,' he added.

The CM said that he would welcome suggestions from all political parties for improving governance and that their support was essential for holding free and fair elections.

Aneeq pledges to take up issue with Saudi govt

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has vowed to take up the issues of the private Hajj organizers with the Saudi government.

While addressing the Sindh Hajj Workshop organized by the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan at a local hotel here, he said that the Saudi Hajj Minister, during his recent visit to Pakistan, had verbally said that there was an issue managing Pakistani Hajj Operators and their number would be decreased

from 901 to 200 or 250. He said that the Saudi Minister could have raised the reduction issue due to internal matters.

He said that they had not received any official letter from the Saudi government regarding the reduction of the private hajj operators so far and hoped that the matter would be resolved before

Aneeq said, 'I am going to Saudi Arabia tomorrow and will take this issue with the Hajj Minister.' The Minister said that he wanted to provide the best facilities to the Pilgrims during the Hajj of 2024

and would make all-out efforts for them.

Earlier, the Central Chairman of the Private Hajj Operators of Pakistan, Jamal Khan Tarakai, raised the issue of the reduction of private hajj operators with the Interim Minister and urged him to take it up with the Saudi Hajj Minister during his visit and get it resolved.

The Interim Minister, in the morning, visited Jamia e Rashid. Later, he paid a visit to Jamia e Naemibia and met Mufti Munibur Rehman. Then, I also visited Cardinal St. Patrick Church.

Punjab witnesses no death due to dengue

LAHORE (INP): Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan Khan has said that the province has not witnessed a single death due to dengue during the current year.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he said during the last 24 hours, dengue was confirmed in 104 new patients across the province and total confirmed cases have risen to 2557.

Ali Jan Khan said that at present, a total of 113 dengue patients are under treatment in hospitals across Punjab, whose condition was satisfactory.

The secretary health urged the citizens to keep their environment clean and dry to prevent dengue.

500,000 fine on factories for causing smog

LAHORE (APP): The district administration Lahore imposed a total of Rs 500,000 fine on various factories over release of dangerous chemical substances causing environmental pollution and posing threat to living beings.

In an operation, conducted in different areas of the city, Alysas Steel Rolling Mill, Tahir Paper Mill and a brick-kiln were sealed for causing smog and environmental pollution.

A spokesperson for the department told the media on Saturday that the administration was taking action against the environment laws violators. He said Deputy Commissioner Lahore Rafia Haider took notice of public complaints, constituted teams and directed them to visit industrial areas and identify factories causing environmental pollution.

He said that strict action was also initiated against those involved in crops and trash burning to restrict increasing threat of smog. An amount of 15,000 per acre fine would be collected from those who burn crop or trash, he warned. He urged factory-owners to ensure proper disposal of waste of their units; otherwise, they would face stern action as per laws.

Hike in POL prices to drag masses on thorns

LAHORE (INP): Centre Secretary Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that recent hike in petroleum prices is tantamount to dragging masses on thorns.

In a statement issued on Saturday, she said that the insensible Pakistani nation was bombarded with petrol bomb.

She said hike in POL prices was not acceptable at all and caretaker government should provide relief to masses despite all difficulties.

Firdous Ashiq Awan said that the hearts of poverty-stricken masses could be won only through people friendly decisions.

Punjab reshuffles five officers

LAHORE (INP): The interim Punjab government in administrative reshuffle on Saturday transferred and posted five officers.

According to details, Deputy Secretary (Admn) Forest, Wildlife and Fisheries, Qaiser Abbas has been directed to report S&GAD Department.

Muhammad Hussain Rana was deployed Deputy Secretary (Admn) Forest, Wildlife and Fisheries.

Deputy Secretary (Admn) Department of Specialize Healthcare and Medical Education, Muhammad Abu Baqar was transferred as Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Jhang.

The services of Muhammad Sohaib Butt were handed over to Chief Minister Office.

Director Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Muhammad Shahab Aslam was deployed as Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Faisalabad.

Position of river inflows, outflows report issued

ISLAMABAD (INP): The position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels and the barrages issued.

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 142500 cusecs and Outflows 120000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 22300 cusecs and Outflows 22300 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 112500 cusecs and Outflow 112500, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 16300 cusecs and Outflows 30000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 74300 cusecs and Outflows 43600 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 138300 cusecs and Outflows 130300 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 149500 cusecs and Outflows 145000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 141600 cusecs and Outflows 124000 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 127800 cusecs and Outflows 98500 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 95000 cusecs and Outflows 44200 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 47800 cusecs and Outflows 6600 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 25200 cusecs and Outflow 9600 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 18100 cusecs and Outflows 800 cusecs.

Reservoirs (Level and Storage), Tarbela: Minimum operating level 1402 feet, present level 1546.18 feet, maximum conservation level 1550 feet, live storage today 5.589 Million acre feet (MAF). Mangla: Minimum operating level 1050 feet, present level 1235.70 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 6.860 MAF. Chashma: Minimum operating level 638.15 feet, present level 644.10 feet, maximum conservation level 649 feet, live storage today 0.102 MAF.

The inflows and outflows of River Indus at Tarbela, Jinnah and Chashma, River Kabul at Nowshera and River Jhelum at Mangla have been reflected as mean flows of 24 hours, whereas the other flows have been gauged at 6.00 a.m.

Ex-minister unveils national unity blueprint

LAHORE (NNI): Former Information Minister Senator Muhammad Ali Durrani has presented a national consensus formula with a focus on three key elements: Pakistan, Democracy, and the Armed Forces, with an aim of creating the much needed conducive environment for the elections.

The proposal envisages a broad-based consensus through trust building measures and yoking the stakeholders over provision of a conducive environment for the elections.

The target of the plan is to make sure that the general elections take place ahead of the next Senate elections so that the parliament is not left incomplete.

Durrani said in a statement that political stability was the first precondition for redressal of multi-faceted crises facing the country. "Political stability is only possible if politics and political parties remain within the confines of the constitution, peoples' issues take primacy and political agenda does not target Pakistan, democracy

and the military," he said.

He emphasized that achieving national consensus requires avoiding the politicization of national integrity, the economy, and terrorism in Pakistan.

Pakistan came into existence as a result of democratic process and the country should be strengthened by ensuring continuity of democratic process and giving rights to the people, he said.

"It is because of the strong defence machinery that no one can dare cast an evil eye on the country despite all odds and a weak economy," he said. He said that we should not weaken our own army and instead make it the basis of national strength and integrity.

He said that it is need of hour that all stakeholders discuss these three points for national consensus.

"I'm confident that national consensus on these points will provide a favorable environment for all political parties. It will also help achieve the goals of economic recovery to end miseries of the masses," he said.

Durrani said that

advancing the political process necessitates entrusting legal and judicial matters to the courts and the legal system, while keeping politics within the domain of political activities. Instead of targeting institutions, politics should be people oriented and relevant political agendas.

Those who wanted clashes among the institutions aim to impede Pakistan's economic recovery through political instability and this scenario is detrimental to the interest of the country, democracy and the army, he said.

"The solution lies in institutions not transgressing from their constitutional role and political parties not going beyond politics," he said. He said that this is the first confidence building (CBM) step towards national consensus that can be the starting point for creating a conducive electoral atmosphere.

Durrani said that he is hopeful of further progress on these points in the coming days and people with their patriotic, constitutional and democratic minds will support these points.



Nawaz Sharif faced political victimization with bravery

PESHAWAR (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League (N) Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer, Maryam Nawaz Sharif here Saturday said that former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had faced political victimization with bravery and steadfastness, and would address all challenges after coming into power.

She was addressing party workers and leaders here. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan Muslim League (N) leaders vowed to give historic welcome to PMLN Quaid, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif upon his arrival to his home country on October 21.

The leaders of PMLN including senior vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif, PMLN KP leader Engr Amir Muqam, general Secretary Murtaza Javed

Abbassi besides others spoke on the occasion.

Maryam Nawaz said the return of the three times elected Prime Minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to his country would help address the issues of terrorism, shabby economic, high inflation and price hike.

She said people of Pakistan including KP were eagerly awaiting to give historic welcome to their beloved leader.

Maryam said Nawaz Sharif was punished for saving people from price hike and load shedding.

She said the country's was plunged into price hike after removal of Nawaz Sharif Govt through a conspiracy, and the people of Pakistan were deprived of development.

Maryam said that Nawaz Sharif had started and completed record development

projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as evident of Hazara Motorway, Nawaz Sharif Kidney Hosital Swat and others. She said that only Nawaz Sharif can take the country's out of existing grave challenges.

She said Nawaz Sharif had strengthened the federation and economy besides included people in development process.

Maryam said Nawaz Sharif was coming to his country for betterment of people and development of Pakistan.

She said Pakistan and it's people needs the services of Nawaz Sharif today.

Engr Amir Muqam said that conspiracy against Nawaz Sharif was in fact a conspiracy against the people of Pakistan.

After the return of Nawaz Sharif, he said a new era of economic

progress and prosperity would start and price hike would be considerably reduced in the country.

Engr Amir Muqam said people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa knew about the 10 years loot and plunders of the elements that deceived masses on the name of change.

Engr Amir Muqam that the elements that had ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif was responsible of the unprecedented price hike and high prices of petroleum products today.

Murtaza Javed Abbassi said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would give historic welcome to their beloved leader on October 21. He said people and workers of PMLN of Khyber Pakhtunkhws love Nawaz Sharif and their participation would be historic.



PESHAWAR: Provincial General Secretary Pakistan Hindko One Tehreek Muhammad Waqar Lodhi with others presenting a shield to Haji Muhammad Ameen Babar.

PFUJ demands arrest of culprits F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) Workers strongly condemned attack on the house of Azam Chaudhary, president of Lahore Press Club.

Some unknown assailants tried to enter his house forcibly and on resistance tortured his young son, a University student.

In a statement of Shamim Shahid, president, Raja Riaz Secretary General, members of the FEC and office bearers of the affiliated units said that the attack on Chaudhary's house and torture on his innocent son in the worst act of the goons and attempt to silent a bold voice continuously narrating the odds of journalist fraternity.

The president Azam is a upright person and true leader of the community and such coward acts cannot pressurise him. The PFUJ-Workers stands with his dedicated colleague and resist every step to threaten him, the statement reads. The PFUJ-Workers has demanded a fair investigation of the incident and arrest of the culprits.

Salim expresses grief over loss in Libya

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Federal Minister and Senator, Salim Saifullah Khan has expressed his profound sorrow over loss of lives due to floods in Libya and the earthquake in Morocco.

In a statement issued here Saturday, he expressed his deepest sympathy with the people and the government of Libya and Morocco. He also offered his sincere prayers for the swift recovery of all those who were injured in the earthquake in Morocco.

He said that people of Pakistan are with their Moroccan and Libyan brothers and sisters during these challenging times.

He also urged Pakistan government to extend possible assistance to governments and people of Morocco and Libya in this time of distress.

Major raids of FIA, one arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): Major raids were conducted by the Composite Circle Abbottabad, wherein one person was arrested, who is allegedly involved in illegal money exchange and hundi business.

The raid was conducted under the supervision of Deputy Director Composite Circle Abbottabad, Sardarullah Babar.

In the operation, the suspect involved in the illegal exchange of hundi and currency was arrested.

The accused was running a money changer business without a license.

The alleged accused Wasiullah was arrested from Batagram, and during the raid, Rs. 13,80,000 (Pakistani currency) and 2517 Saudi Riyals were recovered from him.

The accused could not satisfy the authorities regarding the recovered currency. Receipts related to mobile phones and hundi references were also recovered from the accused.

KPBC issues Rs11m to needy lawyers

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) issued cheques of Rs11 million for disable, aged and patient practitioners facing different illnesses including Rs7.5 million for families of deceased lawyers, on Saturday.

The cheques issued during general body meeting co-chaired by vice chairman KPBC Zar Badshah and chairman Executive Committee Syed Mubashir Shah while requested Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad

Ibrahim Khan to appoint judges for two years on each station while demanded to transfer judges after completion of two years at one station.

The immediate appointment of Additional Session Judges on merit as well as argued Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to certain judicial power of administrative officers in the province, KPBC demanded.

KPBC also demanded withdrawal of subsidies from elite class as well as sacking of luxury vehicles and to end non-developmental expenditures. The

spike in inflation, electricity bills and terrorism had compelled civil society as well as legal fraternity for protests in favor of their demands, lawyers argued.

KPBC will call a session to address the issues of inflation and terrorism in which presidents of all bar associations would be invited.

KPBC argued provincial government and Secretary Pakhtunkhwa to take disciplinary as well as to hold against DC Shangla for corruption charges while demanded his transfer from the district.

KMU conducts centralized test for admissions

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Medical University Centralized Admission Test 2023 (KMU-CAT 2023) for admissions in Pharm-D, DPT, BS Nursing, and allied health sciences was held in 14 centers of the province.

In the said test a total of 18218 candidates participated.

The test results will be announced within 72 hours which can be viewed on KMU official website (<http://cat.kmu.edu.pk>).

In the said test 6794 students appeared in two centers of Peshawar including Islamia Collegiate School and Govt Higher Secondary School No1 Peshawar city, 939 in Abbottabad and Haripur, 523 in Malakand

Chakdara, 3190 in Swat Kabal ground, 1777 in Mardan, 591 in Kohat, 527 in Dera Ismail Khan, 318 in Parachinar Kurram 1246 in Timergara Dir Lower, in Bannu 902, Swabi 736 and in Chitral 675 candidates appeared in the said test.

Meanwhile, the Vice Chancellor, KMU, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that conducting KMU-CAT for admissions in various bachelor programs was a big challenge for all of us.

We were thankful to all the concerned institutions and authorities for their cooperation and support in conducting the test in a peaceful and transparent manner, he said.

He said that the participation of more than 18000

candidates in this test is not only a sign of confidence in KMU but it is also expected to further improve the merit and quality of allied health sciences.

He said that besides doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, nurses and various disciplines of allied health sciences are of fundamental importance in the health care delivery system.

Prof. Zia remarked that conducting centralized admission tests for admissions in BS programs will provide an opportunity for talented students to come forward in these fields on the one hand and on the other hand, it will also improve the overall quality of the health care system in the province.

SCCI rejects historic increase in fuel prices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) rejected the historic increase in fuel prices and called it detrimental for the country's economy, businesses and industries.

According to a statement here on Saturday, Ijaz Khan Afridi, acting president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) said the unprecedented hike in prices of petroleum products will bring a new storm of inflation that would adversely affect the business community and poor masses.

Urging the interim government to withdraw the gigantic hike in fuel prices in the best interest of the national economy, businesses and industries, he warned that the chamber along with traders will be forced to launch an agitation movement against it.

Criticizing the government's anti-business policies, Ijaz Afridi said business community had pinned high hopes from caretakers

that they will take measures for putting the ailing economy on right track but instead doing that they have endorsed the steps of previous coalition government and multiple problems of the traders' community, which is strongly condemnable.

"How can the national economy improve when the business community will face an uncertain situation and no remedial or corrective measures were taken place by caretakers", the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) chief questioned.

He asked the interim government to thoroughly review its policies and initiate consultation with chambers and relevant stakeholders to revive the crippling national economy.

Expressing fear that recent whopping increase in fuel prices would be caused further plunging the businesses and industries, because the prices of electricity, gas and petroleum items are frequently increasing, which were used as raw material in



industries, the price hike will cause increase cost of industrial production and businesses, resultantly the price-hike would also further increase, Afridi remarked.

SCCI acting chief observed the inflation-hit business community and people earlier protested against inflation bills, now their miseries will further increase after the massive increase in fuel prices.

Ijaz Afridi urged civil and military leadership to play their proactive role in putting the national economy on the right track.

Otherwise, he expressed fear that the situation will be further aggravated which won't be favorable and beneficial for the country's economy.

Polio eradication in 2023 not possible, notes 6 new cases

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Three countries reported a total of six vaccine-derived polio cases this week, according to the latest update from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), while the group also published the Independent Monitoring Board's annual assessment of progress toward polio eradication, which it said

will not happen in 2023 as previously hoped.

"Despite recent progress toward eradication, remaining challenges make stopping transmission of WPV1 [wild poliovirus type 1] this year unlikely, while ending all variant poliovirus outbreaks will take even more time," the monitoring board said. Wild poliovirus is endemic in only two countries, Afghanistan and Pak-

istan, several other countries battle outbreaks from three strains of vaccine-derived polio, which is linked to oral polio vaccine use.

Though protected from the virus, recipients of oral polio vaccine shed the weakened virus in their stool, which can then spread to unvaccinated children in unhygienic conditions.

Institute of Professional Studies organized seminar E-commerce



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An introductory session on Amazon and E-commerce held Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) in which large number of students were present, on Saturday.

According to details, an e-commerce and Amazon specialist Farman throws light on importance of virtual economy which is developed rapidly following Information Technology revolution in 21st century.

The trainer briefed the participants on technical aspects of e-commerce and Amazon to secure maximum profit from the platforms.

Director IPS Bilal Afridi said that the institute is committed to equip its stu-

dents with modern tools livelihood and employment during their academics. He claimed that the initiative will pave ways for IPS graduates to create employment opportunities at home rather than searching and roaming for jobs.

1 in 4 people cancel out healthy eating with snacks F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A notable portion of healthy eaters have their good diets canceled out by frequent or low quality snacks, according to a new study in the European Journal of Nutrition released.

The study looked at a group of frequent snackers in the U.K., mostly women, who kept otherwise healthy diets. It found that about a quarter of participants' snacking was hurting their health due to eating too much or eating low quality snacks, but that snacking alone doesn't always hurt.

"Contrary to public perception, we find that the act of snacking, in terms of both frequency and quantity of energy from snacks, was not associated with unfavourable cardiometabolic blood or anthropometric markers," the researchers wrote.

"Instead, we observed that snack quality matters and is associated with favourable lipemic and insulinemic responses, as well as decreased hunger."

Weight-loss meal plan for insulin resistance

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Insulin is a hormone that plays a vital role in how your body cells obtain energy to function properly. After meals, some of the food you eat is broken down into a sugar called glucose, causing a normal increase in blood sugar levels. In response, the pancreas releases insulin, which signals the body to move sugar out of the blood and into the muscle, liver and fat cells for energy.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when the body is insulin resistant, it doesn't respond as efficiently to release insulin. As a result, the pancreas releases more and more insulin to counteract the decreased sensitivity and return the blood sugars to healthy levels. Over time, the pancreas can't keep up with the increased demand for insulin, meaning that blood sugars are less able to return to normal levels, which results in elevated blood sugars. Insulin resistance is a precursor to several health concerns, including prediabetes, type 2 dia-

betes, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and obesity, per StatPearls.

What Causes Insulin Resistance?

It's pretty challenging to pinpoint exactly what causes insulin resistance. And, it can lurk for many years before symptoms are apparent, making it difficult to diagnose. However, factors like genetics, a sedentary life, a high-calorie, high-sugar diet, elevated LDL cholesterol and obesity may increase your risk of insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance can impact your weight because the excess blood sugars are stored as fat, particularly visceral fat—fat around the abdomen and organs, notes the Obesity Medicine Association. That said, losing weight is one of the many steps that can help improve insulin resistance.

To support a healthy weight loss for most people, we set this plan at 1,500 calories a day and included lots of fiber and protein to support healthy blood sugar levels and improve satiety. We included modifications for 1,200 and 2,000 calories per day

for those with other calorie needs. As with all meal plans, this is meant to be a framework for a nutritious eating routine. If there's a swap you'd prefer, or you grab dinner with a friend one evening, don't fret. The idea is to start cooking more meals at home and eating regular meals and snacks with plenty of protein, fiber, fruits and vegetables. Perfection is not required to reap the benefits of this eating plan.

Foods to Focus On

Vegetables

Fruit, such as berries, pears, apples and more

Whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, freekeh, whole-wheat, bulgur, oats and more)

Lean protein

Eggs

Fermented dairy (yogurt, kefir)

Fish

Healthy fats (like olive oil and avocados)

Nuts and seeds, including natural nut butters (with no added sugar)

How to Meal-Prep Your Week of Meals

Make Chopped Salad with Chickpeas, Olives & Feta to have for lunch on days 2 through 5.



PESHAWAR: A vendor waiting for cutomers while selling vegetabels in Pipal Mandi.



In brief

'Accomplices' kill two dacoits

OKARA (INP): Two dacoits were killed in firing by their accomplices while two others managed to escape during a police encounter in the jurisdiction of Gojra police station, Okara. According to police, the identity of the deceased dacoits could not be ascertained. The dacoits started firing shots indiscriminately upon seeing the police team. The police fired back in retaliation and self-defence. During the exchange of fire, two unknown robbers were killed in firing by their accomplices. The dacoits were fleeing after snatching a Honda 125 motorcycle and Rs25,000 from a person named Ali Raza. Two dacoits were killed while their two accomplices managed to escape under the cover of darkness. One motorcycle, stolen items, cash and illegal weapons were recovered from the crime scene. A heavy contingent of Okara police surrounded the area and launched a search for the arrest of the fleeing dacoits.

Action against drug dealers

F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: District Police Officer (DPO) Manshera Zahoore Babar Afridi has directed to take strict actions against the guarantors of the drug dealers. In a statement issued on Saturday, he said that dealing the guarantors of elements involved in drug peddling was vital to curb make Mansehra drugs-free district. Zahoore Babar Afridi for first time in history of district has issued orders to compile lists of guarantors for drug dealers in strict accordance with the law. He was of the view that this unprecedented action aims to hold accountable those who provide bail or guarantees for individuals involved in drug trafficking. The directive will have significant implications for the fight against narcotics in the region, he added. The DPO ordered legal action against Wasim and Muhammad Nawaz, who stood as guarantors for a drug dealer named Abdul Wahid, a resident of the Batt Daryan area. This move sends a clear message that those who enable drug dealers will not be spared from legal consequences.

Sugar, edible oil seized

KHAIRPUR/NAWAB-SHAH (INP): The administration seized thousands of bags of hoarded sugar and hundreds of thousands litres edible oil in respective districts on Saturday. According to details, the teams of district administration during ongoing operation against hoarders and profiteers raided several godowns in Khairpur and Nawabshah districts. During raids, 10,900 bags of hoarded sugar and 83,200 litres edible oil were seized and the godowns were sealed. The officials vowed to continue crackdowns against hoarders and profiteers to get rid the country of prevailing economic crisis.

Youth commits suicide

BUREWALA (INP): A youth allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself in the jurisdiction of Gaggi Mandi police station on Saturday. The police identified the deceased as Shehzad Ali Arain, a resident of 247/EB. According to the police, Ali shot himself with a pistol. The police have shifted the body to Tehsil Headquarters hospital and handed it over to the heirs after the necessary procedure. Initial investigations have revealed that Ali was a laborer and committed suicide due to poverty.



QUETTA: People holding a rally in connection with Jashne Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

PPP a voice of marginalized segments

F.P. Report

HUB: President of Pakistan People's Party district Hub, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has said in his newspaper statement that the opponents of Pakistan People's Party are getting confused due to the increasing popularity of Pakistan People's Party among the people. The reception of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto proves that the people consider the People's Party as the savior to get rid of the problems and difficulties of this country.

He said that Pakistan People's Party is the voice of the people's hearts and under the leadership of Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari and senior colleagues Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be the next Prime Minister by the votes of the people. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the solution to the critical juncture the country is currently passing through and the economic situation of the country lies with the Pakistan People's Party alone.

The people of all four

provinces are looking towards PPP and consider PPP as the savior of the current problems. He said that, in the past, especially during the PTI regime, due to the wrong policies, the people have gone below the poverty line and the common people do not even have the money to eat poison. The inflation has broken the back of the people.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said that the middle class of Pakistan has also been badly affected by this economic crisis. The Caretaker Government should take all possible measures to solve the problems of the people and take measures on an emergency basis to control inflation. They should play their constitutional role to conduct the elections. He said that the Pakistan People's Party has always taken great steps for the better life style of the lower and middle class of Pakistan and in this regard even while being in the opposition for these downtrodden classes.

Meanwhile, the people of Hub and Lasbela have

said that Mir Ali Hassan Zehri's day and night efforts for public interest projects are commendable and he has made Hub district a stronghold of Pakistan People's Party. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri solved the long-standing problems of the people with his personal expenses and released funds from government with personal efforts for collective projects, by which the long-standing problems of the people of Hub are being solved and the people here have breathed a sigh of relief.

Public circles said that this is the reason why the people are joining the Pakistan People's Party under the leadership of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri. Public circles also said that the next prime minister of the country will be Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the chief minister of Balochistan will be Mir Ali Hassan Zehri and they will lead the country and the province on the path of rapid and long-lasting development and prosperity.

Two female scholars complete PhDs

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Two female scholars on Saturday successfully defended their PhD theses, thus completing their degrees in Mathematics. Ms Shaista Gul, a PhD Scholar in the department of Mathematics, University of Malakand (UoM), defended her PhD thesis, titled "Qualitative Analysis of Boundary Value Problems of Fractional Differential Equations" under the supervision of Prof Dr Rahmat Ali Khan, professor, department of Mathematics and currently working as Vice Chancellor of the university of Kotli AJK.

The External Examiners were Dean of Sciences, Dr. Saeed Ul Islam, Professor, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan and Dr. Faizullah, Associate Professor, College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Rawalpindi NUST. The Chairman Department of Mathematics, Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad and faculty members congratulated the PhD scholar and her research supervisor.

Similarly another scholar, Ms. Humaira, also defended her PhD thesis, titled "Fixed Point Results in Complex Valued Fuzzy Metric Space with Application" under the supervision of Associate prof Dr Muhammad Sarwar, department of Mathematics. The scholar published five research papers from her thesis in high impact factor journals.

The external examiners were Dr. Gohar Ali, Islamia College Peshawar, and Professor Dr. Akbar Azam, COMSATS University Islamabad. The chairman department of Mathematics, Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad and faculty members congratulated the PhD Scholars and their supervisors and motivated the scholars to continue the area for further exploration in future too. The scholar thanked all well wishers, teachers and family members for her achievements.

Teenager killed

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): One teenager was killed and another injured when over speeding truck ran over a motorcycle here on Saturday, rescue sources said.

According to the details, the accident took place at Bund road near Saim bridge Faizan e Madina where a reckless driven truck crushed to motorcycle riding teenagers. As a result of accident, Muddasir Naemm 13, was killed on the spot while Adnan Shaukat 16, was critically injured.

Govt workers take to streets for up-gradation in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The government employees including teachers, clerks and class IV employees staged a protest rally at the Timergara Shaheed Chowk against the government delay in their upgradation and deduction from pension in the name of reforms. Dozens of the government employees led by leaders of different organizations, marched on the road from Balambat and gathered at the Shaheed Chowk in Timergara.

They were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans in favour of their demands. The rally was addressed by the All Clerks Association provincial chairman Muhammad Salim, district president of School Officers' Association Salah ud Din, district president of All Primary Teachers' Association Qazi habibullah, APTA former president, Ali Rehman, district general secretary of the All Government Employees Grand Alliance Muslim Khan and others. The speakers said the previous PTI government had approved the upgradation

of government employees but the caretaker government despite legal formalities and court orders delayed the matter for unknown reasons.

They complained the caretaker government was deliberately delaying their upgradation. They said that successive governments had been behind the government employees' pension and wanted to abolish it one way or the other. They said that millions of the government employees would not let the government end pensions or make deductions from it. The speakers said the government employees were not ready to accept CP funds, so the government should not make it mandatory. They said that government employees ran the affairs of the government so they should not be pushed to the wall and forced to take to the streets. They threatened that the government employees would boycott duties in polio eradication, conduction of elections and examinations if the government failed to accept their demands.

MDCAT test: The Pakistan Tahreek Insaaf local leader Syed Alam Shah, Javed Hussain and

others demanded the federal government and the ministry of health to take notice of the unfair means used during the ETEA test for entry into medical and dental colleges and demanded re-conduct of the MDCAT 2023. Talking to local journalists at Timergara they said that several candidates had been caught red handed while using Bluetooth devices during the MDCAT 2023 test held on Sep, 10.

They said that several complaints regarding paper leak, wrong answer key, use of Bluetooth devices and cheating in the test had been recorded at several examination centers. They said the use of modern technology had made the whole process suspicious. They said the government concerned institutions should take notice of the alleged dealing of millions of rupees in the MDCAT 2023 test. They said the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council had issued a statement that the test would not be re-conducted, which had spread disparity among the brilliant students. They announced to move the court if the PMDC failed to satisfy the candidates.

Admn seizes 2000 sugar bags in Lakki Marwat

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The district administration sealed 17 warehouses and seized two thousand bags of sugar in Naurang Tajori towns. "The action was launched on the directives of local deputy commissioner Abdul Hadi", said an official. He said that a special team led by assistant commissioner of subdivision Bitani Najam Dawar raided warehouses in Tajori bazaar and seized two thousand bags of sugar there.

AC ordered quarters concerned to initiate legal action against the hoarders. Dawar warned that the administration would not spare hoarders and profiteers as they did not deserve any leniency. In separate action, additional AC Gohar Ali along with district food controller Aman Khan sealed 17 warehouses with a large quantity of sugar in them in Naurang town.

Jirga announces support for elimination of crimes: Members of Marwat Quami Jirga have assured the local police authorities of their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism and make the district crime free. The assurance was given during a meeting with district police officer Tariq Habib at his office in the District Headquarters Complex Tajazai on Thursday. Other police officials were also present.

MQJ members including former MNA Naseer Muhammad Khan, Raees of Eesakkhel Haji Muhammad Aslam Khan, Nawabzada Abdul Rahim Khan, Maulana Samiullah Mujahud and Maulana Rehmatullah congratulated Mr Tariq on assumption of charge as district police chief in Lakki Marwat.

The participants said that Marwat elders always stood by police and law enforcement agencies and supported them in actions against

miscreants and criminals. They said that local residents were peace-loving and they opposed militancy in all its manifestations.

The MQJ members said that the role the Jirga played to thwart militancy in the district had been recognized at all levels by the government. The district police chief said that he believed in community and friendly policing and under the vision he would bridge the gap between police and the general public.

DPO acknowledged the role of Marwat Quami Jirga in the peace initiative and bringing normalcy to the district and said that close liaison between police and area elders was inevitable to promote good and destroy evil. He said that joint efforts by local elders and police authorities would prove helpful to bring lasting peace to the region, defeat militancy and eliminate criminals' gangs.

Three-day Robo Tech 2023 competition fair held

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The University of Engineering and Applied Sciences and Directorate of Science and Information Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, launched a three-day RoboTech 2023 Competition Fair in Kalam, District Swat.

According to media reports on Saturday, more than 400 students from 21 educational institutions

across Pakistan are participating in the competition fair. The competitions were inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iftikhar Hussain and Project Director Dr. Qasim Jan.

The RoboTech competitions include a variety of events, such as robot soccer, line follower, maze solver, and obstacle course. There are also cash prizes up to Rs. 0.5 million for the position holders students. A

special two-day workshop on robots and leadership for students from tribal districts is also being held at RoboTech.

More than 40 students from tribal and backward districts are participating in the workshop. The aim of the RoboTech competitions is to expose the young generation to modern technology and provide them with opportunities to develop their skills in robotics.

Operation against electricity theft continue

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Prevention of electricity theft and operation against Kanda mafia is going on all across Dir Lower District, an official of the PESCO told APP here on Saturday.

He said the operation was jointly conducted by the district administration

along with PESCO officials and would be extended to remote areas of Dir Lower district. He said, Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Iftikhar Ahmed has already passed directives to nip those involved in the Kanda mafia. He said no one would be allowed to use unfair means and those involved in Kanda by using

illegal electricity, stern action would be taken.

The operation is ongoing to prevent electricity theft and arrest the Kanda mafia. He said on the spot FIRs would be registered against the Kanda Mafia to prevent power theft besides removing the coils. Legal action will be taken against these Kanda mafia, he added.

The climate crisis: Collective responsibility and action needed

Noor Zia

CLIMATE change has become one of the most threatening and undeniable challenges of the time. We see that the climate is rapidly changing, and the risky consequences are evident. From rising temperature to severe weather condition, the impacts of climate change are felt worldwide. The temperature of the earth significantly increases with time. The temperature in September is the same as that in June and July. Outside, we see everyone's

clothes wet, showing terribly hot weather. Our planet is heating up at an alarming rate, and it is the result of human activities as well as natural processes.

Humans as contributors to climate change:

Humans burn fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gases. This results in the emission of greenhouse gases to the earth, particularly carbon dioxide (CO2). This gas traps heat from the sun and result in global warming.

Furthermore, deforestation is

another cause of global warming. Trees and forests are called carbon sinks. They absorb and store CO2 from the atmosphere. The cutting down of trees in living areas and especially in forests for agriculture, making fires in villages, and urban development reduce the earth's capacity to absorb CO2.

Besides burning fossil fuels and deforestation, industrial processes also contribute to climate change. Various industrial processes release greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide. Both absorb

infrared radiation from the earth and then re-emit back to it. Their increased concentration enhances the greenhouse effect, increases global temperature and contributing to climate change.

Moreover, agriculture is also one of the contributors to climate change. Artificial fertilizers release nitrous oxide, and livestock farming produces methane. Both are greenhouse gases and result in a temperature rise. In addition, converting forests into farmlands releases stored carbon, resulting in warming the earth.

Transportation is also a source of global warming. The combustion of fossil fuels in cars, trucks, and trains emits CO2, heating the earth. Natural factors such as volcanic eruption, ocean currents, and solar variation also contribute to climate change, but the current rate of climate change is due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, etc.

Hence, climate change is a stark reality that demands immediate action. It affects not only humans but ecosystems and economies as well. The respon-

sibility of mitigating climate change falls on everyone's shoulders. Human activities contribute more to climate change than it requires combined efforts at individual, community, and government levels. Adopting sustainable practices, renewable energy sources, reforestation, and improving energy efficiency are some steps that can help mitigate climate change and limit its coming consequences.

The writer is student of 8th Semester at Department of English, Islamia College University Peshawar.



Libyan official rejects blame for flood disaster

TRIPOLI (BBC): An official in east-ern Libya has denied allegations that many of those killed in devastating floods last weekend were told to stay in their homes. Othman Abdul Jalil, a spokesperson for the Benghazi-based government, told the BBC that sol-diers warned people in the city of Derna to flee.

He denied that people were told not to evacuate, but conceded some may have felt the threat was exagger-ated. Meanwhile, BBC teams in Derna say aid agencies are yet to arrive at the city. While reporters wit-nessed a hive of activity in the centre of Derna - with rescuers, ambulance crews and forensic teams working to identify the dead - there was little sign of major international aid agen-cies. A spokesperson for one organi-sation said that trying to coordinate aid operations in the country was "a nightmare".

"Libya one week ago was already complicated," said Tomasso Della Longa from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Making the situation even more complicated is the fact that the floods have destroyed crucial infrastructure, like roads and telecommunications sys-tems. Death tolls that have been pro-vided vary from around 6,000 up to 11,000. With many more thousands still missing, Derna's mayor has warned that the total could reach 20,000.

The BBC has been told that some victims' bodies have washed ashore more than 100km (60 miles) from Derna, after they were swept out to sea. A spokesperson for the United Nations' humanitarian office, Jens Laerke, told the BBC that there were still survivors and dead bodies under the rubble, and that it would be some time before they knew the true num-ber of casualties. "We are trying to not to have a second disaster there. It is critical to prevent a health crisis, to provide shelter, clean water and food," he said. More than 1,000 peo-ple have so far been buried in mass graves, according to a UN report.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has asked disaster workers to stop doing this, because a hasty burial in mass graves can lead to long-last-ing mental distress for grieving fami-



ly members. Thousands of people were killed when two dams burst in the wake of Storm Daniel, washing whole neighbourhoods into the Mediterranean Sea. Survivors have described terrifying escapes and peo-ple being swept away in front of their eyes.

The country's fragmented political situation is said to be complicating the recovery. Libya is split between two rival governments - with the UN-backed administration based in the capital Tripoli and the rival Egyptian-supported one based in Benghazi. There have been widespread allega-tions that the two dams that collapsed were not well-maintained, and there are growing calls for an urgent inquiry into how the flooding became so catastrophic. There are also con-flicting reports as to whether - and when - people were told to flee their homes. Residents have told the BBC that they received mixed messages from the two rival governments on whether they should stay or leave.

Guma El-Gamaty, a Libyan aca-demic and head of the Taghyeer Party, said that people in the flood zone should have been evacuated, but "on the contrary they were told to stay put and stay inside their houses and not go out". But Derna's mayor told Arab news channel Al-Hadath that he "personally ordered evacu-ating the city three or four days before

the disaster." The BBC has not been able to verify Abdulmenam al-Ghaithi's claims. As the weather got worse, police and military were telling people to leave their homes for higher ground, survivors have told the BBC.

But it seemed many people did not take the threat seriously. "A lot of them did but unfortunately, people sometimes, they said, 'well you know, this is exaggerating, this might not be the case'," an official from Libya's unofficial, eastern administration told the BBC's Newshour programme. There are also allegations that offi-cials took to Libyan television, and ordered people to stay in their homes because of the bad weather. But the same official, Othman Abdul Jalil, denied this.

It is too early to attribute with certainty the severity of this storm to rising global temperatures. However, climate change is thought to be increasing the frequency of the world's strongest storms. Prof Liz Stephens, an expert in climate risks and resilience at the UK's University of Reading, said scien-tists were confident that climate change was super-charging the rain-fall associated with such storms. A top UN official, Martin Griffiths, said the disaster was "a massive reminder" of climate change and the challenge it posed.

Guterres calls for equality at summit

HAVANA (Reuters): United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres praised efforts to support the Global South in the international arena as he opened a summit of the G77 group of developing nations and China with host Cuba.

The focus is the scientific and technological divide between rich and poor countries and its impact on development. Guterres said greater international equality was essential to building the consensus needed to tackle climate change and inequality. "The world is failing developing nations," he said, expressing the hope that the meeting would strengthen partici-pants' clout on a wide range of issues. He echoed cli-mate advocates who have long urged developed nations, including top greenhouse gas polluters such as the United States, to pay to mitigate climate change and lessen the weight of foreign debt.

Battered by extreme weather, the pandemic, international tensions and economic difficulties, developing countries are pressing for fair treatment from developed nations regarding international finance to sharing technol-ogy. This year Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel heads up the G77, the UN's largest organiza-tion. He cited statistics showing 84 million chil-dren are at risk of being out of school by 2023 and over 660 million people are without electricity, adding these disparities now include the internet and advances in digital technol-ogy.

"Science, technology and innovation have reached the unimaginable," he said, "that in conditions of greater equality and justice could insure more dig-nified and comfortable lives for the population of almost the entire planet," Diaz-Canel said. He added that science and technology "play a transcendental role in promoting productivity, efficiency, creating added value, humanizing working conditions, promoting well-being and guarantee-ing development," he said.

Brazil restores stricter climate goals

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP): Brazil is reinstating stronger greenhouse gas commit-ments it made in 2015 as part of the Paris Agreement that were weakened under for-mer President Jair Bolsonaro.

The announcement was made by the country's Committee on Climate Change, a joint body made up of 18 government min-istries. "Brazil is a major actor in helping the planet in this challenging moment," Vice President Geraldo Alckmin said during the committee meeting in Brasilia.

The change will be offi-cially transmitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international body that works to advance global action on climate change. It tracks each coun-try's Nationally Determined Contribution or commitment to reducing national emis-sions in accordance with the Paris Agreement. During the tenure of far-right President Bolsonaro, Brazil back-tracked on its Nationally Determined Contribution calculation twice.

Morocco earthquake: Bristol woman fundraises to help rebuild village

MOROCCO (BBC): A woman who lost an uncle in the Morocco earthquake is raising funds to help their community rebuild. The village of Makhfaman was almost flatten by the tremors.

Karima Chiki, who lives in Bristol, said: "There are lots of very young chil-dren who've lost both parents. Whole fam-ilies have gone. It's absolutely devastat-ing." She has now raised more than £1,000 to help families from the mountain village, but said she wants to do more. Makhfaman, which was mainly made of clay buildings, is about an hour south of Marrakesh in the Atlas mountains.

Most of the houses there are now in ruins, Ms Chiki said. She said that while most of her relatives had only minor injuries, one member of her family had died. Ms Chiki's great uncle, who lived in Makhfaman, died when the roof of their home collapsed during the earthquake. He had been trying to rescue his 11-year-old daughter who had been hit on the head and her leg was trapped by rocks.

"He was the sole breadwinner," Ms Chiki explained. "She's a lovely girl. They've had a simple life. They were already struggling, let alone that you're going to now live without a dad. "She will live, but the picture of her father trying to pull her out will live with her forever."

Since the earthquake hit, Ms Chiki said she had heard about so many heart-wrenching stories from the village, that she wanted to do more. "I've got a young child and if at any time my turn comes to be tested, I'd like him to be looked after, so I'm paying it forward for him," she said. "I have a roof on my head and food in my fridge. I need to help to get those people in their house, at least before the winter." The mother-of-one said she she first found out about the earthquake from family members the morning after the dis-aster.

"I soon realised after waking up, receiv-ing texts and messages saying that they'd almost died," she said. "There were cracks everywhere, everyone was running for their lives. "I was terrified. (The thought of) losing all your family members at once is difficult." The Atlas Mountains can reach cold temperatures in winter, with snow usually falling between December and February. Ms Chiki hopes she will be able to rebuild her relative's home and potentially more houses in the village to

help them through the winter. Her GoFundMe page has raised more than £1,000 and she is planning to add £500 of her own savings to the final amount. Ms Chiki plans to visit the area once the after-shocks have subsided.

Meanwhile, a charity worker has spo-ken of the "inspiring" resilience of the Moroccan population. It has been one week since a 6.8 magnitude quake struck Morocco at 23:00 BST. Two more response teams from Wiltshire-based disaster response charity Re:act will arrive in the country later to provide support. "It's really great to see communities supporting each other," said CEO Toby Wicks.

More than 2,800 people have died in the disaster, with many more critically injured. The total number of people who have been affected is in the hundreds of thousands, and Re:act have been on the ground for most of the week. Their response team is currently stationed in the village of Amizmiz, in the foothills of the Atlas mountains, about 60km (37 miles) south-west of Marrakech. Response teams will primarily focus on trying to access the hardest to reach and most vulnerable pop-ulations affected by the earthquake.

"The affected population need places to stay because so many homes have been destroyed," said Mr Wicks. "It's also get-ting very cold at night high on the Atlas mountains, about 2000m (6561 ft) in alti-tude so people need blankets to keep warm." Mr Wicks said its top three areas of focus were shelter, sanitation and pro-tection. "Having survived the earthquake, the most pressing needs are to keep them fit. Sanitation is also a major issue and also protection - people need to be safe where they are sheltering."

He said his week in Morocco had been a bittersweet experience. "It's bittersweet seeing and hearing the carnage, hearing people's stories. "It's been really inspiring to see the resilience of the Moroccan pop-ulation," he said. He continued: "There's been a lot of spontaneous outpouring of aid, it is inspiring to see so many local NGOs stepping up and local authorities leading that response with the earthquake. "It is such a privilege for us to be able to support and accentuate that response. "Seeing young people who have witnessed so much suffering and still bouncing back and supporting their neighbours is really quite remarkable."

Mexico extradites Ovidio Guzmán López to US

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico extradited Ovidio Guzmán López, a son of former Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, to the United States to face drug traffick-ing, money laundering and other charges, US Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

"This action is the most recent step in the Justice Department's effort to attack every aspect of the cartel's operations," Garland said. The Mexican government did not imme-diate respond to requests for comment. Mexican security forces captured Guzmán López, alias "the Mouse," in January in Culiacan, capital of Sinaloa state, the cartel's namesake.

Three years earlier, the government had tried to capture him, but aborted the operation after his cartel allies set off a wave of violence in Culiacan. January's arrest set off sim-ilar violence that killed 30 people in Culiacan, includ-ing 10 military personnel. The army used Black Hawk helicopter gunships against the cartel's truck-mounted .50-caliber machine guns. Cartel gunmen hit two mil-itary aircraft forcing them to land and sent gunmen to the city's airport where mil-itary and civilian aircraft were hit by gunfire. The capture came just days before US President Joe Biden visited Mexico for bilateral talks followed by the North American Leaders' Summit.

Garland recognized the

law enforcement and mili-tary members who had given their lives in the US and Mexico. "The Justice Department will continue to hold accountable those responsible for fueling the opioid epidemic that has devastated too many com-munities across the coun-try." Mike Vigil, former head of international opera-tions for the Drug E n f o r c e m e n t Administration, said he believed the Mexican gov-ernment facilitated the extradition, because for someone of Guzmán López's high profile it usu-ally takes at least two years to win extradition as attor-neys make numerous fil-ings as a delaying tactic.

"This happened quicker than normal," Vigil said, noting that some conserva-tive members of the US Congress had raised the idea of US military inter-vention if Mexico did not do more to stop the flow of drugs. Vigil dismissed that idea as "political theater," but suggested it added pres-sure on Mexico to act. Homeland Security Adviser Liz Sherwood-Randall said in statement that the extra-dition "is testament to the significance of the ongoing cooperation between the American and Mexican governments on countering narcotics and other vital challenges, and we thank our Mexican counterparts for their partnership in working to safeguard our peoples from violent crim-inals."

Sherwood-Randall made

multiple visits to Mexico this year to meet with President Andrés Manuel López-Obrador, most recently last month. In April, US prosecutors unsealed sprawling indict-ments against Guzmán and his brothers, known collec-tively as the "Chapitos." They laid out in detail how following their father's extradition and eventual life sentence in the US, the brothers steered the cartel increasingly into synthetic drugs like methampheta-mine and the powerful syn-thetic opioid fentanyl.

The indictment unsealed in Manhattan said their goal was to produce huge quan-tities of fentanyl and sell it at the lowest price. Fentanyl is so cheap to make that the cartel reaps immense profits even wholesaling the drug at 50 cents per pill, prosecutors said. The brothers denied the allegations in a letter. The Chapitos became known for grotesque violence that appeared to sur-pass any notions of restraint shown by earlier genera-tions of cartel leaders.

Vigil described Guzmán López as a mid-level leader in the cartel and not even the leader of the brothers. "It's a sym-bolic victory but it's not going to have any impact whatsoever on the Sinaloa cartel," he said. "It will continue to function, it will continue to send drugs into the United States, especially being the largest producers of fentanyl."

How ‘war on terror’ was fought, won in Southeast Asia – for now

MEDAN (Agencies): In the early 2000s, the potential for terror attacks in Southeast Asia appeared dramati-cally different from today. Indonesia was rocked by the Christmas Eve church bombings on December 24, 2000, that killed 18 people. Just six days later, Metro Manila in the Philippines experienced similar bombings that killed 22 people.

In 2002, a series of bombings ripped through a popular nightlife spot in Bali, Indonesia, killing more than 200 people and leaving at least another 200 wounded. In the fol-lowing years, the JW Marriott Hotel, the Philippine Stock Exchange and the consulate, all in Indonesia's capital Jakarta, were attacked, as were other locations across Southeast Asia.

The group responsible for the attacks, and others, was Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), whose members aspired to establish a hardline Islamic state in Indonesia and across wider Southeast Asia. Often referred to by its initials, JI was alleged to have operatives in Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia and the Philippines, and was said to be linked to other groups, including al-Qaeda and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines' Mindanao island.

Though JI was responsible for a long list of atrocities and hundreds of casualties in the early 2000s – its last recorded attack was the bombing of a police compound in West Java province in 2011 – the group, and the fear of terror attacks, is largely for-gotten in the region now. So, how did Indonesia's and other governments in Southeast Asia effectively curtail a regional threat while the United States-led "war on terror" left entire countries shattered and regions of the world in chaos following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US?

"The early 2000s certainly felt

dangerous at the time," Zachary Abuza, a professor at the National War College in Washington, DC, told Al Jazeera. "But the Bali bombing really shook Indonesia out of its com-placency. The new terrorism law changed the public perception of the perceived level of danger and the authorities had free rein to do their work without political interference," Abuza said.

At the time of the Bali bombings in late 2002, Indonesia did not have spe-cific and targeted antiterrorism legis-lation, although this was quickly drafted and signed into law in 2003 and applied retroactively to some of the perpetrators of the attack on the popular holiday island. Three senior members of JI, Imam Samudra, Ali Ghufuron and Amrozi, were quickly arrested, prosecuted, and executed in 2008 for their roles in masterminding the bombings.

A fourth perpetrator, Ali Imron, was sentenced to life in prison. In 2003, Hambali, a Malaysia-based member of JI, allegedly responsible for securing funding for the group, was arrested in Thailand after spend-ing months hiding out in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. Renditioned by the US, Hambali was tortured at CIA "black sites" before being transferred to the US military's notorious Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba where he remains imprisoned to this day for his alleged role in the Bali bombings.

Indonesia and other governments in the region continued to close the net between JI members and their leaders. In 2007, Abu Dujana, the head of JI's military operations, was arrested. In 2010, Abu Bakar Bashir, the "spiritual head" of the organisa-tion, was captured and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was released early in January 2021.

"When people were arrested, it

broke JI's back," Abuza said. "But JI as an organisation still existed and the government gave it ample space to exist, allowing it to run its madrasas [Islamic educational institutions], charities and businesses," he said. The Indonesian government officially declared JI an illegal organisation in 2008, but authorities took a more measured approach by continuing to allow its members a degree of auton-omy provided they did not engage in violence.

According to Farihin, a member of JI based in Indonesia, the organisa-tion remains active, although it has now changed its philosophy to one of pacifism and focuses on works such as religious teaching and other social-ly-minded causes. "There is no focus on violence now," he told Al Jazeera. "Only on jihad as a spiritual struggle to guard against our personal sins as individuals," he said. "All religions have this concept in some form."

While Farihin still describes him-self as a member of JI, he said the original grouping has fractured and splintered many times over the years, owing to people having different views and opinions. These differ-ences of opinion are regularly cited as another reason for the success of the regional approach to the so-called "war on terror" – a mix of internal political disputes and external secu-rity operations. By 2007, Abuza recounted, JI was "riddled by faction-alism" as remaining members of the organisation jostled for power and clashed on how to create a blueprint for their operations moving forward. "Abu Dujana had different ideas for the organisation and felt that bombing foreigners was not the way to achieve its aims," Abuza said. "Enough peo-ple in JI thought it was best to lie low after the Bali bombing and that the attack had not been productive," he said.

Buthelezi funeral: South Africans mull legacy of divisive Zulu leader

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): Mou-ners have descended on the town of Ulundi to attend the funeral of veter-an South African politician and Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. He has been granted a state funeral in honour of his contribution to the fight against white-minority rule.

As a mark of respect, the national power firm has also agreed Ulundi will not be subject to the national rolling electricity cuts during the events. But his death at the age of 95 has opened up a debate about his legacy. Born into the Zulu royal fam-ily, he remained their traditional prime minister until his death. However, it was his role in politics that has split opinions.

He founded the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) after becoming disillusioned with the African National Congress (ANC) in 1975 at the height of apartheid. He opposed the ANC's stance on armed action and sanctions, arguing that they harmed black South Africans.

For this, his supporters believe he deserves all the accolades being showered on him - and the hundreds of people who lined the streets lead-ing to the Kwa-Phindangene Palace in Ulundi, along with praise-singing Zulu regiments clad in traditional attire, see him as a man of peace.

Prof Kealeboga Maphunye, head of African politics at the University of South Africa, acknowledges Buthelezi was "a respected traditional leader who made a contribution in history in ensuring that the dignity of black people, particularly Zulus, was not trampled on by the apartheid regime". Yet it was what happened during the transition to multi-party democracy in the early 1990s, when an estimated 20,000 people died in violence between the ANC and IFP, that has drawn criticism and opened up old wounds. "We cannot forget that Buthelezi's supporters were involved in acts that undermined his legacy," Prof Maphunye told the BBC.

The City Press newspaper editor-in-chief Mondli Makhanya was more forthright in his front-page editorial, a day after Buthelezi's death, calling him a "murderous apartheid collabo-rator who was behind hit squads linked to his organisation". Makhanya went on to describe posi-tive tributes about him as "the culmi-nation of the greatest whitewashing of history that South Africa has seen". Thokoza township in the east of Johannesburg is one of many areas that experienced political violence by those determined to derail the road to the country's first democratic elec-tions in 1994.

A monument to the 600 people who died there now stands on Khumalo Street, once the dividing line between two warring commu-nities. People gathered at the memorial determined that their relatives who died would not be forgotten at this time. "I lost my uncle during the vio-lent clashes. He was bludgeoned to death," a man, who asked not to be

named, told the BBC.

He had called on Buthelezi to "humble" himself and apologise for the atrocities that were committed in his name. "But instead of apologising, he denied involvement till his death," he said. The IFP has dismissed these criti-cisms, saying neither Buthelezi nor his party can be blamed for planning the violence. After Nelson Mandela won the country's first democratic elections, he and Buthelezi buried the hatchet and the IFP leader went on to serve two terms as home affairs minister in the ANC government. Buthelezi's son, Prince Zuzifa, said: "The IFP shares our pain in seeing long-discredited propaganda revived by a few individu-als who have no sense of humanity but we will not be drawn into their spiral of hatred... history will vindicate our father."

Events to commemorate the Zulu leader began in Ulundi with a memo-rial service organised by the IFP and addressed by dignitaries and politi-cians of all parties. But this too has

become overshadowed by accusa-tions that some are using the com-memorations to play politics ahead of elections next year, with politicians accused of being prepared to revise history with votes in mind.

This criticism has particularly been levelled at the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), the coun-try's second-largest opposition party launched 10 years ago. Its head of political education, Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, took to the stage to praise the IFP founder: "Never be shaken by the negativity of ill-informed, ignorant people. "Never be shaken by oppor-tunists, hypocrites who want to edu-cate us about our own history and the leadership that stabilised this coun-try into a politically peaceful environ-ment," he told the crowd of mourners.

For the IFP the funeral is also a good opportunity to canvas for votes and for other parties to woo a possible coalition partner in KwaZulu-Natal province, homeland to the country's largest ethnic group. Buthelezi retired

from active politics five years ago, but recently won praise for the over-seeing the peaceful installation of the recently crowned Zulu monarch Misuzulu ka Zwelithini, amid a battle for the throne among his brothers. Although it was reported that he and the king were at loggerheads recently over the running and management of the Ingonyama Trust, a body with the role of managing communal land in KwaZulu Natal province.

Buthelezi regarded the trust as one of his great successes - and its crea-tion did pave the way for the IFP to participate in the 1994 elections - although it has come in for criticism, with some seeing it as unconstitutional, as it leaves millions of people in rural areas under rule of the king. But for historian Mphumeleli Ngidi, Buthelezi's nearly 70 years of service show an unflinching dedication to pre-serving Zulu customs and rituals at a critical juncture in South Africa's his-tory - and for this alone there is no doubt he will be revered.

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What would be the endmark of prevailing ignominy

THE people of Pakistan survived shock after shock and punch trailed by a punch in recent days after the caretaker setup assumed charge of the government in mid-August. The headline inflation has made new records, the dollar touched new heights, and the electricity rate and monthly bills brought a calamitous fate that had not ever been seen by the public in the country's history. The self-elected leaders imposed another catastrophe on the poor masses by slapping unbelievable increases in the prices of Petroleum products. The incumbent government raised the petrol price by Rs 26.02 per litre and high-speed diesel by Rs 17.34 per litre in a single sprint. The finance division told the masses that prices of petrol and high-speed diesel were raised because petroleum prices in the international market had increased during the last fortnight. This was the straight third increase in a single month that took a jump in petrol prices from Rs. 272.95 per litre to 331.38 per litre, while High-Speed Diesel (HSD) rates appreciated from Rs. 273.40 per litre to Rs. 329.18 per litre respectively.

The inflation stayed high at 27.4% in the previous month, while these numbers significantly rose in the past weeks because of a continuous decline in currency rate, high energy bills and the implementation of so-called economic reforms that the previous government agreed with the IMF to unveil \$ 3 billion bailout package with the global lender. The PSB data for August revealed that there had been a slight decrease in inflation as compared with July but prices of essential foodstuffs stood elevated at 38.5%, which made this period unbearable for the 241 million populace in the country. That price hike seriously hurts all segments of society and equally affects the prices and availability of all daily use commodities, transport fares, tuition fees, essential medicines, health-care expenses etc. The crises of hefty electricity bills had not been resolved so far that the unelected leaders came up with petrol bombs to test the patience and resilience of this nation.

Amid the high cost of living together with unlivable conditions, the caretaker Finance Minister, along with the Information Minister and Minister for Petroleum appeared before the media to inform the nation about improving macroeconomic indicators that predict stable agriculture and consolidating industry in the coming months. The trio leaders noted that the country has come out of the difficult situation and the economy will grow soon. Like the previous government, interim leaders claimed premature credit for the magnificent revolution that might fall in the future. Realistically, the Pakistani leaders had excelled in butcher work of governance on the costs of public lives, comforts and well-being. Our leaders are well versed in the tact of grabbing funds and weighing a theft on public pockets through artificial price hikes, raising tariffs and illegal taxation on consumers and the general public. No other nation in the region has witnessed such price hikes as the Pakistani nation suffering these days. Yesterday, one litre of petrol was sold at the price of Rs. 96.72 in India, for 64 Afghani in Kabul, and the same precious commodity was available for 125 Tekkas in Bangladesh. Why were all necessities of life so dearer in Pakistan?

Currently, an average Pakistani family spends about 80% of its monthly income on school fees and utility bills with a little left for household expenses, kitchen heating and healthcare. The skyrocketing inflation has pushed almost 60% of the population below the poverty line, begging and the crime rate has exceeded all estimates. The Pakistani leaders mu have changed their style of governance as the situation has reached an irreversible point. The rulers must spare some time to think over such public issues that have made the people's lives miserable and caused serious grievances against their leadership and the country. If those grievances were not addressed timely public anger could break out any time in the future and that movement would be equally disastrous for all.

The fiasco of missed Chinese leader

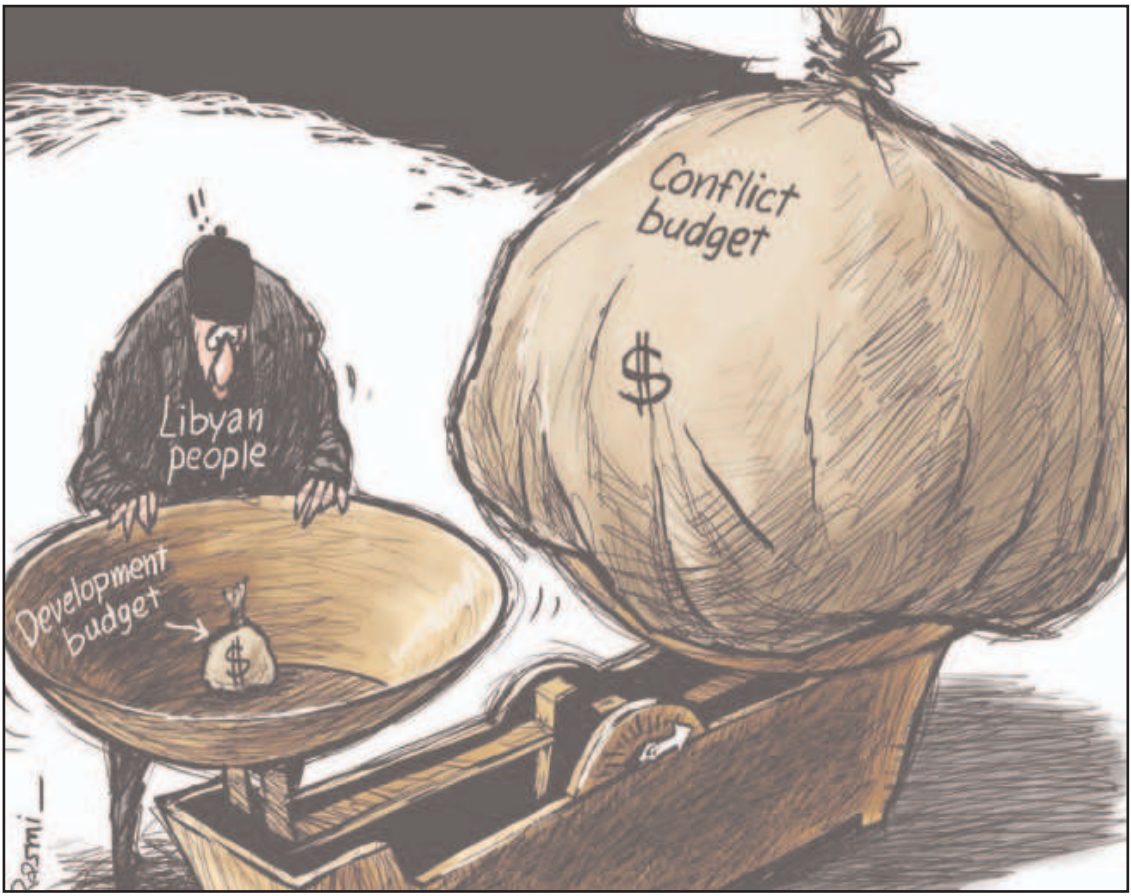
THERE is much hue and cry in Western media regarding the unusual disappearance of Chinese defence minister Li Shangfu, who had not been spotted in any official meeting or public gathering over the past many days. The reports suggest that Mr. Li appeared at a security conference in Beijing days before and his longtime scheduled meeting with the Vietnamese Defense Chief had abruptly been postponed by the Chinese government, due to some health condition, that had not been confirmed by other sources. Li's disappearance appears to be grave because several unusual occurrences have been reported in Chinese leadership in recent days. Before, Li's Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang was replaced over unexplained reasons in similar mysterious situations along with an unceremonial shake-up of the top Commander of the PLA's elite Rocket Force that gave birth to suspicions and rumours in international media.

There is complete silence in the Chinese government and mainstream media regarding worldwide suspensions and doubts about the health and well-being of top Chinese executives. The Western capitals link those top-level changes in Beijing with policy differences and governance issues within a limited and close circle of powerful Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Analysts term such occurrences customary in authoritarian regimes like China, Russia, North Korea, and Belarus where heads of the government avail complete impunity from the public as well as media accountability.

Today's democracy is not more diverse, accountable and lenient in practical terms as it has been described in literature, fiction and films. After reaching powerful offices, all elected leaders somehow became dictators, and authoritarian and cooled shoulder toward public demands, and colleagues' aspirations. With a few exceptions, a majority of the world leaders from Niksen to Trump, Castro to Zelenskyy, Jamal Nasir to Saddam Hussein and many more, all elected leaders solely rule respective nations according to their self-assumed agenda, swapped their aides with eyebrow arch and enjoyed unlimited power and fame in the name of democracy. Therefore, the fiasco of poor Li is not much different from the rest of the world except it is linked to the West's rival, hence largely covered in global media.

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Britain's monarchy is dying, and no PR can save it

Andrew Mitrovica

BY now, the British monarchy ought to have been put into hospice care. It would, at the least, be a merciful end to a spent, vacuous institution that has revealed itself to be a dying artefact of a merciless, imperialist past that should be buried - once and for all. Despite the determined efforts of "royal" historians and "journalists" who embarrass themselves and the profession they purport to serve, the long, inevitable decay-into-irrelevant farce of King Charles III and trifling company was made plain, yet again, on the first anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's death last week.

Beyond her divided family and craven constituents who, by nostalgic temperament and career necessity, prostrate themselves before the grandeur of a glittery anachronism, few others noticed that, unlike many of her less fortunate ancestors, a stooping old lady's 70-year reign had ended a year ago of natural causes. At the time, an army of sentimentalists assured us that Elizabeth's quiet grace and singular longevity had left a profound, indelible mark throughout a Commonwealth paralysed by grief at the sad departure of the only queen most had ever known.

Turns out, Elizabeth's decade after decade after decade tenure as monarch was as ephemeral as a gust of wind and, truth be told, much less serious than the results of that weekend's Premier League fixtures. Sure, there were the familiar TV-friendly rituals confirming that Elizabeth had, in fact, been remembered. But they seemed tired and performative. A gaggle of Londoners were moved, of course, to place flowers at Buckingham Palace's gates, while a thin crowd of celebrity-gawkers greeted Charles and a conga line of major and minor-league royals doing perfunctory "walkabouts" at commemorative church services. Later, the Prince and Princess of Wales took to social media to insist that: "We all miss you."

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak issued a bad speechwriter-penned statement to

observe "the solemn anniversary". "With the perspective of a year, the scale of her late majesty's service only seems greater," he said. "Her devotion to the nations of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth only seems deeper. And our gratitude for such an extraordinary life of duty and dedication, only continues to grow." At the risk of inviting a torrent

This is the telling case, particularly among British teenagers and 20-somethings who have informed pollsters that a sizeable majority of them don't believe the Crown does any "good" and it's time that their little island finally became a republic - proving that, sometimes, maturity has little to do with age. Charles is the head of a pedestrian, dysfunctional family that seethes with petty grievances, jealousies and contempt. The House of Windsor's supposed devotion to "service" is a fig leaf meant to disguise just how inconsequential and disconnected "The Firm" is from the taxing, day-to-day lives of most Brits.

of insults aimed at my blind, heartless self, I am at a loss to understand who constitutes this imaginary "we" that "all miss" the ridiculously rich, pampered-for-life queen? I don't. Honestly, do you? As for Sunak's claim that the "scale" of Elizabeth's service, duty and dedication has only deepened in the 12 months since her passing at age 96, I challenge anyone to provide even a scintilla of tangible, not rhetorical, evidence to support this predictable bit of absurd historical revisionism.

Elizabeth devoted her comfortable life to travelling first-class, shielding her family's vast wealth from the taxman, managing her family's pristine, sprawling estates, being feted at lavish state dinners by virtue of luck and primogeniture, caring for her dear dogs and horses, and burnishing the mirage that the British monarchy remains an exemplar of constancy, charity and benevolence. Stripped of all the silly embroidery, her eldest son's job is to do precisely the same. Royal historians quoted recently have admitted as much.

Charles's assignment is not to rock the gilded boat, but to keep it afloat. "He really has set a very neutral course. I think many people were expecting a lot of reform, a lot of change, in the way that he had advocated for as Prince of Wales," one starry-eyed royal commentator told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "But I think really keeping things bal-

st - both public and private - take up a lot of time and energy even as they paid "solemn" remembrance to their beloved "grandmama". The simmering hostilities between Harry and his older, more obedient brother, William, erupted after the exiled-to-California prince visited, unannounced, his grandmother's grave at Windsor Castle to offer his respects. This is how one astonished "royalist" correspondent described Harry's unforgivable faux pas: "Prince Harry dramatically upped the ante in his war with the royal family Friday as he upstaged his estranged brother Prince William by making a shock visit to his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II's grave on the first anniversary of her death."

Happily, the Princess of Wales - Kate Middleton - came to the PR rescue. The Independent reported that, in touching homage and "poignant tribute" to the late queen, the princess sported a "family heirloom...[stepping] out in drop-down pearl earrings as an ode to Her Majesty." Apparently, the saccharine-laced copy extolling The Firm's endearing virtues is not the exclusive purview of Fleet Street's monarchy-mad tabloid press. My goodness. Is it any wonder then that appetite to continue to tolerate the often surreal, always wacky British version of Family Feud is waning - quickly?

The wise citizens of Barbados, among others, have had their fill of the travelling colonial circus. More importantly, they are no longer content to forget or forgive the conquering, plundering and crimes against humanity committed in the name and profit of an English king or queen. Instead, they have severed their once-binding ties with the so-called "Motherland" and are demanding restitution from the white plantation owners who stripped them, by lethal force, of freedom, independence and agency to govern their lives and futures. Alas, I'm still waiting for my home - Canada - to grow up, too, and follow Barbados's fine and laudable example.

Aljazeera

Oslo Accords created a second Nakba in Jerusalem

Daoud Kuttab

THIRTY years on from the signing at the White House of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the negative effects of the agreement are most obvious in Jerusalem. The signing of the agreement now referred to as the first of the Oslo Accords followed the exchange of letters of recognition between the PLO and Israel. But this recognition agreement that followed have proved disastrous for the people of Jerusalem.

Commitments by the US that Israel would respect the status quo evaporated, as Israel closed the PLO headquarters at Orient House in East Jerusalem. Israel used the archaic British Mandate's emergency regulations to shut out every organization and institute that Israeli intelligence deemed to have any relations with Ramallah and the Palestinian leadership. Not only was the symbolic Orient House forcibly closed, but so was the Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Council and a number of other institutions. Simple public events like a puppet festival or celebrations to mark the success of a football club or high school graduates have regularly been banned by Israel. The excuse is always that these organizations and events relate to the Palestinian leadership or the Palestinian government.

Israel has also created a more physical barrier. An 8-foot wall with cameras and razor wire has created an ugly and suffocating separation. The wall, built deep in East Jerusalem, separates neighborhoods and communities. Suddenly, vast numbers of Palestinian Jerusalemites have found themselves living beyond the wall. Even though Israel continued to insist on sovereignty in these areas, barring any attempt by Palestinian security or the executive branch to approach them, it totally ignored them. Huge neighborhoods rose, including 15- to 20-story buildings built without any supervision or approval by any competent regulatory body. Crime, drugs and lawlessness skyrocketed as these areas became a haven for criminals trying to avoid both Palestinian and Israeli justice. The only time that Israeli security would enter the areas beyond the wall was when they pursued any Palestinian accused of allegedly causing harm to an Israeli Jew.

The Oslo Accords became a second Nakba (catastrophe) for many Palestinians, who decades earlier saw the city of Jerusalem as the hub of Palestinian political activity. The entire Palestinian delegation to the Madrid peace talks was based in East Jerusalem, with a technical committee operating in various sectors, all under the leadership of the Faisal Hussein-Sari Nusseibeh-Hanan Ashrawi trifecta. All that has now been lost to a chaotic situation, in which hooligans often run the city and personal rights and properties are subject to the law of the

jungle.

While Jerusalemites became political orphans, they were waiting for a breakthrough in the peace talks or a more serious intervention in their situation by the Ramallah leadership, but this never materialized. Sure, a Palestinian committee, a governor and even a Cabinet minister exist with the official goal of working for and with Jerusalemites, but in reality, Jerusalem was quickly dropped from the agenda of the Palestinian leadership, which had new priorities, including caring for a bulging security payroll and a huge bureaucracy that was allowed to work in all Palestinian areas except Jerusalem. Even though 35 percent of the Palestinian budget went to security issues, the city Palestinians want to become their future capital was left to fight its own daily battles. For Jerusalemites, the biggest issue has been and continues to be housing. Israel has refused to allow the creation of a zoning plan for the Palestinian city and, as a result, some houses were built without licenses. This building problem brought a new phenomenon in the form of Israel forcing Palestinians to tear down their own homes or face the huge financial penalty of the Israeli government bringing in highly paid, well-protected demolition teams to do it for them.

Israel's reluctance, in the first days of the occupation, to allow a Palestinian curriculum in Jerusalem's schools has also come under pressure ever since the Oslo process took shape. Without any mechanism to allow the rise of a political leadership in Jerusalem, the situation seems bleak in the city. Jerusalemites are looking for new political empowerment strategies to deal with some of the critical problems they face, which endanger their continued steadfastness in their homes and on their land. Arab support, which has often been declared at summits, has not always been delivered as promised and some of it has faced obstacles, including the absence of a transparent Palestinian leadership.

Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem has complicated the situation for Palestinians, who are now debating whether they can gain some power by participating in the upcoming Oct. 31 municipal elections or if they should continue their decades-long boycott of the poll that brings both East and West Jerusalem into a single electoral process. While Jerusalem is listed as one of five permanent status issues that were supposed to be agreed to within an interim period, those talks have not moved at all and, in fact, they have receded, as successive Israeli governments have escalated the repression and abused the five-year interim period, which has mushroomed into 30 years with no end in sight. For now, the Palestinians have lost all hope that anything good can come out of the Oslo Accords and are instead looking for home-grown strategies to help in the only defense left to them - "sumoud," or steadfastness.

International collaboration vital in space realm

Khaled Abou Zahr

THERE is no doubt that Elon Musk has, with SpaceX, transformed the space landscape. There is also no doubt that this was possible thanks to a new approach by NASA and other US institutions. SpaceX has pioneered the use of private, reusable rockets to service America's space program and more. In short, NASA, instead of using its own rockets, decided to outsource its supply missions to the International Space Station and the launch of satellites into orbit.

This venture marked a break with tradition. NASA engaged entrepreneurs in a way that allowed it to satisfy its needs and let commercial industry gain a foothold. It has had a profound impact on the way NASA does business and the space industry as a whole. It unleashed the age of commercialized space. This is why there is today a vibrant landscape of space companies on both sides of the Atlantic that is empowering

an age of innovation and competition.

As greater payload capacity was developed, this reduced costs and also allowed for new businesses such as Starlink. For those who do not know, SpaceX's Starlink uses satellites to provide internet services. By reading the description on their website, it is clear that neither the company nor its founder, Elon Musk, anticipated being drawn into the Ukraine conflict. Starlink describes itself as the world's first and largest satellite constellation. It uses a low Earth orbit to deliver broadband internet that is capable of supporting streaming, online gaming, video calls and more. As the conflict with Russia has devastated Ukraine's infrastructure, Starlink terminals have proved to be essential for preserving internet connectivity and communication in the country. It has also been used by the Ukrainian army in its activities. Thousands of Starlink terminals have been delivered to Ukraine by SpaceX

since February last year. Last week, it was claimed that Musk temporarily blocked the service last September as the Ukrainian military launched a surprise attack on Russian forces in Crimea. In response, Musk stated on X, formerly known as Twitter, that SpaceX "did not deactivate anything" because it was never activated in certain places to begin with. He clarified: "There was an emergency request from government authorities to activate Starlink all the way to Sevastopol." And added: "If I had agreed to their request, then SpaceX would be explicitly complicit in a major act of war and conflict escalation."

This situation illustrates how technology from commercial and private space companies, even in telecommunications, can have dual-use capabilities. This means that this technology can give clear advantages to the country that possesses it and hence there is sensitivity

around it. This also shows that, in this new era, private companies are faced with decisions that never existed in the past, putting the large ones in a sovereign playground. This also applies to the large social media platforms when it comes to information or disinformation campaigns. More importantly, this indicates the absolute need for any country to protect its infrastructure and supply chains and for it to be able to maintain its own sovereign access to space and to satellites. When looking at the importance of satellites and the use of GPS, for example, an attack on such assets would automatically prevent most apps from functioning, as well as affecting the financial system.

To present this as a sovereign issue, Europe is currently without a rocket to use for launches. This has grave implications. Indeed, will the Galileo global satellite navigation system be dependent on the goodwill

of the US to remain in service beyond 2024? Thierry Breton, the European commissioner in charge of EU space policy, will have to decide this autumn: choose SpaceX for a 2024 launch or wait for an Ariane 6 flight in 2025. French media outlets have described this as one of the most explosive and complicated issues Breton has to deal with. Galileo and the Copernicus Earth observation program are flagships of the EU's space policy. They provide valuable services that enable more accurate navigation and timing, as well as delivering valuable data about the Earth. However, if Europe lacks space access, it puts the entire continent in a precarious position. Even among friends, this poses a dilemma. Satellites are also used for intelligence purposes and for the protection of nations. So, being dependent on another country presents a vulnerability. But should it?

Launches into space are such a difficult task that there should be broad col-

laboration between partners and friends. Let us not forget that, before NASA shifted its working model and SpaceX became operational, it had to rely on Russian Soyuz rockets after abandoning its own launches in 2011. Last year, despite the conflict in Ukraine, NASA and Russia's space agency Roscosmos signed a long-sought-after agreement to integrate flights to the International Space Station. This allows Russian cosmonauts to fly on US-made spacecraft in exchange for American astronauts being able to ride on Russia's Soyuz. As we say in Arabic, sometimes you hate something, and it is good for you. Maybe Musk's actions served Ukrainians more than they think. And the same could apply to international collaboration, as it avoids isolated and dangerous decisions. In the realm of space, it should be about partnerships and collaboration among friends.

Arab News

Biden’s Vietnam embrace repeats past US mistakes

Jim Laurie

PRESIDENT Joe Biden returned here to Washington this week with his administration touting the success of his day-long stopover in Hanoi, Vietnam, after the G20 summit in New Delhi, India. Beyond a half-dozen investment agreements which provided business benefits for both sides, Biden came away hailing an announcement that the United States had established a "comprehensive strategic partnership" with the communist government of Vietnam - which Hanoi already has with China, Russia, India and South Korea.

He declared that the historic upgrade signalled that the US had "entered a new stage" in closer ties with Vietnam. Yet, while US-Vietnam relations are undoubtedly much-improved compared with some decades ago, Washington's approach to Asia remains trapped in time. The result? It risks repeating past mistakes, with consequences for the US, Vietnam and the world. Biden was the fourth American President to visit Vietnam since the end of the war nearly 50 years ago. I accompanied the first. In November 2000, Bill Clinton flew to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to put an official stamp on post-war normalisation. For 20 years after America's ignominious withdrawal from war-devastated Vietnam, successive US administrations insisted on punishing the victors with trade sanctions and rejections of normal diplomatic ties.

Clinton's visit set the stage for 23 years of steadily improving relations. This latest visit was very different. It was less about Vietnam and more about Vietnam's giant northern neighbour. If it weren't for China, I suspect, Joe Biden wouldn't have flown to Hanoi at all. When observing this latest American foray, one can't escape the 70 years of history since the United States first became embroiled in the region after the

Vietnamese bloodied the French and sent their colonial rule packing. Then, the US took under its wing the nascent South Vietnamese government of staunch anti-communist Ngo Dinh Diem: the first of America's "Saigon puppets", as Hanoi branded him. In those days of the 1950s, America found motivation in the menace of 'Red China' and more broadly the 'communist threat'.

The Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin had died in Moscow only recently, in 1953. Mao Zedong had taken the helm in Beijing in 1949. "The East is Red," proclaimed Mao. The future was uncertain. Communism was on the march. From Hanoi to Jakarta, it was said, Southeast Asian nations would fall to communism like dominoes. Only the 'preeminent power' in the 'free world' could halt that shift. Seven decades later, the pre-eminent power is no longer fighting communism in proxy wars on battlefields in Asia. But similar language is still being used for what an increasing majority of members in the US Congress describe as a new Cold War. A Republican-led House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) says it is hard at work investigating how the CCP poses an "existential" threat to "fundamental freedoms" in the 21st century. What is really meant by such alarmist language is that China threatens America's superpower status, that the world needs one superpower, and that moniker must remain attached to the United States. In March 2015, retired US diplomat and Harvard professor Robert Blackwill wrote a policy paper that has become an unofficial playbook for today's American actions in Asia. It starts with a remarkable but unsurprising premise: "The United States has consistently pursued a grand strategy focused on acquiring and maintaining pre-eminent power over various rivals, first on the North

American continent, then in the Western hemisphere, and finally globally."

The Blackwell paper argues that the US must "protect its systemic primacy" and spells out how to do it in Asia. The paper maintains that China cannot be regarded as a "responsible stakeholder". The CCP possesses its own "grand strategy" which seeks to "increase state control over Chinese society and, beyond its borders, to pacify its periphery, cement its status in the international system, and replace the United States as the most important power". The US therefore must make sure China knows it can't have free reign in Asia. The Biden administration is employing the 2015 Blackwell blueprint to the letter. That's where Vietnam returns to strategic importance. Employing words like strategic competition, the US has returned to thwarting perceived Communist ambitions as it did so clumsily through war 70 years ago. Some questions are seldom asked in Washington.

Why should the United States be the sole superpower? Who appointed America the task of thwarting Chinese ambitions. Are those ambitions real? How much of the world wants continued US dominance? Would not more nuanced, multilateralist positions on international issues, and building a multi-polar world order be a greater guarantee of peace and stability? For insight into the American mind of the 21st century, it's worth recalling a giant of US politics of the previous century, a figure now largely forgotten: Senator J William Fulbright. Fulbright experienced a conversion in 1965, emerging as one of the most eloquent opponents of the Vietnam War and America's self-selected role as the world's most prolific interventionist. He questioned the assumption that Blackwell and most Americans today accept - the idea of global pre-

eminence. He wrote famously of America's "arrogance of power". "Power tends to confuse itself with virtue," wrote Fulbright. "A great nation is particularly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God's favour, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations ... to remake them, that is, in its own shining image."

It was an attitude that permeated US actions in Vietnam; an attitude that Americans never unlearned despite repeated failures. The same 'special responsibility' came to be exercised again in Iraq in 2003 and throughout the 20 years that ended with another ignominious pullout - from Afghanistan in August 2021. The problem is that much of the world does not view the US as an unequivocal force for good. And many don't share its view of China as an existential threat. Look no further than the recent BRICS summit in Johannesburg, which saw several nations - many of them US partners - queueing up to join the China-led economic bloc. Most of the world resists being drawn into a new cold war. They resist American alarmism. As Fulbright said so many years ago: "We all like telling people what to do, which is perfectly all right except that most people do not like being told what to do." So again, America is attempting - as it is with other nations - to draw Vietnam into superpower politics. The good news for Vietnam is that it is strong enough now economically to resist being dragged on to one side or the other. It will maintain its careful balancing act, paying necessary obeisance to the Chinese with whom it must manage its territorial disputes while taking advantage of the benefits of a closer American relationship. Perhaps what the world needs is multiple "comprehensive strategic partnerships" like Hanoi has with several nations. Or in other words, true multilateralism.

Will Sino-US space competition stop at Mars?

Liu Chang

WHILE attending a conference in the United States recently, I overheard an American expert discussing the space competition between China and the US. After the event, I approached the expert to inquire about the possibility of space cooperation between the two countries. His answer is a matter of concern. He explained that as long as the US Congress doesn't withdraw the ban it announced in 2011, official space collaboration between China and the US is unlikely.

The escalating competition between China and the US in cislunar space risks spiraling out of control. And all signs suggest their space rivalry may extend to Mars in the next two to three decades, possibly leading to even more negative consequences. To avoid such a future, the two sides should explore possibilities for cooperation. But for that, the US Congress needs to abandon its zero-sum thinking, paving the way for the early lifting of the ban on space cooperation and, thereby, raising hopes for Sino-US collaboration in space.

SpaceX's Starlink satellites, which comprise the majority of satellites in orbit, have made space exploration more affordable and efficient for a number of countries. But without proper management, the growing number of satellites in low Earth orbit could trigger the Kessler Syndrome. The Kessler Syndrome, the brainchild of National Aeronautical and Space Administration scientist Donald J. Kessler in 1978, is a phenomenon in which, after the amount of junk (including defunct satellites) in orbit around Earth reach a certain threshold, collisions between objects become inevitable. These collisions will produce more debris, leading to a cascading effect and more collisions, and overwhelming the Earth's orbit with space debris, causing immense problems for satellites, astronauts and space mission planners, even preventing further satellite launches.

This interruption in space exploration would have a devastating impact on industries reliant on satellites for weather, navigation, communication, rendering them unsustain-

able. The massive number of Starlink satellites (both operational and defunct) has raised concerns due to multiple instances of potential collision with spacecraft, including near misses with Chinese satellites. On Dec 3, 2021, the Chinese delegation to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna sent a note to the UN Secretary-General, saying that on July 1 and Oct 21, 2021, China's space station had to perform emergency maneuvers to avoid close encounters with Starlink satellites 1095 and 2305, respectively, to prevent accidents. While space exploration companies have attributed these incidents to technical malfunctioning, this explanation is less than convincing. Even if we were to accept the claim of technical malfunctioning, the sheer number (more than 40,000) of planned Starlink satellites, even with a 1 percent failure rate, would generate a substantial amount of debris in low Earth orbit, leading to more incidents like the 2021 'near misses'. If this is left unchecked, the Kessler Syndrome will become reality with dangerous consequences.

To prevent this scenario, China and the US should engage in space cooperation. However, such efforts still face resistance from the US Congress. Even when the Barack Obama administration tried to establish space cooperation with China, the Congress dashed any such hopes by passing the "Wolf Amendment," in 2011. The amendment, proposed by Republican Congressman Frank Wolf and included in the 2011 Appropriations Act, prohibits NASA and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy from engaging in joint research with China. It also bars all NASA facilities from hosting "official Chinese visitors". As a result, measures were taken to restrict Sino-US space collaboration, preventing Chinese scientists from participating in international space conferences held in the US, and severely limiting communication and exchanges on space exploration between the two sides. In fact, the US has declared that outer space is not a "global commons" and established a Space Force. These actions con-

tradict the spirit of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which advocates the peaceful use of outer space. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin recently acknowledged that space has become a theater for major power competition, with China being the US' "greatest space threat". The US Congress further reinforced this competitive stance in space against China by increasing appropriations for NASA in the CHIPS and Science Act. But collisions in low Earth orbit are just one aspect of the Sino-US space competition. Other issues include concerns over equipping traditional satellites with nuclear materials, direct-ascent anti-satellite weapon tests, and space debris from spacecraft re-entries. Each of these problems is highly complex, and without China and the US reaching a consensus on these issues, they could potentially trigger a new crisis in bilateral relations. With China's space station already in operation, the next phase of China's manned space program is likely to be aimed at exploring the moon, conducting research on and about the moon, and eventually landing astronauts on Mars, following a new "three-step" plan.

Despite setbacks in SpaceX's Starship launches, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk remains determined to land astronauts on Mars before 2050. Therefore, the likelihood of Chinese and US astronauts meeting on Mars is a possibility. If both countries can reach an agreement before this happens, and engage in peaceful cooperation to develop and use (if possible) Martian resources for the benefit of all humanity, it would be a rare piece of good news for the peoples in the two countries as well as those in the rest of the world. The US Congress should abandon its Cold War mentality and zero-sum games, lift all sanctions, and refrain from committing further mistakes by putting its self-interest above common good. Although neither the US expert nor this author is overly optimistic about Sino-US space cooperation, the facts remain that there are only eight planets in the solar system, and Earth is the only place we can call home. Hence, it would be best if the competition between China and the US stops at Mars.

The China Daily

Developers and their Tory allies are killing the high street

Simon Jenkins

HIGH streets matter. We don't want them to follow churches, becoming relics of a mostly dying sense of community. They should be the living hubs of villages and towns and not vanish beneath an anonymous swathe of suburban housing.

The news is that 6,000 high-street shops have closed in the past five years. The big stores are already going. Wilko has followed Debenhams and Arcadia into collapse. One in seven high-street premises now lie vacant, while vape stores, nail bars and charity shops invade the rest. Dame Sharon White, the boss of John Lewis Partnership, which has already closed 16 of its own outlets, pleaded this week for a royal commission to rescue what is left. Something must be done, she said, "to stop the hearts being ripped out of our communities". The easy answer is that this is tough, but the market is talking. Online shopping now comprises close to a third of all retail sales and this proportion is soaring. People are ever less inclined to visit a high street when anything they want can come to their door in a van - and as often in a day as they like. Or they can drive to a shopping mall and park for nothing. In the new age of hybrid working, the lunch break, the office get-together, the after-work drink are all in the past. The village street, human congregation, the chance encounter with friends are equally forgotten.

At this point the picture gets muddy. Online shopping has risen faster in the UK than anywhere else in Europe. The reason for this appears to be that the idea of actually protecting a community's local services and institutions has been allowed to lapse, while it is second nature in France, Germany or Italy

where independent bakers, butchers and greengrocers are a mainstay of every town. The consequences are crippling for the UK. In the past 25 years the government has steadily shifted the burden of local taxes from houses to businesses. A householder can now pay £1,000 to £2,000 a year in council tax while the next-door shop can pay 10 times that. The shop is also liable to regular revaluations that can result in business rates leaping by 20 - to 30% at a time and are wholly unrelated to turnover or profit. Two years ago, a British Retail Consortium survey showed 85% of high-street shops regarded business rates as the "critical issue" in their survival. Boris Johnson promised to reform them when he was prime minister. Nothing happened. The reason was simple: shops don't vote.

More serious has been the advent of policies to close down high-street businesses in favour of new houses being built. This has followed a long battle for the Conservative party's ear between Tory rural constituencies and Tory donors from the building industry. In 2013, the Cameron government conceded to the builders that offices and other commercial buildings could be turned into homes without needing permission. At the same time, Whitehall enforced housebuilding targets on local councils. Rishi Sunak has done nothing to honour Johnson's pledge of business rates reform. He has also continued to discourage conversion - not least of empty floors above shops - by retaining 20% VAT on restoration and conversion, yet allowing new builds to be VAT-free. Then came the big one. As a massive sop to the Home Builders Federation, the then housing minister, Robert Jenrick, decided in 2021

to deregulate permitted development rights (PDRs) on high-street premises, the so-called E class of uses. He was answering pressure from developers who wanted to be allowed to buy and demolish shops, post offices, cafes and pubs, and replace them with private homes without planning permission. This was coupled with blatant pressure in which the big building companies - which in the past have accounted for around a fifth of all donations to the Tory party - threatened to withdraw their considerable donations to the Tory cause, one having recently given £1m.

This year Jenrick's successor, Michael Gove, made a further concession to the builders' cause. To ease the pain of an end to rural building targets, he introduced an amendment to a levelling up bill that would absolve housebuilders from polluting local watercourses. Even Tory peers would not stand for that, and it was given short shrift in the House of Lords on Wednesday. As things stand, all a developer needs to do is buy any retail or other commercial site and leave it unused for three months. They can then knock it down and build a block of flats or houses. A Berkshire village pub of my acquaintance was struggling to recover from lockdown. It had been a pub since time immemorial and treasured as such by local people. Following Jenrick's measures, the owner had only to look at his rates bill and his bank balance and sell to a local builder for £1.3m on the spot. This new wild west appears disastrous. Protests from the British Independent Retailers, the National Trust, the Booksellers Association, the RIBA and even the British Property Federation have become a chorus. The game is

on to grab villages and towns for new housing construction, utterly without concern for a high street's popularity or civic role - and with the government's blessing.

Coming out of lockdown - when the government at least stalled business rates - the high street was certainly likely to see a retail shakedown. The issue should surely have been how policy might ease such change without damaging communal vitality. In the event, it was how to appease a lucrative lobby. In France, with twice the number of independent high-street retailers as Britain, howls greeted a proposal 10 years ago even to allow chains to buy up local cafes. Mayors continue to oversee changes of ownership and use, much to the benefit of their citizens. Even in Paris, the mayor, Anne Hidalgo, is seeking to ensure every citizen is within 15 minutes' walk of local services such as shops. It is the very essence of localism. In Britain, all these matters are forbidden to local government and retained by the centre. Some efforts are being made to keep shops in business, such as a Whitehall proposal for the enforced auctioning of leases for pop-up shops. Lively places such as Derby and Altrincham have galvanised their old market halls and hope to turn their high streets into social destinations. There are also signs that hospitality is recovering from Covid, notably services less vulnerable to online supply, such as gyms, restaurants, health and wellbeing. But such recovery depends on people having the leadership and imagination - and the power - to see such projects through. Only locals truly care about communities. Ministers care about statistics, Sharon White is correct. This cries out for a commission.

Putin will give me a jail sentence for opposing his war in Ukraine

Alexander Rodnyansky

ON 18 May, a Moscow court ordered my arrest in absentia. In a couple of weeks I will know my sentence for the crime of "spreading disinformation" about the Russian army, which means speaking out against the war in Ukraine and telling the world about the atrocities that Russian soldiers commit in my native country. I can guess what the verdict will be - since the introduction of this penal code article, not one of the accused has been found not guilty. I can also guess my sentence, since I share the same judge as the Russian writer Dmitry Glukhovskiy, who was recently sentenced to eight years for his anti-war position.

No other country in the world recognises this crime and I don't either. I will continue to speak out against the invasion on every platform available to me. Ahead of my sentencing, I want to share a message that I feel is important. Moscow was my home for nearly 20 years. Two of the films I produced were nominated for Academy Awards; one of these films, Leviathan, became the first Russian film to win a Golden Globe since 1969. I speak Russian. I even wrote books in Russian -

and I produced films that brought praise and international recognition to the Russian film industry.

The Russian state is fully aware that it has no means to imprison me and yet still the Russian justice system spent time and effort on my prosecution. The reasons behind this decision are very simple. Like others before me - activist Ilya Krasilshchik, journalist Alexander Nevzorov, blogger Veronika Belotserkovskaya and Glukhovskiy - I need to serve as an example of what happens to people who publicly criticise the war. Ahead of my sentencing, I called upon some of my closest Russian friends to ask if they would be willing to provide a character testimony. They all refused. "If there was the smallest chance that my testimony would change the outcome, I would've come, but you know there isn't. I can't risk it," said one of them. And he was absolutely right. The scare tactics employed by Putin work - people are afraid. Some of my friends in Moscow are too nervous to call or text me. Even when they travel to Europe on holiday they dare not approach me. They are afraid that someone will take a picture of them with me, an enemy of

Putin's state, which would destroy their careers or even lead to prosecution.

My personal experience is emblematic of the state of the country. Putin has managed to scare a nation into submission, arresting those who have spoken out against the war and sentencing them to jail time for their beliefs.

Just days ago, a journalist in Khakassia was sentenced to five and a half years for writing a story about 11 Russian soldiers who refused to fight in Ukraine. Fear is everywhere in Russia - but fear is not the same as support. At the weekend, Russia had its biggest regional elections of the year. The results brought an overwhelming victory for Putin's party, with claims of widespread rigging. But it was interesting to note that the candidates all but avoided talking about the war. The mayor of Moscow, Sergey Sobyanin, probably the second most powerful politician in Russia, has spoken about the war twice since the invasion of Ukraine in February last year. The war effort was not mentioned once in his campaign. The regional press has reported that in Buryatia, the region with the high-

est war casualties, local politicians and officials have stopped talking about the war altogether. Some of them have even publicly stated their wish for the war to end as soon as possible. In the small town of Krasnokamsk in the Perm region, a candidate from the Yabloko party got elected into the local Duma under the slogan "I am for peace."

Putin has made every effort to project an image of unity, to signal to Ukraine and the west that there is a strong pro-war sentiment across Russia. This is a part of his strategy to frighten Ukraine's allies and make them feel as though resistance is futile, to push them to grow tired of supporting Kyiv. But it is a bluff. Russia is afraid. The Russian population has chosen to stay silent, and to retreat into the predictable comfort of everyday life and ignoring the war at all costs. The public have largely chosen to leave the fighting to those who give or follow orders. This is not support. Russians will not defend Putin when they are eventually defeated in Ukraine. He has made sure no one dares to go into the streets to protest against his politics, and in doing so has ensured that no one will help him when his time comes.

The Guardian

Gulf News



PBF utterly rejects Rs40 per litre hike in pol prices

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has utterly rejected the 40 rupees per litre jump in petroleum prices in the month of September which will further squeeze the industry, agriculture sector and common man of this country. It said though institutions were trying their best to curb the artificial price of dollar but at this point, increase of 24 rupee per litre was not at all justified move by the finance division. In the last few days dollar was on decline in the open market and we appreciated the commendable efforts of the institutions.

In a statement on Saturday, Pakistan Business Forum Chief Organizer Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said that at present Rs. 60 per liter was being charged from the public on per liter already in the name of surcharge. On the other hand, high electricity bills have left the public and the business community in debt. The business community and the people were currently on the streets challenging the government's helplessness.

Jawad stressed the need for implementing structural reforms for good governance, curbing unproductive expenditures, expanding the tax base, fostering public-private partnerships, and reallocating resources

to critical sectors to stimulate sustainable growth, as the country was facing with daunting economic challenges, posing a serious threat to the viability of the industry, in this regard the role of SIFC was appreciated to shape up the country's economy at the right direction.

PBF official Jawad further observed that it is imperative to understand that fiscal discipline cannot be achieved and sustained without initiating structural reforms.

In the 2023 budget, the government extended substantial subsidies and grants to loss-making entities, which, in turn, are not only failing to make positive contribution but are also incurring significant losses.

"We must maintain fiscal discipline and establish controls to create fiscal space to extend relief to the masses, Saleha said.

Quoting the reports, she said that the budget deficit continues to grow, entangling Pakistan in an unrelenting cycle of debt".

Even if we exclude the impact of debt servicing, our revenues fall short of covering other expenses, implying that all these are met from borrowed funds. At the close of the fiscal year (FY) 2022-23, Pakistan recorded a budget deficit of Rs6.52 trillion, equivalent to 7.7 percent of

the GDP, a slight decrease from the previous year's 7.9 percent of GDP. However, in absolute figures, the budget deficit surged by a substantial 24 percent, or Rs1.26 trillion, within just one year.

Due to this bleak scenario, the primary balance registered a negative Rs690 billion in FY2023. Encouragingly, Pakistan achieved a noteworthy reduction of Rs1.3 trillion or 67 percent year-on-year in its debt portfolio at the primary balance level during FY2023.

According to the Fiscal Operation report, the primary deficit, which stood at 3.1 percent of GDP in FY2022, was reduced to a more manageable level of 0.8 percent of GDP in FY2023.

This improvement has created some fiscal room, and with continued efforts we can attain a primary surplus, representing the fundamental level of financial discipline.

It is encouraging to note that at the consolidated level, the government successfully attained an overall primary surplus of Rs503 billion.

However, by end of the third quarter of FY2023, overall budget's balance showed a negative figure of Rs3.07 trillion. Yet, in the last quarter of FY2023, primary surplus turned into

primary deficit, with latter recording a primary deficit of Rs1.1 trillion.

The budget deficit in last quarter of FY2023 surged to nearly 112 percent of the cumulative figures from July 2022 to March 2023. Pakistan's budget deficit for the initial nine months amounted to approximately Rs3 trillion, but in Q4 FY23 alone, it registered a substantial increase of Rs3.4 trillion. It's worth noting that in the latest budget documents released in June 2023, revised estimate for primary deficit in FY23 was Rs421 billion.

However, according to the Ministry of Finance's recent update, there was a primary balance overrun of Rs690 billion, marking an increase of Rs269 billion, which is 64 percent higher than the revised estimates for FY2023 shared earlier in June of the same year. Contrastingly, according to the budget document from the previous year, a surplus of Rs153 billion was projected.

This highlights the inadequacies in financial planning at ministerial level. PBF President Multan further told many countries are implementing privatisation policies for SOEs, Pakistan remains in debate over the issue without officially announcing any plans for disinvesting in such entities; he added.



MULTAN: Vendors displaying tomatoes boxes during an auction while shopkeepers participate in bidding at vegetable market.

Foreign exchange company suspended

KARACHI (INP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has suspended the authorization of M/s Royal International Exchange Company (Pvt) Limited till further orders for violating SBP rules and regulations.

As per statement of central bank issued on Saturday, the exchange company, its head office, branches, franchises and payment booths have been debarred from undertaking any kind of business activity during the suspension period.

Earlier, during last week, the SBP had suspended the authorization of M/s Usman International Exchange Company -B (Pvt) Limited till further orders, with immediate effect.

Action has been taken due to serious violations of the central bank's regulations and instructions.

It is pertinent to mention here that a nexus between illegal money exchanges and bankers was exposed in investigations by various agencies.

Illegal money exchanges orchestrated a nexus with various banks for money hoarding, sources said. "Islamabad's 78 bankers and cashiers have been involved in this illegal arrangement," according to sources.

Chinese firm to setup EV plant

ISLAMABAD (INP): A Chinese electric car manufacturer has announced establishing an electric vehicle (EV) plant in Pakistan and showrooms in major cities of the country, it emerged Saturday.

The announcement was made by a delegation of XinjianJingyi Cheng Group, led by its assistant chairman GU Xongquan, during a meeting with FPCCI Vice President Amin Ullah Baig.

Mr GU said entering the Pakistani market and setting up a manufacturing unit and showrooms was in the interest of the company and part of its long-term business plan.

Mr GU said cars were the main means of transport in Pakistan, while the rising global oil prices have led to a sharp increase in gasoline prices, making it imperative for consumers to switch to new energy markets.

Baig asked the Chinese firm's delegation to expedite their investment plans which will be mutually beneficial.

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China's crude oil output up

BEIJING (APP): China's crude oil production, processing and imports registered strong expansion in August, official data shows. The country produced 17.47 million tonnes of crude oil last month, up 3.1 percent year on year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

China's total imports of crude oil stood at 52.8 million tonnes, surging 30.9 percent over one year earlier, the NBS said. The data also shows that the country processed 64.69 million tonnes of crude oil in the same period, jumping 19.6 percent from the same period of 2022.

KMBL sign agreement with HBL Konnect

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited and HBL Konnect have signed an agreement, enabling payments for Khushhali Bank customers through HBL Konnect branchless banking and agents network across Pakistan. The agreement marks a significant step taken by KMBL to incorporate partners from the digital payments industry to transform its infrastructure, thereby facilitating customers to make their Khushhali Bank payments conveniently throughout the country.

KMBL, a longstanding banking name with a wide customer base predominantly in rural area, has also previously onboarded JazzCash, EasyPaisa, OmniPay along with offering inter-net and mobile banking in order to digitize its operations and transition into swift and responsible

digital banking methods. "Currently, KMBL branch network is across the country at 215 locations, including the 18 locations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 3 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 2 in Baluchistan, remaining network is in Sindh, South Punjab, and Central Punjab at district, tehsil and UC level. We have a active customer base of over 3 million and around 1 million are borrowers.

However, as we scale up, we aim to reinforce our banking model with digital services to ensure the smooth continuity of our operations", said Aftab Alam Chief Business Officer of KMBL while addressing the signing ceremony.

"Given the potential, the bank deems it wise to reduce footfall in branches and integrate automated, digital solutions wherever possible. Integrating digital

offerings and also through partnerships is a step towards streamlining banking services, and for financial inclusion across the country, enabling transparency and accessibility for both the banks and their customers", said Hammad Haider - Head Operations & Chief Digital Officer KMBL.

Agha Israr Ahmed, National Sales Head of HBL said that partnership between KMBL and HBL Konnect is of great value and going forward we may look into other opportunities and service offering through this partnership like loan disbursements through the integration of digitized systems, together we may gradually achieve the aim to identify the hardest to reach customers and empower them with seamless financial services, while also ensuring a growing customer base in the urban centers of the country."

Batik Air launches Karachi, Kuala Lumpur route

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Batik Air is excited to announce the launch of direct flights between Karachi and Kuala Lumpur commencing on 31 October 2023. This sought-after route underscores Batik Air's steadfast dedication to expanding its worldwide accessibility, ensuring effortless connections for travellers across the globe.

Following the resounding success of its daily flights to Lahore, Batik Air is proud to mount new services between Karachi and Malaysia, where vibrant cultures and breathtaking landscapes beckon Pakistani travellers. Experience the enchanting blend of old and new in Kuala Lumpur's soaring skyline and historical sites.

Indulge in the culinary delights of diverse flavours, from spicy street food to exquisite dining and explore other captivating Malaysian destinations such as Penang, Langkawi, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

"Embrace the hospitality of our nation as you explore

ence in Pakistan since March 2016.

"Much like our previous successful routes, we hold a strong belief in the prosperous growth of this Karachi connection, further enhancing the expansion of our network," he said.

Given the positive response to Batik Air's Lahore route, he believes that the airline's winning formula of excellent service, competitive fares, and efficient operations will translate into success on the Karachi-Kuala Lumpur route as well.

Embark on a journey to Malaysia, where vibrant cultures and breathtaking landscapes beckon Pakistani travellers. Experience the enchanting blend of old and new in Kuala Lumpur's soaring skyline and historical sites.

Indulge in the culinary delights of diverse flavours, from spicy street food to exquisite dining and explore other captivating Malaysian destinations such as Penang, Langkawi, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

"Embrace the hospitality of our nation as you explore

its diverse tapestry. We welcome you with open arms to embrace the true essence of Malaysia, Truly Asia in every captivating moment," said Chandran.

The Kuala Lumpur-Karachi route is an essential step in Batik Air's ongoing mission to enhance connectivity to key destinations. As Chandran pointed out, the airline views each new route as a chance to improve lives and foster closer connections amongst people. This expansion not only benefits travellers but also contributes to bolstering the economic and cultural ties between Pakistan and Malaysia.

This flight is operated using the brand-new Boeing 737-800 aircraft, featuring 12 Business Class and 150 Economy Class seats, ensuring passengers enjoy maximum comfort during their journey.

Batik Air also offers a selection of pre-purchased meals and additional baggage allowance at discounted rates. Meals and drinks are also available for sale on-board in all Batik Air flights.

China's food trade with BRI countries increased

BEIJING (APP): In the first eight months of this year, China's trade in food products with countries along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reached 553.82 billion yuan (\$76.10 billion), a 10.4 percent increase compared to the same period last year and a significant 162 percent increase compared to 2013, officials said at the first conference on import and export food safety cooperation of the Belt and Road, which was held in Nanning, South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The meeting gathered over 100 representatives and officials of over 20 BRI countries, Global Times reported on Saturday.

Aimed at creating a new platform for international cooperation and govern-

nance in food safety among countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the meeting adopted a BRI food safety cooperation initiative to deepen pragmatic cooperation, share supervision experiences and promote the establishment of scientific and rational international rules and standards.

In recent years, China's customs department has actively collaborated with BRI countries to improve food safety governance, and cooperation has expanded and diversified.

As of June this year, China has signed over 200 cooperation agreements related to the Belt and Road Initiative with 152 countries and 32 international organizations, leading to a significant increase in the variety and

volume of food trade, Lü Weihong, deputy chief of the General Administration of Customs, said at the meeting.

Over the past decade, China has established customs inspection and quarantine cooperation with 171 countries and regions, signing nearly 400 international cooperation agreements on the access of agricultural and food products, Lü said.

As a result of closer cooperation between the customs authorities, an increasing number of unique and characteristic foods from BRI countries are entering the Chinese market.

In 2022, China's trade in food products with BRI countries reached 786.31 billion yuan, up 135.3 percent compared to 2013.

Dawlance commemorates 'World Ozone Day'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dawlance is the leading producer of refrigerators and a wide range of home appliances in Pakistan. Dawlance has changed its Refrigerant usage in air conditioners; from R410A to a much safer gas, which will also be recycled in the future, for a sustainable future.

Being a wholly owned subsidiary of Arcelik - the 2nd largest manufacturer in Europe, Dawlance believes in a sustainable growth policy: 'Progress Today - Preserve Tomorrow', reflecting a strong commitment to social wellbeing. As a socially responsible enterprise, Dawlance continues to invest in innovative technologies that promise a higher quality of life with environmental and economic sustainability, for the healthy progress of future generations.

This year's theme for the 'International Ozone Day' is: "Montreal Protocol -

Keeping us, our food, and vaccines cool". Being a specialized innovator of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Dawlance is highlighting the importance of these technologies in safeguarding the wellbeing of humanity. The switch from R410A to a safer refrigerant gas in Dawlance appliances will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2024, promising a greener future to curtail climate change.

On this World Ozone Day, Dawlance encourages individuals, businesses, and governments to join hands in preserving the ozone layer, a vital shield that protects us from harmful ultraviolet radiation. By adopting eco-friendly technologies and sustainable practices, we can collectively create a better, healthier, and safer world for current and future generations.

The Chief Marketing Officer of Dawlance - Syed Hasan Jameel stated that: "We are committed to the

safety and wellbeing of the community and our consumers. That is why we are using a much safer gas in our appliances, which is recognized for its minimal impact on the environment and protection of the ozone layer. This two-pronged approach - using this gas and implementing refrigerant recycling, is a testament to Dawlance's leadership in environmental stewardship and its dedication to a cleaner, sustainable world."

Dawlance, a leading home appliances brand of Pakistan now part of Arcelik, Turkey, was established in 1980 with the vision of making Dawlance a Global brand by practicing reliability and making Pakistan Proud.

Dawlance was acquired by Arcelik in 2016 after which Dawlance became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the 2nd largest White goods company in Europe. Dawlance now serves its customers in 3 functions involving Food Care,

Fabric Care, and Home Care with its wide range of appliances including refrigerators, freezers, microwave ovens, water dispensers, small kitchen appliances, hoods & hobs, washing machines, dishwashers, and air conditioners.

Dawlance promises reliability in every way for its consumers and stakeholders alike; Reliability is the key characteristic of Dawlance and is exercised within all functions of the company; it is in fact embedded in the organization's culture.

Aside from its reliability, Dawlance's major strengths are differentiation and relevance- it makes products that are relevant to the needs of Pakistani households but with an element of differentiation; Dawlance takes pride in introducing innovative products for the Pakistani market to enhance the lifestyle of its consumers and deliver a superior product experience.

Ex-Minister visits China

F.P. Report

KARACHI: former Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Tori arrived in China along with a delegation.

On this occasion, Sajid Tori said that Pakistan values brotherly relations with China, the relations between Pakistan and China are strong at the social, cultural and business levels.

China has helped Pakistan in every difficult time.

China friendship will have positive results on the country's economy and development, our effort is to create more employment opportunities for Pakistani workforce worldwide, Pakistan China friendship



is playing a key role in strengthening the country's economy.

In this visit, it was agreed to promote bilateral

relations and mutual cooperation.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Sajid Duri invited the Chinese delega-

tion to visit different provinces of Pakistan. On this occasion, the Chinese delegation thanked the Pakistani delegation.

Power generation up 3.6%

BEIJING (APP): China's power generation rose 1.1% on year in August, official data showed. In August, the country's daily average power generation reached 27.26 billion kilowatt-hours, according to the NBS.

A breakdown of the data showed growth in the output of hydropower, solar power and nuclear power went up 18.5 percent, 13.9 percent, and 5.5 percent year on year, respectively, during the period.

In the first eight months, China's power output expanded 3.6 percent year on year to 5.87 trillion kilowatt-hours, according to the NBS.

20th China-ASEAN Expo commences in China

BEIJING (APP): The 20th China-ASEAN Expo commenced in Nanning, the capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on Saturday.

The expo and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit will last for four days, with the aim to enhance cooperation and economic integration between China and ASEAN countries.

With the theme of "Work Together for a Harmonious Home and a Shared Future Promoting High Quality Development of the Belt and Road and Building an

Epicentrum of Growth," the expo emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation for the development and prosperity of the region, CGTN reported.

China has been ASEAN's largest trade partner for 14 consecutive years, and the two sides have been each other's largest trade partner for three consecutive years.

Trade between China and ASEAN exceeded \$970 billion in 2022, reflecting the deepening economic ties between the two sides, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

Through the expo, China intends to work with all parties involved to explore opportunities, meet challenges, and ramp up cooperation, according to Mao Ning, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

The expo will focus on implementing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in a high-quality manner, promoting trade and investment liberalization, enhancing regional connectivity, and building an open regional economy, said the spokesperson.



In brief

Hockey Camp started

PESHAWAR (APP): With the support of the Regional Sports Office and District Administration, Junior Under-16 Hockey Coaching Camp after a long time has started in Qazi Mohib Sports Complex Bannu. A total of 50 who are aged between 12-year-old to 16-year-old from various schools across Bannu Region, will be trained under qualified coaches in the camp. Speaking to the media, national player Shafqatullah said that the training camp will continue for two weeks. Hockey coach Barkat Ullah of Director of Sports and former international player Shafqatullah will train in two different sessions. He said that the junior players of today are the seniors of tomorrow. "We have to select players on merit to bring back the lost glory of hockey. Shafqatullah said that the Junior Under-16 hockey camp would be a continuing process in order to find out new faces in hockey. The best team for the Bannu region will also be selected which will represent the Bannu region in the Provincial and National Championship," he added.

Camp ends in Dir Lower

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-week-long hockey camp setup at Dir Lower Sports Complex in connection with the National Hockey Day celebration ended with great enthusiasm shown by the athletes associated with the game of hockey. The National Hockey Day celebration was organized by District Sports Officer Abrar Khan with the support of the district sports officer. Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdul Wali Khan, DSO Abrar Khan, President All Sports Malik Shah, Naseem Khan, Senior Congress Member Muhammad Yousaf, General Secretary Muslim Khan, Prominent Political Personality Alhaji Ameer Azam Khan, Governor Malakand Youth Assembly Qazi Sajid Mehmood, Engineer Aminul Haq, Former Footballer Sadar Zeb, Ustad Ali Sher, Youth Counselors Sikandar Shah, Khalid Shah, Sirajuddin, Salman Khan, Nasser Afghan, Mansoor Zareen, prominent social worker S Akbar Khan Lala including a large number of political and social personalities and local elders were present. Speaking on the occasion, the speakers praised the positive activities of the Sports Department and appreciated District Sports Officer Abrar Khan for organizing the National Hockey Day celebration.

NK returns to games

SEOUL (Agencies): North Korean athletes on Thursday departed Pyongyang to compete in the Asian Games in China, the first international multisport competition North Korea has taken part in since the Asian Games in Indonesia in 2018. After being postponed because of the COVID-19 epidemic, this year's Asian Games will take place in Hangzhou, China, from September 23 to October 8. However, the size of the team or the athletes' travel plans were not disclosed. South China Morning Post, North Korea has 191 athletes signed up for the Asian Games in sports including athletics, gymnastics, basketball, football, boxing and weightlifting. North Korea has traditionally been especially strong in weightlifting, dominating the event at the Jakarta Asian Games in 2018 with eight golds.



KARACHI: Muhammad Shabbir receives the winner's trophy from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at the closing ceremony of 27th CNS Open Golf Championship 2023.

Davis Cup tie: Aisam, Aqeel outwit Indonesian players

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan tennis star Aisam ul Haq Qureshi outclassed David Agung Susanto of Indonesia in the first singles match of the Davis Cup World Group-II tie at Aisam-ul-Haq Tennis Pavilion, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Saturday.

Aisam played classic grass-court tennis to dominate his opponent throughout the match, winning the fixture in straight sets 6-1, 6-4.

In the second singles, experienced Pakistan No.1 Aqeel Khan beat Gunawan Trismuwantara 7-5, 6-4 in

an exciting match. Gunawan served for the first set at 5-4, but Aqeel fought back gallantly to take the next three games, and the set 7-5. Aqeel broke his opponent early in the second set and kept control of the remaining set to win 6-4 and give Pakistan a 2-0 lead, going into the second day.

The compensations were watched by a good number of tennis enthusiasts and a sizable number of Indonesian supporters, which gave the event a festive look.

President Pakistan Tennis Federation Salim Saifullah Khan appreciated

the top-quality tennis.

He congratulated the Pakistan team on their two wins on Saturday, and gave his best wishes for Sunday's matches, hoping the Pakistan team would continue the winning momentum.

Fixtures for Sunday: DOUBLES: 11:00 am M u h a m m a d Shoaib/Muhammad Abid vs Gunawan Trismuwantara/Anthony Susanto

Reverse Singles: followed by

Aqeel Khan vs David Agung Susanto

Aisam ul Haq Qureshi vs Gunawan Trismuwantara.

Indian minister dismisses Pak-India bilateral series till resolution of border issues

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indian Sports Minister Anurag Thakur has ended all hopes of a bilateral series between India and Pakistan, emphasising that any such event hinges on resolving border issues among the neighbouring countries.

Cricketing ties between the two arch-rivals have remained suspended in the wake of ongoing diplomatic tensions, restricting their encounters to fixtures backed by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and Asian Cricket Council (ACC).

Thakur, the former head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), expressed his views in an interview with Indian

media, sharing the BCCI had already made a firm decision in the past not to engage in bilateral matches with Pakistan until border relations stabilise.

"I understand that this is the sentiment of every ordinary citizen of the country," he said.

It should be noted that in a recent Asia Cup match, Pakistan lost the second match against India by 228 runs. Later, the Green Shirts faced a defeat against Sri Lanka in the same tournament, which led to the national team's exit with its dreams to reach the finals shattered during a decisive and thrilling last over on Thursday.

Meanwhile, owing to their spectacular form in One Day Internationals (ODIs), India has jumped ahead of Pakistan in the ICC ODI team rankings. Pakistan, who were previously ranked number one, have slipped to number three in the rankings while the Blues have jumped to number two.

India is ranked two with 116 ratings and 4,516 points while Pakistan is at third with 115 ratings and 3,102 points.

National Accredited Karate Coaches Course begins in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): National Accredited Karate Coaches Course organized jointly by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate Association and Pakistan Karate Federation got under way here at Lala Rafique Sports Arena on Sunday.

Coaches and accredited officials of the Pakistan Karate Federation are part of the National Coaching Course from all across Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two times gold medalist of the South Asian Games and national team coach Khalid Noor said.

Director General Sports Captain (ret'd) Khalid Mehmood formally inaugurated the course with Secretary of Karate Association Khalid Noor and Coordinator Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal, Regional Sports Officer Shafqatullah, Deputy Director Operations Ameer Zahid Shah and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Dr. Wasiullah, Dr. Maryam Ishaq and Muhammad Ahmed Naem are the three course conductors who will deliver their lectures during the

course and would highlight the need of qualified coaches for any of the games.

The role of the coaches would also be come under discussion through their lectures. Khalid Noor while commenting on this occasion said that the holding of coaching course in Peshawar is aimed at to give due opportunities to the upcoming coaches of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged tribal areas.

Farman Ahmed, Ejazul Haq, Khalid Noor and Shah Faisal will be the directors. In the three-day course, the participants will be given practical training about the role of the coach, harassment in sports, nutrition, injury and recovery, anti-doping and other issues including the rules of the World Karate Federation besides introduction of the new rules would also be discussed.

Practical training will also be given on the last day of the three-day course. On the last day, theory test and practical training will be evaluated from the participants. DG Sports Khalid Mehmood welcomed the conduct of the course and said that the

main role of the coaches is to bring out the hidden talent in the players.

All types will contribute to the increase. He said that there is enough talent in Martial Arts Games in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, that is the reason why our players have won many medals in the National Games, besides, there are players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who are playing not only nationally but also at the international level. He said, many of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players are part of different departmental teams.

He called upon other sports federations and associations to organize similar coaching courses in their provinces so that our players can gain awareness about modern technique rules. The focus is on coaching to hone the skills of the players and coaches are hired for almost every sport, DG Khalid Mehmood said. The karate coaching course will expose the participants to modern techniques and international rules which will benefit the athletes of the province and the country, Khalid Noor said.

Shabbir clinches 27th CNS Open Golf C'ship title

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Muhammad Shabbir won the title of 27th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship.

The Closing and prize distribution ceremony of Championship was held at Karachi Golf Club (KGC). Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

While speaking at the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff commended the untiring efforts of KGC staff and organizers for seamless conduct of the championship and

congratulated the winners for their remarkable success.

Naval Chief lauded the high standards of the game that provided exciting and quality entertainment to the participants. He also appreciated the sponsors in supporting the game of golf and conduct of the championship.

The four day long Golf championship held from 13 - 16 September has become a major event in golfing circles since 1995.

The categories in the championship included professionals, amateurs, veterans, ladies and jun-

iors. 72 holes matches were played for professionals, 54 holes for amateurs, 36 holes by KGC professionals, 18 holes for seniors and ladies whereas 9 holes matches were contested among juniors category 'A' and 'B' and veterans.

The event continues to be the highest prize money golf event of the country, wherein; more than 600 enthusiast golfers participated from across the country.

The ceremony was attended by various civil and military dignitaries including officers, organisers, sponsors, golfers and media fraternity.

Naseem likely to miss entire ODI World Cup with injured shoulder

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan fast bowler Naseem Shah is likely to miss the entire World Cup after scans revealed an injury to his right shoulder that is worse than was initially suspected.

The PCB is understood to be seeking a second opinion, but scans from tests in Dubai appear to show the injury could rule him out for the rest of year. A note from the board on Saturday evening said, "the PCB medical panel will decide on the fast bowler's return to cricket based on further assessments."

Should secondary results back up the initial ones, Naseem could be looking at a long layoff. His participation in the Test series in Australia at the turn of the year is in doubt, and he could also miss the next Pakistan Super League in 2024.

Naseem walked off in the middle of the 46th over during Pakistan's second game against India at the Asia Cup last week on the reserve day organised for that game, and was ruled out of the tournament soon after.

The PCB had, ironically, pushed for that reserve day for the game against India, as a hard-won concession after the games weren't moved to Hambantota, which was expected to be drier. It was on that reserve day that Naseem sustained the injury to a muscle just below his bowling shoulder, one that ESPNcricinfo understands is not a recurrence of any previous shoulder injuries.

Naseem's absence from the World Cup, as well as the subsequent series in Australia, will come as a huge blow for Pakistan. Over the past year, Naseem has gone from a red-ball spe-



cialist to an all-format bowler for Pakistan, and on current form is the best of Pakistan's much-vaunted triumvirate of Naseem, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf.

The PCB is expected to make an official decision once it has results from his secondary scans in a few days. He was replaced at the Asia Cup by Zaman Khan, while Mohammad Hasnain, another possible replacement, is currently also injured.

Naseem has had injury issues in these early stages of his career. A back injury he sustained one year into his international career, when he was 17, kept him out of cricket for 14 months. Six weeks after his return, he was sidelined for a month with a shoulder injury he suffered on his debut in the County Championship with Gloucestershire.

In the 18 months since, his work-

load has increased significantly. While he was only a red-ball player at the time, Naseem has become a crucial bowler for Pakistan across all formats. He is their most potent bowler since making his ODI debut, with 32 wickets in 14 matches while averaging just under 17.

But that workload, especially with someone as young as Naseem, has built up quite steeply. Since July 2022, only eight fast bowlers have bowled more international deliveries than Naseem's 2246, none of them nearly as young as Naseem.

Afridi and Haris Rauf combined have only bowled 2732 balls. In addition, Naseem has also been in demand on the T20 circuit, recently coming off the LPL. On Friday he was included in the SA20 auction shortlist, a tournament he is now almost certain to miss.

Liverpool beat Wolves 3-1 to top Premier League table

LONDON (Agencies): Liverpool produced a dominant second-half display against Wolves on Saturday, coming from behind to win 3-1 and top the Premier League table after the early kick-off.

Hwang Hee-chan put the home side ahead early against the sluggish Reds at Molineux and they had a succession of chances to extend their lead in a sparkling first-half display.

But Liverpool flew out of the blocks after the restart and equalised through Cody Gakpo 10 minutes into the second period.

Jürgen Klopp's men pinned Wolves back from long periods and got their reward when Andy Robertson finished neatly in the 85th minute before an own goal from Hugo Bueno added gloss to the scoreline.

It was the third time this season that Liverpool have come from behind to win and they were one point

clear at the top of the table ahead of the 1400 GMT kick-offs after a fourth straight victory.

Klopp said his team deserved to win the game after their powerful second-half performance but stressed that they could not afford to keep falling behind.

"Turning games around is helpful in a season but we cannot rely on it, we cannot," he told the BBC.

"We have to play better in the first half of games generally. We are not stable yet, that is not possible. Too many things are new."

- Neto threat - Gary O'Neil's Wolves have struggled to find a cutting edge this season but they started brightly, with Pedro Neto and new signing Jean-Ricner Bellegarde a constant threat.

They got an early reward when Neto drove down the left, danced through Liverpool's defence and crossed from the byline,

finding Hwang, who finished crisply past goalkeeper Alisson Becker from an angle at the back post.

The high-energy home side looked dangerous every time they flew forward, with Liverpool, missing the suspended Virgil van Dijk and the injured Trent Alexander-Arnold, failing to exert any meaningful control. But Wolves' incisive approach play was not matched by the quality of finishing and they squandered a number of inviting opportunities to extend their lead.

Brazilian forward Matheus Cunha missed the best of those after more brilliant work from Neto, mistiming his jump horribly.

Liverpool created a number of chances towards the end of the first half, hinting at the attacking threat in their ranks. Klopp brought on Luis Diaz for Argentine midfielder Alexis Mac Allister at half time and the Colombian came close to

equalising with a header in the opening moments.

The German manager prepared to bring on Harvey Elliott and Darwin Nunez for Gakpo and Diogo Jota but Gakpo found time to level with his final touch.

Mohamed Salah, who had largely been kept quiet, received the ball on the right and fizzed it across the area, with Gakpo on hand to poke home. Liverpool had a golden chance to take the lead when Diaz found Nunez in front of goal but his shot was saved by Jose Sa.

Klopp's men were pinning Wolves back and took the lead with five minutes left on the clock when Robertson collected a poor clearance from Sa.

The Scotland defender drove forward, playing a one-two with Salah before finishing from close range.

Liverpool still had time for a third goal when Elliot's drive took a significant deflection off Bueno to beat Sa in added time.





In brief

Rescue 1122 high alert

RAWALPINDI (APP): The emergency service, Rescue 1122, which is fully equipped to cope with the possible flood in Nullah Lai, has been put on high alert to cope with emergencies. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesman, the rescuers deployed in low-lying areas particularly in Katarian, Gawalmandi, Sowan and other low-lying areas would remain on high alert round the clock to provide timely emergency response, medical treatment, and transportation facilities to possible flood victims. The Rescue 1122 has also requested people not to stand on the banks in low-lying areas along Nullah Lai during flood and follow instructions given by the flood control room. However, City District Government Rawalpindi has also completed all the arrangements to cope with the flood situation.

Man dies after electrocuted

RAWALPINDI (APP): A 31-year-old man was died after being electrocuted when he touched with electric wires during his job in Doke Syedan area here on Saturday. Rescue 1122 teams immediately rushed to the scene. According to eyewitnesses, the man hit the wires while doing paint work. He was completely burnt due to touching with electric wires. The victim was identified as 31-year-old Kamran. Rescue 1122 has shifted the body to the hospital.

Six stolen bike recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested motorcycle lifter and recovered 06 stolen motorcycles from his possession during crackdown here on Saturday. According to police spokesman, Naseerabad police held Faisal in the jurisdiction of Naseerabad who was involved in motorcycle theft and recovered 06 stolen motorcycles from his possession. Police have registered a case against him and started investigations. SP Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan commended police team and said that the safety of lives and properties of the citizens was the top priority and crackdown would be continued against the organized and dynamic gangs.

Mystery of murder solved

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have solved mystery of blind murder and arrested accused along with an accomplice in the jurisdiction of Dhamyal Police station here on Saturday. According to police spokesman, the accused Asma suspected that the deceased Sher Abbas had an illicit relationship with her daughter. The accused along with her brother and tenant Khurram shot and killed Mailk Sher Abbas. The Dhamiyal police started investigations by registering a case on the complaint of the victim's brother. According to the initial investigation, the accused owner of the house, her brother and the tenant turned out to be murderers. The brother of the accused involved in the incident will also be arrested. SP Sadder Muhammad Nabil Khokhar appreciated the performance of police team for tracing out blind murder and said that the arrested accused would be challaned with solid evidence and would be punished. No matter how vicious the accused are, they cannot escape from the grip of the law, he added.

Polio to be completely eradicated from Pakistan soon: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan Saturday vowed that his ministry was providing and utilizing all available resources to eradicate the crippling disease from Pakistan permanently till the end of the year 2023. "Polio-free Pakistan" is a national goal which is now close to our mission of ending polio", he said while talking to a Private news channel.

The caretaker government is making all out efforts to root out the polio virus from the country and these endeavors will produce positive

results, he assured and urged the citizens to cooperate with polio teams for the complete eradication of the crippling disease from the country.

"The Health Ministry has been actively involved in the Polio Programme in the past few months and we will ensure that the focus on polio remains unwavering.

We are regularly holding awareness drives and religious workshops in which we are collectively working with religious scholars to build community trust and convey vaccine safety and efficacy in communities around

Pakistan," he added.

The minister also called upon the federal, provincial and district administrations to address the challenges of persistently missed children and also encourage the people by raising awareness about the gravity of the situation.

Replying to a question, the minister replied that the future of our children was at stake and we must protect them at all costs.

Pakistan is committed to eradicate the deadly polio virus and will fulfill all its international obligations in this regard, he expressed.

2,027 people came under corruption scrutiny after SC verdict, tells Rashid

RAWALPINDI (PPI) Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Saturday described the Supreme Court's decision on PTI chairman's petition against NAB amendments as 'Triple S'.

In his statement on the social networking website X (formerly Twitter), Rashid said Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial had announced the Triple S (SSS) decision as he quit the office. This short, sweet and smart decision caused tremors in the politics of Pakistan and its effects would be clearly visible till Dec 30.

He said yesterday it was the breaking news in the whole world that 2,027 people had come under corruption scrutiny in Pakistan. The hard work made by the 16-month-long PDM govern-

ment to close their cases was undone by the court decision.

The former federal minister said the PDM government pushed the people into a blind alley and now the masses were cursing them for their wrongdoings. They got the level playing-field they were looking for in the form of revival of their cases, he remarked.

The senior politician said the Supreme Court had kept all the record in its custody and this record could not be destroyed or burnt now. The assembly in which the amendments were passed sometimes had not more than nine members. The looters were again exposed to the public. They could neither save their politics nor could they close their cases, he said.

He said those who had come to save the state

ended up destroying it because "people are the state". They (past rulers) played havoc with the lives of people in 16 months.

Rashid said, "They (rulers) have dropped another petrol bomb on the already poverty-stricken people. Electricity, petrol, sugar and flour prices are the problem of the poor, not of London's fugitives."

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court had ordered police to return all the vehicles of the Awami Muslim League (AML) chief, which were seized without any solid reason. The court allowed the intra-court appeal of the former federal minister and nullified the earlier decision of single bench. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) remarked that the vehicles of Sheikh Rashid were illegally confiscated.

Campaign against power theft will continue

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Caretaker Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum, Muhammad Ali Saturday said that the interim government has launched a strict drive against power theft in the country which was yielding fruitful results and no compromise in the fight against these mafias.

Talking to a private news channel, he said effective measures were being taken to improve the power supply system and eradication of power theft was among the top priorities.

He said that the government was taking practical steps to ensure the availability of gas in the winter season, adding,

far-reaching reforms in the energy sector are the need of the hour.

Minister expressed confidence in the success of this government-led campaign, with the full dedication of officers and staff.

He said the government has established a central control room in the power division to monitor the ongoing campaign against power theft.

Replying to a question, he said that the government will cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold free and fair elections, the conduct of transparent elections is our collective responsibility and it will be performed in line with the constitution.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Secretary KP Nadeem Aslam Choudry called on Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan. —APP Photo

ADC holds review meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad's Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East Usman Ashraf chaired a review meeting on anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and fever prevention on Saturday.

The meeting was also attended by Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates and other stakeholders, an ICT Spokesman said.

ADC Ashraf emphasized the importance of preventive measures against dengue fever, stating that it is not a dangerous disease but can be fatal if not treated promptly.

He directed officials to improve sanitation arrangements and prevent water accumulation in all areas of the city, including workshops and tire shops.

He also called for an awareness campaign to educate the public about dengue fever and its symptoms.

The meeting discussed a range of measures to control the spread of dengue fever in Islamabad, including: increased surveillance and monitoring of dengue hotspots, regular vector control activities, such as fogging and larviciding; public awareness campaigns to educate people about dengue fever and its prevention. Improved sanitation and waste management.

The ADC reassured the public that all possible resources would be used to control the deadly virus in Islamabad, with a special focus on rural areas.

The Islamabad administration is taking proactive steps to prevent the spread of dengue fever.

The review meeting and the measures discussed are a testament to the administration's commitment to protecting the health and well-being of its citizens.

Strict drive against power theft yields fruitful results, says Minister

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Hanif Abbasi rejects alliance with PPP

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Pakistan Muslim League central leader Hanif Abbasi has said Nawaz Sharif is coming to change the destiny of the country.

Addressing a press conference in Rawalpindi on Saturday, Abbasi asserted, "PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif will become the country's premier for the fourth time." He urged the party workers to get ready to welcome Nawaz Sharif to the country.

Nawaz Sharif will be given an unprecedented welcome in the garrison city of the country like he received in 2017 when he was ousted unlawfully from the PM slot, he added.

Mr Abbasi recalled the contributions made during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif. Mr Abbasi said, "During the tenure of Nawaz Sharif, electricity was generated up to 10,000-megawatt (MW)," he said. Speaking about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Mr Abbasi said, "The CPEC was about to be completed when Nawaz was the country's premier."

He made it clear to ask the PML-N about the performance between 2013 and 2018. "Don't ask about the performance of the 16 months during the tenure of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)," he observed, adding that we have to give an account of our part, not 12 parties.

He expressed his hopes that the PML-N supremo will end the menace of terrorism and that no one from the country will live unemployed. To save the country PML-N made difficult decisions and tried to save the country from default, he maintained, adding no paratroopers would come, and people kept coming to parties.

Taking a jibe at PPP, saying, Bhutto is no longer alive. "We have never said to contest elections together with the PPP. The PPP has nothing to do with the exception of chanting the slogan Bhutto Zinda Hai!"

Abbasi also highlighted the party's commitment to completing important projects, including the TB hospital project and finishing incomplete initiatives within a short span.

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Taking a jibe at PPP, saying, Bhutto is no longer alive. "We have never said to contest elections together with the PPP. The PPP has nothing to do with the exception of chanting the slogan Bhutto Zinda Hai!"

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another influential PML-N member, assured unity within the party and rejected the notion of political vendettas. "We are political people; we have never done politics of political revenge and we will never do it," he affirmed.

Reacting to his conference, Tauqeer Abbasi, the PPP District General Secretary asserted that Rawalpindi is not the exclusive political fiefdom of any individual.

Taking a dig at Hanif Abbasi, he said "Hanif Abbasi is an accused in the ephedrine case, and his appeal is still pending."

Furthermore, Tauqeer Abbasi pointed out that Hanif Abbasi is barred from contesting elections himself due to legal constraints. This statement highlights the limitations on Hanif Abbasi's direct political involvement.

"Criticizing the People's Party does not flatter them," He urged for a fair and level playing field in the upcoming elections, implying that such conditions would expose what he referred to as "political orphans" to potential electoral challenges.

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Most urgent proposal!

Saleem Tariq Lone

1. General. Making Pakistan in the image of the Riasat e Madina the way forward, In Sha Allah.

2. In order to transform Pakistan into the image of Riasat e Madina; the first and foremost condition is bound to be the political will and commitment of all the political parties, and the state institutions. Indeed, it would be an uphill and gigantic project, requiring an Action Plan with all requisite resources including ideological, human, management, financial, and technological.

3. The following brief but fundamental suggestions, covering all aspects and facets of our national life, are submitted for consideration and implementation by the Prime Minister and his team :-

a. The Council of Islamic Ideology, Pakistan, must be immediately tasked to prepare a comprehensive action plan, with immediate, short term, medium term, and long-term measures, to implement the Islamic Code of Life in letter and spirit in the light of its reports already prepared in this regard since its inception.

b. The federal/provincial governments and local bodies with active support and

participation of the public should focus on the following issues of national importance and evolve an effective strategy to achieve prompt and satisfactory results for comprehensive implementation of Islamic code of life in letter and spirit as envisaged in the Constitution of Pakistan.

c. Despite very specific and pertinent constitutional provisions namely articles 2/A, 25/A, 31, 37(a,b) calling for establishment of an Islamic Order based on the Quranic Injunctions and Sunnah, we as a nation and a polity are very far from those Objectives and our destination.

d. An amendment made by an Ordinance in article 227(D), giving sanctity to the sectarian bias in the constitution of Pakistan, must be repealed to re-emphasize unity among the Muslims of Pakistan.

e. Most importantly a universal system of Salaat and Zakaat will be established in the country. These two are the fundamental pillars of an Islamic order which must be established by the State.

i. All markets will be closed for Salaat timings, and Salaat system will be established in schools, colleges, universities and offices.

ii. Azaan system for the

five prayers will be established on all TV channels and radio stations as well.

iii. The whole system of Zakaat in Pakistan must be reviewed in light of the recommendations prepared by the Council of Islamic Ideology of Pakistan and implemented in letter and spirit. The citizens of Pakistan must be educated and motivated to pay Zakaat. This would become feasible only if the government of Pakistan establishes a transparent and reliable system of Zakaat collection and distribution to the deserving/needy persons.

f. Revision and introduction of a uniform educational curriculum for the students of schools, colleges and madaris to imbibe/introduce in the new generation true Islamic values free from the Sectarian bias, history and culture, besides proper exposure to the new advancements in contemporary knowledge of physical and social sciences.

(1) A well thought out strategy and action plan must be prepared and implemented to inculcate the Islamic values in the new generation by Practice and Example.

(2) The newly enacted law at the federal level (Act of 2017) and the Punjab province (Act of 2021) Compulsory

Teaching of the Holy Quran in schools and colleges with proper translation must be implemented in letter and spirit, by taking all requisite measures.

(3) The translation of the Quran e Hakeem published by the ILM foundation, Karachi, is acceptable to all Muslim sects. Alhamdulillah.

i. This federal law needs to be extended to all private schools and colleges in Islamabad, to whom the CDA has given land at very low rates to encourage quality education, but these schools have almost abolished Islamic values and education and subjects from their curriculum. Besides, the law introduced in the Punjab must also be made applicable to all private schools and colleges in the Punjab.

ii. Furthermore, the other three provinces including FATA, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir must also legislate in this regard.

g. Obscenity and Vulgarities in the electronic and print media, including educational campuses and offices, and introduction of effective measures to curb them, taking all stakeholders on board.

h. Effectively terminating Riba in all its facets and institutions in the light of the recommendations of Council of Islamic Ideology, Pakistan.

i. A detailed report on the implementation of a Riba free banking system and other economic institutions at the macro and micro levels is available on record. The need is to have these measures and recommendations implemented by the Federal Government.

j. Effectively improving the civil and criminal justice system, which is presently very inefficient and expensive, to make it really efficient and public friendly.

k. Various measures being introduced by the SCP to reduce the pendency of cases in the criminal and civil courts are producing good results.

l. However, more amendments in the relevant laws and procedures are required to be made to achieve the desired results.

m. Improving the system of elections and mushawarat (consultation) at the federal, provincial, and local levels, to ensure that persons of character, integrity and competence are elected to the parliament and other institutions vide articles 62 and 63 of the constitution of Pakistan.

n. The role of Pakistan Election Commission must be made more effective to achieve the above-mentioned goals.

o. Establishing an effective

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n. Establishing an effective

and efficient system of accountability for all institutions at all levels, including Civil and Military bureaucracy, the Judiciary, and the Parliamentarians.

o. In order to make the proceedings of the Parliament and the superior courts including SCP and HCS throughout Pakistan amenable to the general public and the media, dedicated channels must be set up which should give live coverage to such proceedings throughout their sessions. This would be an effective measure to oversee and improve the working of both the Parliament and the Superior Courts.

MAY ALLAH SWT BLESS, JUIDE AND PROTECT US ALL.

4. Conclusion. THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS ARE SUBMITTED FOR THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTATION BY THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN, HIS CABINET AND ALL CONCERNED MINISTRIES ON TOP PRIORITY.

Indeed it would be my great pleasure and honour to assist the government in implementing the above noted recommendations in letter and spirit. In Sha Allah

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172 more Afghans released
KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations announces the release of 172 Afghan refugees from foreign jails. 172 Afghan refugees who were imprisoned in foreign jails freed and returned to country, the Ministry of Refugee said in a statement. These Afghan refugees were detained for some time for the lack of legal documents, after their release, they were returned to country, said local border officials of Spin Boldak.

23 pharmacies shut
LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): The Public Health Department has shut 23 pharmacies for selling expired medicine. Maulvi Mohammad Qasim Riaz, Deputy Director of Information and Culture said a commission formed by Public Health Department had monitored 218 pharmacies in the past two days. He said representatives of the provincial government, intelligence, police HQs and municipality were part of the commission, which also included a public health law review team.

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

Muttaqi to attend meeting in Kazan



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi will attend the next Moscow format meeting on Afghanistan, which is scheduled to take place on September 29 in Kazan, Russia. The development was reported on Saturday by

upcoming meeting. He expressed hope that representatives of the current Afghan authorities will also participate. Rudenko noted that this meeting is a necessary step in the ongoing exchange of views on what is happening in Afghanistan. "And what the international community, in particular the countries of this format, could do to stabilize the general situation there," he added. The members of the Moscow format on Afghanistan include Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Karzai meets US special envoy for Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): During a virtual meeting, former Afghan president Hamid Karzai discussed significantly with US Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West. This dialogue underscores the ongoing international efforts to address the evolving situation in Afghanistan, with Karzai's involvement symbolizing a commitment to fostering diplomatic solutions and stability in the region.

and impact of girls' and boys' education on Afghanistan's economic growth and bright future, along with the necessary support for irrigation to benefit farmers and provide suitable alternative livelihoods." Furthermore, the intra-Afghan talks' significance in establishing sustainable peace and enhancing stability within the country was emphasised, with the hope that these talks can be facilitated expeditiously. Karzai expressed his appreciation for the humanitarian aid provided by the US to Afghanistan and underscored the importance of its continued support. Previously, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that Hamid Karzai currently "does not hold any political position in the country and is an ordinary individual."

Pentagon reopens Kabul bombing investigation

KABUL (Khaama Press): In response to intense criticism from American citizens, the commander of the US Central Command has issued orders for a new interview with soldiers who witnessed the suicide attack on Kabul Airport in 2021. According to Reuters, this interview is being conducted at the direction of General Michael E. Kurilla, the head of the US Central Command, as a military member of the country said that he had never been interviewed about the Kabul airport attack. The soldier added that he was wounded during the attack and could have helped thwart the advance of the attack. The interview was conducted with 22 American soldiers to review and obtain new and different information about the attack. In the attack on Kabul Airport in 2021 during the chaotic withdrawal of US forces, 170 Afghan civilians and 13 Pentagon soldiers were killed. However, some critics and the victims' families do not find the US Department

of Defense's report on the Kabul airport bombing transparent. According to US Department of Defense officials, this attack occurred on August 26, 2021, at the "Abbey Gate" due to a crowd surge, which the ISIS-K group claimed. Previously, US Congresswoman Lauren Boebert had called the withdrawal from Afghanistan shameful on her Twitter account and emphasized that there should be accountability for the deaths of 170 Afghan civilians and 13 American soldiers.

Job employment provided for at least 17 thousand in Kandahar

KANDAHAR (Agencies): Thousands of unemployed youth are working in dozens of development projects in Kandahar province. These youths are currently busy in cleaning canals, building roads and public facilities and several other projects in the city and some districts of Kandahar province. Saifullah Asim, the spokesman of Kandahar Municipality, told BNA that by conducting dozens of other development projects more job employment will be provided for the people in this province. According to reports, 17 thousand youths are currently working in 30 devel-



opment projects in Kandahar. The citizens of Kandahar express their happiness, by conducting such projects and say that with the implementation of development projects, both development

and prosperity will come and many youths get the opportunity to work and earn some money.

Russia to facilitate Afghan citizens

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): The issuance of more visas for Afghan nationals in Mazar-i-Sharif has been facilitated, says the Russian consul general in northern Balkh province. Alexey Pereverzev said this at a meeting with Balkh Governor Haji Mohammad Yousuf Wafa at his office in Mazar-i-Sharif. The officials discussed diplomatic ties between the two countries, enhanced bilateral trade and econom-

ic development, the governor's office said. Pereverzev thanked the governor for ensuring security of the Russian consulate and thereby enabling the mission to carry out its routine activities in a satisfactory manner. He also pointed to friendly relations between Afghanistan and Russia, suggesting the two countries should further strengthen their ties. The diplomat assured the gover-

IEA comes out in support of Azerbaijan

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) supports Azerbaijan regarding the border issue of Karabakh with Armenia. IEA's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid has said. "First of all, I want to say that we have always advocated and advocate that all countries respect each other's borders and territorial integrity. As you know, the issue of territorial integrity for Afghanistan is extremely important. I think that it is also important for Azerbaijan to the same extent," Mujahid said in an interview with Azerbaijani TV, Trend reported on Saturday. He also said that IEA is ready to accept an Azerbaijani diplomatic mission to Kabul. "We are 100 percent ready to open the Azerbaijani Embassy in Afghanistan. We are ready, so to speak, to level the ground and carry out the appropriate work. We, in turn, would also like to have our representatives in Azerbaijan," Mujahid said.

'Historical monuments exist in country'

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, Deputy Minister of Culture and Arts, says that according to a measure 15,000 to 2,000 historical monuments exist in the country and 5,000 of them already registered. The Ministry of Information and Culture of the country, were able to identify around 15,000 to 20,000 historical monuments during past 40-year wars the Ministry said in a statement. Deputy Azizi expressed concern that during the 40 years of war, most of the historical monuments were seriously damaged and need to be restored. He further stated that each province has its own historical reservoirs, and there are dozens of historical reservoirs from the time before Islam. The historical monuments exist in Afghanistan are all more than a hundred years age, he added. According to him, Herat is at the top of the provinces which has most of historical monuments. Deputy Azizi claim saying that currently the support organizations are not very active in this sector and the Ministry of Information and Culture is lack of funds.

Officials urged to treat people based on Sharia

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate's leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, reportedly on a visit to Uruzgan, urged officials to address the challenges of the citizens based on Sharia. A spokesman for the Uruzgan governor, Ihsanullah Hamas, said that the Islamic Emirate's leader held separate meetings with religious clerics, tribal elders and local officials and stressed the need to address existing problems in the province. "In this meeting with the security officials, judges and provincial administrative officials, (he) instructed them to address the problems of the people on time and address all of the problems within the Islamic Sharia," he said. The tribal elders in their

meeting with the Islamic Emirate leader called for the interim government's attention to development projects. Hamas said that the interim government will soon start development projects. "In the near future, the construction of a street which was pledged by the governor will begin. Also work on the Ghazian electricity dam will begin," he said. This comes as political analysts said that the presence of the Islamic Emirate leader among the public boosts trust building between the interim government and people. "This is the good news. We are hoping that he would appear not only in Uruzgan but also in northern areas and other areas



wherever there is a gathering, and appear to the media, in order to hear the problems and voices of the people," said Javid Momand, a political analyst. "Uruzgan is one of the centers of the Taliban and some important officials of theirs (Taliban) have also come to Uruzgan. Maybe the leader of the Islamic Emirate is trying to prevent the opposition in Uruzgan and give the people of Uruzgan hope," said Wahid Faqiri, an international relations analyst. Earlier, the leader of the Islamic Emirate reportedly traveled to Herat, Farah, Helmand, Zabul, Ghazni, Maidan Wardak and Kabul.

Escalating terrorism, drug trafficking from Afghanistan spark concerns

KABUL (Khaama Press): Imam Ali Rahman, the President of Tajikistan, expressed concern during the fifth summit of Central Asian countries' leaders, which took place in the city of Dushanbe. He voiced his concerns about the increasing threats of terrorism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan into Tajikistan. According to Sputnik News, Imam Ali Rahman reported that Tajik security forces thwarted a terrorist attack on the eve of Tajikistan's Independence Day, launched from the Afghan border. Tajikistan's state news agency, Khovar, reported earlier this month that three "Jamiat Ansarullah" armed group members launched an attack equipped with

advanced weaponry from the Badakhshan border in Afghanistan but were neutralized by Tajik security forces. Referencing a thwarted attack, the President of Tajikistan has highlighted the alarming presence of terrorist groups from Afghanistan actively trying to infiltrate Central Asian countries. Additionally, the President expressed growing apprehension regarding the surge in drug trafficking into Tajikistan. This increase in illicit drug trade threatens public health and safety and underscores the need for concerted efforts to combat drug-related issues in the region. Imam Ali Rahman added, "Five tons of drugs were seized in 2022, which



is 22% higher than in 2021." The fifth summit of Central Asian country leaders is set to tackle a comprehensive agenda focused on trade expansion, security assurance, and the promotion of economic growth. These nations are coming together to strengthen their regional ties and address pressing issues crucial for their collective progress. Through this summit, Central Asian leaders aim to foster a secure and prosperous environment that promotes trade and the overall well-being of their citizens.

ARCS provides free health services for 632 patients

KABUL (Agencies): The mobile health team of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has provided free health services to 632 patients in Musahi district of Kabul. According to a statement released by Afghan Red Crescent Society, the organization believes that providing services through mobile health clinics is an effective step, in areas of the country where people do not have access to health services. In addition to donating free medicines to the needy, the aforementioned health team, also provides necessary health advice and guidelines, during which, the mobile health team has provided free medicines



and health advice to 632 patients, during the last two weeks.

Saffron exports down from previous years: Businesspeople

KABUL (TOLOnews): Businessmen in the country said that the export of saffron has decreased this year compared to previous years. According to them, the challenges of issuing visas and banking restrictions are factors that have had a negative effect on the country's saffron exports. "Afghanistan's Herat saffron has good quality all over the world. The export of the plant is carried out all over the world, especially in Asian and European countries, but the reason for the decrease in saffron exports compared to previous years is the restrictions on issuing visas and the banking system, but there is still exports," said Mohammad Nazir, a trader. "Saffron is a very good source of income for our country. Especially for the farmers of the west region, saffron is cultivated in all provinces of Afghanistan," said Khanjan Alokozai, a member of ACCI. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock estimates that more than 23,000 tons of

saffron will be collected from the fields of various provinces in the current solar year. "Last year we harvested 23,000 tons of saffron and this year we hope that this amount will increase," said Musbahuddin Mustaeen, a spokesman for the ministry. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce

reported that in the first three months of the solar year, more than seven million US dollars' worth of saffron was exported to various countries of the world. During the first quarter of this year, an amount of 9, 122 kg of saffron has been exported, the value of which is \$7.1 million, and

compared to the first quarter of last year it increased by 12%," said Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, a spokesman for the Industry and Commerce. Based on the information of saffron exporters, one kilo of saffron is bought and sold for nearly one thousand US dollars in world markets.





ISLAMABAD: Motorists filling the tanks as the fuel prices are on its peak comparing to the 76th years of the history of country.

BJP's machinations for other false flag operations

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: BJP repeating its past practice of gaining political mileage ahead of upcoming elections is trying to create a "false" casus belli to regain lost popularity.

After facing a defeat in states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka, they are trying to capitalise on anti-Pakistan sentiments of general populace to gain landslide victory in upcoming election.

Accusing Pakistan of harbouring terrorists and supporting extremist elements in India, Modi's tested scheme to win elections is once again on public display.

According to Indian media reports, on September 16, multiple officers and soldiers of the Indian forces were killed in an encounter with terrorists in the Uri sector, resulting in a dozen casualties.

Similar reports of Indian forces operation came from Anantnag on September 12, where as per their narrative, 1 x Lieutenant colonel, 1 x major and 1 x DSP were killed.

The evidence on ground is contrary to what is claimed by Indian Media's war mongering hysteria. Video messages of inhabitants living

close to LOC reported a complete calm and denied any happenings of sort reported by Indian Media on the behest of Modi Sarkar.

Today, BJP biased Zee TV aired a Modi's address of 4 March 2019 as "live" to add colour to this political rhetoric for gaining a favourable poll opinion for BJP. *The images of the area are clearly reflective of usual activity where local shepherds are seen with their herds. Such activity is out of question in an area where Indian Forces are engaged in so called "fierced encounter". *

The "False Flag" operation is a theatrical drama staged by India to achieve multiple objectives, including diverting global attention from human rights violations in occupied Kashmir by blaming Pakistan for terrorism.

In anticipation of Indian elections, the Modi government has initiated a campaign to demonize its own citizens and military officers.

It is evident from multiple pieces of evidence and witnesses that India wants to recreate the Pulwama drama to achieve reprehensible political goals once again.

Global media reports and audio-video evidence also confirm that Indian forces are spreading terrorism

along the Line of Control to achieve political ambitions, using false encounters and fake news to fuel a war frenzy, which is Modi's old tactic.

There is also evidence from the Indian media that the Modi government is trying to disrupt the ceasefire agreement on the Line of Control.

In the face of growing chaos in Rajouri and Anantnag, India is resorting to baseless allegations against Pakistan to deflect media and public scrutiny of its problems.

Just a few days ago, the killing of five Indian soldiers in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri sector was a failed attempt by Modi to play politics with his own soldiers' blood.

India's aim remains to divert attention from its internal issues by continuously violating the ceasefire, ensuring a state of war on the Line of Control.

The sole purpose of this entire drama is to create a pretext to break the ceasefire and escalate hostilities against Pakistan, to cover up its internal failures, distract the public and set the stage for victory in next elections.

Ex Governor of IIOJ&K Satya Pal Sharma is on record in highlighting a venture similar to Pulwama by BJP government for vested political mileage.

PML-N plans power show in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has planned to hold a public rally in Lahore on October 21 to welcome party supreme Nawaz Sharif upon his return to Pakistan from United Kingdom, ending his roughly four-year exile.

PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif in an interaction with the media on Tuesday in London made the eagerly anticipated announcement of the three-time former premier's return. Sources said that party leadership has decided to hold a 'massive' rally at Minar-e-Pakistan on October 21. The party supreme will reach Minar-e-Pakistan from airport in a bullet proof container via rally.

In this connection, the PML-N leadership has directed all party workers across the country to reach Lahore on October 21. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader Nawaz Sharif has summoned Maryam Nawaz to London immediately.

Maryam Nawaz, chief organizer of the PML-N, will likely proceed to London next week, party sources said. "She will meet her father Nawaz Sharif and will stay in London for one week," sources further said. According to PML-N sources, Maryam will brief Nawaz Sharif about his homecoming reception plan. They will consult over finalization of the homecoming reception of Nawaz Sharif in Lahore. "They will also discuss political and constitutional matters," sources said. "Nawaz Sharif's reception plan will be finalized after Maryam Nawaz's return from London," they added.

Wassan updates Zardari

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Former Sindh minister and senior PPP leader Manzoor Wassan called on former president and party co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari at Bilawal House in Karachi on Saturday.

During the meeting, political situation prevailing in the country with particular reference to Sindh was discussed. Manzoor Wassan also updated Asif Zardari about the political manoeuvring in Khairpur District.

Manzoor Wassan assured Asif Zardari that the workers are ready for the elections and this time the PPP will sweep the polls for national and provincial assemblies in Khairpur. He also briefed Asif Zardari on the development works completed in Khairpur during the last PPP tenure.

Operation in Katcha area discussed

LARKANA (INP): A meeting jointly headed by Police and Rangers officials was briefed on a full throttled operation against bandits and their support network in katcha area on Saturday. The meeting headed by DIG Javed Jiskani and Rangers officials, was briefed on operational details. "Pakistan Army troops and intelligence agencies would also be part of the operation," the session was briefed.

"This operation will also be launched in pakka area along with the katcha area and will continue until complete annihilation of bandits," the session was informed. "The mobile phone and internet services will be suspended in katcha areas during the operation," meeting briefed.

"All entry and exit points of the area will be kept under thorough checking during the operation in katcha area," officials informed. The Sindh Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Maqbool Baqar on Thursday decided to launch operation in katcha area with police, rangers and assistance of Army troops.

Caretaker chief minister also ordered termination of internet services in katcha area. "This year 218 persons were kidnapped and 207 of the abductees were recovered," IG Police informed the cabinet in a briefing on law and order. "Still 11 persons have been hostages, three of whom in Shaheed Benazirabad, seven in Larkana and one in Sukkur district," police chief said.

Siraj asks govt to reconsider costly deals with IPPs

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Siraj-ul-Haq has urged the government to reconsider its agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and, if necessary, take the matter to the international court of justice in the event of any hindrances.

While addressing the "National Energy Conference" in Islamabad on Saturday, he also declared the JI's intention to approach the Supreme Court to challenge these costly agreements. The conference organized by JI was attended by power sector experts, economists, and engineers. They highlighted challenges and forwarded recommendations.

Sirajul Haq emphasized the urgent need to complete the IP Gas Pipeline and expressed disappointment over the government's inability to resist external pressures, particularly from the United States, which have impeded the import of

affordable fuel from neighboring countries. He lamented that the government was seeking approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) even to allow struggling consumers to pay their hefty bills in installments, asserting that the nation's sovereignty had been compromised at the hands of international lending agencies and foreign powers.

The JI chief criticized the former government for implementing power generation projects solely for political gain, disregarding their cost implications on the financially vulnerable. He questioned the rationale behind choosing imported coal-based projects when domestic coal resources were available, and why projects reliant on imported oil were constructed far from the sea, incurring unnecessary transportation expenses.

He urged the government to shift its focus from sending high bills to consumers towards addressing the billions lost due to line

losses and power theft. He pointed out that the ruling elite benefited from free electricity, resulting in significant losses to the national treasury, while the burden fell on the impoverished citizens.

Highlighting past administrations' negligence, Siraj condemned their failure to invest in hydel electricity generation and other cost-effective energy sources, such as wind energy, which could have yielded thousands of megawatts. He called for accountability of the influential figures behind the costly IPP projects, asserting that the nation deserved transparency regarding the purposes and realities surrounding these projects. The JI chief underlined that people in the country are grappling with inflation, unemployment, and poverty due to flawed policies adopted by previous governments. The caretakers, he said, gave continuation to the former policies instead of providing relief to the masses.

Ceremony of Combat Commanders' course held

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Graduation Ceremony of No 58 Combat Commanders' Course was held at Airpower Centre of Excellence (ACE). Air Marshal Abdul Moed Khan, Deputy Chief of Air Staff Air Defence, was the Chief Guest at the occasion.

While addressing the graduating officers, the Chief Guest emphasized the significance of their achievement and the weight of the responsibilities that now rests upon their shoulders. He highlighted that they have been trained at ACE in an environment with a near realistic replication of the latest threats. Deputy Chief of Air Staff Air Defence stressed that, "As Combat Commanders, you have ascended to an

elite rank within our distinguished force. This achievement signifies your exceptional capabilities and marks a pivotal moment in your careers. Your successful completion of this arduous training has prepared you to face the challenges that lie ahead with unwavering resolve."

Underscoring the critical role graduates of Combat Commanders Course play in safeguarding national security and protecting the integrity of Pakistan's airspace, the Chief Guest urged the graduating officers to leverage their training and expertise to optimally employ the state-of-the-art equipment at their disposal. He further stated, "The nation looks upon you as the vanguard of our defence, and it is crucial that you remain vigilant,

adaptive, and prepared for any eventuality."

The Chief Guest also appreciated the tremendous efforts of the faculty and expressed his satisfaction that all schools of PAF ACE are working in complete harmony for training the future combat leadership of Pakistan Air Force.

Earlier, the Chief Guest awarded certificates and trophies to the graduating officers who underwent a strenuous and professionally demanding course. Chief of the Air Staff Trophy for overall best performance amongst combat pilots was awarded to Sqn Ldr Rana Ahsan Ishfaq while Air Officer Commanding Air Defence Trophy for overall best performance amongst combat controllers was awarded to Sqn Ldr Junaid Ahmed.

‘NAB should not to be used for political victimization’

E.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party Central Secretary Information Faisal Kareem Kundi has emphasized that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) must not be used for political purposes or targeting political parties.

In a press conference at the PPP Central Punjab Secretariat on Saturday, Kundi pointed out that during the PPP's government, there was no political prisoner, highlighting his party's commitment to a fair political environment. He also mentioned that the PPP in Sindh welcomes all political parties and intends to form a political alliance in Punjab with no objections expected.

Additionally, Kundi revealed that Asif Ali Zardari had been assigned the task of establishing contacts with other political parties, while Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

would remain in Lahore for a few more days. He expressed concern over the rise in petroleum prices, "which would overburden the public." Kundi also mentioned a recent Supreme Court decision, expressing hope for justice from the judiciary. He reiterated the PPP's consistent stance that the NAB should not be used to disrupt political parties.

Responding to a question regarding their alliance, as it had recently concluded, Kundi emphasized that the PPP doesn't rely on crutches in politics and questioned the Election Commission's delay in announcing the date of general elections.

Regarding the election date, he mentioned they would wait until November 30 but stressed the importance of timely elections to address the current economic and political insta-

bility. He asserted that Pakistan, as a nuclear country, should not operate on an ad-hoc basis, emphasizing the need for elections and respecting the mandate of the winning party. PPP leader Nadeem Afzal Chan echoed the same sentiments, stating the reasons behind their rejection of accountability processes in Saif-ur-Rehman and Javed Iqbal's eras.

He emphasized the commitment to the Charter of Democracy and the importance of respecting the vote. Chan called for a level playing field for all political parties during elections, distinguishing between former government allies and ideological allies. He mentioned the PPP chairman's determination to face the law and constitution. PPP Central Punjab Information Secretary Shahzad Saeed Cheema, Neelum Jabbar, Nayab Jan and Faiza Malik were also present.

Iran: One year after the death of Mahsa Amini

TEHRAN (Agencies): Saturday marks one year since Mahsa Amini died, sparking protests across Iran and leading to a chain of events, the effects of which remain fresh in the minds of Iranians, Amini, also known as Jina, was a 22-year-old woman from the northwestern province of Kurdistan who had travelled to capital Tehran with her family.

She was coming out of a metro station in Tehran with family members when she was arrested by morality police for alleged non-compliance with the country's mandatory hijab rules that have been in place since shortly after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution. She was put in a van and taken to a so-called re-education centre where women receive guidance on how to dress properly. Surveillance camera footage released by Iranian law enforcement showed

how she collapsed when she was there and was taken to a hospital, where she died days later. Iranian authorities said she suffered an attack because of pre-existing conditions, but her parents countered that account, saying she may have been beaten.

A demonstration first formed in front of the hospital she was taken to in Tehran, followed by protests in her hometown of Saqqez, which then spread to cities and towns across the country. After months, by the time street protests gradually died down earlier this year, foreign-based human rights organisations say more than 500 people were killed, including at least 70 minors.

The only official death toll released by the authorities came in early December last year when the protests were still raging. At the time, the state security council of the inte-

rior ministry said more than 200 people were dead including dozens of security forces, those killed in "terrorist acts", those killed by foreign-affiliated groups and framed as killed by the state, "rioters" and "armed anti-revolutionary elements who were members of secessionist groups".

Thousands were also arrested during the demonstrations, most of whom were released after a pardon by Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei in February. But some, including a number of journalists, remain imprisoned. Seven people have so far been executed after being convicted by Iranian courts in cases related to the protests. The issue of hijab and women's rights has been at the centre of demonstrations inside and outside Iran, with Amini's name and chants of "woman, life, freedom" becoming common refrains.

Abductors demand Rs50m ransom for Kumar's release in Kashmore

KASHMORE (INP): The kidnappers on Saturday demanded a hefty Rs50 million ransom for the release of kidnapped child Sagar Kumar who was snatched along with some other people more than a month ago from a hotel in Kashmore.

Reportedly, the abductors placed a phone call to the family of Sagar Kumar and demanded Rs50 million ransom for his release. They threatened to kill Kumar and throw his body into River Indus if the family failed to pay the ransom. The dacoits also warned the family to not waste their time and lend an ear to the false promises of feudal lords and police. "If the ransom is not paid, we will kill

Kumar," they threatened.

It is pertinent to mention here that people staged a sit-in on Dera Morr situated on the border area of Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan for four days, demanding the recovery of Kumar and other abductees. Protest demonstrations were also held in various cities across Sindh. Four protests were held at Teen Talwar area in Karachi.

The organisers of the Minority Rights and Aurat March held two protests early this week at Teen Talwar in Clifton to condemn the failure of the police and the caretaker Sindh cabinet in ensuring the recovery of Sagar Kumar and another

abductee Priya Kumari. However, three other abductees Mukhi Jagdish, Jaideep Kumar, and Dr Munir were recovered. But the protesters rued that the Sindh police registered no FIR of these abductions.

The family of Kumar said that four times the authorities assured them of his recovery in 48 hours but to no avail. They said that provincial Law Minister Umar Somroo also promised that Kumar would be recovered within 48 hours but four days had passed by and there was no trace of his whereabouts. Kumar and others were taken away by dacoits when they attacked a hotel in Kashmore 45 days ago.