

Only 3.06% pass CSS exam

ISLAMABAD (INP): Only 3.06 percent candidates passed the Central Superior Services (CSS) competitive exam as the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) on Monday declared results for written examination of CSS 2023. As per announcement made by the FPSC on social media platform X (twitter), a total 28,024 candidates had applied for the written exam and out of which 13,008 candidates appeared in it.

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Procedure Act adjourned till Oct 3

SC hears pleas challenging law limiting CJP's powers under way

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Monday observed that parliament's SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 was not an attempt to clip the top judge's rights by devolving the suo motu powers to a three-member committee.

The new CJP passed the remarks during a full court hearing on the petitions challenging the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023. The historic hearing, which was held almost throughout the day, has been adjourned till October 3. The hearing was seen as historic because, for the first time in the country's judicial history, the Supreme Court allowed live telecast of proceedings on the petitions challenging the contentious law seeking to regulate suo motu powers of the country's top judge.

During the hearing, CJP Isa said arguments in the case will begin afresh because the new bench has been formed. There were three applications to make a full court, which had been approved, CJP Isa observed. Ahead of the hearing on Monday, the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan submitted the federal government's response in the matter, requesting the court to reject the petitions against the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act.

"Petitions against acts of parliament are inadmissible. [Therefore,] the petitions against the Practice and Procedure Act should be dismissed," the response submitted by the government contended. Sources confirmed to media that the decision was made in the full court meeting ahead of the proceedings. To this end, five cameras were installed in the courtroom number one. Four cameras were installed in the visitors' gallery and

one was installed for the lawyers' rostrum in front of the judges' docks.

The full court was constituted by newly-appointed Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and includes Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed and Justice Musarrat Hilali. Prior to this, a full court meeting was held to consider live broadcasting of Monday's proceedings and ponder over guidelines for effective hearing of cases. According to the sources, instructions for the live broadcast were issued yesterday (Sunday) — hours after Justice Isa took oath as the CJP. Upon his arrival, CJP Isa — who reached the apex court in his personal car without protocol — said to the SC staff: "People come to the Supreme Court to solve their problems. Treat visitors like guests."

He further said that the doors to justice should be kept open. There are nine applications, the CJP remarked at the outset of the hearing, requesting Advocate Khawaja Tariq Rahim to begin his arguments. The CJP asked counsel Rahim to read the Act and "forget the past". Justice Ayesha asked the advocate what the effect of Section 5, which gives the right of appeal, would be if the law is sustained. "Given that the full bench will hear the case. Would the appeal not be heard?"

"Parliament formed a committee of 3 judges to decide on the matters of public interest," Rahim said while referring to the practice act. To which

Justice Mandokhail asked, "What does Article 191 of the Constitution say? 'The Constitution empowers Parliament to legislate,'" Khawaja said, adding that the apex court had made its rules through the full court. During the reading of the Act, Justice Mansoor remarked: "What I understand of your point is that if all this is done by the full court, then it is acceptable; If Parliament does this, then it is wrong." "Can the powers of the chief justice be nullified by legislation? Justice Musarat asked.

Upon this Justice Mandokhail asked if the legislation abolished the powers of the chief justice or the Supreme Court. Are you satisfied if the chief justice has unlimited power to form a bench? Justice Athar questioned, while both CJP Isa and Justice Mazhar requested advocate Rahim to mention which section of the law the petitioner objected to and what article of the constitution the act is in conflict with. "Can't three judges sit and interpret the constitution?" he pointed out. However, the CJP responded that only the number is being discussed in the legislation not the competency of the judges. As a number of pertinent questions regarding the power and authority of parliament were raised, the CJP reiterated that the advocate should take down the questions, and respond to them later.

"My colleagues are asking you good questions," he said, asking the lawyer to take his time in responding to them. Furthermore, the CJP chided counsel Rahim for referring to his "personal opinion" during the arguments and asked him to stick to the law. "What is this 'personal opinion', please talk about the law," the CJP said. He further asked: "Whose right can be taken away by this law?"

(Continued on Back Page)

Ex-MPA calls on Zardari



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Former MPA of Borewala and a well-known political figure, Abdul Hameed Bhatti, met the Co-Chairman of the People's Party and former President, Asif Ali Zardari, at Bilawal House in Lahore.

On the occasion of the meeting, former MPA Abdul Hameed Bhatti expressed his confidence in the Chairman of the People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Asif Ali Zardari, and announced his rejoining of the Pakistan People's Party. It should be remembered that Abdul Hameed Bhatti was elected as an MPA in 1993 on the ticket of the People's Party.

Solangi greets PTV News

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Monday congratulated a team of PTV News which ensured live broadcast of a day-long proceedings of the apex court on a case related to the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023.

"The team of PTV News deserves appreciation for bringing a day-long live broadcast of a very important case (Practice and Procedure Act) of the Supreme Court to the public for the first time in the history of Pakistan," the minister said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

IHC issues notice to FIA on Imran's bail plea

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court Monday issued a notice to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's petition seeking post-arrest bail in the cipher case.

The court's notices came during the hearing of Khan's bail petition challenging the special court's decision in the said case last week. The plea was filed by the PTI chairman on Saturday and was fixed for hearing today. The special court — established under the Official Secrets Act — had rejected the post-arrest bail pleas of Khan and his party's Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the case of the missing cipher.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued notices in response to the plea filed by lawyer Salman Safdar on behalf of the PTI chief. The PTI chief's legal team repeatedly urged for an early hearing of the case, following which the IHC chief justice emphasised that there is a proper procedure in place, and the case will be decided accordingly. The FIA has been directed to submit its response to the PTI chief's petition.

Khan and Qureshi are on judicial remand in the cipher case till September 26. Last month, the FIA booked PTI chief and his party's vice chairman under the Official Secrets Act for allegedly misplacing and misusing the classified document for vested political interests. Subsequently, both leaders were arrested in connection with the investigation into the case and a special court was established under the Official Secrets Act to try the accused.

The controversy first emerged on March 27, 2022, when Khan — just days before his ouster in April 2022 — brandished a letter, claiming that it was a cipher from a foreign nation, which mentioned that his government should be removed from power. He

did not reveal the contents of the letter nor mention the name of the nation that had sent it. But a few days later, he named the United States and said that Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs Donald Lu had sought his removal.

The cipher was about former Pakistan ambassador to the US Asad Majeed's meeting with Lu. The former prime minister, claiming that he was reading contents from the cipher, said that "all will be forgiven for Pakistan if Imran Khan is removed from power". Then on March 31, the National Security Committee (NSC) took up the matter and decided to issue a "strong demarche" to the country for its "blatant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan".

Later, after his removal, Khan's successor Shehbaz Sharif convened another meeting of the NSC, which came to the conclusion that it had found no evidence of a foreign conspiracy in the cipher. The cipher case against the former premier became serious after his principal secretary Azam Khan stated before a magistrate as well as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) that the former PM had used the US cipher for his "political gains" and to avert a vote of no-confidence against him.

The former bureaucrat, in his confession, said when he provided the ex-premier with the cipher, he was "euphoric" and termed the language a "US blunder". The former prime minister, according to Azam, then said that the cable could be used for "creating a narrative against establishment and opposition". Azam said the US cipher was used in political gatherings by the PTI chairman, despite his advice to avoid such acts. He mentioned that the former prime minister also told him that the cipher could be used to divert the public's attention towards "foreign involvement" in the opposition's no-confidence motion.



TRIPOLI: Rescue workers busy in relief work after powerful earthquake in Derna city of Libya.

The Frontier Post

Shehbaz congratulates CJP F.P. Report

LAHORE: PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif has expressed hope that a new era of justice will now begin under the leadership of newly-appointed Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa. In a statement issued here on Monday, the former PM congratulated Justice Qazi Faez Isa on assuming the position of Chief Justice of Pakistan and expressed hope that now the traditions of justice will prevail in the country.



DOHA: US citizens Siamak Namazi and Morad Tahbaz are embraced after disembarking from a jet in Qatar.

PM to address UNGA on 22nd

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The United Nations on Monday released the schedule of speakers for the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), according to which Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will deliver the speech on Friday (September 22).

According to the schedule, the "General Debate" (as it is formally known) will kick off at 9 a.m. Tuesday (September 19) with an address from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

The Secretary General will be followed by the UNGA President Dennis Francis, a diplomat from Trinidad and Tobago, who will preside from the General Assembly dais for the entire week. As per longstanding tradition, Brazil will deliver the first address from a national delegation and second one by the host country of the United Nations, i.e. the United States.

Reports of selling arms to Kyiv rejected

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday rejected the reports alleging sale of Pakistani weapons to Ukraine to get IMF bailout package for Pakistan.

Responding to media queries, the Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that the story about sale of weapons to Ukraine for IMF bailout package was baseless and fabricated. She said, "The IMF Standby arrangement for Pakistan was successfully negotiated between Pakistan and the IMF to implement difficult but essential economic reforms. Giving any other colour to these negotiations is disingenuous."

The FO Spokesperson said, "Pakistan maintains a policy of strict neutrality in the dispute between Ukraine and Russia and in that context, does not provide any arms and ammunition to them. Pakistan's defense exports are always accompanied with strict end user requirements."

Report sought from Attock jailer

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A Special Court set up under the Official Secrets Act has sought a report from the superintendent of Attock Jail for not arranging a telephonic conversation of the PTI chairman with his sons.

PTI chief's counsel Shiraz Ranjha told the court that his client had not yet been convicted in the cipher case. He argued that the ex-prime minister was in Attock Jail on judicial remand. The Official Secrets Act or the Punjab Jail Laws were applicable to the criminals while the former prime minister was still not guilty in the case, he added. Advocate Ranjha said all the accused had the facility of telephonic conversation with their family members. They have been enjoying the facility for the last three years.

PPP again demand election schedule

F.P. Report

OKARA: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a press conference in Okara demanded of the administration, government and the judiciary to provide justice to the family of Asif Baloch over the killing of his brother. The Chair PPP offered condolences to Asif Baloch and his family. The PPP is a family and is with the bereaved family during this difficult time, Chairman Bilawal said. He said that he will personally contact the current CM regarding this case with the hope that justice is served.

Chairman Bilawal said that with the manner in which the Jiyalas of Okara received the PPP's long march through mammoth gatherings at various locations made it apparent why Shaheed Mughtarma Benazir Bhutto considered it a 'mini Larkana'. It was through the support of the people that we were successful in achieving the goal of ousting a puppet PM through the constitutional and democratic tool of the no-confidence motion for the first time in the country's history. Even now, the country is riddled with a plethora of issues that have not all been solved solely through the imprisonment of Imran Khan. Today too, Pakistan is faced with an influx of issues, be it the remainders of the actions of the puppet PM, those on an international level, economic turmoil, law and order or terrorism. Only a party that has prioritized the wellbeing of the common man, the farmer, labourer, youngster and those from all walks of life, over the elite or its own interest, can make conscious decisions and consider their implications on the average Pakistani, and this is the PPP.

The PPP's track record of resolving issues confronting people. In 2008-13 Pakistan was facing food shortage, Law and order situation, world recession, we were importing edibles despite being an agriculture country. In that situation the PPP started BISP to give relief to the poor women of Pakistan. We improved the agriculture and within a year we started exporting wheat, sugar and rice. The PPP represents the common people of Pakistan and not the elite. Today if we have to overcome this crisis then we the PPP will do it and once again, we will do it Insha Allah.

Responding to questions by the journalists, Chair PPP said that if I had been in this cabinet then I would have suggested to the prime minister that the foreign minister should be sent to the United Nations. The caretaker government have limited space to work generally and specially in foreign affairs. The request to the ECP is to give election date and schedule so that we can come out of these issues. After the election date I will be able to tell what kind of alliance the PPP is making or not making.

Elahi handed over to Punjab ACE on remand

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi Monday found himself embroiled in yet another case, as he will now be headed to Lahore with the Punjab's Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) following an approval of their request seeking his transitory remand.

After an anti-terrorism court (ATC) ordered to send him to jail on judicial remand in the case pertaining to the attack on the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC), the Punjab ACE stepped in seeking the senior politician's remand in a new case filed in Lahore for misusing his power and position to shuffle provincial bureaucracy.

According to a first information report (FIR), Elahi has been booked under section 5/2(d)47 of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) for illicitly misusing his position and power as the then-chief minister of Punjab

and transferring Muhammad Khan Bhatti, an employ in a special department of the Punjab Assembly, to a principal secretary. ATC judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain approved the Punjab ACE request to issue Elahi's one-day transitory remand after reserving its verdict in the wake of arguments presented by the anti-graft department.

"Can't the chief minister appoint his own chief secretary? He has the authority to appoint his own staff," Elahi's lawyer Sardar Abdul Razzaq said during his arguments, revealing that the case against the politico was filed a day earlier. He contested the case was booked after a lower court in Lahore discharged his client on Sunday. Elahi, however, wasn't released due to the non-payment of surety bonds.

The PTI leader's counsel said that his client has been targeted due to political vengeance since January

and argued that he was arrested again after being discharged from the courtroom. Earlier, the court had ordered Elahi to be sent to jail under judicial remand during the hearing of the FJC attack case in the very establishment.

"When will Parvez Elahi's life be spared?" the judge asked. The politician's lawyer said that his client was being continuously moved from one city to another. Elahi, too, was present in the courtroom the rostrum to speak before the judge. "Yesterday, I was taken back to Lahore from Islamabad," Elahi lamented. The judge told Elahi and his lawyer regarding the non-payment of surety bonds. "The bail bonds were to be submitted today," the politician's lawyer said. The PTI president said his meeting with the family has not been arranged during the period of arrest. "Issue an order for a meeting with family."



2 abducted victims recovered: SP Cantt

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant operation, the SP Cantt, Waqas Rafiq, announced the safe recovery of two abducted individuals who were abducted from the Achini Double Road area of Sarband in Peshawar, who were held captive with a ransom demand of 100 million rupees.

The abduction case took a positive turn when an individual named Amanullah reported to the Sarband and Police Station on September 6th that unknown armed abductors had kidnapped Syed Gul and Hakeem, using a weapon disguised as a walking stick.

Upon receiving the report, the authorities swiftly responded, forming a special team led by SP Cantt Waqas Rafiq. The victims included a transport trader, and their captors demanded a hefty ransom. It was discovered that the abductors regularly shared videos and images of the victims in chains.

Taking note of this alarming situation, CCPO



Peshawar, Syed Ashfaq Anwar, and SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi directed SP Cantt Waqas Rafiq to take charge of the rescue operation. A special team was assembled, consisting of DSP Pishtakhara Sher Afzal Khan, and SHO Sarband, Kaleem Khan. This team worked in coordination with Khyber Police to jointly conduct the operation.

Employing modern scientific lines and intelligence, the joint team successfully pinpointed the hideout where both abducted individuals were held captive. In a swift and well-coordinated operation, they rescued the victims unharmed.

Furthermore, the mastermind behind this abduction, Jamshed, son of Mina Khel, a resident of Koki Khel District Khyber, was apprehended during the initial investigation. Jamshed confessed to his involvement in the crime and provided valuable information about the entire network involved in the kidnapping.

This operation not only ensured the safe recovery of the victims but also marked a significant success for law enforcement agencies in tackling such cases and cracking down on criminal networks. It sends a strong message that criminal activities will not go unpunished in the region.

Tik Toker Imran sent to jail

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Judicial Magistrate Peshawar has sent Tik Toker Imran alias Cheeta to jail on 14 days judicial remand in 9th & 10th May vandalism after arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on corruption charges, on Monday.

According to prosecution, Tik Toker Imran alias Cheeta attacked police and state's buildings with bow as well as make video and uploaded on social media.

Police has nominated Tik Toker Imran after identification in the case while took into custody last week. However, judicial magistrate sent him to jail after completion of remand.

Meanwhile, Special Judge Anti-corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Babar Ali Khan has adjourned hearing till 3rd October in in-term bail plea filed by former Member National Assembly Peer Mussawar Shah in illegal recruitment case and issued notice to complainant.

According to Anti-corruption former MNA has nominated in cases regarding illegal recruitment at district hospital Malakand after completion of inquiry.

Special Judge Anti-corruption Babar Ali Khan adjourned further hearing till 3rd October due to unavailability of complainant during the hearing.

President, Addl Secy resigns

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) Lawyer Wing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Tariq Afridi and Additional Information Secretary Salim Shah Hoti advocates announced their resigns while it was forwarded to party's provincial president, on Monday.

According to details, Tariq Afridi stated that he can't continues his responsibility due to professional activities as President Peshawar High Court Bar Association and a member of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council.

While, Salim Shah Hoti Advocate quieted his responsibilities due to a busy professional schedule which created problem in the dissemination of services.

However, it is revealed that both resignations are made due to negligence of provincial leadership towards the redressal of PMLN Lawyer Forum grievances and ignoring in critical meetings.

It is worthy to mention that quieting such positions before arrival of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan will create hurdles for PMLN in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Police held three alleged culprits

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police has arrested three alleged culprits including two rapists from premises of Badabghier police station, on Monday.

According to details, an alleged murderer named Azmat killed his wife while thrown into blind well at Zangali area located in the premises of Badabghier police station. The alleged rapists were identified as Ibad Ullah and Naseeb Gul while the victim girl of 10 years for shifted to hospital for medical report.

Station House Officer Nasir Farid Khattak said that First Information Reports had been registered against them and police started further investigation in this regard. He added that police recovered two Kalashnikovs, two pistols and stolen mobile phones from their possession.

Police held consignment of illegal weapons

The City police on Monday foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of arms and seized a consignment of illegal weapons from the Nothiya area here in Saddar.

According to Police the raid was conducted on a tip-off in the Nothiya area and recovered 82 pistols, 57 twelve-bore rifles and thousands of cartridges of various bores.



PESHAWAR: Members of Association Engineering & Technology chanting slogans during a protest in favour of their demands.

Minister directs SIDB to assist SMEs at market level

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries and Commerce, Technical Education and Tribal Affairs, Syed Aamir Abdullah has directed the authorities of Small Industries Development Board here on Monday. The Managing Director (MD) SIDB and other officers were also present on this occasion.

During the briefing the further directed them to take concrete steps to increase the revenue of the board.

He issued these directives during a briefing regarding the affairs of the Small Industries Development Board here on Monday. The Managing Director (MD) SIDB and other officers were also present on this occasion.

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He further directed the concerned officials of SIDB to adopt modern and current era methods to improve the efficiency of the institution and attract investors towards solarization to solve the problem of electricity for industries.

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Training session for Agriculture University's employees arranged

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directives of the Inland Revenue Regional Tax Office Peshawar, Directorate of Finance, Agricultural University Peshawar (AUP) arranged a one-day training session for university employees on the topic "Taxation Management and E-Filing of Tax Returns".

University employees including faculty, administrative officers and other supporting staff attended the training sessions in large numbers, said a press release issued here on Monday.

Inland Revenue representative Deputy Commissioner Usman Asif trained the employees on taxation management and e-filing of tax returns.

Vice-Chancellor AUP Professor Dr Jahan Bakht while welcoming the Deputy Commissioner of Inland Revenue and other participants emphasized that in the present era of computer and information technology, every individual should have to submit his/her returns timely while using the technology.

He said that apart from this, the university has to further develop the skills of the employees and make them aware of modern requirements and practices.

University Treasurer Dr Abdul Salam thanked Vice Chancellor, Deputy Commissioner Inland Revenue Usman Asif and the participants for their participation in the session.

The participants appreciated the training and said that it would be beneficial for them.

Dr. Ziad defended his Ph.D thesis on waste recycling

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Ziad on Monday successfully defended his Ph.D thesis at Department of Environmental Sciences at University of Peshawar.

His topic of research was "Recycling of Municipal Plastic Waste For Energy Recovery in Peshawar," which he completed under the supervision of Prof Dr Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Sciences and Technology.

His research addresses the pressing need to shift away from petroleum-based energy sources due to high prices, limited supply, and petroleum depletion concerns.

It highlights the potential of plastics wastes as a promising alternative for creating fuel-like products and managing plastic waste more sustainably.

Dr Ziad's research aims at to quantify the plastic waste generation and to characterise and convert various types of plastic waste into liquid oil and gas through thermal and catalytic pyrolysis processes.

Among his key findings, the per capita waste generation in the study area is 0.46 kg/cap/day, with food waste being the dominant component (52%) and plastic waste as the second highest contributor (16%). Polyethylene is the most

prevalent type of plastic waste (48%), followed by Polyethylene-terephthalate (23.7%).

He proposed a plastic waste refinery system to manage the substantial plastic waste generated in Peshawar, which could lead to cost savings, energy generation, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions along with generation of a healthy amount of revenue by commercialising the value added products produced from pyrolysis of plastic waste.

The study conducted pyrolysis of plastic waste, with temperature and retention time affecting the quality and quantity of liquid oil produced. Higher tempera-

tures improved yield quality and quantity, while longer retention times had similar effects.

Comparatively, thermal pyrolysis generated more liquid oil than catalytic pyrolysis, although catalytic oil quality was superior.

Comprehensive analysis of the liquid oil included viscosity, pour point, density, flash point, calorific value, and spectroscopic analysis, confirming its suitability as an alternative to traditional fuels like Kerosene, Diesel, and Petrol.

The GC MS and FTIR analysis were in consistent with the physical analysis of liquid oil and confirmed the abundance of hydrocar-

bons in the kerosene range (C11-C16) and other fractions like naphtha and diesel, making it versatile for various applications.

The study suggests that thermal and catalytic pyrolysis of plastic waste is an environmentally friendly and economically viable technique for producing valuable liquid oil, which can serve as an alternative to conventional fuels and find applications in transport, refineries, and the chemical industry.

The government should implement such technologies at large scale in order to overcome the plastic waste menace in a sustainable, environmental and economical way.



PESHAWAR: VC KUST Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan as a Ph.D supervisor in a group after successful Ph.D defense of Muhammad Zaid at University of Peshawar.

BRT operates successfully without financial problems

PESHAWAR (APP): The Spokesperson of Trans-Peshawar on Monday said that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) bus service was operating smoothly and without any financial problems.

In a statement issued here, the official refuted the social media reports of financial crises and clarified that BRT service was regularly getting subsidies every month and there was no such issue of finance.

The spokesperson mentioned that during the year 2022-23, payment of subsidy to Trans Peshawar was delayed for two months due to financial difficulties, however, it was later paid.

There was correspondence between the Transport Department and the Finance Department regarding payment of the subsidy dues for the previous year and it was misreported by certain sections of press and social media, the spokesperson clarified.

PESCO removes dozens of illegal connections

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday continued its crackdown against power pilferers and defaulters in the provincial capital and removed dozens of illegal connections.

According to a Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) spokesman, several illegal connections and direct hooks were removed during operations in Duranpur, Manzorabad and Vihargoi areas here and complaints were registered against the pilferers in Shahpur police station for registration of FIRs and legal action.

During the operation more than Rs 200,000 were recovered from defaulters, said the official, adding that despite a deficiency of 70 per cent staff in Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), the task force was conducting operations day and night against illegal consumers.



PESHAWAR: Female journalists presenting a bouquet to Director General Information Muhammad Imran Khan.

Rural Youth Summit 2023 organized by PCSP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The three-day Rural Youth Summit (RYS) 2023 organized by the Pakistan Community Support Project (PCSP) in partnership with the World Bank is all set to launch from today (Tuesday) in Peshawar and will conclude on 21st September as the last day is reserved for women participation.

The RYS will be attended by the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, as the Chief Guest along with the World Bank Country Director for Pakistan, Najib Benhassine.

Termed as a flagship initiative of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the first edition of the RYS is also the pioneering event of such magnitude and scale that is aimed at the empowerment of male and female youth based in Pakistan's rural areas with digital tools and latest technologies.

This year's theme "Digital Solutions for Rural Youth" is dedicated to one of the country's biggest gatherings of the youth primarily hailing from the rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including

Khyber, Peshawar, and Nowshera districts which are the project implementation areas of the PCSP.

In addition to dedicated sessions to enable knowledge transfer, ideas sharing, skills development, and experience exchange, the RYS will also provide a platform for empowering youth to explore innovative ideas that tackle local development challenges and promote dialogue with government and non-government organizations to launch initiatives for youth development.

This collaboration between the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the World Bank highlights their shared vision for sustainable development through youth empowerment.

The RYS is Pakistan's pioneering event of this nature which is specifically dedicated to the rural youth to bring them opportunities like never before to engage with experts and peers on rural development issues. The RYS also promises to develop their knowledge, improve their skills, and promote the role of rural youth in shaping the future of Pakistan.

The three days of the

RYS will be packed with engaging panel discussions on vital topics with experts in their respective fields, providing exposure to new technologies that are on display including augmented reality and artificial intelligence, as well as live workshops led by some of the most sought-after tech professionals coming from all over Pakistan.

A distinctive feature of the RYS is its commitment to innovation.

The participants representing different fields and sectors are in for a series of immersive and interactive experiences driven by cutting-edge technologies, offering them a unique opportunity to explore new academic fields and gain hands-on exposure to digital tools.

Professional networking will also be a key focus, providing the participants, especially the youth, with the opportunities to connect with industry leaders, tech professionals, startup owners, policy makers, and development experts. These connections have the potential to spur growth and development opportunities for rural youth, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Augustin Jacob receiving certificate of appreciation from Deputy Commissioner Peshawar on his service to part of interfaith and harmony council member from AC City and DSP City Security.



In brief

Shaista defends Ph. D thesis F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Ms. Shaista Gul, a PhD Scholar in the Department of Mathematics, University of Malakand (UoM), on Friday successfully 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 Azad Jammu and Kashmir. 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.

Minor girl abducted

HYDERABAD (PPI): A disturbing incident was reported from Hyderabad's Civil Hospital, where a six-year-old child was allegedly abducted by a man and woman on Monday. According to the reports, a man and a woman kidnapped the six-year-old child of a woman – who was under medical treatment at Hyderabad's Civil Hospital – and escaped on a motorcycle. In the CCTV footage, the man and a woman can be seen luring the child and escaping from the scene. After finding out the child is alone, as the mother of the abducted child had undergone surgery at Civil Hospital – the kidnappers seized the opportunity to take him away. A report of the incident has been filed, hile the authorities are started searching for the suspects with the help of the footage.

ANF arrests two drug peddlers

QUETTA (PPI): Anti Narcotics Force Balochistan on Monday claimed to have arrested four accused and seized 2330 kilograms of high quality hashish from a truck in an operation conducted in Mengalabad area of Quetta. According to a statement issued by spokesman for Anti Narcotics Force Balochistan, Anti Narcotics (Intelligence) tea Quetta intercepted a suspicious truck near Mengalabad area of the metropolis. Upon searching, 2330 kilograms of hashish was recovered from the hidden cavities of cement mixture machine fixed in the truck. Four alleged accused were also arrested during the operation. Spokesman said that the seized drug was to be smuggled to the interior of Sindh.

Man gunned down in Quetta

QUETTA (PPI): A man was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Qambrani Road in Kashmirabad area of Quetta on Monday. According to rescue sources, unidentified assailants gunned down the man, Ghulam Qadir, son of Sharbat Khan in Kashmirabad area of the provincial capital. His body was shifted to Sandeman Provincial Hospital Quetta and later handed over to the heirs after fulfilling necessary medico-legal formalities. The incident has created a mourning atmosphere in the victim's home. Further investigation was being conducted by the authorities. Panic gripped the area soon after the incident.

Doctors, paramedical staff boycott of duties

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL / BUNER: Doctors and paramedical staff of Headquarter Hospital, Landi Kotal gave up their duties in protest against the allegedly misbehavior and corruption of the Medical Superintendent (MS) here on Monday.

Under the banner of



Grand Health Alliance (GHA), the health staff boycotted Outdoor Patient Departments (OPDs) however causality and gynecology units were opened to deal any emergency. Carrying banners inscribed with slogans against the alleged corruption and misdeeds of MS, Dr Jamshed Sherani, a large number of doctors and nurses and other health staff initiated a rally in the health center.

Addressing on the occasion those who led the rally including Dr Awais Shinwari, Dr Faheem Afridi, Mujeeb Afridi, Khayal Madar and others said that due to poor attitude of MS, specialists' doctors were compelled to

relieve. They maintained that lack of interest by the administration to enhance curing quality in the hospital, the locals preferred to avail treatment facilities in down town hospital.

"Instead of working for the supply of betterment treatment services to the locals, the MS focuses on collecting illicit money

through various means that is injustice," they added. They blamed that the mentioned official incorrectly made deductions of their salaries without any reasons that created uproar among the health staff and asked for accountability of him. The protestors threatened that till the transfer of the MS, Dr Jamshed Sherani they would not give up their boycott. Meanwhile hundreds of patients including women and children approached the hospital for healing from remote areas, returned back to homes without getting treatment because of the suspension of OPDs in the health center.

Meanwhile, the District

Paramedical Association president Haji Zafar Ali Khan and DHQ hospital Daggar president Mushtaq have announced boycott in district hospitals from 18 to 31 this month on the plea when paramedics were not allowed to treat patients at clinics without having qualified doctors then why the paramedics were forced to treat patients in hospitals in the absence of qualified doctors.

These leaders handed over notices copies to the deputy commissioner the DHO Buner and MS DHQ hospital Daggar on Monday and provided its copies to this correspondent as well.

The paramedics leaders in their notices informed the concerned quarters that the decision of the boycott was of provincial leadership and the district chapters were bound to follow the directives.

The paramedics leaders in their video recorded messages told media there were many others genuine demands including ousting out sider from key faculty position and to fill the position from paramedics. They continued to say the district and DHQ paramedics would join the provincial leadership in Peshawar set in and the schedule announced there would be followed here as directed, they concluded with a firm commitment they would continue the struggle for their rights till logical end.

Hindu Panchayat hold protest in Larkana

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The managing committee of the Hindu Panchayat held a protest in front of the press club against the desecration of the Mukiya Shawala gate of the temple, in which President Giri Kumar along with others.

The protestors said that Dilip Kumar's an attempt is being made to occupy two feet of the 200-year-old Thal of the Big Shawaliya Gate of the temple, which many miscreants abused for stopping it. They said that it is an old temple where the panchayat has the right to worship, while He has already submitted his position before the Awqaf Department.

Condemning it, it has been said that we have passed a resolution in front of the Hindu members, in which after returning the rented shop in Larkana, the premises of the temple should be expanded so that we do not face any difficulties in the puja pot at any

time.

Sindh Hari Committee's protest against inflation: A protest demonstration was held by the Sindh Hari Committee in Dokri Tehsil of Larkana District in front of the Press Club against the rising inflation in the country. There were slogans against the government while speaking on this occasion, Azam Ali Machhi, Ghulam Shabir Abro, Anwar Dangrai and other leaders said that the poverty in the country has already made the people very miserable.

To give any relief that the storm of inflation has been imposed on the people, the responsibility of which lies on the government of Pakistan and its officers. Members of the corruption of billions of rupees, on begging. He further said that the country's situation has reached such a state that the rich lands of Sindh and national institutions are being auctioned to clear the country's debt, while the prices of petroleum products are being artificially increased on the people of the country. The burden of increasing has been placed on the people, he demanded from the army chief of the country to take notice of the inflation and take action against the hoarders and provide relief to the people of the country.

SEPCO held 'Kuli Katcheri': The officers of Sukhar Electric Supply Company SEPCO organized a Kahli Kachhari program at SEPCO Sub-Division Jinnah Bagh Main to solve the problems of Sukhar Electric Supply Company regarding the accuracy of bills and complaints of electricity consumers in Larkana. Muzaffar Kahawar, more than 300 citizens' complaints related to electricity, including detection bills, were stored, on which more than 20 lakhs were recovered under immediate action. He said that electricity thieves cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.



QUETTA: Chairman CMIT Abdul Rehman Buzdar called on Caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan.

Two killed in car-trailer collision

KHAIRPUR (INP): Two people were killed in when an over speeding trailer hit a motorcycle at Babarloo Bypass, Khaipura. Rescue sources said that a reckless driven trailer knocked down a motorcycle carrying two people.

Both motorcycle riders died on the spot in the dreadful accident. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead bodies to Civil Hospital, Khaipur. According to police, the deceased were identified as Nisar Bhutto and Rashid Bhutto.

46 passenger vehicles impounded

MULTAN (INP): The district administration took decisive action on Monday in a remarkable display of commitment to road safety and the rule of law, impounded 46 buses and wagons operating from illegal bus stands.

This move comes as part of an ongoing effort to streamline the transportation system and promote safer travel within the district. According to official sources, four illegal bus and wagon stands were sealed by the district administration.

However, upon inspection, officials discovered a staggering 46 passenger vehicles continuing to operate from the unauthorized locations. In response to this blatant violation, Secretary RTA Rana Mohsin promptly imposed fines on the owners of these vehicles. Notably, Rana Mohsin emphasized the district's commitment to reducing environmental pollution by ensuring that vehicles comply with modern emission standards. He highlighted that the authorities were utilizing state-of-the-art systems to monitor and enforce these regulations, contributing to cleaner air and a healthier environment for all residents.

Six persons injured in music party firing

F.P. Report

MARDAN: As many as six persons were seriously injured due to unknown reasons during the music concert of Transgender in Behram Mashki Kaly of Takhtbhai tehsil. The police registered a case against the accused and started raids to arrest them.

According to the details, the injured identified as Zarak Ahmad said that he was present along with other colleagues at the music festival of Transgender organized in connection with the marriage of Ibrahim resident of Bahram Mashki Kali. He said that during that time, the alleged accused Sahil and Mir Andesh, Jawad, Afzal Imam Kaloni, Imama and Bilal started firing with pistols on verbal repetition.

The injured persons including Zarak Ahmad, Muhammad Rizwan, Jamshed, Fakhr Alam, Noor Khan and Wahid were seriously injured due to firing by the accused were transferred to Takht Bhai

Mardan Medical Complex, while the accused managed to escape from the crime scene, Takhtbhai police has registered an FIR and started the investigation, while the police have started raids to arrest the accused, but till the latest reports, no arrest of the accused has been made.

NH&MP, Rescue 1122 trained students: A training workshop was organized at Himalaya College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, Mardan Motorway and traffic police informed the students about road safety awareness and Rescue 1122 informed the students about first aid. On this occasion, traffic in-charge Irshad Khan and rescue 1122 officials gave training to the students in the program.

On this occasion, the students said that under the basic life support program, they got awareness about basic things like first aid, road safety, from which we benefited from the special

guests of the program were District Health Officer Dr. Muhammad Tahir and Director of Mardan Medical Complex, Dr. Tariq Mehmood. While on this occasion Principal Ashfaq Ahmed, Vice Principal Khazee Khan, Administrator Muhammad Umar Khan, CPO Yasir Ilyas, APO Adnan Shahzad, APO Waheedullah, Traffic Officer Abid Khan.

Officers from Rescue 1122, Motorway Police and Traffic Police attended. The Training Wing provided training in fire prevention and fighting. During the training program, the students are trained to perform quick and timely CPR, resuscitation in case of respiratory arrest, stop acute bleeding, fracture, electric shock, snake bite first aid, and fire. Training on rescue and early firefighting was also provided. The guests were given shields and certificates by the management of Himalaya College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences.

Awami Mahaz demands fulfillment of vacant posts

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: President 'Awami Mahaz' Hafizabad Rana Khalid Mehmood has demanded the Punjab government to appoint active and honest police officer against vacant posts of DSP Legal and DSP Headquarter Hafizabad immediately because people of the district are facing different problems and deprive of getting timely justice.

While talking to media, he said that rallies and processions were being taken out in connection with Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW) in the district but mostly CCTV cameras were not working which could cause

any untoward incident, therefore, all out of order CCTV Camera be made functional at earliest. He also demanded ban on displaying of arms and areal firing to avoid any mishap.

As many as 245 cases registered: District Administration, police and GEPCO has registered 245 cases, arrested 15 electricity pilferers and connections of 115 electricity pilferers have been disconnected during ongoing campaign against electricity pilferers in the district Hafizabad.

Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Umar Farooq Warraich said that Rs. 84 lakh and 85 thousand fine

has also been imposed on electricity pilferers so far. DC said that 105 electricity meters of electricity pilferers were also confiscated.

Meanwhile, Incharge Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Hafizabad Muhammad Adeel Ashraf told that on the directions of General Manager Gujranwala Imran Altaf, offices of SNGP are remained open on Sunday addressed problems of people. He said that grievances of consumers were being resolved on priority basis while crackdown on Gus pilferers were also continue in the areas and special teams of SBGP were taking action against Gas pilferers on daily basis.

Addressing educational dilemma in Pakistan

Saleem Tariq Lone

THE former Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Chaudhry took suo Motu notice of fundamental national issue of delivery of education in the state-run schools. The apex court has sought from the provincial governments as well as ICT administration important statistics regarding conditions & provision of facilities in schools, verification of Ghost schools, and detailed reports on implementing Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan. (provision of free & compulsory education up to secondary level).

However, there are other very important issues, profoundly impacting the Purpose, Vision & Quality of Education, which must be seriously addressed if we need to bring about real Visionary & Qualitative improvements in the school education system, as submitted below:

If you would like to live like a good Muslim, it is only possible if you follow the Message of the Quran e Hakeem.] (Allama Iqbal)

The challenges, and serious impasse confronting our educational system at School (government/private-grade 1 to 12) and Madrassa level and their realistic solutions may be discussed under the following heads :

- Ideological and visionary issues;
- Development of Curriculum, Textbooks and supplementary aids;
- Teacher's training & capacity building and motivational issues;
- Adoption of Integrated approach to Education;
- Environmental/ Parental supportive and participatory

approach;

- Provision of financial & material resources issues;
- Organizational, infra-structural, logistical issues;
- Research & development; 76 years of Pakistan; our schooling and end end human product ;

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.

Barring a few honourable exceptions in all walks of our national life, the End Human Product of our schooling system, be it the state-run, the private, the informal or the Madrassa, is hardly up to the mark i.e. up to desired religious, educational, moral, and social standards, individually, collectively, and institutionally.

Collectively assessed in the comity of nations, regrettably, we have further suffered degradation in the corruption & corrupt practices indicators; with wide spread deviant and bank-corrupt behavior, by no means representing an Islamic social order & culture. (vide the Transparency International's report, 2012)

Some other dismal indicators are as under:

Our Graduates, MAs, Drs, Engrs, LLBs, and even PhDs are mostly unable to understand the verses of the Quran e Hakeem when it is recited to them, say in prayers, or when they read it themselves. What a pity!

A matter of serious concern! Our graduates, generally speaking, can't even correctly write an application/paragraph in Urdu or English. Our university degrees are generally not accept-

ed in the foreign universities for admission;

The youth passing through 'Dars e Nizami' courses from the Madaris , have generally, their main focus on learning various disciplines connected with the Quran, Ahadees, Fiqh, etc with a strong Bias towards their respective Fiqhi outlook. This Bias has encouraged divisive tendencies in the religious, social, and political environment, rather than promoting Muslim brotherhood and cohesive tendencies.

Moreover, they are generally ignorant about important contemporary disciplines dealing with science & technology and social sciences

Vision & Quality of education Primary of school education (grade 1 to 12) is an irrefutable factor in character/nation building and sustainable development of any society. What matters most is the Vision & Quality of education in terms of its ideological base; to translate these Values into Action/Practical reality.

To improve the Visionary Base & Quality of Education we need to focus on the Content & Structure of the Curriculum, the Textbooks and Supplementing Aids , The Teachers' Capacity Building to deliver and Motivation to become true Role Models, and Creating of Supporting Environment in the schools, homes, and outside, including Media & Internet."

Adoption of Integrated Approach to Education:

We have also to change our approach to education, which is divided into religious and secular; spiritual and mundane. We have to have an Integrated Approach to Education, where all areas of knowledge are studied, explored and researched, in the context and balancing fulcrum of divine existence. We

should assign top priority to School/Madrassa education by thoroughly revisiting the curriculums and textbooks on the touchstone of ideology and grounded in an integrated approach to education, which combines learning of Islamic Studies along with other Contemporary subjects including Pure & Applied sciences, and Social Sciences.

With the exception of a few schools in the Private sector & Madaris (they too need improvements to attain classical standards) , the School and Madrassa Curriculums & Textbooks are grossly deficient and flawed on one count or the other; They fail to inspire the youth to thoroughly appreciate and cultivate/imbibe the Islamic values/teachings based on enlightened study of the Quran e Hakeem, Sunnah, Muslim history, Culture, and formidable Muslim Contributions to various branches of knowledge including science & technology especially between 8th to 14th centuries.

Such exposure to Islamic values and history would motivate our youth to look for Muslim role models starting from the shining examples of our Holy Prophet (SAWW) and his Great Companions, (including men, women, and children), to imitate for character building, practicing golden tenets/values of Islam in our personal, family, & social lives, besides learning best Principles of governance and statecraft. Our youth can draw great inspiration from the marvelous feats accomplished by the Muslim scientists, discoverers, and scholars in various fields of knowledge, including science & technology during the Golden Period of Muslim history, the hallmark of their Scientific & Technological Pursuits being research & experimentation (basis of scientific method)

The West owes a great deal to the Muslim scholars and scientists who proved to be beacon of light in the dark ages of western world, who extensively borrowed, translated, and learnt from the books and works, and inventions & discoveries of the Muslims. The bottom line of this enlightening school education should be such an inspiring introduction of Allah SWT that the youth are deeply impressed and spellbound by;

All His Perfect Attributes, His Marvelous Creations, Human beings occupying the central place being His masterpiece creation and His Vicegerent on earth; Allah's Sunnah (His grand Design, Planning & perfect Methods) in creating and administering the boundless universe according to His divine Wisdom & Will.

Provision of Adequate Resources:

Since we have now a constitutional obligation to provide for free and compulsory education to 5 to 16 years old students, the federal government have to provide huge sums of financial, and logistical resources to meet this national obligation. Besides, provision of large human resources by recruiting and training teachers for schools is a fundamental obligation of the federal government.

Therefore, we must raise the GDP percentage of expenditure on education from shamefully low percentage of less than 2% to at least 8% for the next 25 years. How could we achieve the multi-dimensional ideal benchmarks in education without providing adequate financial resources on regular basis? Currently Cuba is spending more than 18% of GDP on education, thus setting a great example for the whole world.

We have also to focus on the

character building of youth, based on Islamic values, in schools and madaris by creating activity based supporting environment by motivating the teachers to become role models for their students. Parents have also to contribute in developing the character building module by providing their active support to the students and their teachers.

The ministry of education and most of its functions have been devolved to the provincial governments under the 18th amendment of the constitution. But the federal government must not absolve itself of their responsibility towards this fundamental state obligation of providing free and quality school education to the youth of the country. The federal government must provide adequate resources to the provincial governments to enable them to fulfill this very fundamental obligation in the best possible manner, in the spirit of collective partnership.

Prayer:

In the light of above submissions, it is proposed that a high-level Permanent Commission on Education headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and comprising eminent educationists, well reputed religious scholars, Judges and public servants be set up/

To thoroughly revisit and review the prevailing School Education System (Public, Private, and Madrassa) and to take all necessary measures (immediate, short & long term) to ensure establishing an ideal school education system in the country, which is fully responsive to and capable of meeting our national aspirations as well as cognizant of all challenges as discussed in the preceding paras. To permanently supervise and guide the newly established system of school education to ensure its smooth working.



South Korea working to unfreeze Tehran’s funds in US-Iran detainee deal

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea said on Monday it is working with all parties involved in unfreezing Iranian funds worth \$6 billion, which once released will trigger a carefully choreographed deal between arch foes the United States and Iran to swap detainees. Once the funds are transferred to Qatar, which mediated the deal during months of talks, five US dual nationals who were imprisoned in Iran are expected to leave Tehran for Doha from where they will travel to the United States, sources previously told Reuters.

In return, five Iranians detained in the US will be released so they can travel to Iran. Iranian officials and Iran's state news agency have said one of those detainees is expected to remain in the United States. The precise timing of the fund transfer has yet to be publicly announced. The deal, first made public on Aug. 10, will remove a major irritant between Washington and Tehran, although the two sides remain deeply at odds over issues ranging from Iran's nuclear ambitions and its influence around the region to US sanctions and America's military pres-

ence in the Gulf. "Our government has been consulting closely with involved countries including the United States and Iran to tackle the frozen fund issue, and is currently making efforts to ensure smooth progress of all procedures so that it will be resolved once and for all," South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The US dual citizens to be released include Siamak Namazi, 51, and Emad Sharqi, 59, both businessmen, and Morad Tabbaz, 67, an environmentalist who also holds British nationality. They were released from prison and put under house arrest last month. A fourth US citizen was also released into house arrest, while a fifth was already under house arrest. Their identities have not been disclosed. Iranian officials named the five Iranians to be released by the US as Mehrdad Mo'in-Ansari, Kambiz Attar-Kashani, Reza Sarhangpour-Kafrani, Amin Hassanzadeh and Kaveh Afrasiabi. Two Iranian officials said Afrasiabi would remain in the United States. As a first step in the deal, Washington waived sanctions to allow the transfer

of \$6 billion in Iranian funds from South Korea to Qatar. The funds had been blocked in South Korea, normally one of Iran's largest oil customers, because of US sanctions. Under the agreement, Doha agreed to monitor how Iran spends the funds to ensure it goes on non-sanctioned humanitarian goods, such as food and medicine. The transfer of Iran's funds has drawn criticism from US Republicans who say President Joe Biden, a Democrat, is in effect paying a ransom for US citizens. The White House has defended the deal. Ties between Washington and Tehran have been boiling since Donald Trump, a Republican, pulled the US out of a nuclear deal between Iran and global powers when he was president in 2018. Reaching another nuclear deal has gained little traction since then, as Biden prepares for the 2024 US election. Doha hosted at least eight rounds of talks involving Iranian and US negotiators who sat in separate hotels and spoke via Qatari mediators, sources previously told Reuters. Earlier sessions focused mainly on the thorny nuclear issue and later ones on the prisoner releases.

Singapore’s clean image under scrutiny

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore's image as a squeaky-clean business hub is under scrutiny amid a huge money laundering scandal that has so far resulted in 10 arrests and the seizure of assets worth 1.8 billion Singaporean dollars (\$1.3bn). Singapore police last month arrested 10 foreign nationals - aged between 31 and 44 - and raided residences, seizing luxury items including Hermes handbags, Patek Philippe watches, aged Macallan whisky, and Bentley and Rolls-Royce cars.

The suspects are all originally from Fujian in eastern China but include Cypriot, Turkish, Cambodian and Vanuatu passport holders. The Singapore Police Force has alleged the seized assets are the ill-gotten gains of organised crime committed overseas, including scams and online gambling, whose proceeds were brought into Singapore and filtered through the country's financial institutions. The case has cast a spotlight on Singapore's reputation as a well-run, low-crime financial hub, or a "Switzerland of the East". It is also unwelcome news for Singapore's ruling party, which has been rocked by a string of rare political scandals in the past few months, including a corruption probe involving the transport minister. For would-be money launderers, the Southeast Asian city-state

can be an attractive option due to its status as a major financial hub that offers an array of financial instruments, according to analysts. "The large volumes of financial transactions that flow through our borders can make it harder for regulators to sift out illicit transactions," Woo Jun Jie, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS), told Al Jazeera. Money laundering can be conducted through various channels, from real estate and cryptocurrency to casinos and listed companies. Mak Yuen Teen, a corporate governance expert at the NUS Business School, said money laundering cases often involve entities in the British Virgin Islands and other tax haven jurisdictions, where the ultimate beneficial owners are not disclosed. "My worry is that the rabbit hole goes really deep and wide," Mak told Al Jazeera. Eugene Tan, an associate law professor at Singapore Management University (SMU), said the city-state is attractive to money launderers because funds are less likely to be regarded with suspicion once they enter the financial system there. This is due to "our reputation of being a trusted financial hub with strict laws and tough enforcement," Tan told Al Jazeera. In the same way, drug traffickers are prepared to transit in Singapore as third countries are less likely to treat passengers

coming from Singapore with heightened suspicion given the country's ultra-strict drug laws, Tan said. "Money launderers are willing to take a punt because the benefits of being able to launder the money here makes it easier to move the funds to other jurisdictions like the UK and the EU, rather than laundering the money in those jurisdictions," he said. The image of Singapore as a "playground for the rich" may also add to the perception that its rules are lax, said Tan.

He said that although he is not aware of gaping loopholes in enforcement, "downstream checks appear to be lax" once the funds are in Singapore's financial system. Tan said he has heard of cases where banks have accepted financial in-flows, even if suspicious transaction reports are filed. "In other words, some banks see this as shifting the burden to the authorities," he said. Where the authorities do not do anything, some banks are prepared to accept the funds in question, he added. The NUS's Mak said the latest case has shone a spotlight on what responsibility, if any, belongs to other links in the money laundering chain, such as property developers, luxury car dealers, golf and country clubs, luxury watch dealers and intermediaries such as real estate agents, accountants and lawyers.

Surge of asylum seekers as EU promises ‘action plan’

BRUSSEL (Agencies): The European Union has presented a plan for Italy to help it handle arrivals of migrants and refugees after a record number of people landed on its island of Lampedusa over the past week. The surge in asylum seekers arriving on the Italian island has rekindled a fierce debate in Europe on how to share responsibility for the tens of thousands reaching the continent each year.

"Irregular migration is a European challenge and it needs a European answer," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said during a visit to Lampedusa, offering a 10-point "action plan" to help Rome deal with the crisis. She stressed that the better the EU gets at managing legal migration, the "stricter" it can be with irregular migration. "We will decide who comes to the European Union and under what circumstances, and not the smugglers and traffickers," von der Leyen said at a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni.

The EU chief said she had already spoken to several EU leaders about the plan and was confident of their support. "The most effective measure to counter the smugglers' lies are legal pathways and humanitarian corridors," von der Leyen said. Far-right Italian leader Meloni had called on the European Commission president to view the migration crisis firsthand, after the tiny island's local council declared a state of emergency this week. Several thousand people have arrived on the island between Sicily and North Africa in recent days, leading to overcrowding at the reception camp. There are currently three Frontex operations active in the Mediterranean Sea intended to secure the EU's external borders, to fight against smugglers and to rescue people in distress, according to EU information. However, the Frontex agency has been sharply criticised for repeated reports of illegal so-called "pushbacks" of migrants and refugees over the bor-

ders they are trying to cross. Pushbacks are illegal under international law. Meloni said the right approach was to prevent people leaving for Europe, not redistributing migrants around the bloc.

The 10-point plan presented by von der Leyen also stipulates that the training of the Tunisian coastguard and other law enforcement agencies is to be improved. Due to its proximity to the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax, currently the main departure point for migrants travelling by sea, Lampedusa has long been one of the main destinations for people from North Africa seeking to reach European shores.

Italy, along with other Mediterranean EU states, has for years been asking Brussels for more support to deal with large numbers of people arriving on its shores. This year alone, more than 127,200 people have already reached Italy via sea, according to the latest Interior Ministry figures. This figure was 66,200 the previous year.

Landmark skyscraper in Khartoum engulfed in flames

KHARTOUM (BBC): Buildings have caught fire in Sudan's capital after heavy fighting between the army and rival forces. Videos posted online showed the iconic Greater Nile Petroleum Oil Company Tower engulfed in flames. "This is truly painful," said Tagreed Abdin, an architect of the building, in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Air strikes and ground battles have continued in Khartoum and other towns and cities since fighting broke out in April. Over one million people have been forced to flee the country, the UN has said. Located near the River Nile, the 18-storey oil firm skyscraper is one of the most recognisable landmarks in Khartoum. Ms Abdin said it defined the skyline of the city, and lamented "such senseless destruction". It is not yet clear what caused the building's cone-like structure, which has a glass facade, to catch fire. There have been no reports of injuries or deaths. The violence in Sudan began on 15 April, triggered by a power struggle between the leaders of the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). It followed days of tension as members of the RSF were redeployed around the country in a move that the army saw as a threat. The Sudan War Monitor, which provides analysis of the conflict, said the RSF had attacked areas controlled by the army, including an office block at the justice ministry. Several government buildings are reported to have caught fire as a result of the attack. Attacks on army premises continued, witnesses told AFP news agency. Residents in a southern district of the city - where the army was targeting RSF bases - told AFP they heard "huge bangs" as they woke up. Health authorities announced that all the main hospitals in Khartoum - as well as the Darfur region - were out of service.

Nawal Mohammed, 44, who lives at least 3km (1.8 miles) from clashes in the capital, said the doors and windows of her family home shook with the force of explosions. She described the battles as "the most violent since the war began". According to a group of pro-democracy lawyers, the fighting had killed "dozens of civilians" in Khartoum. Fighting was also reported in the city of El-Obeid, some 400km (250 miles) south of the city. The RSF has been fighting to take control of the capital, and the military's air strikes have been aimed at weakening RSF positions. The conflict has killed around 7,500 people and displaced more than five million.

Hundreds of Eritrean arrested

STUTTGART (BBC): More than 200 Eritrean opposition supporters have been arrested in Germany after clashing with police. The violence erupted as an Eritrean cultural festival was set to begin in the city of Stuttgart. The festival was organised by supporters of the Eritrean regime loyal to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

Police sent to the scene found themselves caught in "massive violence" between the two opposing groups, the deputy police commissioner said. "Neither the extent nor the intensity of the violence was apparent in advance," Carsten Hoefler said in a statement. Officers were attacked with bats, nails, metal rods, bottles and stones, the statement added. Six officers were admitted to hospital, while 228 people were arrested. The violence has been condemned by officials in the city. "We must take decisive action against the emergence of conflicts from other states on German soil," said Stuttgart Mayor Frank Nopper, according to German news agency dpa. The chaos follows a string of similar recent protests. As Eritrea marks 30 years of independence from Ethiopia, festivals have been held by members of its diaspora in recent months, with many ending in conflict.

Libya: Greek rescuers among those killed in road collision

TRIPOLI (BBC): At least three members of a Greek rescue team and three members of a Libyan family have died in a road collision. The rescuers were among a team who were travelling on a bus to the flood-ravaged city of Derna when their vehicle collided with a car carrying the family.

Two others in the car and eight others on the bus were seriously injured, according to a Libyan official. An investigation has been launched. Othman Abdeljalil, health minister in the administration that runs the east of the country, told a press conference the team had been travelling from the eastern city of Benghazi when the crash happened. He put the death toll at four but Greece's armed forces reported three dead and two missing.

Libya is split between two rival governments - a UN-backed administration based in the capital Tripoli, and a rival Egyptian-supported authority based in Benghazi. The Greek authorities said that a bus carrying medical personnel collided with a vehicle moving in the opposite direction and reported that three members of Greece's humanitarian mission had died and two were missing. They added that it was unclear what exactly had happened and that it was looking into the incident in cooperation with Libya, while an operation was underway to repatriate their personnel.

A diplomatic source has told Greek news site Kathimerini that 16 members of the team were Greek rescuers and three were interpreters. They were on their way to join teams already on the ground from other countries including France and Italy. Thousands of people were killed when two dams above Derna broke during a powerful storm a week ago. The UN says the death toll so far stands at some 11,300. More than 10,000 more remain officially missing, according to figures from the UN's Office for the Co-Ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Meanwhile, a masked doctor leans down into a black plastic body bag, and gently manipulates the legs of the man inside. "First we determine age, sex and length," he explains. "He's in the putrefaction stage now, because of the water." In a hos-



pital car park in the eastern Libyan city of Derna, the final details of one of its many victims are being carefully checked and logged. This is now one of the most vital jobs here, and one of the most distressing. The man is unrecognisable after spending a week in the sea. His body washed ashore that morning. Expert hands gently probe, looking for identifying marks and taking a DNA swab. That's important, in case there's a family still alive to claim him. More than 10,000 people remain officially missing, according to figures from the UN's Office for the Co-Ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Red Crescent has been issuing its own numbers. The UN says the death toll so far stands at some 11,300. The final total remains unclear - although the one thing that is certain is the sheer scale of this catastrophe. Mohammed Miftah knows in his heart his family are among the victims. When he went to find his sister and her husband at their home after the floods, it had been washed away.

He's heard nothing from them since. He shows me a video he took as the torrent rose, brown water pouring in through his front door. A car is carried on the current and wedges into the open space, blocking it completely. "I saw cars coming down and I came out running," he recalls. "I thought that was it, that I was going to die. We could see our neighbours waving flashlights. In just a few moments, the lights went out, and

they had disappeared. "That was the hardest thing." As international aid begins to arrive in earnest, the Health Minister of Libya's eastern government has announced that four Greek rescue workers were killed in an accident on the road to Derna. Fifteen more were injured. They were on their way to join teams already on the ground from France and Italy. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have also flown in tons of extra supplies.

The next step is making sure they're used properly and fairly. Abdullah Bathily, the Head of the UN's International Support Mission in Libya, told BBC Arabic the country now needs to create a transparent mechanism to manage all of its international donations. It's a concern borne from the well-known challenges of coordinating between the government in Tripoli which is internationally recognised, and the eastern Libyan government, which isn't. Back in the centre of Derna there are some points of light amid the mud and debris that has enveloped this city. On one street corner, hundreds of colourful clothes lie scattered in piles. Across the road a huge queue forms as fuel is handed out to survivors. As the donations keep coming, one man arrives and places a box of warm scarves at the feet of an elderly woman. He kisses her head tenderly, as she smiles and begins to choose one. These are Libyans helping Libyans in one of their worst moments of crisis.

Taiwan urges China to stop ‘continuous military harassment’

HONG KONG (Agencies): Taiwan's defence ministry has called on China to stop its "military harassment" after detecting more than 100 Chinese military aircraft in the latest of a series of military manoeuvres designed to assert Beijing's claim to sovereignty. The ministry said, it has spotted 103 Chinese military aircraft, including fighter jets, over the sea, a number it called a "recent high". It also said it detected nine navy ships.

Its map of Chinese activities over the past 24 hours showed 40 of the planes crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which had served as an unofficial barrier between the two sides until China began regularly crossing it a year ago. Other aircraft flew south of Taiwan through the Bashi Channel, which separates the island from the Philippines. Beijing claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve its goal. China's activities over the past day posed "serious challenges" to security in the strait and regionally, the ministry said in an accompanying statement. Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are the common responsibilities of all parties in the region, it added. "The continuous military harassment by the Communist military can easily lead to a sharp increase in tensions and worsen regional security," the ministry said as it called on China to "immediately stop such destructive unilateral actions".

Tony Hu, a former senior director for China, Taiwan and Mongolia at the United States defence department, said as the Chinese activities were in international airspace, they were not illegal under international law, but had the "intent to scare Taiwan and try to flex their muscle". He said while Beijing might be hoping for

a response from Taiwan, that was unlikely to happen. "Taiwan is keeping track on their warning radar and making sure the air defence missile system are prepared just in case they [China] make the wrong turn and initiate any kind of attack. And that's sufficient," Hu told Al Jazeera. "Taiwan does not go up and match them every time. They do go up there periodically, just to say, 'Hey, I'm here watching you'." In addition to the weekend's operations by the air force, Taiwan last week detected exercises involving the Chinese navy and its Shandong aircraft carrier in the western Pacific.

Japan's defence ministry also said its navy had detected six Chinese ships - including frigates, destroyers, one fast combat support ship and the Shandong - sailing through waters some 650km (400 miles) south of Miyakojima Island, which lies east of Taiwan. It also confirmed

that jets and helicopters had been detected taking off and landing from the Shandong. A regional security official, who declined to be named because of the sensitivities, told the Reuters news agency the navy manoeuvres were the "largest in years" and had added to pressures across the region. Taiwan's defence ministry noted last week that July to September is traditionally the busiest season for Chinese military drills along the coast. China has not commented officially on any recent drills being conducted in the area. In April, Beijing staged military exercises to simulate the encirclement of the island after Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen met US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California. It also held large-scale drills after McCarthy's predecessor Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022.

Morocco earthquake: The scars, the rubble and the spirit to rebuild

MOROCCO (BBC): The earthquake just over a week ago maimed a six-century-old mosque in one Amizmiz's oldest neighbourhoods, taking a bite out of the pinky brown minaret. A nearby row of shops appeared untouched - until I saw the vertical scar, as if a giant axeman had tried to cut two shops apart, nearly succeeding. The entrails of a nearby building were on show.

"You should see the really bad ones round the corner," said Abdi, man outside the mosque. He was right. Those houses didn't really exist, though you could see the remains of a television jutting out of the rubble. In Amizmiz, many died and some bodies still haven't been recovered. Next to the shops, another man was methodically piling up his possessions in the small square, the sofas and cupboards exposed to the elements. I wished him courage, and he managed a polite smile. Not all of Amizmiz has been hit quite as hard as this neighbourhood. But everyone living here has been affected. The buildings are not safe and so almost everyone has left their homes. The lucky ones have

been given shelter by the government. I could see a long line of yellow tents on the opposite hillside, and blue ones nearer the middle of town. A hotel allowed anyone to stay for free, an example of the Moroccan sense of solidarity I came across so often this week. It was at the hotel that I met Abdelali, a friend of a friend of a friend. A secondary school teacher wearing a lilac shirt and sunglasses, he seemed relaxed - until he started talking about his ordeal. Many of his students and friends had died in the earthquake. He had been celebrating his daughter's 21 birthday on what he now calls "black Friday". As soon as she blew the candles out, the ground started to shake. A birthday she will never forget, a moment that changed everything. The whole family now lives in a tent. "We need a new word," Abdelali said, his voice rising with each phrase, "that is even stronger than horrific, than horrible, than disastrous, than catastrophic. Violent is not a good description, terrifying does not describe the situation." The school he was so passionate about might not open for months and classes would be held in tents, risk-

ing the chances of a whole generation of students. His bank had been destroyed, meaning he had to travel dozens of kilometres to get money out.

His real fear, though, was the winter, when temperatures plunge and snow covers the slopes. What will he and his family do if they are still living in their thin tent when the snow comes? This part of Morocco is one of the poorest and least developed in the country. The government's response to this crisis was too slow, many told me. Morocco has always been a bureaucratic, hierarchical county. I approached a succession of officials for an interview, in hospitals and makeshift camps for the displaced; all refused, saying they didn't have permission from their boss. Morocco has also declined offers of help from the former colonial power France, at least until now, though foreign support will surely be needed for a reconstruction job this big.

At the hotel, I asked Shaimaa, one of many residents made homeless by the quake, whether she believed the government would be able to help her. She laughed, said she doubted it, but added she had faith in

the Moroccan people. Ever since the earthquake struck, Moroccans have clubbed together to buy water and juice, cooking oil and bread, sanitary products and blankets, everything that the survivors might need. They have driven into the heart of these mountains, along roads where an aftershock could send rocks raining down from the steep hillsides, to provide help to people like Shaimaa and Abdelali. Back near the mosque, Abdi motioned me and my colleagues over. "You must eat," he said, and produced a dish of perfectly steamed vegetables on top of fragrant yellow grains of couscous.

Moroccan hospitality is unescapable, even in the most challenging of circumstances; Moroccans' spirit has not been crushed under the weight of the earthquake. Amizmiz is - I should say was - a pretty little town. It follows the curve of the road from Marrakech into the mountains, with incredible views across the valleys that turn a gentle shade of peach when the sun begins to set. Foreign tourists have come here for decades to hike in the hills, and Moroccans for a bit of respite from the hectic urban charms of Marrakech.

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Legacies of adjudicators, and public’ dispiritedness

JUSTICE Qazi Faez Isa has been sworn in as the 29th Chief Justice of Pakistan after administering the oath in a grace-full oath-taking ceremony held at the Presidency on Sunday. An era in Pakistan's judicial history completed its terms and a new dawn arises with the departure and arrival of top judges year on year basis. The nation in general and over 4 million case petitioners, in particular, re-energize their hopes for justice compensation. The public started dreaming about a revolution in the Country's judicial system, through the elimination of bribes, reduction in corruption as well and speedy dispensation of justice to common citizens who often have a dreadful concept of Police investigation and court trials which consume lives but never come to a conclusion on merit.

The shuffle of the top adjudicators has become an important event in Pakistan's government and political system because top judges not only decide the fate of the rulers but also set out future trends in domestic politics in today's Pakistan. By in large, every new Chief already picks his long shopping list for tenure which comprises matters relating to the functioning of his department, his professional career plan, the welfare of family and friends, settlement of scores with the foes, along with any other fascinating agenda relating to his political, ethnic, sectarian and religious belief.

In the current scenario, the biggest challenge Justice Isa will be facing as the Chief Judge is unifying a highly polarized Supreme Court and restoring its credibility not among the judges but among the masses. During former Chief Justice Bandial's tenure, the apex court was deeply divided and the perceived practice of the formation of a particular bench consisting of 'like-minded judges' to hear constitutional matters of public importance has invited criticism of the top judiciary. The excessive and political use of suo motu power together with live coverage of judges' commentary during the hearing remained a concern for the public that seriously politicized the judiciary and damaged the image of the adjudicators. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, the case of civilian trials in the military courts and Amendments to the Official Secret Act and Pakistan Army Act are the grave challenges that would test the professionalism and nationalism of the new Chief Justice. Interestingly, both the previous and the current top judge had the impression of having a soft corner toward the particular civic groups, that might be fixed or deepen those suspicions in the coming weeks, months or a year.

Realistically, Pakistan's judicial system fails to delivery of timely justice to the public. The masses are utterly annoyed with the courts and compelled to settle their cases out of the courtroom after years of wait and a bulk of expenses and anxiety. Unfortunately, Police and Court unashamedly claim credit for such cases that are joke with the system as well as the public. Our judicial system struck fundamental biases of corruption and non-deliverance of justice during early years of the country's independence after the feudal system took root in the politics. Feudal Politicians, landlords and other influential started using Police, courts and local administration for illegal and political purposes. Later, Pakistan's top judiciary assumed the role of a power broker in the country's politics during the 90s when the political government weighed war against the top Court and tried to use judges against political opponents in the garb of accountability and crusade against Corruption. The lawyers' movement and restoration of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry projected the impression of an invincible judiciary. Meanwhile, warring political groups tried to use the court's crutches in pursuance of their political objectives that not only increased publicity of the top adjudicators but prompted disunity and tussle between the judges at the all levels.

Over the years, each judge introduce a new legacy, some earned names in sou motu motions, others inaugurated dams and hospitals, a few were cricket fans and others were fond of chess and wrestling. The new Chief Adjudicator has arranged a televised online Kechery so the public enjoy the debate of counsels with jury, recognise faces and remember their verdicts. Awfully, the public is dejected and has no interest in this circus. The top judge should not waste time on cosmetic surgery by increasing focus on real-time justice delivery. After all, judges' decisions must speak louder than their commentary in the courtroom.

Sinking economy and bulk of refugees

THE Capital Police and Security Agencies have arrested 10 Afghan refugees affiliated with the Daesh militant outfit, who procured Pakistani National Identity Cards (NIC) and were living in several destinations across the national capital. According to the reports, the caretaker government has launched a countrywide operation against illegal migrants and an effective policy has been put in place to stop Afghans illegally entering Pakistan. The caretaker Prime Minister told the media that the government would send illegal refugees back to their countries, who are mostly involved in smuggling of drugs, goods and foreign currency that had a high cost to Pakistan.

Pakistan's economy faced an economic slowdown for the last one year, with its foreign exchange reserves depleting, currency devaluing sharply and inflation rising to record highs. The commodities including wheat flour, chicken, sugar and fertilizers to petroleum products and medicines became rare in South Asian nation and mostly smuggled to Afghanistan. Recently, the LEAs revealed that the majority of the foreign currencies including most dearer American dollars were also being smuggled to neighbouring Afghanistan which caused serious survival risk to the state of Pakistan. On the other hand, major Pakistani cities including Capital territory, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi and Hyderabad became a hub of street crimes, vehicle theft and ransom cases while the majority of involved criminals had been identified as Afghans. Pakistan had first opened its borders to Afghan refugees in the 1980s after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, becoming the largest refugee-hosting country in the world. A significant number of Afghan came to Pakistan after the US-led alliance invaded the South Asian nation under the UN umbrella in late 2001. About half of the Afghan refugees were sent back during 2006-2007, majority of whom returned back to Pakistan due to unfavorable economic and law and order situation in that country. Official status revealed that nearly 2 million registered refugees are still residing in our nation but the real figures are several times higher than that and Pakistan's economy had been scrambling under the weight of almost two nations, either directly or indirectly. It is high time that the incumbent government must take up the case for the dignified return of all Afghan refugees whether registered or unregistered to their country. Although the Pakistani nation has displayed utmost hospitality and resilience over the past four decades, as of now, the Country's economic situation does not afford such courtesy any more.

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Debt cycle...



Greece is fighting wildfires the wrong way

Matthaios Tsimitakis

THIS summer, I decided to seek refuge from the heat in Mount Pelion, a mountainous region in the heart of Greece, halfway between Athens and Thessaloniki. It is home to breathtaking forests and vibrant local communities, where the preservation of natural wealth is a way of life. But soon after I arrived, the spectre of a major wildfire brought much anxiety to residents of the area and their guests. As the climate crisis has intensified in recent years, so has the wildfire season in Greece. This year continued this trend. By the end of July, more than 500 wildfires were burning across the country.

Some of them swept through the plains of the region of Magnesia, where Mount Pelion is located, killing two people, burning more than 5,000 hectares (12,000 acres) of land and causing immeasurable economic damage. But Mount Pelion itself remained untouched. Local volunteers, along with forest fire brigades, mobilised to put out the flames whenever they approached the mountain and threatened the forest. Pelion is home to farming communities that know the mountain very well and take care of it as part of their agricultural activities. They are also quite well-organised and have a strong communal bond that keeps a local volunteer firefighting force well-equipped and ready to take action whenever there is a fire emergency.

I witnessed firsthand this communal spirit one August night at the local cafe in the village of Stagiaties on the outskirts of Magnesia's capital Volos. Residents launched a fundraiser for the local patrol of volunteers monitoring the forest and the coffers quickly filled up. Everyone contributed and everyone seemed to agree that keeping the forest safe - and by extension property and farms - is a communal responsibility.

While Mount Pelion survived the flames this summer, another mountainous region, the national park of Dadia, in the northeast, near the border with Turkey and Bulgaria, burned badly. More than half of its area was completely ravaged by the fire. Evros region, where Dadia is located, witnessed Europe's largest wildfire on record, with more than 94,000 hectares (232,000 acres) of land and forests burned.

The people of Evros mobilised too, but some did not fight the blaze. Official claims that some of the fires were the result of

intentional arson sent local residents looking for scapegoats. Buying into government anti-immigrant rhetoric and rumours that asylum seekers crossing from Turkey were starting fires, they started "hunting" for the perpetrators. In one incident, local residents abducted and locked up 13 refugees in a trailer for hours. What happened to Dadia and Pelion this summer illustrates well how the current approach of the Greek authorities to wildfire management is failing and what they should be doing instead. Introduced in 1998 for the first time, the current state strategy to tackle wildfires invests heavily in putting out fires with firefighting brigades rather than preventing them through better forest management. It also does not include local communities in firefighting efforts, prevention and planning.

The failures of the wildfire management strategy are compounded by decades of state negligence in urban planning and nature preservation. Lax control of construction has led to settlements becoming death traps during fire emergencies. At the same time, weak protection of forests and other natural habitats has allowed human encroachment on these areas and thus put them at higher risk of fires. As a result, the country has fared much worse in terms of wildfire-caused destruction than other countries with similar landscapes and climatic conditions. According to the National Observatory of Athens, the country's most prominent research institute, Greece ranks first among Mediterranean countries in terms of area burned by wildfires this year - close to 688,000 hectares (1.7 million acres); it is also first in terms of the number of acres affected per forest fire - 19,207 hectares (47,462 acres). In recent years, the European Union - recognising the bleak reality of climate change and its effect on wildfires - has started a union-wide effort to increase wildfire preparedness. For example, at the beginning of the summer this year, firefighting brigades from other countries were sent to Greece; when the fires started, they were immediately mobilised alongside their Greek colleagues. The Greek government was also able to activate the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to request more help in the first phase of the fires. But even with EU assistance, Greece was unable to handle the inferno of this wildfire season. Other EU countries prone to wildfires have

realised that investing solely in a firefighting force or waiting for EU assistance does not help and have taken action. Portugal is a case in point. After experiencing a devastating blaze in 2017, the Portuguese government overhauled its approach to tackling wildfires.

From establishing an integrated fire agency that includes forest experts and conservationists to banning new plantations of the highly flammable eucalyptus tree and coordinating controlled burning of debris, Portugal introduced a variety of practices focused on prevention, and it worked. So far, there has been no repeat of the 2017 megafire. Greece, by contrast, has chosen not to learn from past tragedies. After the tragic 2018 fire near Athens, which resulted in 100 deaths, world-renowned Professor Johann Goldammer, director of the Global Fire Monitoring Center at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, was asked to advise the government on how to improve fire management in the country. The committee Goldammer formed produced a report, emphasising one principle above all: prevention. His recommendations, however, were never implemented.

It is time to correct this mistake. Greece should develop a comprehensive approach that prioritises environmental stewardship and long-term planning for climate crisis mitigation over short-term economic gains from land development. That requires a paradigm shift in governance that overhauls economic development and spatial and urban planning strategies. This means that the state needs to bring back the forestry agency into wildfire management activities, develop a forest inventory and a functioning cadastre. It must work with communities to support and coordinate self-organisation and preparedness for wildfires, use local knowledge of the terrain and promote activities that help remove flammable materials from lands and forests - including targeted grazing and forest debris clearing.

One of the key recommendations of the Goldammer report is to reduce wildfire risk by restoring agricultural activities in the countryside to manage biomass. This means supporting rural communities and encouraging the reversal of urbanisation as a state policy. In the past, immigrants have helped keep abandoned areas of the countryside alive. Instead of fuelling

xenophobia and hatred against these people, the government can perhaps encourage them to play this role again. The Greek state also needs to establish firm control over construction. Currently, with various economic sectors lobbying hard for lax regulations, the law in Greece allows lands which have been burned by wildfires to be used for the construction of housing, tourism facilities, wind turbines, etc. Apart from prioritising business interests over the restoration of devastated forests and habitats, such legal provisions may encourage arson.

All of these measures will not only help with wildfires but also other natural disasters. Restoring forests, properly managing land, regulating construction, and working with local communities can also help mitigate the effects of floods. The heavy rains that swept through barren land in Greece were a good reminder of that. Storm Daniel drowned the country, killing 14 people and paralysing central Greece - the heart of Greek agriculture. Shortly after, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis travelled to Strasbourg to meet EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to ask for financial support. As the fallout of the climate crisis intensifies within the EU borders, the union will have to consider creating a permanent climate loss and damage fund to help the most affected member states. But the EU strategy should go beyond financial instruments. It will need to overhaul its own political and economic strategies and structures to be able to tackle climate challenges. Growth at all costs needs to give way to sustainable development, conservation, and protection of habitats and local communities. Painful changes will have to be made. And while Greek and EU political and economic elites waver when hard decisions need to be taken in the face of climate catastrophe, the residents of Mount Pelion do not. After the floods that followed the fires, they once again did what they know best: they organised.

They worked hard to open blocked roads, helped with post-flooding cleanup, saved a group of refugee children from an overflowing river, and regularly supplied the city of Volos with clean water from the mountain. The people of Mount Pelion do not suffer from any doubts. They know that putting the preservation and wellbeing of the community and nature above narrow egoistic self-interest is the right thing to do.

Aljazeera

US steps up fight against terror financing with Hezbollah sanctions

Dalia Al-Aqidi

IN a significant move to combat the financing of Hezbollah, the US Treasury Department last week imposed terrorism sanctions on a family network spanning seven individuals and several businesses with ties to Lebanon and South America. Among those targeted was Amer Mohammed Akil Rada, a Lebanese man alleged to have played a role in two deadly attacks in Argentina during the 1990s.

This decisive action underscores the unwavering commitment of the US government to pursue Hezbollah operatives and financiers, regardless of their locations. Brian Nelson, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, emphasized this commitment in a statement following the announcement. Authorities have described Rada as "one of the operational members" behind the horrific attack on the Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association in Buenos Aires in 1994, which resulted in the tragic loss of 85 lives, with hundreds more people wounded. Another attack on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 claimed the lives of 29 individuals. According to the Treasury Department, Rada spent more than a decade in South America before relocating to Lebanon. During his time in South America, he managed a charcoal business that regularly exported goods from Colombia to Lebanon. Shockingly, he used a substantial portion, specifically "80 percent of the proceeds of his commercial enterprise," to benefit Hezbollah.

Apparently, crime runs in the family. The sanctions also targeted Rada's brother, Samer, who faces accusations of involvement in various drug trafficking and money laundering operations across Latin America. He was previously based in Belize but fled due to a drug-related case. He was part of a smuggling operation that attempted to transport a staggering 500 kg of cocaine, valued at \$15 million, which was concealed within fruit shipments that were seized in El Salvador. The US decision was not just an isolated action but was testament to the resolve of the country to counteract the global reach of Hezbollah and to dismantle its financial network. The militant group, backed by Iran, has a long history of terrorism financing and other illicit activities worldwide. Targeting individuals and entities involved in supporting terrorism sends a powerful message that America will not stand idly by while those who seek to harm innocent civilians or undermine global security continue to operate with impunity.

When discussing Hezbollah's terrorist activities and funding sources, it is impossible to ignore the significant role played by Iran. The intertwining connections between these two entities have long been a concern for global security. In 2020, the US State Department estimated that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a powerful branch of the Iranian military, provided an annual assistance package of approximately \$700 million to the terrorist organization and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah. This financial support has allowed Hezbollah to sustain its operations, expand its influence and continue its agenda of violence and instability in Lebanon and other areas in the Middle East. The Trump administration's decision in 2019 to label the IRGC as a terrorist organization underscored the gravity of the situation. This move clearly recognized the IRGC's involvement in supporting various terrorist groups, including Hezbollah and several militias in Iraq and Syria, as well as the need to hold it accountable for its actions.

Furthermore, the IRGC's influence has extended beyond financial support. The group has been funding and arming various factions and militias in the region, some of which have utilized roadside bombs and missile barrages against US forces stationed in the Middle East. Since President Joe Biden assumed office, there have been nearly 100 reported attacks against American troops in the region, either directly orchestrated by Iran or carried out by its proxy militias. These attacks underscore the complex and evolving dynamics in the Middle East, where long-standing regional tensions intersect with the global struggle against terrorism. Iran's actions, including its support of Hezbollah, have contributed to a volatile environment where diplomatic efforts to de-escalate and stabilize the region face significant challenges.

Addressing this multifaceted issue requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. It necessitates continued vigilance in countering Iran's support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah while also engaging in diplomatic initiatives to reduce tensions and promote regional stability. What steps has the Biden administration taken? It engaged in negotiations with Tehran, allowing for the release of five detained Americans in exchange for the unfreezing of \$6 billion of Iranian assets. It is not possible to accurately predict the percentage of unfrozen Iranian assets that might go to Hezbollah or other militia groups in the region, nor can one estimate how much of these funds could potentially be used for terrorist activities against the US or its allies in the region, especially Israel.

The concern over the potential diversion of funds to groups with hostile intent is valid. It underscores the importance of robust monitoring and verification mechanisms in any agreements involving unfreezing Iranian assets. International oversight and accountability are critical factors in ensuring the released funds are used for legitimate, nonthreatening purposes. While the sanctions against Hezbollah's financiers are undoubtedly a significant step in the right direction, the fight against terrorism financing remains an ongoing battle. To be truly effective, international cooperation is essential, as Hezbollah's network spans multiple countries and regions. It is a reminder that the fight against terrorism is a shared responsibility that requires collective global action.

Africa must be a priority at COP28 climate change conference

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

AS the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference approaches, one of the critical topics that ought to be at the top of the agenda is the devastating effects of climate change throughout Africa, the cradle of humankind. What steps can the international community, particularly the developed countries, take in order to tackle this environmental crisis?

The 28th UN Climate Change Conference, which is also known as COP28, will be held at Expo City Dubai from Nov. 30 until Dec. 12. When it comes to climate change and Africa, one of the most important issues to raise is awareness about the fact that the continent has been disproportionately impacted by climate change. As has become evident, carbon dioxide emissions are the primary driving force behind global climate change. But it is worth noting that Africa has the lowest carbon dioxide emissions of

all the continents. Even though Africa is the second most-populous continent, being home to about 18.2 percent of the world's population (nearly 1.5 billion people), it only emits 4 percent of the world's carbon dioxide.

To put this in perspective, North America, which is home to only 7.5 percent of the world's population, emits about 18 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. In other words, it is estimated that an average North American emits approximately 11 more times greenhouse gas than an average African. The US and Europe currently account for nearly a third of carbon dioxide emissions in the world. The US alone, which has about 5 percent of the world's population, accounts for 14 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. When it comes to carbon dioxide emissions per capita, African countries such as Mali, Somalia, Ethiopia, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Chad and the Central African Republic are ranked among the lowest contributors to climate change. But in spite of the fact that Africa has produced the lowest amounts of carbon dioxide emissions, it is the continent most impacted by global warming. For example, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Sudan and Niger were among the 10 countries most negatively affected by climate change in 2019, according to the Global Climate Risk Index. Nearly 35 percent of deaths that occurred due to extreme weather events, climate or water stress over a 50-year period were in Africa, according to the World Meteorological Organization. And the UN World Food Program last year pointed out that, due to growing and protracted droughts, about 13 million people in the Horn of Africa were living under severe hunger conditions, while

more than 5 million children in the region are today acutely malnourished. Furthermore, there will be more than 85 million climate migrants in sub-Saharan Africa by 2050 because of climate change, according to a 2021 report by the World Bank. "The impact of the climate crisis is all too visible in Africa. People are being displaced and facing unpredictable harvests and food insecurity. Water resources are increasingly stressed. It is staggeringly unjust that those least responsible for the climate crisis and often least equipped to protect themselves continue to bear the heaviest burden," said Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International's regional director for East and Southern Africa.

After raising awareness about the dire situation in Africa, the second issue that the international community, specifically the developed countries, must focus on is that African nations cannot

tackle the negative impacts of climate change on their own. They should be assisted financially, technologically and logistically not only to tackle climate change, but also to adopt clean energy. In addition, the world's most-developed countries should be pressured to fulfill the promise they made more than a decade ago to give more than \$100 billion every year in climate financing to help vulnerable countries. Unfortunately, they have not yet lived up to this promise. Another effective approach would be to make the loss and damage fund, which was created at COP27 in Egypt last year, fully functional and to create a budget for poor and vulnerable countries when it comes to climate change adaptation.

Finally, the rapidly changing climate is having a damaging impact on the agriculture industry in Africa, decimating forests and land and causing more droughts. This is particularly affecting the African continent due to its

arid environment, which causes water stress or scarcity, with demand frequently being higher than supply. This forces many people to leave their homes in search of food and water, such as occurred in Angola in 2021. This has also caused homelessness and deaths in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. In a nutshell, Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world when it comes to the changing climate. Global warming is disproportionately impacting African countries. In spite of the fact that Africa has contributed the least to climate change, it has unfortunately been affected the most. It is incumbent on the developed countries, which have contributed the most to climate change, to provide the financial, technological and logistical assistance required so that African countries can tackle climate change and adopt clean energy. This will not only save Africa, but also protect our planet in the long run.

Militia state or transport hub: Iraq can't be both

Baria Alamuddin

REVOLUTIONARY developments are afoot for strategic control of major trans-Middle East transport routes. Kuwait and Iraq are tussling over control of Gulf waterways, amid plans for a route from Faw port through to Turkiye, and progress on an Iraq-Iran rail link. The G20's unveiling of plans for a major new trade corridor linking Saudi Arabia, India and Europe is a further game-changer. Meanwhile there has been fierce fighting between Arab and Kurdish factions in eastern Syria, as major powers seek to exploit these dynamics to gain control of routes through Syria and Iraq.

Iraq's Supreme Court has declared that a law regulating maritime navigation along a crucial waterway with Kuwait was unconstitutional, triggering a furious response from Kuwaiti lawmakers. Many Iraqi parties welcomed the court's decision, voicing concerns that the previous arrangement undermined Iraqi sovereignty, while questioning the motivations of those who had brokered that 2013 agreement under Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. The Khor Abdullah waterway is critical to Iraq's economic wellbeing, enabling the passage of 80 percent of the country's imports and exports.

Leaderships on both sides have sought to keep negotiations cordial and pragmatic. However, with Iraqi provincial elections due December, the usual suspects have sought to inflame this issue for political gain, staging protests in Basra.

Sectarian Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi militias have threatened Kuwait and other Gulf states and fired missiles across the border to Kuwait, claiming it is a historical part of Iraq. When tensions flared over fishing rights last year, Hashd MP Ala Al-Haidari called for Hashd forces to be deployed in Khor Abdullah, while Hashd media outlets peddled anti-GCC incitement.

Kuwaiti observers have meanwhile expressed disquiet at the doubling of the Hashd budget and force sizes. Iraq's ongoing Faw Grand Port project - if ever actually implemented - is envisioned as the largest port in the Middle East, with the potential to revolutionize Iraq's economic landscape. Iraq last week also launched plans for a major naval base at the site to provide security in Gulf headwaters. Iraq is meanwhile set to finalize agreements for a \$17 billion high-speed Development Route railway from Faw through Turkiye toward Europe. GCC states are taking a keen interest, given the immense opportunities for trade and travel. Improved diplomatic relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia have furthermore fueled hopes for reinvigoration of long-mothballed road-building plans, including linking up the holy cities of Makkah and Najaf as a major pilgrimage route. However, given Iraq's record of endlessly stalled projects and funds siphoned off into corrupt hands, it will be a miracle if any of these plans ever come to fruition.

There are further glaring obstacles to Iraq becoming a core international conduit. Iraq's borders and major road routes are festooned with illegal Hashd checkpoints for extorting revenue from commercial and private transport. Despite laughably feeble efforts to crack down on Hashd economic activities, a previous finance minister estimated that around 90 percent of Iraq's customs revenues were being stolen by Hashd highwaymen. Thus, the Hashd-dominated political echelons' sudden enthusiasm for creating major transnational routes comes as little surprise. If these bandits can monopolize major trade corridors between Europe and the GCC, revenue-generating opportunities are infinite. The Sudani government, appointed by Hashd factions, has already given away immense territories to industrial

conglomerates controlled by these paramilitaries for economic exploitation, including large areas adjoining the Kuwait and Saudi borders. Hezbollah has likewise been given vast fiefdoms in Syria, which it exploits for profit and to strengthen its regional strategic position.

A shadow war has been rumbling for control of transport routes from Iran to the Mediterranean, with the aim of profit from smuggling narcotics, munitions and other contraband. Despite massive Hashd fortifications established on the Iraq-Syria border at Albu-Kamal, the militants' ambitions have been constrained by the presence of US forces near by. Bashar Assad has sought to exploit the recent explosion of violence between Arabs and Kurds in eastern Syria to reestablish regime control through this volatile region, particularly through deployment of a motley assemblage of Shiite militias, including Hezbollah, and reinvigorated attempts to co-opt local tribes. Before this fighting, rumors were rife that the US was planning a major operation to definitively curtail the Hashd's presence at Albu-Kamal.

As part of Assad's longstanding ambitions to reestablish his control of the east, a so-called "Railway of Resistance" from Iran to the Mediterranean is underway. Last week, Iraq's prime minister and Iran's vice president held a foundation stone ceremony at the Shalamchah border crossing near Basra, beginning the Iraq stretch of the project. Further routes from Albu-Kamal to Latakia and Damascus are expected, with China taking a strong interest as a crucial plank of its Belt-and-Road initiative. These planned routes offer a spectrum of economic opportunities in a region experiencing sky-high levels of youth unemployment. But who actually benefits?

Given Hashd political supremacy, and dominance of territories

through which these routes are planned, of course these militias will seek to monopolize these corridors for profit, with Hashd and Hezbollah enterprises well placed to be awarded lucrative construction projects. With Syria and Iraq becoming fully-fledged narco-states, are plans afoot to ensure that ports and rail junctions don't become major distribution hubs for Captagon, heroin and crystal meth?

This is where major powers such as Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, China, the US and EU must come in. Under current conditions, billions of dollars of investment will be corruptly frittered away. The Hashd stranglehold has raised costs of doing business many times over. The absence of major Iraq-straddling trade routes today is less the consequence of poor quality tarmac, and more because of routine extortion, security threats, and the ability of unaccountable militias to block major roads on a whim. In short, Iraq cannot be both a major transport hub and a den of paramilitaries, pirates and highwaymen. Shiny new roads and railway infrastructure are not enough: Iraq must also have the political will and international backing to secure these routes as transnational corridors of free trade. Iraq's neighbors, Kuwait included, meanwhile shouldn't be exploiting Baghdad's weakness, corruption and dysfunction to their own advantage.

For decades under various regimes, an isolated and shunned Iraq has failed to fulfill its global potential. The unveiling of this bounty of megaprojects should be Baghdad's moment of decision: Does it want to perpetuate its isolation as a militia state and a marginalized rung in a bankrupt "Axis of Resistance," or does it genuinely want to throw open its doors to the world? Millions of young Iraqi protesters calling for economic opportunities, renewed Arab ties, and an end to militia governance have made it very clear which vision they favor.

Arab News

Together, let us forge ahead

Kairat Kelimbetov

THE pandemic, lockdowns and geopolitical crises have posed unprecedented challenges. In fact, it is during such testing times that we must come together and promote partnership and connectivity. As we delve deeper into the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is crucial to emphasize the profound impact it has on sustainable development, the strengthening of trade and economic ties, and the promotion of well-being and improved living conditions for the developing and underdeveloped countries of the Global South.

There are more people living in developing and underdeveloped countries than in the high-income economies, and large multi-lateral cooperation initiatives must help connect developing countries among themselves and connect them to the developed world.

The Belt and Road Initiative serves as a catalyst for fostering bilateral and multilateral cooperation, benefiting countries across the Global South. It presents an invaluable opportunity to uplift millions of people, improve their well-being and enhance living conditions through sustained economic growth and development. Trade and economic ties are at the core of the Belt and Road Initiative's objectives. By promoting connectivity and reducing trade barriers, the initiative enhances the flow of goods, services and investments between participating countries. This opens up new markets, diversifies export opportunities and stimulates economic activity. By strengthening trade links at the bilateral and multilateral levels, the initiative helps build resilient economies and reduce dependence on traditional markets.

Furthermore, the initiative provides a framework for inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach all segments of society. It prioritizes poverty reduction, job creation and inclusive economic opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities and regions. The initiative's focus on sustainable development is vital for addressing social, economic and environmental challenges. It encourages the adoption of green technologies, renewable energy and eco-friendly infrastructure. By integrating sustainability into project planning and implementation, the initiative supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and contributes to global efforts to combat climate change and preserve natural resources.

Moreover, the Belt and Road Initiative will foster collaboration among nations beyond markets, in areas such as education, healthcare and cultural

exchange. This creates a foundation for long-term relationships built on trust and respect, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the development of the Global South. Kazakhstan, with its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has been a key partner in advancing the goals of the initiative. The government of Kazakhstan, under the leadership of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering cooperation and progress under the framework of the initiative. This is proved by the recent visit of President Tokayev to China and the ongoing official partnership. The Kazakh government's measures to strengthen partnerships, create an enabling business environment and promote investment have laid the foundation for fruitful collaboration within the framework of the initiative.

The Astana International Financial Centre, Kazakhstan's regional financial services hub, which demonstrates how Kazakhstan's wholehearted engagement in this initiative, has paved the way for enhanced connectivity and economic integration across the region. Kazakhstan's geographic location and extensive infrastructure networks provide critical linkages for the smooth flow of goods and services. The country's commitment to developing modern transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways and logistics hubs, has significantly contributed to enhancing trade connectivity between Europe and Asia.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan's willingness to strengthen the digital integration and development of e-commerce platforms has facilitated the growth of digital trade and enabled businesses to tap into new markets. The country's focus on fostering innovation and technological advancement aligns with the digital transformation objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative. We must recognize that the initiative encompasses far more than physical infrastructure alone.

Yes, the development of robust physical infrastructure is essential. This entails building a comprehensive network of transportation and logistics hubs, modernizing existing facilities, and ensuring seamless connectivity across regions. By enhancing transport connectivity, countries can unlock new trade opportunities, boost economic growth and promote regional integration. The Belt and Road Initiative can also embrace the digital revolution, fostering the development of high-speed internet connectivity, data centers and e-commerce platforms, to enable the efficient flow of information, drive innovation and empower busi-

nesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to tap into new markets and opportunities.

However, physical and digital connectivity are not enough on their own. The development of sound financial markets is crucial to ensuring the sustained growth and efficiency of the Belt and Road Initiative. Robust financial connectivity encompasses both public and private sectors, bridging gaps in funding, facilitating cross-border transactions, and mitigating risks associated with project financing. It requires the establishment of well-regulated financial markets, currency swap arrangements, and access to diversified funding sources to support large-scale infrastructure projects. China's financial institutions, such as the China International Capital Corporation, play a vital role in supporting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. They foster investment, provide advisory services and facilitate cross-border capital flows. Their engagement creates an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth, job creation and technological advancement.

The success of the Belt and Road Initiative lies not only in the involvement of major players but also in the active participation of local and regional champions. Governments, policymakers and business communities in each country involved in the initiative must collaborate to create an enabling environment for investment and entrepreneurship. This entails developing favorable investment climates, streamlining regulatory processes and ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights. Kazakhstan is making efforts to develop the Middle Corridor that connects China, through Kazakhstan, to the Caspian Sea, then the South Caucasus and, finally, to the Black Sea ports in Georgia and Mediterranean Sea ports in Turkiye. It is a viable land-and-sea belt that connects reliable partners that are willing to contribute to the initiative's development in times of economic distress.

Public and private entities are working on the improved infrastructure and bringing in international stakeholders from, for example, the Gulf Cooperation Council region. Today the Middle Corridor can become one of the most important arteries for the initiative and hopefully there will be more participants. By embracing the development of physical, digital, and financial connectivity, we can truly unlock the transformative power of the initiative and drive positive changes for the people of the Global South. Together, let us forge ahead with determination, unity and a shared commitment to sustainable development.

The China Daily

Move forward with ASEAN amid challenges

THE world is encountering changes unseen in a century, and once again stands at a historical crossroad. On the one hand, the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation is gaining momentum, and the aspiration for win-win cooperation among the economies has grown even stronger. On the other hand, the international and regional landscapes are undergoing profound transformation, with instability and uncertainties, to some extent, on the rise.

There are concerns over geopolitical tensions due to shift of power. Global governance sustains risks of fragmentation and bloc confrontation. The Ukraine crisis is still dragging on, severely affecting global security in energy, food and supply chains. The aftermath of the once-in-a-century pandemic continues to create difficulties for a world struggling for a speedy and steady post-pandemic recovery. Not to mention challenges in other significant areas such as addressing climate change, narrowing the digital divide and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

What shall we do facing such a changing and challenging world? How can we navigate through the uncertain waters safe and sound? I believe ASEAN and the related cooperation mechanisms are something worthy to be explored and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations definitely has more to expect and offer.

Despite the complexities in the international situation, ASEAN has successfully managed to maintain peace and stability in the region, sustain the good momentum of growth, and make remarkable economic and social achievements. Now ASEAN stands out as one of the most dynamic regions in the world, leading the post-pandemic recovery of the global economy.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, the GDP growth rate of ASEAN in 2022 was 5.2 percent, one of the highest among all the main economies and economic groupings. In its latest World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund has upgraded its growth projections for five ASEAN member countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand - to 4.6 percent for this year, which is 0.6 percent higher than average emerging market and developing economies and 3.1 percent higher than average advanced economies. In spite of the rise of unilateralism and protectionism in some parts of the world, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership has entered into full force for all its 15 signatory states, which will bring more dividends to the peoples in the region. Notwithstanding the complexities in the international situation, the ASEAN-led cooperation mechanisms in East Asia have registered a good momentum of growth, yielding dividends of cooperation to our peoples. As the theme of ASEAN's chairmanship this year "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" goes, ASEAN has been and is playing an important role in both regional and international affairs. And this role is surely to become more important

in the years to come.

The success of ASEAN lies in its right choice of progress over regression, cooperation over confrontation, and openness over isolation. The success of ASEAN also lies in its adherence to solidarity and independence, in its cherishing of peace and development, in its respect for cultures and traditions of various members, and in its drawing on wisdom of Asian civilizations. The "ASEAN Way" has been known to us for quite a long and accommodating the comfort levels of all parties, which lays a solid foundation for lasting peace and development in the region. This is really what needs to and should be carried forward and further promoted. As mutual respect, consensus-building, time, underpinned by such key principles The success of ASEAN also lies in its establishment of a multi-tiered and effectively-managed architecture of regional cooperation together with its dialogue partners, among which ASEAN-China relations have long been one of the most vibrant and productive ties. Two decades ago, China acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, making it the first among major countries to join the treaty.

Two decades later, it is more than gratifying to see that ASEAN and China are trying their best to build on a comprehensive strategic partnership which is well poised to benefit us all and the parties beyond. The past years witnessed ASEAN-China cooperation yielding gratifying outcomes in various areas. Both sides have become each other's largest trading partner, with trade volume in 2022 almost topping \$1 trillion, up 11.2 percent year-on-year and more than double the volume a decade ago. China is also one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment in ASEAN. By the end of July this year, cumulative two-way investment had surpassed \$380 billion, with China setting up more than 6,500 enterprises with direct investment in ASEAN member states. Against the backdrop of a bleak global economic rebound, Asia, especially East and Southeast Asia have become bright spots. We have every reason to make this spot even brighter.

China firmly supports ASEAN community-building and ASEAN centrality in the regional cooperation architecture. Early this month, the series of leaders' meetings on East Asia Cooperation were held in Jakarta. Chinese Premier Li Qiang attended the 26th ASEAN-China Summit, the 26th ASEAN Plus Three Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit, and reaffirmed that China is ready to continue working with ASEAN member states to stay true to the original aspiration of unity and self-improvement, uphold the spirit of win-win cooperation, work together to meet challenges, so as to build a common home of peace, tranquility, prosperity, beauty and friendship, and ensure East Asia continuously serves as an important engine for global development, adding strong impetus to continued advancement of ASEAN-China comprehensive strategic partnership. The ASEAN-

Shi Zhongjun

China Centre was co-founded by the 10 ASEAN members and China in 2011. It is a milestone in the history of ASEAN-China relations. During the past 12 years, the ASEAN-China Centre has been working as a bridge and driving force to tap into the potential, secure opportunities and implement concrete projects of cooperation in such areas as trade, investment, education, culture, tourism and media between the ASEAN members states and China, boosting the growth of ASEAN-China comprehensive strategic partnership, and helping nurture better understanding between the peoples on both sides.

In face of new opportunities and challenges ahead, it is the ASEAN-China Centre's commitment to keep ASEAN-China relations and cooperation at the forefront of the times, and join hands with its partners and stakeholders to make this region an epitome of development and a promising land for cooperation. For that, the two sides should focus on the following four aspects. First, they should continue to strengthen strategic dialogue and mutual trust. goals and responsibilities in maintaining peace, security and prosperity in the region. Just as Premier Li has said at the 26th ASEAN-China Summit, sincerity is the key that opens the heart, and trust is the bridge that connects the minds. As good neighbors, brothers and partners that cannot be separated, ASEAN and China have shared

ASEAN-led regional cooperation mechanisms. In this respect, the ASEAN-China Centre will continue to play a key role as a facilitator and contributor in addressing concerns of both sides and advancing cooperation, and build more branded platforms of dialogue and communication, such as the ASEAN-China Week and the ASEAN-China Centre Roundtable Series. The centrality and leadership of ASEAN in regional affairs, and promote the further development of the?The two sides should take measures to deepen political mutual trust, strengthen policy coordination in regional and world affairs, support Second, they should continue to deepen economic integration. Economic and trade cooperation has always been the ballast of ASEAN-China relations, and promoting economic recovery still remains the top priority for regional countries.

Both sides should continue to synergize development policies, promote mutually beneficial cooperation between the Belt and Road Initiative and the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific", take full advantage of the high-quality implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and work on the early conclusion of the negotiation of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement 3.0 and the potential shaping of the Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area. The ASEAN-China Centre will continue to advance the aforesaid key areas of cooperation, and organize more activities to promote trade and investment policies of the ASEAN member states and China by cooperating with the ASEAN member states' embassies,

government departments, business associations and think tanks. Third, they should continue to pursue innovation-driven growth. Emerging industries are indispensable to high-quality cooperation between ASEAN and China and high-quality and sustainable development in an era of innovation when the digital economy, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, quantum technology, as well as green technologies are developing at an incredible speed.

and innovation so that the ASEAN member states and China could seize the opportunities of transformation and foster new growth drivers. Early this month in Jakarta, our leaders released the Joint Initiative on Advancing the China-ASEAN Science, Technology and Innovation Enhancing Program at the 26th ASEAN-China Summit. The ASEAN-China Centre will make more efforts to expand our endeavors in such fields as science, technology Last but not least, they should continue to garner strength from public support. Amity among our peoples holds the key to sound state-to-state relations. With 2024 being designated the ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges, more efforts should be made to continue deepening exchanges and cooperation in the fields of tourism, education, culture, sports, and among the media, academia and youth.

In this respect, the ASEAN-China Centre will make the most of the advantages of networking in facilitating lectures, training programs, workshops and exchanges in education, culture and tourism, stay connected with the media and carry out more public relations activities to further raise public awareness about ASEAN-China relations. The success of this region is not something to be taken for granted, but it should be earnestly cherished and actively promoted, especially amid the profound transformation that we are witnessing and living through. Soon we will see both ASEAN and China taking part in a series of major events, including , the 19th Asian Games and the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, in addition to the 20th China-ASEAN Expo which was opened last weekend

It is hoped that the ASEAN member states and China will make the most of the opportunities created by the aforesaid important events so as to open up new vistas for ASEAN-China friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation. Divided, we fail; united, we prevail. Indonesian President Joko Widodo said at the 26th ASEAN-China Summit, "The world's oceans are too wide to be sailed alone", and telling Premier Li on the same occasion that "One needs good companions to travel with and good neighbors to live with".

Looking ahead, we must answer the call of the present time and garner strength to strive for win-win cooperation. ASEAN and China should always bear in mind that, on a journey seeking common development and prosperity, divided, we fail, united, we prevail. The author is secretary general of the ASEAN-China Centre.

Russia's incompetent air force

Hamish De Bretton-Gordon

AS Putin's invasion grinds on, the risk of escalation has drifted away from headlines. People seem to view the war as the "new normal". They shouldn't. This is still an incredibly dangerous situation, ripe with potential for tragedy. This was brought home sharply yesterday, when we learned that almost exactly a year ago we came within a single technological failure of war between Nato and Russia.

An unarmed RAF surveillance aircraft, operating in international airspace over the Black Sea, was fired on by an incompetent - or deranged - Russian pilot. The first missile failed to achieve target lock; the second fell harmlessly into the sea. If either missile had worked as intended, we would have entered a crisis of staggering consequence. It is no exaggeration to say that it could easily have started World War Three; up to thirty British crewmen, and their aircraft, incapable of hostile action, killed in cold blood in neutral airspace. Nato would have had no choice but to respond with overwhelming force. And as we've learned in the last year, Russia's army is paper thin; a modern Western army would punch through their defences without a second thought.

In fact, it wouldn't have to. Overwhelming missile and jet strikes would eliminate every Russian asset outside of its borders within hours of the decision being made to wipe the Kremlin's forces from the earth. What would have been left would have had no choice but to surrender, or - a chilling thought - go nuclear. Given the potentially apocalyptic nature of the consequences, it's easy to understand why the UK - and no doubt the US - tried to suppress the true nature of the event for so long. But it is also a reminder of the total incompetence of the Russian Air Force. This is unlikely to have been the only time where their pilots have made mistakes or misjudgments. Perhaps most worrying is the revelation that Russian pilots seem unwilling to follow orders, or are at the least being given confusing and vague instructions. The risk of a repeat is far too high.

Given this, the best way to avoid a repeat would be to blow the Russians out of the sky. If they can't hit a massive target at point blank range, they certainly wouldn't stand a chance against F-16s. If we speed up the delivery of modern aircraft, Western fighter jets can end any prospect of Russian air-superiority within days, giving

Ukrainian armoured formations the room to manoeuvre so key to generating breakthroughs. It would also allow UK intelligence to continue its critical role in this fight. It is clear that Moscow is willing to do almost anything to suppress Britain's information-gathering activities. Our "spies in the skies" over the Black Sea see everything the Russian fleet is up to, and no doubt a great deal more - allowing British Storm Shadow missiles to target with pinpoint accuracy critical naval assets.

This must be driving Putin absolutely mad. It's no wonder he's dragged himself far to the east to meet the plump tinpot dictator of North Korea: his forces are desperate for any edge they can get. Russian troops are getting through biblical quantities of ammunition without any real effect. Now he's reduced to begging for ancient Soviet era shells, while modern Western armaments continue to flood into Ukraine. And a desperate man is a dangerous one. Nato, and Britain, must be at the top of their game to ensure that another "accident" isn't used as a pretext to demand we step back - or that the increasingly reclusive occupant of the Kremlin doesn't drag the world into armageddon.



SBP's mid-year performance review of banking sector:

Banking sector showed steady performance

F.P. Report

KARACHI: SBP on Monday has issued the Mid-Year Performance Review (The Review) of the Banking Sector for 2023. The review covers the performance and soundness of Pakistan's banking sector for the period January to June 2023 (H1CY23). It also briefly covers the performance of financial markets as well as the results of Systemic Risk Survey (which represents views of independent experts about key potential risks to financial stability).

The Review highlights that the macroeconomic environment continued to remain challenging during

the first half of CY23. Domestic financial conditions tightened while the operating environment remained under stress due to elevated inflation and prolonged uncertainty.

Nonetheless, banking sector's balance sheet expanded by 14.0 percent during H1CY23. The expansion in asset base was mainly driven by investments in government securities.

Besides strong inflow of deposits, banks' reliance on borrowings remained noticeable during the period.

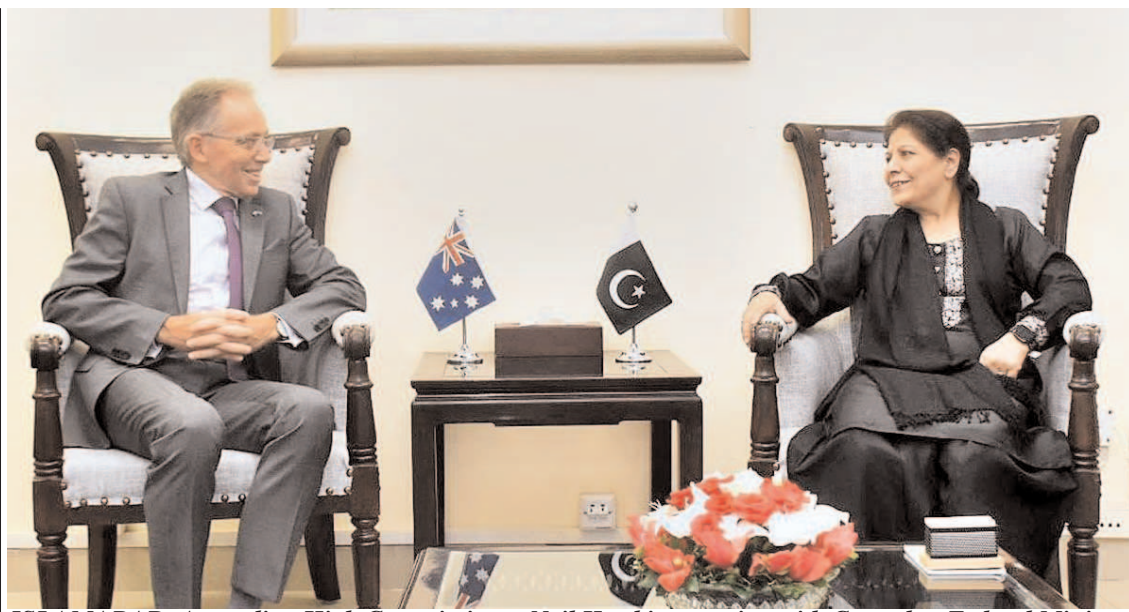
The Review also notes that advances of banking sector recorded a muted growth during H1CY23; private sector advances

contracted while public sector availed additional financing mainly for commodity finance operations. Encouragingly, asset quality indicators improved: net non-performing loans (NPLs) to loans ratio lowered to 0.45 percent at end June-23 (0.68 percent in June-22) as banks set aside higher amount of provisioning from steady earnings.

Profitability indicators witnessed noticeable improvement as return on assets (ROA) improved to 1.5% in H1CY23 (1.0% for CY22). The higher earnings in turn also helped to improve Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of the banking sector to 17.8% by end June-2023

(17.0% at end Dec-2022). With further improvement in solvency indicators, the ability of the banking sector to withstand a set of severe hypothetical shocks further improved as indicated by latest stress testing results.

Finally, the Review also covers the results of 12th wave of SRS (July-23), which suggest that the key potential risks faced by the financial system include foreign exchange risk, increasing domestic inflation and political uncertainty. The respondents, however, expressed confidence in the stability of the financial system and ability of the regulators.



ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins meeting with Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr. Shamshad Akhtar.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, MSC Capetown-III, Al-Soor-II and OM, carrying Containers, Gas oil and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile another bulk carrier Santa Ace is also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Meratus Jayakarta and Zoe Schulte left the port on Monday, while four more ships, MSC Capetown-III, Mega-I, Emmanuel-C and Al-Soor-II are expected to sail on today afternoon.

A cargo volume of 130,331 tonnes, comprising 98,881 tonnes imports Cargo and 31,450 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,384 Containers (534 TEUs Imports and 1,850 TEUs export) was handled during last 24 hours.

There are eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Ulriken and Santa Ace & two more ships, MSC Mundra-VIII and Kyparisia are expected to take berths at Liquid Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Monday, while two more container ships, Maersk Chicago and MSC Heidi are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

PFC to take part in expo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in the 4-day Dusseldorf-Germany Expo starting from November 13 to discover business opportunities and explore new market access for Pakistani products.

In a press statement, Chief Executive Officer PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq said that PFC along with Chenone will be participating in this mega event.

He said Chenone will also exhibit its high-quality international standards products to capture their share in the global market. He said it's an excellent opportunity to showcase Pak products and develop business deals with international buyers.

He said PFC and Chenone have already attended several other international fairs in the US, China, Italy, Sri Lanka etc. and introduced their products which are in great demand.

He hoped to get orders from foreign buyers. TDAP is facilitating the manufacturers of export products.

He said he would also hold a series of marathon meetings with tycoons for investment to avoid the government unprecedented special package for foreign investors.

100-index of PSX gains 49 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday gained 49.67 points, a positive change of 0.11 percent, closing at 45,803.19 points against 45,753.52 points the previous trading day.

A total of 103,494,874 shares valuing Rs3.296 billion were traded during the day as compared to 222,531,077 shares valuing Rs11.056 billion on the last trading day. As many as 308 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 133 of them recorded gains and 145 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Refinery with 7,869,080 shares at Rs14.78 per share; SEARL2 with 7,346,312 shares at Rs1.02 per share

and Agritech Limited with 6,297,000 shares at Rs8.25 per share.

Khyber Tobacco witnessed a maximum increase of Rs24.98 per share price, closing at Rs375.32, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum XD with Rs18.60 rise in its per share price to Rs1,550.40.

Mehmood Textile witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs43.53 per share closing at Rs536.97, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs22.50 decline to close at Rs7,000.00.

10th recovery trading session: Rupee gains 90 paise against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed the 10th consecutive recovery session as it gained 90 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs295.94 against the previous day's closing

of Rs296.84.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs296.1 and Rs299 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 76 paise to close at Rs315.62 against the last day's closing of Rs316.38, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs2, whereas a decrease of Rs2.52 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs366.41 as compared to the last closing of Rs368.93.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 25 paise each to close at Rs80.57 and Rs78.89 respectively.

Exports increase by 22.45% to Rs.1.27 trillion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 22.45 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year (as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Exports during July-August (2023-24) were recorded at Rs.1,276,238 million as against Rs.1,042,226 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 22.45 percent, according to provisional data released by PBS.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports during August 2023 increased by 26.75 percent and were recorded at Rs.695,136 million compared to the exports of Rs.548,440 million in August 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 19.62 percent when compared to the exports of

Rs.581,102 million in July 2023.

The main commodities of exports during August 2023 were Knitwear (Rs.117,892 million), readymade garments (Rs.83,447 million), bedwear (Rs.74,081 million), cotton cloth (Rs.47,002 million), cotton yarn (Rs.30,793 million), towels (Rs.25,567 million), made-up articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs.18,377 million), rice others (Rs.18,073 million), rice basmati (Rs.16,271 million) and meat and meat preparations (Rs.11,210 million).

On the other hand, imports during July-August, (2023-24) totalled Rs.2,371,596 million as against Rs.2,430,313 million during the corresponding period of last year showing a decrease of 2.42%.

On a year-on-year basis, imports into Pakistan during August 2023 amounted

to Rs.1,330,458 million as against Rs.1,337,189 million in August 2022, showing a decline of 0.50 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, imports into the country witnessed an increase of 27.79 percent in August 2023 when compared to the imports of Rs.1,041,138 million in July 2023.

The main commodities of imports during August 2023 were petroleum products (Rs.180,628 million), petroleum crude (Rs.119,438 million), natural gas, liquefied (Rs.89,854 million), palm oil (Rs.80,346 million), plastic materials (Rs.66,789 million), electric machinery & apparatus (Rs.48,536 million), iron & steel (Rs.47,489 million), mobile phones (Rs.32,712 million), iron & steel scrap (Rs.28,618 million) and medicinal products (Rs.24,592 million).

3.93m cotton bales production a good omen

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's cotton industry has experienced a remarkable surge in cotton bales production till September 15, 2023, as with the fresh arrival, Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) has released yield figures, indicating a robust performance in the sector.

The PCGA official sources told APP with figures that till September 15, 2023, cotton arrivals soared to 3.933 million bales, which is signifying a remarkable 79.87 per cent year-on-year

increase, compared to the same time period last year when arrivals stood at 2.187 million bales.

The substantial growth in cotton arrivals is a promising sign for Pakistan's cotton industry, which plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy. Cotton and textile exports have remained pillars of Pakistan's economy, the sources said. It is worth mentioning here that cotton arrivals from Sindh have increased by a staggering 2.15 times YoY, reaching 2.389 million bales. This

surge reflects a growing focus on enhancing cotton production in the province, they said.

Likewise, the Punjab province, being another significant critical cotton-producing region, has shown considerable yield. Cotton arrivals from Punjab surged by 44 per cent YoY, with outcome of total 1.544 million bales. This impressive number marks a 44.57 per cent increase compared to the 1.068 million bales reported just two weeks earlier, the PCJA data reveals.

Pakistanis spend more than 70% of their remittances: Chairman

F.P. Report

RIYADH: Imarat Group Chairman Shafiq Akbar said that overseas Pakistanis spend more than 70 percent of their remittances on buying real estate in Pakistan, amounting to more than \$12 billion. He was speaking at Cityscape Global's public-private forum held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

After the group's successful expansion into the GCC with an office in the UAE, IMARAT Group, Pakistan's leading real estate group, witnessed its CEO, Shafiq Akbar, presenting a strong high investment potential case at the bustling Cityscape Riyadh. His presentation was a lot more than merely a corporate vision. He not only identified critical problems surrounding Pakistan's economy, but offered a roadmap for economic revival, growth, and stability. This holistic solu-



tion encompasses a thorough policy framework and robust digital infrastructure to harness Pakistan's latent potential.

Shafiq backs his blueprint dubbed 'Vision 2047' with his successful venture of the past seven years which include artificial intelligence, blockchain and satellite technologies, consequently resulting in the rise of his group. His vision was backed by the comprehensive ecosystem put in place by IMARAT which comprises Pakistan's largest estate industry network - Agency21,

Graana.com, and PropSure Digital Solutions among other ventures. With a fully digitized record of all 4.5 million land parcels in Pakistan and in-depth research on the nation's 41 economic drivers, IMARAT's 'Vision 2047' provides a tailored strategy to harness the potential.

"An astounding 70 million of Pakistan's population is between the age of 15 and 29, a figure surpassing the entire population of the UK", remarked Shafiq during his address at Cityscape and added: "The youth embark on the jour-

ney of family life and in need of new homes. Translated into financials, this represents a potential investment of USD 40 billion annually in housing, summing up to an incredible 3 - 4 trillion USD in the next 20 years.

While praising Saudi Arabia, Shafiq stated, "The real estate model that the Kingdom has adopted lays the foundation for the transformation of its economy." He expressed the aspiration to emulate this model in Pakistan, charting a course for sustainable economic growth.

SBP BSC launches agriculture finance literacy program

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The SBP Banking Services Corporation (SBP BSC) has launched the Agriculture Finance Literacy Program (AFLP) through a series of five workshops conducted nationwide. This flagship initiative, as recommended by the Agricultural Credit Advisory Committee, seeks to raise awareness among the farming community regarding available financial schemes and government-driven initiatives. AFLP stands out as a pio-

neering effort, as it unites all major stakeholders, including SBP, commercial banks, federal, and provincial governments departments, to engage with farmers collectively.

AFLP addresses critical facets of agricultural finance, with a primary focus on reaching out to New to Bank Farmers (NTBFs) to broaden the pool of borrowers and promote financial inclusion. It also places a dedicated emphasis on reducing the gender as well as regional disparities in agricultural finance by ensuring equitable access to financial resources for farmers across the nation. Over the next five years, AFLP aspires to integrate 500,000 farmers in

crop sector, livestock, poultry and fisheries into the financial ecosystem. This Program will significantly contribute to Pakistan's agricultural growth and sustainability by effectively addressing their primary constraint that is financing requirements. In conjunction with the program launch, the Financial Inclusion Support Department of SBP BSC has conducted a series of five workshops in major cities, including Karachi, Quetta, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar.

The key objectives of the workshops were to sensitize banks officials, who will take forward the literacy program at gross root levels; and to bring the

provincial departments on board who have a vast network across the country that can be utilized for this campaign. These workshops saw active participation from focal persons representing commercial banks and representatives from Provincial Agriculture Extension departments, Livestock Departments, and Fisheries Departments of these regions.

This collaborative endeavor, uniting SBP, SBP BSC, and various stakeholders, underscores our collective commitment for empowering the farming community, advancing financial inclusion, and propelling agricultural growth throughout Pakistan.

Food group import reduced

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group imports into the country during first two months of current financial year decreased by 26.91 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-August, 2023 food imports into the country

came down from \$1.783 billion to \$1.303 billion, according to data of PBS.

The imports of the commodities which recorded negative growth during the period under review including wheat imports reduced by 100 per cent, and spices 5.97 per cent as 20,516 metric tons of spices valuing \$24.762 million were

imported as compared to the imports of 26,619 metric tons valuing \$26.333 million of the same period last year. The palm oil imports into the country also decreased by 22.88 per cent as palm oil 572,004 metric tons of palm oil valuing \$552.403 million were imported as compared to the imports of 460,454 metric tons costing \$716.298 million in the same period last year.

Court Notice

In the court of Mr. Kaleem Ullah Civil JudgeII/Elaga Qazi Malak-and at Bathkela, Case No 47/1 of 2023, Next date: 20/09/2023 Riaz Begum Versus Fazal Mabood (Mirza) proclamation Against Legal heirs: (4) Muhammad Manzoor Ihsan (5) Muhammad Taimoor Ihsan (6) Muhammad Babar Ihsan (8) Mrs. Urooj Ihsan D/S/O Ihsan Al-Wadood S/O Said Gul resident of Thana Tehsil Thana Baizai District Malakand. In the above title case the service of you above named defendants is not possible with ordinary means, hence you are hereby informed through this proclamation to attend this court on 20/09/2023 at 08:00am in person or through appointed agent/attorney or through counsel, otherwise you shall be place and proceed against ex-parte.

Court Notice

In the Court of Tazeen Wisal Civil Judge VII/Judicial Magistrate/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 180/1, Institution. 2022. Date of hearing: 25/9/2023. Muzamil Shah VS Mohamad Rahim etc. Notice to No. 3. Zaren Said. 9. Javed Said S/o Bakht Said. 15. Said Shah son. 16. Mst Taslem Bibi. 17. Safia Bibi daughters of Razi Shah (late) residents of Ambela tehsel Mandanr district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 25/9/2023 theproceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the court of Mr. Kaleem Ullah Civil JudgeII/Elaga Qazi Malakand at Bathkela, Case No 62/1 of 2023, Next date: 29/09/2023 Ahlyan Nall Versus Mr. Fazal Rahman, Proclamation Against Legal heirs: (25) Sher Muhammad S/O Hukam Khan resident of Nall Village Thana Tehsil Bathkela District Malak-and. In the above title case the service of you above named defendants is not possible with ordinary means, hence you are hereby informed through this proclamation to attend this court on 29/09/2023 at 08:00 am in person or through appointed agent/ attorney or through counsel, otherwise you shall be place and proceed against ex-parte.

Stock markets slide before central bank decisions on rates

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets mostly slid on Monday as traders looked ahead to interest-rate decisions this week from the US Federal Reserve and Bank of England.

While the Fed is expected to hold rates steady on Wednesday -- causing the dollar to drop -- the Bank of England is forecast to hike once more a day later.

Investors will be keeping a close watch also on the Bank of Japan's own policy

decision this week.

The rate announcements come amid rising concerns that inflation will stay high for longer as oil prices head toward \$100 per barrel.

"It's a big week ahead for central bank interest rate decisions, which can understandably make investors a bit jittery," noted Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell.

A recent run of indicators suggests the US economy and labour market

remain resilient even after more than a year of interest rate hikes, meaning the central bank will have to keep open the option of another hike.

The Bank of England is set to hike again with UK annual inflation stubbornly high at 6.8 percent.

Elsewhere on Monday, oil prices extended gains as key producers Russia and Saudi Arabia limit output.

Comments by Saudi Energy Minister Prince

Abdulaziz bin Salman will be closely watched when he addresses a conference on crude policy later Monday.

Observers say that, with output unlikely to pick up any time soon, prices could break back above \$100 soon.

On the corporate front, shares in troubled developer China Evergrande tanked more than 25 percent at one point after news of the arrest of an unknown number of staff in China.



In brief

Victories in Squash League

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pak Army GHQ, Falcon Club and Chaklala Garrison earned victories in the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Inter-Club district Squash League. Clubs were participating in the said league which kicked off on September 16 with immense enthusiasm. All participating clubs of Rawalpindi and Islamabad played matches in respective age categories. Each club was representing in five different categories and matches are played on home-and-away concept. In the matches played, Pak Army GHQ beat Shalimar Club (3-2) while Falcon Club downed Islamabad Club (3-1) and Chaklala Garrison outplayed Maksa Club (3-2).

Trials for KHA U-15 held

KARACHI (APP): The trials for the selection of five participating teams of KHA Under-15 Hockey 5As Side Challengers Cup were held on Tuesday. The event will commence on September 23 at Mini Astro Turf Ground, KHA Sports Complex, organized by Sports and Education Technologies in collaboration with Karachi Hockey Association (KHA). More than 70 boys participated in the trials, conducted by the Selection Committee consisting of Laeeq Lashari, Mahmood Ali Khan and Khalid Junior. Forty selected players for 5 teams will be announced on the official page of KHA. The Tournament Director will be Intiaz ul Hasan while other officials Organizing Secretary Ausaf Rabbani, Technical Officials M Faizan, Moin Alam, Arsalan, Media Co ordinator Batool Kazim, Umpires Manager Dr Samar, Umpires Imran Khan and Rizwan Khan.

Ashlyn win 1st WTA title

QUEBEC (Reuters): American teen Ashlyn Krueger didn't lose a set the entire tournament in capturing her first WTA Tour title with a 6-3, 7-6 (6) upset of top seed Zhu Lin on Sunday at the Japan Open in Osaka. Ranked No. 123 in the world, Krueger, 19, entered the week without a main-draw win on hard court this year and had never advanced past a quarterfinal of a WTA event. China's Zhu, ranked No. 35, became just the second top-50 player to lose to the Dallas resident in her young career. This was the pair's first meeting and Krueger's 11th main-draw appearance. Krueger had the edge in aces, 7-3, and never had to save a break point in the 96-minute match. She broke Zhu on her first service game of the match, and Zhu was 1-for-2 in saving break points. "I think I was very aggressive today, playing a lot of really aggressive tennis and using my serve," said Krueger, who recorded 28 winners to 13 for her opponent. "I think I just stayed mentally tough the whole time. Lots of aggressive shots and trusting in myself."

Son follows in father's way

NEW YORK (Agencies): Football legend Lionel Messi was spotted supporting his son Thiago at the Inter Miami Children Football Academy in the United States. After the career giant won numerous accolades, Messi made a move to Major League Soccer (MLS) with Inter Miami. Since his debut, Messi has made a significant impact, including leading the team to their first-ever Leagues Cup victory. Meanwhile, Thiago has recently joined Inter Miami's U12 academy, following in the footsteps of other famous footballers.

Misbah backs Pakistan team despite 'mistakes' in Asia Cup 2023

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former captain Misbah-ul-Haq backed the Pakistan team ahead of the upcoming ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023 following their early exit from the Asia Cup 2023.

Misbah-ul-Haq, while talking to the media during the trophy unveiling ceremony of the Over 40s Cricket Global Cup in Karachi defended Pakistan captain Babar Azam despite a 228-run loss against arch-rivals India.

"The captain is not the only one responsible for a 228-run defeat, the whole team is responsible," Misbah said. "The team's confidence has definitely been damaged, however,

the Pakistan team has always bounced back from difficult situations."

He further showed his faith in the current Pakistan team going into the World Cup 2023 in India.

"Mistakes have been made in the Asia Cup, we have to improve our performance. These players have performed well in the past, and I am hopeful that they will do better in the World Cup," he added.

"Our spin bowlers have failed to perform at their best, however, the selection committee can tell about any upcoming changes in the team for the World Cup," said Misbah-ul-Haq.

He also stated the fact that Indian conditions are

different from Sri Lanka, and will support Pakistani batters.

"The World Cup is a different event and the conditions will be tough, however, India's conditions will support Pakistani batters," he added.

Pakistan, who entered the Asia Cup 2023 as a top-ranked ODI side, however, failed to live up to the label of being the favourites as they crashed out of the tournament after finishing fourth in the Super 4s stage.

Pakistan will kick off their World Cup 2023 campaign against the Netherlands on October 6 at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad.

PWCC announces Pakistan team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council (PWCC) on Monday announced a strong 15-member team for the second edition of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023, taking place from October 2 to 8 at the neutral venue of Kathmandu, Nepal.

Seasoned Muhammad Zeeshan, who led Pakistan to victory in the inaugural edition in 2019 in Nepal, has again been handed over the reins of team's stewardship.

The event, being hosted by Pakistan was earlier scheduled to be held in July but was pushed to October due to the rainy season in Kathmandu," President Rookhsana Rajpoot told APP. "We wanted to hold the event in Pakistan but due to some travelling issues of the Indian team, it was decided to move it to Nepal.

"Recently, we've visited Nepal to oversee the arrangements for the tournament. We assure fans of

some exciting contests during the event," she added.

Teams from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will participate in the Asia Cup. Rookhsana said geographically Nepal was the best destination for all the participating teams to arrive.

She said the PWCC would be responsible for covering the event cost, while Nepal's National Disability Sports for All Organization (NDSO) and Physically Challenged Cricket Association of Nepal (PCCAN) would provide logistic support.

All the fixtures will be held at Kathmandu's Tu International Cricket Ground. Every day, there will be two matches. The opening match will be held between Nepal and Bangladesh on October 4, while in the second on the same day Sri Lanka will face India. Pakistan will launch their campaign against Nepal on October 5, whereas in the second match of the day Nepal

will face Sri Lanka.

In their second match, Pakistan will meet traditional rivals India on October 6, while in the other match of the day Nepal will clash with Sri Lanka. On October 7, Bangladesh will meet India in the first match of the day, while in the second match Pakistan will lock horns with Sri Lanka.

Similarly, on October 8 Nepal will compete against India in the first match, whereas the second match of the day will be held between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The top two teams on the points table will advance to the final, scheduled to be held on October 9.

Pakistan team: Muhammad Zeeshan, Muhammad Fiaz, Muhammad Latif, Muhammad Imran Ameen, Sajid Ali Abbasi, Mozan Nawaz, Ahmed Yar, Umargul, Mohsin Thabel, Muhammad Shahid, Misal Khan, Muhammad Adnan, Asif Nadeem, Zulfiqar Swati, Khalid Shah.

Over 40s Cricket Global Cup to kick off tomorrow

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The inaugural edition of the Over 40s Cricket Global Cup will kick off tomorrow with the hosts Pakistan Veterans taking on the USA in the curtain raiser.

The tournament's trophy unveiling ceremony took place at a local hotel in Karachi on Monday, followed by a press conference by the Chairman of the Pakistan Veterans Cricket Association (PVCA) Fawad Ijaz.

"For the first time in history, a major veterans' cricket tournament is being held in Pakistan," said Fawad Ijaz. "Tight security is being provided to all international teams."

Upon being asked about the name of the tournament, he clarified that the tournament's name was changed to Global Cup following ICC's objection.

"The tournament was initially named World Cup, however, the

International Cricket Council (ICC) raised objections over the name, hence we changed it to the Global Cup, which is sanctioned by the ICC," he further added.

Fawad Ijaz also shed light on the fact as to why the Indian team is not part of the tournament. "It is difficult to get the visa for Indian players," he stated.

The tournament will feature teams from Australia, the West Indies, Canada, Hong Kong, the USA and the UAE. A total of 36 matches will be played at five different grounds in Karachi. Pakistan Team will play all its matches at National Bank Stadium.

Former captain Misbah-ul-Haq will lead Pakistan Veterans, featuring star players Shahid Afridi, Muhammad Sami, Abdul Razzaq and others.

Misbah-ul-Haq also talked to the media and expressed his excitement

to play international cricket once again.

"Playing international cricket again is a different experience, however, playing 45 overs will be challenging," said Misbah-ul-Haq.

"It is good for Pakistan that the tournament is being organized here, as fans love to see their stars in action again," he further added.

Pakistan Veterans Squad for Over 40s Global Cup
Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq, Misbah ul Haq, Muhammad Sami, Hassan Raza, Tariq Haroon, Khurram Ali Khan (w.k), Waqas Ahmed, Abdul Qadir, Muhammad Rizwan Aslam, Kashif Sidqqe, Muhammad Ilyas, Afzal Shah (w.k), Amjad Ali, Imran Ali, Tassawar Abbas, Adnan Raees, Junaid Khalil Nainitalwala.

Reserves: Yasir Hameed, Haris Ayaz, Shehzad Malik.

Ashwin still in mix for India's WC squad

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is still very much in the running to be part of India's World Cup campaign despite being left out of the provisional squad, skipper Rohit Sharma said.

Kuldeep Yadav was picked as the lone specialist spinner in India's initial 15-member squad for the World Cup on home soil, along with spin-bowling all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel.

When Patel suffered an injury ahead of Sunday's Asia Cup final in Colombo India turned to Washington Sundar as a replacement, not 37-year-old Ashwin.

In the end, off-spinner Sundar did not get the chance to bowl as India

bundled out Sri Lanka in 15.2 overs en route to a 10-wicket romp. Rohit said Sundar's selection was in no way further proof that Ashwin, who played the last of his 113 one-day internationals in January 2022, had slipped down the pecking order.

"As a spinner all-rounder, Ashwin is in line. I have been talking to him on the phone," Rohit told reporters after India lifted the Asia Cup for the eighth time.

"The injury happened to Axar at the last minute. Washington was available, so he had to come and perform the role for us. He (Washington) was cricket-fit because he was part of the Asian Games camp."

"I have been very clear with players about their roles. Everyone is in the

loop." Teams can make changes to their squads until Sept. 28. While the victory was a timely boost ahead of the World Cup, batter Shreyas Iyer missed much of the Asia Cup, including the final, with a back spasm.

"Shreyas was not available for (the final) because certain parameters were kept for him to tick off," Rohit explained.

"I should say he is alright 99% as of now."

"He looks good, he batted and fielded for long hours (in the nets), and he was on the ground long before we came to the ground. I don't think it is a worry for us." India host Australia in a three-match ODI series later this month and the teams clash again on Oct. 8 in their World Cup opener in Chennai.

Iranians give Ronaldo an excited welcome

TEHRAN (Agencies): Crowds of Iranian football fans gave Cristiano Ronaldo a rapturous welcome on Monday as his Saudi team arrived in Teheran for the first home-and-away club tie since the two countries resumed diplomatic relations.

Fans chanted the name of the Portuguese five-time world player of the year as he arrived with his Al Nassr teammates to face Iranian club Persepolis in the Asian Champions League on Tuesday.

The match will be the first since Tehran and Riyadh reached a China-brokered deal announced in March. Teams from both countries had only played matches on neutral grounds since 2016 when Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite-majority Iran severed ties.

In Tehran, excitement filled the air as fans eagerly waited to catch a glimpse of Ronaldo as he left Iran's Imam Khomeini's airport. Large crowds of cheering fans lined the streets as Ronaldo and his team arrived at a hotel in Tehran on board a bus. Others chanting "Ronaldo, Ronaldo!" even flooded



into the hotel lobby.

Posters of Ronaldo sprung up across the Iranian capital's main streets emblazoned with "Welcome", written in Arabic, English, and Farsi.

"I think it will be a beautiful game and will have a lot of excitement," said 28-year-old Navid Borhanifar, a Ronaldo fan. "It's very exciting for me."

Sadly for the fans, none will be allowed to attend the match which will be held at the gigantic Azadi stadium, which can host up to 90,000 people.

The Asian Football Confederation have ruled that the game be played behind closed doors as punishment for a controversial 2021 online post by

Persepolis before a match against an Indian team.

- 'Unlimited internet' -

Ronaldo and his teammates have been placed under the protection of an "elite unit", specialised in securing presidential visits, according to sports website Varzesh 3. The unit will be in charge of "preventing any contact between fans and players of the Saudi team," it added.

Ronaldo's arrival has also sparked a debate over Iran's internet restrictions.

Iran has imposed strict internet curbs -- including on WhatsApp and Instagram -- since last year's mass protests triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

Amini, a 22-year-old

PM Talent Hunt Badminton League takes place in Multan

LAHORE (APP): The Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Sports League for Men & Women in Badminton unveiled a new generation of rising stars on Monday at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan.

Ammara Rubab, the chief organizer of the event, told APP here that young athletes aged 15 to 25, under the watchful eyes of technical experts from Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, and the University of Sargodha, showcased their extraordinary talents during the trials.

"The Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Sports League is dedicated to providing a platform for these budding athletes to display their exceptional skills on the court, fostering a spirit of healthy competition among the nation's youth," said Ammara, who is also the head of sports Kinnaird College University.

She said: "As we move forward, we anticipate an exciting season filled with dedication, passion, and outstanding sporting accomplishments."

Karachi mayor inaugurates Hydri Sports Football

KARACHI (PPI): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday inaugurated Hyderi Sports Football in Ibrahim Hydari area of Malir, Karachi.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Mayor Karachi's Representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, former member of Sindh Assembly Mahmood Alam Jamot, and former member of National Assembly Syed Agha Rafiullah were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Mr Wahab said this ground is a beautiful gift from Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to the people of Malir district. He said that it is the mission of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to provide the best sports and entertainment facilities to the people in the suburbs of the city.

He said: "I am grateful to the local leadership of the PPP and the town administration for this cooperation. "We are going to give another gift to the people of Malir District, Ibrahim Hyderi and Sherpao Colony in two weeks in the form of Star Ground where various sports facilities are provided on an area of 20 acres."

The Mayor Karachi said that time proved that whatever project was started by PPP and whatever work was started, it was completed.

Sri Lankan coach termed crushing loss in Asia Cup final a 'wake-up call'



COLOMBO (Agencies): Sri Lanka's crushing 10-wicket loss to India in the recently concluded ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 final should help the team learn lessons for the ODI World Cup, coach Chris Silverwood said Sunday.

The home team were bowled out for just 50 in 15.2 overs with Indian fast bowler Mohammed Siraj ripping through the Sri Lankan batting with his 6-21 in Colombo. Sri Lanka were playing their 11th Asia Cup final but the 116-minute humiliation left the fans disappointed and coach Silverwood said he hoped it would be a blessing in disguise. "Sometimes a bit of a kick up the rear end is not the worst thing going into a World Cup," Silverwood told reporters.

"Maybe this is just a wake-up call, that for us to compete against teams like India, Australia, and New Zealand -- those types of guys -- we have to be on top

of our game. He said, "Maybe there's something we can use out of this that can motivate us heading into that World Cup."

Sri Lanka, who have made the ODI World Cup starting October 5 in India after playing the qualifiers, went in as underdogs in the Asia Cup 2023. But what unfolded in the Asia Cup final was unexpected as Dasun Shanaka's Sri Lanka fell like a pack of cards after they elected to bat first.

"Clearly it was a bad day in the office. Clearly, we came up against a very high-class bowling unit," said Silverwood. "It was a shame to finish the way we did. It's one of those things we can't dwell on too much because we've got a big tournament coming up. There are lessons to learn and questions to be asked in the dressing room."

Sri Lanka overcame an inconsistent showing at the start of the Asia Cup and sneaked into the Super

Iranian Kurd, had been arrested for allegedly violating the Islamic republic's dress code for women.

Last week, Persepolis's general manager Reza Darvish proposed that the Saudi team be given SIM cards with unfiltered internet access. "I have talked to the CEO of Irancell (a local provider and sponsor to Persepolis) and asked for SIM cards for... players and those who accompany them with unlimited internet," he said in a press conference.

The 2023-2024 Asian Champions League officially begins this week with the spotlight on Saudi Arabia which alongside Ronaldo has lured a host of stars including Karim Benzema, Neymar and Sadio Mane. Persepolis are one of the region's most successful clubs and reached the final of the Asian Champions League in 2018 and 2020, while Al Nassr won the tournament in 1995.

Other matches between the two countries will take place in the coming weeks. Saudi's Al Itihad are scheduled to play Iran's Sepahan on October 2, and Saudi club Al Hilal are scheduled to meet Iran's Nassaji Mazandaran on October 3.

Fours with a dramatic win over Afghanistan.

Fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana and left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage stood out for Sri Lanka with 21 wickets between them and Silverwood counted them as positives from the tournament. "We played some very good cricket to get to the final. We had to fight very hard. For me it was an achievement," said Silverwood.

"But if we take today out of the equation, we've seen two youngsters put their hands up, in Dunith Wellalage, and Matheesha Pathirana. We've seen two of them really put up their hands on the world stage."

He added, "Sadeera (Samarawickrama) played some good knocks. (Kusal) Mendis has come back into form. But clearly consistency is something we need to bring into the game."

Notably, Sri Lanka's 50-run total is now the lowest total in the Asia Cup history, breaking the previous record held by Bangladesh, who were dismissed for 87 runs against Pakistan in 2000. Furthermore, Sri Lanka's 50-run total is the lowest in men's ODI history in a tournament final. It is also the third time this year that Sri Lanka have been bowled out for less than a hundred in ODIs. Sri Lanka will start their World Cup campaign against South Africa in Delhi on October 7.

Bangladeshi bowler under fire over misogynist remarks



DHAKA (Agencies): A Bangladeshi cricketer was embroiled in controversy Monday over misogynistic social media posts condemning working women, just days after making a brilliant international debut.

Bowler Tanzim Hasan Sakib took the wicket of India captain Rohit Sharma with only his fourth delivery in international cricket when the neighbours met in the Asia Cup on Friday, before holding his nerve in the final over to secure victory for Bangladesh.

The resulting adulation for the 20-year-old, though, turned to scorn from women's rights activists and feminists after his misogynist social media posts came to light.

"If the wife works, the husband's rights are not ensured," Tanzim posted on Facebook last year. "If the wife works, the child's rights are not ensured. If the wife works, her elegance is damaged."

"If the wife works, the family is ruined. If the wife works, the veil is ruined. If the wife works, society is ruined." Women form the vast majority of the workforce of the garment factories that have driven much of Bangladesh's economic growth in recent years.

But conservative patriarchal attitudes remain widespread in the majority Muslim country. In another post, Tanzim warned men that their sons would not have a "modest" mother if

they married "a woman who is accustomed to free mixing with her male friends in a university". The comments provoked a backlash, with Paris-based feminist writer Jannatul Nayeem Prity pointing out that the Bangladesh team jerseys were made in factories mostly staffed by women.

"I feel sorry for you that you don't consider your mother a normal human being," she added. Writer Swakritto Noman described the comments as "deeply offensive" in a widely-shared Facebook post, demanding the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) question Tanzim and the player apologize.

Journalist Mejbahul Haque added Monday: "The status of such a distorted form of misogyny is unacceptable. No matter how big a star he is!"

The BCB said it was investigating. "The issue came to our attention. We are looking into the matter," its cricket operations chief Jalal Yunus told AFP.

Tanzim has played 12 first-class matches in his short senior career, after helping Bangladesh win the Under-19 World Cup in 2020.



In brief

Operation conducted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police, on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, launched a search operation in Riazabad and adjoining areas on Monday, said a police spokesman. He informed that the heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel, and Ladies Police, under the supervision of SHO R.A. Bazar Police Station, carried out an operation in the area. During the operation, police searched 78 houses, collected data on tenants 24 and 3, and interrogated 266 people. According to a police spokesman, the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under the National Action Plan in different areas of the district, particularly to ensure law and order.

Fraudster arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Investigation Agency's Cyber Crime wing on Monday arrested a fraudster who was plundering innocent people in the name of lottery. According to the details, accused of presenting himself as an employee of a private news channel, calling innocent people and offering them the winning of a money-spinning lottery. The accused deprived one person of Rs. 4,98,000 in the name of a money-spinning lottery and later disappeared. The cybercrime wing arrested the accused from Shekhupura and recovered four mobile phones from his custody. He was sent behind bars for further interrogations after registration of FIR.

244,700 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 244,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 237,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1547.59 feet and was 149.59 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 146,500 cusecs and 130,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1234.80 feet, which was 184.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 16,500 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was 132,500, 115,300, 95,400 and 38,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

5 stolen bikes recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two members of a gang involved in motorcycle theft and recovered five stolen motorcycles from their possession during the crackdown here on Monday. According to a police spokesman, the arrested gang was identified as Asif and Ali Haider. Rata Amral police have registered separate cases against both of them and started an investigation. SP Rawal Town Faisal Saleem appreciated the performance of the police team, adding that the arrested accused will be challenged with concrete evidence and will be punished. The accused, who deprive the citizens of their valuable assets, cannot escape from the grip of the law, he added.

Crackdown: SNGPL removes 323 illegal connections, recovers over Rs 75.4 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Determined to bring down the Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) ratio, the Regional Directorate of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has launched a massive crackdown against the elements involved in theft of the scarce and precious commodity, which continued unabated.

During the ongoing anti-gas-theft operations, the raiding teams so far unearthed more than 323 illegal connections and recovered Rs 75.4 million from defaulters. Sharing details, Islamabad-Regional SNGPL General Manager Azhar Rashid Sheikh in an exclusive talk with APP informed the special teams not only identified but also removed more than 270 illegal meters and 53 direct connections and recovered millions of rupees from the defaulted consumers.

He vowed that the region-wide crackdown against the gas pilferage would continue till knocking down all the elements involved in illegal tapping, causing loss to the national economy and depriving the consumers of gas, which was already in shortage due to the fast depletion in the country's existing hydrocarbon reserves and high-price in the international market.

Accordingly, he said a massive operation to curb gas theft, recover dues, and remove illegal connections was in full swing across the Islamabad-region on directives of the federal govern-

ment. So far, he said raids had been conducted in various areas including Chaitah Bakhtawar, Gungal, G-7, I-14, E-18 Islamabad, Bhara Kahu, Tarlai Wah Cantt, Fateh Jang, and Attock. "During the drive more than 270 illegal meters and 53 direct connections have been removed, FIRs (First Information Reports) have been lodged against 37 individuals. Gas thieves have been penalized with over Rs 90 million fines, and legal action has resulted in the recovery of Rs 75.4 million" he added.

To get the required results, GM Azhar Rashid said the company had increased the number of raiding teams to gear up the ongoing operations against gas theft and make more recoveries from the defaulters. He praised that SNGPL Managing Director Aamir Tufail's guidance had led to the establishment of a special task force in the Islamabad Region to step up action against gas theft. For this purpose, additional resources had been allocated to get the support of law enforcement agencies, he added.

Answering a question, he reiterated that stringent actions were being taken against employees involved in any unlawful activities as so far 25 to 30 individuals had been blacklisted, while legal proceedings were underway against 40 to 50 officials.

To another question, the GM said the company was committed to ensuring uninterrupted services to domes-

tic consumers throughout the year. Customer Service Centers were operating around-the-clock seven days a week, and any complaint related to illegal activities would be promptly addressed by SNGPL authorities.

Azhar Rashid emphasized that no hindrance should be tolerated in resolving consumer complaints, and any involvement in illegal activities should be reported to SNGPL authorities. He highlighted the challenges posed by dwindling gas reserves, with a decline of 9 to 10 percent annually. While gas demand in Islamabad and Rawalpindi Division stands at 100 MMCFD (million cubic feet per day), against which only 50 MMCFD is currently available with the company, he added. This necessitates careful load management, with a focus on ensuring gas supply for domestic consumers during meal preparation times.

The GM highlighted the crucial role of the industrial sector in national development, emphasizing that the country could progress when industries thrive. "So, concerted efforts are being made to prioritize gas supply to industries," he added.

In response to a question, he said that new gas connections were currently restricted but applications could still be submitted.

However, the SNGPL GM clarified that these applications would only be processed once the government lifted the ban on new connections.



ISLAMABAD: MD National Book Foundation Dr. Raja Mazhar Hameed presented the portraits of leaders of independence movement of Pakistan Chaudhry Rehmat Ali and Qazi Muhammad Isa to Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindhi.

21 drug peddlers netted with 20 kg charras, over 1 kg heroin

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 21 accused on recovery of over 20 kg charras, over 1 kg heroin and other items from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, Dhiamial police held Shehnaz Bibi for carrying 1300 grams of heroin and Noreen Bibi for possessing 2030 grams of charras.

Race Course police also recovered 1600 grams of charras from the possession of a female drug smuggler namely Mehnaaz Bibi.

Gujar Khan, Sadiqabad, Race Course, R.A.Bazar, Airport, Saddar Baroni, Rawat, Bani, Taxila Naseerabad and Saddar Wah police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Sadaqat, Danish, Zeeshan, Hamid, Gulzar, Shabbir Ahmed, Ahmer, Tanveer, Javed, Rehan and others and recovered over 17 kg charras.

Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.

City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.

19 outlaws arrested: drugs, liquor and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 19 outlaws during the last 24 hours from different areas of the city and recovered liquor, drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directives, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Alyoun Masih and recovered 2070 gram heroin from his possession. The Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Majid Hussain and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

Likewise, the Karachi Company police team arrested an accused namely Hamza and recovered 271 gram heroin from his possession. The Sumbal police team arrested two accused namely Zahid Hussain and Waqar and recovered 223 bore rifles and one 444 bore gun from their possession.

Similarly, the Tarnol police team arrested two accused namely Aamir Nazir and Izhar Khalil and recovered 340 gram heroin and 560 gram hashish from their possession. The

Sangjani police team arrested two accused namely Shafi Ullah and Abdullah and recovered 130 gram heroin and 1270 gram hashish from their possession.

Moreover, the Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Tofail Ahmed and recovered 232 gram heroin from his possession. The Koral police team arrested two accused namely Mohsin Ali and Khizer Hussain and recovered two 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession.

Furthermore, the Humak police team arrested an accused namely Rehman and recovered one dagger from his possession. The Shahzad Town police team arrested four accused namely Usman, Ahsan Ali, Nazakat Hussain and Imran and recovered two 30 bore pistols and 520 gram hashish from their possession.

The Bani Gala police team arrested an accused namely Rafaqat Hussain and recovered 540 gram heroin from his possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

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



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Interim Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah. —APP Photo

Foolproof security to be ensured: DPO City

ISLAMABAD (INP): Divisional Police Officer (DPO) City Zone Hassan Jehangir has said all necessary security arrangements have been made to ensure foolproof security of worship places of minority places and these measures will further enhance their protection.

On special directives of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO), the DPO held a meeting with a delegation representing minority communities.

The primary objective of this meeting was to bolster security measures for minority communities and their places of worship within the City Zone, as stated by a public relations officer.

Under the ICCPO's guidance, rigorous efforts were put into place to ensure the foolproof security of minority communities and their places of worship throughout the Federal Capital. During the meeting, the delegation engaged in comprehensive discussions about the safeguarding of minority rights and exchanged valuable insights for further enhancements.

To fortify security measures, the DPO City Zone implemented significant measures, including issuing clear orders to In-charge Police Stations to prioritize the safety and security of minority communities and their residential areas.

Additionally, the DPO City Zone ensured that all security requirements for minority places of worship were meticulously met, reassuring the unwavering support of the police force in this regard. The minority delegation conveyed their heartfelt gratitude for the proactive steps taken by the Islamabad Capital Police to protect their community.

They expressed their appreciation for the police force's steadfast commitment and willingness to collaborate in all aspects of security.

ICT admin step up efforts against dengue

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the rise of dengue fever cases in Islamabad, the city administration has decided to step up its anti-dengue campaign to curb the spread of the virus.

In a review meeting held on Monday, the Additional Commissioner/Director Admin Chief Commissioner Office Waqas Anwar directed the authorities to improve sanitation arrangements in different areas of the city and ensure proper disposal of garbage, besides launching an awareness campaign among the people about dengue.

Anwar also said that all possible resources will be used to control the deadly virus in Islamabad, with a special focus on rural areas.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners Islamabad, DHO, MCI and CDA officers, District Health Officers, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates, and other stakeholders in the anti-dengue campaign.

According to ICT Spokesperson Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Tabasim, the Additional Commissioner also directed that different areas of the city be sprayed to prevent dengue mosquitoes from breeding.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan express desire to boost relations in art, culture

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov called on Caretaker Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah in Islamabad.

During the meeting, both discussed issues of mutual interest, particularly enhancing cultural relations between the two countries.

Speaking on this occasion, the Minister said Pakistan and Azerbaijan

enjoy excellent relations rooted deep in shared faith.

Jamal Shah said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan would enhance their relations in the field of art, culture, film and other fields. He said that Azerbaijan would be specially invited to be part of second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor Cultural Carvan.

Azerbaijan Ambassador Khazar Farhadov said that Azerbaijan also values its relations with Pakistan.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov also spoke about Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations based on deep historical roots.

He said that the 14th-century Multani Caravanserai in Baku, Azerbaijan is a clear example of our historical relations. He acknowledged the existing scope of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage between the two friendly countries and desired to undertake joint ventures in respective fields.

Turkish students complete Urdu language course

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Department of Urdu, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) concluded a month-long Urdu Language Course for its second batch of students from the University of Istanbul.

The Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, presided over the certificate distribution ceremony, with the Academic Attaché of the Turkish Embassy in Pakistan, Mehmet Toyran, as the chief guest.

Director of Yunus Emre Institute Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Halil Tokar, all the deans of AIOU, principal officers, faculty members, and Director of International Collaboration and Exchange, Dr. Zahid Majeed were also present at the event.

Turkish students intro-

duced themselves in Urdu and mentioned that they were able to learn how to write and speak the language in just one month.

They proudly spoke in Urdu during their visits to various places throughout the course, without using a single word of English.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, expressed his admiration for the students and their teachers for their dedication and hard work. Dr. Nasir Mahmood also emphasized the importance of language and culture, and how completing this course will enable these students to become ambassadors and contribute to strengthening the relationship between Turkey and Pakistan.

The educational attaché of Turkey expressed gratitude towards the Vice

Chancellor and teachers of AIOU for teaching Urdu to their students.

The Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, commended the teachers for their efforts in teaching Urdu to Turkish students.

He added the Turkish students were able to use Urdu during their visits to Islamabad's Sunday Bazaar, buildings, gardens, markets, Taxila's archaeological sites, and Lahore's historical and cultural sites.

Dr. Zahid Majeed and Dr. Arshad Mahmood, both faculty members of the Urdu Department, also gave speeches at the ceremony. Certificates were distributed to the Turkish students and their teachers by Vice Chancellor AIOU at the end of the ceremony.

Conference to promote religious harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is all set to host the 48th two-day International Seerat-un-Nabi (Life of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) conference on the 12 of Rabi-ul-Awwal 11 and 12 (September, 28 and 29) in the federal capital.

This conference will feature the distribution of awards for Seerat-related articles and books. The theme of this year's competition for articles and books is "Practical Wisdom for Economic Prosperity in the Light of the Life of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him."

Notably, all submitted articles and books are rigorously reviewed by a com-

mittee consisting of at least three experts, including professors with Ph.D. degrees.

Subsequently, their reports are handed over to a high-level apex committee, which makes the final decision on which publications deserve recognition.

This year, a total of 137 books and 94 articles on Seerat were received, resulting in 31 individuals receiving awards for books and 35 for articles. The 66 fortunate recipients will be honored with shields, certificates, and cash prizes.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony plans to print and provide standard articles to libraries in universities across the country, as well

as research institutions focusing on Seerat-un-Nabi Peace Be Upon Him.

The International Seerat-un-Nabi Conference will consist of two main sessions. In the first session, awards will be presented to authors and poets who have participated in the Seerat-related competition.

The second session will explore various aspects of the Prophet's life, with scholars and orators discussing topics related to economic concepts in light of Seerat-un-Nabi.

The conference aims to bring together renowned religious scholars, both national and international, to bridge intellectual gaps and promote understanding among scholars.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used for construction work of Margalla Road during development work in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Coordination with NGOs

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Sadrazam Osmani, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, has emphasized the importance of coordination with the Ministry for the implementation of projects in Afghanistan. This was discussed during a meeting with officials from Care Afghanistan Organization. Osmani stressed the need for close coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and donor organizations.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 03, 1445 — Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Massive fire in Badakhshan

BADAKHSHAN (Khaama Press): According to provincial officials, a fire incident in the Faizabad district of Badakhshan has resulted in over one million Afghanis in financial damages. The incident occurred in the Akhur Goldan area of Faizabad city. The fire originated from two adjacent decoration shops in the city. According to the statement, it spread to neighbouring shops moments after the fire incident, resulting in over a million financial losses.

IEA expects UN General Assembly to lift sanctions

KABUL (TOLOnews): Heads of state and national representatives gather in New York to attend the UN General Assembly, which is September 18-19, and a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate said that they expect the summit to lift sanctions from the interim government.

The deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, Bilal Karimi, said that the summit should also consider the achievements of the Islamic Emirate.

“The realities of Afghanistan, the improvements made, there are achievements in economic

and security issues. They should understand these realities. They should fulfil their responsibilities regarding the removal of sanctions and establishment of diplomatic relations,” he said.

There will be no representative from Afghanistan at the UNGA summit.

Political analysts meanwhile said that the Islamic Emirate and the international community need to engage in order to address the existing crisis in Afghanistan.

“They (Islamic Emirate) through back to back decrees restricted the

rights of women and girls of Afghanistan, which caused serious concerns among the people of Afghanistan and the international community,” said Ahmad Khan Andar, a political analyst.

“There is a need for the people of Afghanistan and Afghanistan to take its position back in the UN General Assembly,” said Fazal Rahman Oria, a political analyst.

Previously, the Secretary General of the United Nations announced that the situation of Afghan women will be discussed in the meeting.

120 killed due to mine explosions last year

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Head of Coordination and Mine Clearance reported a grim statistic for 2023, revealing that 120 people have died, while another 250 individuals have injuries due to mine explosions and unexploded ordnance in the country.

This alarming toll underscores the urgent need for continued efforts in mine clearance and public awareness campaigns to mitigate the devastating impact of these lethal hazards.

Nooruddin Rustamkhil, the head of coordination and Mine clearance, said that most of the victims of these incidents are children in the country.

He added, “From the beginning of 2023 until now, we have had 207 incidents in Afghanistan, resulting in 372 casualties. Among these, 122 were killed, 250 were wounded, and 224 were children.”

According to the statistics of this office, nine organizations are active in the field of mine clearance nationwide, including three hundred teams in thirty provinces.

Furthermore, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) expressed concern over the rising casualties among children due to unexploded ordnance explosions in Afghanistan and emphasized that in 2022, more than a hundred children died or were disabled due to these incidents.

Despite ongoing efforts, Afghanistan remains plagued by many casualties, including innocent children, due to unexploded mine explosions. The persistence of this danger underscores the need for sustained international support and resources to address this critical humanitarian issue.

The threat of unexploded mines still lingers in some regions of the country as a grim reminder of past wars and the lack of awareness surrounding these deadly remnants.

To safeguard the lives of Afghan citizens, concerted action is imperative to clear these hazards and raise awareness about their dangers.

Girls still face unfair bans on edu

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, has stated that two years have passed since the ban on girls’ education in Afghanistan, and this unjust violation of human rights continues.

Guterres said on his social media platform X, “Two years have passed since the ban on girls attendance in schools in Afghanistan.”

Furthermore, he talked about the policies and actions of the Taliban administration regarding the ban on girls’ education, saying, “This is an unjustifiable violation of human rights that inflicts long-term damage on the entire country.”

The United Nations Secretary-General has urged removing all restrictions and decrees preventing girls from accessing education.

Girls in Afghanistan are the primary victims of the policies of the Taliban regime. The de facto administration began issuing decrees and guidelines that severely impacted the lives of women and girls at all levels.

The ban on girls’ education was one of the first orders issued. Although the Taliban initially declared this ban temporary, it is still in effect after two years.

The experiences of women in Afghanistan and the overall policies of the de facto administration, which are implemented with a misogynistic approach, demonstrate that gender apartheid is prevalent in Afghanistan.

United Nations experts who have travelled to Afghanistan and closely observed the situation confirm the occurrence of gender apartheid in Afghanistan.

No intention to meddle in Afghanistan’s affairs: China



KABUL (Pajhwok): The new Chinese ambassador says his country has no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Zhao Xing held out the assurance at an introductory meeting with Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani.

A statement from the

Ministry of Interior (MoI) on September 17 quoted Haqqani as commending efforts by the outgoing Chinese ambassador maintaining friendly relations between the two countries.

China is a good neighbour and the Afghans believe in its positive inten-

tions, according to the minister, who welcomed its stance on Afghanistan.

The incoming Chinese ambassador believed Afghanistan had made significant progress in various sectors over the past two years.

Zhao Xing expressed hope that Afghanistan

would make even more achievements in its interaction with the world.

The diplomat affirmed China’s respect for the sovereignty and culture of Afghanistan. He said China had no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Strengthening govt, enlightening public mind scholars’ responsibility

KABUL (Agencies): In a meeting with a number of scholars, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, underlined that it is the role of ulema to strengthen the Islamic government, enlighten the public mind, and promote unity among the people.

According to a statement

released by the Prime Minister’s Office, Mawlawi Hanafi stated in a meeting with a number of scholars and influential people based in Saudi Arabia that the Islamic Emirate considers providing nationwide security and prosperity to be one of its obligations.

Scholars should actively work to strengthen the Islamic system, create unity among the people, and

enlighten the public minds, the statement said.

Haji Qari Makhdoom Mohammad and Haji Qari Ehsanullah, talking on behalf of these scholars, said after the return of Islamic Emirate in the country, countrywide security and better living conditions have been provided for the citizens of the country, which is a great achievement for the people

of Afghanistan.

He said that scholars are always working to prevent propaganda of biased people, enlighten people and convey truth to the public.

The Islamic Emirate regained its sovereignty as a result of huge sacrifices by thousands of scholars and mujahideen in the country and scholars have the responsibility in protecting it.

‘800 tons of pine nuts exported’

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that in the last five months, they have exported nearly 800 tons of pine nuts worth eight million dollars.

According to the officials, pine nuts are exported directly to other countries, and they are trying to increase the amount of pine nuts.

“Fortunately, we are directly connected to China, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries, and we are still connected with Russia, and our exports are mostly connected through Afghanistan, by air and ports,” said Akhund Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesman for the Ministry of the Industry and Commerce.

According to the ministry, they have exported this amount of pine nuts to Pakistan, India, China, United Arab Emirates, and other countries.

Meanwhile, some businessmen added that to increase the export of pine nuts, it is necessary to meet their challenges.

“The price of air cargo from Afghanistan is very high. Of course, here the government should consider subsidy programs. Second, the problems...,” said Mahbobullah Mohammedi, a trader.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that if the facilities are provided, the traders can export more than \$100 million of pine nuts in a year, and the Islamic Emirate will also earn good income from this route.

“Annually, we export approximately \$75 million, and if we process this in the best way and our processes continue here, we can increase the amount of exports to 100 million dollars,” said Mohammad Yonis Momand, first deputy of Commerce and Investment.

Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in 1401, \$49 million worth of pine nuts were exported abroad, and most of them were exported to Pakistan, China, and India.

Secondary schools to be reopened for girls

KABUL (TOLOnews): On the two-year anniversary of the ban on girls’ education in Afghanistan, Amnesty International has requested the Islamic Emirate to take immediate action to reopen secondary schools for girls.

Amnesty International added that the future and dreams of thousands of Afghan girls are at stake, and it’s been two years since the ban on girls’ access to secondary school in Afghanistan and the situation remains the same.

Today, Monday, September 18 (27 Sonbula), two years have passed since the Islamic Emirate banned girls from attending secondary and high schools in Afghanistan.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that Monday marks two years since girls were banned from attending high school in Afghanistan.

Guterres added that this is an unjustifiable violation of human rights that inflicts long-lasting damage on the entire country.

The Secretary-General of the UN added that girls belong in school. “Let them back in,” Guterres said.

Two years ago today, the Islamic Emirate announced that the classes for girls above the sixth grade were closed until a “second order.”

Meanwhile, the acting minister of higher education, Neda Mohammad Nadim, said that the Islamic Emirate is not against modern science but is determined to take a better step in the field of education and with the capacity-building of universities in the country.

Around 30 media outlets began activities in past 2 years: Ministry

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Information and Culture said that nearly 30 media organizations have been established since the Islamic Emirate came to power.

The MoIC said that efforts are underway to increase efforts to solve the challenges of the media across the country.

“After the Islamic Emirate came to power, between 25 to 30 various media organizations resumed their activities. Most of them are radio stations and are active in different areas of the country,” said Hayatullah Mahajar Farahi, deputy of the MoIC.

Meanwhile, the media-supporting organizations said that nearly 300 media organizations have stopped their activities within this period across the country. 50 percent of them were closed because of economic challenges.

“Nearly 50 percent of the media shut down within this period. More than 50 percent of them are active,”



said Masroor Lutfi, head of Afghanistan’s National Journalists Union.

Meanwhile, the journalists expressed concerns that they are struggling with dire economic conditions and urged the interim government to help them.

“The suspension of many TV and radio media organizations have been

due to economic challenges. The Islamic Emirate should offer support in this regard with a reduction of taxes, giving low prices of licenses and etc....,” said Mohammad Daud Mubrak Oghlo, a journalist.

“The journalists have faced various problems. If the MoIC and the Islamic

Emirate government are not supportive of the media, the media organizations may collapse,” said Mustafa Sharyar, a journalist.

Based on the ANJU, nearly 80 TV channels, 200 radio stations, nearly 10 news agencies and 14 printing media organizations are currently active in Afghanistan.

Kabul-Jalalabad Highway closed due to rockslides



J A L A L A B A D (TOLOnews): The highway of Kabul-Jalalabad remained closed to traffic over the past two days as major rocks slides impeded the highway in the Pul-e-Charkhi area of Kabul.

The highway crosses through a mountainous area east of Kabul that borders with Laghman. Travelers, particularly the truck drivers, are complaining about the closure of the highway and called on the government to reopen it.

“This is very difficult for these passengers. There are corpses and patients among them, and the people are a facing severe challenge,” said Alaudin, a resident of Jalalabad.

“There are also corpses. There are patients and injured people who are going through this path. It is very difficult for them now that the mountain is

sliding and it caused them a major problem,” Osman, a driver. Footage received by TOLOnews shows there are many rockslides happening in the area, which is making it difficult to reopen the highway.

“I was standing here, and there was another person in another position. We were guiding the cars in line and whenever there was a rockslide we would stop the cars,” said Shabir, a resident of the area.

“The big trucks cannot come through this path. If it comes it will collapse. We have loaded vegetables that cost 1,000,000 to 15,000,000 Afs,” said Gula Khan, a driver.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense announced on social media that the engineering teams of the ministry have created a side road on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway, and

now the side road is temporarily open for traffic.

“It is around one kilometer, this road, which we constructed with our machines,” said Nasrullah, an official of the construction department of the MoD.

Ashraf Haqshinas, the spokesman of the Ministry of Public Works, in a video asked citizens to travel by the Leteh Band Road or the Tagab district of Kapisa due to the blockage of the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. According to Haqshinas, a mountain rock slide has not been stopped and the Kabul-Jalalabad highway is blocked three kilometers from the Kabul gate due to dirt and large stones.

This comes as another major highway of Salang, which connects Kabul to the northern provinces, is also closed due to ongoing construction.

Poverty forces Takhar children to hard labour

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Somme children involved in placer mining in northern Takhar province said they have to work from dawn to dusk to manage livelihood for their families.

They asked the government to generate job opportunities for them.

Zalmi, 14, is one of the children’s involved in placer mining which is a hard work in Taloqan River.

After getting permission from his father, he told Pajhwok Afghan News: “I go to school and want to become engineer but my family is economically not sound.” He said most of the time he had to give preference to work and could not go to school, he come to the river and work alongside his father to generate livelihood for themselves.

He said: “All the day I have to work and after the evening prayer I go back to home with my father.”

He added working at a small age was difficult for him but added he had to work alongside his father, some days he earns 100 to 200 and sometimes they return home empty hands.

They have a six-member family who wait at the end of the day for their father and brother who will come and bring something to cherish. The small and drowning arms in the water and rocks of the Taloqan River reflected upon the deprivation of children who now instead of learning lessons and education, bear

the burden of their families and with their new strength and arms, they try from morning to evening to provide a piece of bread for their families.

Habib, 12, is another child who also involved in placer mining in the Taloqan River due to economic problems.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News: “Only I have to work to earn livelihood for my family, there is no one who can work, I can’t earn good money because I am not familiar with this work.” He said during these hot days, he has to work from 5:00am to 5:00pm with shovel and pickaxe in the rocks but at the end of the day he gets 100 afs to 150 afs.

Habib also asked government to pay attention towards job generation for the people.

Among these children, there are also old men whose bent body structure had become even bent by the fate of the times and they are trying to earn alimony for their families among the broken stones.

Mohammad Akram, who work along his two sons, said long distance to the school, lack of resources and most importantly the worst economic condition resulted that two of my sons deprived from education and engaged in hard labour.

Referring to the inking of Taloqan River gold mining contract with foreign companies he said, poor

people earn their livelihood from this source and government should spare some part of the river for the people where they could work.

Meanwhile, Asadullah Taimour, a social affairs expert, said illegal mining by local people and some company in the Taloqan River’s Khayatan area where the Takhar-Badakhshan Road also connects caused danger for the road and agriculture lands.

He said the main road is now about 10 metres away from the river and if placer mining is not stopped the road and agriculture lands could be damaged in the future due to the flood.

Takhar Mining Department Head Mawlawi Abdul Nasir Haqqani, said the gold mine is situated in the Samti area of Cha Ab district which had been granted on contract.

In addition, he said some gold sources are also existed in the Khayatan and Tela Pashan areas where around 70 miners are involved in gold mining and they have government licenses.

He assured efforts were underway to stop illegal and unprofessional mining.

Mawlawi Haqqani said, the damage that can be seen now on the Takhar-Badakhshan public road was from the time when illegal companies started digging arbitrarily, now government monitored everything to avoid harm to the roads and agricultural lands of the people.

Needs all political parties' cooperation for free & fair elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD:(APP):Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting on Monday said cooperation of all the political parties was crucial to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the country."We will not take sides and will remain apolitical," the minister said while talking to a private channel.The minister reiterated the caretaker government's commitment to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan in holding the general elections."It is the right of political parties to express their opinion about the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Ordinance," he said, adding

the caretaker government had nothing to do with the stance of any political party on different issues.To a query, he said the caretaker government was the constitutional and legal one, and the Parliament was the supreme institutions in the democratic system.The minister said the caretaker government respected independence of the judiciary. The people had a lot of expectations from the new Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa who had an credible past."Measures are being taken to provide relief to the public," he said, adding the rupee was gaining strength due to those steps. "Action has been taken against smuggling,

hoarding, and electricity theft," he noted."Investments through the Special Investment Facilitation Council will stabilize the economy and let the government to pass on relief to the masses," the minister remarked. He said the caretaker government would hand over the economy to the next government in an improved shape.The minister said the people had the right to decide whom they elect as their representative."Let us restore the nation's trust and lead the country towards political and economic stability," he remarked. "The government, people, and armed forces are fully capable to defend Pakistan," he added.



OKARA: Chairman Peoples Party Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons after visiting the party workers house.

Iran, US swap prisoners after \$6 billion transfer

5 Americans freed from Tehran in Qatar before flying to US

DOHA (CNN): Five Americans who had been imprisoned in Iran have been freed and have landed in Doha, Qatar, before flying to the United States later on Monday. The five, all of whom had been designated as wrongfully detained, were freed as part of a wider deal that includes the US unfreezing \$6 billion in Iranian funds.

They are being flown on a Qatari government jet to Doha, which left an airport Tehran on Monday afternoon local time. Two relatives of the detainees are also on board, along with the Qatari ambassador to Tehran. The release of the Americans brings to an end a years-long nightmare for those who had been detained. Three of those who are believed to be part of the deal – Emad Shargi, Morad Tahbaz, and Siamak Namazi – had all been imprisoned for more than five years. Namazi had been detained since 2015. The identities of the other two Americans are not publicly known.

Siamak Namazi's mother Effie Namazi and Morad Tahbaz's wife Vida Tahbaz – who were previously unable to leave Iran – were also on the flight from Iran to Doha, a senior Biden administration official said. After stopping in the Qatari capital, they will travel on to the Washington, DC, area to be reunited with their families, the official said. President Joe Biden celebrated the release of the five Americans "after enduring years of agony, uncertainty, and suffering." "Today, five innocent Americans who were imprisoned in Iran are finally coming home," Biden wrote in a statement released Monday, shortly before the Americans were

scheduled to land in Doha, Qatar. "I am grateful to our partners at home and abroad for their tireless efforts to help us achieve this outcome, including the Governments of Qatar, Oman, Switzerland, and South Korea." Their release represents a significant diplomatic breakthrough after years of complicated indirect negotiations between Washington and Tehran. The United States and Iran do not have formal diplomatic ties. Relations further plummeted under the Trump administration, when the US withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and pursued a "maximum pressure" approach to Tehran. In the years since, efforts to constrain Iran's growing nuclear program have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, Tehran has continued to perpetrate human rights abuses against its own people. Last year's death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of Iran's so-called morality police prompted nationwide protests which were brutally suppressed. The release is the latest high-profile deal negotiated by the Biden administration to secure the release of Americans deemed wrongly detained abroad following the release of Americans from Russia and Venezuela.The US will issue new sanctions against Iran following the release. They will target Tehran's Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) and former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, senior administration officials said. They are the second set of sanctions imposed under an executive order signed by President Joe Biden that seeks to punish organizations or criminals responsible for hold-

ing Americans captive.

The deal to free the Americans from Iranian detention "has not changed our relationship with Iran in any way," a senior Biden administration official said. "Iran is an adversary and a state sponsor of terrorism," the first senior official said. "We will hold them accountable wherever possible." "We are focused daily on a policy for the Middle East that combines deterrence with diplomacy to reduce risk of Iran's aggression. It's called de-escalating conflicts through diplomacy wherever possible, and contributing and building a more stable, integrated, prosperous Middle East region," the official described.

"But it goes without saying that when we have an opportunity to bring American citizens home, we do seek to seize it, and that's what we're doing here," they said. Under the agreement between the US and Iran, \$6 billion in Iranian funds that had been held in restricted accounts in South Korea was transferred to restricted accounts in banks in Qatar. Iranian and US officials were notified by Qatar on Monday that the transfer had taken place, according to a source briefed on details of the matter.

Sources told CNN the funds came from oil sales that were allowed and placed into accounts set up under the Trump administration. Biden administration officials have stressed that the funds that have been transferred to the accounts in Qatar will only be able to be used by Iran for humanitarian purchases and each transaction will be monitored by the US Treasury Department.

Russia lashes Ukraine at top UN court in 'genocide' case

NEW YORK (Agencies): Russia hit out at Ukraine at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Monday, as the two warring countries squared off in a legal case over Moscow's claim that "genocide" in eastern Ukraine was a pretext for last year's invasion. Moscow's representative, Gennady Kuzmin, said Ukraine's case that Russia "abused" the United Nations Genocide Convention as a reason to launch its war against its neighbour in February 2022 "couldn't be further from the truth".

When Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion on February 24 last year, part of his reasoning was that pro-Russian people in eastern Ukraine had been "subjected to bullying and genocide by the Kyiv regime". Two days into the invasion, Ukraine filed a suit at the ICJ, "emphatically denying" this and arguing that Russia's use of "genocide" as a pretext went against the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

More "statements" about genocide are not admissible under international law including the Genocide

Convention, Kuzmin contended. Sitting only metres from the Ukrainian delegation, Kuzmin said: "As to expressions of concerns regarding the threat of genocide, they were unsurprising considering the policies of Kyiv regime, which were firmly entrenched in the history, doctrines and practices of Nazism."

Ukraine's legal position is "hopelessly flawed" and "at odds with the longstanding jurisprudence" of the court, he concluded. The case, being heard in the sumptuous Peace Palace in The Hague, is over whether the top UN court has the jurisdiction to order a halt to Russia's ongoing military action. Kuzmin urged the court to throw out the case, arguing that the UN Genocide Convention is about the "prevention and punishment" of genocide, neither of which apply to Ukraine's case.

"Ukraine is not accusing Russia of committing genocide, Ukraine is also not accusing Russia of failing to prevent or punish genocide," he argued. "On the contrary, Ukraine insists no genocide has occurred. That alone should be enough to reject the case

because [...] if there was no genocide there cannot be a violation of the Genocide Convention."

In March 2022, the ICJ sided with Ukraine, ordering Russia to "immediately suspend" its military action. But this judgement was a so-called "preliminary ruling", pending a decision on whether the court is actually competent to rule on the content of the matter. The court's decisions are binding, although it has no "police force" to enforce them.

According to Russia, the ICJ does not have jurisdiction because Ukraine's case falls outside the scope of the UN Genocide Convention. Monday's hearing was the first time a Russian representative had addressed the court in this case, previously arguing that it had insufficient time to prepare arguments. Ukraine will issue its response on Tuesday. More than 30 other countries — all Western allies of Ukraine — will also have the chance to make statements in support of Kyiv from Wednesday. The ICJ dismissed a bid by the United States to join the case.

LHC issues arrest warrants for Islamabad IGP

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Islamabad Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nisar Khan for not appearing in the contempt plea hearing regarding the arrest of former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi despite his release orders from the court.

While expressing its dissatisfaction over the answers of DIG (operations) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and DIG (investigation) Imran Kishwar, the court summoned both of them on October 2 for indictment. The court also issued bailable arrest warrants for the Islamabad chief commissioner. It also issued a showcase notice to the superintendent of police (SP) concerned for not producing the Islamabad IGP. It also issued arrest warrants for the Attock jail superintendent over non-appearance.

LHC moved for Rasheed's arrest

LAHORE (PPI): A petition was filed in the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi bench on Monday, challenging the arrest of Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, his nephew Sheikh Shakir and servants.

Making the federation of Pakistan, the government of Punjab, IG Punjab, and others as respondents, Sheikh Aamer Shafiq, Rasheed's nephew, in his petition, argued that police personnel whisked away the veteran politician and others without any arrest warrants and shifted them to an undisclosed location where they had been kept in illegal confinement.

He further said that despite repeated contacts with the police, the latter were not providing information about the detainees. "An interesting thing is that those picked up by the police neither had any case registered against them nor were they wanted in connection with any investigation," read the petition. It was further stated that Shakir had nothing to do with politics. "He is a trader. But still he was picked up," read the petition.

Major reshuffle in KP's bureaucracy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant administrative overhaul, several high-profile transfers and appointments have taken place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with some remarkable developments that have made headlines.

The current Commissioner of Mardan, Yousaf Rahim, has been transferred from Mardan and is now reporting to the Establishment Department. In a move that stands out, Shaukat Yousafzai, who was previously awaiting posting in the Establishment Department, has now been appointed as the Commissioner of Mardan Division. This marks a unique case, as Shaukat Yousafzai becomes the Commissioner of a division for the fifth consecutive time, a historical first in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Commissioner Malakand, ShahidUllah, has also been reported to the Establishment Department, while Saqib Raza has been appointed as the new Commissioner of Malakand Division.

In another notable change, Amir Sultan has been transferred from the position of Commissioner Hazara and has been posted as the Secretary of Health. Meanwhile, Zaheer Ul Islam has taken up the role of Commissioner of Hazara Division. Due to performance-related issues, Commissioner Kohat, Muhammad Ali Shah, has been made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) and has been reported to the Establishment Department.

This extensive reshuffling isn't limited to commissioners; it also extends to various Administrative Secretaries in the province:

Dr. Amber Ali Khan has been appointed as the Secretary of Housing. Syed Imtiaz Hussain is now the Secretary of Finance, Zulfiqar Ali Shah takes up the role of Secretary of Industries, Mehmood Hassan is the new Secretary of Excise.

Muhammad Idrees assumes the position of Secretary of the C&W Department.

Ministry to host Seerat conference on 28th

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony will host the two-day 48th International Seerat-un-Nabi Conference -- Practical Wisdom for Economic Prosperity in the light of Sunnah -- on Rabi-ul-Awwal 11-12 (September 28-29) in the Federal Capital.

Renowned Ulema and religious scholars, both national and international will address the conference to highlight the multiple aspects of the Sunnah Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), besides tackling the contemporary issues confronting the Muslim Ummah.

Muhammad Ziaulhaq is the Secretary of Transport. Aneela Mehfooz becomes the Secretary of Social Welfare.Arshad Khan takes up the role of Secretary of the Higher Education Department. Muhammad Israr is appointed as the Secretary of Livestock. Mutahhir Zeb becomes the Secretary of Tourism. Tahir Orakzai is now the Secretary of Irrigation.Dawood Khan takes up the position of Secretary of Local Government.Shahid Sohail becomes the Secretary of Public Health, Zarif Ul Mani is now the Secretary of Food, Inayat Waseem assumes the role of Secretary of Relief, Nisar Ahmad takes up the position of Secretary of Energy & Power.

Additionally, several officials, including Muhammad Ayaz, Amir Afaq, Rashid Khan, Matiullah, Abdul Basit, Ihsanullah, Abid Wazir, and Muhsarraf Marwat, have been made OSD and reported to the Establishment Department.

The reshuffling also extends to Deputy Commissioners across various districts: Khalid Iqbal is posted as Deputy Commissioner of Nowshera. Dr. Qasim Ali Khan becomes the Deputy Commissioner of Swat, Afaq Wazir is appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Zia Ur Rehman takes up the role of Deputy Commissioner of Shangla, Muhammad Fawad is the new Deputy Commissioner of Lower Dir, Shahid Ali becomes the Deputy Commissioner of Malakand, Hassan Abid is appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Kolai Palas, Hamid Ali assumes the role of Deputy Commissioner of Buner, Irfan Un Din is the new Deputy Commissioner of Upper Chitral.

Furthermore, Irfanullah Wazir and Shahab Muhammad have been made OSD and reported to the Establishment Department. This extensive reshuffle reflects the commitment of the government to optimize administrative efficiency and ensure effective governance across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

(Continued from Page 1)

Rahim contended that parliament had "interfered" with the rules of the Supreme Court.

Justice Athar asked: "Do you support what happened in the past?" During the hearing, the CJP asked the advocate to comment on whether he believed the whole law to be wrong or a few clauses. "According to Schedule 4 of the Federal Legislative List, the Supreme Court makes its own rules of practice and procedure," the counsel replied. Was this authority given to the Supreme Court in the Constitution or in the law? Justice Mandokhel asked. Advocate Rahim said that he would respond to the queries later. Justice Athar then asked: "Is it not within the purview of the parliament to make this law?" Do not want absolute powers: CJP

During the hearing, the CJP remarked: "This court runs on the taxes of the people." If this law is struck down, the chief justice will benefit, the CJP said. However, he added: "A judge takes an oath to abide by the Constitution and the law." He further observed that as the top judge of the country, he did not want absolute authority. "Rs6.5 billion dollars were lost due to the court's decision in the Reko Diq case, As chief justice, I do not want such authority," the CJP remarked. "I have not sworn to obey the judgments of the Supreme Court. I have taken oath to uphold the law and the

Constitution," he said.

"Law not against SC" After a brief hiatus, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan appeared before the court and argued that the petitions were inadmissible. He said that the law dealt with the powers of one office, not the entire judiciary, and aimed to bring "democratic transparency" to the institution. He further contended that the law, au contraire to the claims of the petitioners, actually served in the public interest. The AGP further argued that since no external check or institution was involved or imposed by the Act, it did not, in fact, curtail the power of the institution as a whole.

During the course of proceedings, CJP Isa observed that there was also a public opinion that Article 184(3) was misused. The three-member bench nullified the Reko Diq agreement causing a loss of \$6.5 billion to the country. It was the opinion of the judges and it was not corrected, he added. The top judge admitted that they made mistakes. "Mistake was made in the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's case."

"We have a huge ego. We endorsed martial law," the CJP remarked, adding that the judges should admit that they also made omissions. CJP Isa continued, "We take suo motu notices over every matter then whey can't on legislation about ourselves."

In Bhutto's case, the review petition was also heard by the same judges who handed him the death penalty, the top judge stated. "Our ego should not be so huge that we do not admit our mistake," At this, Justice Minallah asked if the masses filed petitions after the endorsement of martial law and said, "We should also be held accountable."

During the hearing, CJP Isa asked AGP Awan whether he was liable to follow the 1980 rules of the Supreme Court. "Rules are there to guide us not to limit us," the top judge observed. However, Justice Akhtar said that the judges are not bound by the SC Rules, adding that in such a situation how can the Supreme Court judges be bound by the Act being challenged in the court? Following this, CJP Isa announced that they were taking a "short break" and would resume hearing of the case.

However, as the judges were leaving the courtroom PTI's lawyer Aziz Bhandari came to the rostrum. Justice Isa, while addressing Bhandari, asked, "Whose lawyer are you?" He replied, "PTI's". The top judge then assured him that they would listen to his arguments after recess.

Meanwhile, Justice Ahsan — on behalf of all the judges — conveyed good wishes to the attorney general who has to travel abroad today in connection with the Indus Water

Procedure Act adjourned till Oct 3

Treaty case. At this, Justice Tariq observed: "The matter will end if we nullify the Act. But, if the law remains intact, then what will happen to the verdicts announced in the meantime?" The attorney general replied that the "past and close transaction rule" may be applied in such cases. He maintained that the court could give protection to the verdicts made in the past. The attorney general apprised the court that he had completed his arguments in the case.

When the hearing resumed after the short break, the chief justice asked Advocate Rahim how long he would take to complete his arguments. Rahim said he would complete his arguments in two days. When asked the same question to Bhandari, the PTI's counsel said that he would take just half an hour. While Zaman Khan Vardag was of the view that he would submit his written arguments. "It does not seem the hearing will be completed by Monday," the CJP observed.

Keeping the stay order effective on the law clipping the chief justice's powers, the full court directed all the parties to submit their written arguments in the case by September 25 and adjourned the hearing till October 3. According to the short order, the 15-member full-court bench of the top court lifted the stay order over the implementation of the Act. The CJP will now form benches

after consultation with two senior judges under the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023, it added.

On April 13, an eight-member bench of the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the law, which deals with the powers of the top judge in matters of public interest and seeks to limit the suo moto powers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan. During the previous hearing in June, the similarities between the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 — which relates to the right of appeal in suo motu cases — and the SC Practice and Procedure Act were discussed with Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan saying that parliament could look into "harmonising" the two laws. The then-CJP — while he welcomed the proposal — said that the federal government should take the top court into consideration when making any legislation related to the judiciary.

The law gave the power of taking suo motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior judges including the chief justice. It further aimed to have transparent proceedings in the apex court and includes the right to appeal. Regarding the constitution of benches, the Act stated that every cause, matter or appeal before the apex court would be heard and disposed of by a bench constituted by a committee comprising the

CJP and the two senior-most judges. It added that the decisions of the committee would be taken by a majority.

Regarding exercising the apex court's original jurisdiction, the Act said that any matter invoking the use of Article 184(3) would first be placed before the committee. On matters where the interpretation of the Constitution is required, the Act said the committee would compose a bench comprising no less than five apex court judges. About appeals for any verdict by an apex court bench that exercised Article 184(3)'s jurisdiction, the Act said that the appeal would lie within 30 days of the bench's order to a larger SC bench. It added that the appeal would be fixed for hearing within a period not exceeding 14 days.

It added that this right of appeal would also extend retrospectively to those aggrieved persons against whom an order was made under Article 184(3) prior to the commencement of the SC (Practice and Procedure), Act 2023, on the condition that the appeal was filed within 30 days of the Act's commencement. The Act additionally said that a party would have the right to appoint its counsel of choice for filing a review application under Article 188 of the Constitution. Furthermore, it states that an application pleading urgency or seeking interim relief, filed in a cause, appeal or matter, shall be fixed for hearing within 14 days from the date of its filing.