

Ali Wazir released from jail

RAWALPINDI (PP): Former Member National Assembly (MNA) Ali Wazir was released from Adiala Jail on Wednesday after securing bail in the sedition and terror cases. As many as four FIRs were earlier registered against Ali Wazir in two police stations of Islamabad. Two FIRs were registered in Tarnol Police Station while one FIR was registered in Bara Kahu Police Station.

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First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

Bilawal leaves for Dubai  
F.P. Report

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday reached Dubai. The PPP chairman will stay in Dubai for five days where the latter will celebrate his 35th birthday. Former PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari will stay in Lahore and will look over party matters. Earlier, the PPP Central Executive Committee voiced concerns over efforts being made to push the party to the wall.

Vol. XXXIX No. 243 Regd. No. 241 RABI-UI-AWWAL 05 1445 -- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

# Measures to save of human lives PM underscores need for shared scientific research

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday underlined the need that scientific research should be put at the disposal of all humanity, ensuring access to all the scientific breakthrough or discovery which was essential to save human lives, irrespective of the intellectual property rights.

He said that it was time for the international community to rise to the challenge and ensure better preparedness through legally binding obligations for building resilience against the future pandemics. Addressing a high level meeting on prevention of global pandemics, preparedness and response, the prime minister highlighted that the Covid-19 had caught the world with surprise, which killed over 6 million people across the globe and led to the national and global economies lock downs.

But with human ingenuity and power of targeted research the world was fortunate to have developed a vaccine which caused an optimism for the future, he added. The prime minister said that the pandemic also caused several reasons for concerns in the world, including inequity in the vaccine distribution among the rich and the poor, resistance by the corporate sector, insisting upon the property rights, hampering the wider preparation of the vaccine and inequality in the financial support mobilized for the rich and the poor countries to recover from the Covid.

PM Kakar stressed that they must not repeat those aspects in the future pandemic or health crises. The vaccines should be treated as global goods and available to all countries and companies, he emphasised, adding that the commercial companies, private donors and actors should not be put in charge of determining the medical production and distribution of vaccines. "It should be determined through the intergovernmental negotiations under the auspices of

WHO," he opined.

"We should also commit to remove trade barriers, strengthen supply chains and facilitate the movement of medical and public health goods by diversifying manufacturing capacities across the regions and promoting technologies for the developing countries," the prime minister maintained. He further noted that financing greatly affected the national, global and regional emergency health preparedness which required about \$30 billion annually and including a estimated gap of \$10 billion in the new external finances.

Those should be provided from all resources including allocation of SDRs or recapitalization of the multinational, regional or national development banks, he added. The prime minister further said that adoption of a political declaration by the high level meeting would help galvanize the political will. "We believe that issue of prevention and preparedness, and response to a pandemic can be best addressed by legally treated through a binding treaty as mandated by the world health assembly, which is currently negotiated in Geneva," he added.

**Kakar urges global support to developing nations on climate ambitions:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar urged the world to extend financial and technical support to developing countries like Pakistan to help them achieve ambitions on climate change.

The prime minister, addressing the Climate Ambition Summit 2023 on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, urged all nations to raise their climate ambitions, regardless of their statuses and geographical locations. He told the international community that the adverse impact of climate change continued to rise in frequency and intensity, disproportionately affecting developing countries.

"Pakistan is a prime example. Despite contributing less than one

percent to global warming, we are among the top ten vulnerable countries. The unprecedented floods of last year illustrated this vulnerability but these may just be the tip of the iceberg unless we arrest this global warming," he remarked. The prime minister thanked the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for active solidarity and mobilization of global support after the floods.

He said due to its "well-established" climate vulnerability, the adaptation was a "critical" priority for Pakistan. He said Pakistan adopted the first-ever National Adaptation Plan to build climate resilience that would follow the projection and casting of interventions identified in the said Plan.

He said the second phase of the Plan would mark preparing for the sector-specific investment framework to serve as a blueprint to translate and identify the adaptation needs into tangible and bankable projects. Prime Minister Kakar also highlighted Pakistan's "Living Indus Initiative" aimed at restoring the ecological health of the Indus basin.

He said Pakistan took significant steps to enhance the early warning capacity as well as the flood protection plan. He said despite its no contribution to global warming, Pakistan chose to be part of the solution by deciding to convert 60 percent of its energy resources to alternative energy by 2030 that would cost around \$100 billion to the country.

Citing Quranic verses, the prime minister told the world leaders that Islam promoted responsibility to protect the environment and utilise natural resources efficiently and undertake an equitable approach to nature. Urging the global community to come up with climate actions and support to the developing countries, the prime minister said, "This will be a litmus test of solidarity and perhaps for the survival of our species on our injured planet."



NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the 'Climate Ambition Summit 2023' held on the sidelines of 78th session of UN General Assembly.

## Electricity tariff may increase

ISLAMABAD (INP): It appears that the poor electricity consumers are in for another bad news. The authorities are expected to raise the power tariff by another Rs2 per unit. The final decision will be taken after the September 27 hearing at the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority.

The Central Power Purchasing Agency has submitted a request with Nepra seeking an increase in the price of electricity. The agency has requested for an increase of Rs1.82 per unit in the price of electricity. The application was submitted under the monthly fuel adjustment for the month of August.

The NEPRA authority will hear the power agency's application on September 27. Meanwhile, the crackdown on power thieves across the country is underway on full swing. In south Punjab, another 161 power thieves have been caught, taking the total number of those apprehended to 9,746. According to the MEPCO spokesperson, 126 new cases were registered, with the total number of cases registered going up to 3,049.

So far, 235 people have been arrested over power theft, according to MEPCO, while the authorities added that in Daira Din Panah, a sub-divisional officer and the Kot Addu executive engineer were assaulted outside the Hanjra House.

Malik Shehzad, who is a power thief and a defaulter of Rs111,000, had hit the EXEN's official vehicle with his car. In Faisalabad, 128 more power thieves were arrested and fined Rs17.9 million, according to a FESCO spokesman. So far, 1,333 people have been fined more than Rs163.6 million, 1,137 people booked in cases and 135 have been arrested.

## Terrorist killed: ISPR

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces killed a terrorist in an intelligence-based operation conducted in the general area Kulachi of Dera Ismail Khan District, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Wednesday.

"On 20 September 2023, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in general area Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan district," the ISPR said. During the operation, an intense fire exchange took place between troops and terrorists, resultantly one terrorist was killed while another got injured.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorist, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent civilians, it added.

## 'Historic peace' possible with S Arabia: Israeli PM

NEW YORK (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday an ambitious US-backed deal to normalise relations with Saudi Arabia was possible, as he met US President Joe Biden in New York.

"I think that under your leadership, Mr President, we can forge a historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia," Netanyahu told reporters, adding that it could "go a long way" to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians. "Such a peace would go a long way for us to advance the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, achieve reconciliation between the Islamic world and the Jewish state and advance a genuine peace between Israel and the Palestinians."

Netanyahu's statement came after he and Biden — who has been pushing

Israel to agree to a coveted peace deal with Saudi Arabia — tried to smooth over months of tensions as they met for the first time on Wednesday since the Israeli PM's reelection in December. The two leaders shook hands in front of US and Israeli flags at the start of the meeting, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York after Biden withheld an invitation to the White House.

Biden said he would raise "hard issues" with Netanyahu including upholding democratic values, amid criticism of the hard-right Israeli government's controversial judicial reforms. They will also discuss an ambitious plan to normalise relations between Israel and its long-time foe Saudi Arabia. "Today, we're going to discuss some of the hard issues, that is,

upholding democratic values that lie at the heart of our partnership," Biden told reporters at the start of the meeting.

The US president extended an olive branch by suggesting a meeting at the White House in the coming months, saying: "I hope we will see each other in Washington by the end of the year." Saudi Arabia has been one of the biggest backers of the Palestinian cause and has repeatedly stated that it needed to see a Palestinian state before taking up normalisation with Israel. Washington has been pressing its traditional ally Riyadh to sign a normalisation deal with Israel, which would be its biggest diplomatic win in the region and following similar agreements with United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco, known as the Abraham Accords.

## NAB sends back references to courts after SC verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Wednesday sent back references against politicians to accountability courts after the Supreme Court struck down some sections of the amendments made to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) last year.

The accountability watchdog held an 'emergency meeting' after the Supreme Court's (SC) verdict on a petition filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan against the amendments made to the National

Accountability Ordinance (NAO) last year by the previous coalition government.

During the meeting, sources claimed, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) submitted an application to send back the references against politicians to accountability courts. The application was submitted to accountability courts after approval of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman.

Sources claimed that references against politicians

— including former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif, Yousuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, former president Asif Zardari and former finance minister Ishaq Dar — will be submitted to accountability courts.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Supreme Court ordered restoration of corruption cases against public representatives as it struck down some sections of the amendments made to the country's accountability laws last year by the previous coalition government.

## India's network of killings has now gone global: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said the news of Indian involvement in an extrajudicial killing in Canada has shown that India's network of extra-territorial killings has now gone global.

Responding to a question at her weekly media briefing here in Islamabad on Wednesday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said for decades, Indian intelligence agency RAW has been actively involved in abductions and assassinations in South Asia.

She said Pakistan has remained a target of a series of targeted killings and espionage by RAW. In December last year, Pakistan released a comprehensive dossier providing concrete and irrefutable evidence of India's involvement in the Lahore attack of June 2021. The attack was planned and

executed by Indian intelligence.

She said in 2016, a high-ranking Indian military officer Commander Kulbhushan Yadav confessed his involvement in directing, financing and executing terror and sabotage in Pakistan. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said India's assassination of a Canadian national on Canadian soil is a clear violation of international law and the UN principle of state sovereignty.

She said it is also a reckless and irresponsible act that calls into question India's reliability as a credible international partner and its claims for enhanced global responsibilities. Replying to another question about statements of Indian civil and military leadership against Pakistan, she said Pakistan has the capacity and will to defend itself. It has done in the past and it will continue to do so.

Answering yet another question about post-floods situation in Libya, the Spokesperson said the situation in Libya is human catastrophe and a terrible tragedy on which people of Pakistan are deeply concerned. She said we have expressed our sympathies with the people of Libya and are in contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross on how Pakistan can offer assistance to Libya in these difficult circumstances.

The Spokesperson said Pakistan strongly condemns the recent storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by a group of extremists under the watch of Israeli occupation forces. Pakistan reiterates its call upon the international community to act in concert to bring an end to Israel's escalatory practices in the interest of peace, security and stability in the Middle East and beyond.

## Nawaz prepared to arrive soon: Maryam

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) has said that the countrymen have attached their all hopes with their true and sincere leader Nawaz Sharif prepared to arrive soon.

Addressing an MSF ceremony here on Wednesday, she said that voice of the party leader has reached every nuke and corner and it was matter of satisfaction. Maryam Nawaz expressed his pleasure of huge gathering of the children on the occasion. She said during the Musharraf era, her father was kept in jail and her mother stepped out.

"This path was not easy for me either. I have spent five months in the death cell. Attended about 200 summons and was arrested in front of my father in Lahore," she added. The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader said, "today you are a nuclear power and as long as Pakistan exists you will be a nuclear power. Let us see any project that the PTI Chairman has started. I am happy that the people of Peshawar also have a metro bus service. That's it, all the projects of Pakistan are because of Nawaz Sharif."

She said when Nawaz Sharif got the government in 2013, the country was suffering from hours long loadshedding and finally he fixed the issue. During the four years of Nawaz Sharif's government, the dollar remained at Rs97. 98. Nawaz Sharif was expelled on the Iqama case and the country had not been able to develop till date.

"Neither I believe in revenge nor Nawaz Sharif. Those who conspired against Nawaz Sharif today are not able to go out in public. God willing, Nawaz Sharif is coming back Pakistan on October 21," he concluded.

## 'We know India, not surprised by Canadian allegations': Qazi

NEW YORK (Agencies): Foreign Secretary Syrus Qazi has said that Pakistan was not "surprised" by Canada's revelations that the Indian government was involved in the killing of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia in June this year.

Qazi, who is accompanying caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on a five-day visit to the US to attend the 78th UNGA session, stated this during a media briefing at the Pakistan mission in UN on Wednesday. "India's terrorism in Canada is not a matter of surprise for Pakistan," the top diplomat remarked.

The foreign secretary said Pakistan did not find anything unusual in the Canadian PM's allegations as Pakistan had arrested a serving Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Yadav — an operative of the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from Balochistan in March 2016. The Indian spy was later sentenced to death after he was found guilty of espionage and terror activities to destabilise Pakistan.

On Monday, Canadian

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a startling revelation about the Indian role in the Sikh leader's killing during a speech at an emergency session of the assembly. "Over the past number of weeks, Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar," Trudeau said, addressing the House of Commons about an "extremely serious matter," after informing the opposition party leaders.

Reacting to Canada's revelations, the foreign secretary said: "What happened in Canada did not surprise us." He added that there must be some truth to the allegations levelled by the Canadian PM. Referring to Kulbhushan Jadhav, the foreign secretary said the Indian spy was involved in activities to destabilise Pakistan.

"If anyone in the world is aware of Indian [activities], it is us [Pakistan]," he said. The top diplomat also said that New Delhi was committing state terrorism

in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). A day earlier, former foreign minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari urged the international community to accept that India is a "rogue, Hindutva and terrorist state" after Canada's "huge allegations".

"This is a huge allegation. India has been exposed before the world. And for how long international and our friends in the West would continue ignoring such acts of India," the PPP chief added. Speaking about PM's US visit, the foreign secretary said the caretaker prime minister will discuss all issues including Kashmir in his address to the UN General Assembly. He said the PM attended the reception and opening session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The prime minister's meeting with the Iranian president was held in a cordial atmosphere, Qazi said adding that the foreign minister also held important meetings on the sidelines.



PESHAWAR: Sikh community members holding a protest rally in favour of Hardeep Singh, who was killed by Indian Agency RAW in Canada.









# Governor chairs senate meeting of AWKUM

— suggests measures to overcome financial problems

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday chaired 15th Senate meeting of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) that approved minutes of last meeting. The meeting was also attended by caretaker education minister, Qasim Jan, Vice Chancellor of the varsity, Dr. Zahoor-ul-Haq, Additional Secretary Education, Javaid Iqbal and

representatives of Higher Education Commission. The meeting approved minutes of last senate meeting and discussed matters including draft statutes, university's power of attorney, discipline rules, pay scale and appointments of administrative officials. The meeting also discussed objections on promotions of administrative staff, appointments of regular faculty members and disbursement of pensions.

Speaking on the occasion, governor said that objective of the meeting is to bring improvement in the whole system after consultation and deliberation. He said that it is my utmost desire that universities should overcome their financial problems and further improve performances for betterment of students. He suggested that universities should devise a strategy with consultation of insurance companies for

payment of pension arrears and added that it would reduce pension burden on varsities and also help providing financial help to employees after retirement. Later KP governor met with delegation of various areas including Mathra, Abbottabad, Ghalanai and business community. Governor listened to their problems and assured his cooperation and conveying their concerns to relative quarters.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing 17th Board meeting of Hydrel Development Fund.

# Facebook post by DC Peshawar office and hilarious comments



Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Social media allow users to create and share content as and when required and it is one of the cheapest and easiest way to reach the large number of target audience within no time. In Pakistan even the government departments are now using social media more vibrantly in order to let the public know about their performance and

actions. One of such social media account is of Deputy Commissioner Peshawar (<https://www.facebook.com/dcpeshawar>) which the office uses to provide information about the performance to its Facebook followers and general public. However, it seems that the page is run by some amateur person. Recently a photo of ADC Relief & HR Peshawar Muhammad Imran Khan was posted on

Facebook in which he is sitting at the side of a road with his staff and keenly observing the minimum amount of water accumulated apparently to check if there is any dengue in it. I wonder who advised to upload such a picture as how someone can find dengue without any equipment. Another hilarious aspect of the photo is that in the background one can see two drug addicts sitting just

beside a garbage drum and the person who uploaded the picture never bothered to crop it. More interestingly, the photo was uploaded without caption, although, a day later the caption was given to the photo and also more photos were added. The comments on the post were quite interesting and hilarious. Out of 174 likes, 137 were smiling emojis. One of the comments stated "are you urinating", while another read "ask him if he found anything". Another comment stated "petrol has been found". One of the persons who commented seemed to be quite angry when he wrote to Deputy Commissioner Office "You people make others laugh at you. Posting a picture like this without a caption should be avoided." While another said "efforts to find Titanic continues". The best comment stated "You are trying to see something that can only be seen through the microscope" And last but not the least another comment said "brother drink the juice". The government departments must understand that general public are quite vigilant these days and they notice more than what the officials think of.

## Commissioner assigned addl charge of DG

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has assigned the additional charge of Director General PDA to the Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair. A notification issued from Establishment Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday said, the Additional Director General (Horticulture) Peshawar Development Authority, Riaz Ali Khan has been relieved from the Additional charge of Director General Peshawar Development Authority. Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair will look after the responsibilities of Director General Peshawar Development Authority, the notification said.

## PHC: Police didn't perform their duties

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah declared null & void First Information Report (FIR) in human trafficking registered by police while declared the FIR registered by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is legal and valid, on Wednesday. The counsel argued that the petition Farid Ullah was booked in two FIRs separately lodged by police and FIA in human trafficking. He further argued to quash police's FIR because it is Mala Fade case. Additional Director FIA

Abdur Rehman Afridi informed that police has no jurisdiction to registered FIR in human trafficking and added that police has misused its power. However, Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that it isn't their responsibility while adding that the police didn't perform own duty but intervening in the jurisdiction of others and remarked that FIA is competent authority in this regard. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that police only sitting on chairs but didn't aware about their duties and responsibilities while observed that court will impose fine in this regard. PHC's divisional bench

comprised Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah vacated police FIR against Farid Ullah while sustain FIA case in human trafficking. Meanwhile, Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan has forwarded former Advisor for Commerce Abdul Kareem bail plea to Justice Ijaz Anwar court because initial hearing was concluded before the same bench. The counsel argued that in last Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim refused from hearing the petition while Chief Justice observed that Justice Ijaz Anwar will hear it because earlier hearing was made before him.

## Feroz Jamal: Govt to never give up constitutional rights of province

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Information, Tourism and Culture Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhail said here Wednesday that the caretaker KP government will never give up the constitutional rights of the province. "The provincial government is constantly demanding payment of its rights from the federation in hydropower, gas royalty and other issues, while positive progress is also expected from the center in this regard," he added. He expressed these views during a visit to Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.2 and a detailed interview in the program \*Pakhtunkhwa Online\* in Peshawar. On arrival at Pakhtunkhwa Radio, he also inspected the Broadcasting House while Station Director Ghulam Hussain Ghazi briefed him on the performance and role of the provincial Radio network. Barrister Feroze Jamal

said the announcement of the election date is not the responsibility of the caretaker government, but instead it is the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said when asked. "Whenever the election commission announces the date of the elections, the caretaker provincial government will give full support to conduct fair and transparent elections", he maintained. While appreciating the new programs and news bulletins at Pakhtunkhwa Radio, he said it is the mouthpiece broadcasting organization of the provincial government, which is continuously receiving public recognition while his government is also making it more stable. He said that there are very capable officers in the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, however this department was suffering from many problems in the beginning, but now its performance has been improved and steps are



being taken to improve it further. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhail said that although the financial resources of the province are very limited, if the tourism and mineral sectors are developed here, it can become the richest province and we will not need to take loans from anywhere. On the question regarding the members of the provincial cabinet, he said that the ability of the previous and present caretaker ministers is beyond doubt and everyone has been trying to take this province and the nation on the path of development. KP Information Minister said that after the unfortu-

nate incident of May 9, holding Naat Khwani competition at Radio Pakistan on the occasion of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi is also a positive change and such events will be organized across the province. There are a lot of intelligent people in the province and talent hunt programs will also be organized for the selection of talented children and youth in these events. On this occasion, some listeners and viewers also apprised the provincial minister of their individual and collective problems, while Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhail assured them of their proper redressal.

## CTO visits Traffic Police Line — checks security measures

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan paid a surprise visit to the Traffic Police Line to review the security situation and other arrangements. During the visit, he checked the daily diary, record, personnel statement, references, uniform warehouse, as well as made a detailed review of the traffic control room and various sections. He got aware of the problems faced by the officials and issued special instructions to give all possible facilities to the traffic officers as well as to improve the secu-

rity arrangements of the traffic line and take special care of cleanliness. He also instructed the traffic officers and the administrative staff to complete the records on time and take special care of cleanliness and said that there will be no compromise on the security of the traffic line. Qamar Hayat Khan asked DSP Headquarters Zahoor Khan to issue special instructions regarding security and improve the washrooms and barber shops of the personnel in the line so that the personnel can use the facilities in the line.

## Teams constituted against hundi trade

PESHAWAR (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in a decisive move against the illegal business of hundi has constituted teams for each region to conduct operations and wipe out the menace once and for all. According to an FIA official each team comprising five members including high officials would supervise and conduct operations in their respective regions against hundi and currency smuggling. The teams would submit reports to the higher authorities on a daily basis without any break even on weekly holidays.

## Task Force announces reduced load shedding in high recovery rate areas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's task force on power theft has announced a significant reduction in load shedding in areas where consumer recovery efforts have been successful. The decision was taken in the 2nd meeting Presided by Muhammad Abid Majeed, Additional Chief Secretary of the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, held here on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, Chief Executive Officer of PESCO, Deputy Commissioners, and District Police Officers. The meeting was told that in just a short span of

15 days, this operation has yielded remarkable results. Over 7,454 electricity connections involved in power theft have been disconnected and fines and arrears amounting to more than 15 crore rupees have been successfully recovered. Collectively, the PESCO, district administration, and the police have conducted more than 3,000 raids in various districts of the province, focusing on illegal power users. In the process, connections of over 5,000 commercial and residential consumers engaged in power theft have been disconnected. Cases have been registered against 3,000 individuals, leading to the arrest of hundreds of individuals involved in this unlawful



activity. PESCO officials said in the meeting that the procedure for arrear payments in instalments has been approved to facilitate the consumers. The meeting was informed that, post-September 30, PESCO will distribute

one lakh meters, streamlining the electricity installation process for the consumers. Expressing his satisfaction with the performance of PESCO, the district administration, and the police thus far, Head of Task Force, Muhammad

Abid Majeed emphasized the need to maintain momentum in achieving recovery targets and controlling illegal power usage. He urged the continuation of the public awareness campaign as a crucial component of the operation's success.



PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan review security situation during his visit to Traffic Police Line.

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Task Force on Power Theft in its second meeting announced reduction of load shedding in areas where recovery from consumers has been successful. The meeting was presided by Muhammad Abid Majeed, Additional Chief Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs Department here on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by

Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, Chief Executive Officer of PESCO, Deputy Commissioners and District Police Officers. The meeting was told that in 15 days the operation has yielded remarkable results. Over 7,454 electricity connections involved in power theft have been disconnected and fines and arrears amounting to more than 150 million rupees have been successfully

recovered. PESCO, district administration and the police have conducted more than 3,000 raids in various districts of the province, focusing on illegal power users. Connections of over 5,000 commercial and residential consumers involved in power theft have been disconnected. Cases have been registered against 3,000 individuals, leading to the arrest of hundreds of

individuals involved in this unlawful activity. PESCO officials said in the meeting that the procedure for arrear payments in instalments has been approved to facilitate the consumers. The meeting was informed that after September PESCO would distribute one lakh meters and streamline the electricity installation process for the consumers. Expressing his satisfac-

tion with the performance of PESCO, the district administration and the police thus far, Muhammad Abid Majeed emphasized the need to maintain momentum in achieving recovery targets and controlling illegal power usage. He urged the continuation of the public awareness campaign as a crucial component of the operation's success.





## In brief

### Police arrests 2 alleged culprits F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police claimed to have arrested two accused who allegedly involved in illegal practice to stop or slow down speed of electricity meters. Deputy Superintendent of Police City Circle Ijaz Khan and SHO City Police Station Mukaddam Khan while talking media-personnel told that acting on a tip-off, they arrested two accused identified as Noor Malik and Siraj for their alleged involvement in the illegal practice to stop or slow down electricity meter reading-speed. The officials claimed that the arrested accused had admitted the said crime during their interrogation by the police personnel. They told police that they were doing the said illegal job meant to get money from people. They admitted that they had stopped or slow down hundred of electricity meters so far. The police, however, said that the tools and items had been recovered from the accused's possession which they used in their illegal practice. The officials told that the accused were booked under different relevant sections of law, besides, they were further being interogated so that to trace out their other accomplice if they had.

### Police arrests four culprits F.P. Report

LARKANA: Police arrested 4 accused involved in various crimes including proclaimed offenders. A number of motorcycles and other goods were recovered. According to the details, yesterday the officers of Shaheed Abdul Malik Bhutto Police Station arrested Yusuf Imrani, the alleged accused involved in the murder case of the deceased Dad Mohammad in the year 2000, in an operation on Stadium Road. While Shaukat Ali Sunani was killed in a relationship dispute in Shahdadkot Road by Ratodero Police, Imdad Sunani, the undercover accused involved in the murder case, was arrested, while Ratodero Police arrested and locked up Wasim Sianach and Sajjad Sianach, who were involved in 2 Chingchi thefts. Police took action and recovered the stolen motorcycle of Shahri Javed Somro, while at the same time, the Jakobabad border area of Larkana, 4 buffaloes worth lakhs of rupees and 4 buffaloes worth lakhs of rupees were recovered and handed over to the owners. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused in their local jails. Meanwhile, WAPDA crackdown against those who stole electricity and transformers by SEPCO. Cases were registered in different jails against those who illegally used more than 200 cable connections and three transformers.

### IG Prisons visits Haripur jail F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Inspector General of Prisons Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Usman Mahsud and Additional Inspector General of Prisons (HQs) Hamid Ur Rahman Wednesday inaugurated working Correctional Industry at Central Prison Haripur wherein they were welcomed by Umair Khan Superintendent Central Prison Haripur. This was stated by Umair Khan, Superintendent Central Prison Haripur while talking to APP on phone here on Wednesday. He said the woodworking center is registered with TEVTA wherein the prisoners will earn a diploma in Carpentry.

# IGP KP inaugurates modern command & control center in Kohat

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan, inaugurated a modern command and control center in Kohat on Wednesday.

The command and control center is equipped with LED screens linked to CCTV cameras installed throughout the city, a wireless communication system, and other facilities. The IGP inspected the center and witnessed the monitoring of internal and external checkpoints, various markets, and educational institutions in the city through the screens installed in the control center.

He issued instructions to the authorities to keep an eye on the security of sensitive places and to remain on high alert to avert any untoward incident. Speaking on the occasion, the IGP said that the main purpose of setting up the command and control center was to deal with street and other organized crimes in the city through a timely response and using modern technology and equipment.

The IGP also said that the command and control center would help to improve the police's response time to emergencies and would also help to deter crime. The inauguration of the command and control center is a positive

step towards improving the security situation in Kohat. The center is expected to play a vital role in preventing crime and ensuring the safety of the public.

**RPO stresses people-friendly policing:** Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti on Wednesday visited Tank district and underlined the need for pursuing people-friendly policing to eradicate crimes from society.

District Police Officer (DPO) Tank Ifitikhar Shah and other senior police officers received him and a smartly turned-out contingent of police presented him salute. He also planted a sapling in connection with the green and clean Pakistan plantation campaign. During the visit, he presided over a high-level police meeting at the District Police Office Tank.

DPO Tank Ifitikhar Shah, all station house officers, SP CDT Dera Shabir Hussain, SP Investigation Nasir Khan, SDO Headquarters and Jandola participated where DPO Tank gave a detailed briefing about various issues pertaining to the law and order situation of the district, crime rate and National Action Plan, challenges and efficiency of the police.

While reviewing the performance of the police, the RPO Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti said that people-friendly policing should be pursued and it was among

his top priorities to keep police free from corruption.

He urged the participants to behave politely with the public and utilize their resources for their protection and provision of prompt justice to them. He also urged the police jawans to perform their duties with dedication, hard work and honesty. He directed to intensify the ongoing crackdown against the elements involved in the smuggling of non-customs paid goods, smugglers, gamblers, extortionists, profiteers, hoarders, and narcotics dealers.

He said that these elements were destroying the students of schools, colleges and universities with drugs and narcotics and they deserved to be given no concession or leniency. He said these culprits should be jailed and society would be made free from drugs and crime at all costs.

Later, RPO Dera also visited DC Compound Tank, Acting District Police Office, South Waziristan Upper where DPO South Waziristan, Upper Malik Habib welcomed him. He also inspected DPO office in South Waziristan and introductory meeting was held with the police officers including DPO South Waziristan Upper Malik Habib, SDPOs Ladha, Sarokai and other officers. A complete briefing was given about the law and order situation of the district.

# Blind murder case unfold, accused arrested

F.P. Report

SWABI: Yar Hussain Police traced the blind murder of young Shayan and arrested the accused here on Wednesday, Police Control Swabi confirmed.

Shayan was shot and killed by an unknown accused on which SP Investigation Khan Khel Khan led by DSP Lahore Roohul Amin Khan along with SHO Yar Hussain Sub Inspector Altaf Khan, investigation officers and Hafiz Zahid Ali started the investigation by collecting evidence from the crime scene, on the identification of the plaintiff by using modern lines.

The alleged accused Rabnawaz alias Muna son of Munifat Khan of Yar Hussain was detained. During the investigation, he confessed to his crime. He

took Shayan out of the house along with his son Rashid over a dispute of money transaction and left the dead body in the wasteland by firing firearms at Kocha Makamamat. Further investigations are underway.

**Cleanliness campaign continue in Maniri:** The cleaning campaign "Garbage Free Maniri" is going on in Maneri under the management of the Welfare Organization of Maniri with huge pile of garbage lying near the road of Ghariabad and Shabad Dheri in Maniri area and was removed besides cleaning the drains.

Ishtiaq Khan, the in-charge (inspector) of Citizen Portal Cell posted in TMA Swabi and his team are doing the work of

garbage removal. Jalil Ahmed Khan, President of the Welfare Organization Maniri, is supervising this campaign.

The volunteers of the Welfare Organization Maniri are in the field of cleanliness in the area, including Maniri, and in this regard on every Friday, the main cremation ground of Maneri, the main nullah, is also regularly cleaned, in which the Municipal Committee also helps the Ahlkar Organization of Swabi.

It is a painful appeal to the people of Maniri to support us in every cleaning campaign including Garbage Free Maniri, contact us where there are heaps of garbage, we will arrange it somewhere by removing it by cleaning the areas.

# National Moot Court competitions begin

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal, Upper Dir on Wednesday arranged the first ever national moot court competitions which began at the main campus here on Wednesday. The varsity's vice chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Shahab inaugurated the event. The students of 12 different colleges and universities took part in the competition.

The Judges, lawyers, prosecutors, faculty members, students of the law department and local activists attended the event. Prominent lawyers affiliated with the Supreme Court Bar, Peshawar High Court Bar, district Bar Upper Dir and officers of the law department were also in attendance. A total of 33 colleges and universities' students had got registered to take part in the moot court competition but 12 of them were selected. The participants (law students) presented cases of different

nature before the nominated judges.

The event was also addressed by the chief organizer Dr Ifzal Mehmood, vice president of the Peshawar High Court Bar association Mingora bench advocate Muhammad Yar, public prosecutor Rafiullah, Sheringal bar's president advocate Ghulam Shah and others.

The chairman, law department, SBBU Sheringal Upper Dir, Dr Ifzal Mehmood presented shields to the guests and thanked them for attending the event. He said the event aimed to create strong coordination among the law students and their teachers across the province. The chief organizer said the event would help the law students to get knowledge about the challenges ahead them in the field of law and its implications. He explained that there would be quarter final, semi final and final round of the competition.

SBBU Sheringal ASAS

**election:** Sahibzada Murad Hussain was elected as president while Dr Abidullah as general secretary for the Academic Staff Association of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal, Upper Dir here on Wednesday. The annual elections for the year 2023 were supervised by Mr Zahoor Khan and Munawar Zeb at the Sheringal campus while Dr Najeeb and Dr Rashid at the Wari campus of the varsity.

Other office bearers including Dr Ameer Alam was elected as senior vice president, Dr Akhtar Zaman as vice president, Dr Hamid Afridi as joint secretary, Younus Khan as finance secretary, Dr Aftab as information secretary and Dr Adnan as sports' secretary. The newly elected president Sahibzada Murad Hussain thanked the faculty for supporting him. Addressing the faculty, he said that he along with other members of his cabinet would try their best to work collectively for the uplift of the varsity.

# Police recovers six tons notorious Gutka from factory

F.P. Report

MIRPUR KHAS: Police has seized six tons of Mainpuri/Gutka during raid on a factory owned Aftab Malik, the most notorious, on Wednesday.

Police conducted raid on a Gutka/mainpuri factory, ran by a notorious Gutka dealer, Aftab Malik,

arrested 01 Abdul Rauf Laghari, while the 03 others namely Aftab Malik, Mashooq Leghari and Mumtaz Leghari succeeded to escape from the scene. The recovery contains Gutka /mainpuri weighing 5842 with a net worth of about Rs. 80 lacs. The recovery of such a huge stock is back breaking success

against gutkha/mainpuri sellers in the district.

The factory has been sealed. FIR vide Crime No 144/2023 u/s 4,5,6,7,8 Gutka Act has been registered against the above named 04 Culprits with police station Satellite Town of the district. Raids are being carried out to arrest the remaining accused.

## Explosive recovered from vehicle F.P. Report

BARA: A bid of terrorism failed when an explosive laden loader was held here in Nala Khwar, Malik Din Khel area of subdivision Bara, district Khyber on Wednesday.

District Police Officer, Khyber Saleem Abbas Kaluchvi said that police personnel stopped Chungchi vehicle, loaded with grass in the jurisdiction of Bara police station for general checking. During the search explosive devices, fixed in plastic drums and concealed under the grass were recovered from the vehicle, he added.

The driver identified as Haroon-ur- Rashid resident of Bar-Qamber Khel, Bara was apprehended and shifted to unidentified location for further investigation, DPO said. Later on, the explosive devices were defused by the bomb disposal unit. The District Police Official said that the explosive devices might be used to execute terrorism plan somewhere in Bara.

## 3 dead as car plunges into deep ditch F.P. Report

BATTAGRAM: Three people lost their lives as a car fell into a deep ditch in Battagram, police said Wednesday.

The ill-fated passengers were going to Bana Allai from Pashto Allai. The police reached the spot soon after getting information of the tragic incident. Three people died on the spot while four sustained injuries. The police said that all the injured were shifted to Bana Allai hospital for treatment. The rescue operation is still underway by the local people of the area.

## Muqam blamed for injustice F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) workers annoyed provincial president Amir Muqam attitude and blamed him for the deprivation of activists across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while ignored other district in developmental projects in the province.

This was claimed by PML-N workers of Mandanr tehsil during a meeting held at the residence of former candidate for provincial assembly and district council Muhammad Nigab at Nawagai while discussed upcoming election campaign in the premises. They claimed that PML-N has lost its vote bank due to Pakistan Democratic Movement government.

Because the party has sacrificed its politics while other parties had made profit, wealth and political from PDM allied government, however, PML-N workers are deprived from developmental projects as well as from politics. They claimed that provincial president Amir Muqam has ignored Buner district in general and tehsil Mandanr in particular.

PML-N senior workers including Haji Nawab, Ikhtisham -ul-Qah, Muhammad Uzair, Shah Nazar Khan and Saeed-ur-Rehman addressed the participants. They argued PML-N workers boycotted from Amir Muqam and existing cabinet activities as protest.

The speakers argued that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Amir Muqam had prioritized Shangla in developmental projects by bringing Prime Minister to the district ignored adjacent Buner district. Earlier Amir Muqam invited party leadership to Buner and Swat districts for political mobilization in opposition but assuming power he invited PM to his ancestral district Shangla, the speakers claimed.

# SHOs directed for completion of pending cases

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: District Police Officer (DPO) Bahawalpur Syed Muhammad Abbas issued strict instructions to complete the cases under investigation and rders to transfer completed cases to court immediately and to consolidate pending cases.

According to the details, in the light of the orders of the Inspector General of Police Punjab and Additional Inspector General of Police South Punjab to complete the cases within the specified time, District Police Officer Syed Muhammad Abbas has investigated the SDPOs and SHOs of the entire district. Strict instructions were issued to complete the cases.

Also, orders were issued to send the completed cases to the court immediately and consolidate the pending cases. Cases pending for more than 3 months should be completed by investigating them on merit before the given deadline. Non-arrested accused, advertised accused and absconders should be immediately arrested.

Similarly, such cases which have been completed should be sent to the court immediately so that the case trial can start on them. On the instructions of the DPO, a procedure was laid down to check the progress on a daily basis. DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas while issuing the orders said that our first objective is to provide timely justice to the citizens. Because delay in justice is equivalent to not getting justice. So all officers should follow these instructions. Officers showing laxity will face departmental accountability.

In the light of the orders of Chief Minister Punjab and IG Punjab, a series of crackdowns against drug peddlers continued throughout the district. In the last 48 hours, several suspects were arrested and a huge amount of alcohol and drugs were recovered from their possession. The operations will continue until the complete elimination of drugs. DPO Syed Mohammad Abbas.

According to the details, in the light of



the orders issued by Chief Minister Punjab and Inspector General of Police Punjab to suppress drug dealers, District Police Officer Syed Muhammad Abbas formed special teams to the SHOs of the district to arrest drug dealers. The task was given, as a result of which the Bahawalpur police are taking vigorous action against drug dealers. 11 cases were registered in the last 48 hours, 1018 liters of country liquor, 05 kg 70 grams of hashish were recovered from the possession of the arrested accused. While 03 drug addicts were admitted to the hospital for treatment in the last 48 hours.

On this occasion, DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas issued instructions to the officers and said that the secret sting operation against drug dealers should be intensified. Indiscriminate actions against drug mafia will be implemented, especially in educational institutions. The act will never be tolerated. Further actions should be taken in this campaign utilizing all resources. He further said that drugs are a scourge which will be ensured to be eradicated from Bahawalpur in any case.

# Multiple developmental projects inaugurated

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Several development projects were inaugurated in different valleys of Upper Chitral. Former Member National Assembly Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali inaugurated these uplifts schemes who carried huge funds through the federal government for these projects and inaugurated them. Maulana Chitrali inaugurated the PCC road, in the remote area of Oveer for which he had approved a fund of Rs.50 million.

Abdul Akbar Chitrali also inaugurated road which will be constructed with a cost of Rs 300 million for Kosht Link Road. In this connection, a simple event was held in Bumbagh, which was attended by a large number of people. Principal Retired Amanullah thanked him and demanded that the telephone exchange should be functioned in Bumbagh. He also inaugurated Booni goal road with a cost of 20 million. EX MNA inaugurated a link road in Khoort of Torkho Mulkho Tehsil

and announced of Rs 40 Rehman.

A ceremony was held at Khot's middle school in which people from the area thanked him and strongly criticized the former Member of Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman. For a fake Inaugurating of protection wall in this area but nor work started neither fund released for it, people distributed sweets on it, but after that, there is no funding for the project, and MPA Hedayat -ur -Rehman is also invisible. The people of his own party also expressed their anger and regret that despite being a religious clerk, he lied to the people and cheated us.

He also inaugurated Rich Bridge in the beautiful area of Tehsil Torkho with a cost of 10 million. On this occasion, the contractor of the Pakistan PWD department was also present with him so that people believe that this is not just a paperwork and verbal deposit, like the former Member of the Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayat-ur-

He also inaugurated Trich Road with a cost of 40 million, a tourist destination at the outskirts of the Trich Mir Mountain. He also announced the initiation of work on the Madak Nashko road after approving Rs 5 million for the road. Similarly, he approved Rs 5 million for the road and announced to start work on it soon. Speaking at the public gatherings at the inauguration of the well-known development projects, Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali said, "I have approved this fund with great difficulty."

Former MNA said that it is now the responsibility of the locals not to allow this fund to be deprived and make committees at the local level to monitor these development works on a daily basis so that the contractor not reduces the quantity and quality of this work. A large number of people attended these ceremonies and thanked him for releasing of fund for this neglected area of upper Chitral.

# Tehsil alliance committee setup for polio awareness

F.P. Report

WANA: Tehsil Alliance Committees meeting for Tehsil Wana and Toi Khla was conducted at DHO office conference hall under the chairmanship and supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Kashmir Khan. Tehsil Mayor Wana, Tehsildars and tribal Malik/elders from both Tehsils were present in the meeting.

The objective of the event was to establish alliance committees at Tehsil level under the supervision of district administration for polio boycotts engagement and resolution through Jirga of tribal elders/Maliks. The event was started with the recitation of Holy Quran by Tehsil Mayor wana and he welcomed all the participants in his opening remarks.

The NSTOP Officer Dr Bilal addressed the forum by highlighting the importance of routine immunization and polio vaccination for every child. He further requested the tribal Malik to extend support to the field team to ensure that every child is vaccinated in the upcoming NID campaign commencing from October 9, 2023.

Hussain Ali Awan

Deputy Provincial Manager-PCE also addressed the forum and highlighted the objective of the event and alliances at every Tehsil. These committees will work under the supervision of administration to engage and resolve if any boycott is reported and to delink any other demands from polio vaccination.

A number of tribal Malik and elders also addressed the forum and highlighted some issues and concerns pertaining to health, education, livestock vaccination and additional polio team in few areas. While they assured the administration of Thier full support and facilitation when and where required during polio campaigns. They will always extend support in polio boycotts resolution.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Mr. Kashmir Khan offered the concluding remarks and also addressed the issues highlighted by tribal elders. He issued instructions to the respective line departments for timely and quality services provision to the respective communities. He further added that his office's doors are open for everyone.

ADC added that these

meetings will be conducted regularly, where the issues will be discussed and resolved. He emphasized that a good working relationship will be established with the tribal elders and Malik's for the uplifting of the south Waziristan Lower. He requested the participants to extend their full support and facilitation to ensure that every child has been reached and vaccinated.

## Police recovers Iranian diesel F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The D I Khan police have claimed to have recovered 900 liters of Iranian diesel, illegal weapons, and drugs in several operations in the jurisdiction of Paharpur police station.

According to the police spokesman, District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani has directed all police stations to take action against the illegal diesel agencies. Following the directions, a team of Paharpur police station led by SHO Aftab Alam Baloch recovered 900 liters of Iranian diesel from Muhammad Bilal son of Sakhawat in Teergarh area.





# Vietnam activists to seek US refuge after Biden deal

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Two Vietnamese activists who the Biden administration believes were wrongly detained by the country's Communist government are relocating to the United States under an agreement negotiated ahead of the president's recent visit to Hanoi, US officials told Reuters. A human rights lawyer who campaigned for accountability for police abuses, a Catholic parishioner evicted from his home, and their families are exiting Vietnam for the United States, one of the officials said.

In the United States, the families are expected to seek resettlement under the "Priority 1" refugee program. The activists were not imprisoned, but had been barred from leaving Vietnam. Vietnam's government had also agreed to release two imprisoned Vietnamese activists sought by the United States prior to Biden's visit last week, a US official said, and signed a private agreement to make progress on religious freedom, non-governmental organization (NGO) operations in the country, prison conditions and labor laws, one of the officials said.

The topics of the private agreement, which Reuters has not independently reviewed, were not previously reported. They were inked as Vietnam agreed to lift Washington to Hanoi's highest diplomatic status alongside China and Russia on a trip in which Biden

endorsed the country's vision as a high-tech leader. The agreements come as the Biden administration faces criticism over its diplomacy with Vietnam, India and Saudi Arabia, whose governments deny political freedoms enjoyed in the West, and over its negotiations around a prisoner exchange with Iran. The Vietnamese prisoners included a legal scholar focused on religion who was released to Germany and another individual sentenced for tax evasion related to his NGO.

The officials would not identify any of the four people, citing diplomatic and security sensitivities, but the two ex-prisoners' names are known. Legal advocate Nguyen Bac Truyen confirmed his release and his travel with his wife to Germany earlier this month. The release of independent journalist Mai Phan Loi was also confirmed earlier this month. The Vietnamese human rights community sees the situation there as dire. Vietnam is holding at least 159 political prisoners and detaining 22 others, Human Rights Watch said earlier this month. They have sentenced 15 people to long prison terms without a fair trial this year, the advocacy group said. Vietnam is also drafting new rules that would curtail freedom of expression online, banning social media users who publish news-related content without being registered as journalists, accord-

ing to people familiar with the plans. "It's outrageous that President Biden chose to upgrade diplomatic ties with Vietnam at a time when the one-party state is in the middle of a brutal crackdown on activism, dissent and civil society," said Ben Swanton, co-director of Project 88, a rights advocacy focused on Vietnam. Vietnam often releases such prisoners before presidential visits. Biden administration officials pushed for the exit visas as an additional step during final negotiations over the joint statement and trip logistics, according to one of the US officials.

The people are "representative of a much larger group that we believe should be free," the US official said. "While we wish that we could have gotten many more people out ahead of the president's visit, we do believe that this increased partnership and the strengthened relationship gives us the vehicles and the processes we need to keep working on these issues with Vietnamese friends." US officials said they hope those conversations will happen both in annual rights dialogues with the Vietnamese - which have sometimes been dismissed by some rights activists and officials as an insubstantial exchange of talking points - as well as in ongoing talks between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Vietnamese counterpart, Bui Thanh Son.

# UN chief puts spotlight on ‘movers,’ excludes US

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday will gather heads of state and business leaders that he has identified as taking stronger action on climate change for a meeting aimed at building momentum ahead of the COP28 climate summit. Missing from the list of 34 speakers representing countries at Guterres' Climate Ambition Summit are the world's biggest emitters China and United States, as well as the United Arab Emirates, the host of the COP28 gathering in December.

The summit will feature speeches from leaders who are responding to his call to "accelerate" global climate action, including Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Pakistan, South Africa and Tuvalu. Guterres said one of the aims was to spur action from countries and companies whose climate plans were not in line with the global climate target. Non-member states and international financial institutions that will get speaking slots

include Allianz, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the city of London and the state of California. US Special Envoy on Climate Change John Kerry will attend the summit but will not deliver a speech, a spokesperson said. The Secretary-General's office has kept a close hold on the list of invited speakers. Guterres' climate adviser Selwin Hart said in an interview with Reuters this week that the purpose of the summit was not to "embarrass" countries or companies that did not make the cut but to inspire more action from others. The criteria for a leader to be selected to speak include proposals to update their country's pre-2030 climate plan; updated targets to achieve net-zero emissions energy transition plans that commit to no new oil, gas or coal; and plans to phase out fossil fuels. New climate funding pledges or adaptation plans are also among the criteria for countries to participate.

For businesses, cities and financial institutions,

the UN requires them to represent transition plans aligned with UN integrity recommendations, emission reduction targets for 2025 that include indirect emissions, as well as plans to phase out fossil fuels that do not rely on carbon offsetting. Guterres has been blunt in his public assessment of countries' climate actions and whether they will deliver on the Paris agreement goal to limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C. "I'm not sure all leaders are feeling the heat. Actions are falling abysmally short," he said in his opening remarks of the UN General Assembly. A report released by the UN earlier this month said existing national pledges to cut emissions were insufficient to keep temperatures within the 1.5 C threshold. More than 20 gigatonnes of further CO2 reductions were needed this decade - and global net zero by 2050 - in order to meet the goals. China's mission to the United Nations and UAE did not immediately respond for comment.

# Erdogan says he trusts Russia as much as he trusts the West

ISTANBUL (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he trusts Russia as much he trusts the West. Explaining his recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Erdogan said he had failed to get him to resume the Black Sea grain deal the Kremlin withdrew from in July but had elicited a pledge for Russia to supply 1 million tons of grain to Africa.

"I have no reason not to trust them," Erdogan said during an interview with US broadcaster PBS in New York, where he is attending the UN General Assembly. "To the extent the West is reliable, Russia is equally reliable. For the last 50 years, we have been waiting at the doorstep of the EU and, at this moment in time, I trust Russia just as much as I trust the West."

Ankara has maintained close ties with both Russia and Ukraine during the 19-month war. In July last year, Turkey and the UN engineered a deal to allow Ukrainian grain to be safely shipped from its Black Sea ports, helping alleviate a global food crisis. Moscow pulled out of the agreement two months ago, claiming a parallel deal to allow its exports of foodstuffs and

fertilizer had not been honored. Erdogan is visiting New York four months after winning elections that extended his 20-year rule for another five years. His fresh mandate has seen signs of an improvement in Ankara's often fractious relationship with the West.

Speaking at an event, the Turkish leader appeared to roll back comments he made immediately prior to his departure for New York, in which he suggested Turkey could end its 24-year bid for European Union membership. "We see that a window of opportunity has opened for the revitalization of Turkey-European Union relations in a critical period," Erdogan said, according to a text of the meeting published by his office. "We continue to emphasize the importance of revitalizing Turkey's EU accession process."

Erdogan also indicated improving ties with Washington, which have recently focused on Ankara's approval of Sweden's NATO membership application and a possible deal to supply Turkey with F-16 fighter jets. "We are pleased with the development of our cooperation with the US," Erdogan said. "We have resolved most of

the deadlocks during the talks with Mr. Biden and we have decided to hold more talks in line with the positive agenda."

Turkey and Hungary are the only NATO members not to have approved Sweden's bid to join the defense alliance, which Stockholm made following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The issue is due to be debated by the Turkish parliament when it returns from recess next month. Some members of the US Congress have indicated the provision of F-16s to update Turkey's fighter fleet is dependent on Ankara agreeing to Sweden's NATO membership. But Erdogan reiterated that "these two topics shouldn't be related" although he said the decision on Sweden lies with the Turkish parliament, where his party and its allies hold a majority. "If the parliament doesn't make a positive decision about this bid, then there's nothing to do," he told PBS.

Erdogan also drew a line between Sweden's NATO bid and Turkey's EU accession. In July, however, he called on EU member states to "open the way for Turkey" in return for Sweden's path to NATO to be cleared.

# Japanese crown prince to visit Vietnam

TOKYO (AP): Japanese Crown Prince Akishino, the younger brother of Emperor Naruhito, was on his way to Vietnam on Wednesday to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, as Tokyo pushes to deepen ties with Southeast Asia and other developing and emerging nations to tackle regional and global challenges.

Akishino, at a news conference last week ahead of the trip, stressed the importance of deepening relations between Japan and Vietnam, noting their long history of cultural and economic exchanges dating back to the 16th century. "Japan and Vietnam have a very close relationship," Akishino said. "I hope we can contribute as part of an effort to promote friendly relations between the two countries." He said it is particularly important for younger people to develop mutual understanding and respect for each other's cultures through exchanges.

During the Sept. 20-25 trip, Akishino and his wife, Crown Princess Kiko, will visit Hanoi, where they will see the mausoleum of Vietnam's first president, Ho Chi Minh, and join anniversary events, including attending a new opera, before traveling to Hoi An in central Vietnam.

Akishino said he is especially looking forward to his first visit to Hoi An, an old port city that was home to a "Japantown" for Japanese traders in the first half of the 1600s. He will also visit the nearby My Son Sanctuary, an archaeological site with spiritual origins in Indian Hinduism. It will be Akishino's third trip to Japan after earlier visits in 1999 and 2012. Akishino, who specializes in the study of chickens, said there are wild breeds of chickens in various stages of domestication in Southeast Asia, including in Vietnam, and their presence, along with the giant catfish that live in the Mekong River, are part of the reason he is attracted to the region. The couple's visit comes three months after his elder brother, Emperor Naruhito, and his wife Masako visited Indonesia, the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year as ASEAN and Japan mark 50 years of friendship. Japan is Indonesia's largest provider of official development assistance, according to Japan's Foreign Ministry.

# UN raises alarm over child deaths in Sudan

GENEVA (Reuters): More than 1,200 children have died of suspected measles and malnutrition in Sudan refugee camps, while many thousands more, including newborns, are at risk of death before year-end, United Nations (UN) agencies said. More than five months into a conflict between Sudan's army and paramilitary group, Rapid Support Forces, the country's healthcare sector is on its knees due to direct attacks as well as shortages of staff and medicines, they said.

Dr. Allen Maina, chief of public health at the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), told a UN briefing in Geneva that since May more than 1,200 children from Ethiopia and South Sudan under the age of five had died in nine camps in White Nile state, home to one of Sudan's larger refugee populations. "Unfortunately we fear numbers will continue rising because of strained resources," he added, adding that partners were struggling to vaccinate refugees, stoking the risk of epidemics. Separately, some 3,100 suspected measles cases and 500 cholera cases have been reported across the country in the same period, along with outbreaks of dengue and malaria, he added.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) official told the same briefing that there have been 56 verified attacks so far on healthcare in Sudan since the war began and about 70% to 80% of hospitals in conflict states are now out of service.



TOKYO: Japanese Crown Prince Akishino and Crown Princess Kiko prepares to leave Haneda airport. Akishino, the younger brother of Emperor Naruhito, is on his way to Vietnam to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

# Rush of migrants: Mexican railway operator halts trains

HUEHUETOCA, Mexico (AP): A Mexican railway operator announced it is temporarily suspending train runs in the northern part of the country because so many migrants are climbing aboard freight cars and getting hurt in the process. Ferromex said it has temporarily ordered a halt to 60 trains carrying cargo that would fill 1,800 tractor trailers. It said some international trade would be affected by the stoppage.

In recent days, there have been about a "half-dozen regrettable cases of injuries or deaths" among migrants hopping freight cars, the company said in a statement. The company, owned by conglomerate Grupo Mexico, said some migrants even hopped on moving freight cars "despite the grave danger that represents." "There has been a significant increase in the number of migrants in recent days," Ferromex said in the statement, adding that it was stopping the trains "to protect the physical safety of the migrants," while it awaited action by authorities to solve the problem. But the word had yet to trickle down to the migrants themselves, hundreds of whom waited on the tracks and alongside them at a railway yard in Huehuetoca, on the northern outskirts of Mexico City. Pavel Aguilar Flores, a migrant from Venezuela, was hoping to hop a freight train to Matamoros, a dangerous Mexican border city across from Brownsville, Texas. "We haven't heard any news," Aguilar Flores said. "We

are going to continue on our journey, and in fact we're waiting for a train." "I have heard there have been accidents, but not so many as people say," he said. "You have to be careful and get on the train when it's stopped, not when it's moving." In fact, trains were still running through the railyard at Huehuetoca, but they weren't heading where the migrants wanted to go.

According to Ferromex, the worst problems appeared to be further north. The company said there were about 1,500 people gathered at a rail yard in the city of Torreon, in the northern border state of Coahuila. The company also reported about 800 migrants waiting at the freight yards in Irapuato, in the north-central state of Guanajuato. About 1,000 people were reported to be riding freight cars on the train line that connects the city of Chihuahua and the northern border city of Ciudad Juarez. Ferromex is Mexico's largest concessionary rail operator and the impact of the train stoppage will be "very important," said Ana Bertha Gutiérrez, the international trade coordinator for the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness. She noted the measure could hit industrial states like Nuevo Leon, Baja California and Chihuahua hard, given their links to the US market. Migrants have long used the trains, known collectively as "The Beast," to hitch rides from as far south as Oaxaca state to the US border. About a decade ago, the Mexican government briefly staged raids on the

trains to discourage the practice, but later largely abandoned the effort.

The announcement comes as migrants are increasingly desperate to reach the US border. Migrants mostly from Haiti burst into an asylum office in southern Mexico city of Tapachula. Throngs of migrants knocked over metal barricades and pushed past National Guard officers and police stationed at the office. Some of the migrants were trampled by their colleagues in the rush. Authorities later convinced many to leave, and no injuries were reported. Crowds of frustrated migrants, including many from Cuba and Honduras, say they have had to wait for weeks in some cases for an appointment at the office in Tapachula, near the border with Guatemala.

At the office, run by the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid, migrants can file claims for asylum in Mexico. Most, however, intend to use the papers to travel more safely and easily to the US border. Mexico is on track to receive more asylum applications this year than ever before as the flow of migrants threatens to overwhelm governments of several Latin American countries along the migratory route. Andrés Ramírez Silva, the director of Mexico's refugee agency, said last week that the number of asylum applications his agency receives this year could reach 150,000, well above the 129,000 record set in 2021.

# Rifle, fur hat, drones: Kim returns with gifts from Russia

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is heading home, most likely with gifts from his Russian hosts including a rifle, a cosmonaut's glove, and military drones - which on their own are a violation of UN sanctions. Following are some of the items he is bringing back to the "friendship" museum, where gifts received by the North's three generations of leaders are kept.

After his summit with Russian President Putin, Kim received a Russian-made rifle "of the highest quality," according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. Kim reciprocated with a rifle for Putin "made by North Korean craftsmen". Putin also presented a glove from a spacesuit worn in space, Russia's TASS news agency said. Oleg Kozhemyakov, the governor of the Primorsky region, presented Kim with a set of modern, lightweight body armour designed for assault operations that protects the

chest, shoulders, throat and groin, Russia media said. Kim was also presented with five one-way attack drones and a Geranium-25 reconnaissance drone, which is widely used in the war in Ukraine, TASS said. That violates at least two UN Security Council resolutions against the North - which Moscow voted to approve - imposed for its banned missile and nuclear activities. Kim received a fur hat from Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in Vladivostok, where he inspected Russian nuclear bombers, fighter jets equipped with hypersonic missiles and a warship. There had been a scramble to determine the right size of the hat, Russia's RIA news agency reported. Russia's ambassador to Pyongyang, Alexander Matsegora, suggested a size slightly smaller than his own "very large head", which turned out to be just right. "It's also important that this is a gift from the heart. And Comrade Kim

Jong Un liked it," Matsegora said.

Kim began his visit with a stop in Russia's border town of Khasan, where he was presented with a photo of Yuri Gagarin, the cosmonaut who was the first human to orbit the Earth. North Korea has put much effort into showcasing the gifts that Kim, as well as his father, Kim Jong-il, and grandfather and state founder Kim Il Sung, received from foreign dignitaries, dedicating a special museum for them. Nestled in the hills of the Myohyangsan mountain 160 km (99 miles) from Pyongyang, the International Friendship Exhibition is two imposing concrete structures built in the traditional architectural style with blue tiled roofs. Opened in 1978, the museum comprises more than 100 showrooms with more than 115,000 items from more than 200 countries, according to the North's state media. The scale and importance of the collec-

tion make it comparable to the Louvre in Paris, North Korea's state media have said. The collection includes crystalware sent from former US President Jimmy Carter, tea cup set from French President Francois Mitterrand, a basketball signed by Michael Jordan given by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on her visit in 2000 and a rifle given by the late Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

Propaganda plays heavily into how gifts from South Koreans are displayed, with the large-screen television set from former President Kim Dae-jung, who engaged Pyongyang with peace policies, receiving prominent showing. The Dynasty sedan, which was Hyundai Motor's flagship, was gifted to Kim Jong Il by the North Korean-born founder of the Hyundai Group, Chung Ju-yung, who spearheaded investment in the North after the 2000 inter-Korean summit.

# Chinese blockade of Taiwan would likely fail, Pentagon official says

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A Chinese blockade of Taiwan would likely fail and a direct military invasion of the self-ruled island would be extremely difficult for Beijing to carry out successfully, senior Pentagon officials told Congress. China's military in recent years has stepped up activity around Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory. US CIA Director William Burns has said Chinese President Xi Jinping has instructed his country's armed forces to be ready to invade by 2027.

However, whether Xi would order taking Taiwan by force, either through military options like a blockade or an invasion is unclear. Ely Ratner, US assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific

security Affairs, said a blockade would give Taiwan's allies time to mobilize resources for Taiwan. A blockade's economic impact would be so devastating that it would harden international resolve against Beijing, he said. "It would likely not succeed, and it would be a huge risk of escalation for the PRC, where it would likely have to consider whether or not it was willing to ultimately start attacking commercial maritime vessels," Ratner told the House Armed Services Committee, using an acronym for the People's Republic of China. Army Major General Joseph McGee, vice director for strategy, plans and policy of the Pentagon's Joint Staff, said a blockade was

also not very likely given the challenges involved. "I think it is an option but probably not a highly likely option, when you start looking at the military options - much easier to talk about a blockade than actually do a blockade," McGee told lawmakers. China staged war games around Taiwan in August of last year and again in April, and its forces operate around the island almost daily.

Taiwan's defense ministry said last week in its biennial report that China was bolstering its air power along the coast facing Taiwan with a permanent deployment of new fighters and drones at expanded air bases. Still, McGee also said China's military, the People's

Liberation Army (PLA), would be hard pressed to carry out frontal, amphibious invasion of the island. That is not something it could do in a surprise attack either, he said. "They would have to mass tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of troops on the eastern coast and that would be a clear signal," McGee said. He added flatly: "There is absolutely nothing easy about a PLA invasion of Taiwan." "They would also encounter an island that has very few beaches, where you could land craft on mountainous terrain, and a population that we believe that would be willing to fight so there is absolutely nothing easy about a PLA invasion of Taiwan," he said.



The Frontier Post

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## India-Canada diplomatic row

CANADA has expelled a top Indian diplomat after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau informed lawmakers that the ongoing investigations into the killing of a Sikh leader revealed credible allegations that Indian government agents have links to the assassination of a Canadian citizen. According to the Canadian Prime Minister, India's involvement in the assassination of a Canadian citizen was unacceptable and he took up the case with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the recent G-20 summit in New Delhi. The Indian foreign ministry dismissed the allegation of the Canadian government and termed it absurd and motivated. According to India's MEA, such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

A brawl was in the making between New Delhi and Ottawa over the past several years, because the Canadian Sikh community was vigorously supporting the peaceful and democratic Khalistan Freedom Movement, which is working to create a separate and independent Sikh state in Indian-held Punjab. The Khalistan Freedom movement took momentum in the late 70s after a pause of two decades and was brutally crushed by the Indian government by launching a large-scale operation against Sikh Freedom fighters which ended up through Operation Blue Star in the holy Sikh Shrine of Golden Temple in 1984. However, Indian rulers failed to curb Sikh's quest for freedom and the Khalistan movement, which was previously a local insurgency in Indian-held Punjab spread out in all corners of the world from North America, and Europe to Australia and New Zealand. As of now, over a dozen Sikh organizations are actively working worldwide for the Khalistan cause through peaceful and democratic means. The Sikh nation remained successful in highlighting the Khalistan issue at the global level, while the Khalistan Referendum-2020 was a landmark event through which the Sikh nation held ballot and exercised their right to vote in support of their demand for a free and independent homeland for over 28 million Sikhs, a majority of whom reside in Indian held Punjab.

Historically, New Delhi remained at loggerheads with multiple Western nations including Canada, the United States, the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Australia on the issue of the Khalistan movement which was flourishing unrestricted in those nations and causing a great embarrassment for India at the global level. The Indian government and its Security Forces suppressed Sikh freedom seekers and squeezed space for the Sikh community in the country, while Indian diplomatic missions abroad and the notorious Research and Analysis Wing (RAW ) continuously haunt Sikh rights activists across the world. Reports suggest that the RAW Station Chief in Canada managed the assassination bid of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down on June 18 outside a Sikh cultural centre in British Columbia.

Currently, the bilateral relations between Canada and India are at a record low for the first time in history. Besides the expulsion of a senior diplomat, Ottawa cancelled a planned trade mission to India that trashed the possibility of the long-talked Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between their nations. The Canadian government has termed the killing of its citizens a grave violation of Canada's sovereignty, while Prime Minister Trudeau has raised this issue with other Western nations which in turn backed Ottawa's viewpoint and censured Modi's regime over such grave misconduct at the global level. Over the decades, Indian rulers tactfully concealed the domestic issues from the rest of the world and world nations were not aware of the grave human rights abuses of Indian minorities, maltreatment of low-caste Hindus, ongoing separatist movements in 15 Indian states, decades-long open prison in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir and a simmering Khalistan movement in East Punjab. The draconian face of India was previously covered behind New Delhi's fake democracy and secularism, which has now been exposed to the world. It is high time that the ongoing UNGA session deliberate on the long-held UNSC resolutions regarding Kashmir, along with grave human and minority rights issues in BJP-ruled India, that would not only validate UN prestige but will preserve fun dam rights of millions of people in Hindustan.

## Pak-Iran teamwork

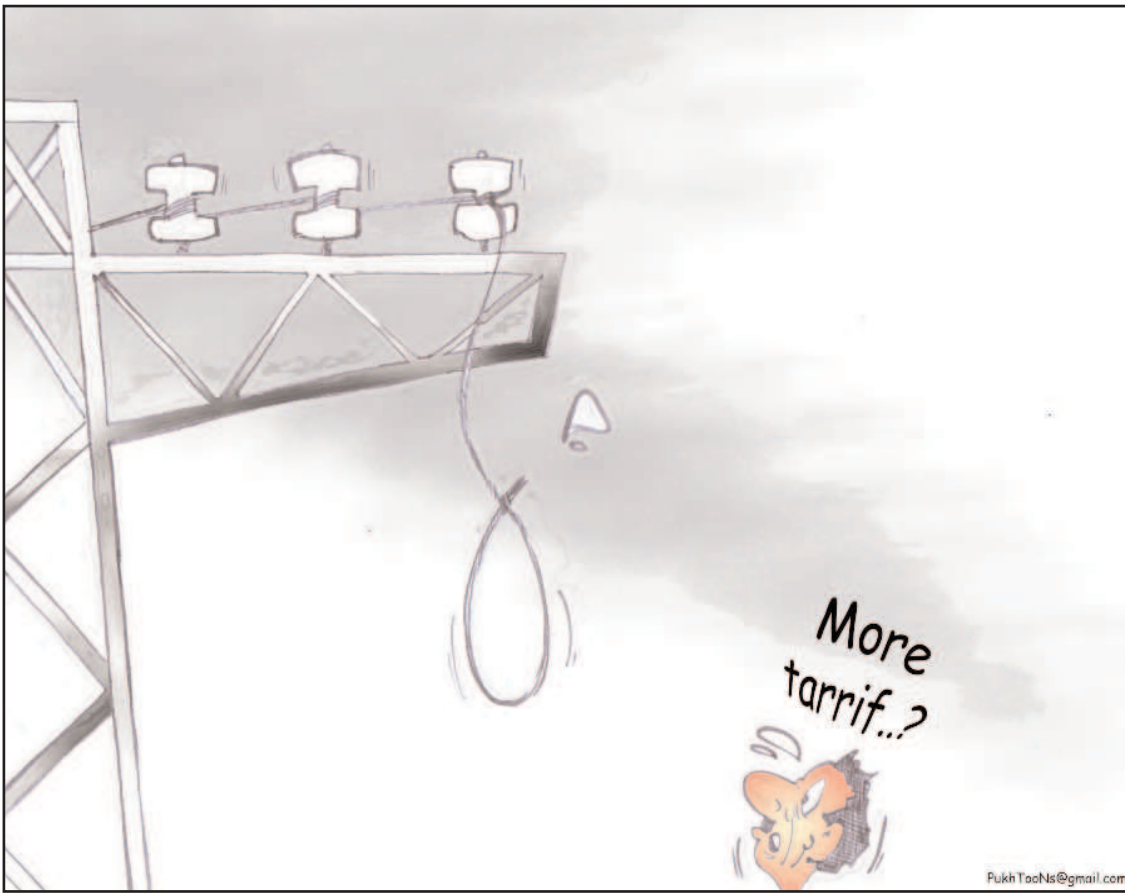
THE Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has reached New York, to attend the historic 78th annual Summit of the UN General Assembly. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Kakar held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA with President Ebrahim Raisi wherein both leaders discussed bilateral relations and weighed the scope for further cooperation between their nations.

The bilateral relations between Pakistan and Islamic Republic of Iran have improved significantly in recent years. Both nations face the same economic and security challenges amid a high level of poverty, difficult geographical terrain coupled with grave security risks, border insurgencies and transnational crimes such as drug and human trafficking, oil and goods smuggling on their joint border. Such convergence of economic, trade, administrative and security problems have created vast opportunities for their teamwork and enhanced cooperation to collectively resolve common issues of their masses. Recently, during the visit of the Iranian Foreign Minister to Pakistan, both countries struck various agreements including the protocols of bilateral economic consultation, and formation of the joint investment committee (JIC) along with a five-year trade cooperation plan to boost bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran during the next five years from 2023-2028. While the magnificent project of border markets has achieved significant progress after the third border market at Pashin-Mand border crossing started working in the past months.

Historically, Pakistan and Iran are two brotherly Muslim countries, who are firmly tied in multiple bonds of history, religion, culture and heritage, language as well as Muslim brotherhood and good neighborliness. Their joint work has always benefited both nations while their disunity and non-cooperation largely used by their enemies to their advantage throughout history. After the recent rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran, and President Raisi's Neighbour first policy had surely ramped up the frequency of contacts/ visits and pace of cooperation between the two nations. In fact, no nation is neither self-sufficient nor could survive in isolation on its domestic resources. Meanwhile, interlinked problems, territorial and management disputes could only be resolved through teamwork and cooperation. The tremendous opportunities await to transform the destiny of both nations , if Pak-Iran leadership make sincere and whole hearted efforts toward that end.

### Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or teshil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



## How Derna tragedy epitomizes Libya's misfortune

Osama Al-Sharif

**LAST week's deadly deluge that hit the eastern Libyan port city of Derna, killing thousands and leaving many more homeless, was brought about by a natural disaster that caught Libyans unawares. But while the uncommon Mediterranean hurricane that hit eastern Libya did the initial damage, it also detonated a silent bomb - the collapse of two crumbling dams south of Derna, which ultimately destroyed half the city and did most of the killing.**

Derna has become a symbol of what post-Qaddafi Libya has become: a broken country and a failed state. It has gone through more than a decade of turmoil and bloodshed since the collapse of the regime. It became a base for paramilitary militias embroiled in tribal and religious wars against their fellow countrymen. Later, it became a stronghold for various extremist groups, including Daesh in 2014. It was a base for the group until it was driven out by a coalition of Libyan forces in 2015.

Today, Derna is under the control of the transitional government of eastern Libya based in Sirte, which owes its allegiance to the self-styled Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. Now 79, he was once Qaddafi's most trusted soldier before they parted ways following the Chad war disaster. Later, Haftar conspired against his mentor, only to fail and be whisked away by the CIA to America, where he became a citizen. Following the 2011 uprising, Haftar returned to Libya, where he would expel the extremists from the east and take control of Benghazi. His ambition to rule as the country's strongman was derailed when his army, aptly called the Libyan National Army, was repulsed on the outskirts of Tripoli in the west after Turkiye's intervention.

He took control of Derna after a long and bitter siege. But Haftar was never able to put together a working government in the east, despite the backing of a number of Arab countries and the Russians. There were many warnings over the sad state of the two Derna dams, even in the days before Storm Daniel arrived. These warnings were not heeded. Now,

Haftar and his aides want to take credit for the rescue and recovery operations in Derna while skirting responsibility. But most people in this city that was once home to 120,000 point the finger at the ruler of Benghazi.

Haftar has resisted pressure to hold presidential and legislative elections under a law that would have favored others, especially elections.

**There were many warnings over the sad state of the two Derna dams, even in the days before Storm Daniel arrived. These warnings were not heeded. Now, Haftar and his aides want to take credit for the rescue and recovery operations in Derna while skirting responsibility. But most people in this city that was once home to 120,000 point the finger at the ruler of Benghazi. Haftar has resisted pressure to hold presidential and legislative elections under a law that would have favored others, especially the former ruler's son Saif Al-Islam Qaddafi. Haftar has control over the parliament in Tobruk, which withdrew confidence from the Tripoli-based administration of interim Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in September 2021, thus creating an impasse. Under UN auspices, presidential and parliamentary elections were set to occur in Libya on Dec. 24, 2021.**

cially the former ruler's son Saif Al-Islam Qaddafi. Haftar has control over the parliament in Tobruk, which withdrew confidence from the Tripoli-based administration of interim Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in September 2021, thus creating an impasse. Under UN auspices, presidential and parliamentary elections were set to occur in Libya on Dec. 24, 2021. However, three days before the vote, the High National Elections Commission dissolved Libya's electoral committees and announced the indefinite postponement of these elections. The postponement resulted from disagreements about holding elections and a failure to reach a consensus regarding the electoral framework.

One thing that Haftar has been saying is that he is fighting religious extrem-

ists, including those supporting the government in Tripoli. This is one reason why he is getting support from outside the country. That is not to say that the UN-recognized government, based in Tripoli, is doing much better. Bitter rivalries and personal agendas have derailed attempts to unify the country and hold presidential and legislative elections.

What it all boils down to is the fact that this oil-rich country of no more than 7 million inhabitants, strategically located in North Africa and close to European shores, which is rich in oil and gas, has not been able to recover from the 2011 uprising - and the ensuing civil war - and the ominous decision by NATO to step in. The Derna debacle, which is apocalyptic in proportion, is a stark reminder of the deep political and social divisions that have torn the country apart. The sad fact is that the absence of a central government that can take responsibility for the entire country and embark on a comprehensive plan to rebuild afflicted cities and towns and maintain a dilapidated infrastructure, while nursing social scars, means that Libya's road to rehabilitation will not materialize anytime soon.

Partition is not the answer, nor is maintaining the current status quo. Libyan leaders must come to their senses and find the middle ground to overcome their differences and save their country from the next natural or human-made disaster. The Derna catastrophe could have been averted if a strong national unity government was in charge. This is the message that both Tripoli and Benghazi must accept. The current political impasse must end and foreign players must stop meddling. That may be wishful thinking at this stage. But Libyan patriots must be reminded: Type "failed states" into Google today and Libya, along with Lebanon, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen, will be the top hits. Libya should not be on the list for many reasons and the Libyan people do not deserve for their country to be there. Until divisions are bridged and a stable, inclusive government is established, Libya will continue to be at risk of further violence and instability.

Successive governments have failed to establish control over the entire country and faced opposition from rival factions based in other parts of Libya. More than once, fighting between armed militias with opposing loyalties has broken out in Tripoli, bringing life in the capital to a halt. In addition, while being recognized as the legitimate government, it has failed to build strong state institutions in Tripoli, including the police and judiciary. Weakening it further is the fact that control over the oil fields, the oil crescent and ports in the northeastern part of the country along the coast of the Gulf of Sidra has been contested many times. The region has been under the control of various factions and entitles, making it difficult for the Tripoli government to gain access to oil sales. And with turmoil, chaos and for-

eign meddling comes corruption. A number of neutral sources have accused the Tripoli government of corruption, with politicians and officials accused of embezzlement and misuse of public funds. Foreign powers, such as Turkiye, Russia, Egypt and others, have played a significant role in the conflict in Libya, providing support to rival factions and prolonging the crisis.

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Arab News

## Disgraceful UK detention centres

David Neal

**TODAY'S inquiry report into mistreatment at Brook House should mark a crucial turning point for the notorious immigration detention centre. The long-awaited findings, which identified 19 instances of mistreatment, including inappropriate use of force against 10 detainees and initially failing to help a detainee following a suicide attempt, found that the immigration removal centre was a place of "stress and distress". A total of 33 recommendations, including a 28-day time limit for holding detainees, was issued to make the centre more humane.**

Yet, over the last two years, in my position as the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration (ICIBI), I have issued my own reports, with findings similar to those published in the Brook House inquiry - and found that little has changed as a result. These inspections were requested by the then home secretary, Sajid Javid, in 2018, and asked the ICIBI to issue an annual report on the effectiveness of the Home Office's measures to safeguard vulnerable people in detention. They were implemented after two landmark reviews of immigration detention by the former prisons and probation ombudsman Stephen Shaw, and were meant to bring greater openness and scrutiny to the system, as well as improving the Home Office's "adults at risk" policy.

My inspections, in 2021 and 2022, found that flaws in the "adults at risk" process to protect vulnerable people in detention have not been rectified - and the implementation of recommendations from prior reviews is proceeding at a glacial pace. While the findings in my reports - like those of the Brook House inquiry - are worrying in themselves, perhaps even more concerning is my conclusion that the Home Office does not have the will to face up to the challenges. The Home Office's responses to my reports have been characterised by defensiveness and excuses rather than a commitment to improvement and positive change, and I've encountered significant pushback from senior leaders within immigration enforcement. The pushback is propelled by an unevicenced focus on asylum seekers "gaming the system", and widespread scepticism. Rather than maintaining a sharp, clear-eyed focus on protecting the vulnerable, the department has been fixated on a narrative of abuse of the system by detainees and their legal advisers.

In total, the ICIBI inspections have produced 26 recommendations that were either fully or (more often) partially accepted, and subdivided into 51 points to better track them. Despite escapes, self-harm and deaths over the intervening period, the Home Office believes its work is complete on just nine of these points. When I submitted my last report to the home secretary in September 2022, I called for a meeting with the immigration minister, Robert Jenrick, to give him the latest findings and to convey my concern about the lack of progress in making improvements to immigration detention.

I told him that the system - specifically the mechanism through which medical staff at immigration removal centres can bring vulnerability concerns to the attention of Home Office officials effectively - was not working. I said that there was a need for a "foot on the ball moment" and a concerted effort to do better to provide protections for vulnerable detainees. The response? My discussion with Jenrick was quickly followed by notification from the home secretary, Suella Braverman, that she was terminating the commission for an annual ICIBI inspection.

Arguably, the timing couldn't be worse, with a significant increase in the use of immigration detention to be expected as a result of the Illegal Migration Act. It's particularly concerning that increasing numbers of vulnerable individuals are likely to be entering into a severely broken system. It doesn't need to be like this. As a brigadier and head of the Royal Military Police at the heart of the Afghanistan campaign, I was involved for a number of years in the assurance of the British army's detention of suspected insurgents. While the comparison is far from precise - immigration detainees are held at the administrative convenience of the state rather than in connection with any sort of criminal proceeding - the stakes were arguably higher.

Many of those detainees were suspected of killing comrades I served alongside, and some were subsequently convicted and sentenced. Some of the detainees rioted and seriously injured some of my soldiers, almost murdering one. In all those years, under all that pressure, I never once saw my soldiers behaving in anything other than a decent, respectful and professional way with the detainees. It is all the more shocking, then, that as the Brook House inquiry has found, immigration detention staff at a site just outside Gatwick airport should have been capable of such cruelty towards individuals whose alleged transgression was to be in the country without proper documentation. Senior management at immigration enforcement and at the top of the Home Office must enforce high standards for contractors, provide robust oversight of the facilities being operated in their name, and be more receptive to scrutiny and to independent voices. What's needed now is strong leadership from both ministers and officials to prioritise the welfare of those in detention - and to get a grip on the environment that led to the abuses at Brook House. Both must understand that a policy of expanding the use of immigration detention requires more attention to, and a greater focus on, vulnerability.

Perhaps the director general of immigration and enforcement (designate), Bas Javid, - the brother of the former home secretary who, back in 2018, recognised that this difficult area of our immigration system would benefit from greater openness and scrutiny - will enforce higher standards for contractors. Maybe the Brook House inquiry report will be a turning point for change. Let's hope.

The Telegraph

## An invasion of the US is under way. It's time to invoke the Constitution

Don Huffines

**THE Mexico border has been, and will continue to be, the number one policy issue facing Texas - and America. Security is the safeguard of freedom, and there can be no serious discussion of the everyday things like marginal tax rates, education enrichment, or highway beautification projects if there is instability across our 1,254-mile-long southern perimeter.**

Amazingly, no-one in the Lone Star State disagrees that we have sleepwalked into a protracted border crisis. In fact this may be our one truly non-partisan issue. Differences set in only when we begin discussion of solutions. Some believe an adamant wall, beefed-up border surveillance, and economic sanctions will do the trick. Others prefer blanket amnesty, a stream-

lined immigration process, and foreign aid. Not a single Texan, and very few Americans, however, believe we should simply do nothing. That the Mexican government is partly responsible for the border crisis is another non-partisan position. But whether this is on account of a deeply corrupt and compromised narco-regime or general ineptitude we cannot seem to settle. We harbour similar feelings for our own federal government, whose involvement in helping Texas "fix" the issue is too often counter-productive.

Having served on the Texas Senate Committee on Border Security, I am convinced that America must fix her own problems at the border. By America I mean, of course, Texas. And we have tried. But - and this is the sticking point - we have

hitherto only attempted half-way measures. We have not, in living memory, attempted anything close to implementing a robust "no excuses" border security policy. This is the greatest failure of our current governor and representatives in Austin. The latest border "solution" was Gov. Abbott's 1,000-foot floating buoy barrier in the Rio Grande. It's a nice idea and one I have praised publicly, insofar as something is better than nothing. But, as usual, he is treating the symptoms of the problem rather than the problem itself.

By and large, Gov. Abbott's Operation Lone Star has been both costly and ineffective. With billions of dollars spent (and projected to rise to close to \$10B by 2025) it is unclear that the initiative has pro-

vided anything other than a band aid-solution to a perennial problem. Moreover, in the places along the border where targeted emphasis has been placed, we have seen - paradoxically - the most rapid increases in illegal border crossings. Clearly something is not working. One of the primary reasons for Gov. Abbott's (to say nothing of President Biden) lack of success is his unwillingness to deal with the primary issue: the Mexican government. Anything short of applying the pressure of the purse directly to Mexico is reactionary and keeps us forever on the backfoot. Optically, and in very real terms, such a shift in policy takes incredible political and moral courage. It is not easy to enter a kind of cold war with one's immediate

neighbour, but if Abbott (and others) hope for real change, that's what it's going to take.

Practically, severe economic sanctions and a host of other solutions would become immediately available if Gov. Abbott took the righteous step of invoking Article IV, Section 4, and Article I, Section 10 of the US Constitution, and declared our border crisis an invasion. Once declared, a host of economic and law enforcement options become immediately available to Texas. Our ability to mobilise resources to secure and deport anyone illegally crossing the border is of crucial importance. There can be no doubt that serious financial pressure on Mexico will hurt Texas and American business. But not to the extent that it will hurt their counterparts on the other side of the border.

This is a war of economic attrition and we are losing. Winning is neither hard nor complicated if our leaders could learn not to swerve in the face of political headwinds.

This is an idea, radical as it may seem to some detractors, that has the broad support of law enforcement and the National Border Patrol Council, the union representing US Border Patrol. It is also an idea that has been untested constitutionally and would meet with legal opposition. But it has in its favour something that current attempts at security lack: teeth. I've said in the past that we should never ask the federal government permission to secure the Texas border. And I have lately begun to think that we should never bother to ask the Texas government, either.



# War is returning to Nagorno-Karabakh because world did nothing to stop it

**OPEN conflict has once again broken out in Nagorno-Karabakh. On Tuesday, the Azerbaijani defense ministry announced the beginning of a new military campaign, indiscriminately shelling the capital Stepanakert and other settlements. For the past few weeks, aerial images and videos have shown that Azerbaijan has been amassing troops along the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh and of Armenia itself.**

The upside-down letter "A" on Azerbaijani military vehicles - a copycat of the Russian military's insignia in Ukraine - looks like a threat to cut through Southern Armenia and secure the land corridor into Nakhchivan and to Turkey, which President Ilham Aliyev has been demanding since the end of the 2020 war. Many international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and foreign governments have condemned the dire humanitarian catastrophe in this breakaway region in the South Caucasus. Residents have been dying of malnutrition and shortages of medicine.

The ongoing blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh and its 120,000 inhabitants since December 2022, and regular ceasefire violations by Azerbaijan, prompted the former Prosecutor General of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, to call this a genocide under the UN's 1948 Genocide Convention. A closer look into the situation on the ground makes it clear there is neither room for peace, nor preventing a new war.

Backed by Turkey, Pakistan and Israel, Azerbaijan launched and won an unprovoked war in fall 2020, reclaiming around 10,000 square kilometers of Armenian-controlled territories in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Since November 2020, the remaining 2,200 square kilometers have been patrolled by local self-defense forces and Russian peacekeepers who lack a broad international mandate and rules of engagement. Regular skirmishes both on the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan have become a new normal. Since May 2021, the Armenian government has reported about 150 square kilometers of its internationally-recognized sovereign territory under Azerbaijani occupation. Incursions by Azerbaijan have barely been held back by unarmed European observers (since October 2022) or Russian peacekeepers.

Since November 2020, the Azerbaijani government and various state-sponsored activists have spoken more systematically about the state of Armenia representing "Western Azerbaijan." Repatriating Azerbaijani inhabitants of Armenia and questioning the legitimacy of the country's existence has unofficially been part of Baku's agenda for some time. Now Armenia is warned against criticizing Azerbaijan's xenophobic statements, which it uses for internal propaganda, in order to avoid jeopardising the chances of a peace agreement. Meanwhile Aliyev, encouraged by this idleness of

**Hovhannes Nikoghosyan & Vahram Ter-Matevosyan**

external players, has occupied swaths of Armenian highlands on the border and keeps lowland residents under fire, often literally. Following Armenia's snap parliamentary elections in 2021, which saw the election of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the Armenian government started nurturing a new narrative about a "peace deal" with Azerbaijan. To meet one of Baku's key demands, Pashinyan has even publicly pronounced Nagorno-Karabakh part of Azerbaijan. This backpedalling created an opportunity for both Russia, as well as the EU and US, to try to establish peace in the region. The Armenian leadership, most likely, acted under duress created by the threat of force by

with it. Aliyev is trying to complete his nation-building project. Through policies and propaganda, him and his father created a vengeful nation for which the pain and suffering of Armenians is an article of faith. Overinflating the sense of humiliation of the 1990s, the motivation for revenge has penetrated all aspects of social fabric. There are parallels with the myth of the humiliation of Russia by the West in the same decade.

Even if Nagorno-Karabakh is fully subordinated to Azerbaijan - a corrupt dictatorship - ethnic Armenians will most likely be persecuted as a result of decades-old and state-sponsored xenophobia against them. The Azerbaijani regime has no desire to overturn

***Despite this, the international community continues to court Baku. Part of the reason why is that Aliyev has become adept at "caviar diplomacy": an investigation by Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting project found he ran a slush-fund of \$2.9 billion, with which he paid off hundreds of European, American and Russian politicians, media personalities and thought leaders. This explains why Aliyev, being an experienced puppet-master, is ready to incur high risks and bear the costs of damage to his reputation. He knows he can get away with it. Aliyev is trying to complete his nation-building project. Through policies and propaganda, him and his father created a vengeful nation for which the pain and suffering of Armenians is an article of faith. Overinflating the sense of humiliation of the 1990s, the motivation for revenge has penetrated all aspects of social fabric.***

Azerbaijan.

The crux of the matter is that "sustainable peace" has become a euphemism for pushing a weakened Armenia to gradually denounce their national interests in the hope that Azerbaijan will stop its onslaught. Such calculus shows a lack of understanding of the historical grievances at play in the region. The global disorder of past years meant achieving peace was not a priority. But there is more to it, often unspoken due to self-censorship and bothsidesism. For 25 years following Azerbaijan's defeat in 1994, first President Heydar Aliyev and then his son President Ilham Aliyev have placed anti-Armenian sentiment at the heart of their country's national image. Children as young as kindergarten are being taught to see Armenians as the enemy. Despite this, the international community continues to court Baku. Part of the reason why is that Aliyev has become adept at "caviar diplomacy": an investigation by Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting project found he ran a slush-fund of \$2.9 billion, with which he paid off hundreds of European, American and Russian politicians, media personalities and thought leaders.

This explains why Aliyev, being an experienced puppet-master, is ready to incur high risks and bear the costs of damage to his reputation. He knows he can get away

this policy, nor do the external players seem interested in using any leverage to end it. Expecting Azerbaijan to back down because of diplomatic pressure is pointless. Even if the ICRC is successful in securing a durable commitment to the simultaneous opening of both the Lachin Corridor (which Azerbaijan blocked) and the road from Azerbaijan (to which Nagorno-Karabakh authorities object) - it will be yet another advance for Aliyev's plan in subordinating Armenians. Despite the world averting its eyes from the conflict between the two countries after November 2020, local residents and international observers know it never fully ended. Its dimensions and geography have merely been transformed.

Three years after that formal ceasefire, the Armenian military's failure to regroup and resupply, and almost 18 months of Russia's war in Ukraine, Azerbaijan is again looking to seize more of its maximalist demands. Most likely, these involve seizing control of a land passage through southern Armenia into its exclave of Nakhchivan and onward to its ally Turkey. Turkey will support its minor partner Azerbaijan as a bargaining chip in relations with Russia. There are four other players with the capacity that could prevent a new war. But none of them used any of it. They are Iran, Europe, the United

States and Russia. Iran has long been the only power which has unequivocally claimed that the region's borders cannot be altered. It seems following a recent visit to Tehran by the Turkish foreign minister some assurances to this end have been sought and received, which will put Iran at bay.

The White House and State Department have put a lot of effort to bridge the divide between the parties diplomatically, but it seems Washington's primary concern is geopolitical, not humanitarian: snatching Armenia from Russia's embrace, without regard to the plight of Nagorno-Karabakh itself. Europe has been divided on this matter. EU President Charles Michel has been trying, probably in his view, to pick the low-hanging fruit of securing a peace deal. But chronic misunderstanding of the regional dynamics and failure to adhere to any principled position have in fact further emboldened Aliyev. This is not the result of Europe's dependence on Azerbaijani gas. Europe's unwillingness to engage meaningfully will lose it many supporters in Armenia. At the end of the day, neither the EU nor the US have skin in the game. The post-1990 arguments about the European and American rules-based order had given way to the global financial crisis and Covid. Furthermore, many politicians in both Brussels and Washington have strayed far from those ideals.

Russia remains the region's traditional dealmaker - and dealbreaker. The Kremlin hasn't stood idle in recent months due to the distraction with Ukraine or the necessity to mobilize the economy in the face of Western sanctions. In fact, this inaction stems from competing interests and shattered decision-making mechanisms inside the Kremlin. For example, the commander of the Russian peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh has been switched four times since 2020. The Kremlin has only been reacting to Armenia's cozing up to the West. This has created a long list of grievances on both sides which prevents Moscow from being willing to stop a new war. There are two ways to halt the humanitarian catastrophe in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Armenia and stifle the flames of the newly reignited conflict. Sadly, it is unlikely the international community will try either of them. Firstly, the Azerbaijani economy and powerful individuals must be sanctioned for purported crimes both inside their country and against Armenians. Secondly, the international community should suspend the country's membership of organizations like the Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as happened to Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Of course, this can be better achieved by more active Armenian diplomacy. But its sloppiness does not grant other players an excuse to stand by doing nothing. The only language dictators understand and respect is force. Very few become more aggressive in the face of credible consequences. Otherwise, for both Russia and the West, this is another appeasement of another dictator before a bigger war.

*The Moscow Times*

## Getting a better Brexit deal means making Britain European again

**Rafael Behr**

**A PERVERSE consensus is emerging in British politics that simultaneously accepts and denies that Brexit has failed. The prime minister and the leader of the opposition are both shopping for European policy in the narrow aisle between economic grasp of the problem and political fear of the remedy.**

No one likes the status quo. Enthusiasts for Boris Johnson's deal lament that its terms have been diluted and its spirit betrayed. Betrayal was always part of the plan, but it was supposed to be Brexiters defiantly flouting their treaty commitments to Brussels, not a Tory prime minister quietly reassembling functional relations. Rishi Sunak mouths the requisite platitudes about Brexit benefits, but his actions display recognition that the country had been steered into a ditch, and it was time to stop angrily revving the engine.

He signed the Windsor framework, reaffirming terms of the Northern Ireland protocol that Tory hardliners hated. He swerved away from the legal cliff-edge that would have seen heaps of retained EU law drop into oblivion. He ditched the requirement for a UK-specific safety certification, accepting that the mainland European one would apply for the foreseeable future. He rejoined Horizon, the EU's cross-border science and research cooperation programme. He postponed the (already long-delayed) implementation of customs checks on goods being imported from the continent. Each of those decisions is a micro-refutation of the case for Brexit. Sunak has internalised the banal fact that a country is diminished when it raises barriers to commerce with the huge trading bloc on its doorstep.

A hard Brexit has hurt British businesses, stoked inflation and dampened growth. The prime minister must know it, but cannot say it aloud. That is only half of the dishonesty. The other half consists in pretending that the problems are mere glitches in a programme that, with a bit of tinkering, can be made to run more smoothly. Interference with European trade is the whole point of Johnson's model. Leaving the single market was meant to propel Britain on a trajectory of divergence from Brussels rules, making reintegration with the EU ever harder as the years go by.

The theory was that release from European regulations would give Britain a competitive edge. The reality is that the widening gap between a smaller jurisdiction and a much larger one causes supply chains to snap. Investors prefer the bigger market, and expect regulatory compliance from their partners in the smaller one. UK ministers, being absent from the European Council, lose

their say in the formulation of rules, but British manufacturers end up following the directives anyway, if they want market access. The symbolic moment of retaking control gives way to gradual surrender of economic sovereignty and slippage down the international pecking order. An automatic downgrade in national wealth and status is encoded in the ideological software of Brexit, and wired into the treaty hardware of Johnson's deal. Keir Starmer seems to understand the problem better than Sunak. The Labour leader is more candid than the prime minister in lamenting the cost of friction at the border. He has spoken about the need for a better deal. But he is complicit in the fiction that substantial improvement is available without reopening the question of single market access.

There are two reasons not to start that conversation this side of an election. First, the single market comes as a package with free movement of labour. Any hint of a return to open-door immigration is electoral halitosis coming from the mouth of a Labour leader. Second, a commitment to align with European rules without a seat at the table where decisions are made looks like regulatory vassalage on terms that Eurosceptics used to complain about when Britain was an EU member. (They were wrong then, but would have a point now.) Passive submission might be an economic price worth paying in some industrial sectors but not all - and it is not an easy sell politically. Starmer's position on all things European is calibrated with hypersensitivity to public opinion, specifically the mood in those "red wall" seats where former Labour voters endorsed Brexit. Subtle shifts in tone - sounding punchier on renegotiating the deal while still ruling out a return to the single market - reflects a judgment about what is becoming permissible and what is still taboo with that target audience. But there is growing pro-European pressure from other angles, and opinion polls suggest a growing number of voters who do not doubt the rottenness of Brexit. There are Labour supporters who feel demoralised by compromises that sound like acquiescence to a Conservative agenda. Business leaders want to know that an incoming Starmer regime will be more attentive to economic reality than the Tories. European leaders want to believe they can do business with Britain under Labour in ways that have hitherto been unavailable. Sending that signal is the purpose of Starmer's meeting with Emmanuel Macron in Paris this week. There are limits to what goodwill can buy. Starmer

has pointed to an automatic review of the Brexit deal, scheduled for 2026, as the opportunity for an upgrade. In Brussels, that process is viewed with more modest ambition. It is a chance to discuss implementation of a treaty as written, not an invitation to rewrite it. Negotiating big changes would take years and burn up administrative energy the European Commission would rather deploy elsewhere. There is a tendency in British debates about Europe to imagine symmetrical interest on the other side of the Channel. But the EU has moved on. Brexit is cited as a cautionary tale against Eurosceptic populism, not lamented as a loss to be recovered. Britain's rupture from the single market was painful all round, but the wound is only septic on one side. Starmer can count on a certain diplomatic dividend in Europe from sheer relief at no longer having to deal with Brexit fanatics. But that will be balanced against the prospect of a Tory resurgence down the line. (This is also one of many reasons why there is no available pathway simply to rejoin the EU on the now-forsaken terms.) Friendly vibes get a warmer atmosphere in negotiations but are not instantly convertible into major concessions.

That doesn't mean there is nothing that a Labour prime minister can offer to get better terms of trade. But the case has to be compelling, and built around the EU's appraisal of its own interests. That takes the conversation into big global issues where Britain, as a large European economy (even accounting for some Brexit damage) can make a difference - joining up energy markets; collective action on climate change; defence and security cooperation; helping rebuild Ukraine. Meanwhile, there are small things that can be done to lubricate the sticky border. Starmer has already identified some of them. Sunak will discreetly do as many of them as his party will allow. But the real prize - a fundamental reconfiguration of the relationship that moves Britain closer - will mean zooming the lens out much wider. It will mean a sustained argument based on long-term, shared continental goals. It will have to rise above commercial quid pro quo, making the case for strategic realignment and institutional partnership with the European project on terms that have no precedent. Harder still, to sell that vision abroad a prime minister must also win the argument at home. There is a way to fix Brexit, but it requires leadership that is willing to make the case for Britain's destiny as a European country in terms that have been absent from the national conversation since long before the referendum. And time is already running out.

*The Guardian*

## Rishi Sunak pursues populist approach as elections draw closer

**Nidhi Razdan**

**WHEN Rishi Sunak came to India last week for the G20 summit, accompanied by his wife Akshata Murthy, the Indian media went into a frenzy. The Indian-origin British prime minister was feted when he moved into 10 Downing Street and the fact that he wears his "Hindu-ness" on his sleeve made him popular, especially among the BJP's followers.**

Ironically, he is perhaps the most socially conservative prime minister Britain has ever seen. The Economist described Sunak as "the most right-wing Conservative leader of his generation." This is even more ironic when you look at not just Sunak's family history but also those of his conservative colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds. His conservatism, many British analysts point out, is not driven by electoral necessity. It is something he ideologically believes in. This includes a tough anti-immigration stand. Ahead of his India visit, Sunak's office told reporters that the United Kingdom will not alter its immigration policy to secure a free trade deal with India. The deal has been hanging fire for over two years. "The prime minister believes that the current levels of migration are too high," a spokesperson for Sunak told reporters. "...To be crystal clear, there are no plans to change our immi-

gration policy to achieve this free trade agreement and that includes student visas." Last year, British Home Secretary Suella Braverman said that Indians make up the largest number of visa overstayers in the UK. Then there is Rishi Sunak's hard line on asylum seekers, where he has brought in a law to effectively stop those fleeing persecution and conflict from coming to the UK. He has made stopping small boats one of his top five priorities and said the cost of the asylum system was "unacceptable". The legislation includes measures to send all irregular arrivals to "safe" third countries such as Rwanda to provide a deterrent against illegal migration. Legal challenges have thwarted the Rwanda plan for the moment. The United Nations has described it as a "worrying precedent".

According to UK government figures, 19,382 people had crossed the Channel on small boats by August 24 this year. But small boat crossings in the first six months of 2023 were 10 per cent down on the same period last year. Sunak cited this to declare that his plan was working. His contempt for transgender rights has also stood out but may endear him to conservative voters. However, latest reports say Sunak is considering ditching plans to use legislation to ban

children from changing gender at schools over concerns that such a law would be seen as draconian. Sunak's government has also taken a new direction on the climate change fight, controversially allowing new licences for oil and gas exploration in the North Sea, among other things. His party has attacked London's Mayor Sadiq Khan for expanding London's ultra-low emission zone for vehicles.

The common refrain seems that as Britain's general election draws closer (it has to be held sometime next year), an increasingly wary Sunak is embracing a more populist approach to appeal to the Tory core base.

The UK is going through a bad economic patch, with high inflation, a cost of living crisis, a crumbling healthcare system and high crime reported from the capital London. In polls, the opposition Labour Party has a solid double-digit lead over the Tories. All this seems to have prompted Sunak to try and ditch his technocrat image and embrace a more right-wing persona. On illegal migration, he recently described Labour as a 'subset of criminal gangs', an unusual offensive that raised eyebrows. However, he is not being compelled to play the right-wing card. It is something he firmly believes in. And is happy to wear it on his sleeve.

*The Gulf News*

## Morocco aid furor exposes France's waning influence

**Zaid M. Belbagi**

**IN the latest iteration of what has become an incredibly fraught relationship between France and its allies in Africa, the French media and government pursued an incredibly short-termist and regrettable agenda against Morocco during a moment of national crisis last week, as the country's Atlas region reeled from a 6.8 magnitude earthquake. The approach, which raised eyebrows among former French presidents and the wider political establishment alike, followed a Moroccan mis-**

sus.

Having begun his presidency with a state visit to Morocco, where he was hosted as a successor to great friends of the kingdom such as Francois Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, Emmanuel Macron's rule has witnessed a sustained decline in French influence, not just in Morocco but in the wider region. This reality, not for any want of military involvement or hard power, has actually coincided with the highest French military presence in the region since colonial times. Rather, the Moroccan affair, which came a fortnight after an eighth Sahelian government was overthrown in yet another coup that signaled the departure of France's proteges from power, is reflective of a wider malaise.

The request that France withdraw its troops from its Operation Barkhane base in Mali last year was the most overt sign that its influence was on the wane. More than a decade after France embarked on a clearly defined and relatively popular operation aimed at clearing extremists from urban areas, Paris' mission descended into a prolonged conflict in which it could no longer have any influence. The localized conflict has since spread to neighboring countries, with France often backing unpopular, failing governments. This contributed to anti-French sentiment across the region, which has only been exacerbated by a catalog of diplomatic errors on France's part. In a face-saving exercise, the Barkhane base was moved to neighboring Niger, which this summer also called for the country's departure.

France's formerly robust diplomatic, military, economic and financial network in Africa has endured a veritable decline in recent years. Though he commenced his presidency with hopes to change the narrative and pursue a more nuanced role for France - more in line with the growing status of its African allies - Macron has pursued an agenda that critics have perceived as neocolonialist. Following a spike in anti-French rhetoric, the decision to "invite" the leaders of the G5 Sahel - Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad - to the French city of Pau in 2020 was viewed as a summing of client states. Malian Prime Minister Choguel Maiga accused France of resorting to "political, media and diplomatic terrorism."

Controversial, unpleasant and at times thoroughly objectionable, France's behavior in Africa has a checkered past at best. Once the master or protector of up to 20 African states, the tricolor was then writ large across the continent. But with the equality and freedom of the French republic often lacking, France used the experience to advocate a policy of assimilation, seeking to create Frenchmen and women from the African peoples it ruled. The imposition of French language, culture, religion, law, traditions and values on societies in West Africa and Algeria was particularly wide-scale, with lasting consequences. It did, however, face serious challenges in Morocco, which retained its sultan and institutions.

Morocco, the last of the African countries to be colonized, remained an administrative night-

mare for France throughout its short colonial history. Not able to establish a department of France as in Algiers, France settled with a protectorate, retaining the traditional facets of the Moroccan state. However, the 44-year experience, of which half was spent trying to pacify Morocco's armed tribes, was not sufficient to fully ingratiate the local society with French customs. This experience emboldened a residual sense of national identity, which some in Paris are yet to appreciate.

Amid the diplomatic fallout last week, Macron took it upon himself to meet Rabat's cold shoulder with a smartphone video, in which he took it upon himself to directly address the Moroccan people. The gesture backfired, with Moroccans questioning his right to do so and with the French media itself reminding their president that the prerogative to address a people belongs first to its government. Matters took another turn for the worse on Saturday, when Morocco rejected French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna's suggestion that Macron had been invited to visit the country by King Mohammed.

Rabat's response to France's intrusion has been material. Amid the fallout over aid, Rabat reopened one of the main roads into the heart of the earthquake zone, which had been blocked by debris, and the country's military helicopters have been flying sorties day and night amid a wider civilian response that is reminiscent of the country's mobilization against France decades ago. Paris should not overlook that providing assistance to foreign countries is a privilege and not a right.





# SBP awards IPA to 5 digital retail banks

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a bid to foster innovation, financial inclusion and availability of affordable digital financial services, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has granted In-Principle Approval (IPA) for establishing five digital retail banks, namely HugoBank Limited, KT Bank Pakistan Limited, Mashreq Bank Pakistan Limited, Raqami Islamic Digital Bank Limited and Telenor Microfinance Bank Limited. It may be recalled that SBP issued NoCs to five successful applicants for establishing digital banks in Pakistan in January 2023. After the fulfillment of the necessary requirements, these entities have now been granted in-principle approval to prepare themselves operationally to launch the digital financial services.

Today, in a momentous ceremony at SBP Museum Building in Karachi, Governor SBP, Mr. Jameel Ahmad awarded IPAs to the five proposed digital banks. This event was attended by sponsors of proposed DRBs, CEOs of incumbent banks, Payment System Operators (PSOs)/

Payment System Providers (PSPs), Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs), Fintechs and SBP's top management.

During his keynote address, Governor SBP highlighted the significance of the initiative of introducing DRBs in the country, its profound benefits to the financial system and some of the key challenges faced by such genre of financial players. Mr. Jameel also mentioned a few other important regulatory initiatives in support of building a digital financial ecosystem and assured that SBP is fully committed to support various stakeholders for a bright, innovative, and digitally empowered future of banking in Pakistan.

Jameel assured the financial fraternity of SBPs commitment to make financial system more inclusive, more innovative, and more responsive to the needs of the citizens of Pakistan. He also shared his expectations that post operational commencement, digital banks will help developing a digital eco-system, foster a new set of customer experience, provide affordable digital financial services including credit access to unserved

and underserved segments of the society.

Earlier, while welcoming the participants, Dr. Inayat Hussain, Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan highlighted that these IPAs shall enable the proposed DRBs to proceed further with respect to achieving operational readiness in all their functions, including governance, risk management, capital requirements, compliance and audit, consumer protection, business continuity, cyber security, product development, deployment of technological infrastructure, formulation of relevant policies, processes & procedures.

The sponsors of proposed DRBs also shared their thoughts during the program. While welcoming SBP's landmark initiative, proposed DRBs' sponsors highlighted that SBP's framework for digital banks served as a comprehensive guidepost throughout the required journey of setting up digital banks in Pakistan. They were of the view that besides having its own challenges, Pakistan is full of investment opportunities wherein digital banks would offer a faster, cheaper and an efficient solution

for meeting financial needs of the unserved and underserved segments of the society. They were confident that digital banks will become an essential part of the financial ecosystem, enhancing market efficiencies, providing access to a wider range of financial services, and thereby, advancing the broader agenda of financial inclusion.

Earlier this year, SBP issued "No Objection Certificate (NOC)" to the proposed DRBs mentioned above allowing them to incorporate as a Public Limited Company with Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). These institutions were selected after a thorough and rigorous evaluation process based on a comprehensive set of parameters including fitness and propriety, experience and financial strength; business plan; implementation plan; funding and capital plan; IT and cybersecurity strategy and outsourcing arrangements.

Upon attaining the operational readiness, these institutions will be required to seek approval of SBP for commencement of their operations.

## Rupee gains Rs1.02 against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed 12th consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs1.02 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs293.88 against the previous day's closing of Rs294.90.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs293.6 and Rs296.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 99 paise to close at Rs314.29 against the last day's closing of Rs315.28, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen came down by 1 paise to close at Rs1.98, whereas a decrease of Rs1.92 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs363.40 as compared to the last closing of Rs365.32. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 28 paise each to close at Rs80.01 and Rs78.34 respectively.

## Vegetables, fruits's prices increased

PESHAWAR (APP): The wave of inflation continued in Peshawar, the prices of vegetables and fruits could not decrease, revealed a visit to the market.

Tomato 90 rupees, Shmla pepper 120 rupees, willow 130 rupees, eggplant 70 rupees per kg while Garlic 460, ginger 1,600, lemon 120 and potato 130 rupees per kg. Cauliflower 100, Zucchini 100, Tenda 120, Turnip 120 and okra 80 are rupees sold.

Among fruits, mangoes reached 270 rupees, peaches 290 rupees, grapes 350 rupees, apples 220 rupees per kilo and guava 140, pear 180 while banana 120 per dozen sold.

The price of live chicken has increased by Rs 20 per kg and now the price of live chicken in the market will reach 405 per kg.

# Sprint Pakistan launched by BOP



## F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a remarkable spirit for innovation and forward-thinking, the Bank of Punjab (BOP) hosted a launch ceremony to unveil the details for their hyped Pakistan's largest hackathon 'Sprint Pakistan - Powered by digiBOP, Empowering Innovation for Global Impact' in collaboration with its executing partner, (NICL) at LUMS who will be involving NICs across these cities.

This ceremony officially kicks off a series of hackathons in 7 major cities of Pakistan inviting all startups and fintechs to participate and compete for the most innovative ideas. Winners from each city hackathon will later compete in the final Grand Hackathon to be held in Lahore at NICL LUMS.

Lucky winners from the grand hackathon will win cash prizes worth PKR 2.2 million and a fully sponsored trip with return tickets to Singapore, representing Pakistan at the Singapore Fintech Festival 2023.

Sprint Pakistan - Powered by digiBOP's esteemed partners include Pakistan High Commission to Singapore, SFA, StartKar 2.0, Elevandi, and APIX.

The ceremony held at NICL Auditorium (LUMS) brought together BOP's leadership, notable industry dignitaries from LUMS, and startup founders including NICs and BICs from 7 major cities of Pakistan. Mr. Nofel Daud (Group Head Strategy & Strategic Initiatives - BOP) highlighted BOP's consistent efforts

in its digital transformation journey. He said, "I am confident Sprint Pakistan will be a game changer in the startup ecosystem as well as render itself as another feat in BOP digital transformation journey".

Ms. Alia Zafar (Group Head People & Organizational Excellence - BOP) emphasized the importance of initiatives for youth and their scale of impact. She said, "Sprint Pakistan" serves as a fertile ground for innovation, providing startups with a unique platform to showcase their creativity".

Imran Ashraf (Chief Digital Officer - BOP) enlightened the audience with a comprehensive plan for the hackathon emphasizing the golden opportunities that it offers to the startups such as international recognition, followed by cash prizes, and fully sponsored trips with return tickets for participation in SFF.

Ms. Ruksana Afzaal (Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore) and

Mr. Shadab Taiyabi (President SFA) graced the launch ceremony with their presence through e-video message. Mr. Umang Moondra (CEO Synfindo APIX) and Mr. Farhan Mumtaz, working group StartKar from Singapore joined virtually and engaged with the audience explaining invaluable information regarding Singapore Fintech Festival 2023. The event was largely viewed locally and internationally in Singapore through e-connect.

Badar Khushnood, an industry expert, entrepreneur, and board member of NICL was also present at the ceremony and lauded BOP's consistent efforts for the startup ecosystem and fostering innovation. Mr. Hussain Merchant (Head Fintech, CE & Innovation - BOP) concluded the evening and asked the aspirants to gear up for the city-wide hackathons that are about to begin for winning startups.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Maersk Chicago, MSC Heidi, Unity and Constant-ions, carrying Containers, Palm Kernel and Gasoline, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and FOTCO oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Sea Bird and Al-Dayyan with Wheat and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on Wednesday.

Seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, MSC Heidi, Maersk Chicago, Santa Ace, Ulriken and N-Orhan are expected to sail on Wednesday.

A cargo volume of 138,401 tonnes, comprising 106,101 tones imports Cargo and 32,300 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo arrived in 4,400 Containers (2,500 TEUs Imports and 1,900 TEUs export) was handled during last 24 hours.

# Conference successfully organized by TI Pakistan

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: Transparency International Pakistan (TI Pakistan) successfully hosted the "Provincial Punjab Conference on Tackling Corruption to Enhance Gender Equality" at Avari Hotel. The event brought together renowned experts, policymakers, and civil society representatives to discuss and strategize ways to empower women in the fight against corruption and promote gender equality.

Kashif Ali, Executive Director TI Pakistan, provided opening remarks and emphasized on the relationship between gender and corruption. He highlighted that corruption hits the poor and vulnerable groups the hardest. He argued that the gendered impact of corruption at the point of service delivery is more conspicuous. As women tend to have a weaker voice to demand accountability, they can also become easier targets for corruption. He emphasized that mainstreaming gender into anti-

corruption programmes is crucial and emphasized on the need for gender sensitive reporting mechanisms.

One of the key sessions at the conference featured Mr. Mehboob Qadir Shah, Chief Information Commissioner of the Punjab Information Commission, who discussed the Punjab Right to Information Act 2013, shedding light on how access to information can empower citizens to hold authorities accountable. He shared success stories where PIC has upheld citizens right to access information.

Saadia Sabir, Senior Program Officer at the US Institute of Peace (USIP) Pakistan, shared valuable insights into enhancing women's participation in decision-making processes through gender-responsive laws, policies, and practices. She emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive environment for women in governance systems.

Ashfaq Ahmed, Project Coordinator at TI Pakistan, introduced the audi-

ence to the Protection of Women Rights and Access to Justice through TI Pakistan Legal Advice Centre. He emphasized the critical role of legal support in safeguarding women's rights.

Ms. Ammara Athar, AIG Administration, Punjab Police, Government of Punjab, discussed the vital role of Punjab Police in protecting the rights of women and ensuring their safety in society. She highlighted different initiatives taken by Punjab police including Tahafuz Centres to protect the rights of the citizens. The conference also featured SSP Makhdoom Qaiser Bashir of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Punjab, who provided an overview of FIA's role in the fight against corruption.

Shahzad Ashraf from UN Women, Punjab, focused on the protection of women's rights and their participation in the political process, shedding light on UN Women's efforts in Punjab. Ms. Bushra Khaliq, Executive Director of Women in Struggle for

Empowerment (WISE), shared inspirational stories and insights about women's empowerment.

The event concluded with an engaging open discussion and concluding remarks by Dr. Nausheen Wasi, Board of Trustee, TI Pakistan. She highlighted key points to mitigate the gendered impact of corruption and promote public policies that address both gender inequities and corruption.

The "Provincial Punjab Conference on Tackling Corruption to Enhance Gender Equality" was a resounding success, fostering meaningful dialogue and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders in the fight for gender equality and the eradication of corruption.

## Court Notice

IN the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner atDaggar. Appeal No. 49/13. Institution 27/4/2023. Date of hearing 13/10/2023 Inayatullah VS Kifayatullah etc. Notice to No. 7, Fazal Mohamad s/o Nor Mohamad, 8, Lal Mohamad, 9, Mohamad Husain sons of Mohamad. 10, Nazer Mogamad s/o Fazal Mohamad. Naemullah. 13, Nizamullah sent sons of Qudratullah. 14/6, Husan Zadgai d/o Bakhtiar. 15/4, Balht Sher s/o Ali Akbar residents of Badher Sura tehsel Mandanr district Buner. 16, Bakht Zanray. 19, Israrzay. 20, Bakhtajzay sons of Shafeq resident North Nazim Abad Karachi Sindh. 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 13/10/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 166/1 Institution. 24/5/2023. Date of hearing. 29/9/2023. Dilawar VS Akbar Jan. Notice to No. 1, Akbar Jan s/o Gul Sheren resident Koz Gokand Buner. 3, Mohamad Saed s/o Mohamad Nasim in Karachi. 4, Mohamad Momin Shafeq s/o Amir Shafeq resident North Nazim Abad Karachi Sindh. 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 29/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

# REAP expect record rice export of \$ 3 billion in Year 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) on Wednesday expected that this year, the export of rice will be above the record \$ 3 billion, which is very encouraging.

Last year 2021-22 the rice crop was destroyed due to the floods, because of which the export of rice has decreased. Chairman REAP, Chela Ram Kewalani told APP.

Last year, he said the production of rice crops improved and there were also new opportunities in the emerging markets of different regions.

He said that facilities are given to rice exporters by the government, but due to the high tariffs in different countries, the export of rice has become a problem, so agreements with these

countries are needed.

Kewalani said that during the finalization of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with different countries, the rice sector should also be included so that the tariff lines will come down for rice exporters.

He said that this would have a positive impact on rice export and new opportunities will be created for the exports in the sector.

Chairman REAP said that by increasing the export of rice, the exchange rate will be stable, but overall the country's economy will be strengthened.

Meanwhile, talking to the APP, former Chairman Rice Export Association of Pakistan and Rice Exporter Ali Hasan said that rice exporters in Pakistan are looking for global markets, but there are also some

challenges facing them such as high tariffs and other duties in the rice exporter markets.

He said that rice should be included as a product for the export of rice in all free trade agreements so that the original potential of rice export can be achieved.

Ali also expressed the hope that this year there will be an increase in rice production and stocks and a record increase in its exports.

Replying to a question, he said that after the approval of the Global Indication (GI) law in the country, Pakistan will have significant opportunities to increase its economic and trade activities in the international market.

The rice exporter said that now after this legislation, a level playing field

will be available for the export of various Agro-trade goods including rice in the international market.

He said that Geographical Indication would serve as a potential economic tool to promote and increase national and international trade by attracting global demand and premium prices for Pakistani products in the international market.

## Cement exports increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 130.24% during the first two months of the financial year 2023-24, as against the exports of the corresponding month of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$39.641 million during July-August (2023-24) against the exports of US \$17.217 million during July-August (2022-23), according to the data of PBS.

In terms of quantity, the exports of cement also surged by 198.15 per cent going up from 329,157 metric tons to 981,395 metric tons, according to data.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the exports of cement increased by 102.74 per cent during the month of August 2023 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of cement from the country during August 2023 were recorded at US \$23.496 million against the exports of US \$11.589 million in August 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, exports of cement increased by 45.53 per cent during August 2023 when compared to the exports of US \$ 16.145 million in July 2023, the PBS data revealed.

Conference at Cairo, Egypt. 2022.

The Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has been conferred 'Company of the Year Award' in recognition of Company's dedication, devotion, commitment and exemplary business performance during Year 2022.

Senior Manager Public Relation & Liaison, Shahbaz Ahmad Khan and Deputy Manager Corporate Affairs, Lt Col Muhammad Kashif Nazir (Retd), received the award.

# FFC wins 'Company of the Year Award' by RCCI



## F.P. Report

R A W A L P I N D I : Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) held its 35th International Achievement Awards Ceremony and Business Opportunity

Conference at Cairo, Egypt. 2022. The Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has been conferred 'Company of the Year Award' in recognition of Company's dedication, devotion, commitment and exemplary business performance during Year 2022.

Senior Manager Public Relation & Liaison, Shahbaz Ahmad Khan and Deputy Manager Corporate Affairs, Lt Col Muhammad Kashif Nazir (Retd), received the award.

# Envoy announces resumption of Thai Airways flights

LAHORE (APP): In a significant development, the Ambassador of Thailand, Chakkrid Kraichaiwong, announced the revival of Thai Airways services from Pakistan, marking a promising step forward in strengthening bilateral ties. The Ambassador revealed plans to reintroduce five weekly flights from Karachi and Lahore, along with four flights from Islamabad.

This announcement was made during the Ambassador's address here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) on Wednesday. The LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mehmood Ch, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, and Minister Counsellor (Commercial) at Royal Thai Embassy Bangladesh in Pakistan, Khemathat Archawathamrong, Deputy Head of Mission Royal Thai Embassy Islamabad,

Kamol Wan Sriposil, and former LCCI office-bearers and Executive Committee members were also present.

Ambassador Chakkrid Kraichaiwong commended Lahore as a vibrant and culturally rich city and expressed optimism that his visit would yield positive outcomes. He elaborated on the purpose of his visit to LCCI, emphasizing the objective of expanding activities between Thailand and Pakistan. Highlighting the strategic significance of Pakistan, the Ambassador noted that Pakistan serves as a gateway to Central Asia and the Middle East for Thailand. He identified key areas of interest, including seafood, mangoes, the Halal industry and Halal cosmetics, underscoring the potential for two-way trade. He emphasized that trade between the two countries had experienced a decline after 2021.

Addressing concerns

about repatriation of profits for investors in Pakistan and LCs opening, the Ambassador was reassured by President LCCI Kashif Anwar, who highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in facilitating investors through streamlined one-window services.

Furthermore, the Ambassador proposed that Thailand could contribute to Pakistan's tourism sector, drawing on Thailand's extensive experience in tourism, hospitality, and restaurant management. He stressed the importance of preserving heritage while promoting sustainable tourism. He praised Pakistan for maintaining historical and cultural heritage in a winsome manner.

Ambassador Chakkrid Kraichaiwong extended formal invitations to LCCI to participate in various exhibitions in Thailand,

covering pharmaceuticals, food, auto parts, and other sectors. He also underscored the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in the working sector as a priority.

In his welcome address, President LCCI Kashif Anwar reiterated the strong and long standing friendship between Pakistan and Thailand, founded on a shared vision for a prosperous economic future. He expressed a deep interest in exploring new avenues of collaboration that would benefit both nations and contribute to regional stability and economic growth.

He said that collaboration in the field of tourism holds immense promise. Pakistan has a rich cultural heritage and diverse landscape which would be of great interest to Thai tourists. Kashif Anwar emphasized the economic significance of Thailand as a key member of ASEAN with global

exports exceeding \$284 billion and imports surpassing \$306 billion. He referred to data from the State Bank of Pakistan indicating that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Thailand reached approximately \$876 million in 2022-23, with Pakistan exporting around \$164 million and importing \$712 million during the same period. Notably, Pakistan's imports from Thailand witnessed a significant reduction in 2022-23 compared to the previous year.

The Ambassador highlighted Thailand's global imports, including Frozen Fish (\$2.2 billion), Medicaments (\$1.8 billion), Screws & Bolts (\$1.1 billion), Surgical/Medical Instruments (\$803 million), and Precious/Semi-Precious Stones (\$803 million). Kashif Anwar emphasized Pakistan's potential to export these items to Thailand at competitive prices.

Kashif Anwar pointed out that Pakistan's primary exports to Thailand were condensate oil, used in plastic manufacturing, and frozen fish while Imports from Thailand primarily included automotive sector products, organic chemicals, and plastic articles. He identified key sectors for enhancing bilateral trade as value-added textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, sports goods, surgical instruments, and food products, especially meat. Additionally, products such as guar, canola, citrus concentrate, grapes, and berry concentrates hold export potential for Pakistan.

Acknowledging the need for better market penetration in Thailand and guidance regarding certification requirements, Kashif Anwar urged collaboration between Pakistani and Thai counterparts to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and facilitate market access.



**In brief****Biles qualifies for C'ships**

**A N T W E R P** (Agencies): Simone Biles will compete for her 20th world title at the upcoming World Championships in Antwerp. The four-time Olympic champion won the all-around women's final at the US selection event to top qualification with a score of 55.700. Biles, 26, will become the first woman to represent Team USA at six Artistic World Championships. In August, she made a return to competition following a two-year hiatus to work on her mental health. Biles marked her comeback by winning her eighth all-around title at the US Gymnastics Championships and breaking a 90-year record. But at Tuesday's selection event, it wasn't her normal faultless display. She fell on transition from high bar to low bar on uneven bars and was deducted half a point for pausing between two leaps on beam. On the floor, she went out of bounds twice and in her final apparatus vault, she over rotated her Yurchenko double pike. Shilese Jones, who finished second on 55.300, would have pipped Biles to a qualification spot had she not received a one-point deduction on her final apparatus, uneven bars. In 2021, Biles took a break from gymnastics after pulling out of five of her six finals at the delayed Tokyo Olympics. She later explained she had been experiencing 'the twisties' - a kind of mental block where gymnasts can lose their sense of space in the air. Team USA will announce the rest of their World Championship squad on Wednesday, with the competition taking place in Antwerp from 30 September to 8 October.

**Djokovic best in history**

**LONDON** (Agencies): Rafael Nadal's last Grand Slam win came at the French Open in 2022, but with Novak Djokovic having overtaken his impressive haul of most major titles in men's tennis, the Spaniard conceded the Serbian is the best player in history. Djokovic's recent win at the US Open, his third Grand Slam title this year, took his tally to 24 Grand Slams, two ahead of Nadal's total. "I believe that numbers are numbers and statistics are statistics. In that sense, I think he (Djokovic) has better numbers than mine and that is indisputable," Nadal said in an interview with AS published on Wednesday. "This is the truth. The rest are tastes, inspiration, sensations that one or the other may transmit to you, that you may like one or the other more," the Spaniard said. "I think that with respect to titles, Djokovic is the best in history and there is nothing to discuss about that." Nadal has suffered with injury issues in recent years, also missing out on the US Open in 2021 with a foot problem which had troubled him all year. However, he doesn't want this to be used as an excuse. "As always, everyone can see the story as they wish, saying that I suffered many injuries. Bad luck for me or bad luck that I had my body this way," he said. "He has had another one and in some ways that is also part of the sport. I congratulate him for everything he is achieving and it doesn't cause me any kind of frustration." The 37-year-old also spoke about fellow Spaniard, the new kid on the block Carlos Alcaraz, winner of this year's Wimbledon.

## Asian Games: Pakistan outwit Chinese Taipei in volleyball match

**HANGZHOU** (APP): Pakistan volleyball team showcased an exceptional performance as they secured a resounding victory against Chinese Taipei in the second and final pool match of the Asian Games at the Linying Sports Centre Gymnasium in Hangzhou, China on Wednesday.

In a remarkable display of skill and teamwork, Pakistan dominated the court, winning all three sets with scores of 25-18, 25-20, and 25-19. This victory comes on the heels of their previous triumph against Mongolia, where they also registered a 3-0 win.

The Chinese Taipei team, which held the second position in the last Asian Games 2018, faced a formidable challenge from the Pakistani players. Pakistan team, previously ranked 8th in the Asian Games, has shown tremendous improvement and determination in their recent performances.

Meanwhile, Chairman of



the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF), Ch Muhammad Yaqoob, expressed his utmost appreciation for the outstanding performance of the Pakistan volleyball team players and coaches. He commended their dedication and hard work, which has resulted in this impressive victory.

President of PVF Sohail Khawar Mir also extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire team and

the nation for this remarkable achievement. He emphasized the significance of the win in promoting the sport of volleyball in Pakistan and inspiring young athletes to pursue excellence.

Team Manager of the Pakistan Volleyball Team, Naseer Ahmed, expressed his optimism for the team's future performances. He believed that the players' exceptional skills

and unwavering determination would lead to even greater success in the upcoming matches.

Pakistan team's triumph against Chinese Taipei marks a significant milestone in their journey towards becoming a force to be reckoned with in international volleyball. Their exceptional performance serves as a testament to their hard work, talent, and commitment to the sport.

## Shehroze Kashif achieves another milestone by scaling Mt. Manaslu

**ISLAMABAD** (APP): The unflinching determination of Pakistani climber Shehroze Kashif enabled him to achieve another feat when he successfully summited Nepal's 8,163 metres Mount Manaslu.

"Congratulations to Shehroze on his amazing feat of climbing the eighth-highest mountain in the world, Manaslu. He is now the youngest climber to reach the summit of 12 summits over 8000 metres. It is really amazing," Secretary Alpine Club of Pakistan, Karrar Haidri said in a statement.

"His commitment and the encouragement he's received from everyone are admirable. I hope he has a safe descent and more luck on his upcoming adventures," he added.

Two years back, in September 2021 he had ascended Manaslu, but after two days it was revealed that he had missed the actual summit point.

"Congratulations to Shehroze Kashif on his triumphant summit of Mount Manaslu. Shehroze reached



the summit of Mount Manaslu on 20th September at 5:01AM PST. "BARD Foundation is beaming with pride for this remarkable achievement. Summiting Mount Manaslu is a significant step towards his dream of becoming the youngest mountaineer to summit all 14 tallest peaks," the BARD Foundation, which sponsors Shehroze's expeditions said in a statement.

Born on March 11, 2002, Shehroze made history by becoming the youngest climber in the world to summit K2 on July 27,

2021. He also became the youngest Pakistani to summit Mount Everest on May 11, 2021. After the successful summit of Mount Everest, Sports Board Punjab made him the youth ambassador of Punjab.

He summited Broad Peak at the age of 17, after which he was called 'The Broad Boy'. He started climbing mountains at the age of 11 with Makra Peak being the first one, followed by Musa ka Musalla and Chembra Peak at 12, Mingli Sar in Shimshal at 13, Khurdopin Pass at 15, and Khosar Gang in alpine

style at 18 years of age.

Shehroze currently holds two Guinness World Records for being the youngest to climb K2 and the youngest to climb Broad Peak. On May 5, 2022, he became the youngest in the world and the first Pakistani to reach the summit of Kangchenjunga - the third-highest peak in the world. On May 16, 2022, he summited the world's fourth-highest peak, Mount Lhotse (8,516m), in Nepal. On November 1, 2022, Shehroze was recognized by Guinness World Records for the year 2023 for summiting Mount Everest and K2.

In May, 2023 he summited Nepal's Mount Dhaulagiri (8,167m), the seventh highest peak of the world. In July 2022, Shehroze and Fazal Ali went missing between Camp 4 and Camp 3, after successfully summiting Nanga Parbat. However, the duo was discovered shortly after. Shehroze intends to summit all above 8,000m peaks before the year end.

## Spain players agree to end boycott before Nations League games

**MADRID** (Agencies): Most of the Spain team have agreed to end their boycott, says secretary of state for sports Victor Francos.

The agreement was reached at 05:00 local time on Wednesday after more than seven hours of meetings. Francos said the Spanish football federation (RFEF) had committed to "immediate and profound changes".

Two of the 23 players named in the squad for this month's Nations League games - Mapi Leon and Patri Guijarro - have left the squad. The rest of the players began the boycott after then RFEF president Luis Rubiales kissed forward Jenni Hermoso following Spain's triumph over England in the Women's World Cup final on 20 August.

The kiss, which Hermoso said was not consensual, led to Rubiales' resignation, while Spain manager Jorge Vilda was sacked. Spain are due to play Sweden on Friday and Switzerland on Tuesday.

Francos, the head of the Spanish government's national sports agency (CSD), said: "It is good news to be able to say that the team will play the next two games with guarantees." He said a decision was reached following "friendly" talks in Valencia involving the players, RFEF officials, CSD and women's players' union Futpro.

"A joint commission will be created between RFEF, CSD and players to follow up on the agreements, which will be signed tomorrow," Francos said.

"The players have expressed their concern about the need for profound

changes in the RFEF, which has committed to making these changes immediately."

Francos said Leon and Guijarro would not face sanctions and their decision was "absolutely respectable". The players could have faced fines or a ban from the Spain side for not turning up for international duty. Leon and Guijarro were among 15 players to boycott the national team before the World Cup in protest at the methods of then coach Vilda. They were not involved at this summer's tournament in Australia and New Zealand.

"It's a reality that the situation for me and for Patri is different to the rest of our team-mates," Leon said. "We already knew this was not the right way to return, and we are not in the right state. "We are content because the truth is that changes are being made, and in this we are giving full support to our team-mates."

Guijarro said: "They are working on the changes and of course we are with our team-mates, but it's true that it's a different situation."

"It's quite difficult and quite hard. Mentally we are not right to be here." On Monday new head coach Montse Tome selected 15 players who were part of the World Cup squad in her squad for the Nations League games. After it was announced, the players published a statement saying the boycott remained in place and that they had been "put in a position in which we never wanted to be in."

They said they intended to explore the potential legal implications of being called up against their wishes.

Tome omitted Hermoso from the squad "to protect her". Hermoso said selecting players who are boycotting the team showed "nothing has changed" at RFEF.

The CSD said a commission would be established to monitor the agreed changes, which will focus on equality policies, advances in equal pay and improving the infrastructure of women's sport.

The RFEF later confirmed the men's and women's Spanish national teams would merge under a single logo and branding known as Selección Española de Fútbol, which translates to 'Spanish national team'.

"Beyond a symbolic step, we want it to imply a change in concept and the recognition that football is football, practised by whoever practises it," RFEF management commission president Pedro Rocha said. "We believe that making it clear that the two teams are equal also allows us to move towards a more egalitarian concept of football."

Futpro president Amanda Gutierrez said: "The players see it as a rapprochement of positions. The vast majority have decided to stay for the sake of this agreement. "It is the beginning of a long road ahead of us." The Spain players travelled to the training camp in Valencia on Tuesday. Asked by reporters at Barcelona airport how she felt about the situation, midfielder and two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas said: "Well, bad." Rubiales has been banned from going within 200 metres of Hermoso after she filed a legal complaint.

## Injured Southee Tim a doubt for World Cup

**NEW DELHI** (Agencies): New Zealand fast bowler Tim Southee is to undergo thumb surgery, leaving his World Cup participation in doubt.

A decision on Southee's involvement in the World Cup, which begins in India on 5 October, will be taken next week, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said.

The 34-year-old dislocated and fractured his thumb while attempting a catch against England on Friday. Southee will have surgery on Thursday, two weeks before New Zealand's World Cup opener against champions England.

"A decision on the senior pace bowler's availability for the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in India will be made early next week once the results of the surgery are known," NZC said. New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said Test captain Southee would be given "every chance" to make the World Cup.

"We've got our fingers crossed the surgery goes well for Tim," Stead said.

"He'll have some pins or screws inserted in his right thumb and, providing the procedure is a success, it will be a matter of ensuring Tim can tolerate the pain and manage the actual wound when returning to train and play." New Zealand will contest a three-match ODI series in Bangladesh, beginning on Thursday.

England completed a 3-1 series victory over New Zealand in the final one-day international at Lord's last week. It was during that final one-day international that Southee suffered his injury in dropping a catch from England's Joe Root.

## Pakistan women aim for Gold in 19th Asian Games in China

**Paras Ahmad Khan**

**HANGZHOU:** The national women's side will be eyeing their third gold medal as they kick off their Asian Games campaign on Thursday against Indonesia at Zhejiang University of Technology Pingfeng Cricket Field in Hangzhou, China. The match will begin at 1400 local time.

This will be the quarter-final of the event after having directly qualified by virtue of being one of the top four ICC ranked sides in the continent. The tournament is being played in the T20 format and the Nida Dar-captained team enter the event with momentum on their side after having secured a historic whitewash against South Africa at home earlier in the month.

During the series played at the National Bank Stadium, right-handed opening batter Sidra Amin top-scored for the hosts in the T20I series, scoring 133 runs from three matches at an average of 44.33. In the bowling charts, left-arm spinner Nashra Sundhu topped the table alongside another left-armer Sadia Iqbal with four wickets apiece.

The national side have previously won gold medals in the 2010 and 2014 iterations of the event. Pakistan captain Nida Dar said:

"The team is in high spirits and every player is looking forward to the Asian Games. After practicing for two days here in Hangzhou, we are all set to play Indonesia tomorrow. The Asian Games hold a special place in our hearts, and we are determined to bring home another gold medal."

She said: "That we enter this tournament after having beaten South Africa comprehensively in the T20I series will certainly help us and we look forward to carrying that momentum. The players are up for showcasing their skills on the field again." The semi-finals will be played on September 24, while the final will take place on September 25. The match for the Bronze medal will also take place on the day of the final at 0900 local time.

Squad: Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Anoosha Nasir, Diana Baig, Muneeba Ali, Najiha Alvi, Nashra Sundhu, Nataliya Parvaiz, Omaiha Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah and Umm-e-Hani. Player Support staff: Ayesha Ashhar (team manager), Mahtashim Rashid (interim head coach), Saleem Jaffer (bowling coach), Taufiq Umar (batting coach) and Rifat Gill (physiotherapist).

## Khoso hopeful for Pak athletes in Asian Games

**ISLAMABAD** (APP):

Director General Pakistan Sports board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso has expressed the hope that Pakistani athletes would perform well and bring good results in the 19th edition of Asian Games at China.

He was talking to the athletes and officials of different teams at Pakistan Sports Complex here Wednesday. They informed him about their preparations.

Khoso expressed his best wishes for the athletes and hoped that Pakistani athletes would show good skills in the Games. Sports players are the ambassadors of the country and they should make the name of the country proud with their

performance, hard work and honesty, he said.

He said that Pakistani nation was a sports loving nation and the PSB is making all out efforts to promote sports in the country. We are providing all-out support to the training camps set for Asian Games, he said.

It may be mentioned that national Taekwondo, Squash and Hockey teams would leave for China on Thursday to participate in their respective competitions at the Games. Pakistan's contingent would compete in 25 different sports events in the mega event to be held in Hangzhou, China.

The Pakistan Taekwondo team partici-

pating in the Asian Games includes Hamza Umar Saeed, Haroon Khan, Muhammad Arbaaz Khan, Aqduus Ullah Qadeer and Naila, while the team officials comprise Shamim Akhtar as Manager, Seongho Choi and Yousef Karami as coaches.

Taekwondo players Hamza Umar Saeed and Haroon Khan were well prepared for the Asian Games and were hopeful of winning medals for the country.

The national squash team includes Noor ul Ain, Mehwish Ali, Sadia Gul, Noor ul Huda, Nasir Iqbal, Farhan Zaman, Noor Zaman, Muhammad Asim while Faheem Gul will accompany as coach.

## Rafi wins Kohat Junior U19 Squash C'ship

**KOHAT** (APP): Promising Abdul Rafi clinched the trophy after defeating Hamza Khan in the final of the Kohat Junior U19 Squash Championship organized by Regional Sports Officer here at Company Bagh Squash Complex on Wednesday.

Dr. Faraz Hassan was the chief guest on this occasion who also witnessed the final. Regional Sports Officer Sajid Afridi, Chairman

Sports Committee Kohat Faqir Muhammad Awan, President District Kohat Squash Association Saeed Khan Afridi, General Secretary Ishtiaq Tasin Khan and Shuja Ahmad among other personalities were present at Squash Complex Company Bagh Kohat.

In the Junior Under-19 Championship organized by the District Squash Association and Regional Sports Office in collaboration with Kohat region

players participated wherein in the final Abdul Rafi defeated Hamza Khan and won the trophy, the score was 11-6, 12-10 and 11-9 while in the girls final, Miss Saira won the first position by defeating Muzamil by 11-8, 11-1, 7-11, 6-11 and 11-3. Muhammad Musaib won the trophy after defeating Ayan by 3-0, the score was 11-9, 11-7 and 11-8. At the end, the chief guest distributed the prizes among the winning players.

## Karate coaches course concluded in Peshawar

**PESHAWAR** (APP): The three-day National Accredited Karate Coaches Course organized by Pakistan Karate Federation and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate Association ended in Peshawar on Wednesday.

In the Course, more than fifty coaches from all over the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated who learned the latest karate techniques from experienced and senior coaches headed by two times SAF Games gold medalist Khalid Noor and international karate coach, who recently got World Karate Coaching Certificate in Dubai, UAE Shah Faisal along with other coaches imparted the training and coaching sessions.

On the occasion of the closing ceremony, Director of Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irfan Ali was the special guest along with Chairman of Pakistan Karate Federation Muhammad Jahangir, President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate Association Khurshid Khan, Secretary Karate Association Sensei Khalid Noor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sensei Shah Faisal, Pride of Performance South Asian Gold Medalist Sensei Farman Ahmed, World Qualified Judge Ijazul Haque and other important personalities were present. More than 50 male and female coaches from around the country learned

about the new rules of the World Karate Federation and various techniques from the qualified coaches. In the course, Dr. Wasiullah, Dr. Maryam Ishaq and Muhammad Ahmed Naeem gave lectures while Pride of Performance South Asian Gold Medalist Sensei Farman Ahmed, Sensei Khalid Noor, Sensei Ijazul Haque and Shah Faisal imparted coaching and training session wherein the participants enthusiastically learned.

In the three-day course, the participants were given practical training in addition to informing them about the role of the coach, harassment in sports, nutrition, injury and recovery, anti-doping and other issues and the rules of the World Karate Federation came under discussion.

Practical training was reviewed wherein Shah Faisal and Khalid Noor highlighted various techniques regarding the preparation sessions for the competitions. Speaking at the ceremony, Chairman of Pakistan Karate Federation Muhammad Jahangir called the holding of the course in Peshawar as an urgent need and said that the Federation will provide all kinds of support in increasing the capacity of the coaches.

This will benefit the players of the province and the country. He said that courses were organized in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad under the aus-

pices of Pakistan Karate Federation, but Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate Association organized this course in the best manner.

The credit of which goes to Coordinator Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal and General Secretary Khalid Noor, who always promoted the game of Karate in the province. They are playing an important role in the promotion and development of sports, particularly Karate. It is hoped that the boys and girls of the province got an opportunity to learn a lot from the coaching course, which will be very beneficial for them in the coming times. Jehangir said.

Director Youth Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irfan Ali said that the Department of Sports and Youth is playing an important role in the promotion of sports in the province and is attracting its youth towards healthy activities. At the end of the ceremony, the chief guest distributed certificates to all the coaches participating in the course and expressed the hope that the techniques they learned would be proved beneficial for the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and in the other players associated with the Games of Karate in general. He also assured that the Directorate of Youth would extend support to other such activities so as to give due opportunities to the youth to come and excel at national and international levels.





## In brief

### Bid to smuggle Ice foiled

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Airports Security Force (ASF) foiled a bid to smuggle huge quantity of liquid Ice (methamphetamine) worth millions of rupees in international market at Islamabad Airport on Wednesday. According to details, the ASF during search of baggage of passenger leaving for Jeddah via Istanbul to perform Umrah found three Ihram towels soaked with 5.448 kg liquid Ice. The accused identified as Muhammad Imran was taken into custody with recovered drug. After initial investigation, he was handed over to Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) for further legal action.

### 241,700 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 241,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 228,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1548.35 feet and was 150.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 135,400 cusecs and 125,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1233.50 feet, which was 183.50 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, Gulabgh, Sukkur was recorded as 142,700, 118,200, 93,700 and 43,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 27,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Power suspension

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Anguri, NCP, Mengyal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khayaban Iqbal, Pir Suhawah, Q u a i d - e - A z a m University, Punjab House, Bri Imam, Mandala, Athal, NIH, Suhadran Road Feeders, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, SES, Fazal Ghi, NDC-1, H-11/4, I-10/2, New Exchange, Kidney Centre, Dr. AQ Khan, Islamic University, Bahria University, G-10/1,2 & 4, G-9/1, CWO, Dhok Najo, Raja Sultan, Eid Gah, Khasala, I-8/4, Service Road, Muslim Town, FHS Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, FECHS, Swan Garden-I, IST, New Rawat, Old Rawat, CWO, AOWHS, Sparco Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Pindhon, I-14/3, Noon, I-16/1, HPT Radio Pak, Lakho Road, Ameer Hamza, Officer Colony, New Milpur, Jinnah Camp, KRL, Zeeshan Colony, Lakho, Feeders, Attock Circle, Ghorghashti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Dir, Radio Pak-I & II, Larnpur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony, HMC Road, Taxila, Sher Shah Suri, Islampura Feeder, Chakwal Circle, Chakra Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-3 Gul Afshan, Sanghui, Chotala, Kantrela, Pakhwal feeders and surrounding areas.

# ‘General elections may be held in December’

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Khurshid Shah claimed on Wednesday that the general elections might be held in December. While talking to the media, he claimed that there are strong possibilities of general elections in January or February 2024. He added that the elections might be held in December. Khurshid Shah said that the charter of democracy should be credited which restricted everyone to not flee from elections. Shah said that it is an unfortunate fact that the country saw martial laws for 40 years. He added that PPP has

never stepped back from his principle stance of democracy and faced difficult times for the rule of democracy. The PPP leader was of the view that the current situation of the country is favourable for elections. He demanded to provide level playing field for all political parties. He said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is still ruling the country and demands will also be tabled before it. "PML-N top leaders are part of caretaker federal cabinet including Touqeer Shah, Ahad Cheema and Fawad Hasan Fawad." He criticised that bureaucracy was reshuffled

only in Sindh but not in Punjab. The development projects were only banned in Sindh but not in Punjab. Shah reiterated that the caretaker government is not authorised to stop work on development projects. Khurshid Shah warned PML-N leaders to refrain from launching tirades against PPP, otherwise, the politics would return to the 80s era. He also criticised Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman for blaming PPP leaders. Shah claimed that Maulana Fazlur Rehman had favoured the no-confidence motion but he retracted from his stance.

## HEC appoints Dr. Nasir as Chairman NACTE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has been appointed as Chairperson of National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) for a term of four years (effective from the date of joining the office) by the Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC). It is pertinent to mention

here that Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has more than 25 years of working experience on various positions in the field of education. According to a notification, he has completed more than 60 research projects and published 57 research papers in national and international journals. Dr. Nasir Mahmood served as the Dean of the Faculty of Education in Allama Iqbal Open

University for a long time. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training appointed Dr. Nasir as the Acting Vice Chancellor of AIOU on the tenure completion of Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum. Since then, he has been rendering his services for Allama Iqbal Open University as Vice Chancellor in a very professional and proactive manner.

## IHC quashes case against Afghan woman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday quashed a case against Afghan national woman for staying in Pakistan without obtaining a visa and said that the Constitution granted the right of asylum. The court instructed the Ministry of Interior to issue a NOC to the concern woman for traveling to Australia. Justice Babar Sattar issued the written verdict

on the petition filed by Afghan National Raheel Azizi against the registration of a case against her under foreigners act. She was accused of entering Pakistan without obtaining a visa from the authorities. The order said that the people seeking for asylum couldn't be sent jail. The concern woman had arrived Pakistan as there were threats to her life after regime change in

Afghanistan. On this basis, the Australian government had issued visa to her but she couldn't travel abroad due to a case was registered against her in Pakistan. The court said that under such circumstances, a case couldn't be run against the woman asylum seeker. It may be mentioned here that the FIA had registered a case against Raheel Azizi under the Section-14 of the Foreigners Act.

## Operation continues against substandard food points

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) in its ongoing inspection drive under the Safe Food City (SFC) project penalized four food business operators (FBOs) with Rs 73,000 cumulative fines besides disposing of 1,500 litres of adulterated milk in the Rawalpindi division. PFA Director General (DG) Raja Jahangir Anwar said that the food and dairy safety teams checked general stores, marts, tea points, pan shops and milk carrier vehicles during the drive. In Rawalpindi, dairy safety teams placed screening pickets at Mandra Toll Plaza and examined several milk carrier vehicles loaded with 1,500 litres. He said that

PFA's dairy teams had taken milk samples for screening tests on the spot and discarded 37.5 mounds of milk as the results were not up to the mark. He added that the regulatory body disposed of milk after finding contamination of polluted water and other adulterated ingredients in the milk. The DG further said that the team raided a food point in the Pind Dadan Khan area, Jhelum and imposed a Rs 39,000 fine after recovering a huge quantity of banned food items including 108 sachets of Gutka, 875 sachets of substandard pan masala, inferior quality beverages and 500 kulfi. In another raid, a mart was slapped with a fine of

Rs 20,000 in the Jhelum area for selling expired food items including cold drinks, spread powder, food colour, jam, coffee, corn puff and snacks, Jahangir said. The Punjab Food Authority was bringing an international-style policy for the supply of pure milk, he said and added the PFA was also utilizing all available resources to eliminate adulteration across the province. He appealed to the public to keep an eye on adulteration in their surroundings and to inform PFA on the 1223 helpline number or PFA Facebook page in case of witnessing any suspicious activities related to the food.

## Task Force's impressive operations continued

RAWALPINDI (NNI): On the directions of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chattha, the Chairman Task Force / Director General RDA, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa conducted a grand operation against twelve illegal housing schemes in Mouzas Abn Chak, Bagga Sheikhan, Mera Martha, Chak Beli Khan, Takht Pari, Ratial and Baniaan on GT road and Rawat Rawalpindi namely National Police Foundation, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Paksitan Government Employees Housing Scheme, Century Town, Tagwa Town, Green Enclave, PARC Housing Scheme, Ample Living / Nishan-e-Mustafa, Pak PWD Housing Scheme, Countryside Farmhouse, Riser Marketing and Shaheen Garden, demolished / sealed site offices, main entrances, boundary walls, illegal cutting/plotting, subdivision, dividers and road infrastructure of illegal housing schemes.

The Chairman Task Force / DG RDA said that on the complaints of the general public, grand operations are continued and conducted to stop fraud of illegal housing schemes, and looting of the citizens. He said that complaints were received from the general public about illegal occupation of the owners of illegal housing schemes. He further said that operations will be continued against illegal housing schemes. He said that the owners of housing schemes who have completed the legal documents have been given the possession of the land. He said RDA has been issuing press releases from time to time for the information of the general public. The citizens should not invest in illegal housing schemes and requested to visit RDA website [www.rda.gop.pk](http://www.rda.gop.pk) and are advised to buy and sell only from approved housing schemes. According to the authorities, previously notices were issued to the owners and

sponsors of above mentioned illegal housing schemes namely Javed Iqbal Khan, Mirza Naseem-ul-Haq, Attar-ul-Rehman, Bukhari, Shehzad Ahmed, Qazi Naveed Ahmed, Muhammad Imran Khokhar, Javed Ahmed Butt, Mr. Hamid Jamil, Mr. Ejaz Jahangir, Mr. Zahoor Akbar and Sardar Shoaib Shaheen and FIRs were also lodged to stop illegal advertisements, bookings and development. The owners of these properties were running booking offices of illegal housing schemes in violation of the rules. The Task Force including Deputy Director Planning Samiullah Niazi, Assistant Director Building Control RDA, Assistant Director Land RDA, Assistant Director Planning RDA, DSP Rawat Mr. Noman, SHO from Police Station Rawat Rawalpindi, RDA Scheme Inspectors, District Council Inspector, District Administration Representative along with other team members taken grand operation jointly.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to PM on overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik chairing the 8th Manpower Export Coordination Committee. —APP Photo

### ANF seizes 67 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover over 67 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that two suspects were arrested from a passenger van intercepted near Phagwari Bazaar in Murree. Eight kg hashish was recovered from the possession of the accused. 52.8 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were recovered from a truck intercepted near Wali Interchange Nowshera. The accused resident of Peshawar was trying to smuggle drugs to Punjab. On the pointination of the arrested accused, his accomplice, a car driver resident of Kohat, was also arrested.

In third operation, 200 ecstasy tablets were recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle near Haji Camp Adda Peshawar. The accused confessed to supply drugs to students of educational institutions. In fourth operation at Multan International Airport, 750 grams ice tactfully concealed in a bag was recovered from the possession of a Bahrain-bound passenger, resident of Dera Ghazi Khan, who was going on flight number GF-789. Separate cases have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

### ICCPO holds online Khuli Katcheri

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan on Wednesday hold an online khuli katcheri to give the residents direct access to the police high ups, a public relations officer said. He said that the ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan responded to the public queries via phone calls from 04pm to 06pm. ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan listened to the problems of the callers and directed the concerned officers for their immediate solution. Most of the problems that were mentioned were the citizen's personal and were related to police stations. Speaking to the citizens, the ICCPO said that the police were striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible. He said the purpose of such initiatives was aimed at bridging the gap between police and the public. People from across the city put their proposals before the ICCPO. Most of the issues were related to citizen personal matters, investigation matters, early disposal of cases and others. The Capital Police Chief told the viewers that the federal capital has witnessed a clear reduction of crime incidents due to effective policing measures, hard work of the cops and swift action on Pucar 15 calls. Citizens are also requested to cooperate with the Islamabad Capital Police and report any suspicious activity on Pucar-15 helpline.

## Modi has a long ‘rap sheet’ of HR abuses: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mashaal Hussain Malik has stated that the fascist Narendra Modi-led Indian government had unleashed a reign of terror and was committing war crimes in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). Inaugurating the Free Dastarkhwan and Free Healthcare society in a private housing society near Gujar Khan, the SAPM on HR and Women Empowerment said that “Modi has a long ‘rap sheet’ of human rights abuses,” a press release issued here on Wednesday said. She said that the Indian government was not only involved in massacre of innocent Kashmiri people but the Hindutva regime was also embroiled in carrying out terrorist activities elsewhere in the world. Mushaal stated that the brutal forces carried out crackdown against the Kashmiri people and they were being subjected to worst state terrorism in order to silence the dissenting voices. She went on to say that fascist Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred two Kashmiri youth during the continued cordon and search operation. However, Mushaal wondered that the international community and human rights organizations were silent over the Indian forces’ brutal and inhuman acts. SAPM on HR and Women Empowerment said that people of Pakistan should thank Allah as they were living in an independent state. At the end of the ceremony, the Executive Director of New Metro City Housing Society Muqrab Abbasi presented an honorary shield to Mashaal Malik.

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## Fraudsters arrested by Islamabad Police

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad Police apprehended fraudsters who exploited citizens by falsely promising to facilitate their overseas visa applications, profiting from their trust. The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has directed to start a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directives, in a proactive move to protect citizens from visa fraud and financial deception, the Islamabad Capital Police, Aabpara Police Station, has initiated legal action against the accused involved in fraudulent activities to swindle citizens under the pretext of sending them to Dubai, a public relations officer said. He said that the accused had been deceiving citizens by claiming to facilitate the issuance of visas to the United Arab Emirates and extracting money from them. The Aabpara police station received information from a citizen who stated that he had fallen victim to a cash scam, having been misled with false promises of being sent to Dubai. In response to the complaint, a case was registered under the charges of fraud and deception, leading to the swift apprehension of the main culprits. It is crucial for the public to be aware that the UAE Embassy in Islamabad and the UAE Consulate Work visa services charge a legitimate fee of \$69 for visa processing and \$41 for document verification. There are no additional fees imposed on citizens. Furthermore, it is strictly prohibited for any entity or individual, except for authorized companies approved by the UAE Embassy, to collect money for visa purposes. Several unscrupulous entities are known to unlawfully extort money from citizens. Citizens are urged to exercise caution and promptly report any suspicious activity or individuals to the “Pucar-15” helpline.

## Revival of students union after 50 years: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Senate Education Committee on Wednesday deliberated at length on the revival of Students Union after half a century and maintained that it's revival should be improvised according to new trends and mindset of the young generation. The Senate Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training met on Wednesday under the Chairmanship of Senator Irfan ul Haq Siddiqui here at the Parliament House. The committee while taking up the Bill titled The Islamabad Capital Territory Student Union Bill 2023 introduced by Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi deliberated that since long serious issues related to discrimination and injustice to students obstructing their social and academic life remained unattended leading to dire consequences such as abductions and killings. Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi said that these issues can only be resolved through collaboration of the management and the elected bodies and a bridge between the administration and students. The committee was of the view that in order to address these issues prevailing in the student community and ensure democratic and inclusive atmosphere for healthy debate and culture intellect a student Union should be established in the Islamabad Capital Territory which will play its role as nurseries for training future leadership and will provide forums to students for constructive activities, civic life, understanding or Rights, obligations and their enforcement. The committee chair Senator Irfan Siddiqui emphasised that the revival of a student Union should be drafted in a way that it must not become a hub of politics and must be above party lines. He said that the revival must be improvised in a way which is trendy and facilitate the students at its maximum. The Committee discussed various procedures of elections in order to save the concept of Union to be politicised. The committee chair deferred the voting on bill up till next meeting. The committee gave time to the members to thoroughly deliberate on the bill and submit appropriate amendments. The committee chair also sought a comprehensive report from the Ministry on the same. The committee also directed the HEC to give its view point on the matter. The matter of regularisation of the services of the daily wages teachers were also discussed in the meeting. The chairman committee extended the time for report and implementation by 2 weeks with a hope that the matter will be resolved with

special focus on all the teachers to be regularised as per the decision of the higher courts. It was also directed by the committee chair that the minimum daily wages given to the teachers be rps 35000/-. The committee chair said that the matter is pending since 2018 and non implementation of the courts orders may be characterised as negligence, irresponsible behaviour and non seriousness of the Ministry, and hoped that the matter may be solved at its earliest. On the matter of re-employment of contractual Montessori Teachers (BS-17) the committee was apprised that the ministry will accommodate contractual montessori teachers in upcoming projects under FDE as per feasibility with the posture that Ministry of Education and FDE stands by them in letter and spirit. The Committee also discussed the procedure, criteria and practice for rechecking of papers of various boards examination under the FBISE. The chairman FBISE briefed the committee that once a paper is evaluated it cannot be re-assessed. The chairman committee stressed whether this practice is in favour of students or not and further inquired on the international practice on this point, he said that the right of re assessment should not be taken away from the students.



### Uplift projects started

KANDAHAR (Agencies): The Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar province is set to witness the commencement of over 100 development projects. These projects, which include the construction of roads, canals, health centers, and water supply networks, are expected to significantly enhance the district's infrastructure. The Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department has recently initiated the implementation of these projects.

## The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 05, 1445 — Thursday, September 21, 2023

### IOM pledged to enhance aid

KABUL (Agencies): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has pledged to improve the quality of services provided to Afghan returnees. This commitment was expressed by Adnan Baghajati, the Program Officer at IOM in Afghanistan, during a meeting with Ghulam Nabi Dadkhel Stanikzai, an official from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. During the meeting, Stanikzai requested increased assistance and services for Afghan returnees.

# IEA responds to UN report on torture

## — says review false and propaganda

KABUL (Agencies): Responding to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) report on torture of detainees, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said Wednesday the assessment was not true and that it was "propaganda". In a post on X, the IEA's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, said the Islamic Emirate strongly rejects the claims. UNAMA said in the report, issued early Wednesday that it had documented more than 1,600 cases of human rights violations committed by authorities in Afghanistan during arrests and detentions of people. The report stated nearly 50% of the violations consisted of "torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treat-

ment."

In his post on X, Mujahid said: "In any military or civil institution of the Islamic Emirate, including detention rooms and prisons, it is not allowed to beat or torture anyone."

He stated that the IEA's supreme leader has prohibited beating and harassment in all areas of the system without a court order, and all institutions are obliged to comply with this order.

"In the prisons of the Islamic Emirate, there are all services for the prisoners, they are given training, they are given vocational education, they are provided with good facilities and no prisoners [are] facing violence," Mujahid added.

According to Mujahid, thousands of Afghans had been imprisoned in

Bagram, Pul-e-Charkhi and other provincial prisons under the supervision of UNAMA, during the former government's tenure, without having committed any crimes. He said these prisoners had been deprived of all human rights, and they were severely tortured.

"They were deprived of all human rights, and faced severe tortures and beatings. Now that the situation has changed supernaturally, there is no beating or harassment of the prisoners, all possibilities are available to them, and they are able to see their relatives," Mujahid said.

He said that spreading bad propaganda on this matter – against the Islamic system – "is a bad behavior that should be stopped."

## Minister visits Panjshir

PANJSHIR (Agencies): The Political Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and his accompanying delegation visited Panjshir province, where he spoke with many local leaders and urged political opponents to return to Afghanistan.

Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai attended a gathering with local authorities, district governors, scholars, ethnic influencers, and a significant number of people during this trip.

During the meeting, the governor of Panjshir stated that it is a matter of great pleasure for Afghans who live under the Islamic system to meet with its officials without any boundaries.

He stated that the establishment of Islamic government in Afghanistan is a precious blessing of the Almighty God granted to the Afghan people after 40 years of their struggle and sacrifices. He stated that all ethnic groups in Afghanistan are brothers who do not allow opponents to achieve their nefarious intentions and that people should not fall prey to their deceptions.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, for his part, expressed delight at his presence in Panjshir, a reputable region of the country. Panjshir is a province with a rich history in the country, as well as the lone hub of Jihad and uprising against the old Soviet Union, he claims.

He characterized Panjshir as an interesting and attractive topography, with waterfalls, delicious fruit, and high mountains among its natural attractions.

On behalf of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's leadership, he urged all political opponents to refrain from violence and return to Afghanistan to live in peace under Islamic government.

He stated that while the world and NATO acknowledged a military defeat in Afghanistan, they are now attempting to wage a political and intelligence war on the country.

Later, Mawlawi Qiyamuddin Hanif, leader of the Panjshir Ulama Council, Mawlawi Rahmatullah Hijat, head of the Panjshir Military Commission, and other local leaders talked and praised the visit of the Political Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Australia rejects visa requests

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Australian government has announced that it has rejected the asylum requests of 50,000 Afghan citizens who had applied for a humanitarian visa in the country after the fall of the Taliban regime in August 2021.

According to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Tuesday, in its latest report, it stated that out of 208,000 asylum requests made by Afghan citizens from the beginning of 2021 until now, approximately 50,000 applicants have been rejected by the Australian government.

Following the fall of Kabul in August 2021, about 208,000 Afghans have applied for humanitarian and refugee visas in Australia to flee the Taliban regime.

However, Australia has rejected over 50,000 visa applications for humanitarian reasons, leaving 144,000 others pending.

Between August 15, 2021, and August 31 of the current year, 13,612 humanitarian visas were issued to Afghan citizens as part of the offshore Humanitarian Program following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, the report said.

These statements come at a time when members of the Afghan community in Australia and former colleagues of the Australian forces in Afghanistan have expressed concerns about the high rejection rate of humanitarian visa applications and have called for reversing this decision.

# IE prioritizes electricity and energy production: Deputy PM



KABUL (Agencies): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, has inaugurated a solar project near the Naghlo Dam in the Sorubi district of Kabul province.

This project, supported by the Islamic Emirate and the private sector, aims to produce 10 megawatts of

solar electricity. With an investment of about 700 million Afghani, it is expected to be completed within a year. Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar emphasized that electricity is crucial for industry and the development of the country.

Recognizing this, the

Islamic Emirate has prioritized electricity production and encouraged investors to contribute to this sector.

Despite the project's relatively small scale considering the country's electricity needs, the Deputy Prime Minister highlighted its importance for achieving self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, he

announced plans to award a contract for the completion of a 500 kV project extending from Turkmenistan to the Afghan Invest Company in exchange for a mine.

This project is expected to facilitate the supply of hundreds of megawatts of electricity to the country, potentially saving \$200 million annually.

# Exhibition showcasing small companies helping IDPs



HERAT (TOLONews): An exhibition in Herat backed by an organization called Cordaid International was held to promote small companies that provide work for internally displaced persons.

Forty officials of small companies in Herat have received business training from the institute in order to develop their business.

"The main goal of the project is to create employment and provide work opportunities for the internally displaced youth," said Zalmay Esar, a local official of Cordaid.

People who have been trained in the program said it is beneficial for the scope

of their business.

"Our way of doing business was going on in a traditional way, but by learning new lessons, we can conduct our business in a modern way. It was very effective for women and there were great elements that we benefited from," said Lena Rawofi, an official of a small company.

"It has really positive effects and we can make progress and good activities through the project," said Safiullah Zia, a trader.

Hundreds of displaced people are reportedly employed in these small production companies.

Meanwhile, business

training helps the managers of these companies to progress in their work and to hire more employees.

"We see a number of women who have been supported and have progressed and even reached the point where they export to neighboring countries," said Behnaz Saljoqi, head of Women's Commerce and Industry for the western region.

"In competitive conditions, it is very valuable and useful to implement such programs for the presence of people who are engaged in business," said Hamedullah Khadem, head of the Chamber of Industry and Mines in Herat.

# 80,000 of Afghan carpets exported monthly: Union



KABUL (Agencies): The Union of Carpet Producers and Exporters in the western zone of the country says over 80,000 square meters of carpets are exported to world markets every month, and that the volume of exports has continued to grow.

The union officials, however, say they do not have direct access to the world markets, but Afghan carpets are sent to the markets of European and American countries through Pakistan.

"According to a survey conducted in 1402, it can be said that 80 to 100 thousand square meters of carpets are exported to different countries every month," said Mohammad Rafi Naderi, head of the union.

Carpets are usually exported through Pakistan to the US, Canada, England, European countries and some Asian countries, he said.

Meanwhile, carpet sellers in Herat city expressed concern saying that although the market for carpets has improved, they cannot send domestic hand-woven carpets to global markets directly.

According to them, Afghan carpets are still exported to the world markets as having been woven in neighboring countries, stressing that there was a need to promote Afghan carpets.

"Now traders don't come, now our goods go to Pakistan, and from Pakistan, our carpets are

being exported under the name of Pakistani goods abroad," said Abdul Khaliq Qaderi, a carpet seller.

Meanwhile, Herat's Department of Industry and Commerce says the process of exporting carpets abroad has improved recently, so efforts are being made to improve the carpet industry and export it to global markets.

"In each zone, places have been selected for better export, good control and packaging," said Bashir Mohammad Seerat, head of Herat Industry and Commerce Department.

According to him, due to the export of carpets from Herat, a facility is being considered where carpets can be packaged.

# Mental health among Afghan women deteriorating, says UN

KABUL (AP): The mental health of Afghan women, who have suffered under harsh measures imposed by the Taliban since taking power two years ago, has deteriorated across the country, according to a joint report from three UN agencies released Tuesday.

Nearly 70% reported that feelings of anxiety, isolation and depression had grown significantly worse between April and June, an increase from 57% in the preceding quarter, according to the report from U.N Women, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Afghan women were interviewed online, in-person and in group consultations as well as via individual telesurveys. In total, 592 Afghan women across 22 of Afghanistan's 34

provinces took part.

The Taliban, upon taking power in 2021 as US and NATO forces were pulling out of the country following two decades of war, promised a more moderate rule than during their previous period in power in the 1990s. But they have instead imposed harsh measures, many of them targeting women.

They have barred women from most areas of public life and work and banned girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade. They have prohibited Afghan women from working at local and non-governmental organizations. The ban was extended to employees of the United Nations in April.

Opportunities to study continued to shrink as community-based education by international organizations was banned and home-

based schooling initiatives were regularly shut down by the de facto authorities — a term used by the UN for the Taliban government.

Afghanistan is the only country in the world with restrictions on female education and the rights of Afghan women and children are on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Taliban spokesmen were not immediately available to comment on the report Tuesday, but in the past Taliban officials have cited Shariah, or Islamic, law to support their policies regarding women and girls.

Last month, Mohammad Sadiq Akif, the spokesman for the Taliban's Ministry of Vice and Virtue, said that women lose value if men can see their uncovered faces in public.

The report found that

81% of women had not engaged at all with local Taliban authorities on issues important to them between April and June 2023. This finding was consistent with engagement levels in the previous quarter, said the report.

Forty-six percent of women said international recognition of the Taliban government should not happen under any circumstances, while 50% warned that recognition should only occur under specific conditions contingent on improving women's rights. These include restoring education and employment and forming an inclusive government.

The women expressed concern that recognition would only encourage the Taliban government to continue becoming stricter in their policies and practices against women and girls.

# Diplomatic town to be constructed near Darul Aman Palace

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has announced plans to construct a diplomatic town near the historic Darulaman Palace in Afghan Capital City.

The project, which was suspended in 2013 due to various reasons, is expected to resume soon.

The diplomatic town is intended to provide a secure and comfortable residential location for foreign diplomats and representatives.

The project will cover 175 acres of land behind the Darulaman Palace.

The deputy minister of urban development and housing, Sheikh Madar Ali Karimi Bamyani, met with the deputy head of the



security department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eng. Abdul Jalil Rahmati, to discuss the project.

Rahmati requested the cooperation and assistance of the urban development ministry in this regard.

Bamyani assured that the ministry will support the project and provide the necessary technical and logistical assistance.

# Ex-army officer mysteriously murdered in Kandahar province

KANDAHAR (Khaama Press): A former government army officer in Kandahar province was mysteriously murdered.

According to sources, the individual is identified as Khalilullah Akhlaqi, and his body was discovered on Sunday, showing signs of stab wounds to the throat and body.

While the motives and perpetrators of the former officer's murder are unclear, it is mentioned that Taliban forces had detained Khalilullah in the 10th district of Kandahar city.

The provincial administration office in Kandahar province attributes the murder of this former officer to personal enmities. It states that their forces transferred Khalilullah Akhlaqi to a

hospital for treatment when he was injured.

Akhlaqi hailed from the Gereshek district of Kandahar province but resided in the Ainak Mine area, the province's centre.

Meanwhile, this month alone, two other former military personnel were killed by unknown assailants in Takhar province.

This comes as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that over the past two years, more than 200 former government military personnel have been extra-judicially killed, a claim disputed by the Taliban administration, which asserts that, as per the general amnesty declared, everyone is immune from prosecution.





# Pakistan’s peace overtures to India have been met with negativity: FM Jilani

NEW YORK (Agencies): Interim Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Wednesday said Pakistan’s “positive outreach and peace overtures”, including the opening of the Kartarpur corridor for visa-free visits from the Indian Sikh community, have been met with negativity.

“Pakistan desires peaceful and cooperative neighbourly ties with India,” he said in a speech at the Asia Society conference in New York. This is one of the several events that the foreign minister is attending in the lead-up to the United Nations General Assembly. He and caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar are there to represent Pakistan.

The foreign minister said that India’s illegal actions in India-occupied Jammu Kashmir and the “abhorrent human rights violations” against innocent Kashmiris at the hands of Indian security forces have “further deteriorated relations” between the two countries. “Worsening religious extremism in India, especially against Muslims has further complicated the situation,” he stated.

Jilani said that in such a complex environment, “India’s belligerence and anti-Pakistan theatrics for domestic elections” are taking the two countries further away from the objectives of regional peace and stability and calling for peaceful constructive dialogues on all outstanding issues in Jammu and Kashmir. FM Jilani stated that Pakistan had the greatest stake in an Afghanistan that has peace within and with its regional and international partners. “This objective lies at the heart of our efforts to directly engage with the Afghan interim government,

as well as cooperate with [the] international community on Afghanistan,” he said. “We are hosting close to four million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and this is something we have been hosting for almost four decades. Afghan authorities and the international community continue to work to ensure that these Afghan refugees, whenever the situation settles down, go back to contribute to the economic development of their own country, which is Afghanistan,” Jilani stated.

“This is something that we feel really proud of because the number of refugees that we have hosted over the last several decades, that is perhaps unprecedented anywhere in the world,” he added. “We also share the international community’s concern over the human rights situation in Afghanistan, especially issues related to women’s rights, girls’ education, and women’s employment,” the interim FM stated.

He stated that the Pakistan government will continue to raise the issue with the Afghan administration but suggested that the international community should “delink aid from political considerations”. “We believe that instead of coercive measures, engaging the Afghan interim government is much more likely to deliver results. Equally important is to avert a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. For that purpose I think delinking aid from political consideration holds the key in this regard,” he stated.

On terrorism, he stressed that Pakistan condemned all forms of it, including state terrorism and state-sponsored violence against religious minorities. However, the FM stated

that “we (Pakistan) reject any attempt to politicise the issue of terrorism by linking it with certain countries, communities, region and religion”. “The entire global community is the victim and we have to act together to uproot this menace,” he said.

Speaking in reference to the cross-border violence from Afghanistan, Jilani asserted that Pakistan’s biggest threat is from the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) who are using Afghan soil to launch attacks against Pakistan. “We remain closely engaged with the Afghan interim administration on this issue, while we are committed to fighting and defeating the terrorists,” he said. “We wish to highlight that the terrorist outfits trying to gain a foothold in Afghanistan should be treated as a threat to the neighbourhood and the entire international community,” he added.

While speaking on the Ukraine war, FM Jilani stated that Pakistan’s position was dictated by Pakistan’s “belief in [an] amicable resolution of conflicts and respect for the UN principles and territorial integrity and sovereignty”. “We will continue to play a constructive role to help end the war and mitigate the suffering of the Ukrainian people,” he said.

“We hope that peace will prevail to allow people of both Russia and Ukraine to enjoy its dividends,” he added. He also stated that mitigating the impacts of the Ukraine-Russia crisis on global food and energy security is critical and hoped for early resumption of the black sea grain initiative.



WEST BANK: Palestinians are in grief around the dead body of Yousaf Rizwan at a hospital in Khan Younas city after killed by Israel forces

## Court halts Arshad Sharif murder case proceedings

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A local court has sent the Arshad Sharif murder case file to the record room, halting further proceedings due to the absence of the witnesses.

Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah, in his written decision of the previous hearing conducted Wednesday, observed that the court had received the investigation report of Section 512 of the Pakistan Penal Court on March 16 in the Arshad Sharif murder case.

Subsequently the court summoned the witnesses on April 5 to record their statements, but none appeared, the verdict added. The court further said that the witnesses were not interested in recording their statements as they did not appear despite 15 chances were given to the prosecution to submit their statements.

Keeping the situation in mind, the court maintained that it stopped further proceedings in the case and the prosecution might file another application for hearing as per the appearance of the witnesses. The file of the Arshad Sharif murder case was being sent to the record room till further orders, it added.

## Meeting of parties with ECP Oct 4

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to settle the code of conducts regarding upcoming general elections has convened a meeting with political parties on October 4.

The meeting was aimed at discussing the code of conduct specified in Section 233 of the Election Act 2017, for the upcoming general elections. According to the ECP spokesperson, a draft of the code of conduct has been provided to political party leaders in advance, allowing them to provide feedback more effectively during the consultation.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will not allot election symbol to a political party failing to submit its financial statement, sources said. All registered political parties are bound to submit their annual financial reports, sources said. The ECP had earlier directed the political parties to submit their consolidated financial statements for the fiscal year 2022-23 by August 29.

It is pertinent to mention that Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar rejected any possibility of delay in holding general elections due to ‘security threats’ at Pakistan’s borders. In an international media outlet interview, the caretaker prime minister expressed the confidence to overcome security threats at the country’s borders and complete the electoral process.

“Although there is an alarming situation on our western and eastern frontiers, wherein the required response mechanism is being enhanced, we are sure that we will control the situation and complete the electoral process,” he said. He affirmed that measures would be taken to ensure that the election process proceed smoothly without disruptions and emphasised the commitment to upholding the democratic process in Pakistan.

## Workers’ Welfare Fund (Amendment) Act SC accepts plea for early hearing of petitions

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court (SC) Wednesday accepted a plea for an early hearing of the petitions against the Workers’ Welfare Fund (Amendment) Act while in another case, it upheld the judgement of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) against the non-appointment of a Naib Qasid in a village council of Dir.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa heard various petitions. While accepting the pleas for an early hearing of petitions against the Workers’ Welfare Fund (Amendment) Act, the CJP reprimanded the lawyer for not being prepared. “If you want to talk about irrelevant things here, we will fine you. You didn’t come prepared. When the judge is telling the case, you are interrupting. Be respectful at least,” the chief justice said to the lawyer.

The Supreme Court also heard a petition against the non-appointment of a Naib Qasid in a Dir village council and disposed it of while upholding the decision of the PHC. “When no appointment was made, how was your right affected? If the government does not make any appointment after advertising the job, it does not affect anyone’s right. It’s quite possible that the government does not make the appointment due to the lack of budget,” the CJP remarked.

SC disposes of post-arrest bail plea of murder accused The Supreme Court (SC) Wednesday disposed of the post-arrest bail of Daniyal Adil alias Zahir Shah, who was nominated in a murder case. “A case is registered against the accused in Islamabad under Section 302,” the petitioner’s lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat told the court.

“The incident took place in 1997. The accused remained an absconder for 25 years. When he surrendered in 2022, his bail was cancelled and he again became an absconder,” he further told the court. “He was subsequently arrested and filed a post-arrest bail plea which was disposed of by the Islamabad High Court (IHC),” he

added. “What is the position of the trial? How many witnesses are there in the trial?” Justice Sardar Tariq inquired.

“There were only two witnesses in the trial. One has passed away, and the other did not testify against the accused,” the lawyer for the accused told the court. “You should have gone to the trial court then and filed a plea for acquittal. You came to the High Court and then the Supreme Court instead of the Sessions Court,” Justice Sardar Tariq said to the accused’s lawyer. “Earlier too you came to the Supreme Court, and your case was remanded back. Now you have come again. The court disposes of the post-arrest bail on merit,” the judge ruled. A two-member bench, consisting of Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Musarrat Hilali, conducted heard the case.

The Supreme Court (SC) Wednesday disposed of a petition seeking the restoration of an employee of the National Database Registration Authority (Nadra) in the woman harassment case on withdrawal grounds. “The Nadra has legal powers. A writ cannot be filed in this case. The Lahore High Court (LHC) has already disposed of your petition,” CJP Justice Qazi Faez Isa remarked. “The dismissal from the job was on the basis of allegations only. There is no evidence,” the petitioner’s lawyer told the court. “What was the matter, and on what basis was the inquiry held?” the CJP inquired. “It was said that a WhatsApp message was sent to a female customer, but no screenshot was presented,” the lawyer told the court.

“According to the inquiry report, you have admitted to sending messages,” the court said to the lawyer. “Do not reject our petition. Let us withdraw it,” the lawyer pleaded with the court. It is to be noted here that a junior executive officer of Nadra in Sialkot was sacked for sending WhatsApp messages to a female customer. A three-member bench, headed by CJP Qazi Faez Isa, conducted the hearing.

## KP CM directs completion of hydro power projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 17th board meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hydel Development Fund (HDF) was held here on Wednesday with the caretaker Chief Minister

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Finance, Ahmed Rasool Bangash, Advisor to CM on Energy and Power, Dr. Sarfaraz Ali Shah, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Qureshi, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments and other board members attended the meeting.

Besides reviewing progress on the decisions of

the last board meeting, the forum accorded conditional approval to the proposed funding for hydel development projects for the fiscal year 2023-24.

The Chief Minister on this occasion, directed the quarters concerned to take necessary steps in order to operationalize the province’s own Transmission and Grid Company adding that appointment of the chief executive officer of the company be ensured as early as possible for the purpose. He termed the establishment of Provincial government’s own Transmission and Grid Company as a good move to improve the power supply system in the province and said that its operationalization will substantially reduce the province’s dependence

on WAPDA infrastructure.

Azam Khan further directed for necessary steps to immediately make the newly completed hydro power projects functional, and added that a feasible strategy in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders be devised for the purpose. He remarked that public money had been spent on these projects, and their benefits should reach the public without any delay adding that these hydro power stations, once operationalized, will not only help a great deal to reduce the energy crisis but will also increase the provincial revenues. He also directed the relevant authorities to ensure the completion of all ongoing hydro power projects within the stipulated time lines.

## Saudi Chief of General Staff visits Naval HQs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the General Staff Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad and Called-on Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including bilateral collaboration and regional security were discussed. The visiting dignitary appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy’s efforts and commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in the region. Both dignitaries appreciated the successful conduct of PN-RSNF Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV that was recently held at Al Jubail and reaffirmed the resolve to further enhance bilateral defence ties. The visit of Chief of the General Staff Saudi Arabian Armed Forces will further enhance bilateral defence collaboration between the two countries.

## UN chief calls for ‘rescue plan’

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A “rescue plan” for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must now result in policies, budgets and investment to ensure a more just, equitable and green future by 2030, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has said.

He was speaking at the conclusion of the two-day SDG Summit at UN Headquarters, where world leaders adopted a political declaration to ramp up progress to achieve the 17 goals, which are in danger of derailment due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises. Goals that address hunger, health, biodiversity, strong institutions, pollution, and peaceful societies are all off-track.

“Now is the time to lift the declaration’s words off the page, and invest in development at scale like never before,” he said. The political declaration includes a commitment to financing for developing countries and clear support for an SDG Stimulus of at least \$500 billion annually. The Secretary-General urged countries to make the most of the momentum from the Summit, presenting a “development-to-do list” for the way forward.

He stressed the need to transform support for the SDG Stimulus “into real investments in developing countries.” In this regard, he called for establishing a Leaders Group that will develop clear steps to get funds flowing before the end of 2024. Leaders must turn commitments made at the Summit into concrete policies, budgets, investment portfolios and actions.

## MDCAT issue: Writ seeks judicial commission

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ has been filed before Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking set up a judicial commission against malpractices during Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) especially leaking paper via different electronic gadgets.

The counsel Asif Ali Shah advocate has filed a writ petition on behalf of Ayesha. The petition stated that candidates had used Bluetooth devices during MDCAT arranged by ETEA for leaking and cheating in the test.

The writ added that cheating via one procedure/technique in different examination center shows

the involvement of a single gang in the malpractices. At least, cheater candidates are caught for malpractice while the majority safely escaped.

The petitioner argued that more than two thousand candidates had obtained than 180 marks for first in history which shall be taken as an indicator for malpractices.

The court shall order constitution of judicial inquiry and stern actions against culprits involved in the malpractices because papers are leaked in most of the tests while now a new technique is invented for cheating, the writ pleaded.

The petition further requested to ban cheater candidates from sitting in

every and each test while argued stoppage MDCAT results till disposal of writ.

Meanwhile, PHC Bar Association condemned murder of Arbab Ghulam Kasi advocate and demanded arrest of murderers on priority basis.

PHC Bar Association president Tariq Afridi and general secretary Lajbar Khan advocates said that killing of senior lawyers can’t be fulfilled within decades. Because Arbab Ghulam Kasi advocate has great efforts for rule of law and supremacy of constitution. PHC Bar Association argued law enforcement agencies to arrest culprits involved in the murder and implement Lawyer Protection Act in its true spirit.

## Iran’s parliament approves ‘hijab bill’

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran’s parliament has passed a new “hijab and chastity” bill that lays out punishment for people, especially women, who violate the country’s mandatory dress code rules. On Wednesday, lawmakers approved the three-year duration of the legislation on a trial basis, with 152 voting in favour, 34 against, and seven abstaining.

The Guardian Council, a powerful oversight body consisting of clerics and legal experts, would need to approve the bill before it can be implemented. The implementation of the legislation, which had been in the works for months, was not put to a parliament vote. It was approved last month by a special committee consisting of 10 lawmakers.

At the time, lawmakers invoked an article of the constitution that permits the formation of a committee to approve legislation for

“experimental” implementation. Wednesday’s vote in parliament only decided the duration. The legislation defines new frameworks for how Iranians, especially women, need to conform to the country’s mandatory dress code that has been in place since shortly after the 1979 revolution.

For women, unacceptable covering has been defined as “revealing or tight clothing, or clothing that shows parts of the body lower than the neck or above the ankles or above the forearms”, according to the latest version of the legislation released in local media. For men, it has been defined as “revealing clothing that shows parts of the body lower than the chest or above the ankles, or shoulders”.

It also sets new punishments for people who are found to be in violation of the rules. Totalling more than 70 articles, the bill defines an

array of financial penalties for hijab violations, which could be ramped up to prison terms if found to be done in an organised manner and in contact with “foreign governments, networks, media, groups or organisations” or people affiliated with them. Businesses and business owners will also be exposed to punishments, including hefty fines, bans on leaving the country, or prison terms if they are found to be propagating “nudity, lack of chastity or bad covering” in any way.

The bill also details new duties for a host of government, law enforcement and military organisations to make sure they and their staff fully comply with the mandatory hijab rules and do their utmost to prevent instances of violation or identify them. Last month, a group of United Nations experts said the hijab bill “could be described as a form of gender apartheid”.

## Notorious blackmailers’ reign of terror reaches KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A group of blackmailers notorious for their tactics targeting administrative officers, police officers, judicial officers, and politicians across the nation has expanded its operations into the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Led by the infamous Uzma Shehzadi, this group has been the subject of numerous police reports (FIRs) in Punjab for their audacious schemes.

Their latest victim is a Government Officer in Peshawar, who fell prey to Uzma Shehzadi’s manipulative tactics. She managed to ensnare the officer and develop illicit relations with him. However, the situation took a sinister turn when they met at a well-known guest house in Peshawar. What was initially consensual contact between them turned into a nightmare

when Uzma Shehzadi, in an alarming twist, called the police to the scene, claiming she had been raped.

Upon the arrival of law enforcement, the government officer found himself in a precarious situation. He attempted to explain to the police that she was, in fact, his wife. However, the situation became more complicated as it was Uzma Shehzadi herself who had summoned the authorities. During the ensuing chaos, Uzma Shehzadi demanded a staggering 10 lakh rupees from the officer as part of her extortion scheme, while the officer, fearing for his reputation and career, offered 5 lakh rupees.

In a strategic maneuver, the authorities astutely grasped the nuances of the situation. Instead of immediately filing a (FIR), they delved into the matter. It soon became apparent that the issue in question

was not one of rape but rather an illicit relationship.

Armed with this understanding, the authorities swiftly took action. Both the accused, including Uzma Shehzadi, and her accomplice, were apprehended, marking a significant development in this case. This unexpected twist not only unveiled the truth but also emphasized the importance of thorough examination before legal proceedings.

Uzma Shehzadi’s cunning exploits have left a trail of ruined careers and departmental inquiries in her wake. She has a history of similar incidents, with multiple arrests in cases of this nature. It is imperative that decisive action be taken to halt the operations of this blackmailing group, which has continued to plague public servants and officials throughout the country.