

Nawaz, Shehbaz blamed
LAHORE (PPI): During an informal talk with journalists in an anti-terrorism court (ATC) of Islamabad, former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi Friday held Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif and PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif responsible for the inflated electricity bills. "Today, the middle class has vanished due to inflation," he said.

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Kashmir key to India-Pakistan peace, says PM

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday called on the UN Security Council (UNSC) to secure the implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir, which, he said, was the key to peace between Pakistan and India.

"India has evaded implementation of the Security Council's resolutions which call for the 'final disposition' of Jammu and Kashmir to be decided by its people through UN-supervised plebiscite," he told the UN General Assembly in its iconic hall with several world leaders, top diplomats and officials in the audience.

In his maiden address to the 193-member Assembly's high-level session, PM Kakar also focused on a range of issues, including the cross-border terrorist attacks against Pakistan by Afghanistan-based TTP; the Palestine tragedy; the threat posed by far-right groups like Hindutva-inspired extremists; Islamophobia; global economic crises stemming from Covid, conflict and climate change; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Pakistan's efforts to recover from its economic challenges, and the UNSC reform. "Development depends on peace," the prime minister said, adding, "Pakistan desires peaceful and productive relations with all our neighbours, including India."

Since August 5, 2019, PM Kakar said India, with 900,000 troops in the occupied Kashmir, imposed extended lockdowns and curfews; jailed all the genuine Kashmir leaders; violently suppressed peaceful protests; resorted to extra-judicial killings of innocent Kashmiris in fake "encounters" and so-called "cordons and search operations", and imposed collective punishments, destroying entire villages. "Access to occupied Kashmir, demanded by the UN High Commission for Human

Rights and over a dozen Special Rapporteurs, has been denied by New Delhi," he told delegates from around the world.

In this regard, the prime minister called for the reinforcement of the UN Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), stressing that global powers should convince New Delhi to accept Pakistan's offer of mutual restraint on strategic and conventional weapons. Pakistan, he said, shared the concerns of international community with respect to Afghanistan, its first priority being to prevent and counter all terrorism from and within that neighbouring country.

"Yet," the prime minister said, "we advocate continued humanitarian assistance to a destitute Afghan population in which Afghan girls and women are the most vulnerable; as well as revival of the Afghan economy and implementation of the connectivity projects with Central Asia. "Pakistan condemns the cross-border terrorist attacks against Pakistan by the TTP, Da'esh and other groups operating from Afghanistan," the prime minister said, adding, "We have sought Kabul's support and cooperation to prevent these attacks. However, we are also taking necessary measures to end this externally encouraged terrorism."

He told the international community that Pakistan's government was committed to rapid economic recovery -- stabilize its foreign exchange reserves and currency; expand domestic revenues and mobilize significant domestic and external investment. To that end, he said, Pakistan had established a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to expedite investment decisions, with 28 projects identified in priority sectors - agriculture, mining, energy and IT - for implementation in col-

laboration with the country's partners.

The second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said, had been initiated covering railway, infrastructure and manufacturing projects. Noting the far-reaching commitments made at the SDG summit to implement the 17 anti-poverty goals, he called for ensuring implementation of the "SDG Stimulus"; the re-channelling of unused Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) for development; the expansion of concessional lending by the multilateral development banks; and the resolution of the debt problems of the 59 countries in debt distress.

Pakistan, he added, also looked forward to the fulfillment of the climate change commitments made at COP28 by the developed world: to provide over \$100 billion in annual climate finance; allocate at least half of such finance for adaptation in developing countries; operationalize the Fund and funding arrangements for Loss and Damage; and accelerate their carbon emission mitigation targets to "keep alive" the goal of restricting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade.

Pointing out that Pakistan is one of the countries worst affected by climate change, the prime minister said that the epic last summer's floods submerged a third of the country, killed 1700 and displaced over 8 million people, destroyed vital infrastructure and caused over \$30 billion in damage to its economy. Gratified by the commitments of over \$10.5 billion for Pakistan's comprehensive plan for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with resilience - the 4RF Plan - at the Geneva Conference last January, he said that specific projects were being submitted to ensure it timely funding and execution.

(Continued on Back Page)

Contempt of court against IGP Sindh: PHC seeks record

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered submission of record in Contempt of Court (COC) plea against Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh for arresting former opposition leader at provincial assembly Hafeem Adil Sheikh, on Friday.

The counsel Nauroz Khan Advocate argued that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activist Hafeem Adil Sheikh was by Sindh's police despite have obtained transit bail from PHC. He argued that arresting the petitioner lies in the jurisdiction of contempt of court. The counsel argued to initiate contempt of court proceedings against IG Sindh police.

PHC Justice Sahibzada Asadullah ordered Advocate General to produce record on next hearing while adjourned the petition till 2nd October. PHC grants status quo: PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Arshad Ali and Abdul Shakoor has granted status quo against seizure of minerals by Licensing Authority while ordered Appellate Tribunal to decide the dispute within two months.

The counsel Daras Khan advocate argued that Abdullah Jan and Ali Mar Jan had challenged mining and minerals advertisement as it is illegal because Schedule-7 assure auction in merged districts in open session. The petitioners had invested millions of rupees in infrastructure development and the contract should be granted to applicants without auction as per Schedule 7, the counsel added.

Earlier, PHC had forwarded the case Licensing Authority to decide the case within two months but the authority allowed auction and ordered seizure of excavated minerals on 9th August 2023, the stated. He argued that PHC has been approached after passage of two months and Appellate Tribunal didn't enlisted the cases. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Abdul Shakoor granted status quo while ordered Appellate Tribunal to decide the dispute within two months.

Shujaat 'advises' PML-N, PPP to avoid conflict

LAHORE (Agencies): Veteran politician and PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat has advised his former coalition partners — PPP and PML-N — to avoid conflict, saying "this is not in the country's interest".

The senior politician's remarks came during a meeting with former president Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday, during which the two held discussions surrounding the current political and economic situation in Pakistan. Shujaat, whose party was a part of the previous coalition government in Islamabad, expressed concerns regarding the ongoing political tensions between the two major political parties.

Responding to the elderly politico, Zardari said his party has not done anything like that. He added that his party is talking in

accordance with the Constitution and ground realities, and not to engage in confrontation with anyone. He emphasised that the rhetoric and confrontational stance between both political entities was not conducive to the country's stability. Shujaat urged Zardari regarding the importance of maintaining a more cooperative approach.

He also conveyed his intention to speak with PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif about the need to avoid unnecessary political hostilities. It is worth recalling that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari recently alleged that the 2013 election in Punjab was manipulated by certain elements, including former Inter-Services Intelligence chief General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, and a

political party. He also lamented the lack of a level-playing field.

The former foreign minister's remarks led to a war of words between the leaders of the coalition parties that had recently governed the country together following the ouster of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, whose government was sent home following a no-confidence motion against him. In response to Bilawal's call for a level playing field, former defense minister Khawaja Asif questioned how such a field could be established if it wasn't already prepared. The political duel between the two parties has added to the already tense political atmosphere in Pakistan, which particularly holds significance as the country is set to witness the general elections in January next year.

Israel on cusp of region-reshaping peace with S Arabia: Netanyahu

NEW YORK (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Friday he believed his country was on the cusp of peace with Saudi Arabia, predicting it could be clinched by US President Joe Biden and reshape the Middle East.

Yet, amid urging by Riyadh and Washington that the Palestinians be included in the diplomacy, Netanyahu told the United Nations General Assembly in New York that Palestinians should not be allowed to veto the regional dealmaking. Expectations that Israel might normalise relations with Saudi Arabia, the home of Islam's two holiest shrines, have been ratcheted up this week. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said a deal was getting closer by the day and Netanyahu and Biden held a long-awaited meeting to discuss the prospects.

Netanyahu described as a precursor the 2020 normalisation accords between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, known as the Abraham

Accords and sponsored by then-US President Donald Trump. "There's no question: The Abraham Accords heralded the dawn of a new age of peace," he said. "I believe we're on the cusp of a more dramatic breakthrough: A historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia."

Such a deal would likely require broad support among US lawmakers — a tall order with a presidential election in 2024. While crediting Trump for the previous deal, Netanyahu made clear he hoped the current administration would clinch this one. "I believe we can achieve peace with Saudi Arabia with the leadership of President Biden," he said.

Though he voiced willingness to seek some accommodation with the Palestinians — whose statehood goals are ruled out by his hard-right government — Netanyahu said: "We must not give the Palestinians a veto over new peace treaties with Arab states." On Thursday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told the same forum: "Whoever

thinks peace in the Middle East is possible before our people achieved their full right is delusional."

Netanyahu, who has often used the UN podium to warn against Iran, described his country's arch-foe as the "fly in the ointment" that would try to wreck a deal with Saudi Arabia. But he cast normalisation as already in the works, citing the now three-year-old air corridor for Israeli carriers over Saudi territory and an ambitious plan, announced by Biden this month, to make both countries part of a rail and shipping network that would run from India to the Mediterranean Sea.

He illustrated the latter with a red line he drew across a regional map — a play on a 2012 UN speech in which he used a marker to draw a proposed "red line" for Iran's nuclear drive. "Today I bring this marker to show a great blessing," he said, deeming normalisation with Saudi Arabia "an extraordinary change, a monumental change, another pivot of history."

The Frontier Post

AC summons Raja Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD (INP): The NAB has started to implement the direction of the Supreme Court regarding the restoration of NAB cases. The NAB has submitted a list of 80 cases to the Registrar Office, out of which 26 references have been submitted to the accountability courts. The Islamabad Accountability Court has issued summons to Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf and PPP leader Rubina Khalid.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the 78th session of United Nations General Assembly.

COAS, Saudi general discuss bilateral ties

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A high-level defense delegation led by Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, according to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) information on Friday.

The military's public relations wing said the meeting discussed the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia including defense cooperation. The delegation also met the chairman joint chiefs of staff committee, the ISPR said.

Earlier, the Saudi delegation met the Pakistan Air Force chief in Islamabad. Leading a high-level delegation, the Saudi Chief of General Staff expressed his admiration for the exceptional progress made by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), particularly in the area of indigenisation.

The delegation also lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel during the meeting whereas the delegation also underscored discussion on several key areas of mutual interest, defence co-operation and geo-strategic situation, a PAF news release said.

Khosa's PPP membership suspended

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Friday suspended the party membership of seasoned politician and former Punjab governor Senator Sardar Latif Khosa. The former senator was also kicked out of the PPP's central executive committee (CEC).

According to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Secretary General Nayyar Bukhari, the decision was taken after lawyer Khosa failed to reply to the show-cause notice issued to him by the party last week.

On September 14, the seasoned leader was issued a show-cause notice for defending/pleading and representing the head of another political party without prior approval of the party's leadership.

"You being a member of Central Executive Committee of Pakistan [Peoples Party] are defending/pleading/representing a head of another political party without prior approval of leadership in corruption cases in which he has been convicted and in a case against him under official secret Act, while delivering a speech in lawyers function you criticized the state policy regarding cipher," said the notice served to Mr Khosa.

Nawaz reiterates his demand for accountability

Shehbaz says no change in Sharif's return plan

LONDON (Agencies): Self-exiled former premier Mian Nawaz Sharif reiterated his demand for accountability in an important consultation meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) bigwigs held here in London on Friday.

PML-N President Mian Shehbaz Sharif, party's Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Ishaq Dar and other leaders attended the meeting in the party office in London. Mian Nawaz Sharif presided over the meeting and said that under a conspiracy, a group of immature politicians was imposed on Pakistan which brought the country to the brink of ruin in the past.

PML-N Supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif said that all the characters involved in this conspiracy have to be brought to justice as Pakistan cannot develop without accountability. The PML-N supremo said that former General Qamar Bajwa, former General Faiz Hameed, former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, Justice Khosa and Justice Azmat Saeed are accused and should be accountable for their acts.

In the consultation meeting Abid Sher Ali, Mian Javed Latif, Talal Chaudhary, Burjess Tahir, and Sheikh Rohail Asghar were present in London while the leaders of the PML-N including Hamza Shehbaz Sharif, Saiful Mulok Khokhar, and Rana Sanaulah from Lahore also joined the meeting through video link. Before the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz talked to the media outside the London office and said there was no change in the return plan of Mian Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan on Oct 21.

Meanwhile, the former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday claimed that

there was 'no change' in the return plan of his brother and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif as the latter is set to land in Pakistan on October 21.

Shehbaz Sharif rushed back to London merely hours after he returned to the country from the UK, a development that gave way to rumours regarding a possible change in travel plans of Nawaz Sharif. The former premier left London earlier in the week after spending several weeks here, but upon reaching Lahore, made a sudden plan to return in order to meet with his elder brother, party supremo Nawaz Sharif.

"Qamar Bajwa, Faiz Hameed, Saqib Nisar and Azmat Saeed are criminals of 22-crore people", he alleged. "The country will not be able to move forward until the characters involved in the conspiracy are brought to justice," he said. Meanwhile, Shehbaz Sharif — while talking to journalists — said that he returned to London on directions of Nawaz Sharif. "No change was made in return plan of PML-N supremo," he added. In response to a question, Shehbaz said he never visited Gujranwala and did not hold a meeting.

PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said on Friday that there were no alterations in former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's return plans. Speaking to a private television channel in London, Ms Nawaz said: "The preparations to welcome Nawaz Sharif to the country are going on with great verve. We will give a great response to those who are doing propaganda regarding Nawaz Sharif's return."

All parties to be provided level-playing field: Solangi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Friday reiterated the caretaker government's commitment for providing a level-playing field to all registered political parties during the general elections.

Addressing a news conference alongside Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, the minister assured impartial treatment to any political group during the election campaign. Solangi said the caretaker government's tenure was extended a little bit due to the approval of fresh census results by the Council of Common Interest.

He pointed to Article 51 (5) of the Constitution, stating that elections would be held in line with the recently approved census after delimitation of the constituencies. The minister disclosed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was actively engaged in the delimitation process and announced that preliminary results of the process would be announced on November 27, with the final results set for release on November 30.

In accordance with the Election Act, he said the ECP would have to give 54 days to political parties for their election campaign. Solangi welcomed the announcement by the ECP that elections would take place in the first week of January, which ended propaganda against the caretaker government.

As regards the criticisms

of Fawad Hassan Fawad, who served in the civil service for over 35 years, the minister highlighted that Fawad had worked with various governments. He stressed that civil servants had no power over choosing their assignments, and that unfounded criticism of someone who had been unjustly imprisoned was unfair.

Solangi also clarified that Fawad Hassan Fawad had no political affiliations. Responding to a query, the minister expressed his commitment to pursuing justice in the Jan Muhammad Mahar murder case, noting that he had personally raised the matter with the interim chief minister of Sindh. Solangi said the caretaker government had nothing to do with Nawaz Sharif's matter, adding his cases were in the court, and it was inappropriate to speculate on the issue.

He stressed that all citizens in the country were entitled to their fundamental rights, highlighting the importance of student organizations as a pillar of democracy. The minister underscored the role of the independent and empowered Election Commission in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections, with the caretaker government requiring ECP approval for transfer postings.

Solangi said government was actively working to address the issues of workers in newspapers and TV channels. He confirmed the lawful arrest of journalist Khalid Jamil by the FIA and emphasized adherence to

constitutional and legal procedures, including producing individuals before the court within 24 hours. Solangi said the caretaker government would not interfere in judicial matters. To another query, he said the institutions were functioning freely and if anybody had any issue, they could reach out the relevant forums.

Caretaker government to create conducive environment for elections: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that the government will create a conducive environment for general elections. During a meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqir, he said the caretaker dispensation will perform its duties according to the constitution and no one will be discriminated.

In the meeting, they discussed important issues including conducting free, fair, and transparent elections and providing facilities to the media during the election process. The minister said that conducting free, fair, and transparent elections was the common responsibility of the relevant institutions.

He said that media was part and parcel of various stages of the election process as it acted as a bridge for the Election Commission of Pakistan. Authentic reporting in elections was most important to ensure access to accurate information to the public, Solangi maintained.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi meeting with Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar at CM House.

Interim CM approves joint operation against dacoits

KARACHI (PPI) Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar presiding over the 28th meeting of the provincial APEX committee approved the launching of a comprehensive joint operation with Pak Army/Rangers against dacoits in the Riverine areas of Sukkur and Larkana divisions and also decided to curb street crimes, drug mafia and operation of illegal hydrants in Karachi and to start halted construction work on Ghotki-Kashmore bridge on River Indus.

"The elimination of dacoits, and curbing of street criminals, drug mafia, and illegal operations hydrants would build the confidence of the people in the government and its institutions and organization," the CM said and directed the IG police to improve the overall condition of the police stations in the city.

The CM expressed his disappointment and dismay that the dacoits were not allowing the construction of the Ghotki-Kashmore bridge, therefore work has been stopped. At this Corepos Commander Karachi Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar directed Rangers and the police to reach the spot immediately and provide security to the people working there.

The meeting was held at House and was attended by provincial ministers - Brig (rtd) Haris Nawaz, Omer

Soomro and Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Advocate General Hassan Akbar, DG Rangers Major Gen Azhar Waqas, PSCM Hassan Naqvi, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, IG Police Riffat Mukhtar, Adl Ig Karachi Khadim Rind, Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput and others.

Kidnapping for ransom: Minister Home Brig (rtd) Haris Nawaz and IG Police Riffat Mukhtar briefing on law and order, particularly kidnapping for ransom said that overall, 220 persons were kidnapped in 2023, including 128 in Larkana, 46 in Sukkur, 42 in Karachi three Hyderabad and one in Shaheed Benazirabad rangers. Out of 220 kidnapped persons, 210 have been recovered, including 121 in Larkana, 41 in Sukkur, all 42 in Karachi, and three Hyderabad regions.

At present, only 10 persons, five each in Sukkur and Larkana regions have to be recovered for which police were working. The IG said that there were hardly 50 to 60 notorious dacoits and the rest were their tribesmen living there. He added that the lists of the dacoits have been prepared to crush them in the operation.

Operation Plan: The meeting was told that the joint operation with the Rangers/Pak Army had been planned. Rangers have been deployed along

with Police for operations and a crackdown on organized Weapon smuggling has been started. The first cache of military-grade weapons has been seized at Ghotki. The intelligence agencies are also supporting the operation, the meeting was told.

The meeting was told that sophisticated military-grade weapons such as Sniper Rifles, Grenade launchers, Mortars, night vision devices, and drones were required for the operation.

It was disclosed that an NOC for the purchase of sophisticated weapons was pending in the Ministry of Interior/ Defence. At this Corps Commander Karachi said that he has already given clearance only the Minister of Interior has to issue a formal NOC. The CM assigned the task to the Chief Secretary to talk to the Ministry of Interior for NOC so that weapons could be purchased from the Pak Army.

The IG police shared a comprehensive joint operation plan to clear hideouts in the Katcha area in which air cover to advise troops would be arranged. The meeting was told that 18 forward base camps were being established with 50 personnel each in the Katcha areas of the four districts - six each in Ghotki and Kashmore, four in Shikarpur two in Sukkur. 400 police check posts were being established, and of them, 210 have been constructed with a deployment of 3200 policemen.

The CM said that all the expenditures of the operation would be met and released in time. Crime situation in Karachi: Additional IG Karachi Khadim Rind briefing the committee on the overall crime situation in the city, particularly the street crime said that in 2013 3467 killings in the city were reported and in 2023 it has been controlled to 411 against which 329 accused wanted in murder cases have been arrested. He added that personal enmity/disputes were the main motive behind the killing.

533 extortion cases were reported in 2013 and this year only 100 cases have been reported. The police have arrested 86 accused involved in extortion.

Street Crime: In street crime, 39884 cases of Street crime were reported in 2013 which kept increasing to 85502 in 2022 and in this year- 2023, 61098 cases have been reported so far (till Sept 17). At this, the CM said that street crime has not only developed a sense of insecurity among the people, but it has earned a bad name for the government. The CM was told that the district East was on top in street crime with 17570 cases, followed by Central with 14648 cases, Korangi with 10731 cases, West 6551 Malir with 3193, Keamari with 3174, South with 2741, and City with 2490 cases.

Memon express condolences over death

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Information Secretary Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon has expressed his condolences and sorrow over the death of Abdul Fattah Jalbani, uncle of Information Officer Munir Ahmed Jalbani.

Meanwhile, a condolence meeting of Sindh Information Department officers was held today under the chairmanship of Director General Public Relations Sawai Khan Chaglri. Director Admin Mohammad Yousif Kaboor, Director R & R Imtiaz Ali Joyo, Director Publication Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, Director Electronic Media Mueez Pirzada, Director Social Media Faisal Farooqi, Director Films Riaz Memon, Director Advertising Aziz Ahmed Hakkro, Director Press Hizbullah Memon, Director Legal Syed Azim Shah and Director Press Information Hasan Asghar Naqvi and other officers and staff of the department attended the meeting after reciting Fatiha for the late uncle of Information Officer Munir Ahmed Jalbani. prayed that the Almighty God grant the deceased a place in His mercy and give patience to the bereaved.

Minister visits Kot Lakhpat jail

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George commended the Kot Lakhpat jail administration during his visit to jail on Friday.

He expressed appreciation for their efforts to enhance prisoners' rehabilitation.

He noted that the prison was conducting various training programmes aimed at developing skills of inmates, with the goal of reintegrating them as positive members of society upon completing their sentences.

Furthermore, he mentioned that prisoners had conveyed their contentment with the overall environment and food quality in jail. The minister emphasised that the time spent in prison serves as an opportunity for inmates to learn and grow, ultimately preparing them to become responsible citizens upon their release.

During his visit, Khalil George interacted with prisoners and inquired about their living conditions. Additionally, he conducted a thorough review of the prison facilities, including the kitchen, hospital, women's wards, and PCO, expressing his satisfaction with the arrangements.

Husband kills wife

KARACHI (INP): A man gunned down his wife on suspicion of infidelity in North Nazamabad, Karachi on Friday. According to police, the accused, Abdul Ghani, suspected that his wife, Gulreza, had relations with another man in the locality, which she repeatedly denied.

Some hours before the incident, the couple had a brief altercation, which led to Ghani killing Gulreza.

After killing his wife, Ghani fled the scene. Police sent Gulreza's body for an autopsy and launched an investigation into the murder.

Police have recovered the murder weapon, which Ghani left behind before escaping.

Emergency General Body meeting of QUTA organized

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Apalled by blatant disregard and non-serious attitude of Vice Chancellor (QUEST NAWABSHAH) the representative body of faculty i.e. the Quaid-e-Awam University Teachers' Association (QUTA) has expressed its serious dismay on such untoward treatment of faculty members by the Vice Chancellor in a public sector university.

In Emergency General Body meeting of QUTA held, all faculty members unanimously condemned violative, discriminatory and victimizing approach of Vice Chancellor who has chosen to harass and intimidate the teachers thereby suppressing pro education and pro research environment in the Public Sector University.

In complete disregard of rules, and Government directions, enhanced salary of 2023 (for the month of

July) alongside Eid Gratia, Remunerations and other legitimate payments have not been paid despite the Sindh government's generous allocation of grants and funds. On one hand, Vice Chancellor Dr. Saleem Samo is enjoying all perks and privileges and on the other hand, ruthlessly created an environment of harassment and victimization of the faculty at a boiling point.

Members pointed out that it is pathetic that the Syndicate of the University is being badly misused for such actions by the Vice Chancellor. Syndicate of QUEST was urged not to be the part of illegal actions anymore.

Moreover, Faculty members are not allowed lawful leave as per statutes of the university to pursue academic excellence by means of Post Doctorate/ Research. Such actions have multiplied financial hardships as well as severe stress amongst the faculty.

QUTA calls upon Vice-Chancellor Saleem Samo to immediately rectify this injustice and resolve the matters as such immediately by disbursing all pending salary arrears, examination remuneration, and research remuneration without any further delay. It's also demanded that transparency and accountability regarding the allocation and utilization of university funds may be ascertained and scrutinized by Competent Authority of the Public Sector Universities of Sindh "the Honorable Chief Minister of Sindh" in the larger public interest and if VC QUEST is not prevented from illegal actions then the faculty will be left with no choice but to take further action and escalate our efforts to ensure justice prevails. The Quaid-e-Awam University Teachers Association is resolute in its commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of its members.

LHC seeks reply from govt over fuel price hike

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday sought a response from the caretaker government and others on a petition challenging the hike in prices of petroleum products.

LHC Justice Tanveer Sultan took up the plea challenging the recent increase in the prices of petroleum products. After the preliminary hearing, the LHC sought a response from the respondents in the fuel hike case.

The plea moved against fuel hike stated that fuel prices have been jacked up massively as compared to the rise in the international market. "The recent fuel hike would lead to a further rise in inflation," the plea stated.

The petitioner pleaded with the court to declare the recent increase in fuel prices void as there is no mechanism to decide the fuel prices in the country.

Earlier, Pakistan's caretaker government

announced hike in the prices of petrol and diesel, taking them to a historic high - over Rs 330 per litre - amidst double-digit inflation in the cash-strapped country. The Ministry of Finance announced the price hike of petrol by Rs 26.02 and diesel by Rs 17.34 per litre following approval from caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar. After the hike, petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) is costing over Rs 330 at the filling stations.

Sindh govt imposes ban on pillion riding

KARACHI (NNI): The Sindh government on Friday imposed a ban on pillion riding in Karachi and other districts of the province due to 'Chup Tazia' processions taking place on Sept 25 and Eid Milad-un-Nabi events on Sept 29.

The Sindh Home Department issued a notification in this regard.

The notification issued

in response to a letter from the Sindh police chief, who had recommended that it is necessary to take immediate steps to maintain law and order situation and avoid any untoward incidents during the processions.

However, the ban will not be applicable to women, children below the age of 12 years, senior citizens, journalists, person-

nel of law enforcement agencies, security agencies in uniform, and employees of the essential services.

"The Government of Sindh, in the exercise of the powers conferred under Section 144 (6) CrPC, do hereby impose a ban on pillion riding of motorcycle/scooter in various zones/districts of the province of Sindh," read the notification.

Significance of Rabi-ul-Awwal highlighted

LAHORE (APP): Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad Friday highlighted the significance of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal and the mercy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in a grand congregation held at the globally renowned Badshahi Mosque.


Addressing the congregation, he spoke of the importance of Rabi-ul-Awwal, a month that held a special place in the hearts of Muslims worldwide. He emphasized that in this blessed month, Allah Almighty sent His beloved, the mercy for all mankind, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), as a source of guidance and light for both this world and the Hereafter.

Maulana Azad praised the exemplary character and conduct of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and stated that following his noble example was the path to success in both this life and the Hereafter. He highlighted that the teachings of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had closed the doors of ignorance and opened the gates to enlightenment and greatness.


He spoke passionately about the responsibilities of people of Pakistan, a nation founded on the principles of Islam and the Kalimah Tayyibah (the declaration of faith). He stressed that the safeguarding of Pakistan was the collective responsibility of the entire nation, adding "Islam is a religion of peace that teaches respect for humanity."

Maulana Azad called for unity, harmony, and national solidarity, stating that these values were of utmost importance for Pakistan.

He praised the armed forces and various national institutions for their unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of the country, emphasizing that the entire nation stood alongside its brave armed forces. Addressing the current regional challenges, particularly the actions of neighboring India, he underscored the need for vigilance and determination urging the nation to remain steadfast and united in the face of internal and external threats.



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- Bring all the relevant attested copies of documents along with the original fee deposit slip and admission form at the time of interview.
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INF (P)2362/23

LOST OF ALLOTMENT LETTER

Original Intimation Letter/Allotment Order/Transfer Order 4/5/Phase-1/A/ECHS 1502 Date: 3 January 1993 of Plot No 17 in Sector C(I) Size of plot 600 Sqyds. (approximately) located in Engineers cooperative Housing Society Islamabad (Sector D-18). Village Ahl Paswal, Sangjani, Tehsil: Taxila Distt: Rawalpindi) has been lost. This plot is the property of Liaqat Shah S/o Abdul Hayat ECHS Membership No.1502 Resident of Moh.Doulat Khel, Teh. Tangi Distt Charsada Tel/Phone No. 03009494901. 1. the owner of the plot have approached ECHS Islamabad for issue of Duplicate Allotment Letter. Finder of the letter or anyone having objection/claim with respect to subject property to please contact me/us and the Honorary Secretary, ECHS Head Office Complex, Sector D-18, P.O: Tamol, Sangjani, Islamabad, Telephone No. 051-2229751-56 within ten days of the publication.

EXECUTANT
Liaqat Shah S/o Abdul Hayat...ECHS. 1502

SUIT NOTICE

In the court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-I Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar. Case No: 64/1 of 2023 Date of hearing 14-10-2023. Suit for the recovery of Rs. 47,030,635/= M/S Osaka Corporation, 35-Industrial Estate, Hayatabad Peshawar Vs: M/S Askary Bank Ltd: Notice Versus:- 1. M/S Askary Bank Ltd: Head office AWT Tower, Rawalpindi, Through its President. 2. The Manager, M/S Askary Bank Ltd: University Road Branch Peshawar. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 47,030,635/= Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today on 16-09-2023 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar Banking Court,I Peshawar



Zafar inaugurates new feeder route

PESHAWAR (APP): Zafar Ullah Khan Umerzai, the Special Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Transport and Housing on Friday, inaugurated a new feeder route, DR-4B, which connects Chamkani to Malik Saad via Ring Road.

The inauguration ceremony took place at the BRT Chamkani Station and was attended by Aamer Nadeem Durrani, the caretaker minister for Local Government and Public Health Engineering, along with other officials including Secretary of Transport Zia Ul Haq, Secretary of Housing Anber Ali Khan and CEO of Trans Peshawar Tariq Uman Saeed.

Following the inauguration, Zafar Ullah Khan Umerzai addressed the media and refuted rumors

of any discontinuation of BRT services.

He emphasized that the BRT system ranks as number one in South Asia and Pakistan and seventh globally. The BRT has received numerous international awards for providing excellent transportation facilities.

Furthermore, he provided updates on the construction progress of BRT plazas, noting that 90 percent of the work on Chamkani plaza is completed, 30 percent on Dabgari Garden, and 70 percent on Hayatabad.

Zafar Ullah Khan stressed the significance of efficient and accessible public transportation in promoting sustainable urban development and enhancing the quality of life for Peshawar's resi-

dents. He outlined the route of the new feeder route, consisting of 19 stops including Chamkani, Sardar Garhi, Chughal Pura, Government Primary School, Pir Zakori Bridge, Motorway Bridge, Kamboh Adda, Pahari Pura, Kabutar Chowk, MMC Hospital, Wazir Colony, Abasyn University, Patang Chowk, Shaheed Tahseen Chowk, Charsadda Adda, Eidgah, Shahi Bagh, Bacha Khan Chowk, and Malik Saad Shaheed.

Zafar Ullah Khan also highlighted that Zu Peshawar serves approximately 300,000 passengers daily, playing a vital role in the city's transportation network. As part of the inauguration, the Special Assistant personally travelled on a BRT bus along the new feeder route.

Elections date to help end political instability

PESHAWAR (INP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has stated that announcement of election date will help end the political instability in the country.

In a statement in Peshawar, he hoped that it would also stabilize the economic situation.

He said all political parties should start their political campaign for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections.

Crackdown continue in province

PESHAWAR (APP): Crackdown against electricity theft continues across the province on behalf of PESCO, said PESCO Spokesperson.

So far, more than 4527 kandas have been removed across the province, the Spokesperson PESCO said. A total of 1074 in Peshawar circle, 861 in Mardan circle and illegal connections have been disconnected while in the Khyber Circle 613, Swat Circle 446 and Bannu Circle 427 were removed, the Spokesperson added.

Apart from this, several turnstiles were also removed in Abbottabad, Swabi, Mansehra and Dera Ismail Khan Circle and fines of more than Rs. 1.981 million have been imposed so far, the PESCO spokesperson said.

Application submitted to file a case against more than 3982 electricity thieves and more than 1694 cases were filed against electricity thieves, 340 people were arrested, spokesperson said. PESCO customers can report electricity theft by calling 118, the Spokesperson said.

Action against adulteration Mafia in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Action against adulteration mafia by the KP Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Peshawar continued here on Friday.

Food safety teams suddenly raided Qeema manufacturing units in Firdous more than 5000 kg of chicken bones were destroyed, a spokesman of the Food Authority said here. Harmful and substandard mince meat was being prepared by mixing color with chicken bones by machine, Food Authority spokesman said.

The Food Authority spokesman said that such Qeema have to supply for making Chapli and Seekh Kebab and other items. Two units sold, owners arrested, action initiated under Food Safety Act, Food Authority spokesman said. Such elements should refrain from playing with the health of citizens and defaming the entire industry, DG Shah Rukh said.

Waqar granted add charge of DG F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has ordered Director Mian Muhammad Waqar to look after additional charge of Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In this regard, NAB has issued officer stated that the chairman has allowed Director A&P Wing Mian Muhammad Waqar to look after work of Director General NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 12 days leave of Waqar Ahmad Chauhan.



PESHAWAR: A delegation from merged districts lead by Maulana Jamal ud Din from meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

Income tax returns date to be extended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Traders Alliance Federation chief Ghulam Bilal Javed and Tanzeem Tajran KP president Malik Mehr Elahi have requested the government to extend the last date for filing income tax returns till January 31, 2024 as many taxpayers are facing high inflation especially in electricity bills.

He said they request Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar that the entire nation, including the taxpayers, has been severely affected by the increase in electricity bills and severe inflation, and now the extortion mafia and the

inflationary storm, rising electricity bills and lack of business.

Mr Ghulam Bilal Javed requested the federal government to extend the last date for filing income tax returns till January 31, 2024 as many taxpayers are facing high inflation especially in electricity bills.

He said they request Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar that the entire nation, including the taxpayers, has been severely affected by the increase in electricity bills and severe inflation, and now the extortion mafia and the

increase in petrol prices have gripped the people.

Therefore, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should be directed to extend the last date for filing Income tax returns by 31st January 2024, which will be widely appreciated by the business community.

If the FBR instructs its commissioners to extend cases who were unable to file returns on time, Malik Maher Elahi said, they still request the Chairman FBR to issue tax returns to the public. Don't leave yourself at the mercy of commissioners for admission.

DC for facilitating masses

PESHAWAR (APP): The newly appointed Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar Afaq Wazir on Friday visited various branches in the DC office and reviewed facilities being provided to the public.

He also met the staff in the license branch, PMRU, domicile branch, general branch, account branch and other branches and directed them to facilitate masses and provide immediate relief to them, warning strict action in case of dereliction of duty.

The DC also met with the people on the spot and asked about the nature of their work and directed the concerned staff to resolve their issues immediately.

Distt Admin sensitise people

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaq Wazir, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Relief Muhammad Imran Khan visited the motorway toll plaza along with polio teams and revenue staff and sensitized commuters and passengers of public transport about the importance of the Oral Polio-virus Vaccine (OPV).

The ADC, along with health teams, also managed to convince five refusal cases and administer polio vaccine to their children under the age of five. The teams were directed to vaccinate all the missing children against the crippling disease.

Chances of more rains in province

PESHAWAR (APP): Chance of more intermittent rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Friday to Sunday, a spokesman of the Meteorological Department said here Friday.

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority has issued a letter to all district administrations to stay alert, the spokesman said. In view of heavy rains and winds, the district administration has been directed to take precautionary measures, DG PDMA said. Fear of landslides in the Upper Districts of the province, PDMA said. Due to heavy rains, there is a risk of landslides in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra and Abbottabad. The PDMA has directed the district administration to ensure the availability of small and large machinery and to monitor rain drains.

In the event of a storm, people should stay away from power lines, dilapidated buildings and constructions, cyan boards and billboards. Tourists and local population in sensitive upper areas are instructed to be aware of weather conditions and take precautionary measures, PDMA spokesman said.

Messages to the district administration in sensitive districts should be conveyed to the local population in local languages, PDMA spokesman said. In any emergency situation, all the concerned organizations should be alert in the maintenance of road links and in case of road closure, alternative routes should be provided for traffic.

The concerned authorities should transfer the people to the safe waiting areas when necessary while Tourists should be informed about the weather situation and PDMA's emergency operation center is fully operational, the spokesman informed. People should report any untoward incident on 1700, he said.

GM PTV called on Secretary Information



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: General Manager Pakistan Television Peshawar Center Aurangzeb Afridi called on Secretary Information Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Jabbar Shah and Director General Information Muhammad Imran Khan in Peshawar on Friday.

In the meeting, it was agreed to promote cooperation with regard to the PTV

National Peshawar transmission. General Manager PTV Peshawar Center Aurangzeb Afridi said that transmission on the new channel, PTV National Peshawar, is being aired regularly to keep the rich culture of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alive, and to show the audience current affairs programmes and news so as to keep them informed in the current age of information.

Apart from this, viewers can also watch PTV National Peshawar's transmission on YouTube 24 hours a day. Aurangzeb Afridi also felicitated Muhammad Imran Khan on assuming charge as Director General Information Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Head of News Department PTV Peshawar Center Muhammad Irfan Khan was also present in the meeting.

KPCVE celebrates International Peace Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Centre of Excellence named Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Countering Violent Extremism (KPCVE) celebrates International Peace Day. Chief Coordinator Officer Dr. Ayaz said that Pakistan, a nation known for its rich cultural heritage and resilient spirit, joins the global community in celebrating the International Day of Peace on September 21st. This day serves as a reminder of the urgent need for peace, unity, and harmony in our world.

Under one roof "Building Peace Together," Pakistan reaffirms its commitment to promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding among its

diverse communities. The nation recognizes the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and diplomacy as essential tools for resolving conflicts and fostering a peaceful society.

KPCVE celebration includes a series of events and initiatives across the province. KPCVE officials, Law Enforcement Agency Departments (LEAs) and Community participate in peace walks to symbolize their commitment to a violence-free and harmonious society.

KPCVE emphasizes the significance of religious tolerance by hosting interfaith dialogues that bring together leaders and followers of various faiths to promote mutual respect and coexistence.

Educational institutions will engage in activities to raise awareness about the importance of peace and conflict resolution among the youth, who are the future leaders of the nation.

Dr. Ayaz emphasized the need for global solidarity in the face of challenges such as poverty and the ongoing situation of Security in country. He stated, "Pakistan stands ready to collaborate with the international community in building a peaceful and prosperous world for all."

As Pakistan celebrates the International Day of Peace, the nation encourages individuals, communities, and nations around the world to work together for a more peaceful and harmonious future.



PESHAWAR: Chaudhry Shahid Ghafoor alongwith others in a group photo with CCPO after a meeting. — F.P. photo

PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electrical Supply Company (PESCO) on Friday notified power suspension from various grids in the province from September 25 and 28 due to unavoidable maintenance work.

Power supply would remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on September 25, 27 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. as a result, consumers of Shagai, KSM, Industrial Naguman, Bakhsho Pull, Ghari Hamza, Old Naguman, Shah Alam, Latif Abad, Dalazak, Sarbulandpura, Samar Bagh, New Takht Abad, New Ghari, Nishat and Khazan feeders would

face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from Kohat Road Grid Station on September 25 and 28 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. as a result, consumers of 11 KV Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nohed Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammadi, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders would face inconvenience.

Power supply would remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid

Station on September 24 and 27 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. as a result, consumers of 11KV Sinandar Pura, Lala, Hashtnagari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jaghira, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Pandho Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Urmur, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Shiekh Abad, Molve Je, Nishtar Abad and NHA, feeders would face inconvenience.

Power supply would remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on September 24 and 27 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. as a result, consumers of 11 KV Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, Commercial.

Minister emphasizes integrity and efficiency

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Caretaker Minister for Communications and Works and Irrigation, Engineer Ahmed Jan Khan, chaired an introductory meeting with senior officers from the Department of Communication and Works in Peshawar on Friday. The attendees included engineers, executive engineers, and other officers. During the meeting, the Provincial Minister outlined the officers' designated responsibilities.

In his address, the caretaker minister emphasized the importance of conscientiousness and honesty as guiding principles for offi-

cers in the execution of their duties. He encouraged them to diligently provide professional services to the public, underscoring that the Communication and Works Department plays a direct role in public development and service provision. Consequently, the department's officials and officers bear a significant national responsibility to uphold public trust and enhance the department's reputation.

The caretaker minister expressed his commitment to ensuring good governance, transparency, and the responsible execution of departmental duties. Drawing from his own experience within the

department, he pledged to leverage his expertise to enhance its performance. He urged officers to discourage unnecessary transfers and promotions, citing their potential disruption to the department's operations.

Additionally, he emphasized adherence to the government's prevailing 2-year policy for transfers and promotions, calling for the appointment of suitable officers and officials to facilitate the department's efficient functioning.

During the meeting, the Secretary of Communication and Works presented a shield to the caretaker minister on behalf of the department.

PIC introduces revolutionary device

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) has achieved a historic milestone by successfully performing a groundbreaking procedure that introduced a cutting-edge device to protect heart patients from strokes, the first of its kind in Pakistan.

This remarkable achievement has ushered in a new era of hope for cardiac patients, said Riffat Anjum Spokesperson PIC on Friday. Dr. Mohammed Waleed, an interventional cardiologist specializing in structural heart diseases, led this procedure.

He is an Assistant Professor at PIC, having received training from Professor David Hildick-Smith at Sussex Cardiac Centre, Brighton. In this pioneering operation, Prof. Dr. David Hildick-Smith, a distinguished specialist from the United Kingdom, joined the PIC team and implanted this innovative device in a 71-year-old female cardiac patient at PIC. The procedure not only marked a significant advancement in the field of cardiology but also provided a lifeline to patients at risk of stroke due to irregular heart rhythms.

Prof. David Hildick-Smith, who played a pivotal role in the successful procedure, expressed his astonishment and honor at witnessing such a case in a public hospital in Pakistan.

He emphasized that this technology could potentially save countless lives in the country, representing a new dawn for Pakistan's healthcare.

Explaining the significance of this breakthrough, Assistant Professor Dr. Mohammad Waleed, a cardiologist at PIC, highlighted that patients with irregular heart rhythms face the constant threat of blood clots forming in the left atrial appendage (LAA), which can lead to a stroke. Traditional blood-thinning medications carry the risk of bleeding in various sensitive parts of the body.

The LAA closure device offers hope to these patients by reducing the risk of stroke without the need for systemic blood thinners.

Prof. Dr. Shahkar Ahmed Shah, CEO, and Medical Director of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology, expressed his pride in the tireless efforts and dedication of the medical team and administrative staff. He reaffirmed PIC's commitment to connecting international technology and treatment methods to benefit patients not only from KP but across Pakistan.

Prof. Shahkar emphasized that PIC aspires to be a center of excellence, providing state-of-the-art healthcare facilities in line with international standards.

He pledged to continue integrating cutting-edge technologies into the healthcare system, ensuring that patients in Pakistan have access to world-class medical care without the need to seek treatment abroad.



In brief

Tank police seize NCP items F.P. Report

TANK: The district police on Friday seized non custom paid (NCP) items worth Rs 5 million within the limits of Gomal police station. According to the Police spokesman, the Tank police have adopted a zero tolerance policy against all types of smuggling in Tank in the light of the orders of Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Nasir Mehmood Satti, the special instructions of District Police Officer Tank Iftikhar Ali Shah. As part of the ongoing drive, a police team led by Gomal Police Station SHO Asghar Wazir acting on on a tip-off on a dirt road at Sheikh Atar area inspected three vans which were smuggling NCP goods to Dera Ismail Khan. During checking, the police recovered 141 tons of non-customs paid women's cloth, 42 cotton pencils, 12 cotton platinum company cigarettes, 10 cotton paan and one bag of green tea worth around Rs 5,000,000. He said that NCP items were handed over to the customs authorities for further legal action.

Police 'arrest' Pir Fayyaz Shah

KHAIRPUR (INP): Police on Friday 'arrested' Pir Fayyaz Shah, co-accused in the murder case of child maid Fatima Phuriro in Ranipur, Khairpur. The 10-year-old Fatima had died in the Haveli of Asad Shah and the video of her tragic death went viral on social media. According to media reports, Fayyaz Shah was taken into custody when he was going back to his haveli after addressing a press conference. On Thursday, an anti-terrorism court granted five days of physical remand of accused Asad Shah and co-accused, Intiaz Meerasi in the murder case of child maid Fatima Phuriro. Earlier, police released four accused including, SHO Ameer Chang, Dr Fatah Memon and Dr Ali Hasan Wasan. In the murder case of Fatima Phuriro who died in the Haveli of Ranipur. The investigating officer claimed that the suspects were set free as they were not named in the FIR. Ejaz Khaskhali, a driver of Hina Shah, was arrested from Karachi by Khairpur Police while 11 others were also taken into custody from Asad's residence. The post-mortem report of Fatima confirmed that the minor maid was sexually abused, according to DIG Sukkur Javed Jiskani.

One arrested with arms F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat Police have arrested one person with one Kalashnikov, four chargers and dozens of cartridges were recovered from the possession of the arrest. In-charge Mills Area ASI Farman Khan arrested the armed man. The arrested suspect was detained during the regional patrol. The arrested accused Afzar Khan resident of Lachi has been transferred to the Police Station for further legal action.

Equal treatment for students F.P. Report

BANNU: Parents appealed to have equal treatment for all the students caught using mobile phones in MDCAT examination conducted on 10th Sep 2023 in the supervision of ETEA in the University of Science and Technology Bannu. As per detail, total 66 students were caught using mobile phones, Out of 66 students, FIR was registered against 35 students only where the rest was set free.

Ex-MNA's son gun down one over land dispute in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Son of former Member National Assembly and disgruntled leader of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazal (JUIF) Maulana Shuja-ul-Mulk allegedly gunned down his relative over a property-dispute in Toru Suwaryan area.

The police officials quoted, widow of the slain person, as saying that she along with her husband identified as Waqar-ul-Mulk was on way back to home from a doctor clinic when the alleged killer opened firing over her husband killing him on the spot.

The complainant told that she remained unhurt in the firing. She, however, told police that a dispute over a piece of land was cause behind the killing of her husband. The officials of Toru police station registered FIR on the complaint of widow of slain person against the alleged killer identified as Manzoor son of Moulana Shuja-ul-Mulk.

The police told that began further investigations into the murdered incident as well as accelerated their efforts to arrest the accused who had managed his escaped from the scene.

Cases registered against electricity thieves:

In a determined effort to curb electricity theft and the illicit kunda culture, the District Administration of Mardan, in collaboration with WAPDA (Water and Power Development Authority) and the local police, has taken stringent action against 566 individuals. These actions align with the directives issued by the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The mission of Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Captain Retd., is to eliminate electricity theft and the kunda culture that has persisted throughout the district. Since August 28, 2023, cases have been registered against 566 individuals for electricity theft. Additionally, 844 illegal connections have been severed during operations conducted in urban and rural areas across all tehsils within the district.

Official data reveals that 224 electricity thieves have been slapped with fines amounting to Rs. 15,71,000 for the damage they have inflicted on the public treasury. Moreover, Rs. 32,29,000 has been successfully collected from these individuals to cover

their dues.

The operations to control this menace occur on a daily basis, reflecting the district administration and the police's unwavering commitment to bringing these cases to a decisive conclusion. Importantly, they remain steadfast in their stance that legal action against electricity thieves, regardless of any external pressures, will not be compromised.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan has appealed to the citizens, urging them to cooperate fully with the district administration and WAPDA authority in their endeavors to combat the scourge of electricity theft. The burden of this illegal activity ultimately falls upon the common consumers, and collective efforts are essential to alleviate this issue.

These joint actions against electricity theft represent a significant step forward in promoting fair and legal consumption of electricity in Mardan. As these efforts continue, the district administration remains resolute in its commitment to ensuring that the common consumers are protected from the repercussions of this illegal practice.

Reforms in FBR to ease taxation system urged

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) president Zahir Shah have demanded the government and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to simplify the tax system through reforms. Instead of burdening existing taxpayers with additional taxes, practical steps should be taken to bring new people into the tax net.

The business community is the backbone of the country's economy, they should be provided with all the facilities and a simple tax system so that the set revenue targets for the FBR can be achieved through timely payment of taxes. Mardan Chamber of Commerce President Zahir Shah said that the development and prosperity of the business community is the guarantee of economic improvement. This country

runs because of the business community and they are being given facilities and incentives, especially in the tax system, practical steps are being taken to simplify and reform the tax system.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has directed administrative and other government officers to make solving public problems their top priority and instead of confining themselves to offices, go to the field and interact with people directly.

After assuming the post of Commissioner Mardan, officers of various government departments, media members and dignitaries met Shaukat Ali Yousafzai and congratulated him on assuming the post of Commissioner Mardan. Among them were Additional Commissioner Naeem Akhtar, DC Mardan

Abdur Rehman, Deputy Director of Halal Food Authority (DDHFA), AC and others.

Speaking on this occasion, Commissioner Mardan said that Mardan is the second largest city of the province and economically and politically, it is a fertile and populous region. The provincial government is taking keen interest in the development and prosperity of Mardan division and work on the ongoing projects will be expedited in this regard while consultations will also be held on starting new projects.

He directed the administrative officers to hold regular open meetings for direct communication with the people so that the problems of the people are solved in a timely and appropriate manner and they do not have to go round the government offices.

Role of front-liners in polio eradication lauded



F.P. Report

ZHOB: The World Health Organization's representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala says, Pakistan is one of only two remaining polio-endemic countries in the world along with the neighboring Afghanistan. It is the core responsibility of the community members and parents to extend their cooperation towards the polio health workers.

He made these remarks during his one-day visit to bordering district ZhoB to review the health facilities in the remote and mountainous district. Before reaching the city, Balochistan Residential College students showered rose petals and presented bouquets to the WR. Principal BRC prof Hassan Iqbal and prof Guldar Khan Wazir briefed Dr. Palitha about the educational institution and presented him with a shield on behalf of the institution.

WHO provincial team members Dr. Isfandiar Sherani, Dr. Ayaz Chandio, Dr. Nayyar Luni, Dr. Noora Khan, Dr. Afrasiab Mandokhail, N-Stop Officer Dr. Amin, ComNet Staff Nazir Mardanzai, rep-

resentative European Union Brace Program Samad Harifal, Dr. Ubaid Harifal, Tehsil Communication Officer Saeedullah Lawoon and General Secretary Para Medical Staff Qasim Mandokhail warmly welcomed Dr. Palitha Mahipala.

Head of the Mission, flanked by the Deputy Commissioner Mehboob Achakzai inspected various departments including the Nutrition Center established with the support of WHO. DHO Dr. Muzaffar Shah and MS civil Hospital Dr. Noor ul Haq Kakar briefed Dr. Palitha. DHO Dr. Muzaffar Shah presented the traditional turban 'Lungi' to Dr. Palitha.

Dr Palitha inaugurated the Cutaneous Leishmaniasis treatment center established by the financial support of WHO. Dr. Abdul Qayyum Mandokhail gave a briefing to the Head of Mission. He also visited the malaria diagnostic center at the DHQ civil hospital. Provincial Coordinator The Indus Hospital Dr. Aimal Mandokhail and District Coordinator Dr. Ubaid Harifal briefed the WR. Dr. Palitha announced

two ambulances, thirty-five motorcycles for the health workers, construction of a hall at the DHO office, renovation of the DHO office, two air conditioners for the Cutaneous Leishmaniasis center, its solarization, an incinerator for the civil hospital and appointment of ten vaccinators. Keeping in mind the alarming increase in the malaria cases, he also announced IRS (Indoor Residual Spraying) in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Mehboob Achakzai also presented a shield to Dr. Palitha on behalf of the district administration.

Dr Palitha Mahipala while talking to journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail, appreciated the role of the frontline polio workers and urged the parents to get their children vaccinated against polio. 'I am optimistic and we want to see Pakistan as a polio-free country. The efforts of the frontline workers will definitely bear fruit. We call them heroes, as they have enormous challenges including the misconception about vaccines. The country would soon become a polio free country,' he expressed hope.



KARTARPUR: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George addressing a public gathering on the occasion of the death anniversary of Guru Nanak.

Impact of inflation Mariyam Sardar

INFLATION is a crucial issue that has become a common term in recent times. For anyone who comes from a working-class family, inflation has been a harmful thing, both for the moral as well as physical being of the people. The government should realize how these price hikes in commonplace things like oil, gas, and grains are severely affecting people.

People are recovering from the pandemic by slowly maintaining their lives, during this time the issue of inflation will only bring any person to a very low position in their life. Government should work on controlling the rate of inflation so it doesn't have any more harmful effect on people.

Dialysis unit inaugurated F.P. Report

WANA: Deputy Commissioner Nasir Khan and District Police Officer Farmanullah inaugurated the dialysis Unit at District Headquarters Hospital, on Friday.

During inauguration ceremony AC Salman Khan Kundi, political leader Taj Wazir were present. District Headquarters hospital MS Dr. Hamad said that following the instructions of DC Nasir Khan and other senior officials, 4 dialysis machines were made functional on an emergency basis.

Employees including patients were suffering from kidney disease due to non-availability of facilities, political leader, Taj Wazir had protested, as a result of which the machines were restored by the local administration. DC Nasir Khan told the media that both DHQ hospital Wana and Sheikhah Fatima hospital Shulam should be functional in all respects. There should be no omission.

Projects inspected F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Chief Minister's Deputy Secretary Ali Akbar Bhindhar visited Hafizabad. He inspected under construction DHQ Hospital, University of Hafizabad and reviewed pace of work on projects. Deputy Secretary also visited government higher secondary schools (Boys and Girls) Veneki Tarar RHC Veneki Tarar and District Headquarter Hospital Hafizabad.

Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich, Deputy Director Development Tasawwar Abbas and other offices were also accompanied by him. DC informed the Deputy Secretary that the best treatment and higher educational facilities would be available to the people at local level with the completion of building of DHQ Hospital and University of Hafizabad.

During the visit of DHQ hospital Hafizabad, Ali Akbar Bhindhar inspected general emergency, children emergency, Operation Theater, OPD and waiting area of the hospital and reviewed provision of medicines and other facilities to patients in the hospital.

PTI former MNA along with 3 workers arrested

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir police arrested the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) former MNA Muhammad Bashir Khan after cancellation of his bail before arrest (BBA) plea in the May 9 and 10 riots at Balambat here the other day.

Police said the former MNA was arrested after his BBA was cancelled by an anti-terrorism court judge-3 along with three other workers including Suleman, Mujeebullah and Mahmood Zeb. Two cases were registered against the former MNA Muhammad Bashir Khan in police station Chakdara and police station Balambat for invoking PTI workers on May 9 and 10 on violent incidents after the arrest of the PTI

chairman.Imran Khan.

Bilawal birth day day: The Peoples Students' Federation Lower Dir chapter arranged a function at the Timergara press club here the other day to celebrate the 35th birth anniversary of the PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here on Thursday. The PSF workers from the post-graduate college Timergara attended the event during which a cake was cut.

The PSF provincial vice president Fazal Hussain, joint secretary Amjad Hussain Salarzai, divisional president Suhail Nawab Yousafzai and others spoke on the occasion. They appreciated the PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto for his active role as a former foreign minister and said that he had proved himself as a

competent politician. They said the PPP was the most popular national party in the country and it would form the next government at the center.

DHQ hospital: The medical superintendent of the district headquarters hospital Timergara Dr Ali Asghar told local journalists that an oxygen plant would soon be installed at the facility that would help resolve the shortage of oxygen in the wards. He said the DHQ hospital Timergara provided health care facilities to patients from Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Bajaur and Chitral. The MS said that the hospital had its own mammographic machine and portable X-Ray machine due to which the admitted patients had no need to go elsewhere for it.

LHC Add Registrar inspects Multan High Court facility

F.P. Report

MULTAN: On the special instructions of Chief Justice Lahore High Court Lahore Muhammad Ameer Bhatti, Senior Additional Registrar Lahore High Court Multan Bench Session Judge Syed Amjad Ali Shah inspected that the under construction new admin block of Multan High Court and reviewed the pace of work.

While expressing his views on this occasion, he said that the admin block consisting on 7-storey building will be completed in three years at a cost of 1470 million rupees. He said the work of putting the first lantern of the building on the ground floor is going on fast track. He said the Hon'ble Chief Justice Lahore High Court took special interest in resolving the long-standing problem of judicial staff, lawyers and cylins and ensured the release of funds for the timely construction of the building.

He said, he will personally monitor the project and will inspect the pace of work every week to solve bottle necks hindering in construction work. The building comprising on 6

kanal of land is now a part of Multan Bench and the best offices will be set up here, he added.He said a weekly progress report regarding construction of admin block is being sent to Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Muhammad Ameer Bhatti on weekly basis.

Senior PA Mr. Umar Hayat, Mumtaz Hussain, Hasan Raza and Coordinator Shahzaib Hassan Qureshi were also present on this occasion.

Commissioner orders price magistrates to control hike, hoarding: Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Aamir Khattak gave an ultimatum to the price control magistrates to improve their performance and said that the deputy commissioners should expose the price control magistrates who show poor performance. The price control magistrates who show poor performance should be given back their authority after warning. will be taken.

These views were expressed by Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak while presiding over the review meeting of the Divisional

Price Control Committee. He said that the Punjab government has ordered a zero-tolerance policy against hoarding. Do it. Strict action will be taken against those who do not follow the official price.

Price control magistrates should ensure their presence in the markets. Apart from them, if any subordinates are found doing price monitoring, strict action will be taken. Get your hands on big wholesalers, hoarders. The government has clear instructions to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against hoarders. The deputy commissioner should send the commission mafia involved in the shortage of food items to jail. The wholesalers who cut the pockets of the people should be given tour of Jail.

District officers should also monitor the auction process in the markets. In the meeting, Deputy Commissioners, concerned officers while giving a briefing said that 136 price control magistrates conducted 5851 inspections in 1 day in the division. 7 lakh 36 thousand rupees fined, 9 cases registered, 22 people arrested.

Child protection dialogue held in Chitral

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: A Community Based Stakeholder Dialogue regarding the Child Protection Project organized by Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP) was held at a local hotel in Chitral in which the presidents and secretary of child protection committee of different villages, representatives of refugees living in Afghan refugee camps and different schools of thought participated.

Child Protection Officer Salahuddin Saleh and DPM-SRSP Chitral Tariq Ahmed briefed the audience in detail about the project. While Child Protection Officer Chitral Asadullah gave a detailed presentation on child rights. Khateeb Shahi Masjid Maulana Khaliq-ul-Zaman, DSP Legal Mohsin Mulk, Niazi A. Niazi Advocate, DDO Education Zubaidah Khanum, Director

Benazir Income Support Program Javed Ahmed, Minority Members Baig and others participated in the stakeholder dialogue and participated in the dialogue. DPM Tariq Ahmed and Salahuddin Saleh said that the purpose of this project is to protect children's rights, identify their problems and provide protection to children.

He said that prevention of child labor, remediation of child labor and education of out-of-school children are also part of the project. Under this project work is going on there should be extraordinary change so that this project can be successful. DSP Legal Mohsin Mulk expressed great concern and said that children are being used in the buying and selling of drugs and in some places young children have become addicted to drugs, including ice addiction. Maulana Khaliq-ul-

Zaman took part in the dialogue in the light of Quran and Sunnah and said that all immoral acts and suicide with recklessness like the spread of cancer in Chitral are the result of distance from religion. He emphasized on the project and SRSP officials and said that such meetings should be organized for the scholars and imams of the madrasahs where they should be educated and trained so that they can convey this message in their respective areas.

Earlier, resource person Asadullah defined the definition of a child, the Muslim rights of children at the global level, exploitation of children, mental and sexual violence, harassment and other threats and the existing laws for their prevention, as well as parents, teachers, community, society and gave a detailed presentation about the responsibilities of the government.



Mali’s junta struggles to fight growing violence in a northern region

BAMAKO, Mali (AP): Attacks in northern Mali have more than doubled since UN peacekeepers completed the first phase of their withdrawal last month after a decade of fighting Islamic extremists, resulting in more than 150 deaths.

In one brazen attack, militants targeted a triple-decker passenger boat, killing 49 civilians. And this week, another group of rebels attacked Malian army camps in the Lere locality on the border with Mauritania, leaving several security personnel dead and wounded. Now, fleeing Malians fear the worst is yet to come in the prolonged violence.

"In Timbuktu, all the communities are leaving the city," said Fatouma Harber, a resident of Timbuktu which is one of the worst-hit areas. "A few weeks ago, a rocket fell in the town, costing the life of a child. Everyone thinks it could fall on them or their children," Harber added. After more than three years in power, Mali's military junta is struggling to fight growing violence in a hard-hit northern region after demanding the withdrawal of around 17,000 peacekeepers. At the same time, a 2015 peace deal with ethnic Tuareg rebels appears to have collapsed, deepening the security crisis.

The ongoing withdrawal of the UN force, in Mali since 2013, has created loopholes in the country's overstretched security architecture, analysts said, the result of which is growing deadly attacks by both the jihadi groups and the former rebels, all eyeing new opportunities to dominate and control more regions. The frequency of the violent attacks has never been this bad since 2020 when the country recorded the first of two coups that paved the way for the current junta, according to Mahamadou Bassirou Tangara, a Malian security analyst and researcher for the Conflict Research Network West Africa.

"The attacks are growing and the armed groups are carrying out attacks against civilians — that is not new, but (what is new is) the frequency and the intensity," said Tangara. Mali has averaged four violent attacks daily since the turn of the year, a 15% increase when compared to the same period last year, according to data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a top database for conflicts around the world. But the situation is worse in the country's hard-hit northern region, such as in Gao town where hostilities have been concentrated. Attacks in that part of Mali have more than doubled since Aug. 25 when the first phase of the UN peacekeepers' withdrawal was completed, resulting in more than 150 deaths.

The Tuareg rebels claimed responsibility for a recent attack on a major Malian army

base — a rarity that analysts have said signaled a failure of the crucial peace agreement signed with the rebels who once drove security forces out of northern Mali as they sought to create the state of Azawad there. Known as the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD), the rebels have also claimed to have temporarily captured parts of Bourem in Gao region where Malian soldiers have been regrouping. The Malian government has referred to them as a "terrorist group" while they in turn have accused the army of violating their security agreement.

Despite being one of Africa's top gold producers, Mali is ranked the sixth least developed nation in the world. With nearly half of its 22 million people living below the national poverty line, many more face a growing humanitarian crisis as a result of the violence. More than a third of Mali's citizens are already in need of humanitarian aid because of the fighting, according to the Mercy Corps aid group, and a growing number of locals in violence hot spots are forced to choose between staying back in their villages to keep their means of livelihoods at the risk of being killed or fleeing to safety.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has already registered more than 33,000 people who have fled the Timbuktu and Taoudeni regions in northern Mali, heading for Mauritania and Algeria to escape the violence. The al-Qaida-affiliated and Islamic State group-linked organizations in Mali almost doubled the territory they control there in less than a year, according to a recent UN report, raising questions from some about the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping force. Referred to as MINUSMA, it eventually became the most dangerous UN mission in the world. After being asked by Mali's military government in June to vacate the country, more than 30% of its personnel are expected to have withdrawn by the end of September, according to MINUSMA spokeswoman Fatoumata Kaba. The operation ends officially on Jan. 1. Also helping to fight the violence in Mali has been Russia's Wagner mercenary group, diplomatic and security officials have said.

Mali's military leader, Col. Assimi Goita, recently posed with Russian President Vladimir for a photo that was posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. It was a reminder to many about the existing partnership between Mali and Russia. Any support from Wagner hasn't been sufficient and can't fill the security gap created by MINUSMA's withdrawal, said Rida Lyammouri, a senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South Moroccan think tank.

UN warn of risk of ‘atrocities’ in Ethiopia

GENEVA (Reuters): UN-appointed investigators warned that more atrocities were likely in Ethiopia and called for continued scrutiny of Addis Ababa's human rights record as their work faces termination amid strong African-led opposition.

Thousands died in a two-year conflict between the government and regional forces from Tigray, which formally came to an end in November last year. Both sides accused each other of atrocities, including massacres, rape and arbitrary detentions, but each denied responsibility for systemic abuses. The International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, composed of three independent experts, said earlier this week in a report that war crimes and crimes against humanity were still being committed in Ethiopia.

Its two-year mandate is up for renewal in the ongoing Human Rights Council

session in Geneva although so far no request has been submitted amid what diplomats describe as strong opposition, mostly from African states. Ethiopia, which denies committing widespread abuses, has strongly opposed the probe and tried to cut its work short.

Mohamed Chande Othman, chair of the Commission, told the 47-member council it would be "premature" to end its work and urged it to renew, referring to ongoing violations in the region of Amhara. "Failure to do so would not only be an abdication of the Council's responsibility, it would send a devastating message to the victims and survivors of this conflict," he said.

He told the Council that "...the situation in Ethiopia exhibits most of the indicators for future atrocities..." and accused Ethiopia of conducting "a deliberate effort to evade regional and international scrutiny". And he criticised Ethiopia's

approach to justice as "deeply flawed", saying there had been no credible evidence of legitimate investigations or trials of its soldiers which it accuses of attacking civilians.

Ethiopia's government and its armed forces have repeatedly denied that their soldiers committed widespread crimes and have promised to investigate complaints of individual abuses. Ethiopia's ambassador Tsegab Kebebew said the Commission had "grossly mischaracterised the positive and widely acclaimed political developments in Ethiopia". He did not directly address the other criticisms. A spokesperson for Ethiopia's government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Ivory Coast envoy Konan François Kouame said that it considered the work of the UN Commission as now being terminated and urged the council to instead support Ethiopian-led measures.

South Korea raids US military bases in drugs probe

SEOUL (BBC): South Korean police are investigating 17 US soldiers and five other people who allegedly smuggled or used synthetic marijuana via military mail. This follows raids in at least two US army bases in May, including Camp Humphreys, its largest overseas base.

A Filipino and a South Korean have been arrested, while prosecutors review the cases against all 22 suspects. A tip from the US Army's enforcement arm had sparked a four-month investigation by Korean authorities. It was one of the largest in recent years involving American soldiers, US media reported citing Cha Min-seok, a senior detective in South Korea.

Joint raids by South Korean police and the US Army's Criminal Investigation Division found 77g (2.7oz) of syn-

thetic cannabis, more than 4kg of "mixed liquids" used for vaping and a total of \$12,850 (£10,440) in cash at the 22 suspects' homes. They are accused of smuggling synthetic marijuana - known by the street names K2 and Spice - into the country through the US military's postal service.

Seven of them, including five soldiers, are thought to have been involved in the sale of the drugs, 12 were users and three acted as middlemen. A soldier's spouse and another soldier's fiancée are also involved, the police told the BBC. The 17 soldiers are currently stationed at Camp Humphreys, about 48km (30 miles) south of the capital Seoul, and at Camp Casey, an army outpost about 40km north of Seoul, according to the police.

They allegedly distributed the drugs on the bases while communicating via

Snapchat. United States Forces Korea said that it was aware of the investigation. No soldiers are currently in confinement or being detained in relation to it, it said in a statement. Synthetic marijuana is made to mimic THC, the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. While it has similar effects to cannabis, it is typically more potent and has been reported to produce adverse health effects, including acute psychotic episodes, paranoid delusions and severe agitation.

It is difficult to detect because it is often used in liquid form in legal e-cigarette devices, the police said. In South Korea, those convicted of trafficking marijuana face from five years to life in prison. Drug possession carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison or a fine of about 50m won (\$37,200; £30,300).

US govt contractor charged with spying for Ethiopia

WASHINGTON (AFP): A US government contractor who worked at the State and Justice departments has been arrested on charges of spying, reportedly for Ethiopia. Abraham Teklu Lemma, 50, a US citizen of Ethiopian descent, was arrested August 24 and is charged with providing national defense information to a foreign government, the Justice Department said.

The criminal complaint against Lemma, a Silver Spring, Maryland, resident whose LinkedIn profile describes him as an IT systems and data analyst, was unsealed on Friday. In a statement announcing Lemma's arrest, the Justice Department did not name the country he was allegedly spying for, but it was identified by the New York Times and other US media outlets as Ethiopia.

According to an affidavit filed by an FBI investigator, Lemma carried out his espionage activities between December 2022 and August 2023, depositing tens of thousands of dollars in cash into bank accounts in the Washington region. Lemma copied secret and top secret information from dozens of intelligence reports at the State Department and provided it to an "official associated with a foreign country's intelligence service" via an encrypted messaging service.

The information included documents, photographs, notes and maps relating to what the affidavit called the "Relevant Country." The affidavit quoted a September 2022 exchange of messages in which the foreign official told Lemma "it's time to continue (your) support," to which he replied, "Roger that!"

"Lemma's communications with the Foreign Official... included a discussion of military activities of a rebel group involved in an armed struggle against the government of the Relevant Country," it said, believed to be a reference to the Tigray conflict. In addition to working at the State Department, Lemma, who has held a top secret security clearance since 2020, also worked as a contract management analyst at the Justice Department.

Ethiopia is a major recipient of US aid and Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited there in March. Lemma is charged with two counts of espionage and one of unlawfully retaining national defense information. The espionage charges carry a potential death sentence while the retention charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years.

Mexico Varsity to probe leader’s thesis

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexico's top university called for an investigation into an academic essay submitted by opposition presidential candidate Xochitl Galvez in 2010, after local media reported allegations that parts of it were copied. The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) said in a statement it had requested the engineering faculty director refer the matter to the university's technical and ethics committees to carry out "corresponding analysis."

Allegations that Galvez had plagiarized parts of the academic report submitted for a computer engineering degree emerged on social media. Galvez said in a video interview that the allegations related to a small part of the text where there is no clear credit. "They are six paragraphs out of 77 pages, in which the important element is professional experience," she said. Galvez is the leading opposition presidential candidate for the election next year, but trails in polls behind ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum as the country looks set to elect its first female president. Earlier this year, in a high-profile plagiarism scandal, UNAM concluded that Supreme Court Justice Yasmin Esquivel had copied substantial parts of her 1987 thesis.

Sudan’s rival military leaders give competing addresses to UN

NEW YORK (Reuters): The heads of Sudan's rival military factions gave competing addresses to the United Nations, one from the podium at UN headquarters in New York and the other in a rare video recording from an undisclosed location.

Army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, speaking at the United Nations following a string of foreign trips, called on the international community to designate the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as a terrorist organization and to counter its sponsors outside Sudan's borders. RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, said in a video message that his forces were fully prepared for a ceasefire and comprehensive political talks to end the conflict.

Both sides blamed the other for starting the war that erupted in mid-April in Khartoum and has spread to other parts of the country including the western region of Darfur, displacing more than 5 million people and threatening to destabilize the region. Most of Hemedti's recent communications have been audio messages, and his whereabouts have been a source of speculation.

In the video released shortly before Burhan spoke, Hemedti appeared in military uniform, seated behind a desk with a Sudanese national flag behind him as he read out his speech. His location was not clear. "Today we renew our commitment to the peaceful process to put a halt to this war," Hemedti said. "The RSF are fully prepared for a ceasefire throughout Sudan to allow the passage of humanitarian aid ... and to start serious and comprehensive political talks."

Previous assertions by the army and



the RSF that they are seeking a solution to the conflict, as well as announcements of ceasefires by both sides, have failed to stop bloodshed and the deepening of a humanitarian crisis in Sudan. "We are still extending our hands for peace, to stop this war and the suffering of our people," said Burhan, adding that the army remained committed to withdrawing from politics in a transition to civilian rule.

But he also called for the RSF to be labeled a terrorist group and said it was backed by regional and international backers, without naming any. "There is a need to firmly address their sponsors," he said. Sudan's war broke out over plans to formally integrate the RSF into the army as part of

a political transition, four years after the overthrow of former leader Omar al-Bashir during a popular uprising. The army and RSF staged a coup together in 2021 before coming to blows.

Witnesses say the army has used heavy artillery and air strikes that have caused casualties in residential districts of Khartoum and other cities, and that the RSF has inflicted widespread looting and sexual violence on residents as well as participating in ethnically targeted attacks in Darfur. Saudi Arabia and the United States have tried to secure a lasting ceasefire in Sudan but the process stalled amid parallel international initiatives in Africa and the Middle East.

Azerbaijani leader sends message of cooperation and peace

BAKU (Reuters): President Ilham Aliyev offered the ethnic Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and also neighbouring Armenia prospects of cooperation, reconciliation and joint development after his forces took control of the enclave.

In a televised address, he said Azerbaijan had regained full sovereignty over its territory and now wished to integrate Karabakh's population and turn the region into "paradise". He said Azerbaijan had nothing against Karabakh's Armenian people - "they are our citizens" - but only against their "criminal" separatist leadership. His words appeared aimed at addressing allegations by Armenian leaders that Baku planned to "ethnically cleanse" Karabakh's 120,000-strong Armenian population, and, more

broadly, decades of open hostility and distrust between Baku and Yerevan.

Many Azeris want to return to the region after fleeing in the early 1990s, when ethnic Armenians took control of Nagorno-Karabakh in a war linked to the breakup of the Soviet Union and independence for Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thousands of Armenian-speakers fearful of what the future might hold had earlier massed at the airport in Stepanakert, Karabakh's capital known as Khankendi by Azerbaijan, while others took shelter with Russian peacekeepers. Aliyev said Azerbaijan valued the fact that Armenia, on whose support Nagorno-Karabakh had relied for three decades, had not sought to intervene in Baku's military operation, but had remained "watchful". This improved the prospects for peace talks, he said. Baku

has insisted that Armenia maintained forces in Nagorno-Karabakh in contravention of a ceasefire deal agreed after a war in 2020, in which Azerbaijan reclaimed swathes of land in and around the mountainous enclave from Karabakh's Armenians.

Yerevan denied this, but Aliyev said Azerbaijan's forces had found 100 Armenian tanks and armoured vehicles. He said his soldiers had, however, fulfilled instructions to avoid harm to Karabakh's civilians and to civilian infrastructure in the 24-hour offensive that forced the separatist authorities to surrender. A separatist Armenian human rights official said that at least 200 people had been killed and more than 400 wounded in the fighting. Ten of those killed were civilians, of whom five were children, the official said. Reuters could not verify the

figures. Azerbaijan's gains in 2020 left Armenia with few options to help Karabakh to defend itself, and the new balance of power set the stage for fresh peace talks between the two neighbours, punctuated by sporadic outbreaks of cross-border fighting. Aliyev suggested that the return of Azerbaijani control in Nagorno-Karabakh would not only remove a perennial obstacle to peace but also pave the way for greater cooperation and development across all three countries of the South Caucasus, including Georgia. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said this month that Russia, distracted by its war in Ukraine, was winding down its involvement in the region. The Kremlin denied this, saying Russia was "not going anywhere" and would remain the guarantor of security.

Congo’s president wants the large UN peacekeeping mission

NAIROBI (AP): Congo's president wants the world's second largest United Nations peacekeeping force to move up its departure from the country, starting this December, saying it has failed to rein in conflicts in the country's east.

President Felix Antoine Tshisekedi in an address at the annual United Nations gathering of world leaders accused the 17,000-strong peacekeeping mission of being unable to confront the fighting in eastern Congo that is "tearing apart" the central African nation. After a quarter-century of peacekeeping efforts, "it's time for our country to take its destiny

fully in hand" and become the leading security force in Congo, he said. How Congo's estimated 100,000-strong military will adapt to the challenge is not clear.

Moving up the start of the peacekeeping mission's "accelerated retreat" by a year, from December 2024, will help ease deadly tensions in the region, said the president, who is seeking a second term in a general election in December. Eastern Congo, far from the capital, has long been overrun by dozens of armed groups seeking a share of the region's gold and other resources. Some have been quietly backed by Congo's neighbors. UN experts have

noted "substantial evidence" that Rwanda is supporting the resurgent M23 rebel group, which Rwanda has denied.

Thousands of civilians have suffered, and frustrated Congolese say that no one is protecting them from rebel attacks. Earlier this month, a Congolese military crackdown on planned protests against the UN mission killed at least 43 people and severely injured more than 50 in the eastern city of Goma. Two high-ranking officers were arrested. Such protests have been common. A visit by Pope Francis to eastern Congo planned for early this year was canceled

because of the worsening security situation there.

"In the past year, the political and security environment has deteriorated sharply, creating a severe humanitarian and protection crisis," said a report last month by the UN secretary-general discussing options for the peacekeeping mission's withdrawal. As the UN mission withdraws, more pressure is likely to fall on a separate, much smaller East African regional force in eastern Congo which has seen citizen protests as well. Earlier this year, the Southern African Development Community also decided to deploy forces to eastern Congo.

Syrians feel growing pressure from Turkey’s anti-migrant political wave

ISTANBUL (Reuters): Anti-migrant sentiment, economic woes and political pressures are leading some of the 3.3 millions Syrians living in Turkey to plan a return to Syria or seek shelter in Europe, according to migrants interviewed by Reuters.

They are concerned that rhetoric against migrants may rear up in campaigning for March local elections, echoing efforts to tap into nationalist sentiments during May's general elections. Many of those now living in Istanbul face a more immediate worry - authorities' Sept. 24 deadline for them to leave the city if they are registered in other Turkish provinces.

One 32-year-old Syrian said he is saving up to pay smugglers and plans to go to

Belgium. Hardship caused by Turkey's rampant inflation and anti-migrant rhetoric motivated his decision. "We are blamed and scapegoated for the worsening economy. Discrimination is rising. It is becoming impossible for us to live here," he told Reuters, declining to give his name for security reasons. The 32-year-old is among those affected by Sunday's deadline because he was registered in southeastern Sanliurfa province.

According to rights groups, racist violence against Syrians is increasing and authorities have adopted a tougher policy on migrants not registered in Istanbul, stoking migrants' fears.

Another Syrian man, a 33-year-old teacher, said he could no longer afford to

live in Turkey after 10 years spent in Istanbul with his two children, with his expenses exceeding his income.

"I decided to return to Syria because of the bad financial situation in Turkey. I know the situation is bad in Syria too but here it's worse for me," he said, declining to be named. It was not possible to quantify the number of Syrians currently planning to leave for Europe or return to Syria. Turkey is home to 3.3 million Syrians with temporary protection permits, according to Turkish authorities. Istanbul has the highest Syrian population with more than 532,000.

While Syrians were assigned to provinces throughout Turkey, many went to Istanbul due to more

opportunities. Authorities said it was unclear how many such people there were in the city.

Adem Maarastawi, a 29-year-old Syrian activist working in Istanbul, is registered in central Turkey's Kirshehir province. As Sept. 24 approaches, he fears being sent to Kirshehir. "I struggled to build a life here. How can I rebuild my life from scratch in another city?" he said, adding that he looked for a job in more than 30 cities before settling in Istanbul. Experts believe anti-migrant sentiment will dominate opposition campaigning for the March votes, as it did in the May elections, and worry this could lead to more physical and verbal violence against migrants including more social media hostility.

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Long-awaited polls must be credible

THE Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finally announced that the general elections in the country will be held in the last week of January 2024, while the detailed schedule will be released after the initial list of the delimitations of the constituencies is finalized. During a recent meeting, the ECP reviewed progress on the delimitation of the constituencies and decided to release the final list on November 30 after hearing objections and proposals regarding the preliminary delimitations. The general elections will be held in the last week of January 2024 after a 54-day election campaign programme following issuance of the final list of constituencies.

The country has witnessed months-long political turmoil and internal chaos after the PDM coalition government relinquished its charge and an interim setup took the reins of the government. The nation was prepared for the general election but CCI's approval of the census results prompted the issue of fresh delimitation and updated voter list to make the electoral exercise trustworthy and credible. The ECP's decision on fresh delimitation raised suspicions and prompted propaganda regarding an early arrangement of nationwide polls, while a flood of rumours broke out about the tenure and intent of the interim rulers that cast a gloomy picture of the country's future and democracy. Meanwhile, the political leaders and civic groups also played a heinous role in spreading uncertainty and intensifying chaos in the country through media hype and unreal verbosity. Although elections should be held within 90 days in case of premature dissolution of the assemblies, the release of census results merits its updated voter lists and fresh delimitation to give an apparent validity to the electoral process and timely addressal of post-election disputes of the politicians.

The country is slowly heading toward the dearly awaited election season despite the impatience of the public and the urgency of the leaders. The election regulating authority taking concrete legal and administrative steps to pave the way for the grand finale between the major civic groups and their supporters. It has published the updated voter lists that confirmed the inclusion of nearly 2 crore fresh voters while the drawing of fresh electoral constituencies is in the final stage. The reports suggest that the exercise of delimitation would not only change the demographic composition of each electoral district but likely bring vital changes in the result of the forthcoming polls which causes concerns in political parties and their leadership.

As the Electoral Watchdog has announced a time frame, the flood of rumours and propaganda of the civic groups and their lobbying outposts must come to a calm and all stakeholders should commence their election campaign in good faith, positive spirit and contribution. The ECP has allocated sufficient time for civic activities and authority is in consultation with political parties to finalize code of conduct for the general elections. Unfortunately, the ECP faces scarcity of resources, shortage of manpower and uses adhoc staff borrowed from other departments who often demonstrate display and slackness, and cause embarrassment for the election commission. Multiple incidents of complicity and poll rigging happened in the past in the garb of fog, unserviceability of vehicles and poor signal of communication networks which highlighted the loopholes in the system and exposed poor management of election authority. For this time, the election commission must set a strict discipline regime for the election staff, and impose tough penalties for political leaders who ever violate the law and sabotage the electoral process, so the sanctity and credibility of the election process can be ensured at all costs.

Haitians' uprising against armed gangs

ACCORDING to Western media, Haiti's most powerful gang leader Jimmy Cherizier alias Barbecue has issued a call to his supporters to take arms and overthrow the Country's sitting Prime Minister who does not align well with the political interests of the gang boss. Haiti, a weak Caribbean nation, has been in the grip of spiralling turmoil, lawlessness and chaos since the murder of politically elected President Moïse, who was shot down cold-blooded in his official residence in the heart of the capital Port-au-Prince. Since then, rifle-toting gangs have commandeered up to 90% of Haiti's capital and there has been an explosion of killings, kidnappings and sexual violence turning much of the city into a no-go zone. Millions are struggling to eat, partly as a result of gang checkpoints blocking food supply routes, and captured water and fuel reservoirs.

Presently, Haiti's government has requested the United States and the UN to deploy special forces in Haiti to help support the Caribbean state in defeating gangs that practically choked the state authority over the past one year. The Biden administration in consultation with the UN Security Council approved a Kenya-led intervention designed to address the Caribbean country's escalating security crisis. As the global community prepares to assist the Haitian government in crushing gang violence, the gang boss and his crooks are openly challenging the writ of the law and warning to overthrow the Chief Executive by force, while repeating the history when some unknown armed men killed President Moïse at his residence about two years ago.

The masses became annoyed by persistent violence and a curfew-like life in their nation as a low-intensity war against peaceful and unarmed people is raging across the country. After the government failed to halt the bloodshed and crimes, a vigilante movement called "Bwa Kale" (public uprising) gained wide-ranging popularity among the masses and the public rose against the gangs with machetes, rocks and guns to protect their fundamental rights, together with civil liberties, and access to basic necessities. The Haitian government submitted an appeal at the United Nations several months back but a majority of nations were hesitant to deploy their troops because of the risks involved. Now the public has stood up against the crooks, hopefully they will champion this crusade against the criminals and Haiti will regain its peace very soon.

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Why major powers' description of Israel as a democracy is wrong

Chris Doyle

AN obstinate lexicon of clichés garnishes every Western political figure's discourse on Israel-Palestine. Most of them bear little relationship to the reality on the ground and, at their worst, are dangerously misleading. The stickiness of catchphrases such as "the Middle East peace process" and "two-state solution" is remarkable.

Dipping his hand into the cliché cookie jar last week was the British foreign secretary. "Israel's security is our security," posted James Cleverly, a position most British voters might not be aware of. "A strong Israel is vital to the security of the region," and "The UK remains a firm supporter of a two-state solution" were two other tired gems. None of this is novel. The peace process is nonexistent. A two-state solution is as close to unrealizable as imaginable, with the Israeli government gobbling up the last crumbs of hope on that front.

Yet here was Cleverly posting a picture of himself alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with the tag line: "United by our unwavering belief in democracy." Other figures have referred to Israel as a "freedom-loving democracy." The US national security adviser, when discussing the upcoming Joe Biden-Netanyahu meet on the sidelines at the UN, said they would "discuss the two nations' shared democratic values." This is spectacular trolling of the Israeli protesters who have spent 37 weeks demonstrating against the Netanyahu coalition's full-frontal assault on the Israeli judicial system. It is quite something given how Netanyahu himself is on trial on corruption charges.

If only Israel was a democracy with equal rights for all of its citizens. The reality is that it never has been, even before these protests. However, making such a claim triggers howls of outrage among the anti-Arab corps, clouding any attempt to examine this dispassionately. Yes, Israel has general elections. Palestinian citizens of Israel can vote. It is not plagued by ballot-rigging. Some Palestinian citizens have made high office, including a few ministers. All true. But elections do not make a democracy.

A democracy has to be a state for all its citizens. In the self-styled "Jewish state," this is not the case. A democracy for Jews only is not a democracy. This has particularly been the case since the 2018 passing of the "Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People." Under this law, non-Jews are second-class citizens at best. A democracy should give rights to all those entitled to be within that state. Palestinian refugees from 1948 are denied their rights to citizenship. Many of them were ethnically cleansed between 1947 and 1950. Deliberate acts of violence were deployed to alter the demographics of the state. More than 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed. Even today, many Palestinians inside Israel live in unrecognized

precarious their status is. The most compelling description of the Israeli political model is a regime of apartheid, with systematic discrimination against the non-Jewish population. In every area under Israeli control, Jews have superior rights. Israel controls the lives of 14 million people but only the Jewish population have full rights. In the worst case, in Gaza, Palestinians endure occupation and blockade; in the West Bank, it is occupation including martial law.

The clearest, most obvious marker of apartheid is the privileged position of 700,000 settlers. Israeli Jewish settlers have full rights and citizenship, living under Israeli civil law in the same geography where Palestinians are under the control of the army - a control marked by

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communities and cannot vote in municipal elections. Any Jew anywhere in the world can immigrate to Israel. A Palestinian refugee within a few miles of Israel's borders cannot. Moreover, Israeli authorities do not draft Palestinian citizens into the army, while ensuring that many benefits only apply to those who have served.

Israel also illegally annexed a unilaterally expanded East Jerusalem. Though this should not have happened, just like Russia should not have annexed Crimea, Israel refused to give Palestinians in East Jerusalem the right to citizenship, just permanent residency.

Those who tried to apply for citizenship faced a long, drawn-out process and mostly failed. Citizenship was never a right. More than 14,000 Palestinians have had their permanent residency in Jerusalem removed, reflecting how

increasing brutality and violence. Israel denies more than 5.5 million Palestinians any rights or basic freedoms. Settlers have privileged access to water, about six times as much per head. Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir last month highlighted the settlers' superior rights.

In an Israeli TV interview, he proclaimed: "My right and that of my wife and children to travel the roads of Judea and Samaria is more important than freedom of movement for Arabs ... The right to life comes before freedom of movement."

International condemnation followed. However, the condemnation was directed at Ben-Gvir for what he said, not the horrific reality on the ground he correctly described. That is what the world should be appalled by. Israel's crime of apartheid is now being recognized across the entire

human rights community and further afield. Many are no longer scared of stating what they have known for a long time. It is barely contested, even if political figures still refuse to face reality.

If the fact that nearly every major human rights organization in the world, including 17 Israeli ones, have determined that this is apartheid is not enough to convince you, what about Tamir Pardo? This man was the former head of Mossad, surely not an antisemite, who has made clear that, in his view, Israel operates apartheid. Not enough?

How about former top Israeli general Amiram Levin, who stated this month that Israel has implemented "total apartheid" in the West Bank. Benjamin Pogrand, one of the most prominent Jewish opponents of the South African apartheid regime, has for years defended Israel against the charge of the crime of apartheid. However, only last month, he wrote that he could no longer make this argument and that the "charge is becoming fact." None of this prevented Germany's antisemitism czar, Felix Klein, from claiming that calling Israel an apartheid state was an "antisemitic narrative." Such a statement, so diametrically at odds with the observed reality on the ground, should lead to him losing his role, but no. In fact, denying the apartheid system is a clear example of deep-rooted anti-Arab racism.

Apartheid and democracy are polar opposites. Apartheid is something Jewish figures globally are increasingly opposing, appalled as they are at the behavior of Israel. They understand all too well this is a disgraceful violation of Jewish beliefs and morals. Describing Israel as a democracy is not some harmless, uncontroversial comment. It is an endorsement of a vile, racist system that needs to be upended. Major powers need to dismantle the discriminatory system Israel has imposed. There can be no peace process and no fair solution until that happens. One day, one hopes the world's leaders will be honest about this and understand their role in propping up this apartheid system. Until then, Palestinians have little hope.

China and Africa cooperation impacts the world

Ma Wencheng

RECENTLY, the China Development Bank signed an agreement with the African Export-Import Bank in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, focusing on development, providing the African Export-Import Bank with a \$400 million dollar term loan to support the financing of African small and medium enterprises. This batch of loans will support African SMEs engaged in African import and export trade and production activities in member countries of the African Export-Import Bank.

China has become one of the main sources of investment and financing in Africa, providing a large amount of urgently needed funds for African development through mechanisms such as providing aid, government concessional loans, commercial financial institution credit funds, special investment and financing funds, and encouraging Chinese companies to directly invest in Africa, creating a huge scale effect. China's cumulative investment in Africa has exceeded over \$200 billion dollars. Chinese companies have built highways, railways, ports, airports and other forms of infrastructure in Africa, greatly improving the economic development environment in Africa, attracting foreign investment, promoting local employment, freeing people from poverty, and gradually moving towards a prosperous and well-off life.

China's aid and cooperation does not come with rose-colored glasses and has no attached conditions; whereas the arrogance and rudeness of certain Western countries - the old colonial mindset - and their high-handed approach make the African people feel humiliated and lowly and are often ignored and looked down upon as Western countries often promise more and deliver less, only caring about their own gains. Cooperation with China offers a kind of equal partnership, a brotherly open and honest communication, without feeling oppressed. As the saying goes: time reveals a person's heart, China's assistance and cooperation have brought tangible benefits to various friendly countries in Africa, bringing visible and tangible changes.

Firstly, enhance capacity cooperation. China has rich manufacturing experience and technical advantages and countries like Egypt and South Africa, as important manufacturing centers in Africa, have good location and market advantages. The two sides can further strengthen capacity docking, jointly carry out manufacturing cooperation, enhance Africa's industrial competitiveness, and achieve complementarity optimization of the industrial chain.

Secondly, deepen financial cooperation. Finance is an important support for economic development, and China and Africa can further expand channels for capital circulation, strengthen cooperation and exchanges between financial institutions. Chinese financial institutions can provide more concessional loans and investments for Africa, supporting Africa's infrastructure construction and industrial development.

The two sides can also strengthen cooperation in financial supervision and risk management to enhance the stability and sustainability of financial cooperation.

Moreover, some investors have doubts about the political stability, business environment and legal environment of African countries, which to a certain extent affect the potential investment momentum and the sustainability of existing investment projects. With the effective development of the Belt and Road economy, China-Africa cooperation is beginning to shift from government aid to enterprise investment and financing cooperation, upgrading from general trade to capacity cooperation and processing trade, and gradually moving towards investment operation, economic special zones, industrial parks and trade logistics centers as well as high-end fields such as financial services. China and Africa have entered a new stage of win-win cooperation and mutual development. Some experts and scholars in the industry believe that China can actively explore helping African countries to plan and build economic special zones and industrial parks, drive the overall industrialization level of Africa, and promote the sustainable development of the African economy. Lastly, in terms of the use of funds, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable development. Our earth is the only one, we have to be responsible for our home, and we must protect our blue globe. We have made significant achievements in environmental protection and sustainable development in China and can share experiences and technology with Africa. The two sides can strengthen cooperation in the fields of environmental governance, renewable energy, ecological protection, etc.; jointly address climate change and environmental challenges; and promote green development and the realization of sustainable development.

It is undeniable that China-Africa cooperation not only has significant implications for the development of both sides but also has a positive and far-reaching impact on regional and global peace, stability and prosperity. China-Africa cooperation is an important part of the "Belt and Road" initiative, aiming to build a closer regional partnership through connectivity, consultation, and building and sharing, to achieve common development and prosperity of humanity. China and Africa will further strengthen cooperation, promote the "Belt and Road" Initiative to land and implement in distant lands for mutual benefit and win-win, and promote China-Africa cooperation to a new level. I believe that as long as we are sincere and united as brothers, multilateralism overcomes hegemony, peace and justice overcome selfishness and self-interest. Creating a good community with a shared future for mankind has become the main melody of the world, and the beautiful great unity of the world is not very far away.

The China Daily

Lebanon's presidential vacuum continues amid Bassil-Hezbollah stalemate

Sami Moubayed

ON the last day of 2020, Gibran Bassil talked Hasan Nasrallah into revisiting the Mar Mikhail Agreement, signed 14 years earlier between Hezbollah and his father-in-law, Michel Aoun. Aoun at the time promised to support Hezbollah with arms. Nasrallah promised to make him president, which he did exactly 10 years later, in 2016. But there was one thing about the 2006 agreement: it made no mention of Gibran Bassil.

Using his tremendous influence on the aging Aoun, Bassil successfully made himself the backbone of his administration as an adviser, foreign minister, and president of the Patriotic Movement (FPM), which controlled the lion's share of parliament during the Aoun years. Less than two years into his father-in-law's administration, Bassil hoped that a new Mar Mikhail Agreement would take him to Baabda Palace. Nasrallah

said yes to a Mar Mikhail II - accommodating Bassil, who had been sanctioned by the US for his ties with Hezbollah - but never went through with it. Despite repeated attempts at reviving the Mar Mikhail sub-committee, nothing happened. Hezbollah constantly found excuses to avoid convening, telling Bassil, albeit indirectly, that they would not support his presidential bid. Then it became public: Hezbollah's presidential candidate would be their long-time ally Suleiman Frangieh, a scion of a historic Maronite political family whose grandfather and namesake had been president in the 1970s.

Furious, Bassil switched his loyalties to the opposition, joining ranks with two vehemently anti-Hezbollah Christian parties: the Lebanese Forces of Samir Geagea and the Lebanese Phalange of the Gemayel family. By the time Aoun's term ended in October 2022, the two former allies had parted ways, showing the

fragility of their alliance. Last June, Bassil put his full weight behind Frangieh's opponent Jihad Azour, openly challenging Hezbollah in parliament. As a result, both Frangieh and Azour failed to secure the necessary number of votes and Lebanon was allowed to drift into a presidential vacuum which continues even after 12 months down the road.

Nasrallah sent emissaries to Bassil, suggesting that he drop his support for Azour and return to the Hezbollah fold, with vague promises of making him president after Frangieh's term ends. Bassil came back with a counter-proposal, saying that he would drop Azour in return for Hezbollah dropping Frangieh, and the two sides would go for a third name: ex-interior minister Ziad Baroud. When that failed, a new proposal began making the rounds, one that was new and innovative where in exchange for supporting

Frangieh, or at a bare minimum - not opposing him - Hezbollah would agree to a law of administrative decentralisation that would empower Christian municipalities and governorates. This was something that Nasrallah felt was worth discussing, delegating Mohammad Raad, a senior member of Hezbollah, to discuss it with Bassil.

On September 10, 2023, the two sides created a sub-committee to discuss decentralisation. Bassil presented them with a full-fledged proposal, which he had personally penned with his advisers, adding a clause for financial decentralisation that also dilutes the powers of the Ministry of Finance, held by Hezbollah's allies in the Amal Movement. Even if Hezbollah agrees to administrative decentralisation, it cannot approve financial decentralisation without an okay from its longtime ally Nabih Berri, speaker of par-

liament and head of the Amal Movement. Bassil has an axe to grind with Berri - they never got along, neither during the Aoun years nor before or after. But under no circumstances would Hezbollah accommodate Bassil at Berri's expense. Bassil can get one of his demands, but certainly not both.

On August 28, 2023, Nasrallah described the status of the talks that led to the joint committee on September 10 as "deep and serious." He quickly added, "reaching a deal needs some time." Coinciding with the renewed talks comes an initiative by Berri, calling for roundtable talks between all stakeholders, followed by an open session of parliament to elect a new president within seven days, saying that this ought to be completed in September. Hezbollah supports the idea, and so does Gibran, Druze leader Walid Junblatt, and the Maronite Patriarch, who sees it - very correctly - as very similar to what the French envoy Yves

Le Drian has been calling for, most recently during his mid-September visit to Lebanon. Opposing the Berri initiative is Samir Geagea and the Lebanese Forces, who feel that Bassil has used them to get back at Hezbollah or to provoke Nasrallah into resuming talks with him.

He is saying that roundtable talks should happen after a president is elected, not before. Bassil is now suggesting a third way forward if the decentralisation law passes with Hezbollah: He will withdraw his support for Azour, Hezbollah would do the same with Frangieh, and they would agree on a new fresh name backed by Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement. But for now, Hezbollah remains uninterested in discussing new names. It has no Plan B for Frangieh. Will Bassil accept him in return for administrative decentralisation? Time will tell.

Gulf News

BRI lays new foundation for healthy Africa

Tian Muye

THE year 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith for China's Africa policy. It also marks the 60th anniversary of China's medical aid to African countries. Africa faces longstanding medical and health challenges. Due to multiple factors such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of human resources, Africa is one of the regions in the world suffering from grim medical and health conditions.

Africa has not yet established a well-structured public health prevention and control system and medical service system that can respond timely and run efficiently. For example, in 2021, it was estimated that there were 247 million cases of malaria globally, with approximately 95% occurring in Africa. Four African countries accounted for over half of all malaria deaths worldwide: Nigeria (31.3%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12.6%), United Republic of Tanzania (4.1%) and Niger (3.9%). Africa also bears 23% of the world's tuberculosis burden, with over 500 cases per 100,000 people in countries such as the Central African Republic, Gabon and Lesotho. Furthermore, various tropical diseases pose threats to Africa, including Lassa fever, dengue fever, river blindness (onchocerciasis), schistosomiasis, trypanosomiasis and leprosy to name a few. While these infectious diseases have been largely eliminated in developed countries, they still prevail in African nations. According to the WHO, Africa bears over 25% of the global disease burden, is home to only 3% of the global health workforce and spends less than 1% of the world's financial resources on health, making it the region with the highest disease burden in the world.

Our world today is living through accelerating changes unseen in a century. Global macro-economic imbalances have been

exacerbated, and the North-South divide is widening even further. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded the gains of the last decade in global development and dealt a heavy blow to developing countries. African countries face the following situations and challenges: On one hand, the pandemic has plunged African economies into the most severe recession in fifty years. Although there has been a rebound, the recovery is still relatively slow, and governments are burdened with increasing debt. As a result, many African countries have reduced their domestic health budget, relying heavily on external health assistance funds. On the other hand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa also faced epidemics including monkeypox, Ebola, plague, yellow fever and Lassa fever. The continent has also long been burdened by diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, which have continued to threaten its population and pose even greater challenges.

For example, according to a report by the WHO, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a 4.3% decrease in malaria case detection rate in Africa, with a 13% increase in malaria deaths in sub-Saharan African countries. This has further widened the global health development gap and seriously hindered the implementation of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2022 annual report released by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation states that "nearly every indicator of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is off track at the halfway point for achieving them by 2030". A report released by the WHO in May this year points out that "the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health contributes to the ongoing decline in progress towards the SDGs". China has always been a staunch supporter and important partner for Africa's development and medical and health cooperation

is a shining name card of China-Africa cooperation. Since 1963, China has been constantly dispatching medical teams to Africa. Currently, nearly 1,000 medical personnel from 46 medical teams have treated over 230 million local patients at 100 sites in 45 African countries. Since 2015, China has established twinning relations with 46 hospitals in 41 African countries, aiming to train local medical specialists and enhance specialized medical services. In addition, China has dispatched short-term medical expert groups to over 40 African countries to provide free clinic service. It has also launched maternal and child health demonstration projects relying on Chinese medical teams and China-aided hospitals, and assisted African countries in upgrading modern medical and healthcare infrastructure. In the field of public health, China actively helps African countries respond to various infectious diseases and major public health crises. Especially since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, China and Africa have continued to provide mutual support, setting a fine example for international cooperation against COVID-19. Overall, China's health assistance to and cooperation with African countries mainly focus on promoting the provision of medical services, engaging in health workforce cooperation and improving access to essential medicines. However, there is relatively less cooperation in providing health financing, strengthening health information systems and enhancing the capacity-building of partner countries in health governance. In light of the new situations and challenges faced by African countries and the WHO's definition of healthcare systems, China and Africa can deepen and expand their cooperation in the following areas to make new contributions to the building of a China-Africa community of health for all.

First, deepen cooperation in pub-

lic health systems between China and Africa. This can be achieved through participating in the construction of the Africa CDC, supporting the African Union (AU) and individual African countries in establishing robust mechanisms for major epidemic prevention and control, and public health emergency management systems. Additionally, China and Africa should coordinate and integrate relevant medical assistance resources, conduct joint research on the prevention and control of major infectious diseases in Africa, implement relevant prevention and control plans, and effectively improve the overall health of the population in the region. Secondly, promote the sharing and coordinating of health information between China and Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for health informatization in developing countries, and the rapid development of communication networks in Africa in recent years has made the above mentioned cooperation possible. China can provide appropriate products, technologies and services to meet the real needs of Africa. By employing mobile health, telehealth and other methods, we can move diagnosis, treatment and other offline activities online; bring high-quality medical resources to the grassroots level; and effectively improve primary healthcare in Africa. Thirdly, expand partnerships and enhance global discourse power. It is suggested to strengthen practical trilateral and multilateral cooperation with international organizations, international development partners, and domestic civil society organizations, leveraging more international resources to support South-South health cooperation. At the same time, China and Africa should fully utilize multilateral mechanisms and platforms to contribute their wisdom and experience to the setting of relevant global health agendas, formulation of rules and establishment of technical standards, thus enhancing the global discourse power of both sides.

Putin and Kim have launched a global war

Daniel Hannan

THERE was an almost cartoonish quality to the bilateral summit of the world's most evil leaders. Kim Jong Un emerged from his Bond-villain armoured train to tour the Russian far east with Vladimir Putin. The two men exchanged rifles, visited military facilities and talked of rockets. You half expected them to disappear with a thunderclap into a Gothic castle alongside Dracula and Montie Burns.

Except, of course, that no man is a villain in his own eyes. Even the worst monsters - especially the worst monsters, we might say - convince themselves that they are cosmic defenders of righteousness. Hence the corpulent Korean caudillo's declaration that "the Russian army and people will certainly win a great victory in the sacred struggle for the punishment of a great evil". He means it. As Roy Baumeister showed in his book Evil, we are hard-wired always to see ourselves as the wronged party. In any clash, whether a minor misunderstanding at the office or a full-scale war, we see our own actions as proportionate, justified and one-off, and other party's as premeditated, sustained and malevolent.

Steven Pinker elaborated the phenomenon in his 2011 magnum opus, The Better Angels of Our Nature: "Even in matters when no reasonable third party can doubt who's right and who's wrong, we have to be prepared, when putting on psychological spectacles, to see that evildoers always think they are acting morally. The spectacles are a painful fit." What might be the point of view of Putin and Kim? I think it would run something like this.

"Westerners are hypocrites. They lecture the rest of us about international law but, when it suits them, they bomb Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya. They throw a fit about Russian assassinations, but they kept trying to murder Fidel Castro. And anyway, what's so special about the Western way of life? OK, it might give them a higher GDP, but look at what it costs them. Fragmented families, drugs, degeneracy. Who's to say that our values - patriotism, sacrifice and collective endeavour - don't make you happier?"

One way to answer that question is to ask people to rate their happiness on a scale of one to ten. Russians score lower than Westerners. North Koreans are not asked. Another is to look at where people choose to live. Here is a striking statistic. On the eve of the Russian revolution, Russia and the United

States had roughly the same population. A century later, because of different rates of longevity, migration and abortion (Russia has one of the highest abortion rates in the world) there were twice as many Americans as Russians. I'd say that's a pretty strong endorsement of liberalism.

The tyrants (and their Western apologists) might object that this is not a fair comparison, insisting the United States somehow acquired its wealth by war rather than by free contract and property rights. They will struggle to argue that the United States was more imperialist than Russia which, as Henry Kissinger quipped, expanded at the rate of "one Belgium per year", but let's leave that aside. If you want a laboratory-quality comparison, consider Korea. The two Koreas began from the same place in 1953. If anything, North Korea had a slight edge, having been more industrialised, although South Korea had a larger population. But in other respects, the two sides were identical. They had the same language, the same culture, the same work ethic, and both had just come through a devastating war. Today, the economy of South Korea is 57 times as large as its northern neighbour's. Its people live more than 10 years longer (North Korean life expectancy is as low as Russia's). Its rivers are cleaner, its forests less depleted. Its children are several times more likely to survive infancy - and if that statistic doesn't correlate with greater net happiness, I don't know what does. Korea also anticipates the argument that liberal capitalism is a success only in terms defined by the largely Protestant culture from which it emerged. To praise Western liberalism in essentially Western terms, runs the argument, is to beg the question, because non-Western cultures might not put the same emphasis on individual fulfilment. Well, the two Koreas began with the same religious blend: Buddhism, native shamanism and a not insignificant Christian minority. Both are now largely atheistic. But only one has to prevent its population defecting en masse to the other. It is true that defining good and evil without a religious scaffold to hold them in place is not easy. In a famous scene in The Brothers Karamazov, a young aristocrat and a monk discuss the problem.

How can a benevolent God have created a world full of horrors? Then again, in what sense - other than by religious criteria - can they definitively be said to be horrors? How, in short, is any morality possible without God? Their fiction-

al dialogue is set in the Optina monastery near the small town of Kozelsk. In April 1940, in that same monastery, Dostoyevsky's questions found a non-fictional answer. Optina was a base for the NKVD, the ancestor of Putin's KGB. As good communists, its officers believed that discrediting Christian superstitions would let them make rational calculations - not least about human life. This reasoning led them to condemn 21,892 army officers, priests and intellectuals who had been arrested following the USSR's invasion of Poland the previous year. The Poles were judged anti-social: they kept their uniforms tidy, continued to observe military rank in captivity and celebrated Christmas. They were duly loaded onto buses, driven into the woods and shot.

That is the system that Ukrainians want to break away from. That is the system that 33,000 North Koreans have succeeded in fleeing, despite the dogs, mines and guns put there to hold them in. States in which you can be liquidated, and your friends will be too scared to complain, are not conducive to human contentment, however much they suit the robber barons who run them. Such states were near-universal until 300 or so years ago. The powers enjoyed by Putin and Kim would have been recognisable to an Iron Age slave emperor. Western liberalism is the beautiful exception. And I fear that that fact is not appreciated, even in the West.

Why, after all, does Putin seemingly want Kim's stocks of ammunition? At best, they will plug a gap for a few months. Presumably, Putin's strategy is to hold out until the United States is led by a man who has praised both him and Kim to the skies, namely Donald Trump. The fact that such an outcome is plausible is enough to tell us that an open society is not widely valued in the West. Nothing in our sublimary world is perfect, of course. All countries occasionally engage in double standards. It is true, to cite one of the most common anti-Western complaints, that we are more agitated about Iran acquiring nuclear weapons than about India or Israel doing so - though that is for a pretty obvious reason, namely that India and Israel won't aim them at us.

It is true, too, that Ukraine is far from being a perfect democracy. But Ukrainians still understand the difference between liberalism and Putinism - between leaders being subject to the law, and leaders making up the rules as they go along. They care enough to fight for that difference. Do we?

The West's climate crisis is bad news for the Global South too

Rizwan Basir

THE global investment and lending systems are on the verge of a climate-centric metamorphosis as the consequences of global warming on economies around the world become impossible to overlook. That change should be good news but it is the economically-challenged Global South that could bear the heaviest burden of this shift.

Before 2021, climate change was primarily regarded as a concern that disproportionately affected the Global South. International financial institutions and advanced economies directed significant amounts of their finance earmarked for climate-related mitigation and investments towards vulnerable areas to enhance their ability to adapt. However, the past two years have brought about a radical shift. The year 2023, specifically, has witnessed an unprecedented surge in dramatic climate change effects across North America, Europe, the Middle East and East Asia. Prolonged heatwaves, floods, raging wildfires and devastating hurricanes have struck these wealthier regions, leaving them bewildered.

Against this backdrop, it should surprise no one if richer nations redirect financing that was previously allocated for the Global South's adaptation efforts, channelling it instead towards domestic recovery efforts. The shift is already noticeable in mechanisms like multilateral climate funds, as highlighted recently by the

struggles of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in securing pledges from rich countries for its upcoming funding cycle. Remember, there are only limited dedicated sources of climate financing to begin with.

And while accessing funding from such platforms is exceedingly challenging, they play a crucial role and may be the only lifeline for many vulnerable regions. If these funds run dry, the Global South will have no doors left to knock on. The Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund, established just last year, might also fall prey to this changing landscape. To some degree, it already has. The fund doesn't yet have enough commitments, let alone necessary capital, to address climate change. Additionally, it regularly encounters dismissive comments from rich countries concerning contributions. The United States, in particular, remains opposed to the idea of holding historical emitters responsible for the current climate landscape, or compensating countries affected by disasters.

COP28 is expected to include the operationalisation of the L&D fund on its agenda. It will be intriguing to witness how delegates will navigate the challenge of operationalising a fund that's nearly empty. Another implication of the climate-driven transformation of financial systems, which could have the most significant impact on the Global South, relates to concessional elements

within global debt.

For institutional lenders like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, climate exposures are becoming increasingly evident through an elevated probability of loans that borrowers are not able to repay due to hardships. Such challenges stem from borrowers facing recurring climate-induced disasters or depreciation of their existing assets caused by the escalation of global inflation, which itself may be driven by climate change.

Lenders face a quandary. On the one hand, their core mandate is to provide financial assistance to countries in need. However, they must also exercise caution when extending loans to countries that may be unable to repay them. Consequently, as a delicate balancing act, institutions are now moving away from the concessional nature of debt instruments, relinquishing their prior leniency. Pakistan serves as a notable example. Last year's floods plunged the country into poly-crises, pushing it dangerously close to a sovereign debt default. Ultimately, the economic collapse was averted through the approval of a \$3bn loan program by the IMF. One would expect that the IMF would provide this amount on favourable terms to help alleviate Pakistan's economic woes. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Reforms tied to the bailout package have resulted in a surge in annual

inflation in Pakistan, reaching a historic high of 38 percent in May. Interest rates have also climbed, and the Pakistani rupee has reached unprecedented lows, with a 6.2 percent decline against the US dollar last month. Climate-vulnerable African nations present other cases in point. According to the IMF's own assessment, 13 African countries are currently teetering on the edge of climate and debt distress. Drought-stricken Zambia and, more recently, flood-prone Ghana have already defaulted on their debt payments.

The prospect of debt pardoning, a plea the debt-burdened Global South fervently advocates for, is not one that lenders like. The climate has changed, not the tenets of capitalism. "We want to pay," said Kenyan President William Ruto during the New Global Financial Pact Summit in June. "But we need a new financial model," he argued. "The current financial architecture is unfair, punitive and inequitable." To be sure, the Global South will need to depend on its internal resources for the most part to drive climate investments. These countries must look to break free from the relentless cycle of debt and climate crises. Yet, to accomplish this, they need a financial system founded not on the principle of survival of the fittest, but rather on equitable opportunities for all. Mere sympathy from the rich will no longer suffice. What the Global South needs, and rightfully deserves, is systemised empathy.

US, China lay out vision for new world order amid human rights differences

Akmal Dawi

AS global leaders converge in New York for the 78th UN General Assembly this month, the United States and China, already embroiled in a fierce contest for expanded global influence, have unveiled distinctive visions for the next era of international order.

"One era is ending, a new one is beginning," said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as he outlined the Biden administration's ambitious blueprint for the future on Wednesday. Blinken said the United States is building up alliances to strengthen democracies, promote human rights and enhance economic development.

Lambasting China for supporting autocratic regimes worldwide and Russia for launching an unjust war against Ukraine, Blinken declared the United States' commitment to nurturing alliances that bolster democracies, champion human rights and foster economic development. "We will advance this vision guided by a sense of enlightened self-interest that has long animated US leadership at its best," he said. Meanwhile this week, Beijing unveiled its Proposal of the People's Republic of China on the Reform and Development of Global Governance. "Humanity is once again at a crossroads," said the 5,400-word Chinese proposal, which calls for greater multilateralism in international affairs with a reformed United Nations and an expanded Security Council at its core. "Together, we will create a better future for humanity,"

the proposal concluded.

The United States and China both express the desire for a global governance system with increased participation from developing countries. Both agree on the need to expand the UN Security Council. But the expansion has remained a topic of heated debate without concrete action from either side. Also, doubts loom over the true intentions of the two superpowers. "What both sides say is not what they really want," said Hossein Askari, a professor of politics at George Washington University in the US capital. Beneath the veneer of multilateralism, the major powers may seek to safeguard and expand their own interests, Askari told VOA. "So, China, Russia say that they want a new multipolar world with no dominant power. But that is their sweet talk. They espouse new power for the [Global] South in order to get their support in the struggle with the US," said Askari.

"The US, on the other hand, wants to stay at the top of the unipolar world. The US needs new alliances around the world to challenge a rising China," he noted. Building a truly multipolar world would necessitate the superpowers willingly ceding or sharing their unequal influence on the international stage to empower the majority of less powerful countries. "This is not necessarily a 'win' for the vast number of developing states," said Jeffrey Taliaferro, professor of political science at Tufts University

in Medford, Massachusetts. "While Global South states may obtain a bit more 'voice' in forums like the BRICS, the G20 and other venues, the two superpowers will still call the shots," Taliaferro told VOA. The United States and its Western allies - historically the architects of post-World War II and post-Cold War global institutions - have formed formidable alliances to protect and advance their common interests. Simultaneously, China, despite criticism of its one-party political system, has been gaining traction in global public opinion as a burgeoning world power.

A recent survey conducted by the George Marshall Fund, or GMF, indicates that younger generations in the United States, Canada, Turkey and Europe are more inclined to predict a shift toward multipolarity, with China replacing the United States as the world's most influential actor, and the European Union emerging as a more influential third player. One of the central points of divergence between the United States and China is their stance on universal human rights. US officials emphasize the importance of promoting and protecting human rights, including those of women and minorities, as a core element of their foreign policy. Blinken envisioned this as "a world where international law and the core principles of the UN Charter are upheld, and where universal human rights are respected." China, on the other hand, has said

there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to promoting and protecting human rights because of varying historical backgrounds, cultural heritages, social systems and levels of socioeconomic development among nations.

Accusations of human rights abuses by China, such as the alleged genocide of Uyghur Muslims and restrictions on freedom of speech, have led the US to argue that crimes against humanity should not be treated solely as internal matters of a state. The US aims to protect against a world where authoritarian regimes prioritize regime preservation and enrichment at the expense of their people and neighbors, according to Blinken. The United States has faced criticism, though, for appearing to grant preferential treatment to some repressive regimes, leading to noticeable divisions in perceptions of the major powers, even within Western countries. The GMF survey suggests that compared with older adults, younger respondents are more likely to view US influence negatively and view Chinese and Russian influence more favorably. As the world's pre-eminent economic and military powers chart the course for a new world order, concerns mount over potential risks, including military confrontations and even nuclear conflict. "A direct military confrontation between the US and China or the US and Russia would be catastrophic, since all three are nuclear-armed superpowers," said Taliaferro.

VOA

A new departure for Franco-British relations

Helene Treheux-Duchene

THIS week, France is hosting a state visit by Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla. For more than 150 years, visits to France by British sovereigns have invariably been highly symbolic key moments in our history.

Beyond the differences between our two countries constitutionally and in terms of political traditions, they have reminded us each time of our two peoples' closeness, the strong ties a sometimes troubled history has forged between us and, still more, the importance of the values that we share and for which our countries have made huge sacrifices together since the beginning of the last century: freedom, democracy and, of course, the essential primacy the law must maintain over force, both at home and in the international arena.

Building on the major visits to France that have punctuated our common history, be it Queen Victoria's in 1855, Edward VII's at the start of the 20th century or Queen Elizabeth II's throughout her exceptional reign (1957, 1972, 1992, 2004 and 2014), King Charles III's visit marks a new stage in this very close relationship. A few months ahead of celebrations for the 120th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale, the 80th of the Normandy Landings and the 30th of the Channel Tunnel, the visit will once again testify to a Franco-

British relationship that always overcomes the challenges standing in its way and that can ultimately look only to the future, in the interests of our two peoples.

Our country knows that it can find in King Charles a friend of France and a French speaker who has already paid 34 official visits to France, as Prince of Wales. Sharing with the French authorities a concern for the climate and biodiversity cause, he took part in Cop21 in Le Bourget in 2015. During Cop26 in Glasgow in November 2021, he and President Emmanuel Macron co-chaired a meeting on the Great Green Wall, a vast programme of rural development throughout the Sahel Strip which seeks to combat the effects of climate change and desertification in Africa.

It is a measure of how far our relationship with the United Kingdom is destined to move forward, on this and many other issues. As President Macron said alongside Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the Franco-British summit at the Elysée Palace on 10 March: "It is a moment of reunion, of reconnection and of a new departure."

This new departure is being confirmed in every sphere: defence relations, joint support for our Ukrainian partner and friend in the face of Russia's aggression, shared concern for global chal-

lenges, the economic partnership and, of course, cultural and academic ties.

The agenda for this relationship is simple: to make headway on every possible project - between our authorities but also with our two countries' exceptional civil societies and with their young people, who are such a powerful link for the friendship between our two peoples, and who cannot allow occasional tensions to compromise the countless projects that they can carry forward. Mobility, trade and the promotion of values fostered, for example, through sport and heritage protection are thus at the heart of our relations and will be on the agenda for the royal visit. And then, of course, there is Europe. We want to build a relationship of trust between the UK and the European Union. We have seen progress on this, particularly with the Windsor Framework, and at continental level with the European Political Community, our shared space whose summit the UK will host next year.

With a strength borne of several centuries of history and of fraternity in the struggle to uphold their values and ideals, France and the UK have so much to say and do together in all these areas. The King and Queen's state visit is a further opportunity to reaffirm this common destiny. Enjoy your visit, Your Majesties!

The Telegraph



WB launches program for critical Pakistan uplift

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The World Bank has launched a new program to foster debate on the critical development policy issues facing Pakistan. 'Reforms for a Brighter Future: Time to Decide' is intended to engage in discussions with a broad range of stakeholders on what fundamental policy shifts are most needed to durably steer the economy towards stronger, more climate-resilient and sustainable growth and development.

A press release issued here on Friday stated that as part of the 'Reforms for a Brighter Future' engagement program, the World Bank together with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, conducted extensive con-

sultations across the country to seek inputs and feedback on the recommendations included in the draft Discussion Notes.

These have included discussions with students across 21 universities and provincial roundtables with thinkers from academia, and the public and private sectors. Participants in all four provinces have shared insights and perspectives that have helped shape the understanding of what it would take to put Pakistan back on a path towards sustainable, climate-resilient, and inclusive growth.

The 'Reforms for a Brighter Future' program will continue over the following months both online and at in-person events across the country, including the national conversation that will take place in

Islamabad today and tomorrow.

This consultation program includes the publication, today, of a series of draft Discussion Notes. These will be progressively enriched by feedback received from a broad range of stakeholders.

The Notes, which draw on international experience as well as a large body of evidence on Pakistan, propose fundamental policy shifts that are needed to move away from the current low-growth, anti-development status quo:

"Pakistan has been facing numerous economic hardships including inflation, rising electricity prices, severe climate shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance development and climate adaptation—when the

country is among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. It is also facing a "silent" human capital crisis: abnormally high child stunting rates, low learning outcomes, and high child mortality.", said Najy Benhassine, Country Director for the World Bank in Pakistan.

"These discussion notes contribute to debates on long standing policy issues that are muting Pakistan's high economic and development potential. There is reasonable consensus on priorities and challenges. Determining specific solutions requires open debates on concrete, fundamental policy decisions. We hope this program of discussions will help build a consensus around a path towards inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development".



LAHORE: Federal Minister of Energy and Petroleum Mohammad Ali receiving a briefing from Chairman Wapda at WAPDA House.

Rupee gains Rs1.01 against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed the 14th consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs1.01 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs291.76 against the previous day's closing of Rs292.77. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs292.1 and Rs295 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.37 to close at Rs310.61 against the last day's closing of Rs311.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs1.96, whereas a decrease of Rs2.31 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs357.92 as compared to the last closing of Rs360.23. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 28 and 27 paisa to close at Rs79.43 and Rs77.78 respectively.

Pakistan earns US\$57m

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$57.030 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the first month of the current fiscal year 2023-24.

This shows growth of 26.51 percent as compared to the US \$45.080 million worth same services provided during the corresponding month of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the month under review, personal travel services increased by 25.61 per cent, from US \$44.900 million last year to US \$56.400 million during July 2023. Among these personal services, the exports of health-related expenditure rose by 766.67 per cent while the education-related expenditure increased by 61.22 per cent.

In addition, the other personal services witnessed a growth of 23.21 per cent.

Meanwhile, the exports of business services grew by 250 per cent, from US\$ 0.180 million to US\$ 0.630 million, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services from the country, witnessed an increase of 2.17 per cent during the first month of the current financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding month of last year, it added.

The exports of services during July 2023 were recorded at US\$ 538.00 million against the exports of US\$ 526.58 million in July 2022, showing a growth of 2.17%.

SBP to remain closed on Sept 29

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Friday, announced public holiday on September 29, 2023 on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, 12th Rabi-ul-Awal, 1445 A.H.

The State Bank of Pakistan and all the other banks will remain closed on September 29 being public holiday on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

Stefan, Jane Marriott called on Shamshad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Stefan Dercon, Professor of Economic Policy at Economics Department of Oxford University and former Chief Economist DFID along with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott called on Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister shared policy actions to enhance Pakistan's economic resilience in the face of global challenges, with a focus on

sustainable development and inclusive growth, according to a press release issued here Friday. Dercon affirmed its continued commitment to support Pakistan's economic development and applauded the country's efforts in actively pursuing a reform agenda to enhance economic stability.

The British High Commissioner Jane Marriott commended the longstanding relationship between the United Kingdom and Pakistan and pledged to explore avenues for increased economic coop-

eration and investment between the two countries.

The Finance Minister appreciated the collaboration and expressed gratitude for the support provided by the World Bank and the United Kingdom. She expressed the desire to further foster bilateral relations in various fields.

The meeting concluded with a sense of optimism and shared commitment to work together to address the economic challenges facing Pakistan and to promote sustainable development and cooperation.

Kazakhstan delegation keen to explore business

ISLAMABAD (APP): A business delegation of Kazakhstan led by its Ambassador, Yerzhan Kistafin, Friday visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and showed interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The delegation was representing food & beverages, oil & gas, minerals, precious stones, fertilizers, chemicals, textiles, autoparts, wholesale and retail sectors, said a press release issued here.

Speaking on the occasion, the ambassador said that his country wanted to further strengthen trade relations with Pakistan as the two countries had good potential to do trade in many items.

He said that last year, a trade delegation of Kazakhstan was organized to Pakistan and hoped that the visit of another Kazakh delegation would contribute to promote business

relations between the two countries.

He said that the President of Kazakhstan was scheduled to visit Pakistan in the near future that would further strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries.

President, ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that both countries should set at least US\$ 1 billion bilateral trade target as the current level of trade was not matching with their actual potential.

He said that Kazakhstan was a big landlocked country and Pakistani ports provided it the shortest route through Arabian Sea to access other markets.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan could cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food items, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance, he added.

He said both countries

should explore road and railway links that would boost trade and economic relations between them. He said that ICCI is planning a delegation to Kazakhstan to explore new avenues of business partnerships increasing bilateral trade ties between the two countries.

Yessentayev Arman, Head of Kazakh delegation said that Pakistan is a huge market for business and investment and they have come to explore business opportunities in many sectors in Pakistan including oil & gas, surgical instruments, juices, textiles, rice, sugar, fertilizers and others.

He said that both countries should open bank branches in each other's market that would facilitate bilateral trade promotion.

He said that there is a lack of information in private sectors of both countries about potential areas of business cooperation and hoped that their visit to Pakistan would bridge this gap.

Mutation deed of FBR land handed over to buyers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hassan Fawad on Friday met Sohail Ilahi, CEO Kiran Builders & Developers (Pvt) Limited and handed over the mutation deed of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) land situated in Faisalabad.

The land measuring 15 Kanals was auctioned by Privatisation Commission in September 2020, on behalf of the Federal Board

of Revenue (Custom Department), while the full payment was made in February 2021, said a press release.

The transaction faced legal issues from Government of Punjab and land could not be transferred to the successful buyer.

Privatisation Commission made persistent efforts to resolve the bottlenecks and obtain necessary No Objection Certificates (NoCs) from the Board of

Revenue Punjab. Due to the personal efforts of the Minister for Privatisation, the land was successfully mutated on September 20, 2023, it added.

The buyer expressed his gratitude to the Privatisation Commission, particularly to the Federal Minister and the Secretary, for their personal efforts.

He further said that such proactive measures by the Privatisation Commission enhanced the confidence.

Pak exhibitors enthusiastic to explore opportunities

BEIJING (APP): The Pakistani exhibitors are eagerly looking forward to exploring new opportunities at the Sixth China-Arab States Expo, which kicked off in Yinchuan, capital city of China's northwest autonomous region of Ningxia.

The event serves as a platform for businesses from China and Arab countries to come together and foster economic cooperation with the world, said Muhammad Irfan, Commercial Counselor at the Guangzhou Consulate of Pakistan.

Muhammad Irfan told China Economic Net (CEN) that Pakistan, being a key player in the region, recognizes the importance

of strengthening its ties with China in terms of trade and investments.

The participation of Pakistani exhibitors at this event signifies their commitment to expanding bilateral trade relations and tapping into potential business prospects.

"China's Belt and Road Initiative has already paved the way for increased trade and infrastructure development between the two countries. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a prime example of this collaboration, with major projects underway in sectors such as energy, transportation, and infrastructure," he added.

The Commercial Counselor said more than 25 Pakistani exhibitors are showcasing their products at the four-day expo and they are very excited to participate and meet Chinese visitors, whereas more than 300 square meters of area is fixed for Pakistan.

Shahzad Chadayala, a Pakistani exhibitor, showcased his wooden handicrafts and furniture and hand-made carved products to visitors at the China-Arab States Expo.

He said that this expo provides a platform for Pakistani businesses to engage with Chinese counterparts, explore new trade opportunities, and forge strategic partnerships.

SCCI demands pragmatic steps to promote Islamic banking in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi stressed the need for pragmatic steps for promotion of Islamic Banking and Finance System.

Also, he called for making schemes that have been introduced by commercial banks to be brought on Islamic banking system in a real sense in order to ensure easy access of the people attached with various businesses.

Ijaz Afridi was speaking during an awareness seminar on 'Islamic Banking and Finance for Business Community, jointly organized by the Bank of Khyber (BoK) and IMSciences Peshawar in collaboration with the SCCI here at the chamber's house on Friday.

Keynote speakers at the seminar include the BoK Sharia Compliance Department official/ Sharia Scholars Abdul Haleem Khan, Mufti Fazal Hakim, and IMSciences faculty



member Dr Adnan Malik.

Besides, officials and representatives from IMSciences and BoK, notably M Ali Yousafzai, Shahab M Khattak, Sardar Gul, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Secretary General SCCI Sajjad Aziz, former vice president Abidullah Yousafzai, former executive members Ihsanullah, Fahad Amin, and Saddam Gul, Ishtiaq Muhammad Fazal Wahid and Aqeel Kayani, a large number of members of business community were present during the awareness session.

During the seminar, Sharia scholars and offi-

cials from IMSciences and BoK briefed participants about various modes of Islamic Banking and its significance through their comprehensive multimedia presentation.

The experts said the tendency of Islamic banking system has not increased in Pakistan but it has played a vital role in global economic development.

The speakers called upon the business community to take full benefits from schemes launched under Islamic Banking System and contribute their share in promotion of interest-free economy in the country.

Ijaz Afridi in his speech

informed that Pakistan's Islamic Financing has been increased by 20 per cent in the banking sector and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is striving to increase this share to 35 per cent, he added.

The SCCI acting chief urged the central bank to issue directives to banks to maximize focus on promoting Islamic Banking in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Besides, he emphasized that banks should be instructed to enhance the lending ratio and financing facility for the business community in KP – which had been adversely affected by terrorism.

He emphasized that it is in dire need of hour to promote an interest-free banking and financing system, which could only be made possible with fostering of Islamic Banking.

He called for organizing further awareness sessions for the business community regarding Islamic banking and finance and appreciated the efforts of BoK and IMSciences in this regard.

Soyabean oil valuing \$46.820m and palm oil worth \$552.403m imported

ISLAMABAD (APP): Import of soyabean oil into the country during the first two months of the current financial year increased by 8.77 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-August, about 41,825 metric tons of soybeans valued at \$46.820 million were imported as compared to the imports of 37,314 metric tons costing \$43.043 million in the same period last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

However, the import of palm oil into the country during the last two months

of the current financial year was reduced by 22.88 percent as 572,004 metric tons of palm oil worth \$552.403 million were imported as compared to the imports of 460,494 metric tons valued at \$716.298 million of the same period of last year.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports of the above-mentioned commodities including soybeans grew by 17 percent, whereas palm oil into the country decreased by 134.43 percent, it added.

In August 2023 over 29,250 metric tons of soyabean oil valued at \$31.865 million were imported as compared to the imports of

26,314 metric tons valued at \$ 27.2343 million in the same month last year in order to fulfill the local requirements of edible oil and vegetable ghee.

Meanwhile, 294,203 metric tons of palm oil valued at \$273.464 million were imported as compared to the imports of 266,373 metric tons costing \$416.939 million in the same month of last year.

The import of palm oil during the month of August 2023 decreased by 34.41 percent as compared to the imports of the same month of last year, it added.

It may be recalled here that food group exports

during the first two months of the current financial year decreased by 1.65 percent as food commodities valued at \$711.748 million were exported as compared to the exports of \$723.696 million of the same period of last year.

On the other hand food group imports into the country during the first two months of the current financial year decreased by 26.91 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-August, 2023 food imports into the country came down from \$1.783 billion to \$1.303 billion.

Weekly inflation goes up by 0.93%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.93% for the combined consumption group during the week ended on September 21, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-

mentioned group was recorded at 281.77 points as compared to 279.18 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 38.66 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.05 percent and went up to 284.80 points from last week's 284.66 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased

by 0.29 percent, 0.47 percent, 0.72 and 1.27 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 22 (43.14%) items increased, 11 (21.57%) items decreased and 18 (35.29%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included tomatoes (11.11%), sugar (3.57%), bananas (2.03%), potatoes (1.89%), wheat flour (0.77%), gur (0.62%), mustard oil (0.45%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.31%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.20%), pulse gram (0.18%) and tea packet (0.17%).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included chicken (8.49%), garlic (5.19%), onions (3.02%), petrol (8.51%), diesel

(5.54%), shirting (1.81%) and match box (1.42%).

The commodities that witnessed a decrease in price on a year-on-year (yoy) basis included tomatoes (26.98%), pulse gram (2.90%) and onions (2.00%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included electricity charges for q1 (118.16%), gas charges for Q1 (108.38%), cigarettes (94.69%), rice basmati broken (88.43%), chilies powder (84.84%), sugar (81.98%), rice irri-6/9 (81.04%), wheat flour (73.70%), gur (72.86%), tea packet (65.28%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), salt powdered (56.48%), gents sandal (53.37%), powdered milk (43.33%) and garlic (43.10%).

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, CMA CGM Ivanhoe, Stary, Chem Sea-I, Al-Jasra, LRI Charm and Oak carrying Containers, Palm oil, Chemicals, LNG, Mogas and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Engro Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile five more ships, Big Breezy, CMA CGM Musset, Yankul Silver, Ginga Cheetah and Berden with Containers, Palm oil, Chemicals, LNG and Wheat also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, a gas carrier Al-Dayyan left the port on Friday morning, while two more ships, Chemicals carrier Chem Sea-1 and containers ship CMA CGM Ivanhoe are expected to sail on Thursday.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar, Case No. 156/1, Institution. 6/9/2023. Date of hearing. 28/9/2023. Shah Wazer Khan VS Hamedur Rehman et al. Notice to No. 2. Hanifur Rehman. 3. Abdur Rahim sons of Hijab Khan residents of Torwarsak tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 28/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Prize money announced

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 13th edition of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup would see the winners of the 10-team tournament earn US\$4 million, along with the trophy that they will lift on November 19. The runners-up would receive US\$2 million, while the losing semi-finalists will get \$800,000 each from the total prize pot of US\$10 million. The 48-match event would be played across 10 venues from October 5, said a press release. The biggest Cricket World Cup ever would see prizes for each league match won. Teams would play each other once in a round-robin format, with the top four making it to the semifinals. The winners of each match in the group stage would receive US\$40,000 and the six teams that do not qualify for the semi-finals will receive a payment of US\$100,000. The breakdown of prize money allocations was as follows: Winner US\$ 4,000,000; Runner-up US\$ 2,000,000; Losing Semi-Finalist (2) US\$ 1,600,000. Teams eliminated after group stage (6) US\$ 600,000 & Winner of each group stage match (45) US\$ 1,800,000.

India formulate security plan

MUMBAI (Agencies): India have chalked out a comprehensive plan for multi-layer security and management of traffic for the upcoming ICC Men's World Cup 2023. A security official told Indian media that arrangements had been made for smooth influx of fans into the stadiums and maintain uninterrupted traffic flow on roads. He said multi-layer security plan had been designed for the mega event, adding that a communication system would also be established for seamless coordination between security agencies and local cricket association. The security teams would ensure the safe movement of teams from hotel to stadium and back by creating secure pathways. As several stadiums, including Pune, are situated at a considerable distance from the city, seamless arrangements have been made to handle the logistical challenge in an effective way. Commissioner of Pimpri Chinchwad police Vinoy Kumar Choubey said told Indian media, "We will be putting in place a multi-layer security cover in and around the stadium. A detailed plan for the same is in the making. "Each layer will have a specific purpose and a pre-decided number of personnel and officers will be tasked to secure each layer. A communication channel has been established between the MCA office bearers and our team."

AHC help girls' cricket

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian High Commission (AHC) supported a girls' cricket clinic and tournament in Karachi in collaboration with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Jalaluddin Cricket Academy (JCA), and Karachi City Cricket Association (KCCA). Australia aims to promote gender equality and empower girls through enabling them to participate in one of Pakistan's favourite sports – cricket. "The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since 2016," High Commissioner Neil Hawkins said in a statement issued here. "We began with a single annual tournament in Islamabad but then expanded to Lahore and in Karachi."

Pakistan unveil World Cup squad

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan have named their 15-player squad for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which will be held in October and November in India. Consistency and confidence in the current bunch were the keys to the selection as the Inzamam-ul-Haq-led national men's selection committee made only one change – that was also forced – from the squad that played the recent Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023. Fast bowler Naseem Shah has been replaced with Hasan Ali. He had suffered a shoulder injury during Asia Cup in a match against India on 11 September and was ruled out of the tournament. Following thorough medical

examinations and consultations with leading medical experts, Naseem has been advised to undergo surgery. He is expected to recover in three to four months.

Pakistan squad: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Salman Ali Agha, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Usama Mir.

The selectors have also named three traveling reserves in wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Haris, mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed and fast bowler

Zaman Khan.

Chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said: "World Cup is the most important event in any cricketer's life and I want to congratulate all the cricketers who have made it to the squad through their impressive performances. This team has performed wonderfully well over the last couple of years and that is why we have shown faith in the same bunch.

"We were forced to make one change because of an unfortunate injury to Naseem Shah. We had a few injury scares in the recent Asia Cup, but I am glad to share that all the players are fully fit and are eager to perform for their country in the all-important

tournament. I have received encouraging reports from our medical panel about Haris Rauf. He has started to (shadow) bowl at the National Cricket Academy and will be available for selection.

"I have a firm belief that this squad can bring the World Cup trophy to Pakistan and make the whole nation proud with their incredible performances. It is time to get behind our team and provide them with the backing and support that they need."

Pakistan will play two warm-ups – against New Zealand on 29 September and Australia on 3 October – before their tournament opener against the

Netherlands on 6 October. Babar Azam's side enters the mega-event as the number one ranked side and enjoys the best win/loss ratio of 2.400 in this World Cup cycle for any side that has played the One-Day International format.

Pakistan missed out on a semi-final spot in the 2019 iteration of the event because of a lower net run-rate to New Zealand, who ended up as runners-up.

The team's best performance came in the 1992 edition when they lifted the trophy at the MCG after defeating England. Pakistan featured in the final of the 1999 edition and reached semi-finals in 1979, 1983, 1987, and 2011.

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh advance into Asian Games semis

HANGZHOU (Agencies): Sri Lanka swept aside Thailand on Friday in a rain-affected women's cricket quarter-final at the Asian Games and Bangladesh joined them in the last four after their clash with Hong Kong was washed out.

Sri Lanka easily chased down their target of 79 in 15 overs of a rain-affected quarter-final match of the Asian Games at the Zhejiang University of Technology Pingfeng Cricket Field in Hangzhou. Thailand had earlier fought back from 37-6 to post 78-7 in their 15 overs, largely due to a battling 31 off 24 balls from Chanida Sutthiruang batting at number seven. "Today we didn't get enough runs," said Chanida. "We thought that we could win the game, but we maybe needed 30 to 40 more runs. Even if we had 20 more runs, I think we could have defended it."

The Sri Lankans cruised past their target with 25 balls to spare, Harshitha Samarawickrama hitting a six to end the contest as they finished on 84-2.

Sri Lanka will face Pakistan on Sunday in the second semi-final of the Asian Games with India playing Bangladesh, who progressed on a higher world ranking after their quarter-final with Hong Kong was washed out later on Friday. "We want the gold medal," said Sri Lanka coach Rumesh Joseph Ratnayake, whose team are in confident mood having just won a T20 series in England 2-1 earlier this month.

"We will take it match-by-match, we'll break it into over-by-over, even ball-by-ball. "So winning those important moments will be our focus and let's hope that can be executed as we want it to." The final and the third-place playoff for the Bronze medal will be held on September 25. The 19th Asian Games officially open on Saturday. The men's cricket will begin on September 27.

Pakistan volleyball team move in Asian Games quarterfinals



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan volleyball team downed Korea by 3-0 in the round of last 12 of the 19th Asian Games 2023 at China and qualified for

the quarterfinals.

According to details, Pakistan achieved a remarkable 3-0 win, with set scores of 25-19, 25-22, and 25-21. This impres-

sive triumph marks the third consecutive win for the Pakistan team in the 19th Asian Games 2023, further solidifying their position as a formidable

force in the tournament.

Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, Ch Muhammad Yaqoob, lauded the team and coaching staff, recognizing their dedication and hard work.

The team manager, a former Captain of the Pakistan team, said the team was determined to continue their winning streak in the quarterfinals and secure a spot in the semifinals.

Pakistan team's victory against Korea was a testament to their skills, resilience, and commitment to excellence. Their outstanding performance has garnered attention and admiration from fans and spectators alike. As they progress to the quarterfinals, the team carries the hopes and aspirations of the nation, aiming to bring home the coveted title in the 19th Asian Games 2023.

India cancels minister's trip to Asian Games in visa row

NEW DELHI (Agencies): New Delhi cancelled on Friday a trip by its sports minister to the Asian Games in Hangzhou, saying that Chinese authorities had denied accreditation and entry to Indian athletes from a region claimed by Beijing.

According to Indian media reports, three women martial arts fighters from the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh were approved to take part in the sports extravaganza by the Hangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee.

But the wushu fighters were unable to download their accreditation cards, which act as visas to enter China, the Hindustan Times reported.

The northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh is claimed almost in full by Beijing, which calls it "South Tibet".

China had discriminated against some of the Indian athletes "in a targeted and pre-meditated manner",

India's foreign ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said in a statement.

"China's action violates both the spirit of the Asian Games and the rules governing their conduct, which explicitly prohibits discrimination against competitors from member states," he added.

A "strong protest" had been lodged in both New Delhi and Beijing against "China's deliberate and selective obstruction of some of our sportspersons", he said, and a trip by the sports minister to the event had been cancelled.

Wushu, or kung fu, is a multi-disciplinary martial art originating in China.

The rest of the 10-member Indian squad along with the coaching staff left for the Games in Hangzhou on Wednesday, according to reports.

Before the Indian foreign ministry statement, senior Olympic Council of Asia official Wei Jizhong

had insisted that the trio had been issued visas and were not barred.

"I make it very clear: the Chinese government gave them a visa, they can enter China," he told reporters. "But unfortunately these athletes didn't accept the visa."

Asked about the trio at a regular foreign ministry briefing in Beijing, spokeswoman Mao Ning said that China welcomed "athletes from all countries with legal documents" to take part in the Asian Games.

"The Chinese government does not recognise the so-called Arunachal region that you mentioned," she added. "South Tibet is part of China."

Indian spokesman Bagchi retorted: "Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India."

In a similar incident in July, the Indian wushu team did not travel to the Chinese city of Chengdu

for the World University Games after the same three athletes were issued stapled, rather than pasted, visas — an indication that Beijing does not recognise India's territorial claim over Arunachal Pradesh.

On that occasion the foreign ministry in New Delhi called the move "unacceptable".

Arunachal Pradesh is on the other side of the Himalayas from Tibet and shares a common Buddhist cultural heritage with its northern neighbour.

The Dalai Lama fled through the state in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in his homeland and has lived in India ever since.

China briefly occupied most of the territory in a bloody conflict three years after the Buddhist leader's flight.

Earlier this year, India reacted strongly after China renamed 11 places in the disputed region.

US to host 2024 WSF World Jr. Squash C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Squash Federation (WSF) board has awarded US Squash the rights to host the 2024 WSF World Junior Squash Championships, set to be held in Houston, Texas from July 12 to 23.

The 2024 edition, to feature both men's and women's junior individual tournaments, would take place at the Houston Squash Club, which is also home to two PSA World Tour Gold events the Houston Open, said a press release.

Next year's championships would also see the men's and women's junior team championships being held simultaneously for the first time in event history.

The 2023 event, which was staged in Melbourne, Australia, saw Egyptian 16-year-old Amina Orfi claim her second consecutive women's individuals title and Pakistan's Hamza Khan become his country's first champion since Jansher Khan in 1986.

In the women's team event, Egypt also claimed their tenth WSF Women's World Junior Team Championship title and eighth in succession.

This would be the first time US Squash has hosted the event since the 2011 women's individual and team championships in Boston, when the women's team – led by 2010 individual junior world champion Amanda Sobhy – finished runner up to Egypt.

"Houston is one of the fastest growing squash communities in the U.S. and we are looking forward to hosting the world's best junior players in Texas " said Kevin Klipstein, US Squash President & CEO.

Houston Squash Club CEO Jahanzeb Khan and Board Member Javed Khan said, "It is an honor for Houston Squash Club to host this world class junior event in Houston, Tx for the first time in the history of Squash. We are thrilled to work with US Squash and member nation federations and we look forward to successfully hosting the athletes from July 12-23, 2024."

WSF CEO William Louis-Marie said, "On behalf of the World Squash Federation, I'd like to express our gratitude to both US Squash and Houston Squash Club for hosting the 2024 WSF World Junior Squash Championships."

Caribbean, USA venues confirmed for T20 WC 2024

LONDON (Agencies): All the venues for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the Caribbean and USA have been announced.

The ICC on Friday, 22 September confirmed Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and St Vincent & The Grenadines as the seven Caribbean venues that will host matches during the T20 World Cup 2024 from 4 to 20 June.

Along with the Caribbean Islands, the USA is also set to co-host the event for the first time, with Grand Prairie in Dallas, Broward County in Florida and Nassau County in New York announced as venues earlier this week.

Speaking about the announcement, ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice said: "We're delighted to announce the seven Caribbean venues that will host the biggest ICC Men's T20 World Cup ever staged, with 20 teams competing for the trophy. They're all popular venues with players and fans alike that will provide a wonderful backdrop to the event.

"This will be the third ICC senior men's event hosted by the West Indies, and the matches will again give cricket fans the unique experience of enjoying cricket in the Caribbean. I'd like to thank Cricket West Indies and the seven host governments for their continued commitment and support of our sport."

The co-hosts for the global tournament were selected back in November 2021, when the ICC Board awarded them the hosting rights. The venues were chosen following an extensive evaluation of several options. A total of 20 teams will contest for the big prize in the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup. 15 teams have already been confirmed, with the Americas, Asia and Africa Qualifier set to determine the remaining five spots in the coming months.

United States and West Indies qualify by virtue of being hosts. Australia, England, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and Sri Lanka will be part of the tournament after finishing in the top 8 in the 2022 edition. Bangladesh and Afghanistan qualified, thanks to their position in the ICC Men's T20I Team Ranking at the end of the previous T20 World Cup. So far, Ireland, Scotland and PNG have booked their berths via the Qualifiers.

AHC empowering girls' through cricket

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian High Commission (AHC) supported a girls' cricket clinic and tournament in Karachi in collaboration with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Jalaluddin Cricket Academy (JCA), and Karachi City Cricket Association (KCCA).

Australia aims to promote gender equality and empower girls through enabling them to participate in one of Pakistan's favourite sports – cricket. "The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since 2016," High Commissioner Neil Hawkins said in a statement issued here. "We began with a single annual tournament in Islamabad but then expanded to Lahore and in Karachi."

"Our countries share a passion for cricket, and a key interest of Australia in Pakistan is to support gender equality so we're very pleased to support this event," he said.

"Cricket and other sports can help tear down barriers and stereotypes. Every time these girls hit a boundary or make a catch, they are taking a step towards greater equality."

The girls attended a four-day coaching clinic in the lead-up to the competition.

We are very pleased to have the participation of first-class cricket coaches as well as the players of the visiting Australian Over 40s Cricket team, who helped to build confidence, foster team spirit, and encourage the girls," the High Commissioner said.

He thanked the schools – Nasra Public School, Alpha Girls School, Ismail Academy and The Future Academy – for joining the event and paid tribute to the contribution made by JCA, PCB and KCCA.

Leading coach Jalal Uddin, a former national player and now JCA Chairman, congratulated the Australian High Commission on the initiative.

"As a pioneer in cricket coaching, we always support grassroots cricket development. We hope this initiative with the Australian High Commission for the Girls Cricket Cup will go a long way in developing women's cricket in Pakistan," Jalal Uddin said.

Shami gets five, India batters dazzle in comfortable win against Australia

MOHALI (Agencies): Finally it arrived. Like a long-awaited letter from a loved one. ODI runs for Suryakumar Yadav ahead of the World Cup might perhaps be India's biggest positive in their five-wicket win over Australia in the first ODI in Mohali. He hit 50, his highest score in 20 innings in the format, thus helping India successfully chase 277 after they had lost 4 for 43 in a tense period during the middle overs.

And if Suryakumar's return to form was a relief, Mohammed Shami's second ODI five-for in the absence of Mohammed Siraj must have ended up providing a headache, Shami grabbed a career-best 5 for 51, including three off his last nine balls.

That aside, KL Rahul, the stand-in captain, continued easing back into international cricket with an undefeated 58, his third significant contribution in four innings since his comeback from injury. Rahul and Suryakumar added 60 soon when it appeared Adam Zampa was inspiring an Australian comeback, by triggering a mild middle-overs collapse that saw India go from 142 for 0 in the 22nd over overs to 185 for 4 by the 33rd.

Both Gill and Gaikwad seemed to be battling with complete ease against both pace and spin. They started with 43 off the first seven overs. Gaikwad got a life next over when Josh Inglis dropped him on 17, but that did not stop him from playing his shots. The punch for four to



deep point turned out to be most productive for him as well as Gill. Seven off the eight fours from the two batters in the first ten overs came in the region from backward point to cover, even as Gill had also effortlessly pulled Marcus Stoinis for six over square leg in the fourth over.

Gill attacked part-timer off-spinner and debutant Matthew Short too, depositing him for four and six in the 14th over, with the latter hit raising his fifty off 37 balls and stretching his dream run in the format this year. Gaikwad followed soon after, bringing up his maiden ODI fifty from 60 deliveries in the 18th over.

But Zampa ended the fun by trapping Gaikwad for 71, before cleaning Gill up for 74 with one that skidded through. In between, Shreyas Iyer, whose fitness and form India would have been keen to test ahead of the World Cup, was run-out for 3 after a mix-up with Gill. Rahul, who

had arrived after Gill's dismissal, then joined hands with Ishan Kishan to briefly steady the innings, before an attempted ramp had Kishan caught behind off Pat Cummins for 18. Kishan had enjoyed some fortune when a forceful loft on 6 was put down by Zampa on the second ball of the 28th over, immediately after which he also dropped Rahul on 1 - this being a much simpler chance while grabbing it low. But Rahul was only carrying forward his fortune from when he was on the field as wicketkeeper.

Two successive fumbles from him possibly ended up being crucial in restricting Australia to 276. When Marcus Labuschagne attempted a reverse sweep off R Ashwin in the 33rd over, the ball tickled his bat to hit Rahul's leg. That happened only because Rahul missed the grab, but the ball ricocheted onto the stumps, and replays showed Labuschagne's

back leg was outside the crease. Labuschagne fell for 39, his dismissal ended a promising 45-run third-wicket stand.

Then in the 40th over, when Cameron Green on 31 seemed to be ticking after a slow start, he dabbled at a ball which Rahul failed to grab on the bounce. Trying to run off the misfield, Green and Inglis had a mix-up, and Suryakumar was close enough to grab a throw from deep third to effect a run-out at the bowler's end.

But before that, Shami had laid the foundation for India's win already. He first had Mitchell Marsh caught at wide slip in the first over, with a length ball that was angled in but straightened, and then cleaned Steven Smith up with his trademark upright seam that was also angled into the right-hander and flattened two stumps as Smith tried to loft uppishly.

Shami also fashioned Australia's death-overs collapse of 5 for 28, removing Stoinis after the latter had added 62 off 43 balls with Inglis. Stoinis swung across the line, but the ball came back in to shatter the stumps, before Short swung one straight to deep mid-wicket and Sean Abbott chopped one on off a slower delivery.

Six of Australia's top seven scored at least 29, but it was only David Warner who went past fifty. Eventually, that made the difference, as four out of India's top six scored a half-century, leaving India 1-0 up in the three-match series.



In brief

AC launches crackdown

against profiteers

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to curb profiteers, encroachment, and professional begging, Assistant Commissioners in ICT limits launched a crackdown on Friday and operations resulted in the imposition of fines, sealing of shops, and seizure of polythene bags, sealing of illegal clinics, shisha cafes, petrol filling agencies, and shops violating anti-dengue SOPs. In a series of operations, a total of 145 inspections were conducted regarding price hikes, resulting in the imposition of fines of Rs. 16,500, the sealing of two shops, and the arrest of two people. Additionally, 19 professional beggars were apprehended, including a 19-year-old son-in-law of one of the arrested individuals. Action was also taken against illegal clinics and shisha cafes, with one illegal clinic being sealed. Encroachment operations were also conducted, netting more than 11 kilograms of polythene bags. Further, two illegal petrol filling agencies were sealed and three persons were arrested. Meanwhile, 16 shops were sealed for violating anti-dengue SOPs, eight violators were arrested, and an FIR is being registered against one person. The Deputy Commissioner's office has stated that operations against encroachments, price hikes, and professional beggars are underway on a daily basis.

Police arrest 11 gamblers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district Police arrested 11 gamblers and recovered Rs 20,690 stake money, 10 mobile phones, a motorcycle and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that Wah Cantt police conducted a raid and arrested 11 gamblers namely Asim, Mumraiz, Abdul Akram, Abdul Raheem, Tofeeq, Riasat, Khalil, Jahanzaib, Amir Sultan, Amir and Arif, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. A case has been registered against them while further investigation is under process. Superintendent of Police, Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession.

23 drug peddlers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other law-breakers here on Friday arrested 23 accused besides recovering over 16 kg charras, 20 liters liquor, three 30 bore pistols and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that City, Rattamral, Sadiqabad, Morgah, Gujar Khan, Jatli, Rawat, Kalar Syedan, Naseerabad, Race Course, Chontra, Kahuta and Wah Cantt police arrested Allah Rakha, Tahir, Faizan, Shah Nawaz, Rafique, Ali Shan, Mukhtar, Mohsin Ali, Muhammad Ashraf and others and recovered over 16 kg charras from their possession. Similarly, Westridge, Jatli, Dhamial, Mandra, Sadiqabad, Morgah and Rawat police conducted raids and held Jameel, Wahab, Khurram, Faisal, Shakeel, Irfan and Asim and recovered 20 liters liquor, three 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, he added.

Ashrafi advocates Islamic unity for combating Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Friday emphasized that unity among Islamic countries was the key to addressing issues such as Palestine, Kashmir, Islamophobia and other challenging concerns.

Speaking to the media, he said leaders of Turkey, Qatar, and Iran raised their voices against the desecration of the Holy Quran during the United Nations General Assembly, highlighting the need to protect global peace, considering the emotions of over two billion Muslims worldwide.

Ashrafi said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's recent interview had made it clear that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had not been oblivious to the Palestine issue in the past, and it remained committed

to playing a role in resolving both the Kashmir and Palestine issues as the head of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

He further stated that the leaders of these three Islamic nations – Turkey, Qatar, and Iran – had criticized the West strongly for attempting to desecrate copies of the Holy Quran, pointing out that Islamophobia, including racism, was spreading like a plague in Western countries.

He said this alarming trend of unwarranted provocations was not only sabotaging international efforts for interfaith harmony but also posing a threat to global peace. He said several Western countries and politicians were capitalizing on this dangerous trend, continually fanning the flames.

Ashrafi said these provocative acts were inflaming the emotions of over two billion Muslims,

urging leaders in the West to understand the gravity of such condemned actions and put an end to the examination of Muslims through such disgraceful acts.

In response to a question, he said Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in his recent interview had categorically stressed the importance of resolving the Palestine issue and improving the lives of Palestinians.

He also mentioned that Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan had expressed his principled stance on Kashmir issue at the United Nations. The Saudi foreign minister made it clear to the international community that the Kingdom stood with Muslim nations, including the Kashmir issue and wanted to get it resolved in accordance with international agreements, treaties, and laws, he maintained.

Sindhi for providing all kind of facilities to students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi has said that students are the future of our nation and they should be given all kinds of facilities.

He was attending the Students Project Exhibition "Beyond the Classroom" as the chief guest at IMCG F-6/2, on Friday. Madad Ali Sindhi said I congratulate the

principal and teachers for organizing a fantastic event.

"I am very happy that the practical knowledge aspect of the students is being given due importance" he added.

Madad said that we should try to acquire all kinds of worldly knowledge.

Madad said that the domain of knowledge has now moved far beyond the classrooms and we have to keep up with the world's most

successful nations. Madad Ali Sindhi said that teachers play an important role in the education of students.

He urged the teachers to fulfill this duty in all respects. He said that seeing the ability of these students, he was convinced that our future is in strong hands. The federal minister said that if all our public schools and colleges have this standard, no one needs to go to private schools.

SNGPL launces decisive campaign against gas theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), has launched a decisive campaign against gas theft in the Islamabad region, leading to a successful crackdown on gas thieves in the federal capital.

The spokesman of SNGPL, Shahid Akram, on Friday revealed that during the recent operation conducted by the Task Force in Sector G-9, Lehtar Road, E-11/2, G-14, and Bani

Gala, eight consumers involved in the commercial use of domestic connections had their connections disconnected and were subjected to heavy fines.

Additionally, a hotel in Sabzi Mandi was fined Rs. 3 million for using domestic connections for commercial purposes.

Furthermore, in Royal Avenue and Jhang Syedan, the Task Force has also imposed fines on owners of hostels who were using

domestic connections for commercial purposes.

Meanwhile, after disconnecting the facility, FIRs against two persons residing in sector E-11/2 were registered at the police station who were found involved in gas theft through direct tapping. The spokesperson mentioned that the Task Force will continue its crackdown on illegal connections in the Islamabad region until the last illegal connection is eliminated.

Construction work on Ring Road project kicks off

RAWALPINDI (APP): The construction work of the 38.3 km long Rawalpindi Ring Road project has been started here which would be completed in one year.

According to a Commissioner Office spokesperson, Rawalpindi Ring Road would have a total of five interchanges at Banth, Chak Bali Khan, Adiala Road, Chakri Road and Thalian while an industrial zone would be set up around the Ring Road.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta today visited the project site at Gorakhpur

Terahia and reviewed the work plan and pace of work on the Rawalpindi Ring Road project. On this occasion, Additional Commissioner Revenue, Kenza Murtaza, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Revenue Rawalpindi Nabeel Sindhu, Assistant Commissioner Rawalpindi Cantt, Qandeel Fatima, DG RDA Saif Anwar Jappa, representatives of FWO, NES-PAK and other departments concerned were also present.

Rawalpindi Ring Road is a very important public welfare project, the Commissioner said adding,

that today, the elements who were saying that Rawalpindi Ring Road project has been shelved would be disappointed. RDA has a key role in the implementation of the development projects for Rawalpindi and the rapid progress of these projects, the Commissioner added.

The Ring Road project would help reduce traffic congestion on the city roads and facilitate the movement of the residents of the adjacent areas, he said, adding that the Ring Road project is a new chapter of development for Rawalpindi city.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Ethiopia, Mr. Jemal Beker Abdula calling on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House. —APP Photo

Dengue cases toll reaches 854

RAWALPINDI (PPI) Rawalpindi's dengue cases total has reached 854 with the arrival of 53 more patients during the last 24 hours, it emerged on Friday.

Punjab Health Department said that 53 fresh cases of dengue were detected in the last 24 hours in Rawalpindi, while 9 patients are in serious condition at the hospital.

Health authorities said 53 patients are being treated at Holy Family Hospital, 32 in DHQ and 34 dengue patients are being treated at Benazir Hospital.

Meanwhile, the district administration had registered 61 FIRs and sealed three premises during last 24 hours. Dengue virus is a mosquito-borne viral disease that has rapidly spread in recent years around the world. Dengue virus is transmitted by female mosquitoes mainly of the species Aedes aegypti and, to a lesser extent, Ae. albopictus.

61 cases registered for violating SOPs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The District Health Authority(DHA) lodged 61 FIRs and sealed three premises for violating anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) during the last 24 hours.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Friday said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments issued tickets to 15 persons and imposed a fine of Rs 42,500 on violations of the SOPs.

Presently, the health officer informed that 122 patients were admitted to different health facilities in the district of which 86 were confirmed cases while 768 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad said that with the arrival of 20 more cases during the last 24 hours, the district's total tally had reached 854 confirmed cases.

Among the new cases, he informed that nine patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, six from the Chaklala Cantonment, three from Municipal Corporation, and one from the Potohar rural area.

ANF seizes 56 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover 56 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that ANF foiled a drug smuggling bid through a luxury vehicle and recovered 30 kg heroin recovered from a Toyota Land Cruiser intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza

Islamabad. During the operation, five 30-bore pistols with magazines were also recovered.

Two accused residents of Khyber and Peshawar were arrested on the spot.

In another operation, 14.4 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Qamar Deen Park Lahore while two accused were arrested.

On the plantation of the arrested person, two other accused including a woman were also arrested.

In the third operation, 9.6 kg of hashish was

recovered from the possession of a bike rider.

An Afghan resident was arrested during a raid on a house near Yaro Railway Track in Quetta. 2 kg of Ice drug 190 litres of hydrochloric acid and different types of prohibited powder were recovered from the house which was being used to store drugs.

Separate cases have been registered under the Anti-Narcotics Act against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

Rivers flows, reservoirs level report issued

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

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 116700 cusecs and Outflows 120000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 23000 cusecs and Outflows 23000 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 111600 cusecs and Outflow 111600, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 10700 cusecs and Outflows 40000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 37600 cusecs and Outflows 7700 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 139800 cusecs and Outflows

131800 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 149700 cusecs and Outflows 145000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 136800 cusecs and Outflows 116400 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 116000 cusecs and Outflows 89900 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 89100 cusecs and Outflows 39700 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 38200 cusecs and Outflows 13000 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 30600 cusecs and Outflow 18000 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 35200 cusecs and Outflows 18000 cusecs.

Reservoirs (Level and Storage): Tarbela: Minimum operating level 1402 feet, present level 1548.33 feet, maximum conservation level 1550 feet, live storage today 5,713 MAF.

Mangla: Minimum operating level 1050 feet, present level 1232.15 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 6,584 MAF. Chashma: Minimum operating level 638.15 feet, present level 644.90 feet, maximum conservation level 649 feet, live storage today 0.122 MAF.

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

Rain likely at various parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rain-wind/thundershower is expected in Punjab, Pothohar region, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir during the next 24 hours.

Isolated heavy falls or hailstorms are also likely in Northeast Punjab and Potohar region during the forecast period.

As per the synoptic situation, a westerly wave was affecting the upper and central parts of the country. Monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea were also penetrating in upper and central parts of the country. Moderate to heavy falls

may cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Lahore, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi on September 22 and 23.

Moderate to heavy rains may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra and Abbottabad from September 22-24.

During the last 24 hours, rain-wind/thundershower occurred in Islamabad, Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hot and dry weather prevailed in other parts of the country.

The rainfall recorded during the period was Punjab: Islamabad (Zero Point, Saidpur 49 mm, Golra 07, Bokra 05), Rawalpindi (Shamsabad 44, Chaklala 21, Kacheri 12), Chakwal 22, Lahore (Airport 19, Tajpura 07, Upper Mall 06, Mughalpur 05, Gulberg 02), Sialkot (Airport 15, City 04), Narowal 12, Gujrat 10, Hafizabad 08, Kasur, Jhelum 07, Mangla 03, Faisalabad 01, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Kalam 04 and Malam Jabba 01mm.

The highest maximum temperatures recorded were Turbat 44 C, Dera Ismail Khan and Lasbela 41 C.

CDA engages PIDE for its services on solutions to urban issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Captain (R) Anwar ul Haq on Friday met Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Vice Chancellor, Dr Nadeem ul Haq here at CDA headquarters to benefit from the professional services of the institution to workout innovative solutions to the metropolis' pressing urban issues.

The CDA chairman was flanked by other officers of CDA including Member Technology and Digitalization, Member Planning and Design on this

occasion, a news release said. During the meeting, it was discussed that the experiences of PIDE will be utilized in matters pertaining to Islamabad Land Digitization alongwith its professional services in other matters including revising the Islamabad Master Plan.

The Institute's professional skills should be fully utilized to evaluate the fulfillment of residential needs in the city, the meeting vowed. The Chairman CDA said, "A study should be conducted from PIDE for proper use of roofs of buildings in different business areas of Islamabad.

Similarly, services should be taken from (PIDE) for recommendations in improving urban transport." On this occasion, the Chairman CDA said that the services of PIDE could be obtained to improve other matters including solving parking problems in Islamabad city.

The Member CDA Technology and Digitalisation was also appointed as the focal person. The Chairman Capital Development Authority said, "The CDA and PIDE can do many things for Islamabad, which will further help in providing the best facilities to the citizens."



ISLAMABAD: A man with his child looking for birds in H-9 weekly bazar. —APP Photo

Expired food items destroyed

BALKH (Agencies): The Directorate of Public Health in Balkh province has burnt nearly 60 tons of poor quality and expired food items and medicines collected over the past four months. The materials, which include 35 tons of medicines and 24 tons of food items, were collected from the provincial capital Mazar-e-Sharif city and districts. Officials in Balkh Public Health Directorate said that the burned materials were valued 8 million afghanis.

Traffic accident kills one

BADGHIS (Khaama Press): A traffic accident in Badghis, resulted in one person's death and another person getting injured, according to the provincial police. Sadiqullah Sadiqi, the spokesperson for the security department of Badghis, announced, through a newsletter, that this incident occurred this morning in the fourth district of "Qal'ah-e-Naw" city. The accident occurred due to a collision between a motorcycle and a Coaster-type motorbike.

Kabul police rescue woman imprisoned in room for 25 yrs

KABUL (Agencies): A woman who was imprisoned in a dark room for 25 years in the Afghan capital has been rescued by police, the Interior Ministry confirmed. The woman was held in appalling conditions, in a filthy room, as depicted in images released by the ministry.

The ministry's spokesman Abdul Matin Qani said the elderly woman, who has not been identified, was hospitalized after being rescued.

"She feels unsafe and afraid whenever she sees



other people," Qani said as he described the woman's ordeal.

The woman is being treated in a Kabul hospital.

Doctors confirmed she is very malnourished and has problems with her bones and joints.

Police say she was subjected to years of abuse after separating from her husband. Other problems that plagued her included infertility, having a brother who was allegedly a criminal and a dispute over inheritance.

Kabul police have arrested four of her relatives, including her brother and nephews. Police said the case is being investigated further.

Fuel prices spike again

KABUL (Agencies): Kabul residents have expressed their concern over the increase in fuel and gas prices, saying that a liter of gasoline has jumped to 80 afghanis and that a liter of gas to 60. If industry and commerce ministry does not control the prices, people will face many problems, they said.

The residents meanwhile say these days the price of fuel increases day by day, calling on the Islamic Emirate to take measures to prevent the private sector from raising the prices. The drivers also complain about the high price of fuel and gas in Kabul city.

"The price of petrol has reached 80 afghanis, and the price of diesel has almost reached to 80 afghanis, and with these prices we cannot even meet our expenses, and we ask the Islamic Emirate to control the prices as soon as possible and prevent the traders because they raised the prices by 20 afghanis per liter and this is an injustice to the people," said Azizullah, a taxi driver in Kabul.

"The dollar has dropped a lot, but the price of fuel, on the contrary, has increased. The price of fuel should also drop because those who drive taxis cannot cover their expenses with these fuel prices," said Siraj Ahmad, another taxi driver.

A number of fuel stations authorities in Kabul, however, say the closure of Salang pass has caused the price of fuel to increase.

"The price of fuel has gone up in the world because of the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the second reason is the closure of the Salang pass, which is under construction," said Zamara, fuel seller in Kabul.

ACCI Deputy Khairuddin Mayel also say the reason for the high price of fuel in the country is due to the increase in prices in the global markets.

West discusses Afghanistan



NEW YORK (Agencies): US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West has met with officials of a number of countries and organizations on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Following meeting with Japan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Kansuke Nagaoka, West said on Twitter that Japan is a "stalwart supporter of the Afghan people, active diplomatically, and generous in its contributions to address Afghans' humanitarian and basic needs."

West also met with Tariq Ali Bakheet, special envoy of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to discuss OIC's work in Afghanistan.

"Appreciate the OIC's focus on promoting moderation, tolerance, women and girls' access to education, and women's right to

work," West said.

Following his meeting with Norway's Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt, the envoy said that they discussed "shared interests" in Afghanistan.

"Norway is a critical partner as we seek to continue principled support of the Afghan people," he said.

West also met with head of International Rescue Committee (IRC), David Miliband, and said the organization is a "tremendous partner at the forefront of delivering principled assistance across Afghanistan."

On his meeting with Pakistan's Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, the envoy said that they discussed "shared security interests, the imperative to support Afghan women and girls' rights, and the status of humanitarian support in

Afghanistan."

Qatar's Foreign Ministry in a statement that the country's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani met with the United States' Deputy Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, United States' Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf, and Special Representative of US President for Afghanistan Thomas West, on the margin of the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York.

"The meetings discussed Qatar-US bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them as well as regional and international issues of common concern in addition to the latest developments in Afghanistan," the statement said.

Iran not a safe haven for Afghanistan's opponents



KABUL (Khaama Press): During a meeting with the Minister of Hajj and Islamic affairs, Iran's Deputy Ambassador in Kabul said that Iran has always stood alongside the Afghan people and is not a safe haven for Afghanistan's opponents.

Sheikh Noor Mohammad Saqib, the Minister of Hajj and Islamic affairs, met with Mr. Seyed Hasan Mortazavi, the Deputy Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Kabul to strengthen religious and cultural relations between

the two countries.

The Iranian Deputy Ambassador in Kabul emphasized that Afghanistan and Iran are Islamic countries with a long history of relations.

Mr Mortazavi clarified, "Iran is not a safe haven for Afghanistan's opponents."

The press release issued by the Ministry does not provide much detail about the purpose of the Iranian Deputy Ambassador's discussion with Afghanistan's opponents.

Mr. Mortazavi also invit-

ed the acting minister of Hajj to participate in the 37th International Islamic Unity Conference in Iran.

During this meeting, Mr. Saqib pointed out, "Fortunately, good coordination has been established in the relations between the two countries, and these relations must develop further and strengthen."

Meanwhile, Iran is among the countries whose diplomats have interacted most with the Taliban administration in the past two years.

Drivers voice frustration over continued blockage of road



JALALABAD CITY (TOLOnews): Drivers and passengers voiced their frustration over the continued blockage of Kabul-Jalalabad highway, and called on the interim government officials to reopen the highway as soon as possible.

The Kabul-Jalalabad highway was blocked on Sunday after major rockslides blocked the highway in the Pul-e-Charkhi area of Kabul.

The Ministry of Defense earlier announced on social media that the

engineering teams of the ministry have created a side road on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway, and now the side road is temporarily open for traffic.

But the citizens said that the substitute path has caused them to reach their destination late due to heavy traffic jams.

"It was 7:00 in the morning that I traveled, and I wanted to go to Logar.

It is now 3:00 o'clock and we are still stranded in a traffic jam. The road is

in severe condition on both sides," said Hafizullah, a passenger.

"This is not the work of one or two days. This (Kabul-Jalalabad highway) is a transit path. The Islamic Emirate should construct it and provide facilities for the people," said Sayed Bismil, a driver.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the traders have also been facing severe challenges in transporting their commodities.

"It is an unexpected incident. We hope this will be solved soon. We were carrying grapes, melons and vegetables from Kabul. This blockage has really caused us problems and the traders have suffered from it," said Khanjan Alokozai, a member of the ACCI.

Haqshinas told TOLOnews on Thursday that the rocks are still falling down the mountain and have covered the highway, and that whenever the sliding stops the ministry will clean the highway.

"The substitute path which has been constructed by the MoPW doesn't have the capacity for big trucks, we want the drivers of big trucks to use the Lata band path or road of Tagab district of Kapisa province," he said.

Uruzgan war victims seek govt's assistance and justice from ICC

TIRINKOT (Pajhwok): Families of war victims in Dehrawud district of central Uruzgan province say the government should assist them and ask the International Criminal Court to bring the killers of their relatives to justice.

Abdul Bari, a 70-year-old resident of Kakar village, told Pajhwok foreign forces raided his nephew's house on the night of his wedding about 20 years ago and killed dozens of people, including family members.

As tears rolled down his cheeks, the elderly man recalled his 11-year-old son was among 43 people martyred and 19 others, including his wife and two daughters, were injured in the bombardment.

Clad in gray clothes, Abdul Bari said Pajhwok was the first media outlet visiting his house to ask

about his condition.

"It was 11:30pm, the guests were dining. I was with guests outside the house when suddenly a huge explosion took place. I didn't know what happened, but women and children were screaming in the house."

He added he wanted to enter the house to know about the condition of his relatives, but bombs continued to be dropped.

Abdul Bari said everyone was trying to get out and seek refuge in a safe place. "It was like doomsday."

He pointed to the river in front of his house and said: "This river was full of water that night, but everyone jumped into the water to save themselves from death."

He said the bombardment by American forces

continued until morning and they could do nothing except pray to God.

He said when the bombardment stopped, he entered the home and saw women's and children's bodies lying everywhere.

With tears in his eyes, Abdul Bari said the whole house was littered with human flesh and he thought it was a scary dream.

Bari said as soon as the sun rose, villagers arrived at his house to pull out the dead and injured from beneath the debris.

He said: "There were 43 martyrs, including 21 women and girls, 7 children and 15 men. Nine of the wounded were women, five children and men."

He said the groom (his nephew) was injured in the airstrike and the bride's mother was also martyred.

The villagers also said

they remember the incident as the most horrifying and unforgettable.

Saleh Mohammad, a resident of the village, said the bombing of the wedding house was such an injustice that they would never forget. His five-year-old daughter Shahida and his wife were injured in the attack.

Saleh Mohammad said 20 years had passed since the incident, but they still felt like it happened yesterday.

He asked the government to help all victims of the last 20-year war in conveying their voices to the International Criminal Court.

Daud Shah, a tribal elder in Dehrawud district, also asked the government to hold the world accountable for the losses caused to Afghans during the last 20

years of war.

He called on the International Criminal Court to listen to the voices of all the victims of the war in Afghanistan and bring to justice those who invaded the country.

Local officials say they will share the voice of war victims with government leaders.

Uruzgan Governor Maulvi Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmad told Pajhwok: "The occupation forces committed actions unacceptable to any Afghan or Muslim."

He also said the invaders should be held accountable for their actions and promised to convey the demands of the war victims to the government leaders.

Besides financial losses, tens of thousands of people died or lost relatives in the last 20 years of war in the country.

In Kabul, technology takes a toll on calligraphy business

KABUL (Pajhwok): A number of calligraphers and painters in Kabul complain the use of technology is affecting their business, forcing a sharp cut in orders from abroad over the past two years.

Pajhwok Afghan News conducted interviews with several heads of calligraphy and painting training centers. They grumbled about their dwindling business and urged the Islamic Emirate to support them by organising exhibitions.

The Ministry of Information and Culture, on the other hand, promised to support the calligraphers and painters.

Calligraphy

In the solar year 1350, Prof. Abdul Hai Habibi wrote a book called "The History of Afghanistan's Ancient Calligraphy and Writings". He traced the history of calligraphy in Afghanistan to the prehistoric period.

He hailed Azizuddin Wakili Fofelzaei, Hosseini Khormi, Tamim Raha, Seyyed Mehboobullah Hashemi and Omar Sediq as renowned calligraphers of the country.

Karimullah Rahmani, the owner of "Rahmani Calligraphy and Painting Centre" in Kabul, deplored his stagnating trade.

Having spent many years of his life perfecting this art, he has taught many students over the past decade. "Previously, calligraphy flourished very well, because at that time, handwork was generally considered complementary. In the past, he recalled, there was no printing. Instead, there were large handwritten plates.

With the use of modern technology, the calligraphy trade has suffered; "But our people still have a taste for the art and want calligraphy that began in the Islamic era to continue."

"Before the political change, we used to receive a lot of foreign orders, but now they have decreased. We used to have orders from clients in Dubai and Saudi Arabia. Today, however, visas for these countries are not easily available. As a result, we cannot arrange exhibitions there."

Until two years ago, they received most of foreign orders for calligraphed and miniature Quran. Most of such orders came from Saudi Arabia, France and America.

For example, Rahmani said: "We had calligraphed a copy of the Holy Quran and received 100,000 afghanis for our effort, including the miniature and cal-



ligraphic panel costs amounting to 40,000 and 30,000 afghanis. We sell a piece of paintings and calligraphy for \$100 to \$250."

Rahmani asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to cooperate with them on boosting sales and exporting their works abroad.

Wall chalking and paintings have become popular in Kabul in recent years, creating work opportunities for calligraphers and painters.

Rahmani said that calligraphy was still useful in terms of plaque writing and wall chalking. Before the fall of the previous regime, this art form was more common.

He sought government support for the calligraphers and painters who are struggling with economic problems.

The interest of youngsters in learning the art has not declined, but burgeoning economic hardships have tamped

down the number of students at his educational centre.

According to him, previously 300 males and 100 females were trained in different departments at the centre, but now the numbers have fallen to 200.

Meanwhile, Bashir Ahmad Mastani, who has highly variegated experience in the art of painting and drawing, says he established his calligraphy training centre three years ago.

According to him, there have

been no changes in calligraphy and people are still interested in the art. But increasing economic woes are taking a toll on the business. He also demanded support from the caretaker government.

Art of calligraphy

Writers and historians' cities Hafiz Pakzad, Ghousuddin Rasam and Ghulam Mohammad "Masour" as leading painters of the country.

One of Kabul-based painters explained no restrictions had been imposed on their work after the fall of the previous administration.

However, he said, their sales had slumped and so had the number of students at educational centres due to the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

Previously, he recalled, the importance of painting was highlighted through exhibitions, where their works were marketed. But now few art and painting exhibitions are organised. Although there were many art lovers, due to economic problems, the number of painting buyers and learners had fallen, he noted.

"So far, the government has not imposed any restrictions on me and I hope it will not. I

expect it will provide me help. I do not have the required facilities to train more students.

"Another problem is that the buying and selling of paintings has considerably decreased. Because of cash constraints, people cannot buy even the cheapest art piece," he commented.

The artist urged the caretaker government to take measures for marketing their works through holding exhibitions.

Registration of calligraphers, painters

Hayatullah Mohajir Farahi, deputy director of broadcasting at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said they were working on a plan to register all calligraphers across the country. After registering them, the ministry plans to arrange regular meetings with visual artists with a view to addressing their problems.

He added the ministry was doing its bit to cooperate with the calligraphers registered with it.

As of now, specific numbers of painters and calligraphers in the country are not known, because they are not registered. But the ministry has now initiated work on documenting calligraphers.

Canada has Indian diplomats' communications in Sikh leader's murder probe

TORONTO (Agencies): The Canadian government has amassed both human and signals intelligence in a months-long investigation of a Sikh activist's murder, which it has alleged was done by India, media reported on Friday.

The unprecedented tensions flared up on Monday after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa was "actively pursuing credible allegations" linking Indian government agents to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, outside a Sikh temple in British Columbia in June. The two countries, whose relations have been fraying in recent years over the issue of Sikh separatists, have since announced tit-for-tat expulsions of senior diplomats and issued tit-for-tat travel advisories.

Indian PM Narendra Modi's government denied any links to the alleged murder. While calling on India to cooperate with the investigation into the murder, Canada said on Thursday it would not release its evidence. Traditional Canadian allies have so far taken a relatively cautious approach to the matter. Analysts say this is partly because the United States and other major players see India as a counterweight to the growing influence of China.

Today, quoting Canadian government sources, CBC News said the "intelligence includes communications involving Indian officials themselves, including Indian diplomats present in Canada". It added that the intelligence "did not come solely from Canada" and some was also provided by "an unnamed ally in the Five Eyes" alliance — an intelligence-sharing network that includes the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Canadian publication went on to add that the slain Sikh leader "reportedly had been warned by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service that he was at risk". The report further said that "in a diplomatic crisis that unfolded progressively behind the scenes, Canadian officials went to India on several occasions seeking cooperation" in the investigation of Nijjar's death.

CBC News said that Canada's National Security and Intelligence Adviser Jody Thomas was in India over four days in mid-August. Another five-day visit this month overlapped with a "tense meeting" between the two countries' premiers, it added. The report quoted Canadian sources as saying: "When pressed behind closed doors, no Indian official has denied the bombshell allegation at the core of this case — that there is evidence to suggest Indian government involvement in the assassination of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil."

"I can assure you that the decision to share these allegations on the floor of the House of Commons ... was not done lightly," CBC quoted Trudeau as stating yesterday after attending the 78th UN General Assembly in New York. "It was done with the utmost seriousness." "Not some special exemption" for India, US says

Meanwhile, the US is in touch with Indians at high levels and Washington is giving India no "special exemption" in the matter, its national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Thursday. The

United States has been seeking to strengthen its relationship with India. President Joe Biden hosted Modi for a state visit at the White House earlier this year. Asked whether US concern over the incident could disrupt that process, Sullivan said the United States would stand up for its principles, regardless of what country is affected.

"It is a matter of concern for us. It is something we take seriously. It is something we will keep working on, and we will do that regardless of the country," Sullivan told reporters at the White House. "There's not some special exemption you get for actions like this. Regardless of the country, we will stand up and defend our basic principles and we will also consult closely with allies like Canada as they pursue their law enforcement and diplomatic process."

Sullivan noted that the United States was in touch with both countries about the topic. "We are in constant contact with our Canadian counterparts ... and we have also been in touch with the Indian government," Sullivan said. Earlier, John Kirby, spokesman for the White House National Security Council (NSC) had said it supported Canada's efforts to investigate the killing and encouraged India to cooperate in the probe.

Separately, another NSC spokesperson, Adrienne Watson, had denied reports that the US had "rebuffed" Canada over the matter. Australia had expressed "deep concern" over Canada's accusations while Britain said it was in close touch with its Canadian partners about the "serious allegations".



ISLAMABAD: Chief of General Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al Ruwaili along with the members of his delegation called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Court remands journalist into FIA's custody

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A court in Islamabad Friday remanded journalist Khalid Jameel into the custody of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for two days in a case registered under the Cybercrime Act.

The FIA produced Khalid Jameel in the court and sought a 10-day physical remand of the accused. Jahangir Jadoon and Naveed Malik, lawyers for the journalist, appeared before the court and opposed the request for remand.

"Every citizen has the right to freedom of expression in Pakistan," lawyer Naveed Malik argued before the court. "The FIA violated its own SOPs. The Islamabad High Court's (IHC) decision was violated with the arrest of the journalist," he added. "The case against him should be discharged," he demanded. The court reserved the decision after the arguments of the lawyers. It then pronounced the reserved verdict and remanded the journalist into the FIA's custody for two days. Judicial Magistrate Shabbir Bhatti heard the case.

Sh Rashid's 'kidnapping': LHC rejects police report

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench on Friday declared the police report on the alleged kidnapping of Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed unsatisfactory.

Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan conducted hearing on the petition filed for recovery of Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, his nephew Sheikh Shakir and staff member Sheikh Imran. The court dismissed the Rawalpindi police report as unsatisfactory and summoned the RPO Rawalpindi in person on September 26.

CPO Rawalpindi said in the court that Rashid was arrested from Islamabad. "We have no knowledge about it," said the CPO. Expressing its surprise, the court said how it could be possible that the police did not know. The court further remarked that police report expressing ignorance was flawed. The court rejected the report terming it unsatisfactory. The LHC bench directed RPO Khurram Ali to appear in person before court on September 26 along with relevant details.

The Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) on Thursday had sealed Lal Haveli used by Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. Police and FIA personnel assisted the ETPB Deputy Administrator Asif Khan completed the operation and sealed the main doors of Lal Haveli.

MDCAT scam: Police arrest five suspects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Capital City Police on Saturday claimed to have traced the entire network behind the Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) scandal and arrested five suspects, including the suspected mastermind.

In a statement issued by the police said that the mastermind and key leader of the network has been apprehended dozens of devices, microphones, mobile phones and smart watches were recovered from the possession of the accused. As many as 19 FIRs have been lodged in the provincial capital after the scam was unearthed. 74 male and female students involved in using electronic devices in the examination have been also apprehended in Peshawar and presented to the court, police said.

The members of the network involved in the MDCAT scam have been identified as Fahad, Fazal Subhan, Arshad Anwar, Fazi Wahab and Aminullah.

Initial investigation of the police revealed that the arrested persons are highly educated and trained in the use of advanced technology in the examination centers.

The special team of Capital City Police in collaboration with Kohat Police has also conducted several operations to track down the prime suspects involved in the mega-scandal of MDCAT examination. Police investigation found that the main character Zafar Mahmood and his brother, resident of Karak and facilitator of the network in Peshawar, Kohat, Abbottabad and other districts of the province have been arrested.

Police claimed to have seized electronic devices from the arrested students and CDRs of their mobile numbers as well as staff members of the concerned authority have been obtained for further investigation. During the investigation, it has also come to light that the arrested network members were in touch with all the candidates to solve the paper

simultaneously under a centralized system.

A written message has also been sent to the concerned institutions for the IP address information of the server to which the devices belonging to the students were connected. 44 devices used in the scam, three smartphones, a smart watch and a bank check worth lakhs of rupees have also been recovered from the arrested persons, said police.

It is pertinent to mention here that scores of the candidates were caught while using the Bluetooth-enabled pocket-sized devices connected to micro earpieces during the examination. Following the use of unfair means and protests of the students and their parents, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) has already issued a ruling against further processing of the test and the release of MDCAT exam results. More than 46439 candidates appeared in the admission test for medical and dental colleges held on September 10 at 43 centers in 11 major cities of KP.

Protest seeks early resolution of Kashmir issue

GENEVA (Agencies): A peaceful protest demonstration was held in front of the United Nations office in Geneva to draw the world's attention towards the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The event, organized jointly by the Kashmiri delegation attending the ongoing UN Human Rights Council session, World Muslim Congress and Friends of Kashmir, France, was attended by members of Kashmiri and Pakistani diaspora, journalists and rights activists hailing from different parts of the world. Whereas the event was addressed by PPP leader Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Altaf Hussain Wani, Mirza Asif Jarral, Sardar Amjad Yousaf, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Hassan Bana, Advocate Parvez Ahmed, Dr Waleed and others.

Expressing their concern over the worsening political and human rights situation in the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the speakers said in the aftermath of 5th August 2019, the situation in the territory has snowballed into a crisis of an immense magnitude. They termed the BJP-led apartheid regime's decision as a flagrant violation of the United Nations resolutions. They said the unlawful move has pushed the territory deeper into a quagmire of unending violence, lawlessness, chaos and uncertainty. The miseries of the people of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, they said, have further increased since the revocation of its special status in 2019.

The speakers pointed out that journalists and human rights defenders had been increasingly targeted for raising their voice against India's belligerent and anti-Kashmir policies. Arbitrary detention of political activists, they said, has become a new norm in Kashmir.

Alvi calls for enhanced coop with Saudi Arabia

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their desire to further improve bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy and defence. This was discussed at a meeting between the visiting Chief of General Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, who along with the members of his delegation, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Malki also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the delegation, the President said Pakistan highly valued its relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) which had always supported Pakistan at difficult times. He stated that both brotherly countries enjoyed excellent relations in various fields and had commonality of views on various regional and international issues. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to

enhancing bilateral economic and financial ties with the Kingdom for the mutual benefit of two brotherly countries.

The President highlighted that Pakistan was looking for investment as the country had huge potential for the investment in the agriculture and IT sectors. He apprised the delegation that Pakistan had constituted a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to serve as one window platform to fast-track decision making and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment in four key areas: Information Technology, Agriculture, Energy and Mining in the country, especially from the KSA.

Expressing satisfaction at the existing level of cooperation, the President said that the high-level exchanges of military leadership of two countries would further boost defence cooperation. He informed that he was highly impressed by the vision of His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman that led to the nor-

malisation of relations between the Kingdom and Iran and would also bring peace and prosperity to the region. The President appreciated the role played by the KSA in the Organization of the Islamic Countries for important Muslim causes, especially for Palestine, Kashmir and Afghanistan. He deeply thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for providing financial support to Pakistan to deal with its economic challenges. He asked General Fayyadh bin Hamed to convey his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili said that Pakistan and KSA enjoyed close ties in various fields since the beginning. He called for further improving bilateral cooperation between two brotherly countries. He said that the Kingdom's vision 2030 would bring prosperity to the neighbouring countries as well as to the Islamic World.

PPP for specific date for elections in country

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi has underlined the need for the Election Commission to announce a cut-off date for general elections to put a permanent end to the uncertainty surrounding the electoral process in the country.

He expressed these views while talking to the media at Kundi Model Farm here Friday. He said that the formal announcement of election schedule and its date was a part of the constitutional procedure, but the ECP had neither given any schedule for the election nor announced

its date. Merely announcing the month of January for the election is not enough, he added.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that the People's Party had always adopted a principled position that elections should be held in accordance with the Constitution and this crucial requirement should be fulfilled by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). He said that the party had also expressed its willingness about the election to be held in 60 days and while respecting the wishes and consultation of the coalition parties, we agreed to hold the election within 90 days, but this constitutional requirement was not being

met.

He said that PPP had concerns and reservations on many issues as in case, objections were raised by the people about the delimitation and the matter was taken to the courts of law, even then elections would be held in January. In this regard, he said that the Central Executive Committee of the party would take a decision.

Referring to the 'level playing field,' issue, Faisal Karim Kundi highlighted that work on development projects was continuing in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the present caretaker setup and appointments were also being made.

Kashmir key to India-Pakistan peace, says PM

(Continued from Page 1)

"I hope our development partners will accord priority to release of funds for our 'resilient' recovery plan which has been costed at \$13 billion." The prime minister welcomed the normalization of Saudi-Iranian ties, but expressed dismay over the continuing tragedy of Palestine, with Israeli military raids, airstrikes, expansion of settlements and evictions of Palestinians. "Durable peace can be established only through a two-state solution and the establishment of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State within the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."

He called for countering all terrorists without discrimination, including the rising threat posed by far-right extremist and fascist groups, such as Hindutva-inspired extremists threatening genocide against India's Muslims and Christians. "We also need to oppose 'state terrorism'; address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, injustice and foreign occupation; and

distinguish genuine freedom struggles from terrorism."

"Make no mistake," the Pakistani leader said, "it is a latent threat that undermines millennia of progress. We need to cherish and celebrate our diversity and different ways of life. Mutual respect, sanctity of religious symbols, scriptures and personages should be ensured." In this regard, he added, "While Islamophobia is an age-old phenomenon; however, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it has assumed epidemic proportions, as manifested in the negative profiling of Muslims; and attacks on Islamic sites and symbols, such as the recent public burnings of the Holy Quran."

On UNSC reform, PM Kakar said Pakistan did not believe in elitism within the comity of nations. Pakistan, he said, believed that adding additional permanent members — India is one of the aspirants — to the Security Council would further erode its credibility and legitimacy. "The widest possible agreement can be best achieved on the basis of the Uniting for Consensus Group's

proposal for expansion of the Council only in the non-permanent category with provision for a limited number of longer-term seats," he said.

"Pakistan believes that to build, preserve and promote peace and prosperity today, and in the future, it is vital to reduce great power rivalry and tensions; ensure strict adherence to the UN Charter; consistently implement Security Council resolutions; eliminate the root causes of conflicts; and respect the principles of non-use of force; self-determination; sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-interference in the internal affairs of states and peaceful co-existence."

PM urges APPNA to invest in Pakistan's health tourism, paramedical training: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar invited APPNA to invest in Pakistan's health tourism, medical and paramedical education, training and skill development sectors.

He was talking to a delegation of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani-descent of North America (APPNA), led by its President Dr. Arshad Rehan,

that called on him on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session in New York Thursday afternoon. Kakar appreciated APPNA's social welfare, educational and medical relief missions and programmes in Pakistan, and commended President APPNA Dr. Arshad Rehan for APPNA's positive role in spearheading the message of unity and solidarity among the Pakistani-American community.

The PM reiterated that over one million strong Pakistani-Americans were an asset for Pakistan and their contribution in the country's national development was fully recognized. He expressed confidence that the Pakistani American diaspora will continue to contribute to Pakistan's socio-economic progress through their remittances, investments and philanthropic work.

Kakar said that the diaspora was Pakistan's face in the US and a valuable bridge for further strengthening Pakistan-US ties. He assured APPNA delegation of the Government's firm

resolve to facilitate the Pakistani diaspora all around the World. President APPNA Dr. Arshad Rehan, on behalf of APPNA members, expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for the call-on and briefed the Prime Minister on APPNA's continued work in Pakistan's social welfare, educational and medical domains.

Kakar for enhanced productive links with US corporate sector: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar called upon the US corporate sector to look at ways to further enhance its long and productive relationship with Pakistan.

He was addressing a delegation of the US Pakistan Business Council (USPBC), on the sidelines of the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday evening. The prime minister said attracting foreign investments in all sectors of Pakistan's economy was the government's top priority.

The government was focused on creating a business friendly environment and would welcome all sugges-

tions, he added. Kakar said the government believed in a no-holds-barred foreign investment regime and had constituted the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to facilitate foreign investors, bolster their confidence and expedite project implementation in priority areas of agriculture, IT, energy and minerals & mining.

The caretaker prime minister in particular identified the agriculture, tech sector including fintech, pharmaceuticals, health, and digital banking sectors where the US companies could focus their investments in Pakistan. Ms. Esperanza Jelalian, President of USPBC congratulated the Caretaker Prime Minister on assuming office and assured that USPBC will continue to engage with the government of Pakistan to seek mutually beneficial ways of enhancing cooperation. In their remarks, the USPBC members briefed the prime minister on their businesses in Pakistan and plans to enhance their presence in the Pakistani market.