

3 die in gas cylinder blast

SUKKUR (PPI): Three people died in a gas cylinder blast at an LPG shop in Sukkur on Saturday. According to details, a total of nine people were injured in the incident in Sukkur. The three injured including 7-year-old Shehryar, Jameel and Naeem were shifted to the hospital but had lost their lives during the treatment. The injured were shifted to the Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences, Sukkur as there was no burn center near.



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White House deeply concerned about Sikh killing in Canada

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: White House Spokesperson, Karine Pierre while referring to the Sikh citizen killing in Canada, supposedly by an Indian Diplomat said that “we are deeply concerned about it” and that “Canada and US are regularly in touch with each other on important issues.”

It is pertinent to mention here that White House National Security Spokesperson, John Kirby gave a similar reply yesterday when he was asked about this developing story, in which so far Canada has expelled one

Indian diplomat and as a tit for tat action, Indian Embassy in Canada has stopped issuing visas to the Canadian Indian citizens.

According to India media the deceased Sikh Canadian citizen was supposedly involved in raising and supporting the “Khalistan” issue, which pertains to Sikhs of India wanting to have a separate country for themselves. Canadian media and officials on the other hand are of the opinion that how dare another country’s official organize, plot and execute a murder on their land and of

their citizen.

The Canadian argument is definitely supported by the majority of the first world countries but at the same time this incident has raised many eye brows around the world about embassies or individuals working in embassies being hand in gloves with local gangsters and mafias. When asked about Israel and Saudi Arabia, Karine once again emphasized President Biden’s argument that with out Palestine, talks with Israel and Saudi relations will not bare any fruits.



NEW YORK: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq addressing a press conference.

PPP constitutes boards for recommending Party tickets

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has constituted Parliamentary boards in four provinces which will recommend Party tickets for candidates in the forthcoming general elections. Divisional and district presidents will also be invited for consultation in these provincial election boards.

According to the notification issued by the Secretary General of Pakistan Peoples Party, Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari, the board formed for Central Punjab consists of Raja Parvaiz Ashraf, Rana Farooq Saeed Khan, Syed Hasan Murtaza, Shahzad Saeed Cheema, Amir Fida Paracha, Arangzeb S. Barki, Beelam Hasnain, Chaudhry Aslam Gill, Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf, Ghulam Fareed Kathia, Makhdoom Faisal Saleh Hayat, Nayyer H

Dar, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Qasim Zia, Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi and Samina Khalid Gurkhi.

The board formed for South Punjab includes Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mehmood, Natasha Doulatana, Nawabzada Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Makhdoom Shahabuddin and Shazia Abid.

While in the board formed for Sindh, Nisar Ahmad Khoro, Syed Waqar Mehdi, Ajiz Dhamra, Abdul Latif Ansari, Abdul Qadir Patel, Farooq H. Naik, Hari Ram Kishori Lal, Islamuddin Shaikh, Jam Mehtab Dahar, Jameel Ahmed Soomro, Makhdoom Jameel-uz-Zaman, Manzoor Hussain Wassan, Moulana Bakhsh Chaudhio, Mian Raza Rabbani, Mir Ijaz Khan Jakhri, Mukesh Kumar Chawla, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Dr. Nafisa Shah, Nawab Muhammad Yusuf Talpur, Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq, Rukhsana Zuberi, Saeed

Ghani, Salim Mandviwala, Shazia Atta Marri, Sherry Rehman, Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Taj Haider and Shagufta Jumani are included.

The board formed for Balochistan consists of Mir Changez Khan Jamali, Rozi Khan Kakar, Sarbuland Khan Jogezai, Haji Ali Madad Jattak, Mir Baz Khan Khetran, Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Sabir Baloch and Ghazala Golu.

According to the notification, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, Shuja Khan, Amjad Khan Afridi, Anwar Saifullah Khan, Azam Khan Afridi, Barrister Masood Kausar, Begum Shahzadi Salman, Farhatullah Babar, Faisal Karim Kundi, Humayun Khan, Najam-ud-Din Khan, Sardar Ali Khan, Syed Akhunnada Chhattan and Rubina Khalid are included in the board formed for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Govt may reduce petrol price

KARACHI (PPI): Caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi on Saturday hinted at reducing the petrol price in the next fortnight’s review as the Pakistani rupee gained massively against the US dollar.

“There are enough chances that the fuel prices will come down in the next announcement,” the minister said while talking to media at Karachi Press Club. Solangi said that the rupee gained Rs30 to Rs35 against the greenback due to administrative measures taken by the caretaker government in the last few days.

On elections, He said that the interim government will play its due role in facilitating the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for free, fair and transparent polls in the country. The minister went on to say that the government was taking various measures to support economic situation of the country and these measures have shown results recently in the decreasing price of dollar. On Sept 15, the government made a massive hike in petrol and diesel prices after making tall claims of providing relief to the masses. A massive hike of Rs26.2 per litre was made on petrol and the new price would be Rs331.38 per litre. Moreover, Rs17.34 was jacked up on diesel and the new price would be Rs329.18 per litre.

SC to hear Faizabad sit-in review case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: According to the cause list issued on Saturday by the Supreme Court for the next week, the apex court will hear the Faizabad sit-in review case on Thursday. The Supreme Court has issued the roster for the judges for the coming week’s cause list for the SC’s Islamabad principal seat.

According to the cause list, five cases will be heard on the SC principal seat. The Bench 1 will be consisted of Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Aminuddin and Justice Athar Minallah.

The Bench 2 will be comprising Justice Sardar Tariq and Justice Musarrat Hilali. The Bench 3 will be consisted of Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Shahid Waheed. Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar, Naqvi and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar will be the part of the Bench 4. The Bench 5 will be comprising Justice Jamal Mandokhel, Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi.

oust Imran from power.

Imran and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had been attending hearings in the case, while PTI leader Asad Umar’s and former principal secretary Azam Khan’s involvement was supposed to be determined during the course of the investigation. While Umar was granted pre-arrest bail last week, Imran and Qureshi were denied post-arrest bail, and their judicial remand — which was extended — will complete on September 26.

Imran had on Sep 16 filed the petition, a copy of which is available, through his lawyer Barrister Salman Safdar. The state and Interior Ministry Secretary Yousuf Naseem Khokar are respondents in the case. The petition urged the IHC to grant Imran post-arrest bail till the final disposal of the cipher case “to meet the ends of justice”.

The plea claimed that

nearly 200 criminal cases have been filed against the former premier, out of which “almost 40 cases are [on] charges of corruption, murder, sedition, mutiny, foreign funding, NAB (National Accountability Bureau) reference and Toshakhana reference”. It argued that the PTI chief could not avail remedy under section 498 (power to direct admission to bail or reduction of bail) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc).

The petition alleged that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) operated at the behest of the then interior ministry. It added that the matter of the case not being registered by the foreign ministry had gone unnoticed by Special Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain. “Never before, history has witnessed the ‘arrest’ and ‘prosecution’ of a former prime minister (Imran) and a former foreign minister (Qureshi) under this law (Secrets Act),” the plea stated.

Sepoy embraced Shahadat

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Mir Ali, North Waziristan District.

During conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own

troops and terrorists. Own troops effectively engaged terrorists’ location.

However, during the operation, Sepoy Shakeel Shafqat (age 21 years, resident of District Khanewal), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorist found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

The Frontier Post

Mansha Bomb remanded

LAHORE (PPI): A court in Lahore handed over accused Mansha Bomb to police on four-day physical remand on Saturday. Earlier, the court reserved its ruling on the physical remand of Mansha Bomb in connection with a case relating to illegal possession of government plots and assault and firing on officers of Lahore Development Authority (LDA). Judicial Magistrate Model Town heard the case.

Murder of Sikh leader in Canada jolts West: PM

— Bringing economic stability, govt’s foremost priority

NEW YORK (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said that the gruesome murder of Khalistan Movement Sikh leader in Canada had jolted the West that raised serious questions about the role of Indian state.

Addressing a presser at the Pakistan Mission, the prime minister said that Pakistan had been a victim of such state-sponsored terrorism and shared evidences of ‘Pakistan centric’ at different global and multilateral fora about the role of Indian state. He said that it might be the first of its kind event probably after the First World War that an Asian country staged a physical murder on the European soil and its impacts were being felt across the Western countries who now realized how India was persecuting its minorities like Christians, Sikhs and Muslims.

The prime minister opined that an alliance should be formed to check such ‘rough behaviour’ of India. To another question, he said that he also held meetings with different business bodies in the US that showed interests in the economic revival plans in Pakistan, including privatization and SIFC. He also termed his discussion with the IMF Managing Director very constructive, adding that she hoped that the upcoming mandated government would carry on the economic plan.

To a query, he said that the caretaker government had conducted administrative intervention against the sugar and wheat mafias with effective measures. There was no dearth of the commodities in the country as different edible items were readily available, however, prices of

certain commodities were linked with the international prices, he added. The prime minister said that the caretaker government was striving to provide relief to the masses.

The IMF was very appreciative of the interim government’s steps over illegal trade of dollars, he added. The IMF did not demand anything, rather the caretaker government was giving them a confidence and would abide by the agreements, he said, adding that the upcoming elected government would further negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) according to its manifesto. About Afghanistan, the prime minister said that they had multifaceted engagements with the Afghan interim government and hoped the outcome of those engagements would be beneficial for the two countries.

Responding to a question, he said that Pakistan would take all steps to protect its territory and people whenever any need arose. He further said that Pakistan respected the territorial sovereignty and integrity of Afghanistan. About Pak-US ties, he said that they had very constructive historic relations which would be further strengthened. The Pakistani diaspora was contributing in the United States and playing their role in the community building.

The prime minister stressed that Pakistan had an exclusive identity and it should be seen through the prism of it rather than any other regional or other contexts. About his meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, PM Kakar said that they had discussed the mutual priorities and held beneficial negotiations. The prime minister said that the State

of Pakistan effectively responded to the Jaranwala incident. Contrarily, the Indian state acted as a spectator rather an accomplice in the Manipur violence in which hundreds of people were killed.

PM Kakar said he as well as the current Chief Justice of Pakistan visited Jaranwala and tried to mitigate the situation. The Army Chief also took a public position on the issue. To a question, he said the Election Commission of Pakistan was mandated to hold the general elections and the final date would be announced soon. He said all the registered political parties had the right to take part in the polls as the ECP did not ban any party from the process.

He assured that the caretaker government would carry out fair treatment to all the political parties. Rubbishing the notion of any victimisation, the prime minister said anyone involved in the violence against the state would be dealt with under the law of the land as Pakistan was a sovereign state.

He said Pakistan wanted constructive engagement with Russia and both the countries had immense potential of enhanced economic cooperation. However, he said, Pakistan did not favour military solution to any conflict and instead advocated dialogue for settlement. Prime Minister Kakar said that persecution of Muslims being carried out in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) was aptly described as “genocide”, which he also mentioned in his address at the United Nations General Assembly.

(Continued on Back Page)

Nepra okays electricity price hike

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepa) allowed state-run power distribution companies (Discos) and K-Electric to increase electricity rates by Rs3.28 per unit for the next six months, starting from October 2023 to March 2024.

All the consumers will be charged an extra Rs3.28 per unit on account of the fourth quarterly adjustments for FY23 (April-June 2023). This increase has been made due to the variation in capacity charges, Variable O&M, additional recovery on incremental sales, Use of System

Charges, Market Operator Fee, and fuel charge adjustment (FCA) impact on transmission and distribution (T&D) losses.

All Discos and K-Electric will collect nearly Rs183 billion (including GST) from power in these six months. Excluding GST, the Discos collection stands at Rs135.58 billion and the K-Electric will charge up to Rs20 billion. Interestingly, of this collection (without GST), over Rs130 billion is for paying capacity charges to Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

It should be noted that no quarterly adjustments would be passed on to B1, B2, B3 and B4 industrial consumers to the extent of incremental

sales till the continuation of the package, in line with the Authority’s decision of December 01, 2020. On August 24, 2023, Nepa held a public hearing on the petition filed by the companies.

Representative of the Ministry of Energy during the hearing submitted that the proposed quarterly adjustment may be recovered from consumers in a period of six months in order to minimise the impact on consumers. The ministry said that the impact would be around Rs3.55 per unit instead of Rs6.20 per unit if passed on to consumers over a period of six months instead of three months.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a press conference at Press Club.

Country’s affairs to be run by people’s representatives: Solangi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Saturday that as per the Constitution, the country’s affairs would be run by its elected representatives.

Addressing a press conference on the occasion of his visit to Karachi Press Club, the minister said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was responsible for conducting free, fair, transparent and impartial elections under Article 218(3) of the Constitution.

Principal Information Officer Muhammad Asim Khichi was also present on the occasion. He said that the caretaker government would play its full role in holding free and fair elections. The minister said that delimitation of constituen-

cies would be completed by November 30 and after that, the final date of the election would also be given.

Terming Karachi Press Club as his old home, he said it has been an important front in the evolution of democracy in the country. He said that Karachi Press Club had a historical status and its role in the freedom of expression, knowledge and people’s right to rule was praiseworthy.

The minister said that working class and oppressed people of Pakistan also come to Karachi Press Club and explain their pains and sufferings. Murtaza Solangi said that he was aware of the hardships suffered by the journalists as there were problems related to their jobs. He said that the current caretaker government was a constitutional and legal gov-

ernment under Article 224 of the Constitution and during its tenure, injustice cannot be done to journalists.

He said that measures would be taken together with the Principal Information Officer to solve the problems of journalists. In response to a question, the caretaker Federal Minister for Information said that the ECP had announced holding of elections in the last week of January. He said that the caretaker government would help the Election Commission in every way and all the requirements of the ECP would be fulfilled.

In response to a question about the prices of petroleum products, the caretaker federal minister of information said that the prices of petroleum products were determined by the prices in the world market.

Nawaz to hold rally after return

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Self-exiled former three-time premier Mian Nawaz Sharif has finally decided to return to Pakistan as per his already announced schedule of October 21. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) bigwigs held an important consultation meeting to discuss the legal and administrative matters of the party’s supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif’s return at the London office.

After the meeting, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif talked to the media and announced that they had completed the consultation about the return of Mian Nawaz Sharif on Oct 21. Shehbaz said the issues of Nawaz Sharif’s return to Pakistan were finalized and the journey of development of the country will start from where it stopped in 2017 when he was ousted from premiership. Shahbaz Sharif told the media persons that legal and administrative matters were discussed in today’s London meeting.

He said he will go back to Pakistan in a few days while Nawaz Sharif will arrive in Pakistan on October 21, where he will be warmly welcomed. After reaching Lahore, Nawaz Sharif will address a grand public meeting at Minar Pakistan and announce the future plan of action. Shehbaz said during the last term of Nawaz Sharif, load shedding was ended, inflation was extremely low at 3.5%, and GDP was at 6%.



Punjab CM returns from visit to China

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is all set to arrive Pakistan from China tonight.

His visit remains very beneficial for increasing cooperation in bilateral relations, especially in the fields of agriculture and industry.

Mohsin Naqvi was the top trend on Twitter and the visit was given special importance and significant coverage by Chinese media.

During his visit, the CM inaugurated the Ningxia International Friendship States Forum of more than 18 countries.

Mohsin Naqvi is the first Chief Minister in the history of Pakistan to inaugurate this forum. He delivered a

keynote speech. he laid emphasis on peace and prosperity in the region for a bright future. He described Pakistan-China relations as indispensable for peace.

Sahiwal and Woosung and Bahawalpur and Zhongwei are declared sister cities to support economy and trade, science and technology.

The chief minister visited Ningxia General Hospital and Medical University. He got briefing on solid waste management, Safe City cameras, policing and road infrastructure in Beijing.

Mohsin Naqvi had an important meeting with

Communist Party Secretary Liang Yao Shong in Yinchuan. A ministerial delegation from Punjab participated in the 6th China-Arab Expo in Yinchuan.

Provincial Ministers SM Tanveer, Aamir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Ibrahim Hasan Murad, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Finance Secretary Mujahid Sher Dil accompanied him.

The CM said that he invited party secretary of Ningxia was invited to visit Punjab and he accepted the invitation.

The signing of documents to declare Sahiwal and Bahawalpur as sister cities with two Chinese cities is a great success,

CM Naqvi said. He said in the light of these agreements, mutual cooperation will be further promoted.

In the meetings with Vice Governors of Ningxia, besides agriculture, irrigation and industry it was agreed to increase technical support in the field of information technology, said Mohsen Naqvi.

Ningxia's health, agriculture, agricultural research, industry, one-window operation and civic amenities were observed during the visit, he said.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the people of Punjab benefit from the outcome of this visit, said Mohsen Naqvi.

Man gets death sentence in rape case

LAHORE (PPI): A model court in Lahore on Saturday awarded death sentence to a rapist who had sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl. Model Court Judge Mian Shahid Javed pronounced the sentence and also imposed Rs1 million fine on convict Rafiq. The rape case was registered against Rafiq at Satu Kutla police station in March 2019. In case of non-payment of fine, the convict would have to spend another six months in jail, the court ordered. Rafiq was shifted to the Kot Lakhpat Jail soon after the pronouncement of his death sentence. However, the court barred the jail authorities to execute its order unless the Supreme Court endorses his death sentence. In case of implementation, the court further ordered to leave the body of the convict on the gallows until his soul leaves the body.

Khursheed Shah cautions PML-N against locking horns with two retired generals

LAHORE (NNI): Khursheed Ahmed Shah, a prominent PPP figure, has advised the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), a former partner in the PDM-led coalition government, not to pursue any action against retired army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa and former spymaster retired Lt-Gen Faiz Hamid.

Khursheed Shah's counsel came shortly after Nawaz Sharif, the head of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, made a strong statement emphasising the need for strict accountability of those responsible for his removal as prime minister in 2017.

Speaking via video link from London, Sharif

asserted that Pakistan's path to progress depended on holding accountable all those involved in the 2017 conspiracy. He further alleged that former chief justices of Pakistan, Saqib Nisar and Asif Saeed Khosa, along with Supreme Court judge Azmat Saeed, were also part of this conspiracy and should be held responsible for the country's predicament.

Khursheed Shah cautioned the PML-N against pursuing action against the two retired generals, expressing doubt about the feasibility of their plan to target these former military leaders.

He pointed out the case of late military dictator

Musharraf, who was sentenced under Article 6 of the Constitution, but was later hospitalised and transferred to Dubai, suggesting that pursuing such conflicts might be unproductive.

Shah urged the PML-N to avoid getting embroiled in such situations, noting that politicians often find themselves entangled in such disputes.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif maintained that Pakistan had been pushed to the brink of disaster through a plot that placed amateurs in power, underscoring the importance of adhering to the law in addressing the culprits behind the conspiracy.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi visiting Arts Council of Pakistan. —APP Photo

Solangi visits Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Saturday visited Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi which has been playing a critical role in promoting the country's art and culture.

Upon arrival, the minister was accorded warm welcome by Arts Council President Ahmad Shah along with its staff. The minister lauded the services rendered by the President of Arts Council Ahmad Shah for promoting arts and culture of the country.

The services of the Arts Council and its President for promoting the art and culture were commendable, Solangi remarked while visiting various departments of the council. He said the Arts Council had become the largest cultural institute in the country.

Bird strike grounds PIA Flight in Sialkot

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A bird hit PIA flight PK264 at Sialkot International Airport. According to the details, the flight was coming from Abu Dhabi to Lahore. The plane landed at Sialkot airport due to bad weather.

An hour later, a bird hit the plane as it took off again. The pilot made an emergency landing back at the airport. All three tires of the plane burst during landing.

The flight landed safely. After the incident, the flight was cancelled and the passengers were sent to Lahore by road.

CAA divided into two separate organizations

KARACHI (INP): In order to divide the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), a nine-member committee has been established.

A notification was issued according to which, the Ministry of Aviation's Joint Secretary II – Shazia Rizvi – has been appointed as the chairperson of the nine-member committee.

The notification stated that Vice Air Marshal Taimoor Iqbal will serve as the deputy of the committee, meanwhile, the other committee members comprised of Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Aviation, Asif Iqbal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Abdul Malik, Deputy Director General of Regulatory CAA, Nadir Shafiq, President of Aircraft Accident Investigation Board, Commodore Mirza Aamir, Director Finance of CAA, Saqib Butt, Director of Aviation Security, Sameer Saeed, Director of APS, Sadiqul Rahman, and Director HR of CAA, Abid Ali Shah.

CTD arrests 13 terrorists in operations across Punjab

LAHORE (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab has arrested 13 terrorists belonging to banned organizations while carrying out intelligence-based operations in various cities of the province, including Lahore.

During the operation in Lahore, a key commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and two of Daesh (Islamic State) were captured, officials claimed.

They further said that five terrorists of the outlawed TTP were arrested from Attock. The officials further said that activists of

the banned organization were also arrested from Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur and Jhelum.

The CTD officials said explosive material and equipment for making suicide jackets were recovered from the arrested terrorists.

The officials said cases have been registered against those arrested, and investigations started.

Previously on September 9, the CTD had arrested two alleged terrorists during intelligence-based operations in Rawalpindi and Gujranwala.

The arrested terrorists

include Isa, said to be a central member of Daesh or Islamic State (IS). Officials said Isa was arrested from Rawalpindi in an IBO.

A large quantity of explosive material, detonators, mobile phones and cash were seized from the arrested terrorists, they added. They further said that cases had been registered against the terrorists, and an investigation was underway.

The CTD officials said that week, 369 combat operations were conducted wherein 52 suspects were arrested.

Tessori, Gohar discuss increase in industrial production

KARACHI (APP): Interim Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries & Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Sunday called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here.

They discussed the measures to increase indus-

trial production, and continuous supply of electricity and gas to industries especially in the metropolis.

The Sindh Governor said that the people and industrialists were equally worried about electricity load-shedding and increase in rates.

He said that the economic development of the coun-

try depended on industrial activity.

He further said that if Pakistan's economic hub Karachi developed then the entire country would develop.

The caretaker federal minister said that the interim government was taking steps to provide relief to the industrialists.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): According to details, following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to

inquire about the problems faced by the citizens.

In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 211 house servants of 520 houses from Sumbal Police Station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements

involved in any kind of suspicious activity.

He said citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes comes to their house in order to collect the data.

Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.



LAHORE: An illuminated view of Justice Sir Shadi Lal building Chief Justice Lahore High Court (1920-34) near Jain Mandir. —APP Photo

Centre supplies expensive energy to Sindh's people, says Shaikh

KARACHI (PPI) Former energy minister Imtiaz Shaikh has said Sindh is providing cheaper electricity to centre but latter supplies expensive energy to the people of the province. Former energy minister commenting on hike in power tariff said that the electricity price has now become unbearable and made life of the people miserable, according to a statement on Saturday.

Imtiaz Shaikh said that Sindh supplying eight-to-10-thousand-megawatt electricity to the national grid with coal, alternate energy and other sources of power generation. The former minister had earlier penned down a letter to state minister for petroleum and asserted that injustices were being committed with Sindh in the distribution of gas and electricity and urged the federal gov-

ernment to resolve the issues.

He had noted in the letter that there was an acute gas shortage in Sindh. "People of province are facing severe problems due to this gas load shedding, while industries are facing closures, which is not only creating unemployment and is also a loss to the national economy," he added.

"Sindh is producing 2.11 MMcf/day of gas whereas its own requirement is 1600-

1700 MMcf/day," he pointed out, adding that only 700-800 of gas was being provided to the province.

He had demanded a fresh gas allocation policy for the province, in consultation with the Sindh Government. He also demanded that the federal government give Sindh representation in the federal energy regulatory bodies and in K-Electric's board of directors.

KWSC taking all possible measures to ensure uninterrupted water supply

KARACHI (NNI): Under the direction of Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) is taking all possible measures to ensure uninterrupted water supply to the citizens and its fair distribution and in this context, Water Corporation provides all the facilities of water supply and drainage to all citizens without discrimination of politics, religion, nation, caste and race, because water has nothing to do with politics, therefore, we will provide water in the city not politically but on a public basis and distribute it equitably.

These views were expressed by CEO Water Corporation Engineer Syed Sallahuddin Ahmed during a meeting with var-

ious UC Chairman's On this occasion, Project Director Karachi Water Sewerage Services Improvement Abdul Ala Bhatti, Muhammad Hanif Baloch, Zafar Paliyo, Sikandar Zardari and all Superintendents and Executive engineers were present.

During the meeting, the delegation informed the Water Corporation officials about the various water supply and drainage problems faced in their respective Union Councils and asked that all the problems should be solved on priority basis.

CEO Water Corporation assured the delegation of immediate resolution of all complaints and issued orders to the concerned officers on the spot to ensure that all

issues are resolved on priority basis, while giving instructions to the officers, he said to submit the complete details of all the works and take their approval and start the work immediately.

He said that together with the elected local government representatives, all the problems will be solved on a priority basis and better facilities will be provided to the citizens, because providing better facilities to the citizens is one of our top priorities. He said that Water Corporation is striving day and night to serve the citizens with a new commitment and a new identity. On this occasion, he further said that any officer or employee of Water Corporation found involved in water theft will be exposed to us.

During the meeting, the delegation addressed the CEO Water Corporation and said that we are happy that you gave us time, and after hearing all the issues with satisfaction issued orders on the spot to resolve them immediately.

In the Court of Jehangir Khan Judge Banking Court-II

Federal Judicial Complex Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar. Case No: 77/1 Next date: 23-10-2023 Suit for recovery of Rs. 2,95,860.02/- UBL Hayatabad Phase5 Branch Vs. Muhammad Usman Notice Versus: Muhammad Usman S/o Imran Hussain R/o Post office Ramdas House No. 2260 Mahallah Sarbanan Peshawar. Business Employer Address Zong united Telecom Main Kohat Road Murshid Abad Chowk Opposite to Civil Colony Peshawar. Where is the plaintiff Bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.2,95,860.02/-against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institutions (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 newspaper filling which an expert decree shall be passed in favor of the plaintiff Bank with costs.

Banking Court-II Peshawar



LAHORE: A loader rickshaw Turn Turtle due to overloaded during passing through the accumulated water near sabzi mandi in Lahore. —APP Photo



Caretaker forced retirement: PHC upheld UOP decision

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad upheld the decision of Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar regarding force retirement of Bara Gali Campus Caretaker.

The counsel Abdul Waheed advocate argued to declare force retirement of Bara Gali campus's caretaker null and void because neither evidence is available against him nor witnesses were produced before inquiry committee.

During hearing Khalid Rehman advocate and UOP Law Officer Riaz Ali Khan appeared before court while argued that Abdul Waheed served as caretaker at Bara Gali campus for 26 years. They argued that several complaints and allegations were placed against him and Abdul Waheed was summoned by the inquiry committee regarding the allegations.

The committee has found Abdul Waheed guilty and charge-sheeted in the allegations of forced retirement, UOP lawyer argued. They added that the petitioner had approached

UOP's syndicate as an Appellate forum but the varsity decision was upheld regarding force retirement.

UOP's representative argued that after syndicate decision, Abdul Waheed approached PHC and added that concrete and strong evidences are available against the petitioner for force retirement.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Arshad Ali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad upheld UOP's decision regarding force retirement of Caretaker at Bara Gali campus after conclusion of arguments.

SCCI stresses attracting foreign direct investment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a lucrative destination for foreign direct investment wherein ample opportunities exist to make investment in tourism, mining, oil and gas and other potential sectors.

However, he emphasized it is essential that the government and relevant authorities should take proactive steps to pave the way for attracting foreign investment in those aforementioned sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by removing all hurdles so that it will help stabilize the national economy and put the country on sustainable growth and progress.

Ijaz Khan Afridi was talking to a delegation of Overseas Business Forum United Kingdom (UK) led by its chairman Muhammad Farooq Khan during a meeting held here at the chamber's house on Saturday.

Other members of the Overseas Business Forum UK include Salman Dossa, Muhammad Fayyaz Khan, Naeemullah, Wamiq, Anjad Ali and Nauman Ali and others. The chamber's secretary general Sajjad

Aziz and other relevant officials were present during the meeting.

Chairman of the Overseas Business Forum U.K, Muhammad Farooq in his opening remarks briefed the meeting about main objectives of the forum. He, on the occasion, invited the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Businessmen for the forum upcoming event/foreign investment, which is scheduled to be held in London, UK.

Earlier, during the meeting both sides discussed matters of common interests, promotion of foreign direct investment in KP along with launching joint ventures and programmes and taking benefits business community experiences for mutual benefits.

Muhammad Farooq pointed out key reasons in declining Pakistan's exports and bilateral trade to the United Kingdom and the rest of European countries and gave a number of proposals to remove all those trade barriers.

The OBF UK chief called upon the KP businessmen to come forward and play a role in attracting foreign direct investment in tourism and other potential sectors to stabilize Pakistan's crippling economy and put it on sustainable growth and progress.

He, on the occasion, suggested the formation of an overseas commission in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the pattern of Punjab and urged the SCCI to play a role in this regard.

Later, the SCCI chief responding to various queries and demands from members of OBF UK asked the forum to play its proactive role in attracting foreign direct investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the chamber will provide every assistance to the forum in this regard.

Ijaz Afridi said the overseas Pakistan business community can play a vital role in the promotion of bilateral trade between the two countries.

He, on occasion, lamented that government policies and commercial banks' unsupportive behavior had added to miseries of the business community, resultant the country's exports and bilateral trade dropping exponentially.

He said there was no clear policy of promoting trade and investment in the country.

During the meeting, both sides have also agreed to strengthen linkages between the business community of Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) through launching joint ventures and programs.

ANP criticize PTI for their corruption

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali here Saturday accused PTI government to overburden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with loan of Rs 900 billion and said that people want to know where this huge amount was spent.

Addressing a workers convention in PK 77 Tehkal Payan he came hard on PTI for their corruption during their nine years in KP and said that their misadventures are reasons behind economic woes of KP.

He said those who criticized metro bus system of Punjab by saying it 'Jangla Buses' have themselves destroyed the structure of Peshawar by making BRT and added that metro bus system was completed with an amount of Rs. 30 billion while more than Rs 100 billion were spent on BRT Peshawar

Aimal Wali also welcomed the holding of elections in January and said that ANP is a democratic party and is a fervent supporter of democratic system.

KP govt activates helpline

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken a significant step in addressing criminal activities such as extortion, blackmailing, and targeted killings by launching a dedicated helpline.

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has activated this helpline to encourage citizens to report these crimes and ensure the safety of their communities, confirmed by concerned officials on Saturday.

The effective use of this helpline is expected to aid law enforcement agencies in identifying and apprehending those involved in these illicit activities, including the menace of hidden extortion threats.

This initiative aims to safeguard lives and property in the province.

Citizens are urged to share any information related to extortion with the helpline by dialing 091111283283.

The identity of informants will be kept confidential to ensure their safety and encourage more people to come forward with valuable information.

This proactive approach by the government demonstrates a commitment to maintaining law and order and protecting the well-being of its citizens in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Weather partly cloudy in most districts of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Weather will remain humid and partly cloudy in most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Saturday.

Chances of rain in most districts of the province and temperature in Peshawar 26 degrees Celsius recorded, the official said. He said the chance of rain up to 33 degrees Celsius and humidity ratio in the air is 70% recorded.

However, he said, there is a possibility of rain with thunder and strong winds in the upper and some plain areas of the province with rain is expected in Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Biteram, Kohistan and Torgar. Heavy rain is likely in Shangla, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand and Bajaur, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

Khurram Durrani has been promoted and posted as Chief Engineer (RE/PP) while Chief Engineer (RE/PP) Engr Imran Haleem has been transferred and posted as Chief Engineer (Development). This order was issued in best public interest and implemented with immediate effect.



PESHAWAR: A beautiful illuminated view of lighting Ganta Gar building.

Crisis in public hospitals as doctors run private clinics

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: A shocking revelation has emerged regarding doctors who were on leave from public hospitals running their own private clinics and hospitals.

This alarming development has led to a deteriorating situation in government-run healthcare facilities, compelling patients to seek treatment in private hospitals.

Reports indicate that the Health Department dispatched District Health Officers and Medical Superintendents across the province to investigate this matter. It has been uncovered that Medical Officers, Women Medical Officers, and specialist doctors, upon availing leaves from the Health Department, are operating their private clinics in close proximity to government hospitals.

This revelation has raised concerns about the adverse impact on patients seeking treatment in public

hospitals. The actions of these doctors have come under scrutiny, causing distress to the Health Department.

In this challenging time, Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mehmood Aslam, deserves commendation for his unwavering commitment to improving the healthcare system in the province. Under his leadership, significant strides have been made towards enhancing the quality of healthcare services and infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Director General Health, Dr. Shaukat, has played a crucial role in overseeing and implementing vital healthcare initiatives in the region.

His dedication to public health has been evident in his tireless efforts to address the challenges within the healthcare sector.

Dr. Shaukat's leadership has been instrumental in promoting transparency and

accountability within the health system. His initiatives have aimed to provide better healthcare access to all residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, regardless of their economic status.

Directives have been issued in the dispatch that all doctors on leave must return within seven days and provide a detailed report of their activities during their absence. This investigation is not limited to Peshawar alone; doctors in major cities and smaller towns throughout the province have been found to divert their attention from government hospitals to their private practices.

Patients suffering due to the absence of doctors in government hospitals often turn to private healthcare providers for timely medical attention, incurring additional financial burdens. The government has strongly criticized the self-serving actions of these doctors, which lead to further hardships for the common people seeking medical care.

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The need for immediate action to rectify this situation is apparent. Patients should not be forced into private healthcare due to the unavailability of doctors in government hospitals. The government's stance is clear: doctors on leave must prioritize their responsibilities within public healthcare facilities.

The impact of this issue on the healthcare system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is significant, and swift measures are required to ensure that government hospitals can provide the necessary care to the people who rely on them. Secretary Mehmood Aslam and Director General Health Dr. Shaukat's leadership and dedication to healthcare reform will be instrumental in addressing these challenges and ensuring a better future for the people of the province.

Crackdown against counterfeit drugs leads to significant seizures

PESHAWAR (APP): The Director General of Drugs and Pharmacy Services, Dr. Abbas, has announced a significant crackdown on counterfeit and fraudulent medicines in the province.

This operation has led to substantial seizures and actions taken against those responsible. Dr. Abbas disclosed that, based on confidential information, the Drug Control Peshawar successfully intercepted a large quantity of counterfeit drugs being transported via Daewoo Cargo.

These illegal medications were en-route from Karachi to Peshawar through Daewoo cargo services. The seized contraband includes a staggering 37,000 counterfeit tablets and medicines, supposedly procured by the Sindh government.

Investigations are underway to trace the origin of these fake drugs within Peshawar.

In the Namak Mandi area, numerous drug supplier stores underwent rigorous inspections. During these checks, samples of suspected fraudulent drugs were collected and sent to the drug lab for thorough analysis.

Furthermore, Dr. Abbas highlighted the swift closure of an illegal medical store in Mian Village Colony by Drug Control

band includes a staggering

Kohat personnel.

Similarly, a medical store near LMH Kohat was shut down due to the sale of medicines with an Expired Drug License.

Legal actions have been initiated against the violators under the Drug Act of 1976. Various medical stores were inspected, resulting in the confiscation of numerous suspected counterfeit and substandard medicines for comprehensive laboratory testing and analysis.

Dr. Abbas also provided updates on actions taken in Swat and Bajaur, where 12 drug samples were collected during 14 inspections. The results of these sample

analyses will lead to legal actions against the relevant suppliers and medical stores involved.

The joint efforts of Drug Control Peshawar, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, are aimed at ensuring the safety and effectiveness of pharmaceuticals in the region.

Dr. Abbas urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities related to counterfeit drugs to the authorities.

The province remains committed to safeguarding public health by addressing the issue of counterfeit drugs with the utmost seriousness and diligence.

Minister vows action on human rights issues

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting was convened at the office of Syed Arshad Husain Shah, the Minister was given a detailed presentation on the current human rights situation in the province and the difficulties faced by the Directorate General in carrying out its human rights-related responsibilities.

The team emphasized the urgent need to establish regional divisions within the Directorate General to ensure the protection of fundamental rights at the local level.

Law and Human Rights attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Minister was given a detailed presentation on the current human rights situation in the province and the difficulties faced by the Directorate General in carrying out its human rights-related responsibilities.

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The Minister assured that this matter would be promptly addressed with the relevant authorities.

The Minister stated his intention to convene a meeting with the Police and Revenue departments as soon as possible to enhance coordination between departments when investigating human rights violations.

He also instructed the team to regularly update the Directorate General's social media accounts to raise awareness about human rights issues.

Additionally, he suggested that the Directorate General should engage with journalists to effectively communicate its performance.

The Minister emphasized the importance of having a strategy in place to promptly respond to incidents of human rights violations and take proactive measures as required.

He expressed his strong commitment to the cause of human rights and assured the Directorate General of his full support.

Provincial caretaker minister for ensuring services to public with honesty

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 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, here Saturday.

The meeting was attended by engineers, executive engineers, and other relevant 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 officers in the execution of their duties.

He encouraged them to diligently provide professional services to the public.

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PESHAWAR: Allama Muhammad Azam Chushti addressing a public gathering in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



In brief

Police arrests four murderers F.P. Report

PABBI: Police had arrested four alleged murdered killed a trader at Mahajir bazaar over shop dispute within few hours after commencement of crime. Police has cordoned the premises after the escape of culprits while Station House Officer Jalojai Sartaj Khan reached the crime scene and deployed teams for arrest of alleged murderers. Police had also recovered weapons used in the offense. The alleged murdered identified as Suleiman, Usman, Shah and Wahab.

Smuggled sugar, oil recovered

DERA GHAZI KHAN (INP): The Border Military Police (BMP) in Dera Ghazi Khan has recovered 575 sacks of smuggled sugar and a large quantity of Iranian diesel and petrol during various operations in the past few weeks. According to media reports, a BMP team under the supervision of Political Assistant Mushtaq Ahmed Tawana seized 575 sacks of 50 kg sugar loaded on two trucks from Buata border. An FIR has been filed against the truck owners. In another operation, the BMP seized 97,610 liters of petrol and diesel in fifteen days and registered an FIR against 39 suspects. 73 people were also arrested. The BMP is continuing operations against smugglers and the sugar mafia in tribal areas. The seizures are a major blow to smugglers and the sugar mafia, who have been profiting from the illegal trade of sugar and Iranian oil. The BMP's actions will help to protect the Pakistani economy and the interests of consumers.

Boy drowned in flood water F.P. Report

SWABI: Seventeen-year-old nephew of ANP Maneri Bala Swabi President Sher Ali Khan drowned in the flood water in the canal and the search is still underway by the officials of the Rescue 1122 here on Saturday. Along with his friends, he came to the said canal, where due to heavy rain in the upper areas, the water was flowing in this canal with high and fast flow. As a result of digging for gravel and sand in the upper canal (Khor), large caves have been formed, in which flood water comes in abundance these days and a large amount of sand is also deposited in it. It is thought that Umar might have been stuck in the pile of sand. The teams of Rescue 1122 Swabi, including local people and expert divers, searched the lower area of the water flow several times, but they did not find Umar's body so far.

LESCO team attacked

OKARA (PPI): People in 53 2L, a suburban village of Okara, on Saturday attacked the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) team which had gone there for recovery. They beat up Line Superintendent Muzammil Hussain, ALM WAPDA and other members of the team with sticks and rods, tore their clothes and later held them hostage. The team came under attack by a six-member gang when they severed the village's power connection due to the non-payment of bills. Soon after learning about the incident, personnel of the city's Saddar police station reached the scene and got members of the team freed. Police also arrested one of the attackers named Ibrahim and started conducting raids for the arrest of the remaining five members of the gang.

Dir traders to support Chakdara colleagues on their own

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The traders body of Chakdara on Friday announced to financially support the affected shopkeepers of a market fire on their own. Talking to local journalists at Chakdara the Anjuman Tajiran President Khwaja Faizul Ghafoor said the government and the administration had never helped or supported the victims of such incident despite repeated appeals in the past.

He said that 15 shops were completely destroyed while several other shops were partially damaged in the fire that broke out in a market at Chakdara the other day. The traders' leaders said that some of the affected shopkeepers were even unable to pay monthly rent and their utility bills. He said the business community will be asked to collect donations for the victims.

About half a million rupees were collected on the very first day, he said, adding that traders of other areas would also be



requested to support their brethren. He pointed out that millions of rupees goods and valuables had been lost in the incident.

Meanwhile the Adenzai A.C Daud Saleemi and other officials also visited the market and assessed the damages.

BAP stands for altruistic service to people

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Power has never been our goal, but service to the people is our manifesto and motto. All resources are being used to provide basic facilities to the people. These views were expressed by Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri in a meeting with a delegation of party workers.

She said that sincere workers of the party are the capital of the party and they cannot be ignored. The roots of the party are in the hearts of the people due to the hard work of the party workers day and night.

Senator Samina said while talking to the delegation that the platform of

Balochistan Awami Party is serving the people of Balochistan without color, caste and prejudices. We are working hard day and night and our efforts are continuing for the service, development and prosperity of the public. We will leave no stone unturned to complete the ongoing development projects. So that more and more people can benefit from these useful schemes.

She said that the axis of politics of Balochistan Awami Party is to serve the people and solve their problems with sincerity and this is the reason why BAP is becoming more popular day by day. Speaking to the delegation, she said that the era of politics of lies and deception is over and the people have

become conscious and know good and bad.

The people of Balochistan want peace and prosperity in the province and this is the manifesto of the party. For the achievement of which the implementation of public projects and to control the law and order situation is going on rapidly and God willing, the journey of development and prosperity will continue.

Senator said to party workers that make full preparations for it and deliver the party manifesto door to door. She expressed hope that in the upcoming elections, educated people who care about Balochistan will vote for Balochistan Awami Party so that Balochistan can achieve rapid development.

400 illegal electricity connections identified

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: More than four hundred illegal electricity connections were detected and eight transformers were seized during an anti-power pilferage operation in Lakki Marwat on Saturday.

"Additional AC Ishaq Ali Khan and PESCO executive engineer Hizbullah Mehsood led the operation launched on the directives of local deputy commissioner Rehmat Ali and additional chief engineer Nadir Zaman Kundi following credible information about

power theft in the area", said an official. He said that a joint team of the power supply company and district administration along with police contingent disconnected 450 illegal power connections and recovered over Rs 11 million from defaulters.

The official said that along with seizing eight transformers, the PESCO staffers also disconnected power supply to domestic and commercial consumers from 92 transformers. The officials of the power supply company forwarded complaints to relevant

police stations for registration of FIRs against 93 electricity thieves", he added.

In Bannu, the anti-power pilferage task force disconnected power supply to two factories and markets from four transformers in the industrial area of the district.

The task force also disconnected power supply to commercial and industrial centres over nonpayment of power dues. During the operation led by director commercial Tufail Khan, the authorities recovered over Rs two million from power defaulters.

FC completes solarization of girls high school

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Frontier Corps North has completed Solarization of Girls High School in Sra Sha, Mohmand. This initiative reflects FC north commitment to enhancing educational facilities in the area and ensuring uninterrupted access to electricity for educational institutions.

The project, executed in close coordination with the district administration and in response to the demands of the local community, has achieved its goal of providing reli-

able solar-powered electricity to the school. The Girls High School in Sra Sha now boasts a solar power system that caters to 13 classrooms and a dedicated science laboratory, ensuring a conducive environment for learning. This endeavour has garnered immense appreciation from the local community, particularly the schoolgirls who will benefit from the improved facilities. Frontier Corps North is dedicated to furthering its efforts to support education and empower the youth in Mohmand.

Numaira: Collector of firsts and best example of women empowerment

Shehnaz Nawaz

NUMAIRA Saleem is known for all the good reasons which are enough to make Pakistan proud. She is the first Pakistani who hoisted Pakistani flag at the North and South Poles, first Asian to skydive (tandem) Mount Everest, during First Everest Skydive in 2008. Numaira has officially been recognized as the First Pakistani Astronaut by the government of Pakistan in 2006. In 2007, Numaira served as Honorary Ambassador of Tourism for Pakistan. And now she is going to be the first Pakistani ever who will hoist Pakistani flag in space. She is

often referred to as the "Collector of Firsts" for all these reasons.

This woman is the best example of Women empowerment which is a concept that has gained immense significance in recent decades. It refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their lives, make choices, and access opportunities in various spheres of society. This concept is not just about promoting gender equality but also about recognizing and harnessing the potential of women to contribute to the development and progress of their communities and the world at large.

One of the key facets of women empowerment is eco-

nomie empowerment. When women have access to education, job opportunities, and financial resources, they can become self-reliant and contribute to their family's income. This not only enhances their self-esteem but also improves the overall economic well-being of their households. Studies have shown that societies that empower women economically tend to have lower poverty rates and higher economic growth.

Education is a powerful tool for women's empowerment. When girls and women are educated, they are better equipped to make informed decisions about their lives, health, and families. They can choose their own career paths like Numaira Saleem.

Education also opens doors to a wider range of career opportunities and helps women become more financially independent.

Moreover, educated women are more likely to participate in civic and political activities, thus influencing policies and decisions that impact their communities. Political empowerment of women is crucial for ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes. When women are represented in political offices, they advocate for policies that address gender-based inequalities and social issues. This can lead to more equitable and just societies. Countries that have greater female political representation often exhibit better governance

and policies that promote the welfare of all citizens.

Empowering women also involves challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit their potential. Numaira Saleem is also basically challenging gender stereotypes and doing all the big things that are usually not expected from women specially in our culture. So, it is important to create a society where women are not confined to predefined roles but are free to pursue their interests and ambitions without fear of discrimination or judgment. This cultural shift can lead to a more inclusive and diverse society where everyone can thrive. We need more brave women like Numaira Saleem who are able to

show their potential fearlessly.

"Women Empowerment" is not just a buzzword; it is a concept that has the potential to transform societies and make the world a better place for all. When women are empowered, they can contribute to economic growth, foster healthier communities, and shape policies that benefit everyone. However, achieving women empowerment is an ongoing process that requires the collective effort of individuals, communities, governments, and organizations. It is a vision for a brighter and more equitable future where the full potential of women is realized and we see more women like Numaira Saleem on the front stage.

Quarantine doctor obtains bribe in honey trade at Torkham F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Doctor in quarantine center, Torkham victimized honeybee owners and asked for illicit money to clear honey bees at the border and demanded from the concerned officials for legal action against him. It is to be mentioned here that the honey producers shift the honey bees' boxes to Pakistan and Afghanistan as per need of season.

Addressing a press conference held in Landi Kotal press club on Saturday Waheedullah Shinwari, a clear agent in Torkham said that the quarantine Dr Ilyas teased the honey owners for one reason or the other. He blamed some clearing agents who paid him thirty thousand rupees per vehicle to clear the import of honey bees from Afghanistan.

He went on that almost 150 vehicles of honey bees involved in the honey producing business but the unscrupulous attitude of the doctor affected them. The matter had been already resolved with the Director of Agriculture Department by producing legal documentation of the honeybees but to in avail, he opined.

He demanded of the concerned authorities that besides paying custom duty and other clearing documents; however, the doctor refused to let import of the honey bees. When Dr Ilyas, quarantine center, Torkham was asked for his comments on the issue he firmly rejected the allegation levelled against him and never discouraged honey trade. He maintained that he let honeybees loaded trucks to cross into the border that had legal documents.

Police arrests seven alleged culprits F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Police have arrested four alleged culprits involved in theft of gold, silver ornaments worth Rs. 12.5 million and Rs. 2 million cash from jewelry shop situated at Post Office Bazaar Sukheki Mandi eleven month ago and recovered stolen gold ornaments worth Rs. 1682180/-, Rs. 20 lakh cash and wagon used in burglary.

This was announced by Station House Officer Luqman Azam Chathah and added that police determined to clear Sukhaki area from crimes and all accused involved in different crimes would be arrested.

According to details,

eleven month ago, unknown burglars stolen away gold,

silver ornaments worth Rs. 12.5 million and Rs. 2 million cash from jewelry shop of Saleem jeweler situated at Post Office Bazaar Sukheki Mandi. Police was registered a case against unknown accused. Some days before, police received information that an accused involved in the burglary was present in Raheem Yar Khan Jail. Sukheki police carry accused Allah Ditta from RYK Jail and recovered 44 gram gold and a wagon used in theft incident.

Later, police also arrested three accused Abdul Waheed, Zulfiqar and Farooq from different places and recovered booty of Rs.20 lakh cash, gold and silver ornaments worth Rs. 1682180/= from their possession. SHO Luqman Azam Chathah told that further investigation is underway and other accused would also be arrested soon.

QWP for peaceful elections in January

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday said though the Election Commission of Pakistan had announced the general election would take place in January next year, there was a dire need to bring the worsening law and order under control so that the polls could be held peacefully.

Addressing a gathering at Shabqadar tehsil in Charsadda district, he said it was the responsibility of the caretaker government to provide an enabling environment to political parties by overcoming the challenge of lawlessness. He added a level playing field should be ensured so that the candidates could freely run their election campaign and the people could exercise their right to vote.

Aftab Sherpao said law and order was worsening in

the country particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that it was the responsibility of the caretakers to beef up the security to allay the concerns of the people. Commenting on the economic affairs, the QWP leader said though the country's economy was stabilised to some extent, it was still facing tough economic challenges and it would take considerable time and effort to turn around the economy.

Advising the people, particularly the youth to think about the country's future before casting their votes, he said the ones, who had raised hollow slogans and made empty pledges, left the country in dire financial straits due to their incompetence and lack of vision. He said rising prices of the petroleum products and daily use items had crippled the people economically who were unable to make ends meet in the face of backbreaking inflation.

Many families find it hard to send their children to schools due to rising inflation and this will lead to higher dropout rate," he feared, adding that the have-nots in KP were already faced with lack of health and education facilities. Aftab Sherpao said though successive governments claimed credit for undertaking uplift work, the province still lagged far behind in terms of facilities and road infrastructure. "Nobody cared about protecting the provincial rights," he remarked. He said the people in the remote and mountainous areas were compelled to use cable cars for commuting. He said the gulf between the province and the centre was widening as KP was not getting its due share in resources, underscoring the need for collective wisdom to address the challenges facing the country.

PTIP commits for peace, development, prosperity

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary (PTIP) Chairman Pervaiz Khattak and Vice Chairman Mahmood Khan have said that peace, development and prosperity

is the top priority of the party. They said that PTIP will secure next government while claimed that Imran Khan hoax the people including me, carried out mega projects in KP. Existence political parties has no road map for the betterment of the country and prosperity of the people, it was the dire need to form a separate political party.

He was addressing a public meeting in which Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) District General Secretary Syed Habib Ali Shah joined of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians in Odigram yesterday. Former

Chief Minister and PTI Vice Chairman Mahmood Khan, ex-minister Mohib ullah and others also addressed the gathering. Mahmood Khan said in his address that projects worth Rs 300 billion were approved in Swat, on which work is still going on, universities, colleges, schools, water supply schemes, roads will not be needed in Swat for the next 30 years.

Former Chief Minister said that have come out in the politics for the people service. Our agenda is peace, development and prosperity, we ruled the province for 10 years, we do not adopt a dual policy, we have proved everyone with our work, no one has served like us, we do not serve politics, I had everyone's files, the purpose of forming a party was not to go with thieves.

PTIP vice chairman said that four universities are being established, we have

planned for 30 years for Swat, the era of peace, development and prosperity is coming, projects for the development of Swat are unprecedented. The work done for the development in the area has not been done by any politician in the past.

PTIP Chairman Pervazi in his address said that we have made historic reforms within the institutions in 2013 in KP. Imran Khan made me the Chief Minister under compulsion, and Imran Khan had promised where to build a new Pakistan could not do any reform about corruption, health and other sector and fooled me and the whole nation.

Khattak said that if our government comes, then the rule of the people will be, we will expose the real face of all these political parties to the people, there is no solution for Pakistan to get out of the problems with the oppressed people.

General election in Jan unconstitutional: PPP

F.P. Report

HUB: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and president Hub district, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has expressed his reaction to the Election Commission's decision to hold the upcoming elections in the last week of January, calling the announcement unconstitutional and undemocratic.

He expressed his regret for not announcing the final date on behalf of the Election Commission and said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had demanded the final date of the elections before and he still stands by this demand. He said that The People's Party rejects any such unconstitutional action that may harm democracy. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also expressed his reservations on the Election Commission's announcement and the future action plan with the party's consultation on his return to Pakistan.

PPP district president said that no one will be allowed to steal the mandate of the People's Party and the party workers of Pakistan People's Party are fully prepared for the elections. He further said that we have always demanded

timely, transparent and fair elections. In our view, fair and impartial elections are the cause of political and economic stability in the country.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri made it clear that if the elections are delayed or the action of 2018 election is repeated, then strong resistance will have to be faced due to which the country has to face an irreparable economic and political crisis. He demanded that the final date of the upcoming elections should be announced and the election commission officer of each district should be given the powers of the returning officer so that the transparency of the election is not questioned.

He says that Pakistan People's Party has always taken Pakistan and the nation out of difficult situations and taken it on the path of development. Even today, the hopes of 25 crore people of Pakistan are connected with Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Asif Ali Zardari and People's Party. He said that the focus of our politics is to serve the people only and the Pakistan People's Party will go to the National and provincial assemblies with a huge majority in the upcoming elections and all the current

problems will be solved for the people burdened by inflation, unemployment, lawlessness and other crises. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri once again demanded the Election Commission to announce the final date for the elections instead of telling the month or week.

Old enmity claims 3 lives

KHANEWAL (PPI): Three people were gunned down in Khanewal and Ahmadpur Sharqia over old enmity, police said Saturday. According to reports, two persons were shot dead while another suffered injury in heavy firing on a car near Gharat bridge in Khanewal. Both the deceased and injured hailed from the same family.

The rescue officials shifted the dead bodies and injured to the Khanewal DHQ hospital. Police said the firing incident was a result of an old enmity. A similar incident took place in Ahmadpur Sharqia tehsil of Bahawalpur where a man was shot dead in crossfire between two rival groups. The tragic incident took place in the jurisdiction of the Dera Nawab Sahab police station.



Mexican officials push migrants away from border-bound cargo trains



HUEHUETOCA (Reuters): Several dozen migrants retreated in frustration from train tracks outside Mexico City, blocked by Mexican officials from hitching rides on cargo wagons in a major new enforcement effort to curb the flow of people headed north. Thousands of people have reached the northern border in recent days and crossed into the United States, many after taking dangerous journeys on freight trains known as "The Beast." Mexican railroad operator Ferromex this week suspended 60 trains due to the influx of people, and Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM) has deployed agents to dissuade people from climbing aboard. At a railway alongside a trash dump in

Huehuetoca, a town north of Mexico City, some 40 INM agents in more than a dozen vans drove alongside the tracks to cut off access to migrants, and sent up a drone to locate others who had scrambled into the surrounding hills. "They forced us away from the rail," said Jason, a Venezuelan migrant who asked to be identified only by his first name. "We have no other options anymore." Migrants carrying backpacks and jugs of water made their way through tall grass under the hot sun to retreat on foot to the nearest town. INM said it would work with Ferromex, owned by conglomerate Grupo Mexico, to identify strategic points to dissuade migrants from riding the trains, which it said puts

lives at risk. Despite the dangers of clambering aboard car roofs or huddling inside open-air wagons, many migrants say they cannot afford other options, and fear extortion on the highways or being sent by migration agents back to southern Mexico. Milagros Narvaez, also from Venezuela, told the INM officers told the migrants they had to turn back, and that she was desperate after already struggling for nearly a month to find a way to the northern border. "It's been an odyssey to be here in Mexico," she said. "We want to take the train to get to the border and cross into the United States... Wherever the train takes us, wherever they will give us asylum."

Timbuktu siege: 2 killed in Mali mortar attack

MALI (BBC): Two people have been killed and five others injured after shells were fired on the historic northern Malian city of Timbuktu, the army says. The military blamed what it called "terrorists" for the shelling. Timbuktu, a UN-designated World Heritage Site, has been under siege in recent weeks by jihadists, leading to acute food shortages. Back in 2012, it was captured by Islamist and Tuareg fighters, who were eventually ousted by French forces. However, the jihadists continued to stage attacks from their bases further north in the Sahara Desert. The insurgency was the main reason Mali's military seized power in 2020, accusing the civilian government of failing to provide security. It pledged to end the militant attacks but in recent months it appears they have been on the increase. In one of the bloodiest incidents, 49 people died when a river boat in the north-east of the country was ambushed a fortnight ago. The UN peacekeeping force, which has been in the country since 2013, is pulling out at the request of the military government. Last year, France with-

drew its forces as the authorities brought in mercenaries from Russia's Wagner group. Attack on Timbuktu, a seat of Islamic learning home to tens of thousands of ancient manuscripts, caused panic among residents, local media report. The city's inhabitants have endured faced shortages of food, petrol and medicine since the beginning of August, when jihadists warned trucks from neighbouring regions not to enter the city. This has led to a sharp increase in the price of those goods which are still available. As well as reporting shelling of Timbuktu, the army said it had foiled an attack 240km (150 miles) south-west in Léré town, killing five militants. On Sunday, five soldiers were killed after two military camps were raided by ethnic Tuareg rebels. An alliance of Tuareg groups that re-launched a rebellion last month said it had captured two bases from the Malian army in Sunday's fighting. The Tuareg rebels, who want independence for northern Mali, are opposed to the army taking control of bases vacated by departing UN troops in the area. They also accuse the junta of reneging

on the 2015 Algiers peace deal that ended their previous rebellion. **Fight ends** PHOENIX (AP): Two federal lawsuits filed over former Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey's decision last year to place thousands of shipping containers along the US-Mexico border have been dismissed after the state said it would pay the US Forest Service \$2.1 million to repair environmental damage. The Sept. 15 dismissal of the cases in US District Court in Phoenix ends the fight over the double-stacked containers that were placed as a makeshift border wall in the summer of 2022. Ducey, a Republican, sued in US District Court seeking to stop the federal government from preventing placement of the containers. The US Department of Justice then sued Ducey and other Arizona officials, saying the wall interfered with federal control of the land along the international boundary. Many of the 3,000 containers were placed in the Yuma area of western Arizona and in the remote San Rafael Valley in southeastern Cochise County.

Judge blocks govt plan to scale back Gulf oil lease sale

NEW ORLEANS (AP): A federal judge has ordered the Interior Department to expand next week's scheduled sale of Gulf of Mexico oil and gas leases by millions of acres, rejecting a scaled-back plan announced last month by the Biden administration as part of an effort to protect an endangered whale species. The Biden administration asked the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to block the order issued in Lake Charles, Louisiana, by US District Judge James David Cain Jr. Environmental groups represented by the Earthjustice organization also appealed. As originally proposed in March, the Sept. 27 sale would have made 73 million acres (30 hectares) of offshore tracts available for drilling leases. That area was reduced to 67 million acres (27 hectares) in August when Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management announced final plans for the sale. Cain's injunction restores the original coverage area. BOEM's revision also included new speed limits and requirements for personnel on industry vessels in some of the areas to be leased — also blocked by Cain's order. BOEM had adopted the reduced area and new rules for next week's sale as part of an agreement the administration reached last month with environmentalists in efforts to settle a whale-protection lawsuit filed in federal court in Maryland. Chevron, Shell Offshore, the American Petroleum Institute and the state of Louisiana sued to reverse the cut in acreage and block the inclusion of the whale-protecting measures in the lease sale provisions. They claimed the administration's actions violated provisions of a 2022 measure, labeled the Inflation Reduction Act, that provided broad incentives for clean energy, along with creating new drilling opportunities in the Gulf. They also said the changes after the initial lease sale was proposed in March violate federal law because they were adopted arbitrarily, without sufficient explanation of why they are needed. Meanwhile, rival litigation filed by Earthjustice and other prominent environmental groups seeks to halt the lease sale. The organizations say the lease sale violates the National Environmental Policy. They say the administration failed to account for health threats to Gulf Coast communities near oil refineries and didn't adequately the effects of new fossil fuel development on the climate. Energy industry representatives welcomed the ruling. "The injunction is a necessary and welcome response from the court to an unnecessary decision by the Biden administration," Erik Milito, President of the National Ocean Industries Association, said in an emailed news release.

China, at UN, presents itself as a member of the Global South as alternative to a Western model

UNITED NATIONS (AP): China told assembled world leaders that it considers itself part of the Global South, saying it identifies with the goals and challenges of less-developed nations and offering them an alternative to what it has long called "Western hegemony." The message came from a second-tier official after the country's powerful president, Xi Jinping, skipped the annual UN meeting again. Xi sent Vice President Han Zheng to deliver a policy statement at the General Assembly's leaders' meeting that covered the government's usual positions with familiar language but appeared to focus on building coalitions around its approach to development and international relations. "As the largest developing country, China is a natural member of the Global South. It breathes the same breath with other developing countries and shares the same future with them," Han said. He also said China supports those nations' development path "in keeping with their national conditions." The loosely defined term "Global South," which has come up frequently at the United Nations this year, identifies nations around the world that are less developed and less rich than what have typically been called "first-world nations." They're not necessarily in the Southern Hemisphere; many, in fact, are not. Leaders of a number of larger developing nations, including Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and India's Narendra Modi, have of late pitched themselves as leaders around whom the Global South could coalesce. Lula told leaders at the UN meeting that "Brazil is back" in a speech widely received as Global South-focused maneuvering. And Modi in January hosted a "Voice of the Global South"

virtual summit. China, too, has loosely cast itself in a similar role for more than a decade — and more so since Xi launched the "Belt and Road Initiative" to drive Chinese development, infrastructure and influence in other nations, particularly developing ones. The sprawling project has been widely touted but has encountered bumps along the way. "China," Han promised, "will remain a member of the big family of developing countries." That statement is in keeping with Beijing's attempts to balance — often adeptly — the benefits of continuing to be a developing nation with the advantages of being a major global economic and diplomatic power and counterbalance to the West. For decades, since the start of the "reform and opening up" launched by Deng Xiaoping after Mao Zedong's death in 1976, China has positioned its approach to both domestic and international affairs as an alternative to "Western hegemony." That counternarrative is a frequent cornerstone of its international identity. Han's "Global South" statements match that longtime sensibility. And China benefits from association with the Global South, which allows it to style statements as if it speaks for many nations — nations that may not be strong enough to object if such a powerful government mischaracterizes them. Whether China and its \$18 trillion GDP should actually be considered part of the Global South is a frequently debated matter. In January, at Modi's summit, 125 countries were included but China wasn't one of them. That may have had more to do with China's often-tense relations with India than with its attitude toward the concept in general.

Xi was one of four leaders of permanent UN Security Council members who did not show at the United Nations this week. France's Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Rishi Sunak and Russia's Vladimir Putin also skipped it; US President Joe Biden, leader of the host nation, was the only permanent Security Council member to deliver a speech. Han Zheng's presence at the United Nations came at a time when China's diplomatic operation appears to be in a bit of disarray. Many expected Foreign Minister Wang Yi to come to the General Assembly and possibly pave the way for a Xi-Biden meeting. Wang attended and delivered the speech last year. In the months since, a newly appointed foreign minister came and went with some mystery, and Wang took the role on again. Han, in his speech, covered China's usual topics in such meetings. Among them: He reiterated that Taiwan, the island off China's coast that has its own independent government, is historically a part of China and always will be — a frequent message to the United States and the world. The island and the mainland split in 1949 after a civil war. He said China supported human rights "suited to our national conditions in response to the needs of our people." Beijing's repressive policies toward ethnic Uyghurs in the western region of Xinjiang and its policies toward dissent, including in the special administrative region of Hong Kong, come under frequent Western scrutiny. He said, as China has many times before, that a cease-fire and peace talks are the only path to ending war in Ukraine. China has tread a delicate line in the 18 months since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Cubans march in New York to protest island leader's presence

NEW YORK (Agencies): Dozens of Cubans marched in Manhattan, shouting "Freedom for Cuba" and "Down with communism," to protest the presence of the island's handpicked president, Miguel Díaz Canel, in New York to attend the United Nations' general assembly this week. "The Cuban people have no human rights, and the sad part of it is that a couple of blocks from here, at the United Nations, the international community is complicit," said Alian Collazo, coordinator of Cuban Freedom March, one of the groups organizing the demonstration. "There are thousands of political prisoners, including children under 18, in political prison for doing what I am doing here," he shouted into a megaphone. Díaz-Canel arrived in the United States on Sunday to participate in several high-level events at the United Nations, speaking about climate change, the debt of developing nations, and universal healthcare, while taking each opportunity to slam the US embargo against the island. But Cuban exiles who have come to the United States fleeing poverty, lack of freedoms and communist indoctrination for over 60 years say the United Nations should not invite authoritarian leaders. "We have come to say what Díaz-Canel did not say inside that building," said another of the protest coordinators, activist Rosa María Payá, who is leading Cubadeceide, an initiative to hold a plebiscite in Cuba to decide the country's future. "We are here to raise the voices of the more than a thousand Cubans who first raised them for us and are in prison today carrying the honor and decorum of the entire Cuban people."

Local Miami-Dade community council member Daniel Fernández, who heads the pro-democracy group Somos Más, said Díaz-Canel came to the United Nations "to lie to the world" about the actual situation on the island and that the "murderous dictatorship" was behind the erosion of democracy in other Latin American countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua. Florida Republican state Sen. Alexis Calatayud also participated in the protest carrying a sign with the faces of some of the political prisoners in Cuba. Protesters were also carrying banners accusing Cuba of supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine by sending Cubans to fight there, following an online leak of documents, including several photos of passports showing Russia is recruiting Cuban mercenaries. Cuba has denied involvement and said it was investigating a human-trafficking ring, but the island's ambassador to Moscow was quoted on Russian media saying his country was not opposing the recruitment efforts. The ambassador's statements prompted a rare public rebuke by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, who said the Cuban government was against "mercenaryism." Cuba is a close Russia ally, and while Cubans were demonstrating on the streets, Rodríguez was meeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the UN. Rodríguez put out a statement assuring the "excellent state of bilateral relations and the mutual willingness to deepen economic, commercial, financial and cooperation ties for the benefit of both peoples." Demonstrators had been expected

to attend a panel discussion about human rights violations on the island organized by CubaDecide and Human Rights Foundation at Columbia University Club, an alumni association. But the club canceled the event, telling Payá she "had brought a protest to the club's door," she said. The club has not replied to an email seeking clarification about its decision. But the protest continued in front of Cuba's mission to the UN, and so did the human-rights event, rebeked at a different venue, The Knickerbocker Hotel. Those in attendance heard about the harsh conditions in which Cuba is keeping Jose Daniel Ferrer, one of the prominent opposition leaders on the island, arrested when he tried to join the islandwide pro-democracy demonstrations in July of 2021. Ferrer is surviving "under extreme and cruel conditions, confined in a tiny cell in unsanitary conditions, and incommunicado for several months at a time," said his daughter, Martha Beatriz Ferrer, who lives in the United States. The speakers also discussed extrajudicial killings and the lack of an independent judiciary, as well as the Cuban government's support of Chinese espionage against the United States and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The panel, moderated by Payá, included human-rights lawyers, activists and experts who talked about the difficulties in seeking accountability for the death of Cuban dissident Oswaldo Payá, who was likely killed by Cuban state security agents, according to a recent conclusion by the Organization of American States in a report that was years in the making.

How Lebanese people survive the 'normalization of misery'

BEIRUT (Agencies): Zuhair looks despondently down at his feet, where the shoemaker's profound poverty is obvious in his own shoes, tattered beyond repair, which he wears without socks. "I can't even afford to buy shoes," he says. "We are barely surviving. We don't see a chicken; meat is off the menu." Zuhair, who has big hands, a mish-mash of teeth, and thick veins protruding from overly thin arms, refuses to be photographed or to give his full name. He expresses shame at how dramatically his life has been degraded by the economic collapse that began in October 2019, in Lebanon — a nation once trumpeted as the Switzerland of the Middle East. Lebanon's economic meltdown, brought on when the government defaulted on its foreign debt and the currency collapsed, triggered months of protests demanding deep political reforms and accountability from corrupt sectarian elites. Dubbed a "revolution" by the thousands of those who took to the streets, it resulted in little positive change. The financial crisis was deemed so severe that the World Bank, in spring 2021, said Lebanon could be among the top three "most severe crisis episodes globally" since the mid-19th century. The Lebanese people have been the subject of dire predictions of malnourished destitution. The impact of their country's economic collapse has been compounded by a perfect storm of the pandemic, the massive 2020 ammonium nitrate explosion in the Port of Beirut that caused billions in damage, chronic political dead-

lock, and a ruling elite that analysts say has settled into a strategy of "doing nothing." "I can't take it anymore. Every time I feel depressed and sick to my head, I go sit on the beach," says Zuhair of the impact of his weekly earnings dropping from \$300 to \$50. He works in a small factory that produces 32 pairs of women's shoes a day. "Things got worse after the revolution because the people who run the country are a bunch of thieves," he says. Before the crash, he and his family "had it all, used to go on picnics," and could pay for meat, food, and their own rent. Now his two teenage children can't go to school because he can't pay their annual fees of several hundred dollars. "This country is gone," says Zuhair. "It's a misery." So how do Lebanese get by every day, in a system so broken that citizens hold up banks to retrieve their own cash; where the lack of fuel limits the police response to crimes; and where, in the southern city of Sidon, local officials have asked for firefighting help from a Palestinian refugee camp? For Zuhair and his family — among the more than half of Lebanese people who have fallen under the poverty line for the first time in their lives — survival today means living in a house on loan from a friend. Without running water, it was only recently hooked up with enough electricity to power a lamp donated by neighbors. Incongruously amid the poverty, the Port of Beirut is clogged with new cars, and streets in more affluent

neighborhoods are plied by the latest-model Porsche, Lamborghini, and Ferrari sports cars. "In Lebanon, we are seeing two split economies: We are seeing the wealthy are not losing significant amounts of money, and in fact are probably getting richer," says David Wood, senior Lebanon analyst for the International Crisis Group in Beirut. He notes suggestions of "renewed prosperity" on the back of data that the value of Lebanon's imports has reached pre-October 2019 levels, though more reportedly is spent on importing cars than medicine. "It's damning," says Mr. Wood. "We're seeing that people who do have disposable cash are spending it on cars and watches and assets ... while for the majority of people in Lebanon, we are seeing the normalization of misery." Change appeared possible after 2019, but assumptions on the street proved not to be true, says Mr. Wood, that either the economic collapse would jolt the ruling elites into action, or that inaction by those elites would lead to massive civil unrest. "The calculation has been made," says Mr. Wood. "Lebanon's elites have decided that any reforms they need to accept, that would impact their grip on power, are unacceptable, and that it actually serves their narrow self-interest to do nothing, rather than to risk losing control over a system which has served them so well for so long." Despite the lack of reform and grim economic statistics for ordinary Lebanese, the crisis has significantly expanded one area of

government that appears to be working: two programs that provide cash assistance, administered via two social welfare programs. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) estimates that it supports one-third of all the people in the country, working largely through those government structures. Despite that support, a recent UN food security review found that a quarter of all those living in Lebanon, some 1.4 million people, are "food insecure." "That means they are in crisis mode, or in emergency mode," says Antoine Renard, the deputy country director for the WFP in Lebanon. He says 112,000 people qualify as being under emergency status. "The challenge you have with this crisis is that what used to be the middle class has been wiped away, and then you have those who were poor, even before." What started as an emergency WFP response to the Syrian refugee crisis — Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world — has expanded exponentially in recent years to provide sustainable support to cushion the blow of the multiple crises for Lebanese people, also. Needs surged after the 2020 port blast, which caused damages estimated at \$15 billion and left some 300,000 people homeless, prompting the WFP to provide direct and immediate aid through food parcels. It also facilitated a system of cash payments via a late 2021 World Bank loan called the Emergency Social Safety Net, which monthly provides \$20 per individual to families in need, topped up by \$25 per family.

Together, the WFP estimates that those Lebanese support programs have scaled up 35-fold since their inception. Cash is now provided to 700,000 people and food to 300,000. "This is a protracted crisis," says Mr. Renard. "Now we talk more and more with key ministries [and] with many other crises around the world; we have to speak about an exit strategy," as the WFP shifts focus to more sustainable support of Lebanon's food and social protection systems. Mounir Kahil and his family, who live by candlelight in a hovel in Beirut's southern suburbs, are among those benefiting from the cash handouts. The former bus driver — who lost his job when the private school he drove for closed due to the 2019 economic crash — pulls a card from his wallet that he uses to withdraw \$105 per month from the WFP-World Bank program. It is not enough to cover all their needs, including \$250 in monthly rent, for which Mr. Kahil says he has sold pieces of furniture and even downsized the family stove. But the cash helps, along with a similar card issued by Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shiite militia, which enables big discounts for poor people in areas it controls at specific Hezbollah shops and pharmacies. Mr. Kahil's wife also earns \$7 each day during the school year, as a school cleaner. "Everybody in this area has to fight for their family, for food," says Mr. Kahil, who uses a sawed-off broom handle as a cane. "Ten years ago, we never thought it would be this way. Now we can't even buy a

Pepsi." Also helping Lebanese people get by are remittances from relatives abroad, which have recently grown to 53.8% of the country's gross domestic product — the highest remittance dependency in the world. "Remittances are definitely a big part of the answer to how Lebanese survive each day," says Jacob Boswall, the team leader of Mercy Corps Lebanon Crisis Analytics in Beirut. Remittances have for decades played an important role in the Lebanese economy, but prior to the 2019 crisis they were traditionally used to invest in productive assets, which helped boost the economy. "What's happening now is usage is almost exclusively being put toward survival, and that's buying basic items like food, fuel, and paying rent," says Mr. Boswall. That significant change is "deeply, deeply unequal" and polarizing, with very little sharing or distribution of remittances. Not receiving remittances, and unaware of any cash or food handout scheme, shoemaker Zuhair describes a lack of support — and 90-minute walks to the nearest beach, where he can use his fishing rod. Gone are the days when he could pay for a bus to Jounieh, the town just north of Beirut, where he used to fish on weekends. Or even pay for a ride to the nearby beach from his home in Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiya. "I don't get paid much to begin with," says Zuhair. "We have no other choice but to work. If we stop work, we literally don't eat."

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Kashmir dispute and UN impotence

CARETAKER Prime Minister Anawar-ul-Kakar has called on the UN Security Council (UNSC) to secure the implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir, which was the key to peace between India and Pakistan, the nuclear-armed neighbours whose military mostly remain eyeball to eyeball throughout the year. PM told the world leaders that Inda has invaded the implementation of the UNSC's resolutions which call for the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to be decided by it's people through a UN-supervised plebiscite.

During his maiden address to the 193-member General Assembly's high-level session, PM Kakar put a special focus on the Kashmir dispute because Jammu and Kashmir is the oldest unresolved dispute on the agenda of the United Nations and its executive arm the UN Security Council (UNSC) who's multiple resolutions had been dubbed with dust and corrosion in a wait to implementation over the past seven and a half decades. As a matter of fact, the Jammu and Kashmir is a major territorial dispute, an ever elevated nuclear flashpoint and a long-held humanitarian issue, that sets in a thickly populated region in South Asia. This all-time simmering conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbours is not only a grave risk to global peace but poses a serious risk of a nuclear conflict which could perish millions of lives within no time.

Over the decades, the people of Jammu and Kashmir did not lose their confidence in the United Nations, which not only acknowledged Kashmiris' right to self-determination but also asked contesting nations to hold a plebiscite under UN supervision to get people's verdict about the future of the state. Unfortunately, UN Security Council resolutions were not time-bound, which was used by the occupier to its advantage for consolidating its grip over the valley instead of abiding by its obligations under UN resolutions.

Prime Minister Kakar rightly sensitized the world about grave human rights situations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), which has been shaped into an open prison in the world. India has deployed over 900,000 troops in the occupied Kashmir, imposed extended lockdowns and curfews, and incarcerated all the genuine Kashmir leaders, extra-judicial killings of innocent Kashmiris in fake encounters become a norm and collective punishment through so-called cordon and search operations are an everyday practice in the highly militarized zone in the world. Meanwhile, New Delhi blatantly denied requests by the UN High Commission for Human Rights and over a dozen Special Rapporteurs, which is indicative of the worst human rights and deteriorating security situation in the valley that merits particular attention from the UN Security Council which almost forgot it's resolution on Kashmir dispute.

Meanwhile, PM Kakar categorically opposed an addition of permanent members in the UN Security Council, wherein India is one of the aspirants to the Security Council's permanent membership, which would further erode its credibility and legitimacy. Meanwhile, Kakar stressed that world nations build, preserve and promote peace and prosperity which is vital to reducing great power rivalry and tensions. He also called for ensuring strict adherence to the UN Charter and consistent implementation of the Security Council resolutions to eliminate the root causes of conflicts and respect the principles of non-use of force, self-determination, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states and peaceful co-existence.

Although, Mr. Kakar has made a concerted effort to highlight the Kashmir issue and present Pakistan's perspective regarding important global issues including climate change, UN reforms, the war in Ukraine and others. However, the annual UNGA Summit, commentary of global leaders and rebuttals of opponents, propaganda and demonstrations inside the global forum and outside the UN Headquarters have now become customary and a periodic exercise. In fact, all such global huddles, leaders' debates and people's aspirations are futile if all those endeavours are cosmetary and traditional instead public problems-centric. This is the reason that UN failed to achieve it's manifesto over the past decades.

Chitral Valley and the evil of terrorism

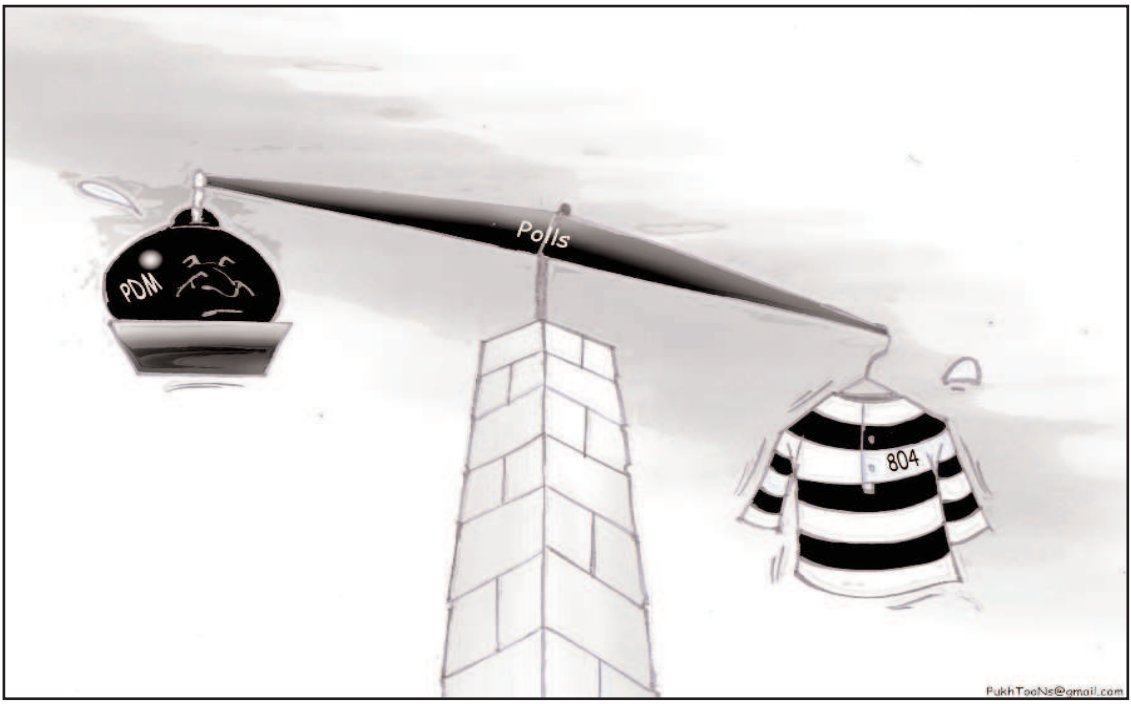
THE menace of terrorism has flourished across Pakistan while the KPK formally known as Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province and Erstwhile FATA bordering Afghanistan, has been the prime victim of terrorist activities in the past almost two decades. Unfortunately, the latest wave of terrorism has endangered the peace, prosperity and religious harmony in KP's most peaceful and heavenly regions particularly Chitral, Dir and the famous Lowari top and Shindoor Pass. There have been several incidents of terrorism and terrorist movements/activities in border regions adjoining Afghanistan which have caused serious concerns among the locals, the tourists from other areas, and the Law Enforcement Agencies who want to preserve peace and tranquillity in the terror-free valley at all costs.

The issue of terrorism has become more complex as several terror outfits including the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have joined hands to achieve their collective manifesto in the broader AfPak region. Those groups are based in the Eastern provinces of Afghanistan, which provided them with easy access and across-border movement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Similarly, the IS-K is also expanding its network and bringing lethality to its activities inside Pakistan.

Currently, the enemies are regrouping and expanding their sabotage, and subversion to peaceful destinations and tourism hubs in Pakistan. That will not only destroy peace in the region but will ruin local tourism, economy and good neighbourlyness in that areas. The terror incidents met a prompt reaction and Corps Commander Peshawar personally visited Chitral and emphasized an unwavering commitment to maintaining law and order in the area. Meanwhile, the citizens of Chitral also expressed their commitment to working alongside Pak Army and other law enforcement agencies to preserve peace in this naturally breathtaking valley. In fact, LEAs alone cannot preserve peace in far flung areas and need full public support, valuable intelligence sharing and people resilience against the evil of terrorism who had taken root in our society. Luckily, residents of Chitral have affirmed their resolve to preserve complete peace and tranquillity in their homeland, hence, they can defeat all evildoers with their teamwork and cooperation.

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World leaders must commit to preserving the UN and making it better

Dr. Amal Mudallali

THE 78th UN General Assembly is underway and the world leaders who have made their annual pilgrimage to New York know what is at stake this year for the UN, the world order that underpinned all the post-Second World War international institutions and the fate of multilateralism and cooperation due to the unprecedented challenges that our world faces.

The theme that General Assembly President Dennis Francis, the permanent representative of Trinidad and Tobago, has chosen says it all: "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity." The trust deficit among the nations of the world, especially between the Global South and the developed world, or the Global North, is a widening chasm. Global solidarity has given way to division, competition and fragmentation. Reigniting it will take a real commitment by those who have the power to rekindle the promise of peace that the UN represents.

All the analysis about this UNGA is full of dread about the state of our world and the future of the UN and global cooperation. It is true. The world that is descending on the UN headquarters is not the same world that we knew even a year or two ago. The world is divided like we have never seen since the founding of the organization. The UN itself is under tremendous pressure to stay relevant only because those who are supposed to keep it strong are undermining it by their actions outside of the UN framework, sometimes in contravention of its charter or via inaction in the face of colossal challenges. These challenges range from conflict to rising poverty and inequality to a worsening climate crisis and natural disasters, the consequences of a terrible pandemic and backsliding on democracy and human rights.

The UN is reeling under the weight of these multiple crises and the gridlock that has plagued its Security Council, which failed to uphold its responsibility to maintain peace and security in the face of conflict on many occasions last year. It is very easy for world lead-

ers and experts alike to blame the UN. But the blame should be laid on the shoulders of member states, especially the great powers, including the new rising powers, and not the organization. The UN is only as strong as its members and their actions, and is as weak as they make it. The last year was a showcase of how not to treat the UN and what happens when you dilute its influence by acting outside or around it, weakening it. Last year's diluted multilateralism, power competition and unfulfilled commitments to the UN and to solving urgent global problems were a harbinger of a more difficult path ahead.

This reality was, no doubt, what Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had in mind when he decried the assault on peace. "Drop by drop, the poison of war is infecting our world," he said last week. He appealed to the world leaders who are coming to UNGA, saying: "This is not a time for posturing or positioning. This is not a time for indifference or indecision. This is a time to come together for real, practical solutions." The UN has prepared for the world leaders and their delegations a very full agenda, along with clear paths to solutions should they decide to put our world on a path of recovery and healing.

The centerpiece of the UNGA's meetings is the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. It is central because the implementation of the goals is currently off track. The summit will issue a political declaration that has already been negotiated among member states and, for the first time, it includes "bold" language that was not imaginable in previous declarations. It admits that the achievement of the SDGs is "in peril" and expresses deep concern over the "marked increase of the estimated SDG financing gap and (recognizes) the urgency of providing predictable, sustainable and sufficient development finance to developing countries from all sources." The declaration calls for "strengthened multilateral actions and coordination by

all creditors to address the deteriorating debt situation." It supports the "reform of the international financial architecture ... including its business models and financing capacities," saying that it "must be made more fit for purpose, equitable and responsive to the financing needs of developing countries, to broaden and strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, norm-setting, and global economic governance." This is new language for a UN declaration endorsed by world leaders, including the big powers, and it indicates a change reflective of the new global political landscape, in which the voice of the Global South is becoming clearer, louder and bolder.

Qatari Ambassador to the UN Sheikha Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, who led the negotiations on the political declaration with her colleague from Ireland, told Arab News that the political declaration "symbolizes a moment of unity among nations, emphasizing their shared responsibility to address pressing global challenges." She added that the declaration represents a "solid baseline for the negotiations yet to come in the upcoming UNGA session on the future pact that is anticipated to be negotiated and adopted at the 2024 UN Summit of the Future." World leaders will also have a chance at the Climate Ambition Summit to "walk the talk" on efforts to tackle the climate crisis, as a UN press release said. The summit will focus on "three acceleration tracks: ambition, credibility and implementation."

Pandemic preparedness will also be the subject of a meeting between world leaders, the president of the General Assembly and the World Health Organization. They will adopt a declaration on the road ahead for confronting future pandemics and ensuring global health. There will also be a meeting on universal healthcare, a high-level dialogue on financing for development and one on the fight against tuberculo-

sis. The last meeting is a ministerial one to start preparation for next September's Summit of the Future.

With this packed agenda, UNGA 78 is on its way to being one of the busiest in a while, although President Joe Biden of the US is the only leader from the five permanent members of the UNSC slated to attend. The other P5 leaders' absence should not take away from the importance of having the rest of the world gathered in New York. Maybe their absence should be a message to all that the crucial work of the UN continues regardless of who attends. Since their representatives are in the room, nothing should take away from the importance of the work that will take place at the UN this week. The fact that this organization and the architecture that it was built upon has been able to ward off another world war for 78 years so far, while succeeding in keeping all these countries working together (193 now, compared to the 50 brave ones that set it up) is a vote of confidence in this imperfect organization. I used to think of us inside that building on First Avenue in New York as Noah's Ark. We were still sitting together, negotiating and working toward a better world, while the noise, distrust, hatred and divisions of the outside world were opening more gates for floodwater to drown the sailing ship.

Whenever I am faced with any criticism of the UN, I remember American President Dwight Eisenhower, who said at the General Assembly in 1953: "Never before in history has so much hope for so many people been gathered together in a single organization." His words ring as true today as they did then, especially when he added: "With all its defects, with all the failures that we can check up against it, the UN still represents man's best organized hope to substitute the conference table for the battlefield." We should all, especially the world leaders, remember that this week, in that magnificent reservoir of hope on the East River, and commit to preserving the UN and making it better.

Arab News

China-Europe freight trains energize connectivity and commerce

Xu Ying

AS the celebrated ancient Silk Road once spurred flourishing trade and cultural exchange between the East and West, a new "steel Silk Road" has emerged in modern times - the China-Europe freight train network. Traversing remote frontiers along the Eurasian landmass aboard this high-tech carriage, East meets West again in a new era of burgeoning prosperity.

A decade since conception, China's visionary Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is delivering tangible benefits across continents, propelled by infrastructure development and closer economic linkages. Among its many milestones, the extensive rail routes connecting China and Europe stand out as a logistical marvel. Ferrying everything from smartphones to wine bottles, autos to avocados, the trains snake through snow-capped landscapes and desolate deserts, traversing 11 countries over a 12,000 kilometer journey. In 2021 alone, around 15,000 trains

made the trip, more than triple the volume in 2019. They transported 1.46 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), a 31% year-on-year rise. This impressive growth shows no signs of slowing - the network now boasts over 60 routes serving 200 cities in two dozen countries. Chongqing, Chengdu, Zhengzhou and Xi'an serve as major hubs on the Chinese side, while Duisburg, Hamburg, Warsaw and Vienna are among top destinations in Europe.

The formidable progress was no accident - significant investments laid down physical and digital infrastructure, enabling seamless connectivity. Chinese cities poured over \$300 billion into high-speed railways and logistics facilities tailored to support surging trade volumes. European countries also sponsored collaborative platforms and upgraded port capacities to smooth customs and enhance regional benefits. Memorandums of under-

standing formalized long-term road-maps, aligning diverse stakeholders toward shared prosperity.

The payoff from these efforts has been remarkable. Shipping freight by rail costs nearly 80% less than air transportation, while being 5-10 times faster than maritime routes. Supply chains are more responsive and reliable, inventory needs lower and working capital is freed up. For European customers, it unlocks convenient access to premium Chinese products, from household goods to machinery and tech gadgets. For Chinese exporters, it opens avenues into the European common market.

Notable examples illustrate the reach: Duisburg's freight hub serves as German gateway into Europe, handling volumes up 300% since 2013. IKEA facilities in Moscow stock over 2 million items transported from China by rail. Under two days, fresh seafood from eastern China reach-

es markets in Budapest to delight food connoisseurs. Spain's winemakers tap emerging sophisticates across China, exporting over 2.4 million bottles annually. Intermodal solutions combining rail, road and sea transport create versatile end-to-end logistics tailored for enterprises of all scales and sectors. Fundamentally, the prolific China-Europe rail exemplifies connectivity's power to uplift economies and societies. While technology shrinks distances, shared humanity has never drawn closer when afforded conduits enabling constructive exchange.

Just as ancient silk caravans spawned dialogues that shape civilizations today, every freight train crossing Eurasia brings prosperity through partnership and deepened affinity between peoples. By channeling collaborative energies to pave new conduits, the BRI rekindles the spirit of the historic Silk Road - not merely a trade corridor, but an open passage bridging cultures.

The cult of red terror executioner lives on

Polly Jones

A row of men in suits stands at attention, a dark bronze statue towering between them and a grey high-rise looming behind. A solemn speech praises a state official as a "model of crystalline integrity, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty." Devoid of color and spontaneity, the scene could hardly appear more Soviet. Yet it played out last week, at the unveiling of a monument to Bolshevik secret police chief Felix Dzerzhinsky at the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) headquarters in Moscow.

Fallen statues often serve as a visual shorthand for radical social and political change, from Saddam Hussein's monument in Iraq in 2003 and the dismantling of Lenin statues across Ukraine since the early 2010s to the toppling of Bristol's Edward Colston statue during anti-slavery protests in 2020. These images have a seductive but misleading clarity. While hailed as symbols of the rejection of a despised past, they gradually reveal a more complicated confrontation and contestation of memories.

The Dzerzhinsky monument's return has already prompted an outpouring of celebrations and disgust. Conservative politicians and pundits crow that Dzerzhinsky is finally back in his rightful place. For liberals and opposition figures, the renewed tribute to a Soviet "hangman" offers further proof for their alarms over Russia's descent into a repressive dictatorship. Dzerzhinsky was the architect of the "Red Terror", a sweeping campaign of executions and repressions aimed at stamping out opposition to the Bolsheviks. Historians have placed the number of dead as high as 200,000.

If the Soviet collapse were summed up in a single image, it might well be that of pro-democracy protesters cheering on the night of Aug. 22, 1991, as the 12-foot, 11-ton statue of Dzerzhinsky was lifted by a crane onto a flat-bed truck. As it teetered on its graffiti-tied pedestal in the shadow of the notorious KGB headquarters at Lubyanka, the statue's removal seemed to herald a new age of freedom. The first head of the Bolshevik Secret Police (Cheka), Dzerzhinsky now looked like the last vestige of its reign of terror. That the square's sole monument was now the Solovetsky Stone, installed by the now-banned Memorial NGO in memory of Soviet repression, further epitomized the apparent sea change in attitudes. The afterlife of Dzerzhinsky's monument in post-Soviet Russia has come to symbolize neither the complete rejection nor wholesale return of a violent past. It shows instead how Russian officials use aspects of history as a model and justification for the present. It is thus no accident that Dzerzhinsky's long-awaited (or long-feared) return was announced last Monday by Putin's spymaster Sergei Naryshkin, amid Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and crackdown on domestic "foreign agents."

I first visited Russia during (and thanks to) Gorbachev's reforms in 1991. The Intourist itinerary of our school trip avoided Lubyanka Square, so I missed the chance to glimpse Dzerzhinsky in situ. When I returned a few years later as a graduate student, he already had a new home. Not long after the coup, the Moscow authorities had moved the statue to languish amid a jumble of Soviet paraphernalia in the so-called Graveyard of Fallen Monuments. Traces of the 1991 attacks were still visible on the pedestal, just as a nearby Stalin statue sported a smashed nose. The method of its removal showed that violent intolerance should have no place in the new, supposedly democratic Russia.

It was hard to imagine that Dzerzhinsky's monument, and what it symbolized, could ever be restored. Discussions of the statue's return regularly punctuated central and municipal politics in the 90s and 2000s, often framed in apolitical terms. Supporters emphasized its architectural benefits, arguing that Lubyanka Square lacked coherence without a

monumental focal point. However, notes of nostalgia and admiration for Dzerzhinsky soon started to creep in from more than just the Communist fringes. Among those clamoring for his return over the last quarter century have been a Mayor of Moscow and numerous State Duma deputies. President Vladimir Putin himself has never stated his position, though it is not hard to guess.

Dzerzhinsky's path back to Lubyanka was strewn with roadblocks. The last attempt to return a statue to the square, two years ago, pitted him in a Moscow-wide competition with the medieval prince Alexander Nevsky. When Nevsky pulled into an early lead, the vote was called off. Details are scarce on the decision-making behind the 2023 sculpture, and how sculptor Vladimir Ivanov created his reproduction of the original. But it seems likely to be popular within the SVR, whose headquarters have housed a bas-relief of Dzerzhinsky since the start of the decade, even if outside opinion is decidedly more mixed.

Dzerzhinsky's stubborn haunting of post-Soviet politics recalls the campaign to rename the city of Volgograd to Stalingrad. Though the plans have now progressed further than ever before, "Stalingrad" does not yet feature on post-Soviet maps. The contrast is telling. Despite feeding off the cult of what Russians call the Great Patriotic War and increasingly resembling Stalinism, Putin's regime does not view the Stalin era as a fully usable past. However, the cult of the Secret Police is going from strength to strength. In fact, the original Dzerzhinsky statue was commissioned during Soviet attempts to dissociate the Secret Police from Stalinist terror. Its 1958 unveiling formed part of what historian Julie Fedor calls a "rebranding," which peaked during Yuri Andropov's tenure as chairman of the KGB. Throughout the Soviet era, though, the Dzerzhinsky myth highlighted his apparent humanity and commitment to "legality". His work on child homelessness fostered an image of fatherly kindness, strengthened by the proximity of his statue to Moscow's largest children's department store.

Despite engineering the brutal Bolshevik "Red Terror" and other bloody campaigns, Dzerzhinsky's Cheka is still widely seen as more humane than the brutal Stalinist NKVD. It can plausibly be claimed that he had no connection to the latter, having died eight years before its founding. In a country headed by a former KGB agent, whose policing draws on the Soviet playbook while keeping secret police archives closed to historians, it is unsurprising that this sanitized image of the Cheka is thriving. The return of "Iron Felix" also conveys a willingness to crack down hard on enemies of the state, a point emphasized by Naryshkin and state media. Like other Putinist historical symbols, this myth harbors layers of meaning, which can be activated depending on the political demands and audiences of the moment.

In recent years, several new busts and statues of Dzerzhinsky, and even some of Stalin, have cropped up across Russia (as well as Dzerzhinsky's native Belarus). They lack the physical and mythological stature of the Lubyanka Dzerzhinsky, however. The new statue stands almost 30 kilometers from the city center, and is a downsized facsimile of its monumental predecessor. These controversial Soviet symbols have not made a full return, and do not occupy the very center of Russian space or its political agenda. But perhaps they don't need to. While the future of the Soviet past remains unpredictable, to quote historian Nancy Adler, some parts fit very well with the present. In a state obsessed with internal and external enemies, the merciless but honorable Chekist, in the eyeline of today's secret agents and with his own gaze trained toward Russia's western borders, seems perfectly at home where he now stands.

The Moscow Times

Walk away, Justin Trudeau. Canada’s love affair with you is over

Andrew Mitrovica

ONE way or another, all love affairs end - often badly. At least in politics. In 2015, when he became prime minister with a robust majority at age 43, Justin Trudeau was feted as the reincarnation of former United States President John F Kennedy - young, vibrant and charismatic. Much of the smitten international press, particularly the starry-eyed New York Times, swooned, praising the Trudeau-helmed government as "emerging as a moral leader of the free world".

Heady stuff for a big, "boring" and largely anonymous country that yearns for attention and approval. Lots of Canadians were smitten too. Trudeau was the "progressive" antidote to a spent Conservative administration that seemed to revel in its callousness - led for nearly a decade by the definition of the dour bureaucrat, Stephen Harper. But Trudeau is discovering, like every other prime minister, that, given the inexorable cycle of politics, governments - Liberal or Conservative - have a natural life expectancy.

Trudeau is entering his eighth year in office. The predictable, tell-tale signs of atrophy are apparent, except, of course, to devoted partisans. Enthusiasm has waned. Fractures have emerged. Scandal - real or manufactured - has begun to dominate the public discourse. Familiarity has bred hubris and contempt. Fatigue has become synonymous with the "brand". Popularity has turned to animus. Change now seems almost inevitable. In reply, Trudeau has dipped into the same, futile gambits meant to arrest his steep slide in the once reassuring polls and persuade Canadians that there is life and fight in him and his restive colleagues yet. So Trudeau shuffled his bulging cabinet, expelling the corrosive underachievers and promoting ambitious and, no doubt, grateful backbenchers primed to prove to the wounded prime minister that they have the

right mettle.

Yet beyond the fleeting notice of Ottawa's incestuous, insular orbit of career pundits and columnists, the new arrangements have had no impact on Trudeau's quickly listing fortunes. Instead, worry - which, I suspect, has tipped lately into fear - among Liberal members of parliament has triggered leaks bemoaning the prime minister's surprising listlessness in the face of Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre's typically rabid rhetorical onslaught aimed not only at questioning Trudeau's empathy for "struggling" Canadians but, shamefully, his loyalty to the country he serves. Faithful readers of this column know full well of my antipathy towards the jejune Trudeau. The idea that a stunt-prone dauphin was intent, like Kennedy, to buck stubborn convention and pursue a transformative agenda as prime minister was a silly mirage. Just like Kennedy, Trudeau has been, save for a bit of performative tinkering around the edges, a staunch advocate for and defender of the economic and foreign policy establishment and status quo.

A supposed "champion" of climate "action", Trudeau bought a floundering oil pipeline for 4.5 billion Canadian dollars (\$3.3bn). A supposed "champion" of human rights and the rules-based international "order", Trudeau offers diplomatic cover and comfort to an apartheid regime in Israel and tried, with a little help from his insurrectionist-friendly friends in Brazil, to install a malleable marionette in Venezuela. A supposed "champion" of the plight of hurting "ordinary" Canadians, Trudeau has allowed predatory corporate monopolies to continue to reap extraordinary earnings while the divide between the uber wealthy and the other, much less fortunate 99 percent, mushrooms. Trudeau was confronted recently by an anxious caucus preoccupied

by the disturbing prospect of losing power and their jobs. A chastised Trudeau emerged from the party's please-do-something-to-save-our-vulnerable-skins "retreat" to announce that he would summon the CEOs of grocery chains to a meeting in the capital and issue the following ultimatum: Cut prices, or I may - somehow, somehow - put a small, momentary dent in your obscene profits.

It was Trudeau Jr's limp, belated variation of the famous admonition proffered in 1970 by his dad, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau: "Just watch me." Stirring stuff. In Trudeau's simplistic calculus, the solution to the systemic inequities not only tolerated, but entrenched by a do-as-you're-told succession of Liberal and Conservative prime ministers is a stern lecture by a teacher-turned-prime minister delivered in the principal's office. Yes, that should do it. If anyone requires any more evidence of Trudeau's unserious nature and that his "revitalised" cabinet had promptly run out of what could be charitably described as "ideas" to address the onerous financial burdens too many Canadians endure every day, I am at a loss.

Trudeau's insipid response to widespread hardship goes some way towards explaining the undeniable exhaustion that personifies a flailing government whose best-before date expired after the last federal elections in 2021 when the Liberals, out of squalid parochial interests, reached for another majority and failed. Trudeau should have followed his father's sensible lead and taken a contemplative walk in the snow and realised that his time was up and the baton ought to be passed. Still, I don't begrudge Trudeau the understandable toll that governing during a raging, disorienting pandemic and the sad demise of a long marriage must have taken on mind

and body. And spurred on by the addicted-to-rage provocateur Poilievre, Trudeau has been assaulted - there is no other word for it - by a torrent of bile by a travelling mob of vulgar, flag-waving, conspiracy-infected MAGA wannabes who, like their crass standard bearer, ditched civility for profanity ages ago.

Trudeau intends, it appears, to contest the next federal elections, slated for some time in 2025. He hopes, I gather, that time, combined with a stumble or two by a surging Poilievre will reverse his depressing political fortunes. In the meantime, Trudeau and Poilievre will try to persuade Canadians that they stand with the beleaguered "everyman" and "everywoman". It is a familiar pantomime. Poilievre feigns concern for the working woman and man. If elected, this slick, anti-reason, anti-science, anti-union charlatan will, in quick and happy course, abandon the people he claims, with a cloying valedictorian's earnestness, to hold dear to his calcified bosom.

Poilievre is a younger, slightly more fluent facsimile of Ontario's Conservative premier, Doug Ford, who verified his "faux" populist credentials by recanting on a cross-my-heart-and-hope-to-die promise to protect thousands of acres of prized farmland and forest from voracious developers. Ford's obedient minions sold the public land in secret deals to six hand-picked, chummy real estate investors who stand to pocket billions while the "buck-a-beer" premier insists he did not know about the sweetheart deals struck at chichi dinners.

Poilievre will follow the same cynical playbook because that's what "fiscal" Conservatives do in the fanatical pursuit of "privatisation": enrich the rich at the expense of the distracted "everywoman" and "everyman". Soon enough, Canadians will be asked to choose between two vacuous, pedestrian politicians. Woe, Canada, indeed.

A mountaintop enclave facing genocide. And a plan to stop it

Lara Setrakian

NOTHING about Luis Moreno Ocampo's testimony to the US Congress last week was subtle. The legendary former prosecutor of the International Criminal Court told the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission that there is reasonable basis to believe that a genocide is underway in Nagorno-Karabakh, where an estimated 120,000 Armenians have been deprived of food, fuel and medical supplies for more than eight months.

Nagorno-Karabakh - known as the Republic of Artsakh by local Armenians - a mountaintop region populated by ethnic Armenians, has been officially within the borders of Azerbaijan since the days of the Soviet Union. Local Armenian authorities have vied for independence from Azerbaijan for decades, leading to an ongoing political and military conflict. Since December, the main road into the mountaintop enclave, has been blocked by Azeri protesters and government forces, who stopped the normal flow of goods. Since June, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been barred from using the road to bring food to the Armenian population, in what local residents see as a way of forcing them to capitulate to a series of political demands, including a complete surrender of their local autonomy.

This weekend, the two sides had appeared to reach a deal on aid deliveries, but by Monday the agreement had either stalled or broken down. As the political dispute drags on, residents are running out of time. Multiple monitoring groups say there is widespread food scarcity on the ground, with child and adult malnutrition setting in. (On Tuesday, a single Russian Red Cross truck with supplies arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh carrying food, blankets and hygiene supplies, according to the local authority, as reported by Reuters.) Its precious cargo is sorely needed. In strangling the supply of food, Ocampo said, Azerbaijan's government has crossed a critical line. "This is an ongoing genocide. This is happening now," he told the hearing. "Genocide under Article IIC requires just creating the conditions to destroy a people ... blocking the Lachin Corridor with its life systems for the Nagorno-Karabakh people is exactly creating those conditions." Moreover, he said the US risked being complicit in genocide, should it fail to call out what is happening on the ground and prevent further loss of life.

The US appears to be trying to lift the blockade, though its efforts to date have been limited. Last Sunday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, voicing US concern over what he called "the deteriorating humanitarian situation" facing Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Since December, Blinken has repeatedly called on Aliyev to open the Lachin Corridor to humanitarian, commercial and passenger traffic. The International Court of Justice said the same in February, ruling that Azerbaijan "shall ensure uninterrupted free movement of all persons, vehicles, and cargo." Azerbaijan insists it is not doing anything wrong. As an exercise of sovereign control over its territory, Azeri officials say that the checkpoints and restrictions it has put in place are an element of national security. It accused the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of smuggling contraband goods through their aid deliveries and others of bringing in weapons to Nagorno-Karabakh. The ICRC said no unauthorized material had moved through any of its vehicles to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan also claims that Armenia continues to have a military presence in the Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement to CNN, a spokesman of Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that his government "rejects in the strongest terms any contention that it is committing or intends to commit genocide." In June - six months after the blockade began - Baku offered to bring in supplies

through another road from the city of Aghdam, under the control of the Azeri government. But the US and EU have said it is no substitute for reopening the Lachin Corridor, which was meant to remain open as part of a ceasefire deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020. Armenians are also wary of becoming reliant on aid from Azeri authorities who have reportedly cut food, electricity, gas and internet to the population at various points since the start of the blockade. (Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the source of the power and internet cuts.)

Perhaps surprisingly, Armenia and Azerbaijan were well into a round of peace talks when the blockade began. As it has dragged on, the deprivation and now starvation of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh have left an overtone of bitterness and distrust that is dampening the peace process. Armenians say Azerbaijan is strangling the population into submitting to oppressive demands. Azerbaijan says Armenians

cross-border aid deliveries, as we have seen in Syria, Sarajevo and Darfur. The fastest path would be for Azerbaijan to restore movement along the Lachin Corridor, letting in aid from the ICRC. If they are concerned about arms or other material seeping in, those concerns can be easily addressed. In addition to the ICRC already saying it undergoes customs clearance, international partners have offered to put incoming cargo through scanners to prevent weapons smuggling. If the blockade isn't lifted it will be time for a humanitarian intervention. Already, aid groups say fresh food is nearly impossible to find and bread lines last for hours, with food often running out. If the situation continues to devolve it will soon be too late to act, as people begin dying in large numbers because of a bitter political impasse.

If instead of feeding the ethnic Armenian population, they are offered an evacuation from Nagorno-Karabakh - Azerbaijan has already offered them a one-way ticket out - then it will constitute ethnic cleansing of the region. Like genocide, ethnic cleansing comes in more than one form; It can happen by removing people from their

That is a basic principle of international humanitarian law. There needs to be humanitarian airlift, by plane or cargo drone, potentially with UN authorization of cross-border aid deliveries, as we have seen in Syria, Sarajevo and Darfur. The fastest path would be for Azerbaijan to restore movement along the Lachin Corridor, letting in aid from the ICRC. If they are concerned about arms or other material seeping in, those concerns can be easily addressed. In addition to the ICRC already saying it undergoes customs clearance, international partners have offered to put incoming cargo through scanners to prevent weapons smuggling. If the blockade isn't lifted it will be time for a humanitarian intervention.

have been supporting criminal separatists trying to break away from the central state. Nagorno-Karabakh, which had been an autonomous region run by Armenian authorities during the Soviet Union, has pursued its independence for decades. It falls officially within the borders of Azerbaijan, but has fought multiple wars to avoid integration with the country, fearful of its history of bloody massacres and cultural extinction of Armenians from different parts of its territory. In one example captured in satellite photos from the region of Nakhichevan, Azeri authorities apparently demolished thousands of Armenian Christian monuments, known as khachkars, with an assessment showing the use of heavy machinery to raze the ground. (Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev denied having destroyed the site, saying the claims were "a lie and a provocation," according to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting.)

Azerbaijanis themselves suffered mass displacement when Armenians won the First Karabakh War in 1994, claiming that scores of homes and mosques were ruined in the process. Those episodes have left scars on all sides. Now Azerbaijan has the upper hand and conditions on the ground are deteriorating, with 30,000 children there potentially facing malnutrition and many more potentially dying of basic illness. There is still time for a turnaround. There are at least three things that can be done to save lives and end a multi-decade cycle of painful loss. They would also renew the chance for an effective peace process.

First, food and medicine urgently need to reach the population in Nagorno-Karabakh. Civilians shouldn't be held hostage to political and geopolitical contests for power. That is a basic principle of international humanitarian law. There needs to be humanitarian airlift, by plane or cargo drone, potentially with UN authorization of

homes by making life practically unlivable. Thousands of people who otherwise had no intention of leaving their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh will flee out of desperation for food and sustenance. Second, if President Aliyev is true to his word as a leader who champions tolerance and ethnic-religious harmony, he should treat the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh with dignity and a spirit of reconciliation. Rather than threaten Armenians with starvation, which poisons the well of co-existence, he should let aid move unimpeded into Nagorno-Karabakh.

He should also drop all state-sponsored hate speech and inflammatory rhetoric, which has included grotesque caricatures of Armenians in a controversial government-backed museum celebrating Azerbaijan's victory in 2020. With leadership from the top, Aliyev and his government can create true space for interethnic dialogue, including a pledge to maintain ancient Armenian churches and monasteries in Nagorno-Karabakh without the risk of desecration or destruction, which they have faced in the past.

Third, on the understanding that no one wants to see a new interstate war, the US, EU and Russia should put pressure on Azerbaijan's main allies, Turkey and Israel, to discourage a military escalation in the region. Turkish and Israeli weapon supplies, as well as direct training, are vital to Azerbaijan's military capacity. Those countries should be asked to help stabilize the situation, avoiding the threat of force or its actual use, particularly on a civilian population weakened by hunger. There are many things that both Armenia and Azerbaijan can do to smooth the path toward peace. But in this crisis it must start with these urgent steps. What the final political outcome should be is not yet clear, but an imposed blockade and the starvation of civilians is no way to get to a good one.

Musk, McCarthy and Romney are three kinds of leaders

Richard Galant

‘Troy fell ... the walls of Hadrian succumbed ... the Great Wall of China was futile; and ... the mighty seas which are alleged to defend us can also be circumvented by a resolute and ingenious opponent,' wrote US Army General George S. Patton. "In war, the only sure defense is offense, and the efficiency of offense depends on the warlike souls of those conducting it."

"Warlike soul" is an apt description of Patton himself. A vain and ambitious cigar-smoking bully who wore riding breeches, a polished helmet and boots and carried ivory-handled revolvers, he led troops on successful lightning strikes through German-held territory near the end of World War II. Patton's military feats could be chalked up to daring, a grasp of strategy and an ability to inspire the troops. He believed in setting an example by being a presence on the front line. Patton's approach to warfighting was "often ridiculed by his seniors" but under Patton's command, according to Stephen D. Sklenka, a Marine Corps major, "the Third Army delivered ten times as many enemy casualties as was inflicted upon themselves." But there was a dark side to Patton's forceful approach, one that kept him from rising to the very top ranks of the military. It was made manifest by his racist and antisemitic remarks and when he slapped two soldiers he unfairly accused of faking illness in 1943. In the midst of the war, the army tried to keep the assaults secret but word eventually leaked.

Patton's example comes to mind as the world focused last week on war and peace, along with challenges to the way we live, work and vote. The performance of leaders, from Washington to New Mexico to Detroit to the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's far east, matters more than ever and raises a host of questions: When is "war-

like" ferocity effective in the pursuit of valid goals and when does it cross over into becoming harmful or even toxic? Should a leader ever put his own views aside to bow to the dictates of his followers? And when does injustice make it essential to obey your conscience above all else? In the business world, Elon Musk's achievements have been epic, particularly in spaceflight and the manufacture and marketing of electric cars, but they've often been eclipsed by erratic and impulsive episodes, according to Nicole Hemmer's review of the new book "Elon Musk" by Walter Isaacson. After buying Twitter last year, Musk "emerged as a force of destruction, stripping the social media site of its value, its reputation and then, ultimately, its name. In recent weeks, he has been using the rebranded 'X' platform to attack the Anti-Defamation League, an organization that fights antisemitism and extremism. Musk has repeatedly been criticized for enabling and boosting antisemitic content on the platform."

"Isaacson tries to square these two Musks. He rummages through Musk's violent and chaotic childhood in South Africa ... He dissects Musk's many combative, combustible romantic relationships and the many children they produced, often in secret. He charts the ruptured business partnerships and dismissed employees and impossible deadlines that seemed tailor-made to increase human suffering. And Isaacson decides that this is the cost of innovation. ... Musk's apparent cruelty is at least in part an offshoot of the fact that his companies seem to be more real, more alive, to him than human beings." Hemmer contends that Isaacson presents an "impoverished view of genius, one that perpetuates the great man' theory of history, in which the course of the world is

shaped by a few brilliant men who thrive under the systems of their time. It overshadows genius generated through collaboration, which, though present throughout Musk's career, takes a backseat to the force of his singular personality throughout Isaacson's book. And it leaves little room for the transformative power of people such as racial justice and LGBTQ movement leaders who divined a new way of being in the world, which requires a sort of emotional and moral understanding absent from Musk's career." In the past week, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy modeled a different kind of leadership - one that was drastically weakened in part by the 15 rounds of voting it took for him to win over enough of his party's hard-right faction to lead the House in January. In what was widely seen as an attempt to placate members of the House Freedom Caucus and to mollify former President Donald Trump, McCarthy launched an inquiry into the grounds for impeaching President Joe Biden. But by week's end, it was clear that the gambit had done little to appease the extreme House Republicans who still seemed in no mood to compromise on a deal that would avert a government shutdown on October 1.

"Trump clearly seems to view impeaching Biden as payback for both his prior impeachments and his current criminal prosecutions," wrote Norman Eisen. "In a sense, Trump is right - revenge is all it is because there is no constitutional basis for proceeding here." Eisen, a Democrat who served as counsel to House Democrats in the first Trump impeachment, said McCarthy appeared to cave to House members who threatened to oust him from the speakership. "He recently said that he would not proceed without a formal vote on the inquiry, but there was no

mention of that at all in his announcement of the inquiry Tuesday." "Years of searching have yet to yield any support at all for the allegation that Biden personally profited off his son's foreign business dealings," Eisen observed. A conservative writer, W. James Antle III, argued that "the Biden family deserves congressional scrutiny. President Joe Biden reportedly engaged in phone calls with his son's foreign business partners that could jeopardize the integrity of the White House and our democracy. Especially because they seem to have gone beyond the president and his aides' claims of strict non-involvement in Hunter Biden's affairs."

"There are questions about these matters that need to be asked. But an impeachment inquiry is not the place to ask them," wrote Antle, noting that McCarthy "becomes the latest political figure to debate and erode what was once the ultimate safeguard against presidential misconduct. ... Without any realistic prospect of a Senate conviction and removal from office, impeachment becomes the equivalent of a nonbinding resolution opposing the president. Soon it has little more impact than a mean tweet." Impeachment will backfire, predicted John Avlon. "This baseless impeachment inquiry is part of an elaborate revenge fantasy designed to blur the differences between Trump, who has been indicted four times, and Biden ahead of the 2024 presidential election. Rather than helping Republicans politically, it will provide just the latest example of overreach leading to backlash. A tit-for-tat impeachment vote is not going to appeal to swing voters in swing districts. It will look like the hyper-partisan pantomime that it is - an exercise in putting party over country."

CNN

UK Government is paving the way for Labour’s great Brexit betrayal

David Frost

THE Leader of the Opposition has finally come clean. To the Financial Times (of course), Keir Starmer says that he will renegotiate the Brexit arrangements we put in place in 2020. We always knew he would, but it's good to have it said.

For some reason, Starmer thinks the 2020 deal is "thin". In fact, it's the biggest and broadest such deal ever - the first deal with no tariffs on any of either side's goods, and including not just trade but also aviation, transport, social security, health (your UK health insurance card is valid in the EU thanks to this deal), fisheries, security and law enforcement, and more. So for Starmer and Labour, this is all about ideology not fact.

He also thinks Brexit is "not working". Economically, that's obviously not true - as the ONS's recent sudden correction told us. What he really means is that "self-

government is not working": that Britain cannot govern itself without an injection of EU laws from Brussels. That's clearly what metro "progressive" Labour really thinks, and it's what makes these renegotiation ideas so dangerous. Possibly Starmer is operating in the fantasy world in which the EU will make concessions purely because they are so pleased to see Labour back in charge in Westminster. In reality, no one on the EU side is pressing to change this deal. Yes, in 2020 the EU wanted the review mechanisms in case we rapidly and aggressively exploited our Brexit freedoms while still having zero tariffs. They can see there is not much risk of that now, more's the pity, so why would they do anything other than tinker at the edges?

The only people who want to go back to the argument are the unrec-

onciled fanatics on both sides of the Channel: on one side Guy Verhofstadt sneering at British democracy on Twitter; on the other, David Lammy, the shadow foreign secretary, who in 2019 compared Brexiteers to Nazis and proponents of South African apartheid. If Starmer is indulging in such wishful thinking, he'll get nothing.

But it's hard to see his Islington base being happy with this. Labour will have to offer fundamental change, a return to EU law and supervision. Perhaps Starmer will begin with a food and veterinary deal, accepting the only one that will be on offer, one that comes with the imposition of EU laws and control by the Commission and the ECJ. Perhaps he'll look for a migrants' returns agreement, accepting that he will have to commit himself to taking a share of EU

migrants too. But it won't stop there, and before long we will have the worst of both worlds: the EU setting many of our laws again, this time with no UK say at all.

The worrying thing is that, despite these obvious problems, Labour feel the wind is in their sails. That's not surprising when the Government itself is responsible for the wretched Windsor Framework and does very little to speak up for the 2020 Brexit deal. One could be forgiven for asking why our rulers are so keen to keep watering down what every other country outside the EU has: the right to set its own laws and run its own affairs, well or badly. Yet so it is. Brexiteers must provide a counterbalance: come together again to get out the arguments, protect what we thought we had definitively achieved in 2020, and explain what we can yet achieve with it. Hold on to it - or lose it.



Kazak President to visit Pakistan: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan on Saturday said the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is scheduled to visit Pakistan in the near future for further strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations.

A business delegation of Kazakhstan led by Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and showed interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan, said a press release issued here by the ICCI here.

The delegation was representing food and beverages, oil and gas, minerals, precious stones, fertilizers, chemicals, textiles, autoparts, wholesale and retail sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country wants to further strengthen trade relations with Pakistan as both countries have 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.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that both countries should set at least US\$ 1 billion bilateral trade target as the current level of trade is not matching with their actual potential. He said that Kazakhstan is a big landlocked country and Pakistani ports provide it

the shortest route through Arabian Sea to access other markets. Pakistan and Kazakhstan can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food items, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance. 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 sec-

tors 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.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that both countries should sign a transit trade agreement to provide a legal framework to the private sectors for trade promotion. He said that Pakistan can also get easy access to Central Asian markets by developing close cooperation with Kazakhstan.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in traditional hand made items during Handicrafts Expo organized by Handicrafts Association of Pakistan in collaboration with ICCI and Centurus Mall.

Thailand ready to finalize FTA with Pakistan: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand on Saturday said that his country was ready to finalize a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Pakistan as negotiations on this had reached the final stage and now, it was up to Pakistan to expedite it. He revealed that Thai Air was resuming its flights from Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

He expressed these views during an interaction with the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Ms. Kamolwan Siriposil, Thai Economic Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Khemathat Archawathamrong, Thai Counsellor and also accompanied him on the occasion, said a press release issued here.

The Ambassador said that many Pakistanis visited Thailand and stressed that

they should also play a role to increase bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that both countries should focus on promoting bilateral investment to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Mr Krachaiwong said that the Pakistani business community should display its products in Thailand Industrial Fair 2024 in January next year, which would help them to improve their business prospects.

He said that many Thai investors wanted to invest in Pakistan, but they did not know where to invest. He identified seafood, mangoes, the halal food and halal cosmetics as potential areas for the bilateral trade.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that the Chamber would take up the issue of FTA with relevant Pakistani

authorities for swift progress on it as it would help increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and Thailand.

He said that Thailand's annual exports in 2022 were over US\$ 285 billion and imports were around US\$300 billion, but its bilateral trade with Pakistan in 2022-23 was less than US\$ 1 billion.

He said that both countries were doing trade in limited items and stressed that they should diversify trade to achieve better results. He said Pakistan can export many other products to Thailand including value-added textiles, leather goods, sports items, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments and food products. Similarly, he said Pakistan can import more products from Thailand.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government had

established a Special Investment Facilitation Council to facilitate new investments in defense, agriculture, minerals, IT and Telecom, energy and other sectors and stressed that the Thai investors should take advantage of these opportunities in Pakistan.

He said that tourism sector was another promising area of mutual cooperation as Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes offer great attractions to Thai tourists.

He said that learning from Thailand's successful tourism industry, Pakistan can also develop its tourism sector along modern lines.

Aamir Hussain, Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Malik Najeeb, Khalid Chaudhry, Fiazan Shehzad, Kashif Chaudhry, Ms. Parveen Khan, Ch. Tahir and others were also present on the occasion.

PCGA urges govt to ensure cotton purchase

MULTAN (APP): The Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) called upon the government to ensure the purchase of cotton through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan. PCGA Chairman, Waheed Arshid, made this demand during a press conference held on Saturday.

Arshid highlighted this year's cotton crop has been excellent, despite pest attacks in some areas caused by heatwaves.

He commended the government for its timely use of drone technology to

thwart these attacks and save the crops.

However, Arshid stressed that the government's efforts to promote cotton need to be reinforced by guaranteeing the purchase of cotton through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan. This move would greatly encourage farmers, as it would ensure they receive fair prices for their produce.

Farmers have invested substantial amounts in inputs, and now it is imperative that they receive a just return on their investments, he advocated.

Arshid urged the government to step in promptly to address this issue.

Emphasizing the importance of cotton to strengthen the economy, Chairman PCGA also informed that October 7th would be celebrated as World Cotton Day. He mentioned that seminars would be conducted in the region to further promote cotton.

During the press conference, Suhail Haral, Haji Muhammad Akram, Rana Waseem Hanif, and several others were also in attendance.

SB Governor calls on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori met the Governor of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmed at Governor House here on Saturday.

On the occasion, the economic situation of the country, measures to improve it, the role of the State Bank of Pakistan and other matters of mutual interest came under discussion.

The Sindh Governor said that the steps taken by the caretaker federal government for the economic improvement were commendable.

He said that at this time joint efforts were needed to get the country out of the economic crisis. He said that the role of SBP was vital in this regard.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed said that steps were being taken for the economic development on the directives of the caretaker federal government.

Secretary holds meeting with SCCI president

SIALKOT (APP): Secretary Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skills Development Department of Punjab Ehsan Bhutta held a meeting with various chambers of Punjab including the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and various government departments.

The primary agenda of the meeting was to deliberate on proposals for establishment of streamlined one-stop facilitation centres in major industrial hubs.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik presented a comprehensive list of departments that hold particular significance for the industrial sector in Sialkot, which should be included in the ambit of the proposed one-window facilitation system.

Chinese investors briefed on investment

BEIJING (APP): The Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Ibrahim Alkhorayef met with Chinese investors in Shanghai, where they discussed investment opportunities available in the Kingdom in mining and industry.

President of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu Khalid Al-Salem, Vice Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources for Mining Affairs Khalid Al-Mudaifer, and leading officials of the industry and mining sectors attended the meeting, which previewed the prominent investment opportunities provided by the Kingdom in the industrial and mining sectors.

The Saudi side highlighted the goals of the National Strategy for Industry and the opportunities provided in various industrial sectors. The

meeting examined the measures, initiatives and incentives provided by the ministry to create an attractive investment environment, remove obstacles for investors, and offer the required facilitations.

The Saudi officials spoke about the goals of the Saudi Vision 2030 in the mining sector and the opportunities it provides for investors worldwide in mineral exploration and investment opportunities.

The Saudi side highlighted the mining investment system in the Kingdom and the goals of the mining strategy. Alkhorayef made the official visit to the People's Republic of China to strengthen the economic partnership in the industrial and mining sectors.

The visit also seeks to review the qualitative investment opportunities

between the two countries and brief the Chinese side on the Kingdom's initiatives to enhance the strategic sectors of industry and mining.

Meeting with OEPS to enhance manpower export



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In pursuance of the directives of the Prime Minister to enhance manpower export, Jawad Sohrab Malik, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development convened a meeting with Overseas Employments Promoters (OEPs) in the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development.

The Meeting was attended by prominent OEPs who were invited on the basis of their highest performance in export of labour force.

The SAPM on OP&HRD Jawad Sohrab Malik, in his opening remarks, underlined the importance of agenda of the meeting to increase manpower export and invited the participants to provide their valuable input in this regard.

He assured unflinching support of the Ministry in resolving issues being confronted by OEPs representatives of Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) and discussed means to enhance manpower export in accordance with Government instructions.

On the invitation of the SAPM on OP&HRD, the Executive Director NAVTTC and DG Immigration and Passport Office, Islamabad along with senior officers also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the OEPs raised some technical issues which had been facing while coordinating with the relevant offices during the process of issuance of visas and clearance of other formalities for the intending emigrants.

The SAPM stressed upon a close coordination and cooperation among all the relevant departments so

that export of highly skilled manpower could be maximised.

In this regard, special instructions were issued to National Vocational and Technical Training Commission/NAVTTC, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment/BE&OE, Director General Immigration and Passports/DGI&P, Islamabad for assisting the job of OEPs in areas related to their respective jurisdictions and mandate.

The SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik directed the OEPs to provide a detailed breakup of issues being faced by them along with a proposal for their possible solution thereof within the next three days so that those issues may be resolved immediately in accordance with law.

Furthering the support of Ministry of OP&HRD for the PEOPA Representatives, a Special Facilitation Cell for addressing the concerns highlighted by OECs has been set up under the supervision of Honourable Jawad Sohrab Malik in the Ministry.

No impediment should come in the way of OECs' functions in maximizing the hurdle-free export of our manpower in different destinations of their work, SAPM remarked.

Markets mixed as traders eye high interest rates

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stock markets diverged Friday as investors contemplated central bank signals that interest rates will remain high to combat stubborn inflation.

Wall Street stocks opened higher, but proved unable to hold onto gains amid talk of persistently elevated interest rates.

Steve Sosnick of Interactive Brokers said investor efforts to rally were "understandable" after two straight days of big declines on major US indices.

"Traders are conditioned to try to buy dips, and I think that's what they tried to do this morning," said Sosnick. "But there was really no follow through."

The broad-based S&P 500 finished at 4,320.06, down 0.2 percent for the day and 2.9 percent for the week.

US stocks have been playing defense since the

Federal Reserve's Wednesday policy decision.

While the US central bank kept interest rates unchanged, Fed officials signaled they could hike interest rates again in 2023.

The Bank of England on Thursday also decided against hiking its interest rate for a 15th time in a row, leaving it at 5.25 percent, the highest level since 2008.

"The no action is quite premature," Ipek Ozkardeskaya of Swissquote said.

London's stock market rose Friday but the British pound dipped against the dollar.

"Whatever the Brits will import from now will cost them more than during the last months, when the pound was appreciating," Ozkardeskaya said, adding that another rate hike is likely on the horizon.

Major eurozone indices closed lower, however, as a

key survey showed eurozone economic activity shrank further in September but at a slower rate.

In Asia on Friday, the Bank of Japan stuck to its long-term program of sub-zero borrowing costs.

It comes as BoJ officials face increasing pressure to turn more hawkish as the yen weakens and after fresh data showed inflation remains stubbornly high.

Policymakers have for several months hinted that they are willing to adopt a more normalized policy, such as minor tweaks to its yield curve control scheme, which sees the bank control the band within which government bonds are allowed to move.

But there are growing calls for it to move quicker, and they will not have been tempered by data Friday showing the consumer prices -- excluding food and energy -- jumped 4.3 percent in August, a three-decade high.

Export container shipping index down

SHANGHAI (APP): China's index of export container transport declined in the week ending on Sept. 22, according to the Shanghai Shipping Exchange.

The average China Containerized Freight Index (CCFI) went down 0.4 percent from the previous week to 871.80, the shipping exchange said.

The sub-reading for the South America service fell by 4.7 percent from a week earlier.

Bucking the trend, the sub-index for the Southeast Asia service registered an increase of 5.5 percent week on week.

The China Containerized Freight Index (CCFI) tracks spot and contractual freight rates from Chinese container ports for 12 shipping routes across the globe based on data from 22 international carriers.

The index was set at 1,000 on Jan. 1, 1998.

Great nations win without war



Salwa Imdad Khokhar

In our ever-evolving world, the concept of "winning without war" has gained paramount significance. As globalization continues to weave nations together, the old adage that wars settle disputes is increasingly challenged. Throughout history, conflicts have bred a horrifying tapestry of death, disability, destruction, and despair. However, in the wake of the devastating World Wars, humanity has learned vital lessons, leading to a substantial decrease in global conflicts.

Historical testament to peaceful victory
One remarkable historical episode showcasing the power of peaceful negotiations is the Treaty of Sulah Hudaibiya in 628 A.D. This

event in Islamic history offers a timeless lesson for mankind. It reveals how diplomacy and patience can sustain peace even when conditions seem unfavorable. Instead of rejecting the terms set by the Quraish, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) chose the path of negotiation, maintaining a peaceful environment. The result was profound: a wave of conversions to Islam greater than those of the previous 19 years. The Treaty of Sulah Hudaibiya stands as an enduring example of how disputes can be resolved through dialogue, demonstrating that peace often achieves more than violence ever could.

A global imperative

In the contemporary world, ongoing conflicts like Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine loom ominously. These disputes have the potential to escalate into a global catastrophe. The planet cannot bear the weight of such a war, with its heart-wrenching consequences. It is imperative for nations to prioritize peaceful resolutions and global cooperation, erecting barriers against the impending tempest.

The 21st century paradigm

In the 21st century, the road to progress and prosperity meanders through soft power, diplomacy, and amicable gestures. Rather than resorting to traditional warfare, modern nations can champion their ideals through education and technology. The examples of Germany and Japan, nations that thrived by redirecting their focus towards peace, education, health, and economic betterment post-war, are testament to the potential of this approach.

A focus on education and innovation

By placing education at the forefront, societies can cultivate innovation and intellectual growth, yielding advancements that benefit all of humanity. Investing in technology and research opens new avenues for cooperation, addressing global challenges collectively and harmoniously.

The power of diplomacy

Moreover, embracing diplomacy and peaceful negotiations paves the way

for sustainable partnerships and alliances. This creates a world interconnected by mutual understanding and respect, bolstering global stability and prosperity.

The collective path forward

It's paramount for countries to recognize that armed conflicts not only inflict immense suffering but also impede progress and hinder the potential for shared prosperity. By championing education, innovation, and peaceful resolutions, we can collectively forge a future where war becomes a relic of the past. Humanity stands poised to prosper through unity and cooperation, forging a brighter future for all.

Call to action

It is our collective responsibility to recognize the futility of war and embrace the alternatives. Let us all, as global citizens, commit to supporting diplomatic efforts, nurturing education, fostering innovation, and promoting peace. Together, we can make "winning without war" the defining legacy of our time.



In brief

Murray beaten by Karatsev

BEIJING (Agencies): Andy Murray lost to Aslan Karatsev in the last 16 of the Zhuhai Championships in China. The Russian, who reached the 2021 Australian Open semi-finals as a qualifier, came through 4-6 6-3 6-2. Murray led 5-2 in the opening set and held off a Karatsev fightback to take it but the world number 63 was the stronger after that. The veteran Scot lost his serve twice in the second and third sets as Karatsev wrapped up the victory. It made it two wins out of two for Karatsev, who had also beaten Murray in their only previous career meeting in the 2022 Sydney Classic final. Karatsev will face another Briton in the last eight after Cameron Norrie swept past Australian qualifier Marc Polmans 6-0 6-3. The world number 17 won 90% (26/29) of his first-serve points and did not face a break point on his way to victory as he chases his second title of the season.

Comilla retains Naseem

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan pacers are in for a huge demand as the reigning champions of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Comilla Victorians, have successfully retained the services of Naseem Shah and signs Zaman Khan for the highly anticipated 2024 edition of the tournament. The announcement was made through the social media platform 'X', generating excitement among cricket enthusiasts and fans alike. The Victorians team has also secured the signing of the all-rounder Khushdil Shah for the upcoming edition of the aforementioned tournament. In the previous edition, Naseem was not fully available for the team due to national duty, but played three matches for the side and picked up seven wickets with an average of 10.71 and economy of 6.25. However, Zaman Khan's performance in the 2023 The Hundred Men's competition fell short of expectations, securing only two wickets across five matches. Conversely, he exhibited a notably aggressive performance in the 2023 Vitality Blast, claiming an impressive 25 wickets in 14 matches, boasting an average of 16.56 and an economy rate of 8.28 and was also the fourth-highest wicket-taker in the tournament as well. It is worth noting that the tenth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League is expected to take place from January 10 to February 2024.

'Federer not to be stranger'

LONDON (Reuters): Swiss maestro Roger Federer said he had missed everything about tennis following his retirement last year and vowed to not be a stranger to the tour despite his off-court commitments and the challenge of parenting two sets of twins. Speaking after the first day at the Laver Cup in Vancouver on Friday, the 20-time Grand Slam champion described his life as "intense" and "beautiful" following his farewell match in last year's edition of the team event in London but said he was delighted to be back in front of fans. "In a way, I miss everything about the game, the exciting moments spent on court, break points saved, winning match points, holding up trophies, walking past the fans, taking selfies," Federer said. "It's been beautiful to be home more, spending time with my



HANGZHOU: Members of Pakistan's delegation take part in the athletes parade during the opening ceremony of the 2022 Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium.

Delay in visa forces Pakistan to change WC travel plans

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan were forced to change their World Cup travel plans as the hosts India continued to politicize the sports and has still not issued visas to the Pakistan squad.

Delay in visa means, Pakistan were forced to cancel their "team-bonding trip" to Dubai.

The Green Shirts were scheduled to fly to Dubai early next week before leaving for India ahead of their first warm-up match against New Zealand on

September 29.

However, the team has now planned to fly to Dubai and leave for Hyderabad (India) from there next week on Wednesday, the report said, adding Pakistan are the only one out of nine teams who haven't been issued their visas yet.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which is worried about the situation, has informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) about the delay.

The ICC World Cup is scheduled to begin on

October 5.

The sources said that the visas were supposed to be issued on time as per the agreement signed with the regulatory body.

Moreover, the Indian authorities are not providing any information about the issuance of visas for the team and the cricket fans.

The PCB has been in constant contact with the Indian Consulate for the last week. However, the visas were not issued till Friday — the last working day of the week.

PCB confirms team management for ICC WC

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed the team management for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 that will be played in India in October and November. Pakistan begin their campaign on 6 October when they play the Netherlands in Hyderabad.

Player support personnel: Rehan-ul-Haq (team manager), Mickey Arthur (Director — Pakistan men's team), Grant Bradburn (head coach), Andrew Puttick (batting coach), Morne Morkel (bowling coach), Aftab Khan (fielding coach), Abdul Rehman (assistant coach), Dr Sohail Saleem (team doctor), Drikus Saaiman (strength and conditioning coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi (media and digital content manager), Usman Anwari (security manager), Maqbool Ahmad Babri (psychologist), Talha Ejaz (analyst) and Malang Ali (masseur).

Pakistan are scheduled to depart for Hyderabad in the wee hours of Wednesday. Babar Azam's side will play their first warm-up on 29 September against New Zealand and the second and last against Australia on 3 October. Team director Mickey Arthur will join the side by 30 September.

Babar Azam can set the World Cup on fire: Gautam

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian cricketer Gautam Gambhir lauded the exceptional talent of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, expressing confidence in his ability to set the upcoming World Cup ablaze with his skills.

While talking on Star Sports, Gambhir highlighted Babar's distinct talent and the ease with which he plays. He emphasized that we indeed have the likes of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Kane Williamson, Joe Root, and David Warner in the pool but Babar's quality is unmatched.

"Babar Azam has that every quality that he can set this World Cup on fire. I have seen very few players who have a lot of time to bat. I believe that there is Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Kane Williamson, Joe Root and David Warner but Babar Azam has a different level of quality," Gambhir said.

Babar has played 108 matches for Pakistan and is already considered their best batsman. He has made 5409 runs in 105 innings and has the average of 58.16. He has 19 centuries and 28 fifties to his name and holds the record for being the quickest to reach 5000 ODI runs (97 innings), beating Hashim Amla's record (101 innings).

ICC Men's World Cup 2023 is set to begin from October 5 in India and Babar will lead the national side by kicking off their campaign from October 6 against Netherlands.

Pakistan qualify for SAFF U19 C'ship semi-finals

KATHMANDU (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan on Saturday, qualified for the semi-finals of the ongoing South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) U19 Championship being held in Nepal.

Taking on the Maldives, the Men in Green were put on the back foot as they struggled to find the net in the first half of the game. Maldives exploiting the loopholes in Pakistan's defense, took a decisive lead in the 39th minute of the match courtesy of a brilliant outside-of-the-boot finish.

With the second half starting with Maldives in the lead with the score 1-0, Pakistan looked to level the score whereas Maldives fiercely repelled the repeated attacks by the Men in Green.

Pakistan finally had their moment late in the game with Shah Jahan finding the back of the net and then celebrating by taking his shirt off. Pakistan, who won their first match against hosts Nepal, topped

Asian Games 2023 begins with glitzy opening ceremony

HANGZHOU (Agencies): The Asian Games 2023 kicked off with a glitzy grand opening ceremony held at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre in China on Saturday.

Throughout the opening ceremony of the Asian Games 2023, a fusion of China's rich cultural heritage and its contemporary dynamism was on full display. The performance involved seamlessly integrating artificial intelligence and eco-friendly technologies.

The ceremony began with a breathtaking performance, where Chinese military forces marched past the audience, proudly holding the national flag. Chinese President Xi Jinping made a special appearance at the ceremony, emphasising the importance of the Asian Games in promoting regional cooperation and friendship. Adding to the spectacle were the Asian Games mascots, who graced the stadium with their presence, captivating the audience with their joyful dances and interactive performances.

Pakistani athletes also made their mark at the opening ceremony, with a 262-member contingent participating in the games. The Pakistani squad comprises 53 female and 137 male athletes, competing across 24 different sports in the Asian Games. Renowned Pakistani shooter GM Bashir led the delegation, instilling hopes for medals and glory in the hearts of the nation.

Several other countries taking part in the event have showcased their unique cultural outfits during the opening ceremony, adding a lively and colourful atmosphere to the event. At the same time, mascots and volunteers enthusiastically greet the athletes as they proudly carry their national flags while walking in the parade. It must be noted that the Asian Games will have 483 events and 61 disciplines across 40 sports. China, Thailand, Japan, Korea, India and Hong Kong are sending about 600 athletes.

the final.

Pakistan Squad
Goalkeepers: Sahil Gul, Mohsin Khan and Muhammad Abdullah

Defenders: Muhammad Sadam, Muhammad Adeel, Asad Nasir, Ans Amin, Khurshid Alam, Muhammad Raheel, Shayan Ali, Kamil Ahmad Khan, Abid Ali, Hannan Naveed and Najeeb Ullah

Midfielders: Ali Zafar, Muhammad Azan and Awais Khan

Forwards: Shahjahan, Muhammad Hassan, Faisal Ahmad, Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Haroon Zafar and Muhammad Adeel Younas

Team Officials: Shadab Ifthikhar (Head Coach), Mohsan Ul Hussain (Assistant Coach), Khurram Shahzad (Goal Keeper Coach), Aamna (Media), Muhammad Abdullah and Muhammad Samama (Physio) and Zohair Gondal (Team Manager).



MIRPUR: Ish Sodhi is jubilant after dismissing Soumya Sarkar in a caught and bowled.

Spotlight follows Sodhi as he spearheads NZ victory

MIRPUR (Agencies): Ish Sodhi had a field day in Mirpur with bat and ball to hand New Zealand a 86-run win. Somewhere in between all that he was run-out backing up too far at the non-striker's end and recalled to resume his innings. It was his 35 off 39 balls that lifted the visitors from 187 for 7 to 254 just as it was his 6 for 39 that ripped through Bangladesh's batting order.

Sodhi was brought on in the ninth over of the chase, with Tamim Iqbal and Tanzid Hasan picking up 23 runs in the two previous overs and preparing a platform from which Bangladesh could launch. He struck twice in his second over, first enticing Tanzid into a big shot with a full, loopy legbreak that was misued to mid-off and then having Soumya Sarkar caught and bowled off a leading edge.

Towhid Hridoy's attempt to rebuild the innings was undone by a Sodhi googly that took the inside edge onto the stumps. Tamim, who was the only set top-order batter, paddled a ball that spun big to the wicket-keeper. Sodhi started his

first spell with the hosts on 42 for 1 in eight overs. And when it ended, Bangladesh were reeling at 93 for 5 in 19 overs while he was flying with 4 for 29 off six.

Mahmudullah, who was playing his first ODI innings in six months, and Mahedi Hasan knuckled down to deny Jamieson, Rachin Ravindra, and Lockie Ferguson for just over ten overs. They even started to pick up a boundary every over after a 35-ball drought. And then, Sodhi came back, ripped out Mahedi's middle stump with the first ball of his new spell to claim his first ODI five-for.

A few quick overs later, Mahmudullah pulled a rank long-hop, from Cole McConchie, straight to Finn Allen at short fine leg. Nasum Ahmed extended the innings with a 30-ball 21, bashing two sixes along the way, but Bangladesh could add just 19 runs for the last three wickets, which was where Sodhi made a difference with the bat earlier in the day.

Sodhi was on 5 off 13, and New Zealand were 187 for 7, when Jamieson joined him in

the 39th over. They saw off the better part of three overs before Sodhi heaved a length ball from Nasum over long-on. Jamieson picked up a couple of boundaries himself before being caught and bowled by Mahedi.

Then came the most talked about moment of this innings. Three balls into the 46th over, with New Zealand on 224 for 8, Hasan Mahmud ran Sodhi out for backing up too far at the non-striker's end. Sodhi was walking off, wearing nothing but a smile on his face, which suggests that some players are starting to get used to this form of dismissal. But, a few seconds later, the Bangladesh stand-in captain Litton Das chose to withdraw the appeal and invited Sodhi back to resume his innings. Sodhi returned, wearing an even bigger smile on his face, hugged the bowler Mahmud and ushered New Zealand to a total of 254. He was on 17 off 26 when he was run out and recalled and went on to make 35 off 39 with three sixes. New Zealand added 67 runs for the last three wickets.



In brief

49 dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 49 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 903 in the district. District Coordinator of Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Sajjad Mehmood Saturday said that among the new cases, 30 cases had arrived from Potohar town urban, 10 from Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi, three from Rawalpindi Cantonment and two from Potohar rural. He said 130 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 96 were confirmed cases while 807 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 50 FIRs, issued tickets to 14, sealed two premises, and a fine of Rs 42,500 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 22,923 houses, and larvae were found in 1,212 homes. Similarly, he added that while checking 9,427 places, the teams found larvae at 191 sites during outdoor surveillance.

Minister takes notice

ISLAMABAD (APP): An immediate investigation was launched into complaint of a citizen of an adverse reaction to the injection given to a victim. The action was taken on the direction of Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan, following taking notice of the complaint of the resident of Kasur. According to Ministry's spokesperson, the federal minister contacted Punjab Provincial Minister for Health Dr Javed Ikram on telephone. He added the Punjab government has constituted a five-member committee in this regard. The committee has started the investigation from every angle. Dr. Nadeem Jan assured that the government would ensure all necessary steps to ensure a transparent investigation of the incident. "We are in contact with the provincial government and keeping a close eye on the situation."

Nine-member body formed

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A 9-member committee has been formed to split up the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority into two bodies. A notification was issued on Saturday in this regard. According to the notification, Ministry of Aviation Joint Secretary (two) Shazia Rizvi has been appointed committee's chairperson and Air Vice Marshal Taimoor Iqbal has been made its coordinator. According to the notification, the 9-member committee will complete its work by October 15. The PCAA will be split up into two departments i.e. Pakistan Airport Authority and Bureau of Air Safety Investigation, the notification stated. The committee will distribute the PCAA's assets and funds between the new departments. The committee will also look into the affairs related to the transfer of PCAA officers and record. It will also be responsible for the distribution of space, furniture, machinery, vehicles and funds between the departments. Other members of the committee include: Ministry of Aviation Joint Secretary (three) Iqbal Asif, Finance Ministry Joint Secretary Abdul Malik, PCAA Deputy DG Regulatory Nadir Shafi Dar, Aircraft Accident Investigation Board President Air Commodore Mirza Amir Vilayat, PCAA Finance Director Saqib Butt, Director Sameer Saeed, Director APS Sadiqur Rehman and Director HR Abid Ali.



ISLAMABAD: Special Kids pose for group photo in a ceremony held at National Special Education Centre H/9 in connection with International Day of Sign Languages on Saturday. —INP Photo

CJP Isa supports students' union revival at QAU

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The students' union is all set to be restored at the Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad as the varsity's syndicate has given a go-ahead to the much-awaited move, it emerged Saturday. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa also supported the decision in the syndicate meeting and it is hoped that the move will pave the way for the restoration of unions in other educational institutions as well.

The decision was made during a syndicate meeting chaired by university's Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad Akhtar. The CJP, who is a member of the forum by virtue of his position, also participated. Justice Isa became the second CJP, after former chief justice Rana Bhagwandas, to have attended a QAU syndicate meeting. Student unions were

banned in 1984 by then military dictator Gen Ziaul Haq. The move was meant to suppress the student uprisings against his oppressive policies. It left a huge vacuum in Pakistan's political arena. The students of QAU would get their democratic rights back after four decades and it is being hoped that other universities would also follow the suit.

"The syndicate was discussing the engagement of students in positive and healthy activities when the matter came up," said a statement issued by the QAU. It added that Federal Education Secretary Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry expressed an opinion in favour of reviving the student unions. He was seconded by the chief justice who observed that Gen Zia's Martial Law Order had been repealed by an act of parliament in 1989.

He also gave reference of a 1993 Supreme Court judgement which favoured the elected bodies of students to resolve their issues on the campus. The syndicate also talked about a unanimous resolution passed by the Senate in 2017 on the same subject. Later, the syndicate unanimously decided to revive QAU's students' union.

Meanwhile, a committee has been formed to come up with a detailed proposal on the modalities of elections and other related issues. A representative of the education ministry, the QAU registrar and the director of the university's School of Law will be its members. The committee will submit its report to the syndicate within two weeks. CJP Isa said it should be a platform for the welfare and excellence of students and for the flourishing of democratic culture.

Paigham-e-Quran seminar held at PAC

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Arts Council (PAC) in collaboration with Minhaj-ul-Quran organized a seminar titled "Paigham-e-Quran" here on Saturday.

Addressing the seminar, prominent religious scholar Allama Ali Akhtar Awan said that the Holy Quran is the most holy book of Islam and the source of guidance.

He said that Quran Pak is a book of thought and action and it was necessary to read it with understanding.

"It is obligatory for every Muslim to meditate on the verses of the Quran while the Quran comprehension classes in universities and making it a part of the curriculum is a commendable initiative." Allama Akhtar said there was a need to connect educated people who do not know Arabic with the Quran so that their beliefs and actions could be reformed.

Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that the message of the Quran is for the whole of mankind.

"Those who make riots in the land and spoil the peace do not deserve any concession."

The Quran says that the qualities of a Muslim are a worshiper of Allah, not associating anyone with Allah, treating relatives, orphans, neighbours, strangers, and travellers with kindness and he is not arrogant in any situation, he added.

Usman Arshad said in his address that Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) is the last prophet and the Holy Quran is the holy book.

The language of the Holy Quran is the most eloquent Arabic and there is no second to it.

It is the only book in which no word or verse has been changed until today and will not be changed until the Day of Judgment.

Arshad added that every individual of the society should make recitation of the Holy Quran a part of their life.

In this period of anxiety, people's hearts will shine with the blessing of reciting the Holy Quran.

A large number of people from twin cities participated in the seminar.

Mushaal lauds PM for championing Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights Mushaal Mullick has said that Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has championed the Kashmir cause in the best possible manner at United Nations General Assembly.

In a statement issued here Saturday, Mushaal Mullick said that she was grateful to the Prime Minister for voicing the oppressed Kashmiris in the United Nations General Assembly session.

"The Prime Minister has proved to be the ambassador and advocate of Kashmiris", she added.

She said that Kashmiris had been encouraged by the Prime Minister's address in the General Assembly. She said that the innocent Kashmiris know Pakistan as the center of their hopes for

achieving their right to self-determination.

The Special Assistant said that Indian state terrorism had started to reach the rest of the world from the region.

The international community has to stop India for the sake of peace, she said and added, according to the resolutions of the United Nations, the solution of the Kashmir issue is indispensable for regional peace.

Mushaal says 'Sikhs being harassed by India in Australia, Europe'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Friday said the 'Sikh community is being harassed by India in Australia and Europe'.

Mullick during her visit to Nankana Sahib said Modi is now doing terrorism in the region by becoming the Prime Minister, the face of Indian spy agency RAW has been exposed in the killing of Hardeep Singh (a Canadian citizen).

She said that most human rights violations are taking place in Occupied Kashmir, Indian spy Kulbhushan was involved in terrorist activities in various areas including Karachi, Punjab and FATA.

She said that Kashmiri people have been sacrificing their lives for 75 years, mosques were destroyed in Modi's name, and places of worship were desecrated in India. Mullick said that India's terrorist activities are also going on in Pakistan, and the international community.

11 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 11 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directives, the Kohsar police team arrested an accused namely Ali Imran and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The

Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Sabir and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition from his possession.

Likewise, the Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Khawar Kamran and recovered 230 gram heroin from his possession. The Sangiani police team arrested two accused namely Zubair and Muhammad Arif and recovered 540 gram hashish and 210 gram heroin from their possession.

Similarly, the Shams colony police team arrested three accused namely Manzoor Ahmed, Danyal and Muhammad Ayub and recovered three 30 bore pistols from their possession. Khanna police team arrested an accused namely

Ly Kamran and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Lohi Bher police team arrested two accused namely Zulfiqar Ahmed and Raheel Ahmed and recovered 792 gram heroin from their possession. The Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Qamar Akhlaq and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

ICCPD Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and to ensure the safety of lives and property of citizens on priority basis.

RDA seals site office of illegal housing scheme

RAWALPINDI (NNI): On the directions of the Director General,

Rawalpindi Development Authority, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, the Enforcement Squad RDA has carried out an operation and sealed site office of illegal housing scheme namely Eastridge at Mouza Kotha Kalan, Rawalpindi, RDA spokesman said.

He said RDA has also lodged First Information Reports (FIRs) against the owners of nine illegal housing schemes namely Eman Garden, Land Sub-Division / Chanar Enclave in mouza khasala kalan on Adyala road to Chakri road, Land Sub-Division / Bahram Villas in mouza katarian near new Islamabad International Airport, Haider Residencia in mouza kohala on Chakri road, Khalid Colony phase-IV, Kahmir Homes / Imam Hasan Town, Zam Zam Villas in mouza misriat, Usmania Forts in mouza thalian near Thalian

Interchange and Al-Barka Garden in mouza chowker, Taxila Rawalpindi.

He said taking legal action previously notices were issued to the owners of these illegal housing schemes namely Mr. Saleem, Mr. Saqib Mahmood Bhatti, Mr. Waseem Mazhar, Mr. Muhammad Ayyub, Mr. Osama Abbasi, Raja Shoaib Tanveer, Mr. Rizwan Charagh, Mr. Waqas Khalid, Mr. Muhammad Naveed, Mr. Shahzad Musharraf Afridi, Malik Shafiqat and Mr. Saifullah. He said that the owners of the above-mentioned properties have violated the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and under section 38 of Punjab Development Authorities Private Housing Schemes Rules 2021.

The Enforcement Squad RDA including Incharge / Assistant Director Building Control, Building Inspectors and others with the assistance of the Police from the concerned Airport Police

Station carried out the operation against above mentioned illegal housing scheme. The owner of this property was running illegal housing schemes' site office in violation of rules. He said notices were issued to the owners of above mentioned illegal housing schemes.

RDA spokesman said the DG RDA advises the general public that in their own interest they should not make any investment in any illegal / unauthorized Housing Scheme whose status was declared illegal by RDA.

It could be checked on the RDA website www.rda.gov.pk. Otherwise, they themselves will be responsible for their losses.

He said the DG RDA has directed the MP&TE Directorate to take strict actions against illegal / unauthorized housing schemes, their development, construction of booking and site offices and encroachments without any fear or favour.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy people searching valuables from garbage near Khanna pul in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Arifullah met Turkish envoy

KABUL (Agencies): The head of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, Mawlawi Abdul Hanan Arifullah, has met with the newly appointed Turkish envoy to Afghanistan, Omar Noman. Arifullah requested Turkey's assistance in enhancing the capabilities of civil service personnel in Afghanistan. Arifullah emphasized the need for international cooperation to improve the capacity of civil service employees in Afghanistan.

IE to ramp up anti-drug efforts

KABUL (Agencies): Sohail Shaheen, the head of the IEA's political office in Doha, has affirmed the Islamic Emirate's commitment to bolstering its efforts in combating drug production and trafficking. In a meeting with the Italian ambassador to Afghanistan, Shaheen discussed the Islamic Emirate's achievements in its anti-drug campaign. They discussed the progress made by the Islamic Emirate in various sectors of the anti-drug fight, including the treatment of drug addicts.

Global community betrays Afghan women's trust



KABUL (Khaama Press): Richard Bennett, the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights Council on Afghanistan, stated on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly that women and girls in Afghanistan have lost trust in the global community. According to him, the international community has betrayed women in Afghanistan. Mr. Bennett made these remarks during a session titled "Combating Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan," which took place on the sidelines of the 78th United Nations General Assembly. He called for practical measures to end gender

apartheid in Afghanistan. In this session, he aligned with women's rights activists' call for practical action, emphasizing that the current situation in Afghanistan can only be rectified through practical actions, not just condemnations and expressions of sympathy. According to him, women and girls in Afghanistan have been left isolated, and a sense of mistrust towards the global community has developed among Afghan women. He added that "the international community has betrayed them." Richard Bennett used the terms "gender apartheid" and "sexual abuse" in his report on the status of women and girls in Afghanistan, which was presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in June of this year. He used these terms to describe the depth of the tragedy in Afghanistan. He said continuing this situation will lead to a "crime against humanity": "Sexual abuse is considered an international crime, but gender apartheid is not. Recognizing gender apartheid can become a fundamental principle for creating international laws that do not legitimize countries that do not adhere to this principle." Since the Taliban assumed control in Afghanistan, they have enforced oppressive policies, severely curbing women's rights to education, employment, and social engagement. Despite widespread international and domestic criticism, they have yet to reopen schools beyond the sixth grade and universities for Afghan women.

Better healthcare demanded

SHARANA (Pajhwok): The residents of Zirouk district in southeastern Paktika province have complained no surgery ward and facilities for the treatment of some other diseases have been not available in the health centres at the district level. They said they transferred their patients on difficult routes to Sharana, the provincial capital, or Khost province and sometimes a patient is lost on the way to the hospital. Lahor Khan, the resident of Dabi village, told Pajhwok Afghan News, the local health center of this district sans surgical ward, some other facilities are also not available and the people face serious problems. Lahor Khan added: "The current health service provided by the district clinics are very limited; the residents are forced to take their patients to other health centers in Sharana or Khost province, some of the patients even die on such risky ways."

Haj Mohammad asked the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to equip the local BHC clinic with surgical ward and provide more facilities for the treatment of other diseases. Haji Haj Mohammad, a tribal elder of Soori village told Pajhwok: "Zirouk population is 90,000 and the health services are inadequate for their number of people." The officials of provincial health department accept the problems of the residents but they assure them that these problems will be solved in near future. He said efforts are underway to upgrade the BHC clinic to CHC (community health center), at that case the clinic will be able to provide the surgery and ambulance services. He acknowledged the complaints of the locals but added the clinic sans the surgical section and has no ambulance facility. He said, his duty begins at 8:00am and ends at 4:00pm, as too many patients visit this clinic for the treatment of their illnesses every day, Abed stays in the clinic even at night. Doctor Nik Mohammad Abed, the head of the local BHC clinic said that the available facilities of the clinic do not respond to the needs of the patients. The former government approved to equip the local (Behavioral Health Consultation) BHC clinic, a promise which has never been fulfilled, he said. The officials of provincial health department accept the problems of the residents but they assure them that these problems will be solved in near future. He said efforts are underway to upgrade the BHC clinic to CHC (community health center), at that case the clinic will be able to provide the surgery and ambulance services. He acknowledged the complaints of the locals but added the clinic sans the surgical section and has no ambulance facility. He said, his duty begins at 8:00am and ends at 4:00pm, as too many patients visit this clinic for the treatment of their illnesses every day, Abed stays in the clinic even at night.

IE seeks to participate in 'Belt and Road Initiative'



KABUL (TOLONews): Second Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi said during a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Kabul, Zhao Xing, requested Afghanistan's participation in the "Belt and Road Initiative." Abdul Salam Hanafi said that they are trying to connect Afghanistan through different corridors with this project. The Ministry of Economy said that Afghanistan's connection to the Belt and Road Initiative project is beneficial for Afghanistan's economic growth. "Afghanistan's joining

the Belt and Road Initiative will integrate Afghanistan's economy into the regional and world economies and will promote trade and economic growth and the development of Afghanistan, as well as promote Afghanistan's geo-economic transit position," said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy of the Economy Ministry. The Chamber of Commerce and Investment believes that connecting Afghanistan to the Silk Path or the "Belt and Road Initiative," project can increase Afghanistan's

trade with the countries of the region. "It is very effective. It is known to you that we have trade with China, and not only with China, but with Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, and these countries we do it by sea. And it's very influential for business growth," said Khanjan Alokzai, a member of the ACCI. Economists said that connecting Afghanistan to the Belt and Road Initiative is needed so that the countries of the region will support Afghanistan from a financial point of view.

"In order to reach such a line to Afghanistan and for Afghanistan's participation to actually get a good score, it is clear that the World Bank and the extraordinary financial resources of the northern countries play a role," said Sayed Masoud, an economist. The Belt and Road Initiative or New Silk Path was presented by the President of China and is planned to cost \$1300 billion to build thousands of kilometers of roads, railways, waterways, and air routes.

Contracts signed for extraction of 10 mines



URUZGAN (TOLONews): Mohammad Aali Jan Ahmed, the governor of Uruzgan, announced that extraction will soon begin in ten mines in the province. According to the governor, the contract for the extraction of ten fluoride and turquoise mines in the center and in four districts of the province will be given to some private companies, which will provide

money earned from the extraction of these mines on development projects in the province. "These people have suffered a lot, now it's time to pay attention to them," said Sayed Wali Sediqi, a lecturer. "Until now, there have been many people in Uruzgan province who are suffering from unemployment in one sector, in one department, they should be given attention, and the field of work should be provided for them," said Ghulam Nabi Shuja, an Uruzgan resident. According to the information of officials in Uruzgan, it is expected that the contract for the extraction of two fluoride mines in the Gizab district of the province will soon be signed by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum with private companies.

Gap between schools, Madrasas eliminated



SAR-E-PUL (Agencies): During his visit to Sar-e-Pul province, the acting education minister, Mawlawi Habibullah Agha, announced that the divide between schools and madrasas has been bridged with the reinstatement of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. The primary purpose of the acting education minister's trip to Sar-e-Pul province was to oversee the educational landscape in the region and address any existing challenges therein. Mawlawi Mohammad Rahmani, the education

director of Sar-e-Pul province, provided information and talked about the achievements and challenges in the field of education. He requested the attention of the central government to address problems facing the education process in the region.

Education Minister emphasizes need for modern, religious sciences

JAWZJAN (TOLONews): The Acting Minister of Education, Habibullah Agha, said during a visit to the province of Jawzjan that modern and religious sciences are crucial for development and equality with other nations. The acting minister of education said that inventive students need support. Habibullah Agha made the remarks during the opening ceremony of a school in Aqcha district of Jawzjan province. "When a student can make a plane from plastic, I say if we educate them well in modern science, he will

make drones," he said. Local officials and tribal elders in Aqcha district of Jawzjan have also emphasized the need to establish schools and providing modern education facilities for students. "You [people] should try to send your children to school," said Nooruddin Amir, deputy governor of Jawzjan. "Today, we are witnesses that the Islamic Emirate is against war and cruelty. The message of the Islamic Emirate for the education is this, we have built a school instead of a military outpost," said Mohammad Tahir Jawad, director of the



education of Jawzjan. The acting minister of education emphasized the importance of both modern and religious education in the country, despite the fact that girls above six grade have been banned from attending school for more than 730 days.

Efforts underway to create new crossing with Turkmenistan

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate said it plans to establish a new transit crossing with Turkmenistan through the Bala Murghab District of Badghis Province. The Islamic Emirate spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, said that the purpose of creating this new route is to facilitate the export and import of goods. Mujahid noted that the construction cost of this route has been determined and efforts are underway to implement it. "We planned a new route

to connect with Turkmenistan via the Bala Murghab. The work is underway, and the project has been determined. We are talking to the companies to sign contracts with them regarding its construction, and its practical work will begin," the spokesperson said. The Ministry of Borders and Tribes said that, in accordance with the Islamic Emirate's leader's order, the ministry had carefully inspected the areas of this new crossing in Bala Murghab and sought the opinions of the local people

on the matter. "Noori and his delegation observed and carefully inspected this area. They also paid close attention to what people wanted. The report will also be shared with the Amir al-Mu'minin," said Hamdullah Fitrat, spokesperson of the ministry. The ACCI said he considers the establishment of a new route and transit crossing with Turkmenistan as beneficial for the development of the country's trade and economy. "The port that will be

constructed in Bala Murghab will be the best port. Both oil and flour can come through that port. We want the necessary things to be installed and built in this port as soon as possible," said Mohammad Yunus Momand, the head of ACCI. "The port needs to have facilities, services, and infrastructure. It should build its capabilities. We welcome this and will cooperate with the Islamic Emirate in the construction of this port," said Khanjan Alkozi, a member of the ACCI.

ARCS facilitates treatment for 30 more children with heart defects

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has facilitated the introduction of 30 additional children with heart defects to two hospitals in Kabul for treatment. According to an ARCS statement, Mawlawi Muti-ul-Haq Khalis, President of ARCS, met with the families of these children prior to their introduction to the hospitals. Over the past 14 years, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has registered 26,481 children with heart disease, nearly half of whom have received treatment. In the last two years alone, ARCS has referred 1,801 children to hospitals for operations. Of these, 1,600 have completed treatment while the rest are still undergoing treatment. Mawlawi Muti-ul-Haq Khalis emphasized that Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is not a government budget unit. Instead, it funds its operations through income generated from its assets, domestic and foreign charity associations, and donations from affluent individuals within the country. He further stated that Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has a broad scope of work and future plans include providing free ambulance services nationwide. This initiative aims to transport sick individuals and deceased members from needy and impoverished families to hospitals and homes.

KABUL (Khaama Press): Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, Afghanistan's acting deputy foreign minister for political affairs, firmly asserts that the continued presence of US drones patrolling Afghanistan's airspace constitutes a clear violation by the United States. During an interview with Ariana News, Stanekzai revealed that officials from the Taliban administration had raised this matter in negotiations with American delegations, emphasizing the imperative need to cease the violation of Afghanistan's airspace. "Yes, drones are patrolling in Afghanistan's airspace, and we repeatedly shared this issue with them (the Americans) in the meetings, and they have violated this article," he said.

"According to the Doha agreement, after the withdrawal of US forces, this country would have friendly relations with the new Islamic government of Afghanistan and would play an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and encourage other countries in this direction, and not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan," he added. Addressing concerns from Central Asian countries about the Qosh Tepa canal construction, Stanekzai affirmed that the canal is an indigenous project, and the government remains committed to its completion, stating, "This canal is an Afghan project, and the government will continue to complete it." Furthermore, the deputy foreign minister has reassured Afghan women and

girls that the educational process will remain open, with the de facto administration fully committed to safeguarding their educational rights. He firmly asserted, "As an Afghan, I can say that education will not be banned till the end; it should not be banned, and this is the natural and religious right of girls." Stanekzai went on to clarify that schools and universities will admit girls once suitable conditions are in place. Nonetheless, it's essential to note that this marks the third consecutive year since the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan, during which they have prohibited girls from attending schools and universities. Despite repeated assurances of reopening these educational institutions, the



Taliban has yet to follow through on this commitment. Concurrently, they have imposed bans on women engaging in employment with domestic and international organizations and aid

agencies, all amid a severe humanitarian crisis in the country. Stanekzai also urged opponents of the Taliban to consider returning to the country. Addressing Pakistan's concerns about Tehreek-e-

Taliban Pakistan (TTP), he stressed that Afghanistan has achieved comprehensive security after a prolonged conflict, and neighboring countries should not link their problems to Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

CJP staunchly advocates student union revival at QAU

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The students' union is all set to be restored at the Quid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad as the varsity's syndicate has given a go-ahead to the much-awaited move. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa also supported the decision in the syndicate meeting and it is hoped that the move will pave the way for the restoration of unions in other educational institutions as well.

The decision was made during a syndicate meeting chaired by university's Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad Akhtar. The CJP, who is a member of the forum by virtue of his position, also participated. Justice Isa became the second CJP, after former chief justice Rana Bhagwandas, to have attended a QAU syndicate meeting. Student unions were banned in 1984 by then military dictator Gen Ziaul Haq. The move was meant to suppress the student uprisings against his oppressive policies. It left a huge vacuum in Pakistan's political arena.

The students of QAU would get their democratic rights back after four decades and it is being hoped that other universities would also follow the suit. "The syndicate was discussing the engagement of students in positive and healthy activities when the matter came up," said a statement issued by the QAU. It added that Federal Education Secretary Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry expressed an opinion in favour of reviving the student unions. He was seconded by the chief justice who observed that Gen Zia's Martial Law Order had been repealed by an act of parliament in 1989.

He also gave reference of a 1993 Supreme Court judgement which favoured the elected bodies of students to resolve their issues on the campus. The syndicate also talked about a unanimous resolution passed by the Senate in 2017 on the same subject. Later, the syndicate unanimously decided to revive QAU's students' union.

Meanwhile, a committee has been formed to come up with a detailed proposal on the modalities of elections and other related issues. A representative of the education ministry, the QAU registrar and the director of the university's School of Law will be its members. The committee will submit its report to the syndicate within two weeks. CJP Isa said it should be a platform for the welfare and excellence of students and for the flourishing of democratic culture.

13 terrorists held in CTD operations

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In view of possible incidents of terrorism in the province, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab in its intelligence-based operations carried out in several cities, has arrested 13 terrorists.

Spokesman for the CTD said on Saturday that operations were carried out in Lahore, Attock, Bahawalnagar, Jhelum, Bahawalpur, Sheikhpura and Rawalpindi. Giving further details, he said that five terrorists were picked up from Attock and three from Lahore. The spokesman elaborated that those taken into custody were Khurshid, Rasheed, Irfan, Luqman, Waheed, Rizwan, Amir and Wajid, and they were planning to attack government offices and other key installations.

ECP unveils changes to Election Rules

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday approved changes to 18 clauses of the Election Rules besides issuing five new forms. The ECP said that objections could be raised to these changes within 15 days.

As per one of the changes, a candidate will have to open a separate bank account for election campaign-related expenditures, and that a joint account will not be acceptable. As per another change, a returning officer (RO) will provide election's result to the candidate at the District Election Commission's building.

Similarly, according to yet another change, postal ballots will be enclosed in

separate packets before sending to them to concerned ROs, and that in case the RO does not receive ballots prior to the election day, votes will not be counted. Furthermore, now the RO will not only have to immediately inform the ECP in case the result is not announced by 2:00 at night, but he will also have to give reasons for that delay. The RO will hand over the election result in the presence of all candidates.

Not only that, he will himself fill in forms 47, 48 and 49 for results before sealing them. As per amended rule, a candidate will now himself calculate the expenditures incurred on electioneering and hand over its details to the ECP. Similarly under a new rule, the cost of filing election-related petition in the ECP

will be Rs100,000, and that the ECP will be bound to give decision on it within 180 days.

Likewise in case a candidate wants hearing of the petition to be adjourned, he or she will be fined between Rs10,000 to Rs50,000. And even if the case's hearing is adjourned, it will not be for more than three days, says another amended rule. According to yet another change, political parties will be bound to intimate the election commission about intra-party elections 15 days prior to these elections. Similarly, they are now bound to submit results to the ECP seven days after the elections. According to another amendment, the fines imposed by the election commission will be deposited in the national exchequer.

Alvi for steps to enroll 27m children in schools

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has emphasized the need to adopt innovative solution to impart education as about twenty seven million children in the country are out of schools. Talking to Caretaker Education Minister Madad Ali in Islamabad on Saturday, he said mosques can be used as educational institutions from Fajr to Zohar of imparting education to children. He said online education in remote areas will also be useful in this regard.

He said special arrangements should be made to provide education to the people living in remote areas of the country. President Ali also proposed that online tools of education could also be utilized for the provision of

education to the people living in remote areas. He also suggested to utilize various platforms other than school buildings such as mosques to provision education to the people. Highlighting the importance of education for special persons, the president stressed that special arrangements should also be made for them to give education along with the normal children. With respect to the girls education, he said the girls should be encouraged to continue their education in schools. He said the universities should equip their students with skills according to the needs of the market.

The number of people enrolled in universities for higher education in Pakistan is very less compared to other countries in the region, he said adding

special measures should be taken to increase the number of people with higher education in the country. He proposed the universities to provide higher education to more students with the help of online education and different shifts, adding that besides the 4-year programs, the universities should also start 2-year degree programs.

With the help of online and distance education programs of Virtual University and Allama Iqbal Open University, the number of highly educated people can be increased, the president said. He also stressed the universities to focus on artificial intelligence, machine learning, cyber security and cloud computing matters related to the Federal Urdu University were also discussed in the meeting.

PAF contingent returns triumphant after exercise

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force contingent has landed back at an operational air base after successful participation in the multinational tri-services air exercise Bright Star 2023, held in Egypt. The exercise brought together 30 nations from across the globe, fostering camaraderie and showcasing the prowess of participating armed forces.

The distinguished event showcased the remarkable performance of PAF's contingent, consisting of skilled combat pilots, proficient air defence controllers, and adept technical ground crew, who demonstrated pride and profes-

sional excellence as a unified team while operating advanced JF-17 Thunder fighter jets.

The primary objective of the Bright Star Exercise was to promote interoperability and facilitate knowledge sharing among participating countries. Throughout the exercise, PAF's air and ground crew consistently demonstrated exceptional air combat capabilities, effectively highlighting the impressive strengths of Pakistan's esteemed asset, the JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft. Engaging in rigorous training and immersive, realistic aerial warfare scenarios, the PAF contingent reaffirmed its preparedness to address contemporary air

warfare challenges, underlining its unwavering commitment to serving the cause of global peace and security.

The resounding triumph of PAF's crew in the Bright Star exercise within the realm of aerial warfare serves as a testament to their unwavering dedication and operational proficiency. Pakistan Air Force's participation in the exercise underscores its ability to adapt to cutting-edge advancements in air combat and its willingness to establish strong partnerships with the international community in order to effectively address the evolving challenges of aerial warfare in the modern world.

Fatima murder case: SHO threatens victim's family

NAUSHEHRO FERAZ (INP): SHO Khanwahan issuing threats of abduction and killing, Ranipur murder victim's family has complained. According to media reports, ten-year-old child maid Fatima had died in the Haveli of Asad Shah in Ranipur and the video of her death went viral on social media.

"SHO Khanwahan Ghani Dayo issuing threats to abduct or kill me," Fatima's mother has complained. "He is using filthy language against my late daughter," she said. "SHO

Khanwahan police has been a henchman of Ranipur pirs," she alleged and demanded protection against Khanwahan police officer. Caretaker home minister of Sindh during his visit to the family had directed for action against the SHO, who is still holding the SHO charge.

Police on Friday 'arrested' Pir Fayyaz Shah, co-accused in the murder case of child maid Fatima Phurrio. Sources having knowledge of the matter said Fayyaz Shah was taken into custody when he

was going back to his haveli after addressing a press conference. The Sindh High Court's Hyderabad bench had granted an interim bail to Fayyaz Shah.

On Thursday, an anti-terrorism court granted five days of physical remand of accused Asad Shah and co-accused, Imtiaz Meerasi in the murder case. The postmortem report of the girl had confirmed that the minor maid was sexually abused, according to DIG Sukkur Javed Jiskani.

Jinnah House attack case: Court reserves verdict

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Saturday reserved its verdict on the bail petitions filed by 63 suspects, including Khadija Shah, Sanam Javed, Robina Jameel, Samia Asad, Babar, Fayyaz Ahmad and Ashima Shuja, in Lahore's Jinnah House attack case. ATC judge Muhammad Arshad Javed heard the case.

Opposing granting bails to the suspects, Special Prosecutor Farhad Ali Shah said that sections related to treason had also been inserted in the cases registered against these people, and that the investigators had over 600 videos which proved their involvement in an attack on the Jinnah House. All 63 people applied for bail for the second time after the insertion of treason-related sections in their cases. Case No 96/23 had been registered against them at Sarwar Road police station.

Thousands of people lost their temper following the arrest of their leader, former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan on May 9. They took to the streets, ransacked and even set several government and military buildings on fire besides damaging even memorials of Pakistan Army's martyrs.

ATC orders to release Sanam Javed

LAHORE (Agencies): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) ordered to release Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed Khan and other party activists in Jinnah House attack case. As per details, ATC judge Arshad Javed announced the verdict and granted bail to nine suspects of Jinnah House attack case.

The bail pleas were accepted against surety bonds worth Rs 0.1 million each and ordered to release the nine PTI leaders. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed Khan and 12 other women leaders were sent on physical remand over the Jinnah House attack case. The court sent former PTI MNA Aliya and women activists including Khadija, Sanam Javed Khan and others on five-day physical remand in the Jinnah House attack case.

The court stated that PTI women will stay in police custody from sunrise till sunset for inquiry. They will be kept in judicial custody after sunset. It is worth mentioning that violent clashes broke out across Pakistan after the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan were arrested at the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday. The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers are agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order.

Army installations and Corps Commander's house in Lahore came under attack during a protest by PTI workers. It was also reported that Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Ali Nasir Rizvi sustained severe injuries while clearing.

Javed Latif and Maryam summoned

LAHORE (PPI): The Anti-Terrorism Court on Saturday issued summons to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders Mian Javed Latif and Maryam Aurangzeb over allegation of making anti-state speeches and statements.

The hearing was conducted by Judge Abhar Gul Khan of the Anti-Terrorism Court. During the hearing, the police presented a case report against the accused. However, the court rejected the police's exclusion report, indicating that the case will proceed.

The case against Javed Latif and Maryam Aurangzeb was registered at the Green Town police station in 2022. The leaders are accused of making speeches and statements that are considered anti-state. The specifics of these accusations have not been disclosed yet.

Following the rejection of the police's exclusion report, the court has summoned the accused for a hearing on September 30.

Heavy rains lash Punjab areas

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Most parts of north-eastern and upper Punjab received heavy downpour on Saturday. The latest spell of rains is again a result of monsoon current from the Arabian Sea penetrating the upper and central parts of Pakistan with a westerly affecting the region at the same time, resulting in intense downpours.

Hence, the combined effects of the two systems are producing heavy rains despite the fact that the monsoon currents are moderate in their intensity. Although global warming has increased the rain intensity around the globe, convergence of hot and cold winds due to two systems [monsoon currents and westerly] makes downpour even more likely. In fact, the overwhelming majority of intense rains, especially in northeastern Punjab, this season is a result of their interaction.

The reason behind this trend is the gradual strengthening of westerlies due to global warming as they contain more powerful than in the past because of the increasing amount of moisture they carry. Thus, any interaction with monsoon currents produces extreme weather events in the shape of heavier down-

pour or even cloud burst. In Lahore, the downpour with wind started around 3:30 which was soon followed by a drenching thunderstorm. Although, rain had stopped around 9:30am, the city and other parts of northeastern Punjab were still covered by dark clouds.

The highest amount of rain 156mm recorded in the city was at Qartaba Chowk followed by Lakshmi Chowk 138mm, Gulshan-e-Ravi 142mm, Gulberg 121mm, Nishtar Town 107mm, Paniwala Talab 107mm, Tajpura 103mm, Farrukhabad 97mm, Iqbal Town 92mm and Johar Town 88mm.

However, the rain clouds initially had started developing over western Punjab around midnight, which moved towards central and eastern Punjab, resulting in heavy rain along its path. According to the Met Office, the chief amounts of rain recorded in some other towns and cities of Punjab are: Jhelum 74mm, Mangla 72mm, Narowal 46mm, Joharabad 38mm, Mandi Bahauddin 32mm, Kasur and Faisalabad 28mm, Hafizabad 27, Gujranwala 26, Islamabad (Zero Point) 26mm, Sialkot Airport 24 and Chakwal 23.

Earlier, it was expected that the heavy rains during the last weekend and earlier

this week would end the hot and humid conditions. But the delay in monsoon withdrawal means that the humidity level had again jumped. On Friday, isolated rain was reported from Islamabad and upper Punjab on Wednesday after the monsoon currents and the westerly started affecting the region. The spell will continue during the next 36 to 48 hours.

Reuters had reported on Tuesday that India will receive heavy monsoon rains at the tail end of the four-month season, the chief of the weather office said on Tuesday, bringing farmers succor after the driest August in more than a century hit some summer crops amid higher food prices.

It means delay in monsoon withdrawal may also have effects on Pakistan, producing more rains in the country. But if the monsoon current continues reaching Pakistan with rains in the cotton belt – southern Punjab and Sindh – then it can adversely affect the crop yield. The extreme weather events with high temperatures, erratic or intense rains and droughts mean Pakistan immediately needs to work on adjusting crop pattern so that it can secure future needs and achieve sustained food security.

WB report reveals Pak's poverty rate surges to 39.4%

ISLAMABAD (INP): World Bank report reveals Pakistan's poverty rate surges to 39Pakistan's poverty rate surges Pakistan is facing a big challenge, poverty rates are rising, and they're soaring high at 39.4%! Just last year, it was at 34.2%. This means that almost 95 million people in Pakistan are struggling with poverty, with around 12.5 million being pushed below the poverty line.

The World Bank, an important organization that helps countries with their money matters, is worried. They're saying that Pakistan's way of developing its economy hasn't been working well. There are several reasons for this. Pakistan is dealing with problems like rising prices for things we need, like food and electricity.

Also, there are big climate issues, like floods and droughts, making life even harder. But there's more. Pakistan is also facing a "silent" problem in its schools and healthcare. Many kids aren't growing well because they're not getting enough good food. They're not learning as much as they should, and sadly, many children are getting sick and passing away too soon. This is very sad and something needs to change.

The World Bank has some suggestions to help Pakistan. They're proposing a big 10-year plan to fix the economy. One of the ideas is to collect more taxes from agriculture and businesses. They also want to make sure taxes are fair. Right now, some people don't pay as much tax as they should, and this is

causing problems. The World Bank thinks that if they change this, Pakistan's economy will start to look brighter.

If Pakistan makes these changes, there could be some big benefits. They might save a lot of money and get more income. They could also get more money from taxes on land and farming. Plus, if they improve their trade rules, they could sell more things to other countries, which means more jobs and money.

The World Bank is saying that Pakistan needs to make these changes quickly. They say that if Pakistan can catch up with other similar countries in terms of education and healthcare, the economy could grow by a huge 32%. That's like a big leap forward!

22 NAB references restored

RAWALPINDI (PPI): The Rawalpindi Accountability Court has restored 22 NAB references which will be heard on Monday (Sept 25), reported 24NewsHD TV channel on Saturday.

After the NAB amendments were declared null and void by the Supreme Court, the Rawalpindi Accountability Court restored 22 NAB references in compliance with the SC order. The

accused involved in all the references have been summoned on Sept 25 after issuing notices.

During the court hearing on Saturday, the NAB prosecutor said that the accused who quashed their cases from jail, would be sent to Adiala Jail again. He told the court that 8 accused would be charged, adding that all the mudarba, fake housing references and corruption cases

were restored. Accountability Court Judge Raja Qamar Zaman accepted the request to reopen the NAB references.

The court was informed that its summons for accused involved in 22 references are being delivered to the respective police stations today. However, the court instructed that compliance on the summons by the accused should be made today.

Murder of Sikh leader

(Continued from Page 1)

He said thousands of Kashmiris had been killed and women were raped, besides the extrajudicial killing of the innocent people. To another question, he said of around 5 million refugees in Pakistan, some 2.8 million were legal and the rest were without any legal document. Therefore, the government had decided to repatriate them and administrative intervention was being made for the purpose.

The prime minister rubbished the notion of an isolated Pakistan and said during his interactions with the world leaders, they had found growing interest of the world in Pakistan. He also highlighted his engagements on the sidelines of the UNGA session.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that bringing economic stability in the country was the foremost priority of the government and in this regard a comprehensive economic revival plan was in force.

He said assisting the process of elections was one of the prime duties of the government. "We will be assisting and supporting the process, and while doing so really try to focus on the economic revival plan. That is the biggest challenge." In an interview

with the US based weekly magazine Newsweek here on Friday, the prime minister pointed out that the caretaker government was deeply concerned about the situation of stability. "At the moment, it's pretty much under control. It's something which we fully and lawfully monitor, and we are in charge to pull all the strings when it comes to stability."

With respect to Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, he said it would take some time to get relations with the neighboring Afghanistan's de facto government better. "It'll take a bit of time, but we are quite confident that we will be able to manage that." "We do have a larger perspective and outlook on the whole of the region. But these day-to-day events do mire and complicate our relationship at times. But we're trying to manage it in a manner which is mutually beneficial to both sides," he added.

Responding to a question regarding the US' attention in South Asian region, PM Kakar said as a Pakistani and someone coming from that region, he would be very much baffled if that region was being ignored or if it deserved less attention by the United States, because this was where actually lot of things were happening. "A population of around 3 to 4 billion resides in that region.

How do you ignore 4 billion people? How do you pay less attention to 4 billion people out of 8? Almost half of humanity resides there."

He said there were potential conflicts in those areas. "It would be very stingy on my part not to mention Kashmir, because it is a flashpoint between two nuclear states. God forbid, if there is any sort of military confrontation between the two nuclear powers, how would that translate to the region? How would that translate outside the region? What sort of implications would it have for the European continent? What implications will it have across the planet into North America and the rest?." The prime minister expressed his concerns over the entire so-called "Indo-Pacific" policy of the Western Hemisphere via the encirclement of a regional power around the South China. "We do view it and we are closely monitoring all the developments."

"The so-called Indo Pacific strategy is done for the objectives which suit Western powers...so, there is an element of concern and there is a legitimate sense of caution on the Pakistani side, and we are closely monitoring that...and we are trying to do our own preparedness to respond to such a challenge," he added.