

Credentials presented

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to Denmark Shoaib Sarwar has presented his credentials to Her Majesty Queen of Denmark, Margarethe 2 on Friday (September 22) in Copenhagen. Ambassador Sarwar, before his appointment as Ambassador to Denmark, served at Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad as Joint Secretary, a press release received here on Sunday said.

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Istanbul: Minister of National Defence Türkiye, Defence Minister of Pakistan Lt. Gen. (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi with commissioning crew onboard newly commissioned PNS BABUR.

1st Pak Navy MILGEM Ship PNS BABUR: Commissioning ceremony organized

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Commissioning ceremony of 1st Pakistan Navy MILGEM Ship PNS BABUR was held at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, Turkey. Minister of National Defence Türkiye Mr. Yasar Güler and Defence Minister of Pakistan Lt Gen (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder graced the occasion as Chief Guests. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi also attended the ceremony.

While addressing on the occasion, Turkish Defence Minister termed the brotherly Pakistan-Turkiye relations as exemplary and acknowledged the potential for further collaboration in the field of defence production.

He lauded the efforts and remarkable work done by Istanbul Naval Shipyard and M/s ASFAT (Turkish Firm). He also thanked the Govt of Pakistan and Pakistan Navy for exceptional support during recent devastating earthquakes at Turkey.

During his address,

Defence Minister of Pakistan admired the collaboration of Ministry of Defence Production Pakistan, Ministry of National Defence of Türkiye, M/s ASFAT and Pakistan Navy for synergized efforts to make the project a success and congratulated all teams on successful commissioning of 1st MILGEM Ship.

He added that relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye is unique because of deep rooted historical ties between the two brotherly countries, hence cooperation shall continue in future as well.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi underlined that PN MILGEM Ships fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors will play a key role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

He expressed his gratitude for enhanced collaboration in defence production especially in Maritime domain between the two countries. The Admiral stated that in line with Govt

Policies, Pakistan Navy has adopted indigenization of platforms and hence it is very satisfying to see modern warships being built in collaboration with brotherly country Türkiye.

PN MILGEM Class ships are the most technologically advanced and state-of-the-art surface platforms being constructed for Pakistan Navy. The ships will be fitted with latest Command & Control Systems including modern weapons and sensors.

The contract for construction of 04 MILGEM Class ships for Pakistan was signed between Ministry of Defence Production, Pakistan and M/s ASFAT in 2018. Under the project, two ships are under construction at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, while the other two are being constructed at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works.

The ceremony was attended by high level Civil & Military dignitaries from Türkiye and Pakistan and officials of Istanbul Naval Shipyard.

Apex Court demand to expedite trials



ISLAMABAD (APP): The father of murdered Noor Muqadam, former ambassador Shaukat Muqadam and father of Sarah Inam, the other victim of brutal physical violence that caused her death, Inam-ur-Rahim on Sunday besieged the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) to expedite the trial of their daughters' murders to serve justice for the innocent.

Sara Inam's father Inam-ur-Rahim and Noor Moghadam's father, former Ambassador Shaukat Muqadam held a press conference here at the National Press Club flanked by social workers to apprise the media and flag an appeal to the Apex Court for justice for their daughters.

Ambassador (R) Shaukat said Sarah Inam was killed in a very painful way, adding, "After this incident, me and my wife went to Inam Sahib's house. We knew the pain these people were going through. We approached the courts for justice but a lengthy trial followed."

He said during the trial of Noor Muqadam it was claimed that it was an open and shut case, and we were told that there would be a fair trial. He added that on February 24, 2022, my

daughter's killer was sentenced to death.

"The case went to the High Court and Noor's killer (Zahir Jafer) was sentenced to death twice, Chief Justice Amir Farooq sentenced Zahir Jafer capital punishment and upheld his punishment. Now my daughter's case is pending in the Supreme Court," Shaukat Muqadam said.

"It is requested that the Supreme Court should hear this case as soon as possible," he urged.

He said that if such cases were lingered on for years then the public will lose their confidence in the system.

He emphasized that a message should be sent and would be conveyed in the society through the supremacy of law. Shaukat Muqadam also requested the SCP to hear Sarah Inam's case so that she could get justice. "These girls wanted to do a lot in the society. Fifty percent of Pakistan's population is women, it is not like women sit at home. It is not possible that fifty percent of the country's population will be left behind," he said.

Noor Muqadam's father wept during the press conference as he was unable to control his emo-

tions while expressing his view before the media. He added that Sara Inam was not safe in her husband's house.

Sarah Inam's father, Inam-ur-Rahim said that a day earlier on September 23, it was a year since my daughter passed away.

He said that he had never thought that such an accident would happen, adding, "my daughter was an innocent and simple girl who used to saw everything at its face value."

He added that the behaviour of Shahnawaz (Sarah's husband) to her daughter was revealed to him by her friends. "We did not know anything about this family except Ayaz Amir (Shahnawaz's father). Shahnawaz wanted to extort money from my daughter," he alleged.

Inam-ur-Rahim added that the police had investigated this case in detail and extended his gratitude to the police for supporting him in this case.

"The opposing counsel tried hard to prolong the case. Witnesses used to come to the court, but our opposing counsel did not come to the court. I was told that the judge cannot compel the lawyer to come to the court," he said.

Soldier martyred in Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (PPI) A soldier of Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom in an intelligence-based operation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district Mir Ali, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement late Saturday night.

According to army's media wing, an intense exchange of fire took place between the troops and terrorists in Mir Ali where the soldiers effectively engaged with the terrorists. However, during an intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Shakil Shafiq fought gallantly and embraced martyrdom.

"Locals of the area appreciated the operation," the ISPR said, adding that sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. On September 20, the security forces killed a terrorist in an intelligence-based operation conducted in the general area of Kulachi of Dera Ismail (DD) Khan District, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

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

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

Israeli normalization deals will fail

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi said in a US television interview on Sunday that US-sponsored efforts to normalize Israeli relations with Gulf Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, "will see no success".

In an interview with CNN, Raisi also said Iran had not said it does not want nuclear inspectors from the United Nations' nuclear watchdog in the country. Raisi said Iran has no issue with the U.N. nuclear watchdog's inspection of its nuclear sites, days after Tehran barred multiple inspectors assigned to the country.

Israel has moved closer to the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco following a U.S.-driven diplomatic initiative in 2020 which pushed for normalization of relations.

Establishing ties with Saudi Arabia - home to some of Islam's holiest sites - would be the grand prize for Israel and change the geopolitics of the Middle East. Commenting on Iran's nuclear programme, Raisi said: "We have announced time and time again that the use of nuclear weapons, the use of weapons of mass destruction in general, do not have a place. Why? Because we don't believe in it, nor do we have a need for it."

The Frontier Post

JUI-F opposes winter polls

LAHORE (NNI): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) Secretary General Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari said everyone should be held accountable without any discrimination. Talking to media on Sunday, the JUI-F leader said that elections should not be held in winter as it would be difficult for the people living in mountainous areas to cast votes in the harsh weather conditions.

UNGA Session: Kakar vociferously spells out Pak's views

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has emphatically conveyed Pakistan's views on key regional and global issues, during his recently concluded five-day visit to New York, where he addressed the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, besides holding sidelines meetings with the world leaders.

Contrary to the impression created by a section of media regarding the prime minister's visit, the successfully marked visit drew immense interest among the world leaders and governments representatives who harken to the prime minister's forthright viewpoints which were broadly highlighted by the international media.

The visit was also marked with prominence amidst Canadian prime minister announcing Indian state's role behind a gruesome murder of Khalistan Sikh leader in Canada.

In New York, PM Kakar told the world leaders about 'India's rogue behaviour' which vindicated Pakistan's persistent stance about alarming rise of extremists ruling saffron junta of RSS-inspired BJP whose religious fanatics are not only hell bent upon persecuting the minorities in India, but also the growing Hindu supremacist trend poses an existential threat to the regional and global peace.

The prime minister's views were acknowledged by his diverse audience as the Western countries voiced their concerns over the Indian state sponsored murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh leader and Canadian citizen after the irrefutable evidences keep emerging.

The prime minister mentioned Kashmir, Islamophobia, financial inequality, Covid triggered inflation, climate change, peace in Afghanistan, UN role and reforms, and terrorism issues, in his address to the UNGA session.

Being the first interim prime minister to represent Pakistan at the world body, Kakar held important discussions with Iranian President, UN Secretary General, Chinese Vice President, President of Uzbekistan and heads of different financial institutions on the sidelines of the UNGA 78.

In a bilateral meeting with President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi, the caretaker prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to further strengthen and deepen ties with the brotherly country.

Caretaker PM Kakar and Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, on the sidelines of the UNGA session, expressed their firm commitment to continue working together to realize CPEC's shared objectives.

The prime minister and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in the bilateral discussions, reiterated their commitment to promote regional economic integration and resolved to play an active role for inter-regional connectivity.

He also met United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and briefed him on India's ongoing human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In a meeting with International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, the prime minister apprised her of various measures taken by the Government of Pakistan to stabilize and revive the country's economy.

The prime minister also addressed high level dialogue on Global Development Initiative (GDI) and highlighted the need for adequate financing. He called for action in key areas to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan support to China's Global Development Initiative (GDI) that focused on cooperation and partnerships and addresses such issues as extreme poverty, food security and climate change.

In Climate Ambition Summit 2023, the caretaker PM urged the world to extend financial and technical support to developing countries like Pakistan to help them achieve ambitions on climate change.

While in his candid views, in a high level meeting on prevention of global pandemics, pre-

paredness and response, the prime minister underlined the need that scientific research should be put at the disposal of all humanity, ensuring access to all the scientific breakthrough or discovery which was essential to save human lives, irrespective of the intellectual property rights.

The caretaker prime minister also met Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session, and discussed polio eradication, gender equality, nutrition, and financial inclusion.

Besides, he met with Association of Physicians of Pakistani-descent of North America (APPNA), U.S. Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) and CEO of Rio Tinto Group Jakob Stausholm.

During his interviews with various US think tanks and media outlets, the prime minister elaborated interim government's economic revival plans, political, social, regional and global issues and the arrangements for the upcoming general elections in the country.

Israel's military said it conducted "counterterrorism activity" in the camp, dismantling an operational command centre equipped with computers and surveillance cameras and uncovering dozens of explosive devices and bomb-making components.

"During the activity, suspects opened fire and hurled explosive devices at the forces, who responded with live fire. Hits were identified," the military said in a statement, adding that an Israeli soldier was moderately wounded.

Hamas, which has been extending its reach away from its base in Gaza and into the West Bank, said one of the men who were killed, 21-year-old Osaid Abu Ali, was a member of its armed wing.

The family of the other man, 32-year-old Abdel-Rahman Abu Daghash, said he had stepped on to the roof of his house to observe what was going on when he was killed by a sniper.

"He went up to the rooftop to film the ambulances. He barely had the chance to look and the sniper targeted him," said his brother Mo'men Abu Daghash. "He has nothing to do with it and he has kids and his wife is about to give birth."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Violence in the West Bank has raged for more than a year, with stepped-up Israeli military raids, increased settler assaults on Palestinian villages, and a spate of Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

In the Nur Shams camp, residents took stock of rubble-strewn roads and buildings damaged during an operation that witnesses said lasted around six hours.

The military said special engineering vehicles dug up roads in the camp, uncovering a large number of concealed bombs and setting off at least one roadside bomb.



DENMARK: Pakistan's Ambassador to Denmark Shoaib Sarwar before presenting his credentials to Queen of Denmark, Margarethe II.

J&K never be a part of India: Pak Counselor

NEW YORK (NNI): Pakistani Counsellor Saima Saleem has categorically said that Jammu and Kashmir has never been a part of India and nor it will be.

She stated this in a right of reply to India during the General Debate of High-Level Week of the 78th Session of the General Assembly.

Saima Saleem said the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir will be determined by its people through an UN-supervised plebiscite as per Security Council's resolutions.

She said India accepted the Security Council resolutions. It is obliged to implement them under Article 25 of the UN Charter. It has failed to do so, through fraud and force.

The Counsellor said Instead, India has sought to suppress the Kashmiri demand for their right to self-determination and freedom, by imposing a cruel occupation. She said since 1989, over a hundred thousand Kashmiris have been killed.

Saima Saleem recalled that on 5 August 2019, India gave up all pretence and announced the annexation of Jammu and Kashmir. It enlarged its occupation army to 900,000, imposed a complete "lockdown", turning the beautiful Valley of

Kashmir into the largest open-air prison in the world.

The entire Kashmiri population is the victim of India's brutal tactics.

She further said that information blackout has been imposed by closing media houses and charging independent journalists with terrorism.

The Counsellor said despite the worst kind of oppression the Kashmiris are facing, they have not given up the demand for freedom from Indian rule. She said India may forcibly occupy the land of Kashmir but it has lost its people forever.

Saima Saleem the second lie is to describe the Kashmiri freedom struggle as terrorism. This is a familiar colonial ploy. Under international law, the Kashmiri resistance to foreign occupation is just and legal. It is India's oppression that is illegal. It is India which must be held accountable for its war crimes and human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Counsellor referred that two reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have documented these crimes and violations. Over a dozen Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have called for the investigation of the human rights violations in

Jammu and Kashmir.

India has consistently denied them access to the occupied territory. She said the third Indian lie is to portray itself as a victim of terrorism. On the contrary, India is a serial sponsor of terrorism. It has perpetrated terrorism against each one of its immediate neighbours. Now, India's terrorist franchise has gone global.

Saima Saleem stressed that Pakistan has solid evidence of Indian sponsorship of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan which has carried out repeated terrorist attacks against Pakistani civilians and military targets.

The BLA - Baloch insurgents - is also financed and operated by India.

The captured Indian spy, Naval Commander Kulbhushan Yadav, has fully enumerated India's terrorist activities in his confession. India must be held accountable for its terrorist activities.

Highlighting plight of the minorities living in India, Saim Saleem said the BJP-RSS government is guilty of imposing a reign of terror, not only against innocent Kashmiris, but also its own 200 million Muslims, two million Christians and millions of Dalits and other "low-caste" Hindus.

India's crimes are well-documented.



Elections to be held on Jan 28, says Wassan

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) senior leader Manzoor Wassan predicted that the general elections will be held in the country on Sunday (January 28).

Manzoor Wassan who is known for his political predictions made a special conversation with the media and workers at his residence in Karachi on Sunday.

Manzoor Wassan predicted that the problems of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan will increase before the general elections.

The PPP leader said the people should be prepared as elections will be held on Sunday, January 28.

He said Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan after seeing the situation and it will be clear in October whether he is returning homeland or not. PPP's Wassan said his party [PPP] will form a government with the power of the people and the process of accountability will continue even after the general election.

Answering a question about accountability, Manzoor Wassan said politicians and bureaucracy as well as others should be held accountable.

48 held over profiteering in city

LAHORE (INP): The price control magistrate, taking action against profiteers, arrested 48 individuals besides registering 55 cases against them in the provincial capital.

In a press statement, Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider said the magistrates checked 1,592 locations and found violations on 132 locations. A total of 53 officers conducted field operations to ensure compliance with government price lists across the city.

Inspections and price monitoring in vegetable and fruit markets would also be closely monitored by officials, the DC said.

Exhibition to be continued till today

KARACHI (NNI): Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi and Central Jail jointly organized art and crafts exhibition based on the artworks of prisoners, seeing the great interest of the public, the exhibition will continue till Monday (September 25) at Ahmed Parvaiz Art Gallery.

President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmed Shah said that the prisoners who created the masterpieces on display on Monday will be among us so that they can share the skill with which they have performed their art.

It should be noted that prominent political and social figures of Pakistan participated in the opening of the exhibition, including Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Speaker Sindh Assembly Agha Siraj Durrani, Caretaker Provincial Interior Minister Brigadier Haris Nawaz, Superintendent of Jail Hassan Schito, PP leader Nasir Hussain Shah, caretaker provincial culture minister Junaid Ali Shah and others are included.

MD visits Karachi Bureau

KARACHI (APP): Managing Director of Associated Press of Pakistan, Muhammad Asim Khichi on Sunday visited the APP Karachi Bureau and held a meeting with the Bureau Chief Abdullah Sarohi and officials concerned.

On the occasion, Bureau Chief Abdullah Sarohi expressed gratitude to the MD APP Asim Khichi for visiting the APP Karachi Bureau.

The MD APP along with the BC APP Karachi also visited news, video news, IT, photo service, admin and accounts sections on the occasion, where he was briefed about the operations of the respective sections.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori presenting shield to the caretaker Federal Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs Shamshad Akhtar at Governor House. —APP Photo

Punjab CM opens Urs celebrations

LAHORE (NNI): A two-day annual Urs celebrations of Hazrat Mian Mir (RA) started on Sunday.

Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Navqi inaugurated and inspected the traditional 'chadar' on the shrine of the great Sufi saint. Special prayers were offered for the development and prosperity of the country and its people, and for peace and stability.

Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Navqi also inaugurated and inspected the Library and Interfaith Dialogue Table. Navqi appreciated the steps taken to promote inter-faith harmony among the citizens.

He also laid the foundation stone of the model Lungar Khana of Hazrat Mian Mir's shrine. On the occasion, an agreement was signed between the Punjab Aqaf Department and the Madina Foundation for the

construction of a model Lungar Khana.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM said the government has made good arrangements to provide the best facilities to the devotees of Hazrat Mian Mir.

"Pilgrims who come to participate in Urs celebrations are our guests and we will take good care of them," Mohsin Navqi added.

Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir, Aamir Mir, member board of revenue, secretary endowments, information secretary, DG Walled City Authority of Lahore, Raut Hilal Committee Chairman Abdul Khair Azad, and religious scholars attended the opening ceremony.

The representatives of Sikh, Hindu, and Christian communities and other officials were also present on the occasion. During the two-day 400th Urs celebra-

tions, religious and spiritual meetings would be held and Ulema would highlight the teachings of the saint. Mehfil-e-Samaa will be held in which renowned "Qawals" will perform. It is pertinent to note that the Urs of Hazrat Mian Mir will be held between the 7th to 8th of Rabi-ul-Awal under the aegis of the Punjab Department.

It is an ancient tradition to start the Urs with diyas and the pilgrims who light diyas come here to offer their prayers. It is said that the prayer of this famous person of the Indian subcontinent had such an effect that it also attracted the Mughal emperor Jahangir to his door. His lineage traces back to Hazrat Umar (May God bless him and give him peace). Mian Mir was also the father-in-law of the eldest son of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

Illegal immigrants to be deported: IGP Sindh

KARACHI (NNI): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar on Sunday directed top police officers to ensure the deportation of illegal immigrants as soon as possible.

This he directed at a meeting of top Sindh police officers held under his chairmanship at Central Police Office Karachi regarding law and order. Additional IG Karachi/Special Branch Khadim Hussain Rind delivered a point-to-point briefing on the ongoing policing measures in the city against illegal immigrants, smuggling, and prevention of street crimes.

The IGP Sindh instructed officials at the meeting that the illegal immigrants should

be deported as soon as possible and comprehensive recommendations should be prepared and sent to the Sindh government with overall measures regarding the illegal immigrants.

He said that the establishment of a joint task force consisting of FIA, Nadra, ANF, and police should also be made a part of the recommendations. The process of allocation of holding centers at different places should also be included in the recommendations regarding the deportation of illegal immigrants.

The IGP Sindh said that there is a declaration of war against street criminals, so the eradication of street criminals must be ensured in all circumstances. He

urged the police to make a weekly progress report on the comprehensive performance of police against street crimes and he would take this report himself.

He said that strict supervision and monitoring of transportation from border areas should be ensured, adding that smuggling through those areas should be stopped in all circumstances by developing strong coordination with the relevant institutions.

The Additional IG Karachi told the meeting that new police teams had entered the field against crimes and adopted a zero-tolerance policy against crimes and criminals, adding no criminal would be spared.

Govt alerts ministries against phishing threat

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The federal government has reportedly issued instructions to all government officials, mandating the use of secure email channels for official communication in response to a new threat posed by hackers.

A communication has been dispatched to all relevant ministries and departments in this regard, outlining the specific risk that certain civil and military

officials may be susceptible to phishing attacks.

The communication provides tips on securing official emails, which include refraining from using weak passwords, regularly changing passwords, avoiding sharing email IDs with unrelated individuals, and utilising personal accounts for official correspondence.

The communication also cautions against the use of official email accounts on

mobile phones, opening emails containing any attached links, responding to suspicious emails or clicking on any links, and emphasises the importance of employing licenced anti-virus software.

Phishing attacks encompass deceptive emails, text messages, phone calls, or websites designed to deceive users into downloading malware or divulging sensitive information and personal data.

Dengue continues to spread its tentacles in Sindh

KARACHI (NNI): Not less than 11 more new dengue cases were reported in Karachi in one day and the number of cases across Sindh has reached 308 this month.

Among the new dengue cases, 3 were reported in East, 1 in Central, 5 in South and 2 in Malir were reported. As per report, in September, the highest number of 248 dengue cases were reported only in Karachi.

Similarly, 31 cases were reported in Hyderabad division and 14 cases in Mirpurkhas while 6 cases were confirmed in Sukkur, 6 in Larkana and 3 in

Shaheed Benazirabad, report revealed.

This year, the virus was confirmed in 1268 people across Sindh and out of total 1029 were from Karachi only. Despite the spread of the dengue virus, fortunately there were no fatalities reported so far.

Malaria patients started increasing in Qamber Shahdaddock Sindh as out of 200 patients at District Headquarter (DHQ) Hospital, 90 have tested positive for malaria.

A doctor confirmed that the number of positive malaria patients has

reached 630 in a week.

However, supply of malaria drug Primaquine to government hospitals could be disrupted.

Only one doctor is available on duty due to which patients are forced to return home because the number of patients is high, complaints a patient.

Patients are also forced to go around hospitals to get medicines including malaria doses.

Patients appealed to the district administration to appoint more doctors as the number of malaria flu patients is high.

LESCO recovers Rs23.55m

LAHORE (APP): The recovery drive of Lahore Electric Supply Company, in collaboration with tehsildars, is under way and, on the 12th day of the campaign, Rs 23.55 million were recovered from 763 defaulters.

A spokesman for LESCO said here on Sunday that Chief Engineer O&M T&G Zafar Iqbal, in collaboration with Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noraz Humayun, recovered Rs 3.83 million from 83 defaulters in northern circle, and Rs 4.37 million from 105 defaulters in eastern circle.

Manager Material Disposal Engineer Anwar Wattoo, with the cooperation of Tehsildar Model Town Rana Irsaal and Tehsildar Cantt Sajaad Qureshi, recovered Rs 3.84 million from 85 defaulters in central circle, and Rs 1.79 million from 46 defaulters in south circle.

Manager Technical Engineer Muhammad Farooq, with the cooperation of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhpura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar, recovered Rs 1.37 million from 57 defaulters in Nankana circle and Rs 2.19 million from 97 defaulters in Sheikhpura circle.

The spokesman said Manager E&S PMU Engineer Abbas Ali, with the collaboration of Naib Tehsildar Kasur, recovered Rs 1.75 million from 128 defaulters in Kasur circle, and with the cooperation of Naib Tehsildar Okara, he recovered Rs 4.41 million from 162 defaulters in Okara circle.

During the recovery campaign, overall recovery of Rs 346.45 million was made from 10,878 defaulters.

In northern circle, recovery of Rs 41.52 million had been made from 1,169 defaulters while in eastern circle Rs 93.91 million had been recovered from 1,410 defaulters. Rs 50.73 million had been recovered from 1,311 defaulters in central circle, whereas Rs 21.22 million from 764 defaulters in south circle, he added.

He said that Rs 16.91 million had been recovered from 677 defaulters in Nankana circle, Rs 34.04 million from 1,076 defaulters in Sheikhpura circle, Rs 64.41 million were recovered from 2,885 defaulters in Kasur circle while Rs 22.71 million were recovered from 1,586 defaulters in Okara circle.

Alert issued for schools after rise in conjunctivitis cases

LAHORE (NNI): In response to the increasing cases of conjunctivitis, the Punjab Education Department issued a province-wide alert for schools.

The department has sent a letter to the education authorities of all districts, instructing them to introduce a special period in schools to educate children about the disease.

Furthermore, the department urged schools to comply with the guidelines provided by the Health Department to prevent the spread of conjunctivitis and to educate students about preventive measures.

Earlier, Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan said that a locally-manufactured injection, which caused vision loss among several patients in Punjab, had been withdrawn from the market and an action has been launched against suppliers and manufacturers.

"The stock of injection has been recalled from the market and stern action has been started against two drug suppliers," health minister said, while addressing a press conference along with Punjab health minister Dr Jamal Nasir in Islamabad.

He added that com-

plaints of vision loss from injection were received from Multan, Kasur, Faisalabad and Sadiqabad.

The minister was of the view that investigation from all the aspects is going on and the health department would also compensate the loss of patients.

"We'll provide best health facilities to patients who lost their eyesight after using the injection," caretaker health minister said.

Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr Jamal Nasir said that the injection is of 100 mg and there are around 14 to 20 patients so far who lost their vision.

CM orders release of irrigational water

KARACHI (NNI): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar taking serious notice of the water shortage at Dhori Minor of Qubo subdivision of Saifullah Magsi Canal has directed the Irrigation dept to release water within 48 hours.

Concerned Irrigation Superintendent Engineer Amjad Jatoti submitted a report to the CM saying that the water shortage in the area of Dhori Minor said that it was a non-perennial Minor and carried water only in Rabi Season, however, some water was

released for drinking purposes.

The report said that during the recent heavy rains abandoned water was released in Dhori Minor, therefore the growers of the area from RD-0-30 planted paddy crops.

The CM directed the concerned Superintendent Engineer to release water in Dhori Minor so that the standing paddy crop of the local growers of RD-0-30 may not turn pale. The CM directed the Irrigation dept to release water and report him.

Appreciation: The caretaker Chief minister appre-

ciated the deputy Commissioner South Intiaz Saryo-led operation against smuggled cloth and said the teamwork of Pakistan Customs, Rangers, and Police produced congenial results.

A joint team of Pakistan Customs, Rangers, and Police led by DC South conducted raids at Cloth Markets in District South and recovered smuggled cloth worth Rs250 million.

He hoped a similar teamwork would be demonstrated in operations against street criminals, drug mafia, and hoarders.

Intending pilgrims to get more facilities

KARACHI (PPI): The intending pilgrims from Pakistan, which will perform Haj in 2024, will get additional facilities as compared to the past years.

This was stated by Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Aneeq Ahmed, as he held a meeting with Saudi Arab's Minister for Haj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, in Riyadh, according to a statement on Sunday. The meeting was held to finalise the arrangements for pilgrims. The meeting was also attended by Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ahmed Farooq.

The Caretaker Federal Minister said that arrangements would soon be

finalised for the lodging, messing, and travelling facilities of the intending pilgrims. He said the flight schedule for the intending pilgrims from Pakistan would soon be finalised. The accommodation facilities for the Pakistani pilgrims will be located near the holiest sites in Saudi Arabia. The Road-to-Makkah project will be launched from other cities of Pakistan apart from Islamabad. He expressed gratitude to the Saudi Arab rulers for providing patronage to the Saudi Ministry for Haj and Umrah for providing the best facilities to the pilgrims.

The Saudi Minister for Haj and Umrah said that his government would extend

maximum cooperation to the pilgrims from Pakistan. He said that new steps had been taken by the Saudi government to facilitate the pilgrims. He said that an unlimited number of private tour operators from 80 countries of the world could now send people to Saudi Arabia.

He said the Saudi government had been thinking about the option of including Karachi and Lahore in the Road-to-Makkah project. The Saudi Haj and Umrah Minister informed the Pakistani delegation that the Road-to-Makkah project was gradually being expanded. He said that he had recently visited Pakistan to finalise Haj arrangements beforehand.



LAHORE: Mr. Khalil George, Federal Minister for Human Rights meets with Ch Shujaat Hussain at his residence in Gulberg. —APP Photo

Whistleblower culture needed to fight corruption: Chairman

KARACHI (NNI): Pakistan needs a whistleblower culture to check the growing corruption and attacks of the economic hitmen of capitalists sitting in corridors of power in shape of so-called politicians, said Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor here Sunday.

He said in the West, especially Europe, the governments encourage whistleblowers in every walk of life so that the insiders detect and warn about any corruption and wrongdoing before it causes too much harm.

He said the whistleblowers are fully protected under the law and they are even given a share from the

money recovered from the corrupt mafias. He said in Pakistan economic hitmen of the capitalist have penetrated the government system and devoured the national economy.

These economic hitmen working in guise of politicians. These so-called politicians sadly have looted the national economy in the periods of all three main political parties: Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The shameful scandal of IPPs, their whooping profit margin and permission to them to send their fat profits outside the country in US dollars have shaken the

whole nation.

He said no doubt the economic hitmen operating under the political cover of the PPP, PML-N and PTI are responsible for the IPPs scam and they should be fully unmasked and dealt as per law. He said it is heartening to know that some lawyers and activists are going to file a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan against the IPPs mega scandal.

He said besides the IPPs scandal with its shameful capacity payment looting, there are petrol, sugar, fertilizer, wheat flour, private banking, Forex and other mafias that have pushed the country to the verge of bankruptcy.

A severe action should be taken against them to save the country from a total economic collapse. He said we take loans also on the behest of these economic hitmen and today about 80 percent of our national budget is spent to pay these loans and their interest. He said sadly Pakistan has become a textbook example of the debt trap. He urged all citizens to become whistleblowers in all sectors of life and complain timely when they see corruption particularly in the sectors, departments and organisations where they work. He said it is our national duty to check corruption and bribery at every level and every walk of life.



Boosting national economy:

Small business traders playing key role: Mayor

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali Sunday said that small business traders are playing a major role in managing the economy and all steps have been taken for the solution of their genuine problems.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting organized by Peshawar Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry after visiting different markets of the city here Sunday. Mayor Peshawar visited different historical markets in the city and met with the shopkeepers.

During this visit, he reviewed the completion and quality of the development works in the markets, the shopkeepers were also informed about their problems. Later, in a meeting with the business commu-

nity, not only solar systems were provided on the spot for the mosques of the markets, but sewing machines for the women of the area and street lights for the markets were also handed over to the business community. Malik Maher Elahi, Haji Shakeel Saraf, Haji Shaikat, presidents and officials of the city's markets and the business community participated in large numbers in the meeting.

On behalf of Mayor Peshawar, he thanked him for ensuring the installation and monitoring of cameras under Safe City, including the maintenance, beautification and decoration of roads and footpaths in markets and green belts.

The business community also immediately approved the further demands placed before the mayor regarding

their respective markets and directed them to solve them by bringing them to the notice of the relevant authorities.

In his address, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali said that just as his father had done record development work for the people of the city while being the Governor, he is also carrying forward the same mission.

He said that the work that the elected provincial assembly members and ministers could not do in their constituencies is being done in the corners of Peshawar city as the mayor. He said that every possible practical work is being done to solve the problems of the people as well as our guardians i.e. the police, whether it is to improve the condition of the police sta-

tions or to increase their efficiency.

All kinds of moral support are being given. He said that the trust reposed in him by the business community will never be violated, the remaining capacity of street lights and cameras in the markets will be completed soon, and solar systems are being installed in the mosques.

There will be an effort to implement the proposal of giving subsidy to the poorest families for solarization by the government, but this is purely the power of the elected provincial government for which efforts will be made.

The business community not only thanked the mayor for his assurance and fulfillment of promises, but also assured them of their full cooperation.

'National Newspapers Readership Day': Information Department issues message

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On 'National Newspapers Readership Day', we celebrate the value of printed news in our lives. In a world increasingly driven by digital media, this day serves as a reminder of the irreplaceable role newspapers play in shaping our society.

In an age of rapid information dissemination, newspapers continue to hold a special place. They provide credible information in an ocean of misinformation. With seasoned journalists and editorial standards, newspapers are an example of truth and accountability.

In a message issued by Information Department on Sunday, 'National Newspapers Readership Day' observed every year on 25th September is an opportunity to salute the editors, reporters, photographers, and countless oth-



ers who work tirelessly to deliver the news to our doorstep every day. Print media serve as a platform for dialogue, debate, and the exchange of ideas, nurturing a sense of national identity.

Today, I would like to address the vital role of a free press in upholding the principles of democracy, particularly in the context of free and fair elections. As the Minister of Information, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of an independent and responsible media in ensuring the integrity of our electoral processes.

In a democratic society, free and fair elections are the cornerstone of a vibrant and accountable government. They provide citizens with the opportunity to voice their preferences and choose their leaders. However, these elections can only be truly democratic with the active participation of a well-informed electorate. The free press plays an indispensable role in safeguarding these democratic principles.

The role of 'All Pakistan Newspaper Society' is very important here and they have been playing a very important role in the development and sustenance of print media in Pakistan. On this occasion of National Newspapers Readership Day, the Government of KP proudly repeats its commitment to a free and vibrant press, thereby safeguarding the tradition of responsible journalism within our province.

Pesco's crackdown continued

PESHAWAR (APP): Crackdown against electricity theft is ongoing in the whole province by PESCO, PESCO Spokesperson said here Sunday.

So far, more than 5,561 Kunds have been removed across the province and more than 1984 cases were filed against electricity thieves, 389 people were arrested.

PESCO spokesperson said. He said 1204 in Peshawar circle, 1105 in Mardan circle and illegal connections have been taken down. Khyber Circle 823, Swat Circle 584, Dera Ismail Khan 514 and Bannu Circle 527 were removed, Spokesperson PESCO said.

Apart from this, a number of poles were also removed in Abbottabad, Swabi and Mansehra circles, Spokesperson PESCO said. Fines of more than Rs. 23.50 million have been imposed so far, he said.

Submission of application to file cases against more than 4768 electricity thieves and PESCO customers can report electricity theft by calling 118, Spokesperson PESCO said.

Scholarships announced

PESHAWAR (APP): Mahboob Medical Institute (MMI), Hayatabad has announced 10 scholarships for deserving and highly talented students in all the academic programs, including DPT, BS MLT, BS Psychology, BS P&O and BS Nursing.

Talking to APP, Chairman Mahboob Medical Institute (MMI) Dr. Mahboob-ur-Rehman disclosed that the management of MMI has decided to play a due role by promoting medical education in the prevailing challenging situation where parents are facing extreme difficulties in educating their children.

"Every educational program in the institute will now have 2 scholarships, i.e. 1 for deserving category and 1 for talent category," Dr. Mahboob informed.

The last date to apply to the scholarship test is September 30, 2023. All the students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may apply. For DPT, 60% and for other courses, 50 percent marks are required in FSc.

Conjunctivitis viral infection reached

PESHAWAR (APP): After Karachi, the Conjunctivitis viral infection reached Peshawar as there are 5 to 6 conjunctivitis patients in every 20 to 25 people who come to the hospitals for eye complaints. Ophthalmologist Jinnah Medical

College Peshawar said here Sunday.

Conjunctivitis is a self-healing infection, antibiotics etc. are not beneficial, Dr. Mahfuz Hussain said, adding, "The affected people should wash their eyes with cold and fresh water

and applying ice packs will reduce the pain."

If the affected person's eyes start to squint, understand that along with conjunctivitis infection, germs have also come, antibiotics can help, Dr. Mahfuz Hussain said.



PESHAWAR: Labours loading relief items in a truck that would be sent to affectees of Jaranwala incident by Secretary Aqaf, Hajji, Religious & Minority Affairs KP Dr. Asad Ali Khan.

Free treatment under 'Sehat Card Plus' continues unabated

PESHAWAR (APP): Despite payment controversies between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP), treatment under the "Sehat Card Plus" program has continued, free-of-charge medical and surgical healthcare services were being provided to patients irrespective of their financial position.

"I was dangling between life and death and not sure about my survival when I faced a heart attack while eating my dinner in Kohat. I felt severe pain in my chest and was rushed to Liaquat Memorial Hospital where doctors gave me initial treatment and immediately referred me to Peshawar for further treatment," said Jamal-ud-Din,

a heart patient of Kohat district while narrating his ordeal to APP.

"The situation was serious and I was out of cash due to the market situation and loss of work in a computer shop. When I was on my way to the hospital in semiconscious condition, my prime concern was how my cash-stripped family would bear the burden of costly treatment events in a public sector hospital," he said.

"However, my worries were evaporated when my family member, who was accompanying me to Peshawar informed me about the free healthcare facilities being provided to needy and poor patients under the 'Sehat Card Plus' which he termed a milestone achievement to help

out patients that are unable to bear financial expenses to treatment."

The SCP program was launched by the previous government under a social protection initiative in December 2015, which initially covered free medical, diagnostic, and surgical treatment of about 50 percent population of the province.

"Treatment under SCP continued in KP despite financial crunch and around 9.7 million families benefited from the incentive costing Rs 30 billion in the second phase," said Dr Riaz Tanoli, Chief Executive Officer, of SCP Program KP while talking to APP.

In the first phase, he said about 2.3 million people availed of free treatment facilities, and Rs six billion

were spent on their medical treatment. The program caters to around one million needy families and has provided free treatment to approximately 2.5 million patients so far. The annual financial implications of the program are about Rs 33 billion, and the government intermittently disburses Rs 2 billion to sustain its operation.

Primarily, the program was launched in Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Chitral districts wherein as many as 1.8 million poor households (approximately 150 million people) were entitled to get free medical treatment up to Rs 540,000 at designated hospitals of the province.

Later in February 2019, the program was extended across the country includ-

ing all districts of Khyber in its second phase with a target to provide free treatment including surgeries and medicines up to rupees one million to each family of over 80 million people at 1000 designated hospitals.

"The program initially covered three percent of the population in four districts in 2015 and later extended to 51pc, 70pc and 100 percent population of the province till November 2019 in three different phases respectively," Dr Tanoli said.

Despite the change of government in KP, he said the program continued unabated including in tribal districts, and the caretaker government had extended support by releasing the allocated funds for the project.

"There is no shortage of funds as the caretaker government in KP has so far released the required amount to SLICP for facilitation and relief of ailing community," he said.

He said that the SCP program was protected through an act passed by the KP assembly and would continue till amendments or abolishing it by the provincial assembly.

"In this period of unprecedented inflation and price hike, it is very difficult for poor and marginalized communities to meet both ends while bearing expenses of costly treatment is considered as a nightmare by those strata that are living below the poverty line," said Dr Naem Khan, a medical professional.

He said, "Prices of medicines are ascending with each passing day so are the treatment, surgical, and diagnostic labs charges."

"Sehat card is a blessing for those who are unable to meet their daily life expenses owing to their meager financial resources," he told that and suggested that the facility must be continued keeping in view the sufferings and poverty of people. "It is relief for those, who are moving from pillar to post to end the sufferings of their beloved ones in this time of unprecedented inflation", he said.

Secretary of Health KP, Mahmood Aslam, has reaffirmed the commitment of the government to provide free healthcare services to all residents of KP. Under the sehat card plus initia-

tive, treatment facilities continue to be accessible to everyone, so that no one is left behind.

"The program has been designed to offer quality healthcare services to all residents, regardless of their economic status," he added.

The Secretary of Health said, "Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan has directed the department to continue the provision of free healthcare facilities under the SCP to ailing humanity."

"As per the CM instructions, the issue of stalled payment of SCP has been addressed and the required funds were released to the partner of the scheme i.e. State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan," he said.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Zafarullah Khan Umer Zai receiving a shield after inaugurating BRT new rout.

PHC rejects MD British petroleum plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court released its detailed judgment dismissing the petition of Dr. Amer Jadoon who held himself out as having served as 'd-Managing Director and General Manager Operations' at British Petroleum, and had applied for post of CEO of KP Oil and Gas Company Limited (KPOGCL).

According to the judgment authored by Justice Attique Shah while the petitioner managed to have

his name approved by the Cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the position of CEO KPOGCL, it was found during the course of background and reference check that that the petitioner never served as 'Managing Director and General Manager Operations' at British Petroleum, and was merely a 'facilities engineer' at British Petroleum.

Accordingly, the offer letter issued to him for the post of CEO KPOGCL was revoked, and the revocation which was under challenge

was upheld by High Court.

Dr. Jadoon was represented by Nouman Muhib Kakakhel whereas the Advocate General Amir Javed represented the Government of KP and Barrister Asad-ul-Mulk represented KPOGCL.

The High Court had issued a restraining order preventing the filling of the post of CEO KPOGCL since February this year and the same was a source of concern for the KP government and KPOGCL.

In addition to dismissing

the petition on merit the High Court also held that a constitutional petition was not maintainable even against public sector company in respect of employment or contractual matters. The High Court clarified that its precedent-judgment reported as 2021 PLC (CS) 711 on which the petitioner was relying has been set aside by the Supreme Court and thus it was the rule set in the Salahuddin case reported as PLD 1975 SC 244 which would be followed.

PDA announces boycott from public services from tomorrow

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Doctors Association Sunday announced a boycott of elective services across the province including Peshawar from Tuesday (September 26).

In this connection an emergency meeting of the Provincial Doctors Association was held regarding the approval of demands by taking the decision of the

boycott of the public services. A schedule has been released for doctors' protests in government hospitals during the meeting.

There will be a protest in Hayatabad Medical Complex on Tuesday, September 26, a decision was taken in the meeting similarly, the protest demonstration at Lady Reading Hospital on

Wednesday, September 27, and at Khyber Teaching Hospital on Thursday, September 28.

The boycott of elective services will continue during the protests of doctors in government hospitals, the decision was taken in the meeting. All TMOs and House Officers are informed to be part of the protest during the boycott,

the meeting decided.

In case the demands are not met, the scope of the protest will be spread from teaching hospitals MTI to peripheral hospitals where duty will be boycotted and site-in will be held on the streets. Doctors who are not yet part of the organizing protest are also invited to participate, the meeting decided.

Skyrocketing inflation, insecurity hit business

PESHAWAR (INP): Inflation and insecurity have robbed Peshawar of business customers, with 70 to 80 percent of businesses in the city affected. Shopkeepers have opened their shops, but customers are non-existent.

Traders say that the recent inflation has hurt business so much that they cannot even pay a day's wages to salesmen. They blame inflation, wrong taxation policies, and other factors for the decline in

business.

The Peshawar Traders Association has appealed to the government to provide relief to businesses, or they will be forced to close down.

The city of Peshawar is the provincial capital of KP, which has been plagued by insecurity in recent years. The province has been a target of terrorist attacks, and the Pakistani military has been conducting operations against militants in the region.

The combination of

inflation and insecurity has created a difficult environment for businesses in Peshawar. Traders are struggling to stay afloat, and many are on the verge of bankruptcy.

The government needs to take steps to address the concerns of the business community in Peshawar. It needs to provide relief to businesses and create a more secure environment for them to operate in. Otherwise, the city will lose more businesses and jobs.

Training for building capacity to promote votes organized

PESHAWAR (APP): A day-long Training of Trainers for "Building the Capacity of Community Women Leaders to Promote Votes without Violence" was organized by PODA organization in Peshawar.

The master training was attended by 10 promising women leaders from the district Khyber including minority representatives, communities

and women heading community based groups, ex-councilors, women journalists, social activists and students.

Dr. Adnan Arshad, Project Manager PODA shared the project overview and said that Violence Against Women in Election (VAWE) is a pervasive challenge in Pakistan that undermine women's equal access to

the democratic process as a voter, candidate, polling staff, polling agents and elected leaders.

He added it is not acceptable that millions of Pakistani women are still considered missing voters because they were not able to get CNIC or register as voters. He urged the trainee women participants to help women register as voters in their districts.

NAB to take briefing

PESHAWAR (APP): National Accountability Bureau and Department of Health decided to take a briefing from the higher authorities for awareness on health related issues.

Secretary Health, Secretary Finance, Secretary Establishment and Chief Executive Officer Health Care Commission, DG Health were summoned to National Accountability Bureau Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for a briefing on September 27.

For the briefing, the procurement procedure for health workers, medicines and other items will be reviewed across the province.

The procedure for local procurement and MCC, procedure for technical evaluation of procured items, role of drug testing laboratory, procedure for storage of procured items would also come under discussion.

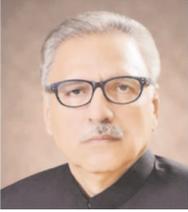
The procedure for the formation of a physical inspection committee for pharmaceuticals, the baseline for the schedule of hospitals' requirements will be considered, the National Accountability Bureau letter issued to the health department said.



NATIONAL NEWSPAPER READERSHIP DAY



M E S S A G E S



Dr. Arif Alvi
President Islamic Republic of Pakistan

I extend my sincere congratulations to all newspaper readers and the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on the occasion of National Newspaper Readership Day. Reading newspapers has a greater educative value as they provide us knowledge and information about the social, economic, and political issues as well as sports, culture and entertainment. They educate the readers about the developments taking place in the national and international arena and broaden the mental horizon of the readers. Besides, newspapers play important role in shaping public opinion and influencing and guiding the decision-makers by providing their input and insight.

It is an established fact that newspapers are effective means of communication and can change perceptions and opinions of the society. So, they should play their role in reformation of society by bringing positive changes and behavioral improvement. The world is facing multiple economic and social challenges, including health issues and the scourge of fake news. In order to address these challenges, newspapers need to educate the readers and raise awareness among them about the social issues such as the growing population, women's rights of inheritance and their socio-economic empowerment, apart from guiding the people about breast cancer and mental health and disability issues. Additionally, the society is facing the dilemma of moral and ethical degradation and it is the responsibility of all means of communication to promote good values, tolerance, mutual respect, brotherhood and unity among the people.

In today's world, fake news is the greatest challenge being faced by the world and it requires the collective efforts of all segments of the society, including media, scholars, writers and religious leaders to discourage the menace of fake news. Furthermore, the journalistic ethics demands to avoid biased reporting and publish news stories with truthfulness, accuracy and impartiality. We must preserve this important source of information that keeps us informed about the important events and developments taking place across the globe.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for their commitment to celebrating National Newspaper Readership Day. I am confident that this initiative will significantly contribute to nurturing the habit of reading among our people, empowering them with the knowledge and insight to make informed decisions for a better future.



Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar
Caretaker Prime Minister

Today, we celebrate the "National Newspaper Readership Day" to recognize the importance and the utility of reading newspapers as a reliable source of news and information. Newspapers have long been a cornerstone of democracy, which provides us with valuable information, diverse perspectives, and a platform for public discourse.

Despite the growth of electronic and digital media, newspapers still play a significant role in creating awareness and educating the people about various economic and social issues. Currently, the world is facing the challenge of fake news. The role of newspapers has become even more important to discourage the spread of fake news. By objective reporting and adhering to the principles of responsible, impartial, truthful, and accountable journalism, newspapers are the best tool to fight disinformation and fake news.

Newspapers also provide an in-depth analyses, investigative reporting, and thought-provoking opinion pieces that contribute to a reasonable understanding of the world around us. The news stories are filed after proper research that are once more filtered through a rigorous editorial check for accuracy before publication. This feature distinguishes newspapers and make the print medium more credible source of information.

On this special day, I would like to express my gratitude to all the journalists, editors, and newspaper staff who work tirelessly to bring us the news every day. Their dedication to the pursuit of truth and their commitment to upholding the principles of journalism are commendable.

I encourage my fellow citizens to support the newspaper industry through subscription to newspapers. Through this gesture, we would not only gain access to reliable sources of information but would also contribute to the sustainability of this important institution of our society.

I deeply appreciate the remarkable initiative of the All Pakistan Newspaper Society to celebrate 25 September as the National Newspaper Readership Day.



Murtaza Solangi
Caretaker Minister of Information & Broadcasting

I feel honoured to congratulate the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on declaring 25th September as the National Newspaper Readership Day which is certainly indicative of the priority that the industry accords to the newspaper readership. I am of the opinion that in the era of fake news and after the advent of social media, the newspaper readership has attained even more importance for authentic reporting. If put in comparison with other media of information, the print media still possesses unequivocal significance in terms of the veracity of information and news.

With the advent of social media, it was speculated that newspapers would become obsolete and redundant. However, with the dissemination of fake news and misinformation, newspapers became more important and relevant than ever, because the print media is based on facts, and the newspapers still have the system of editorial control to check fake news.

In addition to fake news and the storming of social media, the electronic media, too, is scrambling for breaking news and complaints of providing and promoting fake news with little factuality. Therefore, I believe that the habit of newspaper reading should be instilled in our people once again. Taking recourse to history, the newspaper echoed the voice of our people that imbued the spirit of freedom and independence which eventually culminated in the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. Those newspapers were at the forefront to fight for our independence and helped to unite the nation towards the single aim of achieving our separate homeland. Today, I take pride in stating that our newspapers have grown and developed themselves over the years, and can stand any competition whatsoever, with any international newspapers across the globe.

On behalf of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, I appreciate the efforts of the APNS for observing the National Newspaper Readership Day in acquainting the nation with the significance of newspaper reading. There is no gainsaying that the newspapers are a source of reliable and authentic information in an era of massive proliferation of fake news and it is encouraging to see that the newspapers have upheld their authenticity, credibility, and reliability, despite the advent of digital media. Moreover, the newspapers also helped in effectively putting Pakistan's stance across the globe. Lastly, I reiterate the Government's resolve to promote freedom of expression and urge the print media fraternity to join hands with the Government to develop an educated and enlightened nation.



Mohsin Naqvi
Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab

Newspapers are the most authentic source of accurate information, and therefore have been, are, and will remain an important part of every society. The importance of newspapers in raising public awareness is unquestionable.

Newspapers have played a pivotal role in every society in promoting free democratic values. In the Pakistan Movement, newspapers played a crucial role in raising awareness among the people of the importance of a separate homeland.

In developed societies, newspapers are still printed and sold with great enthusiasm. The habit of reading newspapers has declined in the digital age, but it cannot be completely eradicated. Newspapers provide easy and affordable access to accurate and authentic information. Despite the rise of electronic and digital media, newspapers remain a great source of information for readers.

By reading newspapers, one can gain awareness of various economic and social issues. Reading newspapers also expands the reader's exposure to language and vocabulary.

Newspapers are the most authentic source of accurate information, therefore newspapers were, are and will remain an important part of every society. The importance of newspapers for raising public awareness is unquestionable. Newspapers have played an unforgettable role in every society for the promotion of free democratic values. In Pakistan movement, newspapers played an important role in raising awareness of the importance of a separate homeland among the people. In developed societies, newspapers are still being printed and sold with full gusto. The habit of newspaper reading, has diminished in the digital age, but it cannot be eradicated by any means. Newspapers provide easy and affordable access to accurate and authentic information. Despite electronic and digital media, newspapers are still a great source of information for readers. By studying newspapers one gets awareness of various economic and social issues. The reader's access to the language and vocabulary is also widened by reading newspapers.



Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar
Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for celebrating National Newspaper Readership Day, highlighting the importance of newspaper readership in the country. National Newspaper Readership Day is an extremely relevant day to establish and promote the habit of reading in Pakistan. In this digital age and time, one cannot deny the importance of newspapers as they provide us with news with facts and information with sources. The Government of Sindh wholeheartedly supports the National Newspaper Readership Day and urges the entire nation to develop a habit of reading newspapers and checking facts before falling prey to fake news and rumors. Let's just join hands for this cause of combating fake news. We should also instill the habit of reading newspapers in our children as well so that they grow up to become responsible and socially aware citizens of Pakistan. With this, I would like to once again appreciate the step taken by APNS and acknowledge their efforts for the said cause. Here's wishing to celebrate National Newspaper Readership Day for years and years to come.



Muhammad Azam Khan
Caretaker Chief Minister KP

It is a shatter of pleasure that the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) has declared 25th September as "National Newspaper Readership Day"; and has been celebrating the day since 2019 for which it deserves appreciation.

The initiative will help highlight the importance of newspaper readership, and promote the habit of reading in the country which is, unfortunately, declining due to the mushroom growth of social and digital media. Social and digital media have changed the very dynamics of communication and dissemination of information, resulting in manipulated and out-of-context messages, news, and information, causing fears, conflicts, and controversies.

In view of the above facts, the relevance of Print Media can hardly be underestimated. The new media might have brought about revolution, but the Print Media still remains the most credible and authentic source of information when it comes to disseminating news and information. Promotion of reading habits among citizens will effectively, combat the challenges posed by the unchecked onslaught of fake news.

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa firmly believes in the fundamental and constitutional right of freedom of the press and considers an independent and free media absolutely imperative for a developed and civilized society.

We also believe that without freedom of the press and ensuring people's right to know, our cherished goal of a strong and democratic Pakistan cannot be materialized.

I appreciate the initiative of the APNS, and I am confident that celebrating this day would encourage more and more people to opt for reading and have a shared understanding of issues of national importance.



Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki
Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan

We are living in a dynamic world, which is, at the pinnacle of the technological advancement where mobile phone has replaced number of things that used to be integral part of everyone's daily life.

In addition to affecting variety of other things, the latest technological innovations have caused a dramatic fall in newspaper readership, one of life's essential necessities.

It has becoming more challenging to distinguish between true, credible and factual reporting and misinformation falsehood with the introduction of new trends in digital media.

The rapid development of social media and technology, particularly widely available mobile phone technology, unfortunately, has led to a significant fall in newspaper readership.

The phoney and negligent social media platforms have filled the void left by the decline in newspaper readership and accurate reporting of events, wreaking havoc on society. The general public needed to be made acutely aware of the sensitive nature of the problems that were putting the entire society in danger.

The All Pakistan Newspapers Society deserves praise for picking up the reins and embarking on a protracted campaign to revive the once-common practise of newspaper reading.

I appreciate the efforts of APNS for the revival to the newspaper readership habits. However, it is our collective responsibility that we need to encourage and educate our people about developing reading habits as it contributes greatly towards the intellectual development of the nation.

I commend APNS for honouring "National Newspaper Readership Day" in order to educate the public about the value of reading newspapers on behalf of the Balochistani government. Newspapers are unquestionably a source of trustworthy and accurate information in a time when fake news is widely disseminated.

To mark the occasion, I call upon every segment of the society to contribute to APNS's noble cause and help spread the habit of reading newspapers.

Instead of relying on phoney and irresponsible news, let's turn to real, thoroughly researched, and well-informed content.

I sincerely hope that our serious attempts to revive newspaper reading habits would put an end to the fierce rivalry of false information and fake news.

Crucial Role of Newspapers in Combating Fake News & Upholding Democracy

Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan stands as a beacon of hope, guaranteeing fundamental freedoms that underpin a thriving democracy. It highlights the rights to freedom of speech, expression, and a free press, safeguarding these rights against reasonable restrictions imposed by the law. This provision constitutes the bedrock upon which the democratic edifice of Pakistan stands, allowing its citizens to be well-informed and active participants in the nation's growth.

Article 19-A of the constitution further strengthens the right to information. It affirms that every citizen shall have the right to access information on all matters of public importance, subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by the law. Together, these constitutional provisions underscore the critical role of newspapers and journalism in a democratic society.

The cornerstone of a robust and vibrant democracy lies in the unfettered freedom of expression and a free press. Independent newspapers with unwavering editorial policies and steadfast adherence to journalistic ethics play an indispensable role in strengthening the democratic fabric of any nation. The significance of newspapers has become even more prominent in the face of the recent proliferation of digital media platforms and social networking

sites, many of which grapple with issues of credibility, truthfulness, and relevance in the dissemination of news and information.

Newspapers, in particular, occupy a unique and irreplaceable space within a democratic system. They serve as catalysts for constructive debate, offering a platform for diverse segments of society to voice their opinions on matters of political, economic, religious, social, and other policy concerns. In a media landscape comprising television, radio, print, and online sources, newspapers have established themselves as paragons of accurate and robust reporting, independence, and accountability.

Intergraf, a prominent European printing industry association, underscores the democratic importance of printed newspapers within the European Union. Printed newspapers reach an estimated 30% of people in the EU-27, encompassing more than 130 million individuals. This outreach ensures the participation and informed decision-making of all citizens in public debates and elections, preserving their right to choose how they consume news and information.

In a democracy, principles such as the rule of law, citizens' rights, fair and free elections, and the protection of individual rights can only be upheld and safeguarded through a free press. Newspapers also serve as

educators for voters, providing them insights into politics, parties, politicians, and their policies so the citizens can make well-informed and well-thought decisions. This becomes even more important in view of our own general elections scheduled for January 2024.

Journalists employed by newspapers possess a formidable array of skills, including research acumen and critical thinking. The best journalists know which questions to ask, which leads to pursue, and how to rigorously fact-check their findings. Another pivotal role of a free press is to serve as a watchdog over governments and powerful institutions, exposing instances of corruption and violations of human rights a duty that is indispensable for the health of democracy.

The enduring confidence expressed by readers in the factual content of newspapers underscores their continued relevance, even in the digital age.

According to the Eurobarometer survey on fake news and disinformation, the traditional media including print, television and radio remains the most trusted source of news at 60%+ for each media. In contrast, online sources of news are the least trusted at 26%.

In an age dominated by social media, where misinformation and sensationalism often run rampant, newspapers stand as bastions of authenticity, well-researched reporting, and fact-

based journalism. They adhere to rigorous editorial standards and invest in thorough investigations, ensuring that the stories they publish are backed by verifiable facts and statistics. This commitment to accuracy and reliability not only bolsters democracy by providing citizens with trustworthy information but also contributes to the de-



velopment of a more informed and responsible society. In the battle against fake news, newspapers remain a beacon of truth, serving as a vital counterbalance to the unchecked spread of misinformation on social media platforms.

Research conducted over the last four years by the European E-Read on the impact of digitalization on reading practices, known as the Stavanger Declaration, suggests that detailed and research-based stories in newspapers offer superior benefits for comprehension,

and critical thinking compared to reading from screens. The transition from paper to digital is not neutral; comprehension and concentration are often stronger when reading from paper, particularly when time constraints apply.

Furthermore, a meta-study involving 54 studies with over

170,000 participants indicates that comprehension of long-form informational text is consistently more effective when read on paper than on screens. Reading newspapers, whether in print or digitally, has far-reaching effects beyond mere information consumption, including fostering mental focus, patience, discipline, enhancing linguistic knowledge, and contributing to personal well-being.

Newspapers, as the oldest mass communication medium, have the unparalleled ability to reach a wide audience, regard-

less of income or educational background. They have traditionally served as invaluable sources of information about local, regional, national, and international events. Beyond merely presenting facts, newspapers excel at interpreting and explaining complex issues, offering readers a nuanced understanding of various topics.

Newspapers also play a vital role in raising public awareness. They have been instrumental in educating the masses on health, commerce, education, social responsibilities, public safety laws, environmental concerns, hygiene, labor rights, disaster management, and civic issues. Newspapers have consistently defended citizens' rights, especially during times of military dictatorship or civilian government challenges.

Beyond their role in information dissemination, newspapers facilitate social activities, such as matrimonial and personal advertisements, becoming an indispensable part of daily life. Classified advertisements, community announcements, and communal notices constitute significant components of newspaper content. Features on sports, education, campus news, cultural events, music, dance, drama, literature, and fine arts enrich the reading experience, offering comprehensive insights into the happenings in the community.

Modern newspapers offer

space for readers to voice their opinions through letters to the editor sections. This should be considered as the initial example of citizens journalism that allows readers to express their grievances or appreciation concerning reports or incidents within society. Additionally, newspapers inform readers about political activities, new laws, rules, and regulations that impact society.

For students, reading newspapers is particularly advantageous. It exposes them to a wide range of topics, enhances their oratory skills, and fosters active participation in speeches, debates, and conversations. Daily newspaper reading not only broadens students' understanding but also improves their vocabulary and familiarity with various writing styles and reporting techniques, which they may not find through social media news formats.

Given the pivotal role newspapers play in fostering an informed citizenry and preserving democratic values, it is imperative that the government extends its support to print industry by providing special grants, concession on printing paper and material, reasonable advertisements as compared to other communication media as it is the easiest, most accessible and less cost medium for creating awareness in the masses besides providing education, information and entertainment to the citizens.



At least 16 killed in coal mine fire in China



BEIJING (Agencies): At least 16 people were killed in a coal mine fire on Sunday in southwest China's Guizhou province, local officials said.

The fire broke out at the Shanjiaoshu Coal Mine at around 8:10am (0010 GMT), the Panzhou City government said in a notice posted to its website on Sunday night.

"It was preliminarily determined that the conveyor belt caught fire, causing 16 people to be trapped," it added, with no further details on what was damaged or how the fire began.

Emergency personnel extinguished the blaze and temperatures at the site returned to normal, but "after preliminary verifica-

tion, 16 people have no vital signs", the notice said.

The Panzhou City mine is about 3,600 kilometres (2,250 miles) southwest of the capital Beijing.

China — the world's biggest emitter of the pollutants driving climate change — operates thousands of coal mines, even as Beijing has pledged to peak greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

While safety standards in the country's mining sector have improved in recent decades, accidents still frequently plague the industry, often due to lax enforcement of protocols, especially at the most rudimentary sites. Last year, 245 people died in 168 accidents, according to official fig-

ures.

An explosion at a coal mine in Shaanxi province in northern China last month killed 11 people, nine of whom were trapped inside. Another two people managed to make it to the surface before they succumbed to their injuries, according to state media reports at the time.

In February, a coal mine partly collapsed in the remote and sparsely populated Alxa League of the northern Inner Mongolia region after a 180-metre-high (590-foot) slope gave way. Dozens of people and vehicles were buried under a mountain of debris, but authorities did not disclose the final death toll for months. It was only

revealed in June that 53 people had been killed.

In a sign of that incident's severity, Chinese President Xi Jinping at the time ordered authorities to "do everything possible to search for and rescue the missing people... and protect the security of people's lives and property as well as overall social stability".

Authorities deployed hundreds of personnel and over 100 pieces of equipment as part of the rescue operation, according to local government statements.

And in December, around 40 people were working underground when a gold mine in the northwestern Xinjiang region collapsed.

Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan resume Nile dam talks

NAIROBI (AFP): Ethiopia said Saturday it had begun a second round of talks with Egypt and Sudan over a controversial mega-dam built by Addis Ababa on the Nile, long a source of tensions among the three nations.

Ethiopia this month announced the completion of the fourth and final filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, prompting immediate condemnation from Cairo, which denounced the move as illegal.

Egypt and Sudan fear the massive \$4.2-billion dam will severely reduce the share of Nile water they receive and had repeatedly asked Addis Ababa to stop filling it until an agreement was reached.

For years at loggerheads over the issue, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed agreed in July to finalize a deal within four months, resuming talks in August.

Ethiopia's foreign ministry wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the three countries had opened a second round of negotiations in Addis Ababa.

"Ethiopia is committed to reaching a negotiated and amicable solution through the ongoing trilateral process," it said.

Protracted negotiations over the dam since 2011 have thus far failed to bring about an agreement between Ethiopia and its downstream neighbors.

Egypt has long viewed the dam as an existential threat, as it relies on the Nile for 97 percent of its water needs.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, in an address to the UN General Assembly, said that Cairo wanted a "binding agreement" on the filling and operation of the dam.

"We remain in anticipation of our goodwill being reciprocated with a commitment from Ethiopia to arrive at an agreement that will safeguard the interests of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia," Shoukry said.

"It would be a mistake to assume we can accept a fait accompli when it comes to the very lives of more than 100 million Egyptian citizens."

The dam is central to Ethiopia's development plans, and in February 2022 Addis Ababa announced that it had begun generating electricity for the first time.

At full capacity, the huge hydroelectric dam — 1.8 kilometers long and 145 meters high — could generate more than 5,000 megawatts.

Armenians may flee Karabakh, says PM

MOSCOW (Reuters) : Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Sunday the likelihood was rising that ethnic Armenians would flee the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh and blamed Russia for failing to ensure Armenian security.

If 120,000 people go down the Lachin corridor to Armenia, the small South Caucasian country could face both a humanitarian and political crisis.

"If proper conditions are not created for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in their homes and there are no effective protection mechanisms against ethnic cleansing, the likelihood is rising that the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will see exile from their homeland as the only way to save their lives and identity," Pashinyan said in address to the nation.

"Responsibility for such a development of events will fall entirely on Azerbaijan, which adopted a policy of ethnic cleans-

ing, and on the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh," he said, according to a government transcript.

He added that the Armenian-Russian strategic partnership was "not enough to ensure the external security of Armenia".

Last week, Azerbaijan scored a victory over ethnic Armenians who have controlled the Karabakh region since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. An adviser to the leader of the Karabakh Armenians told Reuters earlier on Sunday that the population would leave because they feel unsafe under Azerbaijani rule.

Russia had acted as guarantor for a peace deal that ended a 44-day war in Karabakh three years ago, and many Armenians blame Moscow for failing to protect the region.

Russian officials say Pashinyan is to blame for his own mishandling of the crisis, and have repeatedly said that Armenia, which borders Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia,

has few other friends in the region.

"The government will accept our brothers and sisters from Nagorno-Karabakh with full care," Pashinyan said.

Pashinyan has warned that some unidentified forces were seeking to stoke a coup against him and has accused Russian media of engaging in an information war against him.

"Some of our partners are increasingly making efforts to expose our security vulnerabilities, putting at risk not only our external, but also internal security and stability, while violating all norms of etiquette and correctness in diplomatic and interstate relations, including obligations assumed under treaties," Pashinyan said in his Sunday address.

"In this context, it is necessary to transform, complement and enrich the external and internal security instruments of the Republic of Armenia," he said.

Italy criticizes Germany over migrants



ROME (Reuters) : A German plan to finance charities helping migrants in the Mediterranean causes difficulties for Italy, defence minister Guido Crosetto said on Sunday, as Rome tries to enforce tougher measures to stem the flow of sea arrivals.

Following reports in Italian media, a spokesperson for the German foreign ministry said on Friday that Berlin was implementing a parliamentary financial support programme for both civilian sea rescue and projects on land.

"We have received several applications for funding. The review of the applications has already been completed in two cases," the spokesperson told Reuters, saying the

funding amounted to between 400,000 and 800,000 euros (\$426,000-\$852,160) for each project.

Italy's Crosetto told daily La Stampa that Rome regarded the German move as "very serious", adding his government was instead committed to fighting the human smugglers he said should be treated as "international criminals."

"Berlin pretends not to realise that, in doing so, it causes difficulties to a country that in theory should be a friend," said Crosetto, a senior member of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party.

Germany's foreign ministry said rescuing people at sea is a "legal, humanitarian and moral duty".

Latest interior ministry

data shows over 132,000 migrants have reached Italy by boat so far this year against around 69,000 in the same period of 2022.

On Saturday, charity SOS Humanity said in a statement it would receive around 790,000 euros from the German government.

Italy, which takes a hardline against illegal immigration, said this week it would increase the number of detention centres to hold migrants ahead of their possible repatriation and lengthen the time they could be detained.

The government also ruled they will have to pay to avoid detention while their request for protection is being processed, drawing strong criticism from human rights groups.

Police officer killed in attack in north Kosovo

KOSOVO (AFP): One policeman was killed and another wounded in north Kosovo early Sunday, according to authorities, during an armed attack on a patrol as it approached a blocked road near the border with Serbia.

"As soon as they arrived in the vicinity of the place where the blockade was reported, the police units were attacked from several different positions with an arsenal of firearms, including hand grenades and shoulder-fired missiles," police said in a statement.

Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti was quick to condemn the attack, calling the ambush near the village of Banjska an act of terror-

ism.

"The attackers are professionals with masks and armed with heavy weapons. We condemn this criminal and terrorist attack," Kurti wrote on social media.

"Organised crime with political, financial and logistical support from officials in Belgrade is attacking our country," he added.

Serbian state media outlet RTS later reported that Jarinje and Brnjak border crossings between Serbia and Kosovo have been closed.

An AFP reporter near Banjska said automatic gunfire could be heard hours after the incident, while authorities had sealed off the area.

The incident comes more than a week after talks between the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo centred on improving ties failed to make a breakthrough during EU-mediated negotiations in Brussels.

The EU has been trying for years to resolve the long-running dispute between Balkan neighbours that has soured relations since their war more than two decades ago.

Brussels believed it had broken the logjam by hammering out a plan to normalise ties in March, but since then there has been minimal progress.

The diplomatic stalemate comes as tensions in the troubled north have

been smouldering for months, following the Pristina government's decision to install ethnic Albanian mayors in four Serb-majority municipalities in May.

The move has triggered one of the worst bouts of unrest in the north in years. Demonstrations followed, as well as the arrest of three Kosovar police officers by Serbia and a violent riot by Serb protesters saw more than 30 NATO peacekeepers injured.

Kosovo remains overwhelmingly populated by ethnic Albanians, but in the northern stretches of the territory near the border with Serbia, ethnic Serbs remain the majority in several municipalities.

The tussle in the north is just the latest in a long list of incidents to rock the area since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

That was nearly a decade after NATO forces helped push Serbian troops from the former province during a bloody war that killed around 13,000 people.

Belgrade — along with its key allies China and Russia — has refused to recognise Kosovo's independence, effectively preventing it from having a seat at the United Nations.

During an address to the United Nations General Assembly last week, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic accused the West of hypocrisy. He said its recognition of Kosovo's independence was based on the same justification as Russia's war on Ukraine.



Philippines condemns Chinese 'floating barrier' in South China Sea

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines on Sunday accused China's coast guard of installing a "floating barrier" in a disputed area of the South China Sea, saying it prevented Filipinos from entering and fishing in the area.

Manila's coast guard and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources "strongly condemn" China's instal-

lation of the barrier in part of the Scarborough Shoal, Commodore Jay Tarrila, a coast guard spokesperson, posted on the X social media platform, formerly Twitter.

The barrier "prevents Filipino fishing boats from entering the shoal and depriving them of their fishing and livelihood activities," he said.

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

China claims 90 percent of the South China Sea, overlapping with the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines. Beijing seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and forced fishermen

from the Philippines to travel further for smaller catches.

Beijing allowed Filipino fishermen to return to the uninhabited shoal when bilateral relations were improving markedly under then-President Rodrigo Duterte. But tension has mounted again since his successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, took office last year.

Russia says Karabakh Armenian fighters start giving up arms

NEAR KORNIDZOR, Armenia (Reuters): Russia said that Armenian fighters in the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh had started to give up arms as some humanitarian aid reached the 120,000 Armenians there who say the world has abandoned them after Azerbaijan defeated their forces.

The Armenians of Karabakh, which is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, were forced to declare a ceasefire on Sept. 20 after a lightning 24-hour military operation by the much larger Azerbaijani military.

"The armed formations of Karabakh have begun handing over weapons and military equipment under the control of Russian peacekeepers," said Russia, which has around 2,000 peacekeepers in Karabakh.

Russia's defense ministry said so far six armored vehicles, more than 800 guns, about 5,000 units of ammunition were handed over by the fighters.

Russia said it had delivered more than 50 tons of food and other aid.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it had supplied 28,000 diapers as well as blankets and fuel. An ICRC aid convoy reached the border headed toward Karabakh late on Saturday afternoon, Reuters witness said, the first since Azerbaijan retook the region.

The future of Karabakh and its 120,000 ethnic Armenians now hangs in the balance: Azerbaijan wants to integrate the long-contested region, but ethnic Armenians say they fear they will be persecut-

ed and have accused the world of abandoning them.

Armenians in Karabakh told Reuters that they were essentially besieged in the region, with little food, electricity or fuel — and called on big powers to help them.

Azerbaijan envisages an amnesty for Karabakh Armenian fighters who give up their arms and has said the Armenians can leave the region for Armenia if they want.

Armenia, which lost a 2020 war to Azerbaijan over the region, has set up space for tens of thousands of Armenians from Karabakh, though Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan says he does not want them to leave their homes unless it is absolutely necessary.

US Senator Gary Peters, leading a congressional delegation to the Armenia-Azerbaijan border on

Saturday, said the situation required international observers and transparency from Azerbaijan.

"I think the world needs to know exactly what's happening in there," Peters, a Democrat from Michigan, told reporters. "We've heard from the Azerbaijani government that there's nothing to see, nothing to worry about, but if that's the case then we should allow international observers in to see."

"I think there needs to be some visibility," he said.

Azerbaijan began its "anti-terrorist" operation on Tuesday against Nagorno-Karabakh after some of its troops were killed in what Baku said were attacks from the mountainous region.

The United States said it was deeply concerned by "Azerbaijan's military

actions."

Accounts of the fighting were chilling.

Armenian Karapetyan, an Armenian in Karabakh, said he was now homeless, holding just a few possessions and a photograph of his 24-year-old son who died in 2020, after leaving his home in the village of Kusapat.

"Today we were thrown out into the street — they made us vagabonds," Karapetyan told Armenia A1+, a partner of Reuters.

"What can I say? We live in an unfair, abandoned world. I have nothing to say. I feel sorry for the blood of our boys. I feel sorry for our lands for which our boys sacrificed their lives, and today... I miss the grave of my son."

Thousands of Karabakh Armenians have massed at the airport seeking the protection of Russian peace-



keepers there.

Svetlana Alaverdyan, from the village of Aradjadzor, said she had fled with just the clothes on her back after gun

fighters gripped the village.

"They were shooting on the right, they were shooting on the left — we went out one after another, without taking clothes," she

told Armenia A1+.

"I had two sons — I gave them away, what else can I give? The superpowers resolve their issues at our expense."

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A piece of advice

The World Bank has recently released a report with shocking revelations and eye-opening remarks pushing the entire Pakistani nation to deep anxiety and fears about the economic outlook of the country as well as the future of their coming generation. The World Bank has noted that the poverty rate surges to 39.4 % with almost a 5% increase on a year-on-year basis, posing equal challenges to the survival of the South Asian economy together with its over 240 million masses.

This means that almost 95 million people out of 240 million nation are embattled with poverty, with around 12.5 million already pushed below the poverty line.

The World Bank categorically told the Pakistani leaders and Economists that their way of developing the country's economy hasn't been working well. There are several reasons for that failure including rising prices for essential commodities, oil, gas and electricity together with multiple other natural and manmade phenomena such as global warming, earthquakes, floods and droughts, that made the administrator's job more difficult. Meanwhile, improper and insufficient healthcare and a stagnant education system are silent problems that gradually paralyzed the country over the past decades. There have been some bitter facts for Pakistanis that are hard to believe such as Pakistan's economic model failed in reducing poverty rather the system reversed the gains that were achieved in the past. It said that Pakistan's per capita growth rate was less than half of the growth rate of the rest of the South Asian economies while in the head of human development, the Pakistani nation is equivalent to several Sub-Saharan African countries with the cost appropriately borne by the ill-nourished women, girls and infant health, high child mortality rates, improper education and illiteracy.

Realistically, Pakistani leaders and their economic advisors never came up with the sincere effort to set up the economic foundations of the country on an entirely professional, sustainable and long-term basis without compromising national interests and public well-being. Rather successive governments' policy decisions have always been heavily influenced by the vested interests of political groups, military, national entities, business cartels and other pressure groups in the society, which led to adhocism, interval economic growth, persistent current account deficit, recurrent economic depletion, along with an all-time expanding poverty in the past years.

The World Bank report has exposed the policy's flaws along with putting forth several suggestions to help Pakistan redefine its economic model and revive its growth. The Bank has proposed a big 10-year plan to fix the economy, along with a proposed increase in the tax base by collecting more taxes from agriculture and businesses. Meanwhile, the bank suggested the government a pivotal policy shift in service delivery and social protection system to reduce abnormally high child mortality and increase literacy rates especially girls' education, a reduction in government expenditures along with investment in infrastructure and climate adaptation to benefit the common public.

In fact, the friends of Pakistan, global financial institutions, think tanks and rating agencies have time and again released their economic surveys and research studies regarding world economies highlighting ongoing trends along with the future forecasts that often play a beacon role in sensitizing the world leaders to evaluate their plans to avoid looming disasters. The same has happened in the case of Pakistan, however, Pakistani leaders resolutely pursued their politically motivated policies that neither grasped the economic objectives of the country nor could attract all-out support from the masses. Thus a waste of resources, repeating failures, disapproval from the global community and criticism from the public are the outcomes of seven decades of the political and economic journey of our country. After, all the good suggestions and sane words, only a single phrase of advice has been left for Pakistani Strategists so far, watch your neighbours and copy them, so the persistent disgrace might spare you.

Western alliance against Asian darling

White House Spokesperson, Karine Pierre endorsed Ottawa's claim regarding the killing of a Canadian Sikh in British Columbia, supposedly masterminded by an Indian Diplomat a few months back. Karine expressed deep concern about the plot and informed that Canada and the US are regularly in touch with each other on important issues.

The ongoing India-Canada row has gained worldwide popularity and the cost of the assassination bid of a Sikh leader double down on the Modi regime who was championing the huge dividends attached to fake democracy and secularism in the sole radicle Hindu state in the world. As of now, the entire Western world fully backs Canada and clamped hard on New Delhi, which enjoyed the status of West's Darling after tightening the knot with the United States nearly a decade ago. Realistically, the Modi government and its RSS gangs have squeezed land for Indian minorities in the country, while the notorious Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) with the active support of the Indian diaspora abroad haunts Sikh and Kashmiri freedom activists, political dissents and human rights defenders in other nations particularly London, Brussels, New York and Washington. Ottawa and multiple other destinations to harras and suppress their voices in support of minorities in India.

According to Indian media, the deceased Sikh Canadian citizen was supposedly involved in raising and supporting the Khalistan cause which aims at creating a separate, free and independent state in the heart of Meha-Bharat, that was not acceptable to Hindu rulers in New Delhi. Interestingly, the killing of the Sikh leader cost a heavy political, economic and strategic price to the Modi regime that the RAW anti-dissident operation turned into a global political embarrassment for New Delhi while exposing the draconian face behind the cosmetic blush of India. There is a lot to learn from New Delhi's strategic manoeuvring and hawkish policies of the BJP government that will finally end up under heavy weights of distress and miseries of Indian minorities.

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



For the survivors in Derna, the nightmare has only just begun

Hafed Al-Ghwel

Floods have not been a rare occurrence in the history of Derna. However, the power of Storm Daniel this month was on a scale unlike any of the other shocks, natural or otherwise, the Libyan city has endured over the years, including its recent transformation into a battleground between Islamists and a notorious warlord.

Some might argue that the “reverse tsunami” marked Libya's initiation into the uncertain future of climate change but the country already had a foot in that door, situated as it is in one of the most climate vulnerable regions of the world.

However, the threats are magnified by the extent to which Libya's future, and its resilience to inevitable shocks, is compromised by the corrosive legacies that amplified Derna's tragedy and will continue to have similar effects on the country for years to come.

We are already seeing some of the ways in which the effects of those legacies manifest themselves, just days after the devastating storm swept through. The residents of Derna are now trapped by an almost apocalyptic mix of corruption, death and destruction.

A despairing populace, rightfully aggrieved and furiously demanding accountability and change, is left to salvage what remains of their destroyed city, abandoned by a homeland that persistently betrays them at every turn.

Having survived the most catastrophic storm since records began in the 1900s, Derna's survivors have seen their lives reduced to rubble. Some have told how they watched, helplessly, as loved ones were swept away by the torrent.

The full extent of the horrors becomes more apparent each day, with entire families wiped from civil registries. Meanwhile, authorities busy themselves policing dissent rather than rendering aid or facilitating recovery efforts, while the hopeful gather with the mournful along the coastline as now-unrecognizable bodies continue to wash ashore.

Their ordeal is far from over. As if to add insult to injury, this week Derna was inexplicably cut off from the rest of the world. Libyan authorities — continuing to coast on dubious claims of legitimacy bought by the gun and assured by a disinterested international community — have proffered only a conflicting stream of statements and press releases about the communications blackout.

It is unclear whether the intent is to buy time to find a convenient scapegoat, or to come up with palatable justifications for isolating the residents of a devastated city who, with no hope of recourse or relief, took to the streets to protest in a rare display of public furor against a firmly entrenched ruling elite.

However, their demands for an investigation into the disaster and calls for the UN to oversee the reconstruction of Derna have been met only with further oppression for daring to voice their grievances. In a stark reminder of the kind

of disconnect that pervades Libya today, the very authorities responsible for handling the aftermath of the devastation would rather brand the foremost voices of the rightfully aggrieved as “terrorists.”

The media and internet blackout was imposed in the name of “safety,” it is claimed — but whose safety? Certainly not the survivors of the disaster, who now face a second crisis given the UN's recent warnings of possible dis-

The media and internet blackout was imposed in the name of “safety,” it is claimed — but whose safety? Certainly not the survivors of the disaster, who now face a second crisis given the UN's recent warnings of possible disease outbreaks stemming from contaminated water and lack of sanitation. For the few journalists who managed to reach Derna before the enforced isolation of the city, the stories they uncovered were harrowing. Survivors, desperate for their voices to be heard, gave chilling accounts of their experiences so far. Aid and rescue workers said they had never seen such scenes of destruction, even in Turkiye after the earthquakes in February. Yet pleas for help and calls for swift action continue to be swatted aside by a greedy and corrupt cabal that is rapidly positioning itself to exploit Derna's tragedy, eagerly anticipating the influx of international aid and the opportunity to control its distribution. They could not care less that their repression and blackouts only send the horrifying message that the lives, grief and rage in Derna — or elsewhere else for that matter — will never be worth more than their own self-preservation. Naturally, the knee-jerk lunge to silence, refute, arrest and “disappear” any dissenting voices has further fueled the intense anger, and galvanized Libyans far beyond Derna and even outside the country.

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Naturally, the knee-jerk lunge to silence, refute, arrest and “disappear” any dissenting voices has further fueled the intense anger, and galvanized Libyans far beyond Derna and even outside the country.

Meanwhile, rather than acknowledge the gravity of

de facto overseer of Russian private military company Wagner's operations in eastern Libya, which the US Treasury Department stopped short of designating a terrorist group but describes as a “significant transnational criminal organization.”

Secondly, and even more dastardly, it is his Internal Security Agency that terrorized Derna's survivors in its efforts to arrest organizers of the protests in front of the city's grand mosque this week.

Worse yet, there have been no notable reports of outrage in the world's press concerning the blackouts in Derna or the arbitrary arrests of survivors of the disaster, demands for accountability, or the fact that one of Haftar's sons is overseeing recovery efforts.

Moreover, reporters can only get as far as Benghazi, about 250 km away, in their efforts to cover what is happening in Derna while it is cut off from the rest of the world. It is an insidious recipe for the inevitable result that developments in the wrecked city will end up relegated to a cursory line or two in the margins as attentions shift elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the death toll continues to rise, while Haftar and his ilk set about turning Derna into a potential windfall for their political aspirations and a showcase of legitimacy in their rivalry with the UN-backed authority in the west of the country. Control of access and the funneling of resources, funds and personnel to the disaster area will afford the rival authority in the east more influence and attention, which are already being wielded for nefarious purposes.

Derna could have been the type of wake-up call the global community has consistently missed or resisted concerning Libya. It is unlikely a unified, accountable and receptive government would have come about even if the voices of protest in Derna had not been abruptly interrupted.

However, the swiftness and harshness of the repression in an attempt to silence them does indicate the glaring vulnerabilities, and a palpable fear of a contagion of unrest, among the seemingly unassailable elites. If only Libyan authorities responded to their citizens' needs as swiftly as they cracked down on dissent.

Meanwhile, we watch as the global community continues to break bread with the same entities complicit in creating the conditions that resulted in the Derna disaster. As the cries for aid grow louder, the international community must heed not only the calls for immediate relief but also the desperate pleas for transparency, accountability and decisive blows to the malignant corruption that is compromising Libya's future.

As we bear witness to the unraveling of Derna, we must remember that its residents are not merely the victims of a terrible natural disaster, but the casualties of a system that prioritizes power over people. For the people of the city, the nightmare has only just begun.

Azerbaijan offensive raises fears of new war in Europe's ‘backyard’

Andrew Hammond

European politics has been convulsed in the past 18 months by the Ukraine conflict. Yet, there are concerns of a second war in the EU's “backyard” after Azerbaijan launched a new military offensive on Tuesday against Armenian positions in Nagorno-Karabakh.

While a shaky ceasefire was agreed the following day, the continued possibility of a new war in the Caucasus is a significant blow for the 27 EU member states, not least for their energy security policy after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Just over a year ago, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen traveled to mineral-rich Azerbaijan to sign a memorandum of understanding on gas supplies with President Ilham Aliyev.

It is estimated that around two-thirds of Azerbaijan is rich in oil and natural gas. The country also produces a range of metals and industrial minerals, including aluminum, lead, iron and zinc.

Von der Leyen even asserted Azerbaijan to be a “reliable, trustworthy partner,” despite some critics asserting she was trading one energy autocracy for another.

European Council President Charles Michel, who has helped drive conciliation discussions between Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent weeks, said on Tuesday that the latest developments are “devastating.” This assessment was shared by Toivo Klaar, the EU's special representative for the South Caucasus, who cautioned that “(Azerbaijan) military action will only worsen the situation.”

Perhaps the big unknown factor in the latest flare-up is what role, if any, Russia is playing. Moscow is the region's traditional power broker, but some interpret Tuesday's actions as a further indication that Russian President Vladimir Putin is losing influence in the wake of the Ukraine war.

However, others point to the possibility that Putin may well have encouraged these latest developments, possibly to force a change of policy, or regime, in longstanding ally Armenia, which has significantly developed its ties with the West recently.

Nikol Pashinyan, who led the anti-government protests in 2018 and became Armenia's prime minister, has asserted that his nation's historical reliance on Russia as its single source of security was a “strategic error.” Armenia is still a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, an alliance of former Soviet Union countries mirroring NATO, but has annoyed Moscow recently on several counts.

First, it has recently undertaken joint military exercises with US troops. Second, Armenia has transitioned toward ratifying the Rome Convention establishing the International Criminal Court, which recently indicted Putin because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A second related uncertainty is whether the offensive on Tuesday is really the start of a new war, or merely a more limited operation, possibly to try to encourage Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh to flee to Armenia. Before Wednesday's uncertain ceasefire, Hikmet Hajiyev, a senior presidential aide, said Azerbaijan had already hit its main targets and the operations will now continue in a “more limited format.”

The backstory to the latest developments is the long, bloody tensions between the Azerbaijan and Armenian peoples going back more than 100 years. Nagorno-Karabakh — at the south of the Karabakh mountains — is widely recognized as part of Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh's 120,000 inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians and Christian.

The latter populace has its own separatist government, which, while close to Armenia, is not officially

recognized by it or, indeed, any other nation. Armenians assert long-standing ties with the region, while Azerbaijan, whose people are mainly Turkic Muslims, also claims deep relations to the area.

Nagorno-Karabakh assumed the status of an autonomous region within the republic of Azerbaijan under the Soviet Union. The First Karabakh War lasted from 1988-1994. Around 30,000 people are estimated to have been killed and perhaps more than a million driven from their homes. Most of the latter were Azeris displaced when Armenia assumed control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The second war in 2020 culminated in a huge loss for the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh state backed by Armenia. In just over a month, Azerbaijan won back large areas of land it

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had lost in the 1990s. Russia helped negotiate a ceasefire, including about 2,000 peacekeepers to guard the so-called Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

In recent months, tensions have intensified around the region, including after Azerbaijani troops blockaded the Lachin corridor, preventing the import of food and medicines to its roughly 120,000 inhabitants. The offensive on Tuesday also comes after weeks of negotiations brokered by the EU, US and Russia to try to avoid a repeat of the 2020 war and end the worsening famine. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has called for the UN Security Council to take “clear and unambiguous steps to end Azerbaijani aggression.”

Earlier this month, there were hopes that tensions might ease when aid trucks operated by the International Committee of the Red Cross were allowed into Nagorno-Karabakh through the Lachin corridor and, separately, the Aghdam Road from Azerbaijan. However, that optimism may have faded.

Taken together, the Azerbaijan offensive has broader, regional implications beyond Nagorno-Karabakh. Europe and the wider West will want to see the situation stabilized in the coming days. But that scenario is by no means certain, especially if Russia has decided it wants to try to upend the regional status quo.

Zelensky delivers an important message to America

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the US last week for two important engagements. His first stop was New York to address the annual UN General Assembly. He then travelled to Washington to meet US President Joe Biden, Pentagon officials, and US politicians on Capitol Hill.

The timing of his visit was crucial for three reasons. First, Ukraine is in the middle of its major counter-offensive to repel Russian forces. Even though Kyiv is making advances, progress has been slower than many had hoped. Furthermore, the US has been reluctant to provide Ukraine with the long range weapons that are needed. Zelensky wants to change this.

Second, winter is fast approaching and memories of electricity and heating outages from Russian airstrikes last year are still fresh in the minds of many Ukrainians. Last week, Russia attacked Ukraine's electrical power grid for the first time in months, leaving thousands without electricity. This was a reminder of how difficult last winter was and foreshadowed how challenging the coming winter might be. After long-range missiles, Zelensky will be asking for more air defense systems.

Finally, Congress will soon be voting on whether to give Ukraine more military and financial support. Additional aid will be crucial heading into the winter months, but some politicians are growing skeptical of sending more aid to Ukraine. Zelensky will be in Washington trying to convince them otherwise.

This year the president addressed the General Assembly in person, having spoken virtually last year. Much of his speech focused on nuclear threats by Moscow. He told the audience: "Look what Russia did to our Zaporizhzhia

power plant — shelled it, occupied it and now blackmails others with radiation leaks."

With the eyes of the world watching, he also took the opportunity to address the breakdown of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. This deal was brokered by Türkiye last year to allow much needed Ukrainian grain to be

Luke Coffey

policy makers in Washington for more aid for Ukraine. This was no easy task.

An increasing number of Republicans oppose additional support for Ukraine. They are joined by some Democrats who are also growing weary of continued military aid — espe-

cluded his visit with a major speech at the National Archives Building. Throughout his visit there was one clear message: The sooner Ukraine gets the weapons it needs, the sooner the war will end.

It is too early to tell if Zelensky's visit to Washington will have an impact on skeptical politi-

has been dismantling the armed forces of Russia — one of America's top geopolitical adversaries — for pennies on the dollar. It is also likely that Ukraine's stiff resistance against Russia's invasion has played a key role in deterring any aggression against Taiwan.

Some politicians use the excuse that Europeans are not doing enough for Ukraine to argue that the US should do less. This is no longer true. Collectively, Europeans have now committed more money than the US to help Ukraine. As a percentage of GDP, the US ranks behind 20 European countries in terms of aid.

Some in the US argue that more military aid delays peace talks and prolongs the war. This is easy to say sitting comfortably thousands of kilometers away from the frontlines. The Ukrainians are fighting for their national survival. If Russia stops its military operations, the war ends immediately. If Ukrainians stop fighting, their nation could disappear. The Kremlin has not shown any sign of wanting a negotiated peace. On the contrary, Moscow just launched another wave of recruitment to send fresh troops to Ukraine. If American politicians want the war to end quickly, then they should provide Ukraine with what it needs to win, and not just enough aid to merely survive.

As America enters a presidential election campaign, it will be tempting for some to bring politics into the debate about US support for Ukraine. That would be a mistake. Cutting off US military assistance to Ukraine doesn't hurt Biden. It hurts only Ukrainians.

Zelensky delivered a strong message during his visit to the US. It remains to be seen if this message was heard. For the sake of Ukraine, let's hope that it was.

After New York, President Zelensky headed south to make the case to policymakers in Washington for more aid for Ukraine. This was no easy task. An increasing number of Republicans oppose additional support for Ukraine. They are joined by some Democrats who are also growing weary of continued military aid — especially after the Biden administration's decision this year to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine. This has created an unusual dynamic in American politics in which politicians on the far-right and far-left are now aligning with one another against more support for Ukraine. Zelensky spent hours meeting members of Congress. He also received military briefings at the Pentagon and met Biden at the White House. He concluded his visit with a major speech at the National Archives Building. Throughout his visit there was one clear message: The sooner Ukraine gets the weapons it needs, the sooner the war will end. It is too early to tell if Zelensky's visit to Washington will have an impact on skeptical politicians. However, there is a strong case to be made for the US to continue its military support for Ukraine.

shipped to countries across Africa, the Middle East and China. Until this agreement, Russia was preventing grain ships from leaving Ukrainian ports. For almost a year Ukrainian grain was exported without any threats from the Russian Navy. Since July, Russia has suspended its participation in the initiative leaving global food security in doubt.

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cluded his visit with a strong case to be made for the US to continue its military support for Ukraine.

Despite what some in Congress argue, the US can easily afford to continue current levels of support. Over the past 19 months, American assistance to Ukraine has amounted to only about 0.04 percent of GDP. If the political will is found, this is easily affordable. American taxpayers have received a great return in investment too. Ukraine

Fallout from this violence reaches far beyond Sudan

Ali Mohamed Ahmed Osman

The third-largest country in Africa by land mass, Sudan shares borders with seven countries in an unstable region. The current violence there is bound to have a significant impact on the economic, social, and political realms not only within its neighboring nations but also throughout the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa because of the social, tribal, and economic linkages; as well as the entire globe, especially for those who have established economic ties with the country.

The primary exports of Sudan include gold, which generated \$2.85 billion in 2021; groundnuts, crude oil, and sheep and goats. The nation is also a significant exporter of gum Arabic, a crucial component in numerous food industries.

Sudan imports raw sugar, refined petroleum, wheat, medicines, and automobiles. The present clashes could disrupt this trade and engender economic challenges for Sudan and its trading partners.

Since the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, formerly known as the Janjaweed insurgency, and subsequent failed to take power by force on April 15, the Sudanese people have experienced war crimes unprecedented in the recent history of the country, and atrocities committed by the paramilitaries including to killings, abductions, torture, looting, and rape, as well as the destruction of thousands of public and private institutions and ministries, including hospitals and water and electricity stations. The public sector has also been hampered, and economic activity has halted entirely. These offenses have led to the displacement of numerous Sudanese citizens, or their departure to neighboring countries such as Egypt, Chad, and South Sudan.

As Sudanese citizens prepared in April to celebrate the final agreement ushering in a civilian government, the paramilitary leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo caused a hindrance to the democratic transformation process. This obstacle is a significant setback and a shock to the Sudanese people and the international community. Dagalo refused to integrate his paramilitary forces into Sudanese within a reasonable time, proposing instead a 10-year period for integration when the parties signed the framework agreement in December 5 2022, and started to discuss security sector reform, which is one of five contentious issues in the framework. This proposal aims to extend the two-year transitional period and two terms of the future elected government, while integration of the paramilitaries is limited to two years. This allows future elected governments to prioritize critical issues such as the economy, development, and building democratic, justice, and constitutional institutions.

To illustrate some of the regional ramifications of the paramilitary rebellion, the influx of numerous Sudanese to Egypt will undoubtedly add a significant economic burden.

Sudan shares a tribal affinity with Chad, which has witnessed a significant exodus of Sudanese from Darfur. This movement has both economic and security consequences. The paramilitary leadership has attempted to assume Chad's control to monopolize the entire region.

Subsequently, after the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict, South Sudan experienced a transitional period during which many South Sudanese citizens were forced to return, as well as several Sudanese citizens who had fled the war. This has increased commodity prices and inflation, particularly for the nation, which heavily relies on its food imports from Sudan.

Clashes in Sudan could seriously interfere with oil shipments and force economic collapse in South Sudan, as around 90 percent of the country's economy is based on oil transported through the pipeline.

Europe, whose economy has been adversely affected

Furthermore, it should be noted that a significant 90 percent of Sudan's external trade is conducted through Port Sudan, which is a substantial commercial sea gateway for its landlocked neighbors. Therefore, any port disruption could exacerbate the already acute shortages of essential commodities, particularly food.

The paramilitary mutiny and its associated effects in the region can pose global security threats, as evidenced by the fact that the sub-Saharan region, according to the Global Terrorism Index, accounted for 48 percent of global terrorism deaths in 2022. Given the current turbulent circumstances, this trend will probably escalate and spread to other regions of the world, particularly in the presence of non-state actors and the proliferation of weapons.

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to Port Sudan. Furthermore, the spread of weapons in the country with the support of the paramilitaries could further aggravate the situation.

After the paramilitary rebellion, they disrupted traffic between Sudan and the Central African Republic, causing sharp increases in commodity prices and acute food insecurity in the Central African Republic, especially in the northern region, which depends mainly on Sudan for its food.

Ethiopia is currently being impacted by new and escalating clashes in the Amhara region, which borders Sudan.

The recently signed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front underscores the importance of Ethiopia putting forth every possible effort to preserve peace in the country. Moreover, many Ethiopian refugees residing in Sudan have returned to their country, thereby imposing additional economic hardship.

One of the primary factors contributing to the military coup in Niger was the involvement of the previous president, who had tribal ties with the paramilitary leader and supported the Rapid Support Forces by sending troops into the conflict in Sudan.

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These effects of conflict extend far beyond the borders of the country involved. Some of the consequences of the war include regional destabilization, humanitarian crises, economic fallout, global security threats, and diplomatic implications. The international community must acknowledge the interconnectedness of these effects and collaborate to address the underlying causes of conflicts, promote peace-building initiatives, and provide assistance.

Most importantly, the international community must maintain internationally recognized and agreed guidelines and principles by supporting state institutions, isolating and condemning the paramilitaries, and contributing to Sudan's rehabilitation when the rebellion ends.

Saudi National Day: Saudi Arabia's vibrancy keeps on increasing

Iwai Fumio

On this celebratory occasion of Saudi Arabia's 93rd National Day, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the people of the Kingdom. It is a great honor to talk about the friendship and close bond between Japan and Saudi Arabia on this day, when we express our respect to the first King Abdulaziz, who built up the current Kingdom, and to the contributions of those who are promoting extraordinary reforms under the leadership of the Saudi royal family. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Arab News for giving me this opportunity.

Having overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, mutual visits of high-level officials between Japan and the Kingdom are increasing. In July of this year, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Saudi Arabia for the first time since taking office, holding a Japan-Saudi Arabia summit meeting with the crown prince. This month, the two leaders met again and held a talk on the occasion of the G20 summit in India, build-

ing a close relationship with each other.

In addition, Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman and Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of the Public Investment Fund, have both visited Japan. On Sept. 7, then-Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi held the first Japan-Saudi Arabia Foreign Ministerial Level Strategic Dialogue meeting with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh. This series of high-level mutual visits between the two countries have all been realized over the past few months.

In his meeting with the crown prince, Prime Minister Kishida reiterated Japan's unwavering support for Vision 2030 and confirmed that Tokyo would further expand its cooperation in a wide range of fields within the framework of the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030, which was launched in 2017. Through these face-to-face discussions, the cooperative relationship between the two countries has been developing at an accelerating pace. Tangible efforts are also progressing, such as the establishment of the Japan-

Saudi Arabia Foreign Ministerial Level Strategic Dialogue and the resumption of free trade agreement negotiations between Japan and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

In the field of the economy, multifaceted cooperation will be promoted in the areas of the exploration and refining of key minerals, development of solar power generation, production and utilization of hydrogen and ammonia, and utilization of electrofuels, in which both countries could leverage their advantages. Thus, cooperative projects are being considered toward decarbonization, which both Japan and the Kingdom are aiming for. In this context, I hope that many Japanese businessmen will attend the seventh edition of the Future Investment Initiative, to be held in Riyadh next month, and take an interest in investment opportunities in the Kingdom.

From a different perspective, Saudi Arabia's vibrancy keeps on increasing in terms of sports and culture. In football, world-class players are joining Saudi club teams one after

another and the FIFA Club World Cup will be held in the Kingdom in December, which the entire country is looking forward to with great excitement. Also, the World Combat Games, which includes Japanese martial arts such as judo and kendo, is to be held in Riyadh in October and I am looking forward to the active participation of Japanese players in it.

The Saudi sports world is also packed with events such as golf, motor racing and electronic sports. Furthermore, I recently found a concept video in which Turki AlSheikh, the chairman of the General Entertainment Authority, announced the slogan of "Big Time" for this year's edition of Riyadh Season. I am excited to see a new world of entertainment in the Kingdom, together with the Saudi people.

Considering these interactions at the governmental level, as well as the live activities in the Kingdom, I hope that the exchanges between the people of Saudi Arabia and Japan will become even more active.

It is worth mentioning that the number of visa applications to Japan has rapidly increased since the

online application and payment system for short-stay tourist visas began in March of this year and that, accordingly, the number of Saudi people traveling to Japan is increasing. From this point of view, the tourism authorities of the two countries signed a memorandum of cooperation in the field of tourism in July, which is expected to further invigorate the tourism businesses of both countries.

Just like Japan has many attractions for tourists, the Kingdom also has many natural and cultural heritage sites. Also, I think that, while their historical and cultural backgrounds are different, the Kingdom has many similarities to Japan, such as its hospitality for guests, which attracts the Japanese people. I look forward to more people from both countries visiting the other and deepening our mutual understanding.

Thus, I sincerely hope that the bond between our two countries will grow stronger and stronger as we approach the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2025.

Once again, congratulations on your National Day.

Why Erdogan and Netanyahu have decided to seek closer ties

The highly anticipated encounter between the leaders of Türkiye and Israel, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Benjamin Netanyahu, finally occurred on Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. This was the first documented meeting between the two leaders. The two countries had close ties until the infamous Mavi Marmara incident of 2010, which was a pivotal moment in the relationship between Tel Aviv and Ankara.

Key highlights from the meeting, which were shared with the press, included an agreement to arrange mutual visits; the possibility of Erdogan visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the near future; cooperation on various fields such as energy, technology, innovation, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity; discussions regarding Israeli-

Palestinian relations; and efforts to normalize Israel's relations with Saudi Arabia.

The meeting took place a day after Erdogan expressed support for the US administration's initiative to broker an Israeli-Saudi deal, as he believed it could help reduce tensions in the region. It also occurred in the context of warming relations between the two countries, following Israeli President Isaac Herzog's visit to Ankara in March, which marked the first high-level Israeli visit since 2008, and Foreign Minister Eli Cohen's meeting with the Turkish leader in February. Indications of improved ties were also apparent in Erdogan's speech at the UNGA. In contrast to previous years, he refrained from criticizing Israel.

Erdogan has a long history of animosity with Netanyahu, with the two leaders having publicly

exchanged harsh words for many years. Few leaders have experienced such prolonged tension with Erdogan as Netanyahu. Therefore, the meeting held greater significance than merely two ambitious leaders coming together; it reflected the repercussions of multiple factors operating on three levels: domestic, regional and the involvement of the US.

Beginning with the role of the US, the improvement in Turkish-Israeli relations has consistently been intertwined with Ankara's relations with America and the Jewish lobby there. This lobby has significant sway in either bolstering or undermining Türkiye's relations with Washington. Historically, its support has proven beneficial for Ankara in various cases, such as the Armenian issue, Greek claims and arms sales.

However, following the

deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, the Jewish lobby changed its stance, leaving Türkiye vulnerable. The US went on to back several decisions that were contentious from a Turkish perspective. Over the years, Ankara has come to recognize that, without the backing of the Jewish lobby, it is challenging for it to make further strides in its relations with the US.

The second factor at play is the shifting regional dynamics that have prompted the two countries to reassess their relations. Historically, regional developments have been a significant driver in shaping Turkish and Israeli calculations toward each other. In the past, when Türkiye faced threats from its neighbors, namely Iraq, Iran and Syria, it tended to draw closer to Israel. Similarly, for Israel, the

Sinem Cengiz

Iranian threat has consistently been a motivating factor in forging closer ties with Türkiye and other regional powers. The significance of the Iranian factor should not be underestimated in Tel Aviv's signing of the historic Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the UAE.

Moreover, the Nagorno-Karabakh war of 2020, which culminated in Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia thanks to Turkish and Israeli support, played a role in thawing relations between Tel Aviv and Ankara. One of the consequences of the war was the diminishing influence of Iran in the region. Israel's support for Azerbaijan was primarily driven by Tehran's support for Armenia. In seeking to establish a closer relationship with Baku, Israel, which also hosts a sizable

Azerbaijani diaspora, provided support against Yerevan. This common cause brought Tel Aviv and Ankara together once again.

The third factor to consider is the situation in Syria, where both countries face similar threats. Moreover, Israel is uneasy about Türkiye's close contacts with Iran and Russia on the Syrian file. Tel Aviv does not want Türkiye to align itself with the Russian-Iranian axis.

From the Turkish perspective, there have been concerns about the close energy ties between Israel, Greece and Cyprus, particularly in regard to the EastMed pipeline, which aims to export Israeli and Egyptian liquefied gas to Europe.

For Türkiye, improving its ties with Israel is part of a broader overhaul of its foreign policy — a policy that had left Ankara isolat-

ed in the region. Türkiye is also expected to strengthen its ties with the Gulf countries, so the restoration of ties with Israel aligns with this policy as well as with the US-mediated Abraham Accords. Türkiye is now not as vocally against the Abraham Accords as it was when they were signed in 2020.

At the domestic level, it is worth noting the observation of prominent scholar Louis Fishman, who has written: "If you look at the two countries' domestic politics, they perhaps are much more alike than different, like two peas in a pod."

Netanyahu has faced legal challenges for several years, including allegations of corruption, fraud and breach of trust, which have triggered a political crisis in the country. He needs to demonstrate to the public that he is reconciling with former regional rivals for

the sake of the economy. In Türkiye, the situation mirrors this, as Ankara is striving to break its regional isolation to attract financial investments.

Both countries now seek to increase bilateral trade, even though it is important to note that Türkiye remained a key trading partner of Israel even during the height of the tension between the two countries. In recent months, they have also discussed the idea of an Israel-Türkiye natural gas pipeline, though the likelihood of such a project materializing appears extremely low for a variety of reasons.

Thus, economic and energy-related interests, closely linked to domestic gains, shifting regional dynamics and the US factor, play a predominant role in the new phase of Turkish-Israeli relations initiated by Erdogan and Netanyahu.



SBP to provide interest-free loans to unemployed women

D.I.KHAN (INP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is making it possible to provide unemployed women interest-free loans for starting large scale businesses in order to ensure their economic stability. This was stated by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Deputy Chief Manager in Dera Ismail Khan Fazal Muqem while addressing a one-day seminar titled 'Women bankability and banking on equality' organized by the SBP here at Government Polytechnic Institute (GPI) for women of Dera Ismail Khan the other day.

By starting their own businesses, Fazal Muqem said that women would be able to support their parents

and families besides providing good education to their children.

He was of the view that the current wave of inflation affected the whole society including the rich and poor. However, he said, it becomes difficult for the poor to manage the expenses of routine life as their income resources are very much limited.

The employment opportunities are also limited in the country, therefore starting of own business is the only way to handle such a situation, he added.

He informed that the prime minister introduced different policies with the support of the SBP to make unemployed women as productive citizens. Under

these policies, the bank accounts of unemployed women were being opened along with men on equality basis so that they could be provided with interest-free loans up to Rs 0.5 million.

Addressing the seminar, Assistant Director Muhammad Zubair said that today's era is of digital mobile app and citizens must take benefit from this facility.

He said the citizens should become income tax filer which would make them avoid many taxes.

On this occasion, GPI for women Principal Sara Khan thanked the guests from the SBP. She said their institution was working to make its students skillful so that they could

become self-sufficient and useful citizens of the society.

She said many women would get benefit of this SBP's policy in future. She expressed the hope that such type of useful seminars would be organized in future so that poor and eligible women of Dera Ismail Khan could be benefitted.

On this occasion, GPI for women Principal Sara Khan, SBP Dera Ismail Khan Assistant Chief Manager Muhammad Amir Ejaz, Assistant Director Muhammad Zubair, Rizwanullah Shah, GPI (women) Placement Officer Zafar Awan, a good number of teachers and female students were present on the occasion.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Syed Amir Abdullah inaugurating Bank of Khyber at Jalozi Economic Zone.

High cost of doing business discourages investment: APBF

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum has said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's economy, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on energy sector.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the industry has been overburdened due to recent increase in electricity tariffs which is aggravated by the extraordinary upsurge in petroleum prices, triggering severe anxiety not only amongst the masses but also the business and industrial community.

He urged the government to shut down all costly oil-fired power plants in order to ensure consumers had access to cheaper energy. He lamented that the previous administration did not prioritize the rehabilitation and maintenance of older power plants, resulting in multiple system constraints and significant losses.

He observed that the government's inability, ill planning and financial woes had multiplied the miseries of businesses which were facing unscheduled power outages across the country. At the same time, the industry was already paying heavy electricity bills of up to Rs50 per unit, including surcharges and other taxes, he added.

Shocked by the unprecedented fourth consecutive jump in petroleum product prices, he said the move would worsen the economic crisis, multiplying cost of production and intensifying miseries for the trade and industry.

Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that it has become almost impossible to run the industries at such a high cost. This was the fourth consecutive hike in petroleum prices while, in the tenure of the caretaker government alone, the petrol prices have been raised by almost Rs60 per litre, which was going to create a lot of problems for the already ailing economy as the production has been curtailed by many industri-

al units to a great extent due to high cost.

Ibrahim Qureshi criticized the caretaker government that it should have kept the prices of petroleum unchanged due to the falling landing cost of imported crude on account of the persistent rise in the rupee strength against the dollar in the last eight interbank sessions despite rising crude oil prices in the world market.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that it is fact that the given the economic crisis being faced by the country, the government has to take harsh steps to generate the required revenue for over-coming expenditures and fulfilling international commitments.

However, instead of taking these steps back-to-back, the government should devise some kind of an effective strategy to ensure some sigh of relief to the masses and the industry who will not be able to bear the brunt caused by consecutive price hikes.

The APBF President stressed that the emerging situation has to be efficient-

ly addressed and handled very carefully otherwise, the rising petroleum prices and electricity tariffs would continue to increase the cost of doing business, which would terribly affect the industrial performance, raise unemployment and open the floodgates of inflation, particularly for the middle and lower segments of the society, besides making the poor poorer due to unbearable inflation.

The unexpected massive increase in petrol and diesel prices was widely felt as inflationary at the retail level and the State Bank of Pakistan may have to review its decision of leaving the key interest rate unchanged. He believed that the inflation would be in the range of 30-31 per cent in the ongoing month which is against the SBP's expectation to bring it down to 20-22pc.

After keeping its policy rate unchanged at 22 per cent by the central bank, the government increased the petroleum prices by over Rs26 per litre making it clear that inflation would be higher in September.

Rising cost alarming as high fuel prices push inflation to over 38%: PIAF

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has warned the record inflation and high cost of doing business continued to hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as weekly inflation has surged to new highs for the third consecutive week.

Quoting the data, PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol revealed a year-on-year increase of 38.66 percent in short-term inflation for the week ending on Sept 21, marking an alarming trend in rising prices. The ongoing depre-

ciation of the Pakistani rupee, coupled with soaring petrol prices, sales tax burdens, and mounting electricity bills are identified as the primary contributors to the persistent inflationary trend.

But the most important factor contributing to inflation is the steep increase in petroleum products. During the week under review, the retail price of petrol witnessed an 8.51 percent increase, while diesel prices rose by 5.54 percent. These price hikes have led to elevated transport costs and have subsequently driven up the cost of moving goods, affecting consumers across the country.

He said that to meet

local demand, Pakistan has become increasingly reliant on imports of essential vegetables, including tomatoes, onions, and potatoes, primarily sourced from neighboring Afghanistan.

The SPI basket, comprising 51 essential items, demonstrated notable fluctuations. Prices of 22 goods soared, 11 experienced price drops, and 18 remained unchanged compared to the previous week.

Key items that witnessed substantial price increases compared to the same week the previous year include electricity charges, gas charges, rice, sugar, wheat flour, and more. Whereas, on a week-on-week basis,

the largest price increases were observed in chicken, garlic, onions, shirting fabric, and matchboxes. It is pertinent to mention here that according to the latest IMF forecast, the average CPI for the current fiscal year is projected to be 25.9 percent, slightly down from the previous year's 29.6 percent.

The PIAF Chairman observed that the government's inability, ill planning and financial woes had multiplied the miseries of businesses which were facing unscheduled power outages across the country. At the same time, they were already paying heavy electricity bills of up to Rs50

per unit, including surcharges and other taxes, he added. He said all the major industrial cities of the country were facing unannounced electricity load shedding and stressed the need to rectify technical faults immediately.

He said that the high cost of production is damaging Pakistan's trade and industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He urged the government to shut down all costly oil-fired power plants in order to ensure consumers had access to cheaper energy.

Energy affordability must for growth

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has assailed the NEPRA to approve another electricity rate hike of up to Rs3.5 per unit under quarterly adjustments, leading to an additional burden of Rs136 billion on power consumers, as energy affordability for industry is critical to boost economic growth in the country.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, calling for charting out a viable way forward to promote renewable energy transition under worsening global and domestic energy inflation for sustainable economic development and providing relief to the industry from external price shocks, he said that until now, consumers were paying an additional Rs1.25 per unit due to ongoing quarterly adjustments. He added that out of the total increase, the new Rs1.25 per unit will remain, while an additional Rs2.03 per unit will be imposed for the next six months.

The BMP chairman remarked that the energy sector's success depended on reliability, affordability and accessibility. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the increase in electricity tariffs will have varying impacts on different categories of consumers as for households consuming between 1-100 and 101-200 units, there will be a tariff increase of Rs3.2814 per unit. This rate will continue for households consuming 201-700 units, while those using more than 700 units will face an additional charge of Rs3.2814 per unit.

In the case of commercial consumers with a sanctioned load of less than 5kW, they will encounter a uniform rate increase of Rs3.2814 per unit. For commercial consumers with a sanctioned load of 5kW and above, the same rate will apply, along with

the introduction of a Time of Use (TOU) category for peak and off-peak consumption, also set at Rs3.2814 per kWh. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations will be billed at the same rate.

He revealed that the major recovery would come from capacity payments amounting to Rs145 billion, to be collected from consumers who had consistently paid their bills. These payments will be disbursed to power plants that remained idle and out of operation. He also stressed the need for improvement in forecasting mechanisms to ensure return on investments for renewable energy projects.

We are confronting a poly-crisis globally and domestically; there is a pressing need for innovative solutions to achieve a balance between soaring energy prices and capacity payment issues to alleviate some of the sufferings of the public. He underlined that there was an immediate need for execution of solar and wind projects through competitive bidding.

He called for tapping into the Green Climate Fund to catalyze the national-level energy transition projects. He emphasized the need for scaling up off-grid systems to address social challenges and increase energy access for marginalized communities. He said opting for wind energy in low-load areas like south Punjab and improving transmission from such points to high-demand areas would prevent transmission losses. He urged the government to focus on indigenizing the manufacturing of solar PVs, inverters, etc to reduce technology cost and import dependence.

He also called for introducing hybrid renewable energy technologies in areas with low wind pressure to scale up the integration of wind in renewable energy. He urged the government to focus on technology transfer and concessional financing for the indigenous manufacturing of renewable energy tech-

nologies. Anjum Nisar condemned the move, stating the burden of power theft, mismanagement, and inefficiencies should not be shifted to the trade and industry consumers, as it would prove to be dangerous for overall economy. FPCCI former president asked the Pakistan authorities urgently need to strengthen energy sector viability by aligning tariffs with costs, reforming the sectors cost base, and better-targeting power subsidies.

Anjum Nisar said that Pakistan's industry had been harmed by the high cost of doing business, which discouraged investment in capacity and capability and called for easing the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

He said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

While describing the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs as a shameful decision, he urged the government to reverse the increase. The government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the BMP strongly condemns the government's decision and calls on it to rescind it. He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system.

He said that the government is ignoring the fact that the gap between the generation and consumer cost is chiefly because of power theft and inefficiency of the heads of power distribution companies who are well protected by their political masters. It is a disastrous decision, which will encourage electricity theft. He said that the increase should have been linked with a reduction in line losses.

Khwaja Wajih-u-Din

In our country Pakistan, the number of Taxes are many. There are central Taxes, then there are provincial Taxes and then local Taxes following one another. Thanks to the debacle in the last few years when any poor person buys essential items/basic needs from the market, he has to pay taxes on it. Even the electricity bills has many taxes including the income tax. This form of indirect taxes is the biggest burden on every common man, which ultimately results in price hike. Interestingly we hear a similar statement from every finance minister, in every budget, that the poor have not been burdened.

The position as of today is that the Government is faced with a precariously poised near bankrupt official economy characterized by the problem of twin deficits, fiscal and balance of payments, touching almost fatal levels. The long running imbalance between government revenue and expenditure resulted automatically in large and growing budget deficits in all the years. During the last several years, the successive governments financed budgetary deficits by borrowing both externally and inter-

nally. This naturally resulted in rapid accumulation of debt servicing liabilities, and as of today a major chunk of our budget is meant for the same. Ultimately the whole program of expansion, development, health and education facilities etc. has to be drastically reduced. No Government wishes to deprive its people with all possible facilities, but the financial constraint does not permit it. The same is the case in our country.

We have been told by successive governments that they are in dire need of funds and are exploring various channels for the ultimate materialization of its policies. The most common of these is repeated begging before the international monetary fund and our friendly nations. No wonder the derogatory treatment an average Pakistani gets at the international airports. It speaks volumes of our impression in the international community. A statement by the former prime minister of Pakistan bears testimony to this fact. Obviously beggars cannot be choosers.

We hear about the importance of investment every day. It is no secret

Taxes and economic revival

that red tape is a major hurdle in the safe investment along with the behavior, methodology and process of the government machinery. Even the overseas Pakistanis feel reluctant to invest in their homeland for the fear of the said hurdle. That directly contributes towards absolute retardation of the entire process. Over and above the tax rates are so high that the investor is completely discouraged. One should learn some lessons from other developed countries of the world like Japan where industries Spurred up in a relatively short time due to absence of controls and now their exports have reached unprecedented levels. Hong Kong, Korea, China etc are other examples.

On the streets a person with the meaneast intelligence would point out how the law of the land has been persistently floated by all those who matter. The predicament is that in our beloved country nobody has the will to discharge his national duty, including the rich and the influential, the politician, the feudal lord, big businessman and so on. All evade taxes with impunity. This is the case

with the majority of such people. Tax collection comes only from the poor and the middle-class, who work in unfavorable conditions and even contribute to the federal exchequer willingly and voluntarily.

The most important of all the taxes is the income tax. It is levied on the income earned by a person from any source. Of course agricultural income has been kept immune from income tax, which is a measure based on political expediency. The reason for it is that since its very inception, the governments have been dominated by the feudal lords, who do not wish to contribute their share towards national reconstruction. On the basis of perpetual brute majority in the assemblies they successfully managed its avoidance.

The World Bank urged its imposition repeatedly but successive governments in Pakistan managed to sidetrack the issue. Recovery of Incometax presents a very dismal picture. The Active Taxpayers List (ATL), shows the number of participants to be 4.38 million. Only a fraction of the total population, in single digit, pays income

tax. Which is very mean figure by any stretch of the imagination. Imagine a Big Country thronging with Industries shopping plazas, big limousines and the lavish standard of living of many, beyond the reach of even Americans, the tax collection represents a dismal figure.

Without prejudice to the above but in addition there too it can be safely said that the evasion of tax in our country has reached unmanageable proportions. The evil of black money is there for everybody to see. Very many causes can be given for the operation of black money in the country, but the fact remains that its existence on such an unprecedented scale is a source of abundant worry for the economic experts of the country, as well as the government. This money cannot be taxed properly and is being used for ostentatious pursuit and expenditure. The evasion is sought to be achieved through "benami" transaction, under invoicing and over invoicing and inflation of expenditure etc., the holders of black money resort to purchase of gold and precious stones, luxury items and under recording

immovable property, besides enjoying a very high standard of life. All this ultimately effects the general economy of the country, and the average man feels frustrated, because human urge is always there.

The Governments from time to time have thrown various incentives to ensure that untaxed money is brought into the central Exchequer, but the results have been far from satisfactory. It is no secret that the privileged class does not want to pay taxes. The uppermost class which is the moneyed class has always hoodwinked the process, and exploited every situation to their advantage.

They have flouted all the laws with impunity and never paid their share of taxes. These classes are largely responsible for the whole scale evasion of taxes. The IMF has recently emphasized that "those who can, those that are making good money, public sector, private sector, they need to contribute to the economy."

Another important factor which needs mention here, would be the non-existence of Social Security, unem-

ployment allowance and age old benefits which exist in the western countries but are nonexistent here. In ultimate analysis tax evasion is a moral problem and depends on the degree of enlightenment and moral fabric of a society.

Talking of morality I was remember to have been informed by at least three people, proudly, that they enjoyed a monthly salary at the expense of the Pakistan steel mills in Karachi without actually working. All these petty personal gains have reduced the said national asset to be a burden on the people of Pakistan. There are many projects like that for example the Pakistan international airlines. As a nation we need to work on our ethics and morality on emergency basis.

The policy of privatization is indeed a step in the right direction provided it is done expeditiously in a fool proof manner. Ironically this policy of privatization, is being criticized by vested interest, including banks and executives who have been using trade unions etc. to create hurdles in the same. In actual fact both are directly hit by this policy, the former would lose their

authority, and consequent benefits, and the later that is the trade unions would have nothing to exploit. If the banks are in private domain, the owner would not tolerate carelessness or slackness, nor would he allow anybody to play the truant. We can see the example of privatized banks and their function is so smooth because there is no government control. Whereas public sector banks manager thinks himself to be an officer and does not care for the public at large. The bank staff knows all this tricks of the trade and therefore, they want the present situation to continue so that they are not required to concentrate more and more on their work. In national interest all sick segment of public sector organizations need to be privatized to put less burden on the budget.

The recently constituted Special Investment Facilitation Council is indeed the right step. It should include more professional people who know their job well and are honest. The recent steps introduced to control the black market shows that if there is will there is a way. We need to put our house in order before it is too late.

(The writer is former Registrar Peshawar High Court)



In brief

Rashford unhurt

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford escaped unhurt after being involved in a car crash following his participation in a 1-0 win at Burnley on Saturday. The incident happened when Rashford had left United's Carrington training ground in his white Rolls Royce. Erik ten Hag's squad had returned on the team coach from Burnley before leaving the training base in their personal cars. Pictures and video emerged online showing the aftermath of the incident. Rashford played the full 90 minutes of United's win at Turf Moor as they snapped a three-game losing streak.

Norrie knocked out

LONDON (Agencies): British number one Cameron Norrie was beaten in straight sets by Russia's Aslan Karatsev in the Zhuhai Championships quarter-finals. World number 17 Norrie, 28, who was the second seed in China, lost 7-6 (7-5) 7-6 (7-5) to the world number 63. Karatsev, 30, who knocked out Andy Murray in the last 16, edged another hard-fought contest on Sunday. He will face either Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff or Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka in the semi-finals. After losing the first set, Norrie backed up a break of serve to go 3-1 up in the second and then served for the set at 5-4. But Karatsev broke back before again edging out Norrie in a tie-break. Russian top seed Karen Khachanov takes on American Sebastian Korda in the second semi-final. Norrie was playing in his first singles tournament since reaching the US Open's round of 32 and was part of the team that helped Britain reach the final eight of the Davis Cup last week.

Assefa smashes record

BERLIN (Agencies): Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa shattered the women's marathon world record in Berlin on Sunday, lopping off more than two minutes from the previous best to clock an official time of two hours 11 minutes and 53 seconds. Assefa, who had set a course record with a personal best last year, set a blistering early pace, gradually shaking off any competition to pulverise Kenyan Brigid Kosgei's record of two hours 14 minutes and four seconds set in 2019. "I knew I wanted to go for the world record but I never thought I would do this time," said the 26-year-old, a former 800-metre runner. With her time she set a marker for next year's Paris Olympics while also almost certainly nailing down a spot on the Ethiopian Olympic team for 2024. "I have set a mark now. The decision does not lie with me but with officials." Her remarkable victory overshadowed men's world record holder Eliud Kipchoge's record fifth victory on Berlin's quick and flat inner-city course. The 38-year-old Kenyan, who is aiming to win his third Olympic marathon medal next year in Paris, did not come close to the record he set in Berlin last year, finishing with a time of two hours two minutes 42 seconds. "I always learn from every race and every victory," Kipchoge said. "I'm very happy to win for the fifth time in Berlin and I shall use these lessons in my preparation for the Olympics." Compatriot Vincent Kipkemai was second, with a time of two hours three minutes 13 seconds and Ethiopia's

Sri Lanka beat Pakistan to set up final with India



HANGZHOU (Agencies): In-form Sri Lanka, fresh from a stunning Twenty20 series victory in England, beat Pakistan by six wickets on Sunday to reach the women's cricket final at the Asian Games and set up a clash with India. Pakistan never got going on a difficult batting surface affected by days of rain at the Zhejiang University of Technology ground in Hangzhou, and

could only muster a below-par 75-9 in their 20 overs. Left-arm medium pace bowler Udeshika Prabodhani led the Sri Lanka attack with three wickets and Kavisha Dilhari took two with her offspin. Sri Lanka sauntered to their target with 21 balls to spare to spark wild celebrations as their players ran on to the field to high-five and hug each other. Earlier, the Indians routed Bangladesh for 51 on the same ground with all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar, only drafted into the squad as a last-minute replacement, taking four wickets. They wasted no time in racing to an eight-wicket victory with more than 11 overs remaining as Jemimah Rodrigues top-scored with an unbeaten 20. Rodrigues is yet to be dismissed in the Asian Games, scoring 47 not out in the quarter-final against Malaysia, which was later abandoned because of rain. It was the second time in just over a week that Sri Lanka cricketers had proven party-poopers by preventing a Pakistan-India major cricket final. The country's men's team beat Pakistan in the semifinal of the 50-over Asia Cup in Colombo to prevent a final showdown against their fierce rivals India. Earlier this month, Sri Lanka's women secured a historic first-ever white-ball series triumph over England, winning 2-1. Pakistan and Bangladesh will face off for bronze on Monday before India take on Sri Lanka in the gold-medal match.

Council 'looking into' Indian athletes' China visa issue

HANGZHOU (Reuters): The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and Asian Games organisers are examining the issue of three Indian athletes unable to join the games in China due to a visa problem, acting OCA President Raja Randhir Singh said on Sunday. "OCA is looking into it, definitely," as well as organisers and the government, Singh told a press conference in the eastern Chinese host city, Hangzhou. "Since it's a diplomatic issue, they're looking into it. And hopefully, let's see, (whether) something good comes out of it." The three wushu fighters from the state of Arunachal Pradesh were issued stamped visas instead of stamped ones, India's foreign ministry said. India does not accept stamped visas as valid. Wei Jizhong, chairman of the OCA's ethics committee, told reporters last week that China did not refuse entry to the athletes. The practice of issuing visas on loose sheets of paper has been seen as China's way of questioning India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh, a region near the China-India border that Beijing claims as part of Tibet. New Delhi vociferously rejects the claim, saying Arunachal Pradesh has always been part of India. Beijing and New Delhi fought a war over the disputed Himalayan frontier in 1962 and have been uneasy neighbours ever since. Relations nosedived in 2020 over a border clash in which 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed. At the Asian Games, delayed by a year due to COVID-19, some 12,400 athletes from 45 nations are competing for 481 gold medals across a huge programme of 40 sports.

Pak victorious in Target Ball Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan outplayed Afghan team by 38-18 in the inaugural Pak-Afghan Target Ball Championship 2023 here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Board. Raihan Quraishi was the standout performer in the match, earning the title of the best scorer. The Chief Guest for the event was Miss Sadia Ahmed, a Lawyer and Young Parliamentarian Associate in the Senate of Pakistan. Muhammad Ashraf, Assistant Director of Facilities at Pakistan Sports Board, and Fida Khan, the Director of Hostels were also present on the occasion. Sadia Ahmed expressed her gratitude for the outstanding coordination efforts of the Director General of Pakistan Sports Board and its senior officials, which led to the successful organization of this championship. She emphasized the pivotal role such sporting events play in enhancing Pakistan's international image and drawing the attention of global athletes. Moreover, she highlighted the platform this competition provides for young players to showcase their talent and pride in representing their nation. She urged Pakistan's government, private associations, and organizations, including sports industrialists and renowned hotels, to lend their support and sponsorship to such games. She said sports, beyond the realm of competition, hold immense benefits for both physical and mental well-being. In a world where the importance of holistic well-being is increasingly acknowledged, the Pak-Afghan Target Ball Championship 2023 offers an opportunity for players and spectators alike to experience these advantages firsthand. The Pak-Afghan Target Ball Championship 2023 promises to be a landmark event in the world of sports, fostering cooperation and friendly competition between Pakistan and Afghanistan while providing a stage for emerging talents to shine and contributing to the physical and mental well-being of participants.

Sakkari downs Dolehide for Guadalajara title



GUADALAJARA (Agencies): Second-seeded Maria Sakkari ended her four-year wait for a second WTA title on Saturday, beating Caroline Dolehide 7-5, 6-3 to win the 1000 level Guadalajara Open. Greece's Sakkari, ranked ninth in the world, had come up empty in six finals since her breakthrough victory in Rabat in 2019. That included the Guadalajara final last year, when she lost to American Jessica Pegula, and a loss to Coco Gauff in the final at Washington this year. An emotional Sakkari thanked her coach of five years, noting they'd waited "more than four years for a second title. "We've heard so many bad things - that I will never win a title, that I'm a top-five player with only winning one title, that was very hard for me to overcome," she said. "I'm so happy that I did it here this week." The victory came less than a month after Sakkari was unceremoniously dumped from the first round of the US Open, her third straight first-round exit at a Grand Slam. Sakkari had said at Flushing Meadows she was "suffering on the court" and was "uncertain" about what to do about it. This week, however, Sakkari has looked in total command, becoming the first player this year to reach the final of a WTA 1000 event without dropping a set. Sakkari ended a fairytale week for Dolehide, ranked 11th in the world and playing in her first career final. Dolehide, who will rise to inside the top 50, came from a set down to beat Peyton Stearns in three tie-breaks in the first round, she beat eighth-seeded Ekaterina Alexandrova in the third round and saved four match points in her quarter-final win over Martina Trevisan. In her first career semi-final, Dolehide defeated 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin. Dolehide demonstrated the same grit she'd shown all week when she clawed back an early break in the opening set to take a 5-4 lead. But Sakkari won the next two games, taking advantage of one of Dolehide's six double faults to break for 6-5. Down 0-30 in the next game, Sakkari battled back to take the set, and finally gained the upper hand in the second with a break for a 3-2 lead.

Asian Games Pakistan record win in shooting and tennis with setbacks

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan on Sunday recorded important wins in shooting and tennis with setbacks in taekwondo and swimming and taekwondo in the ongoing Asian Games 2023 being held in Hangzhou, China. In shooting, Pakistan's GM Bashir secured the eighth position after scoring 282 points with eight centres off target. The Pakistani shooter needs to finish in the top six to proceed to the finals. The second round of the qualification phase will be played on Monday (tomorrow). Bashir recorded 98 points in eight seconds, then 97 in six seconds and 97 in four seconds. Separately, Pakistan's Mehak Fatima failed to qualify for the next round in women's 10m air rifle. She finished 40th in the qualifying round. Sarah Ibrahim, Ushna Sohail secure important wins in Tennis. On the other hand, Pakistan got off to a flying start in the tennis singles and doubles. In women's tennis singles, Ushna Sohail defeated a straight-sets defeat to Tajikistan's Sumaya Tukhtaeva 6-2, 6-3. Another Pakistani tennis player, Sarah Ibrahim emerged victorious against Qatar's Hind Almudahka after a three-set battle 6-2, 6(5)-7, 6-3. Ibrahim won the first set comfortably 6-2, but Almudahka made a comeback in the second set — which lasted for more than an hour — and won it after a close encounter 7-6(5). The decisive set was won by the Pakistani player 6-3 after a 51-minute long clash. Sunday was

Pakistan beat Singapore by 11-0 in hockey match

HANGZHOU: Pakistan's hockey team made a triumphant start in the Asian Games by defeating Singapore 11-0 on Sunday. In the hockey tournament being played in Hangzhou, China, Pakistan displayed a splendid performance in their first match against Singapore, securing an 11-0 victory. Pakistan scored one goal in the first quarter, five goals in the second quarter, four goals in the third quarter, and one more goal in the final quarter. Earlier, Sri Lanka women cricket team outclassed Pakistan by six wickets in the 2nd semi-final of the Asian Games Women's Cricket match on Sunday. While batting first at the Hangzhou, China, Pakistani batsmen failed to set a good total and lost nine players against 75 runs in 20-overs. Chasing the soft target, the Sri Lanka team clinched victory against a loss of 4 wickets in 16.3 overs.

Pakistan's day in tennis, Naila defeated Saudia Arabia's Medhat Abrar Bukhari in the Round of 16. In swimming, both of Pakistan's swimmers Mohammad Amaan Siddiqi and Mohammad Ahmed Durrani failed to qualify for the next round. In Men's 200m individual medley, Durrani's timing was two minutes and 15.10 seconds, which was enough to create a new national record but he failed to reach the next round. The previous Pakistani record in the 200m individual medley was two minutes and 16.26 seconds. Durrani was 12 seconds behind the last swimmer who qualified for the next round. His final position was 19th out of 27. Meanwhile, Amaan finished 22nd with his timing of two minutes and 18.65 seconds. In the 100m freestyle heats, Durrani finished 33rd while Aman was ranked 37th.

First Pakistani husband-wife duo summits in Nepal



GILGIT (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's Ahmed Uzair and Anum Uzair became the first husband-wife duo from the South Asian country to summit Nepal's towering Mount Manaslu, Nepalese commercial adventure operator Seven Summit Treks confirmed on Sunday. Mount Manaslu is the eighth-highest mountain in the world at 8,163 meters and is located in the west-central part of Nepal. Pakistani mountaineers Naila Kiani, Sirbaz Khan and Shehroze Kashif summited the mountain earlier this month. Ahmed and Anum Uzair, both parents to two children, summited the mountain on Sunday, Seven Summit Treks wrote on social media platform X. "Congratulations to Ahmed and Anum Uzair who successfully climbed the eighth highest peak, Mt. Manaslu (8163m), this morning," the company wrote. "They are the first Pakistani couple to achieve (climb 8,000m peak) this feat." Kashif took to X, formerly Twitter, to congratulate the couple on the feat. "What a piece of news to wake up to! It's truly an outstanding achievement," he wrote. The couple are based in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore. Speaking to Arab News, Kashif said Uzair is a barrister by profession while Anum is a forensic doctor. "They are my clients. Under my mentorship, they have also climbed Minglik Sar (6,050 meters) and Hisper (5,246 meters) peaks in the past," he told Arab News. Both Minglik Sar and Hisper mountains are located in Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan region. Kashif said that though the couple had conquered their first eight-thousander (mountains that stand above 8,000 meters high), he believed they would go on to summit more in the future. "They will become the first [Pakistani] couple to summit all 14 [eight-thousander] peaks," he added.

Son double holds Arsenal, Liverpool cut Man City's Premier League lead

LONDON (Agencies): Son Heung-min's double earned Tottenham a point from a pulsating 2-2 draw against Arsenal, as Liverpool moved into second in the Premier League with a 3-1 win over West Ham on Sunday. Brighton climb up to third after beating Bournemouth 3-1, but Chelsea still cannot buy a goal as Mauricio Pochettino's men lost 1-0 at home to Aston Villa. Spurs have still won just once in their last 31 away league meetings with Arsenal, but the optimism garnered under Ange Postecoglou's early weeks in charge was not punctured at the Emirates despite twice falling behind in the north London derby. Arsenal's bright start was rewarded when Bukayo Saka's strike was deflected into his own net by Cristian Romero. But for the fifth time in seven games under Postecoglou, Tottenham fought back from a goal down. David Raya has displaced Aaron Ramsdale as Arsenal's number one goalkeeper as he was selected for the third consecutive game by Mikel Arteta. The Spaniard justified that decision with a stunning save to deny Brennan Johnson his first Tottenham goal. However, the visitors were not denied for long as James Maddison's cross was swept home by Son at the near post three minutes before half-time. Romero's afternoon went from



Darwin Nunez's goal was his fourth of the season for Liverpool.

bad to worse when he was harshly penalised for handball and Saka stroked home the resulting penalty to restore Arsenal's lead. But the Gunners lost record signing Declan Rice at half-time to injury and that proved costly as an error from his replacement Jorginho gifted Tottenham an equaliser just a minute later. Maddison was again the creator as he robbed the Italian midfielder and teed up Son for a cool finish into the far corner. -Liverpool's fearsome firepower - Liverpool cut Manchester City's lead at the top to two points as Jurgen Klopp's men showed more promising signs of getting back to their best. The Reds sank to fifth last season, but have the firepower that could make them the biggest threat to City's throne as champions. Mohamed Salah opened the scoring from the penalty spot after he was upended in the box by Nayef Aguerd. West Ham's only previous defeat this season came at home to City last weekend and they bounced back to fully merit their equaliser before half-time when Jarrod Bowen's diving header found the far corner. However, the Hammers were undone by a moment of magic when Alexis Mac Allister's in-chip perfect chip picked out Darwin Nunez, who volleyed into the far corner. Diogo Jota then came off the bench to make it 3-1 five minutes from time. -Mitoma's instant impact - Brighton took advantage of dropped points for both north London sides to move up to third after coming from behind to beat Bournemouth 3-1. Roberto De Zerbi made nine changes from the side that started the Seagulls' first ever European game in a 3-2 defeat by AEK Athens and paid the price in a slow start. Dominic Solanke fired Bournemouth in front after a glaring error from Brighton 'keeper Bart Verbruggen. Milos Kerkez's own goal brought Brighton level in first-half stoppage time, but that did not stop De Zerbi sending on Kaoru Mitoma at the break. The Japanese winger took just 16 seconds to put Brighton in front with a precise finish and Mitoma made sure of the points when he headed home Pervis Estupinan's cross 14 minutes from time. Chelsea's disastrous start to Pochettino's reign goes on as the toothless Blues failed to score for a third consecutive game. Malo Gusto's straight red card for a lunge on Lucas Digne on the hour mark gave the home side a mountain to climb at Stamford Bridge. Villa made their man advantage count when Ollie Watkins' powerful strike beat Robert Sanchez from a narrow angle. Despite spending more than any other Premier League club in the summer transfer window, Chelsea have taken just five points from Pochettino's first six league games in charge.



In brief

21 absconders arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police have arrested 21 absconders involved in heinous crime during the last week, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all seniors' police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes. During the crackdown, the Islamabad Capital Police Kirpa, Noon, Shahzad Town, Karachi Company, Kohsar, Industrial Area, Aabpara, Koral, Sihala, Golra, Tarnol and Bhara Kahu police stations teams have arrested 21 absconders involved in heinous crime during the last week. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the Islamabad Capital Police is taking all possible steps to eradicate the crime from the city and those involved in heinous crimes and illegal activities will be dealt with iron hands. Safety to the lives and property of the citizens is the foremost priority of Islamabad Capital Police, he added.

47 more power pilferers held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday nabbed 47 power pilferers and imposed fine of over Rs 2.5 million for stealing electricity in various areas of the company during the ongoing special anti-power theft drive. The IESCO spokesperson told that some 2,974 meters were checked during the ongoing drive. Collectively over 1,000 power thieves were caught and over all fine Rs 60.82 million has been imposed on them in last 18 days, he said. Some 163 FIRs have been registered against the power thieves while 18 have been arrested so far. He requested the consumers to share information on toll free number 118 about power theft.

Boy reunited with family

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Shams Colony police station team reunited a missing boy with his parents, a public relations officer said. According to the details, the Shams colony police station received an application from citizen Mushtaq Ali stated that his son namely Ishfaq Ahmad had been missing and could not be traced despite hectic efforts by family members. Upon receiving the application the Shams Colony police team registered the FIR and immediately started the investigation. The police team used technical and human resources and succeeded to trace the missing boy and reunited him safely with his family. The parents appreciated the police team's efforts and thanked the Islamabad Capital Police for immediate assistance. ICCPO said that the safety of lives and property of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no stone would be returned to secure the city.

23,938 screened

RAWALPINDI (APP) : As many as 23,938 persons have been screened for Hepatitis B and C so far during the second phase of the Local Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention (LHEAP) drive started on July 10. According to the District Health Authority spokesman, the LHEAP was underway in four Union Councils (UCs)-10,11,14 and 15 of the city while 117 people diagnosed with HBV



ISLAMABAD: Federal caretaker Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan and Provincial caretaker Primary and Secondary Healthcare Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir meeting today. —APP Photo

Eid Miladun Nabi to be celebrated with splendor in federal capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal dawned, Pakistan has come alive with vibrant celebrations in honor of Eid Miladun Nabi, the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him, slated for September 29.

The devout across the country have embarked on adorning mosques, homes, and businesses with resplendent lights, creating a captivating atmosphere. In the bustling Industrial Area, Sector I-9, industrialists have not only adorned their business establishments but also illuminated the roadsides with an array of colorful lights, lending a picturesque charm to the surroundings.

Government buildings, following an annual tradition, have been aglow with radiant lights in preparation for the 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal, the date observed for this revered occasion. In recognition of the significance of Eid Miladun Nabi, both the federal and provincial governments have officially declared September 29 as a public holiday, marking it as a day of traditional and religious reverence.

In anticipation of the festivities, the Islamabad Capital

Territory administration, Islamabad Police, and Islamabad Traffic Police have devised stringent security and traffic plans to ensure the smooth progress of rallies in the federal capital and its adjacent areas during the celebration of Eid Miladun Nabi. This proactive approach would maintain peace and security throughout the commemorations.

Speaking to APP, Muhammad Amir Attari, a Public Relations Officer of Dawat-e-Islami in Islamabad, shared details of the grand celebrations planned for this auspicious occasion. He disclosed that numerous rallies would be organized, commencing from various sectors and suburban areas of the federal capital, as a tribute to the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him.

The main march, orchestrated by Dawat-e-Islami in the federal capital, would commence from Jamea Masjid Faizan-e-Madina, Sector G-11 Markaz, following Friday Prayer. It would culminate at the same venue with Magrib Prayer, accompanied by supplications for Pakistan's peace, progress, prosperity, securi-

ty, and sovereignty.

Amir Attari emphasized that these rallies, in commemoration of Eid Miladun Nabi, would not be confined to Pakistan alone but would resonate across the world, demonstrating heartfelt reverence for the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him under the banner of Dawat-e-Islami.

He also noted the substantial investment in the decoration of Faizan-e-Madina, Islamabad, with captivating lights. Furthermore, he highlighted that Mehfil-e-Milad (gatherings to celebrate the birth of the Prophet) and Seerat Conferences were being held nationwide to shed light on the exemplary life of the Holy Prophet Peace Be Upon Him and to inspire believers to follow His noble path, ultimately contributing to the betterment of humanity.

In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony would host the two-day 48th International Seerat-un-Nabi Conference — Practical Wisdom for Economic Prosperity in the light of Sunnah — on Rabi-ul-Awwal 11-12 (September 28-29) in the federal capital.

Tribute paid to police, armed forces martyrs

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A dignified ceremony was held at the Islamabad Sports Complex to pay homage to the martyrs and heroes of Pakistan Police and Armed Forces.

The event, attended by a significant number of citizens, including the police, law enforcement department, business community, families of martyrs, and veterans, saw the heartfelt tribute to the sacrifices made by these brave individuals, a public relations officer said.

He said that the Islamabad Capital Police with the support of Islamabad business community organized an honorable event at Islamabad's Sports Complex to pay tribute to Pakistan armed forces and Police forces who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, fighting terrorism.

The ceremony was attend-

ed by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer, Dr. Akbar Naseer Khan, senior police officers, members of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the business community, families of martyrs and heroes, and a large number of civilians.

Renowned artists Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Aima Baig paid their respects to the martyrs and heroes through their musical tributes. The young police personnel from Islamabad Capital Police also joined in with melodious tunes, creating an atmosphere of unity and gratitude.

During the event, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, and CEO Centaurus mall Sardar Yasir Ilyas honored the families of the martyrs and heroes on stage, presenting them with recognition shields.

Representatives from the business community addressed the gathering, acknowledging the sacrifices made by Pakistan's Armed Forces and Police, affirming their commitment to support and stand by them.

They emphasized that the martyrs and heroes have unwaveringly protected the nation, and their sacrifices have fortified the country's security.

They also paid their gratitude to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan for their support in organizing this prestigious event.

On this occasion, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan thanked the business community of Islamabad for organizing this prestigious event for the families of martyrs and ghazis.

Parents appealed to vaccinate children against diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Sunday appealed to parents to get their children vaccinated against various deadly diseases.

In a video message about immunization of children, the minister said that effective measures are being taken to ensure 100% immunization coverage. He said that the ministry of Health is determined to ensure universal health coverage.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said, "Innocent children are our future and they need regular medical care particularly their safety against various diseases through regular vaccination."

He said that frontline health workers are the real heroes of our immunization program, who perform their duties with dedication and devotion.

IRSA releases 201,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 201,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 161,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1547.36 feet and was 149.36 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 96,700 cusecs and 110,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1230.85 feet, which was 180.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,600 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 117,700, 117,500, 99,900 and 43,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 21,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Ashrafi earns global acclaim for addressing Kashmir issue

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, addressing an international conference held in Mauritania, highlighted the issues of Kashmir and Palestine in a resounding manner the other day.

Representing Pakistan wholeheartedly, he gained widespread praise for his concise and insightful thoughts from global leaders attending the conference, said a statement received here on Sunday.

The conference, attended by delegates from 65 Islamic countries, included the Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani and Muslim World League Secretary-General Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa.

Ashrafi highlighted that the issues of Palestine and

Kashmir were concerns for the Muslim Ummah (community), and unity was essential to resolve them. He expressed faith in peaceful negotiations, stating that the Muslim Ummah valued dialogue but could not tolerate the desecration of its sacred scriptures.

He pledged unwavering support for the oppressed Kashmiri and Palestinian brethren, vowing to raise their voices on every international platform.

Ashrafi emphasized that the current challenges facing the Muslim Ummah could be resolved through negotiations, promoting dialogue between all religions and sects as a pathway to peace. He stressed that Pakistan was not alone in this struggle as the entire Islamic world stood by it.

He said Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia share Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

He further stated that Islam was a religion of peace and the unjust killing of innocent humans was unequivocally prohibited in Islamic law. He highlighted the importance of upholding the sanctity of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him's life and the respect for all celestial books, prophets, and messengers.

He emphasized that the OIC, and United Nations (UN) should make earnest efforts fostering interfaith and inter-sect harmony to work collectively for global peace. In conclusion, Ashrafi urged the OIC and UN to take effective measures concerning these matters, ensuring the protection of sacred values and promoting interfaith and inter-sect harmony.

Mushaal lauds PM for raising voice for oppressed Kashmiris at UNGA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussain Mallick on Sunday extolled the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar for raising voice for the oppressed Kashmiris in his address at the UN General Assembly session.

The SAPM, while addressing the award ceremony arranged by Bright Future Society, said "I am grateful to the PM for highlighting the state terrorism in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir at global stage".

Mushaal said that PM's address in the General Assembly not only helped

exposed the Indian fascist and notorious face before the world but it would also encourage the Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan never missed the chance to bring to lime light the brutalities of the Indian brutal forces before the world.

She pointed out that the PM as the ambassador and advocate of Kashmiris highlighted the worst human rights violations in the occupied valley before the international community. Mushaal vowed that Pakistan will continue to expose India's Hindu fascist regime at every forum globally.

SAPM said that the oppressed Kashmiris see Pakistan as the center of their

hopes for achieving their right to self-determination as India fascist Narendra Modi led government turned the scenic Kashmir valley into a killing field.

She said that all top Hurriyat leaders including her husband Yasin Malik was in Indian Illegally and unlawful incarceration as they were detained in fake, fabricated and politically motivated cases to silence their just voices. Morevoer, she said that Hindutva regime even subject other minorities to worst state oppression.

Mushaal said Indian government was not only involved in state terrorism in IIOJK but its notorious agency carried out terrorist activities across the world.

Admin introduces online procedure

ISLAMABAD (APP) : Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA) has introduced a new online applying and verification procedure for International Driving Permits (IDPs) by using City App.

This will make the process more convenient and efficient for residents, who can now apply for IDPs from the comfort of their own homes using the City App, ICTA spokesman said.

In order to apply for an IDP, residents can simply send their documents through the City App and wait for a message from the District Administration Islamabad. Once they receive the message, they can visit the

facilitation center to collect their IDP within 10-15 minutes.

For verifying an IDP, residents can enter the number of their National Identity Card and the Driving Permit Registration Number on the City App. The app will then display whether the IDP is real or fake.

The Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, said that the new online procedure is part of the district administration's efforts to make government services more accessible and user-friendly. He also encouraged residents to take advantage of the City App to access a variety of other services online.

Benefits of the new online procedure:1) Convenience: Residents can now apply for and verify IDPs from the comfort of their own homes;2) Efficiency: The new procedure is expected to reduce the time it takes residents to obtain an IDP.

Transparency: The online verification process will make it easier to identify fake IDPs. The new online procedure for IDP application and verification is a welcome development that will make the process more convenient and efficient for residents of Islamabad.

It is also a positive step towards making government services more accessible and user-friendly.

Diamar, Neelum Valley receives first snowfall

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Winter knocked as upper mountains and tourist spots of Diamar and the Neelum Valley in Azad Kashmir have received snowfall in the wee hours on Sunday.

The report said that Nangah Parbat including Babusar Top, Getty Das, and Fairy Meadow also received snowfall on Sunday morning.

Tourist places and mountains seem covered with a white blanket due to snowfall and lakes and waterfalls are adding to the beauty of the area.

Tourists enjoy snowfall at Babusar Top and Gatti Das, the prominent tourist destinations of Diamar as the beauty of Babusar Top and Gattidas has been enhanced by snowfall.

On the other hand, the Neelum Valley has received the first snowfall of the year.

Ratti Gali Lake, Baboon Valley and Shounter Lake have

received snowfall. The first snowfall has ushered in winter in the upper areas of Neelum Valley.

Tourists in large numbers were seen at Ratti Gali Lake, Baboon Valley, Chitta Katha Lake, and Patlian Lake.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, rain/wind-thundershower (with heavy moderate to heavy falls) is expected in Kashmir, (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhpura, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Kurram, Mansehra, Kohistan,

Abbottabad, Haripur, Kohat, Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera with occasional gaps.

Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Karak, Waziristan, Mianwali, Sargodha, Khushab, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Bhakkar, Layyah, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Bahawalnagar on 23rd and 24th September with occasional gaps.

The PMD has warned that the moderate to heavy falls may cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Lahore, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi.

It has also warned that moderate to heavy rains may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra and Abbottabad from 22nd to 24th September.



ISLAMABAD: People sitting and hanging on the roof top of Pick up van in a dangerous way may cause any mishap and need attention of concerned authorities. —APP Photo

Minister visits Health HQ

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, Acting Minister of National Defense, visited the newly established departments and polyclinic of Health Headquarter of Defense Ministry. Officials from the health center shared information about the operation and capacity of the polyclinic. The Acting Defense Minister expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the authorities and health personnel in providing improved health services to military personnel.

Minister seeks increased help

KABUL (Agencies): In a meeting with Fran Equiza, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative for Afghanistan, Acting Public Health Minister Qalandar Ebad called for increased cooperation from the global organization to expand health services in Afghanistan. According to a statement, Dr. Qalandar Ebad emphasized the need for effective and long-term health services for the Afghan people, in line with the priorities of the Afghan health sector.

Students to study based on prepared curriculum



KABUL (TOLNews): The Minister of Education, Habibullah Agha, said that students from now on will study based on a prepared curriculum in their schools and seminaries. Habibullah Agha, who was on a visit to Sar-e-Pul province, said there should

be no distance between the schools and seminaries and thus the new curriculum will be taught in both institutions. "The schools and universities should not be segregated from each other. The distance between them should be eliminated. We have now prepared a curriculum which can be used both in school and seminary until grade 9. I have gotten permission from Amirul Momineen. Of course, I have gotten permission for grade six, but I will get permission for grade 9 as well," he said.

This comes as the local officials in Sar-e-Pul called for further facilities to be provided in the educational sector in the province.

"75 major seminaries were allocated for Sar-e-Pul, and its construction was completely finished. I hope the next process phases will be launched so that the remaining seminaries can be built," said Mohammad Rahmani, head of the provincial department of education. The education minister earlier visited Jawzjan, where he stressed the need for the improvement of the educational level of Afghanistan.

IEA's army now totals 170,000, says MoD's IG



KABUL (Agencies): Ministry of Defense (MoD) Inspector General Latifullah Hakimi says the Islamic Emirate's army now totals 170,000 personnel. Speaking at an event on Sunday in Herat, attended by a group of university professors, writers, poets and others, Hakimi said that all these forces are equipped with military uniforms and efforts are being made to improve security even further. "We have 170,000 soldiers in the framework of

the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, organized, coherent and uniform soldiers," he said.

At the event, some jihadi commanders also criticized the non-payment of pensions of former soldiers.

They said that there is a need to re-recruit former Mujahideen into the ranks of the current army and to pay the pensions of officers and soldiers who are registered with the Ministry of Defense.

In addition, Herat's

Information and Culture Department Head Naeemulhaq Haqqani once again asked politicians and educated personalities of the country to return to their homeland.

"The Islamic system is not looking for opposition, it is looking for agreement. The message of general amnesty has not been closed yet, the message of amnesty is still open, whoever returns to his country, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will embrace him," said Haqqani.

Reopening of market demanded

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Some entrepreneur women in northern Takhar province have demanded the reopening of women handicraft market called Qaria-i- Ma Eftikhar e Ma — Our Village Our Pride — to help improve the economic condition of people.

The said unemployment and restrictions against women caused poverty among families asking the government to allow women to work and run their business.

Najiba Farogh, head of NGO in Takhar, said she worked with some handicraft women before regime change but after ban on women work she was stopped from her work and the handicraft market was also eroded with the passage of time.

Farogh had implemented multiple projects which included clothes sewing, bag, cloths making and others, many women were engaged making these items but after the political change some of these women left Afghanistan and now faced with economic problems.

She recalled the 'Our Village Our Pride' market was specifically created for women handicraft products during the past government but during the current government this market is closed.

Abeda, another women who make handicraft products and generate income for her eight-member family, said a special women market existed in Talooqan City from where women earned a decent amount of income and supported their families.

She, however, said after the new regime takeover the women market was shut and women were not allowed to work.

She urged government to allow business women run their business and sell their products so they could help support their families economically.

Syed Azam, the resident of Talooqan City, said in the past some women were engaged in handicraft business and they generated income for their families through this way.

He also demanded government to allow business women to work so they could support their families through this way.

NPC approves 25 projects worth 6 billion AFN



KABUL (Agencies): The National Procurement Commission (NPC) has approved a total of 25 projects, collectively valued at approximately 6 billion afghanis.

In a routine session convened Sunday at Marmarin Palace and presided over by the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, the NPC

scrutinized and deliberated on the projects outlined in the agenda.

During this session, a total of 28 projects were tabled for discussion while 25 of these projects received the green light for execution, underscoring the significant progress in this regard.

Regrettably, one contract was scrapped while two others were recommended

for thorough reevaluation.

The approved projects span various sectors, including but not limited to the Prime Minister's Protection Department, the Ministries of National Defense, Higher Education, Public Works, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Afghan Millie Bank, and Kabul Municipality.

Cumulatively, these ven-

tures represent an estimated value of approximately 6 billion AFN.

At the end of the session, pertinent directives were issued to the respective sector ministries and agencies.

These directives emphasized the need for timely submission of future projects for consideration and endorsement by the National Procurement Commission.

Eight people killed, two injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week some countries have repeated demand for the establishment of inclusive government in Afghanistan, removal of curbs against women while some linked the acting Afghan government's pending recognition with these issues.

At least 8 people killed and 2 more got wounded last week in different incidents in Afghanistan.

Kabul Police Head Quarters said, a student of Haji Abdul Qadir High School stabbed another student of the same school to death while security forces engaged in a firefight with a band of thieves in the city in which one thief was killed.

Unknown gunmen killed a teacher in Logar province and another man was killed in Faryab province.

In Bamyan, a man killed his father, according to the local officials, in a separate incident a man killed his wife in northern Jawzajan province, and as the result of a mortar shell blast two children were killed and two injured in Helmand province. In the previous week, 20 people had been killed and one injured in different incidents across the country.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, security forces and insurgents would get killed and wounded in violent incidents every week. The 78th session of the United Nations' General Assembly was held last week.

According to reports leaders from Turkey and Iran called for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, Qatar insisted

ed on the implementation of the Doha Agreement between the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' and the United States, Iran and Tajikistan emphasized on increased coordination to fight "terrorism" and Canada emphasized on women's rights in Afghanistan.

Reports said, leaders of Germany, Belgium, Abania, Denmark, France, Spain and some other countries have issued a joint statement on gender based discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan and asked the caretaker government of IEA to end the imposed sanction on the work and education of women and girls in Afghanistan as soon as possible.

The Amnesty International has also asked from the government of IEA to

open the gates of schools for girls above grade six in the country.

But Abbas Stanikzai, the Deputy of Foreign Ministry during his trip to central Panjshir province told a gathering of people that the government of IE is committed to the education of girls in the light of Sharia law and Afghan culture. He expressed hope that the universities will be open soon for the education of girls in the country.

However some other officials of IE had said that the internal issues of Afghanistan belong to the people of this country and the ban of girls' education above grade six and at the university level is a temporary issue and will be reopened once the conditions are met.

Over 100 Afghan athletes to compete in 19th Asian Games

KABUL (Agencies): The 19th Asian Games have officially commenced in Hangzhou, China. This major sporting event, which was delayed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marks the first time in over a decade that China has hosted an event of this magnitude.

The games feature more than 12,000 athletes from 45 countries worldwide, competing in 40 different sports. Among the participants are 100 athletes from Afghanistan, competing in 17 sports.

This represents a significant milestone for the country, reflecting the growth of a young generation of athletes.

The Afghan Olympic Committee has expressed

optimism about the performance of their athletes in these games.

They have reported on the intensive training and full readiness of the athletes, indicating a bright presence in the Asian Games.

Experts also suggest that Afghan athletes could potentially surprise in the Asian Games, given their preparation and potential.

Khaama Press adds: A group of Afghan female athletes living abroad are participating in the 19th Asian Games, which are being held in China.

The 19th edition of the Asian Games is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 26th of September, in the city of Hangzhou, China, at 3:30 Afghanistan time.

According to reports, this competition considered the largest sporting event in Asia, will feature Afghan athletes from inside and outside the country.

In this competition, 17 Afghan female athletes are set to represent Afghanistan following the restrictions imposed by the Taliban administration on women's sports participation abroad.

These Afghan female athletes from various countries will compete in disciplines such as cycling, volleyball, and athletics.

Simultaneously with this mission, the spokesperson of the Olympic Committee in Afghanistan announced

during a media briefing. He revealed that approximately 130 male athletes will participate in these competitions, competing in 17 different sports disciplines, including volleyball, judo, and wrestling.

Meanwhile, approximately 12,500 athletes from 40 different sports disciplines, hosted by Xi Jinping's China, compete in these games. Seventeen women represent Afghan women and girls worldwide in the 19th edition of the Asian Games hosted by China.

After the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in August 2021, they banned women and girls from participating in sports, education, and employment.

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) public health minister, Dr Qalandar Ibaad, has officially launched the newly established call center for emergencies.

The National Emergency Operations Center, will be run by Dr Nek Wali Shah Momin, and will respond to medical-related questions and concerns of the public.

"This is the responsibility of the Call Center to promptly respond to the questions and concerns of the people in close coordination with the relevant departments," added the minister before cutting the ribbon.

The Call Center is technically and financially supported by UNICEF and is



also focused on polio eradication.

It is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by highly trained

call agents. This new facility will provide assistance to citizens, ensuring swift resolution of their queries and concerns.

This center will also drive awareness and communicate through telephonic conversations, messages and surveys.

National Museum catalogues 51,700 artifacts

KABUL (Pajhwok): The National Museum of Afghanistan has documented a total of 51,742 artifacts, including 1,361

objects seized from smugglers.

The series of registration of the artifacts is yet to be completed.

The National Museum was established in 1918 in the Baghi Bala area of Kabul before being shifted to the Kofi Baghcha building

at the Presidential Palace in 1924. Later on, it was moved in 1930 to Darul Aman locality, where it remains so far.

Yahya Mohibzada, the museum's archive head, told Pajhwok Afghan News the institution had more than 100,000 different artifacts prior to the devastating civil conflict of the 1970s.

However, 70 percent of them were pillaged or went missing during the war, the official said. Its database was established in 2001 and 51,742 antiques have since been registered.

Of the registered items, 10,585 had been looted during wars and then recovered with the help of International Police

(Interpol) and some other countries. They were handed over to the museum after recovery.

Over 10,000 historical artifacts were brought back from the US, England, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and other countries.

Without going into details, Mohibzada said some of the historic artifacts of Afghanistan still exist in a number of foreign countries.

Over the past two years, he revealed the government had foiled bids to smuggle 1,361 antiques out of the country. The items recovered from smugglers were handed over to the museum and registered. Most of

them are ancient coins and statues.

Such museum pieces date back to different periods — Islamic civilisation, before Christ, Kushan dynasty, weapons of the 19th century.

They also include items recovered from areas around the Mis Ainak' copper mine in central Logar province.

He explained the National Museum had not suffered any harm during the political change of August 15 2021. All catalogued objects were safe, he maintained.

He insisted all ancient relics of the museum were physically secure and some of them stashed away in warehouses.

Every month, the National Museum welcomes about a hundred foreigners in addition to domestic visitors.

Following the political change in the country, attempts had been redoubled to secure historical relics, Mohibzada said.

However officials have repaired many relics over the past two years. Some cultural outfits had promised cooperation, but none has taken practical steps in this regard so far.

He added the incumbent interim administration government was relying only on its domestic resources in this regard.

Museums in Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Ghazni and Balkh

provinces are currently functional, with the government making efforts to bring the remaining rare pieces abroad back to the country.

Visitors also asked the caretaker government to focus on the development of cultural sites and museums across the country.

Mohammadullah, one of the visitors, remarked museums reflected the cultural and historic identity of a nation. Museums should be established in all provinces of the country, he suggested.

Idrees, another visitor, held a similar view. He urged IEA to pay more attention to preserving cultural assets of the country.





QUETTA: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq addressing a protest gathering in front of Governor House against increase in electricity and petrol prices.

Journalist sent to jail on 14 days judicial remand

ISLAMABAD (INP): A local court in Islamabad on Sunday sent journalist Muhammad Khalid Jamil to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in a case pertaining to spreading "provocative narrative against the state institutions through social media platforms".

The journalist was presented in an Islamabad district and sessions court Sunday after completion of a two-day physical remand.

During the hearing, the FIA sought more physical remand of Jamil which was rejected by Islamabad court. After hearing arguments, he was sent to jail on 14-day judicial remand.

Khalid Jamil, the bureau chief of a private news channel, was taken into custody from his residence at Media Town, Islamabad.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), the accused was found "sharing and spreading highly intimidating content/tweets on social media platforms, including X".

The FIR invoked Section 505 (statement conducing to public mischief) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). It also included Section 20 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Pecca).

The FIR asserted that the journalist was found to cause "harm to Pakistan".

Shikarpur cops foil sugar smuggling to Afghanistan

HIKARPUR (PPI): Police during an action on the National Highway seized 26 trucks loaded with sugar and urea in Shikarpur on Sunday. The raid was carried out on the National Highway by the New Fojdari police station cops on a tip-off. During the action as many as 350 tonnes of sugar and 11,254 urea bags were recovered.

The sugar and urea were to be smuggled to Afghanistan, the police said and added that the seized sugar and urea are being transferred to the food department.

A countrywide crackdown is underway against the smuggling on the orders of the caretaker government. In Karachi Mochko police in February during checking of a passenger coach found 150 bags of urea that were illegally being smuggled to Afghanistan via Balochistan.

In a raid in Quetta, the Customs department seized huge quantities of urea in Quetta. A spokesperson for the department said that 300 bags of urea and sweet supari (betel nuts) worth Rs60 million were seized during a search of container and trailer at the Lakpas Checkpost of Customs in Quetta.

Solangi promises equal treatment

KARACHI (NNI): Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi Sunday directed state media organizations to provide level playing field to all registered political parties in the upcoming general elections.

During his visit to Radio Broadcasting House Karachi, he assured an impartial treatment to all political groups during campaigning.

The Caretaker Minister said government is trying to cater to the broadcasting needs of public through digital technology. Digital Radio Mondiale will be introduced soon in the country.

Murtaza Solangi said that all political parties

should have full freedom to contest elections.

He said it was clear in the Constitution that the system of the country will be run by elected representatives. "State media should not support or oppose any political party," Murtaza Solangi said.

The minister issued directives to the official media to give fair coverage to the registered political parties.

It was the responsibility of the caretaker government to provide a conducive environment for transparent elections, Murtaza Solangi maintained. He said that the government was working for the betterment of Radio

Pakistan and that its broadcast should be digital.

Murtaza Solangi said he would try to solve radio problems under legal and constitutional powers. He assured that he would use his available time for the solution of problems.

The minister said that Radio Pakistan should meet the demands of the modern age and this was his dream.

Murtaza Solangi said that the board of Radio Pakistan would be reconstituted soon and he considered it his responsibility to improve the affairs of Radio Pakistan.

Murtaza Solangi vowed to resolve all the problems of the Radio Pakistan employees.

Pakistan, GCC agree to forge full partnership

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have agreed to forge a comprehensive partnership with a renewed focus on the promotion of bilateral trade and business relations.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and the GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi on the sidelines of 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction on the progress made in the negotiations on Pakistan-

GCC Free Trade Agreement and reiterated the need for its early conclusion.

The Secretary General agreed to cooperate closely to conclude Pakistan-GCC Free Trade Agreement at the earliest.

The Foreign Minister highlighted that Pakistan desires to strengthen institutional linkages with GCC and its member states, in line with the Joint Action Plan for Strategic Dialogue between the two sides.

He underscored that Pakistan would be ready to host a GCC Foreign Ministers' Conference in Islamabad as proposed during the 1st meeting of the

Political Dialogue held in March this year.

During the meeting, the regional and global issues of mutual interest also came under discussion.

The Foreign Minister briefed the Secretary General on situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and atrocities committed by Indian forces against innocent civilians.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani also met with the OIC Secretary-General, Houssein Ibrahim Taha, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

October 21 won't be a good day: Faisal Vawda

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior politician Faisal Vawda while warning Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif that October 21 will not be a good day for him said that the country cannot progress unless 18 political leaders are punished.

Speaking in a private TV channel program, he said he is the one who will decide which party to join, emphasizing that no party will make that choice for him. Rejecting the rumors that he had sought governorship position, he said that there is misinformation circulating about him.

Vawda clarified that he is currently not affiliating with any political party and asserted that he will make his political decisions independently, based on his own understanding and assessment of the situation.

Expressing his views on the political landscape, he

acknowledged interim Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar as a prominent figure and mentioned that current political developments are of a temporary nature, with the upcoming government expected to serve for a duration ranging from 12 to 17 months, primarily influenced by the wishes of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

Terming the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as homeopathic, he said that the previous elections were not transparent, and the next elections will not be transparent either. The senior politician went on to say that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa are the hope for the country, adding that Pakistan shouldn't be disappointed with the Chief Justice. He also predicted

that Arshad Sharif case will be reopened, adding that the real faces of some people will be exposed.

Regarding PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan, Vawda said that October 21 will not be a good day for him.

"The new Chief Justice and Army Chief have sparked hope after 75 years," he said and added the Army Chief's decisions have caused the value of the dollar to decline. Furthermore, he asserted that the country cannot develop without bringing 18 political leaders to the justice.

Faisal Vawda said, "PTI doesn't have popularity of its own, and PTI chairman is popular due to hatred of PDM, while Sheikh Rasheed is a sensible person." Additionally, he mentioned that Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar and Ali Mohammad Khan are notable figures within the party.

20 injured as Mari Indus Express hits freight train

SHEIKHUPURA (PPI) Twenty people, including a train driver and his assistant, were injured when a passenger train hit a freight train at the Qila Sattar Shah Railway Station in Sheikhupura on Sunday.

According to rescue sources, Mari Indus Express 147 DE 6422 was on its way to Lahore from Mianwali when it collided with a freight train at the Qila Sattar Shah Railway Station. As a result, train driver Imran Sarwar, assistant driver Muhammad Bilal and 18 passengers sustained injuries.

Fifteen of the injured were given first aid on the spot while five critically injured were shifted to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital for treatment.

The alleged negligence of the staff of the Qila Sattar Shah Railway Station was stated to be the cause of the accident, according to the railway sources.

Iran defused 30 bombs in Tehran

DUBAI (Reuters): Authorities in Iran have neutralised 30 bombs meant to go off simultaneously in Tehran and detained 28 terrorists linked to Da'ish, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday, citing the intelligence ministry.

"Some of the members are of Da'ish and the perpetrators have a history of being affiliated with Takfiri groups in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Kurdistan region of Iraq," Iran's intelligence ministry added in a statement.

The militant group has claimed several attacks in Iran, including deadly twin bombings in 2017 that targeted Iran's parliament and the tomb of the Islamic Republic's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

More recently, Da'ish claimed responsibility for an attack on a Shia shrine last October, where 15 people were killed in the southwestern city of Shiraz.

7,187 illegal connections disconnects

LAHORE (NNI): In an effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) continues its crackdown.

The SNGPL has disconnected a total of 7,187 illegal gas connections in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad.

According to the details, Sui Northern - as part of its crackdown - disconnected over 7,000 connections and slapped a fine of over Rs406 million to the violators. SNGPL spokesperson said in Peshawar fine of Rs190,000 was imposed on the violators and Rs110,000 in Rawalpindi.

In Mardan fine of Rs529,000 was slapped over gas thieves and Rs178,000 in Gujranwala.

Earlier, in twin cities of Pakistan, the crackdown led to the disconnection of 23 illegal gas connections, while in Sialkot and Sargodha, 17 connections were met a similar fate.

Furthermore, the spokesperson for SNGPL reported that 75 gas connections were disconnected in Gujranwala, Lahore, Sheikhupura, and Sahiwal. Meanwhile, in Bahawalpur and Multan, 34 gas connections were disconnected due to their illegal use.

Ties with Israel depend on national, Palestinian interests

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani maintained that Pakistan's decision regarding establishing relations with Israel would be determined with consideration of both Pakistan's national interests and those of the Palestinian people.

The statement came in response to Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen's remarks regarding normalisation of Israel's relations with the Muslim world. Cohen, as reported by Israeli media outlet Kan News, suggested that "six or seven" Islamic nations were likely to normalise ties with Israel, following Saudi Arabia's potential inclusion in the Abraham Accords, which already involved the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.

The Israeli minister also claimed to have met with leaders from several Muslim countries who have not recognised Israel yet.

Jalil, in response to the Israeli FM's assertion, clarified that Cohen has not met with any Pakistani offi-

cial in recent times.

In 2005, during the tenure of former president General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's then-foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri met with his then-counterpart Silvan Shalom in Turkey, Istanbul.

This was the first meeting that took place publicly and was a result of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's efforts. However, no such meetings at the level of foreign ministers or higher have been reported in the media since then.

A senior Pakistani diplomat, on the condition of anonymity, hoped that Pakistan would not have to make a decision on this matter in the near future.

In his address at the 78th United Nations General Assembly this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said peace with Saudi Arabia means peace between the Muslim world and Jews.

Netanyahu also claimed Israel is "on the cusp" of normalising ties with Saudi Arabia while holding maps showing the West Bank,

Gaza, and Golan Heights as part of Israel.

His statement has since sparked a new debate about which Muslim countries, after the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, will establish relations with Israel.

It should be noted that Cohen has claimed that six or seven Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, will soon recognise Israel.

However, he did not mention the names of those seven countries due to the situation in Libya, international affairs experts believe.

A significant diplomatic issue with Libya was sparked less than a month ago by Cohen, whose office disclosed that then-former foreign minister of Libya, Najla Mangoush, had met with him in Rome.

Mangoush was fired as a result of the discovery, which also caused widespread protests in North Africa, and fled to London. Following his error, US officials reprimanded Cohen for "killing" the conduit of communication with Libya, The Cradle reported.

Sell borrower properties, says Sirajul Haq

QUETTA (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) Ameer Sirajul Haq demanded the government that the properties and assets of those who have taken loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should be sold and paid.

Sirajul Haq addressed the participants of a sit-in at Quetta on Sunday and said loans from IMF have been taken by Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari and Imran Khan but these loans are being paid off by squeezing the blood of the people.

Siraj said despite the passage of 76 years, the British system still exists in the country.

He said it is difficult for 250 million people of Pakistan to run their kitchens and pay utility bills easily.

He announced that his war was against oppressors and thieves of flour, sugar and rice.

He said that there is a valuable opinion of experts that a unit of electricity can be generated in Pakistan for Rs5 only while the rulers made bad and anti-masses agreements due to which a unit of electricity is costing Rs56 nowadays.

He pointed out that the former rulers of the country, by plunging it into a quagmire of crises, are now

attempting to conceal their corruption.

He called upon the government to confront these challenges with courage and decisiveness, or alternatively, admit their helplessness before the people.

Emphasizing the Jamaat-e-Islami's commitment to fostering awareness among the populace, the JI Emir stressed the importance of distinguishing between allies and adversaries.

He condemned the elite's privileges and called for their reduction, arguing that those responsible for Balochistan's plight are now blaming the province for its troubles.

UNHCR: Out of 3.7m Afghans living Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Out of total 3.7 million Afghans living in Pakistan, only over 1.3 million are registered, while 775,000 are still to be registered.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee's (UNHCR) statistics compiled up to June 2023, 68 per cent Afghan migrants are living in Pakistan's urban and semi-urban areas while

the remaining 32 per cent are settled in villages and tribal areas.

Out of total 3.7 million, 700,000 Afghan nationals are settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); 300,000 in Balochistan; close to 200,000 in Punjab, 73,000 in Sindh, 41,000 in Islamabad and over 4,000 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The Afghans, living in Pakistan illegally, are involved in the smuggling of narcotics and other prohibited items.

If we look at history, we find out that Pakistan suffered immensely by letting the Afghans in since it was after their arrival that Pakistani markets were flooded with foreign products. The Afghans benefitted a lot from that as their businesses flourished. But they refused to pay taxes, which badly affected the country's economy.

Govt determined to take country out of crisis

KARACHI (NNI): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Shamshad Akhtar said that the caretaker government was determined to take the country out of the economic crisis.

She said this while talking to Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House in Karachi Sunday.

Caretaker finance minister said remissions are offered to the investors to increase investment in the country. The Sindh governor, on the occasion, lauded the steps being taken by the government for the deal

with economic challenges confronted to the nation.

Dr Shamshad Akhtar, the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue on Friday said that the securities market can play a vital role in the development of debt market through the listing of Government debt securities on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Centralized Gateway Portal, a unique financial initiative that simultaneously onboard investors and customers in the securities market, the NBFC sector, and the insurance industry.

'Six or seven' Muslim countries to make peace with Israel: Report

JERUSALEM (Agencies): Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen has stated that "six or seven" Muslim countries could "make peace" with Israel if it signed a peace agreement with Saudi Arabia, according to a report.

The Jerusalem Post said that Cohen made the remarks while speaking to Kan News following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on Friday. The publication quoted Cohen as saying that "peace with Saudi Arabia means peace with the greater Muslim world".

"There are at least another six or seven countries that I have met with—significant Muslim countries with which we do not have relations — that are interested [in peace]," the

minister said.

According to the report, Cohen said the countries were in Africa and Asia but declined to name them. He later said that only some had been directly in touch with him.

US President Joe Biden is hoping to transform the Middle East — and score an election-year diplomatic victory — by securing recognition of the Jewish state by Saudi Arabia.

In his speech at the UNGA, Netanyahu said he believed his country was on the cusp of peace with Saudi Arabia, predicting it could be clinched by Biden and reshape the Middle East.

Yet, amid urging by Riyadh and Washington that the Palestinians be included in the diplomacy, Netanyahu said that Palestinians should not be

allowed to veto the regional dealmaking.

Last week, Netanyahu said the ambitious US-backed deal to normalise relations with Saudi Arabia was possible, as he met Biden in New York.

Saudi Arabia has been one of the biggest backers of the Palestinian cause and has repeatedly stated that it needed to see a Palestinian state before taking up normalisation with Israel.

Washington has been pressing its traditional ally Riyadh to sign a normalisation deal with Israel, which would be its biggest diplomatic win in the region, following similar agreements with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco, known as the Abraham Accords.



KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a ceremony held in his honor at Radio Pakistan Broadcasting House. —APP Photo