

IHC reserves verdict
ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Islamabad High Court on Monday reserved its judgment on whether the hearing bail plea in the cipher case involving the imprisoned PTI chairman should be held in-camera or not. As Chief Justice Amir Farooq heard the petition, Barrister Salman Safdar and Shah Khawar appeared before the court as defence representative and prosecutor respectively.

 @thefrontierpost

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

Shujaat calls for unity
GUIRAT (PPI): PML-Q Q head Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, emphasised the importance of unity among politicians for the nation's interest, regardless of their differences. Chaudhry Shujaat expressed, "I've always been an advocate for open dialogue, and I've passed on the same message to my sons. I've advised Chaudhry Shafay and Chaudhry Salik to consistently stand by the oppressed and thwart the oppressor."

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX No. 248 Regd. No. 241 RABI-UI-AWWAL 09 1445 -- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

UK investors show keen interest in Pak's capital market

LONDON (APP): The investors of the United Kingdom's capital and financial market in a meeting with Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday expressed their keen interest in exploring investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The leaders of the notable investment firms who met the prime minister in London included Fidelity International Limited (FIL), Wellington Management, Ashmore, Jefferies International, Redwheel Capital, Switex Industrial SA, Oxford Frontier Capital, GuarantCo, JP Morgan, Kalrock Capital, and UBL UK.

Prime Minister Kakar informed the delegation about Pakistan's current economic landscape, highlighting government measures for external account improvement. He said that recent administrative actions strengthened the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar, fostering optimism for stability.

He said positive indicators, including inflows from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and friendly nations, contributed to reduced inflation, stabilized reserves, and revival of industrial growth. The prime minister spoke about the potential for foreign direct investment in Pakistan's key sectors and the positive impact of the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, exceeding expectations and stabilizing the economy and currency.

He also highlighted economic improvements such as reduced inflation with expected sustained decline, and upcoming growth in agriculture and industry. He mentioned improved trade after removal of restrictions on imports and fiscal measures for monetary support and medium-term inflation targets.

The prime minister highlighted Pakistan's pro-investment efforts, introducing the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). This initiative, led by the prime minister himself, streamlines investment processes, attracts investments in key sectors, and fosters long-term growth by simplifying the business landscape.

The British investors enquired about the continuity of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme in Pakistan and reform efforts from short to medium term. The prime minister assured them that Pakistan had expressed its commitment to the IMF programme by undertaking reforms committed with the IMF.

Kakar urges British fashion firm to open buying house in Pakistan: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, highlighting Pakistan's pro-investment policies and facilities, urged the UK-based Boohoo Group to consider opening buying houses in Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with leading British businessman and co-founder and Executive Chairman of Boohoo Group Abdullah Kamani, emphasised the advantages of investment in Pakistan and extended an invitation to Boohoo Group to send a buying delegation to Pakistan for enhanced collaboration.

In the meeting, Kamani expressed keen interest in establishing long-term buying linkages with Pakistan and the ambition to create a comprehensive supply chain in the country, encompassing organic cotton to apparel production. They also hoped for improved Pakistan-UK air connectivity to facilitate increased imports from Pakistan.

Prime Minister Kakar conveyed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating investment and offered support in establishing manufacturing facilities within the country, particularly within Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The meeting marked a significant step towards enhancing economic cooperation and trade between Pakistan and the firm.

Boohoo Group is a prominent British online fashion retailer with annual sales exceeding one billion pounds, with a wide range of popular brands including boohooMAN, Pretty Little Thing (PLT), Miss Pap, Karen Millen, Coast, Oasis, and Debenhams.



LONDON: UK's Foreign Secretary Rt. Hon. James Cleverly called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Anchorperson Imran Riaz recovered

ISLAMABAD (INP): Renowned TV Anchorperson Imran Riaz Khan who had been missing for more than four months is now "safe at home". Punjab Inspector General (IG) Dr Usman Anwar confirmed.

According to media reports, Sialkot District Police Officer (DPO) Hassan Iqbal and Riaz's lawyer, Mian Ali Ashfaq, also confirmed the development. Riaz a YouTuber and television anchor was arrested two days after violent protests broke out across the country following PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest on May 9. He was last known to be taken to Cantt police station after his arrest and later to the Sialkot prison. On May 15, a law officer told the Lahore High Court (LHC) that the anchorperson was released from jail after taking an undertaking in writing.

On September 20, the LHC had given the Punjab police chief a "last opportunity" to recover Riaz by September 26 (tomorrow). During the hearing, LHC Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti had stated that his patience was "running out". In a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) during the early hours of Monday, the Sialkot police said, "Journalist/anchor Mr Imran Riaz Khan has been safely recovered."

Adjournments in cases is a matter of past: CJP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to reduce the pendency of cases in the country's top court, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has called for ending the practice of seeking adjournments.

During a hearing of an agreement violation case on Monday, the CJP remarked: "Get this out of [your] mind that adjournments will be granted [in cases] from now on." CJP Isa said that the practice of granting adjournments in the cases should now be considered a thing of the past. He said there are a lot of pending cases in the Supreme Court and added that in any case, a notice will be issued to the parties on a single hearing and a decision will be taken on the arguments in the next hearing.

CJP Isa maintained that through this case he was sending a message to everyone that adjournment in cases will not be granted anymore. The top judge said time is given in other courts for the submission of documents related to cases but the Supreme Court is the last court of resort where records of all cases were submitted beforehand.

Justice Isa who took the oath as the Chief Justice of Pakistan on September 17, 2023, had pledged that during the hearing of a first case as the country's top judge all-out efforts would be made to dispose of the pending cases at the earliest. Former CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial had blamed constitutional cases for the increase in cases backlog in the country's top court.

Highlighting the performance of the court after he assumed charge, the former CJP had said the apex court disposed of some 23,000 cases last year, breaking the record of 18,000 cases in one year. The Supreme Court decided 24,303 cases during the period from last year — February 2, 2022, to February 25, 2023 — against the total institution of 22,018 new cases during the same period.

The pendency/backlog of cases in the Supreme Court of Pakistan was reduced by 2,285 cases from 54,735 to 52,450 during the aforementioned period. The number of cases decided in the annual period ending February 2023 was the highest since 2018 when the total disposal was 16,961 cases.

IHC directs shifting PTI chief to Adiala Jail, providing due facilities

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday directed the authorities concerned to shift the chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan from Attock Jail to Adiala Jail.

Chief Justice IHC Aamer Farooq heard a petition submitted by the lawyers of former prime minister demanding that he be shifted from the Attock to Adiala Jail. The chief justice said the status of the PTI chairman's sentence had changed. As all the under-trial prisoners of Islamabad were in Adiala Jail, why the PTI chairman was still in Attock, the court asked.

The court asked Additional Attorney General Mansoor Iqbal

ed from the Attock to Adiala Jail. The chief justice said the status of the PTI chairman's sentence had changed. As all the under-trial prisoners of Islamabad were in Adiala Jail, why the PTI chairman was still in Attock, the court asked.

The court asked Additional Attorney General Mansoor Iqbal

Dogal that if the government sent the PTI chief to Rahim Yar Khan Jail, will his trial start there. The CJ ordered the authorities to shift the PTI chairman to Adiala Jail. During the hearing, the lawyer requested the court that as the PTI chairman was a sportsman, an exercise machine may be provided to him.

Solangi participates in SCO's festival

NANJING (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Monday participated in the Television Festival 2023, organized by Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Nanjing, China.

On the occasion, Murtaza Solangi met Chinese Minister for National Radio and TV Cao Shumin and thanked her for organizing the festival. During the meeting, both ministers expressed the resolve to enhance cooperation in the areas of television and radio.

They vowed to promote innovation in media technology and exchange of journalistic delegations. Murtaza Solangi called for initiating the Chinese Hour programme on PTV. He also stressed for promoting the activities of Chinese media in Pakistan.

Quran desecration in The Hague deliberately provocative act: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemned in the strongest terms the latest senseless and deeply offensive act of desecration of the Holy Quran outside embassies of Muslim countries in The Hague, Netherlands, terming it a "deliberately provocative and Islamophobic act", the Foreign Office said on Monday.

"It is a deliberately provocative and Islamophobic act that has hurt the sentiments of Muslims around the world. Such acts cannot be condoned under the guise of freedom of expression, opinion and protest," a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) read. It added that the country believes that freedom of expression comes with responsibilities.

Pakistan also urged the governments of different countries to actively prevent

racist and Islamophobic acts, which incite religious hatred. "It is important for the international community to raise its voice against Islamophobia and work in concert to promote interfaith harmony," the statement also said while referring to the 2022 United Nations resolution on combating Islamophobia.

It further stated that Islamabad has conveyed its concerns to the Dutch authorities. "We urge them to be mindful of the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and Muslims around the world and take active steps to prevent such hateful and Islamophobic acts." It may be noted that the incidents of Quran burning and desecration have been on the rise for the last few months.

Last month, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressed grave concern over an increase in

Islamophobia after a spike in incidents of Holy Quran burning in Nordic nations. Notorious people, with their governments' approval, have in the last few weeks desecrated the holy book in Sweden and Denmark, inviting strong criticism from Muslim countries.

The 18th Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the OIC adopted a comprehensive resolution expressing grave concern over increasing incidents of intolerance, discrimination, and rising Islamophobia, a statement from the Foreign Office said. Later, the government in Denmark, which is one of the countries where such incidents happen frequently, said it has prepared a bill that — if passed — could lead to a countrywide ban on Quran burnings, amidst rising terror threats and outrage in the Muslim world.

PHC annoys law and order situation

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) annoyed law & order situation in Peshawar and observed that no one can go to Sarband and Warsak road areas in bright daylight while added that how can anyone travel at night, on Monday.

PHC's Justice SM Attique Shah further observed that rivals are opening firing on each other in daylight but no one can accept responsibility for law and order. He inquired that Mr. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) are you aware about your area and added that what are doing police?

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed and SSP Operation Peshawar Kashif Abbasi and counsel for petitioner Sohail Advocate appeared before court during hearing of compensation plea of deceased, killed in cross-firing as a pedestrian.

The counsel argued that Muhammad Israr was killed in firing among two rivals as a pedestrian in the premises of Badabher police station and added that now accused didn't pay compensation to the deceased's family. Justice SM Attique Shah inquired from Kashif Abbasi that Mr. SSP Operation Peshawar are you aware about your area? SSP admitted that he is familiar with area.

In the meantime, Justice SM Attique observed that

then go one kilometer inside Matani and Warsak road areas because citizens can't go to the premises as rivals are opening firing in daylight on each other and added that it isn't Pak-Afghan but heart of Peshawar.

PHC's Justice further observed that a pedestrian was killed in firing while police did nothing in this regard and now rivals didn't pay compensation to the deceased's family. He added that if rivals didn't grant compensation then provincial government will pay it. Justice SM Attique remarked that 8 children become orphans due to killing of Muhammad Israr as a pedestrian in firing among rivals and added that what will be the fate of children? PHC inquired regarding police inquiry and ordered submission of report while directed Advocate General to submit report within fortnight in this regard and adjourned further hearing.

Death toll in cylinder blast reaches six

SUKKUR (PPI): Two more victims of Sukkur cylinder blast succumbed to their injuries at a hospital on Monday, hospital officials confirmed. Seven people suffered injuries in the blast that took place at an LPG shop near main bus terminal four days ago.



Revenue Division
Federal Board of Revenue
Government of Pakistan

Filing is Beneficial For You and the Country

File your Income Tax Return Today and be an Active Taxpayer



ENLISTMENT IN ATL
Reduced Tax Rate on different financial transactions

AVOID NON-FILING PENALTIES
Double Tax Rate - Fine and Imprisonment

YOUR TAX IS SPENT ON YOU
through various projects of public welfare and national development.

SCAN TO FILE



Don't wait for the last date, file your income tax return online today.

LAST DATE

2023
30
September

Non-Filing of tax returns may cause fine of Rs. 1000/- per day and legal action

File your return and avoid higher withholding tax rates.

Tax Compliant Pakistan - Self Reliant Pakistan

FBR PR WING HELPLINE
051 111 772 772

helpline@fbr.gov.pk www.fbr.gov.pk

PID(1) 1904-D/23



Baqar directs audit of varieties, orders holding of Senate meetings

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar has directed the University & Board Education Commission (HEC), Sindh to conduct an audit of all the public sector universities and direct them to establish their pension fund for timely payment of pensions to their retiring or to be retired employees.

"I am surprised that nine public sector universities have not held their Senate meeting in the last eight to nine years and they must but taken to task and their senate meeting be held at the earliest.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting of the Universities and Boards Dept and provincial Higher Education Commission here at the CM House. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhre Alam, Chairman HEC Prof Tariq Rafiq, PSCM Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatui, Secretary U&B Noor Mohammad Samo, and others.

HEC: The Chairman HEC told the interim CM



that Sindh HEC was established in 2013 with a mandate to promote and improve higher education, research, and development in the Sindh Province.

The provincial HEC mainly focuses on faculty development; improving access; promoting excellence in learning and research; governance and management; enhancing quality assessment, monitoring & evaluation, and physical technological infrastructure development.

The important programs of the HEC were the Research Support Program,

M.Phil, Ph.D Scholarship Program, Laboratory Strengthening Program, and Smart Classroom program.

To a question, CM was told that there were 27 universities in the public sector in the province, of them nine have not held their Senate meetings in the last eight years. At this, the CM said that the Senate was an Apex body of the universities, and their Senate body passed their budgets.

It was also pointed out that most of the public sector universities were running huge losses due to financial management. At

this, the CM directed the Secretary U&B to conduct an audit of all the universities through well-reputed and recognized auditors.

The CM said that the universities of the world through their research work have introduced revolutions, in science & technology, medicine, and in various other fields but our universities have not shown such commendable work which could be quoted at international fora.

Justice Baqar said that most Ph.D. degree holders have no such excellence, so we have to examine where

the flaws exist.

Pension fund. The CM directed U&B and HEC to ask all the universities to establish their pension fund. At Karachi University and various other universities, retired employees were running from pillar to post to get their pensions. This system needed to be reformed and upgraded, he said.

KU: On the directives of the Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar the teachers of Karachi University have called off their strike.

The Secretary U&B Noor Ahmed Samoo and Chairman HEC Prof Tariq Rafiq held a meeting with the teachers who had suspended their teaching activities for want of their demands. The CM's condition for the talks was the resumption of educational activities.

The KU staff assured the CM that they would resume the educational activities and then talks were held. On behalf of the CM, the Secretary U&B and HEC Chairman assured the KU staff that their demands would be accepted.

Japanese envoy discusses issues of mutual interest with CM Naqvi



LAHORE (APP): Japanese Ambassador Wada Mitsuhiko called on caretaker chief minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office to discuss various areas of mutual interest.

During their discussion, topics such as tourism, museum restoration, the automotive industry, water resources, and the ongoing programme by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) were addressed. The CM expressed his appreciation for Japan's technical assis-

tance aimed at enhancing services for the people of Punjab. He highlighted the collaboration with Japan in restoration of not only the Taxila Museum but also the Lahore Museum.

Recognising Japan's prominent position in the automotive industry, he showed interest in cooperation regarding electric motorbikes. Japan's remarkable technological expertise was acknowledged and its support in advancing Punjab's development was sought by the CM.

The Japanese ambassador assured the CM of continued technical support and emphasized their commitment to cooperation in fields such as museums and culture.

Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir, chief secretary, senior member board of revenue, secretary P&D, secretary to CM, deputy commissioner, honorary consul general of Japan Amir Shirazi, first secretary & head of the political section Mr Nabukuni Shinohara were also present.



KARACHI: Shia Muslims Participating in Chup Tazia Procession. —INP Photo

Pak-Canada ties being strengthened: Tessori

KARACHI (PPI): Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori in Karachi on Monday.

Pak-Canada relations, services of the Pakistani community living in Canada and other issues came under discussion on the occasion.

Talking to them, the Sindh Governor said Pak-Canada relations are strengthening with the passage of time and increase in economic relations will be beneficial for both countries.

He said Pakistan supports the stance of Canada on the issue of killing of Hardeep Singh on the soil of Canada. Kamran Khan Tessori said India has been involved in terrorist activities in Pakistan as well and it has transformed occupied Kashmir into a big prison of the world.

11 drug inspectors suspended

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab Primary Healthcare Department has suspended 11 drug inspectors in six districts of the province over Avastin injection issue.

Three inspectors were suspended each in Lahore and Bahawalpur, two in Rahimyar Khan and one each in Jhang, Kasur and Khaniwal. Those who were suspended included drug controller, deputy drug controller and drug controller.

Two drug inspectors and a deputy drug controller were suspended in Lahore who were identified as Daniyal Ilahi Cheema, Sher Muhammad Zaman and Rana Muhammad Shahid.

Drug controller Atiya Nawaz suspended from Jhang, drug controllers Ali Raza and Rana Muhammad Akram, and deputy drug controller faced the music in Bahawalpur, drug controller Ameer Shahid and deputy drug controller Farrakh Saleem were suspended from Rahimyar Khan, drug control Sanaulah Saif from Kasur and drug controller Rana Akram from Khanewal also faced the action.

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life source of salvation; says Balighur

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that the Uswa-e-Hasana of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is a source of salvation and guidance for us.

Addressing a ceremony in connection with the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) "Building Islamic Society in the Light of teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)" at the Governor's House here on Monday, he said Allah sent the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) as a mercy for all mankind, adding, love for Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is an integral part of our faith.

The Governor Punjab said when the Arabs were

passing through the age of ignorance, the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) gave them the message of Allah and enlightened them with the teachings of Islam.

He said Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) set an example of the highest character and forgiveness by forgiving his worst enemies on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah. The Governor Punjab said that the problems of the present era can be solved by following the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

He said Islam gave rights to the downtrodden sections of the society and women in the age of ignorance when daughters were buried alive as soon as they were born.

He said that the people should develop the habit of research, adding that our religion has placed great emphasis on research and critical thinking. The Governor Punjab said many false and unverified things are spread on social media these days. He said, "We should neither believe what we hear nor spread it without confirmation."

He emphasized the need to take guidance from Sirat Tayyaba (PBUH) to solve our problems. Prof. Dr. Mufti Intikhab Ahmed Noori, Prof. Dr. Saeed Ahmed Saeedi, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, Allama Dr. Raghib Hussain Naeemi and Prof. Dr. Humayun Abbas Shams and others spoke on this occasion.

Egypt makes polio certificate mandatory for Pakistan

KARACHI (INP): The Egyptian authorities have made it mandatory for travelers from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other countries to provide a polio vaccination certificate.

"As informed by the Egyptian Authorities, passengers travelling to Egypt from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Malawi, Mozambique and Congo are requested to provide an international certificate of vaccination specifically polio vaccine, OPV or IPV (both are acceptable)," Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said in an advisory on its website on Monday.

It added that foreigners who have stayed more than four weeks in the above-mentioned countries are also required to provide polio vaccination in order to travel to Egypt.

Last month, the International Health Regulations' (2005) Emergency Committee, responsible for assessing global poliovirus spread, expressed concerns over Pakistan's efforts to reach a large number of children through its polio eradica-

tion campaign.

In a session convened by the World Health Organisation (WHO) director general on August 16, 2023, the committee highlighted the gaps in Pakistan and Afghanistan's efforts to eliminate polio.

It emphasised that recent favorable environmental samples from Peshawar and Karachi underscore the persistent risk of a polio outbreak in Pakistan.

The committee highlighted that a new case of WPV1 emerged in Pakistan since the last meeting, bringing the 2023 total to two cases. Both instances occurred in the Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. Throughout the year, at least 15 environmental surveillance-positive samples were identified.

"Although the action plan in southern KP has resulted in 160,000 more children being vaccinated, the context remains challenging — including political instability, insecurity in some areas with front-line workers requiring police patrols to accompany them and vaccination boycotts,

where communities make demands for other services in exchange for allowing polio vaccination," the committee further said.

Commenting on the emergency committee's statement, Pakistan's caretaker health minister Dr Nadeem Jan told The News that boosting routine immunisation and coverage of zero dose via outreach campaigns would help in polio eradication efforts in the country.

In Afghanistan, since the last meeting, there have been five new WPV1 cases reported, all from Nangarhar province, the emergency committee said adding that the cases occurred in five different districts and had onsets from April to May 2023.

"Any setback in Afghanistan poses a risk to the programme in Pakistan due to high population movement," the emergency committee warned.

The committee further observed that in 2023, there were only two genetic clusters of WPV1 identified, compared to three in 2022 and five in 2021.

Hajj duration may be cut to 18 days

KARACHI (PPI) The Ministry of Religious Affairs has proposed a shorter duration for Hajj pilgrimage next year, allowing pilgrims to decide the duration of their pilgrimage.

This proposal is currently under consideration by the interim Minister of Religious Affairs. The introduction of a shorter Hajj duration, which could last between 18 to 20 days is seen as a significant move to make the pilgrimage more accessible and manageable.

This was informed in a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs which was held in Islamabad on Monday under the chair of Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri. The committee chairman also proposed that the Hajj duration should be of 18 to 30 days.

Last year, the official Hajj package spanned a period of 10 days and cost Rs1,020,000. However, the Saudi government has offered shelters and is ready to give some concessions to all the pilgrims. They are planning to increase the number of pilgrims to 10 million, the committee was informed.

Currently, the Road to Makkah programme is being run only from Islamabad International Airport. However, the Saudi government has decided to include Karachi in the Road to Makkah programme in the next Hajj, according to the caretaker minister for religious affairs. Efforts to include Lahore in the Road to Makkah programme are also underway, he added.

The Road to Makkah project refers to the immigration of pilgrims at Islamabad Airport.

UoK professors' continue to boycott classes

KARACHI (NNI): The University of Karachi (UoK) Professors' Association continued their protest due to which more than 46,000 students are facing academic loss.

According to details, the Karachi University Professors' Association announced to persist a complete boycott of classes until their demands are not met.

The ongoing protest by the Karachi University Professors' Association has resulted in an academic loss

for over 46,000 students.

The professors are demanding to pay their remaining dues of evening class professors be paid and morning class instructors receive additional relief. According to the Karachi University Professors' Association, the Sindh government has not increased their salaries.

The professors' are demanding to disburse the remaining dues of evening class professors, and Ad-hoc relief should also be

provided to the morning class teachers.

On the other hand, the Karachi University administration has stated that the M.Phil and Ph.D. fees for professors have been waived, and over Rs 1.15 billion have been disbursed within a year.

The administration has also urged the professors' association to resolve the issues through negotiations instead of boycotting classes, as disrupting in education will only bring loss to the students academics.

PBSA commissioner met S. Korean envoy



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Boys Scouts Association (PBSA) National Commissioner Sardar Waqar Shahzad meet with South Korea ambassador in Islamabad Park Kijun,

on Monday.

PBSA commissioner Sardar Waqar congratulated Park Kijun on his new posting at Islamabad and discussed various fields of great opportunities for both nations. Both countries can increase trade, transfer of

technology, Buddhist Gandhara Heritage, promoting Taekwondo sports and increasing the number of Pakistani students in Korean Universities. Sardar Waqar invited His Excellency Park Kijun to visit Swat valley at the suitable time.

14 power pilferers arrested

LAHORE (APP): On the 19th day of an anti-power theft operation, Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) got arrested 14 electricity thieves by the police and detected pilferage on 359 connections in all its work circles, the company's spokesman confirmed to the media here Monday.

He added that FIR applications against 358 electricity thieves had been submitted in the respective police stations, out of which 178 FIRs had been registered while 14 accused had been arrested. Among detected connections, one was agricultural, 20 were commercial and 338 domestic categories and supply to all of them have been disconnected, he said, asserting that all the electricity pilferers had also been charged a total of 570,400 detection units worth Rs 28.804 million.

Sharing further details, the spokesman said that 6,482 detection units of Rs 300,000 were charged to a domestic connection on Arcade Road in Ichhra area, 5,500 detection units of Rs 287,369 to a domestic customer pilfering electricity on Natha building in new Shadbagh area, 4,365 units worth Rs 256,720 to a pilferer in Rasoolpura area, 3,800 detection units bill amounting to Rs 256,000 to another electricity thief in Islamia Colony, and 4,273 detection units of Rs 250,000 were charged to a domestic connection in Ichhra area.

The spokesman mentioned that during 19 days of anti-power theft operations, LESCO detected pilferage on a total of 8,588 connections in its domain. The company also submitted FIR applications against 7,935 electricity pilferers, out of which 6,604 FIRs have been registered and 550 accused have so far been arrested. All the electricity pilferers have been charged an accumulative bill of Rs 802.462 million against 18,216,296 detection units.

It should be noted that operations against electricity thieves are being conducted as per the instructions of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is personally supervising these operations.

SNGPL finds another 111 illegal connections

LAHORE (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), during its ongoing gas theft crackdown, caught another 111 illegal connections in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad and imposed Rs. 2.698 million fine on the culprits.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected three connections on illegal use of gas and another three for using compressor. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected eight connections over the use of compressor, while another one was disconnected for consuming gas illegally. The company also processed 42 under-billing cases.

The company disconnected 14 connections on illegal use of gas in Multan. The regional team imposed Rs. 9,000 fine on gas pilferers. In Sheikhupura, three connections were disconnected by the regional team.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 21 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections.

The regional team also lodged one FIR against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi, the regional team disconnected seven gas connections and imposed Rs.100,000 fine over gas theft. The SNGPL team detected 53 domestic under-billing cases in Mardan and imposed Rs 0.34 million fine.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected nine connections over the use of compressors and one commercial meter for under-billing. In Sargodha, 617 under-billing cases were processed and three meters were disconnected over the use of compressors. Also eight connections were disconnected over illegal use of gas and Rs 1.26 million fine was imposed. The regional team in Gujranwala detected 149 under-billing cases, disconnected six meters and imposed Rs. 875,000 fine.

In Gujrat, five connections were disconnected over illegal use of gas. The company disconnected eight connections over illegal use of gas in Islamabad.



Re-conduct of exam MDCAT aspirants approached PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The candidates obtained more than 180 marks in Medical and Medical College Admission Test (MDCAT) approached Peshawar High Court seeking to stop cancellation of the test.

The petition argued that there is no provision of the retest in the Education and Testing Evaluation Authority (ETEA) policy while added that students had obtained the marks after hard work and dedication.

The candidates pleaded there is no guarantee that the applicant would be once again secure high score while the retest will also impact intelligent students.

The government should take stern actions against

culprits and candidates involved in unfair means during MDCAT as competent authorities admitted the gang leader's arrest, writ argued.

The petition pleaded for stern actions against culprits involved in the MDCAT scandal and stoppage of rearrangement of the test.

Special Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar has sent juvenile to jail on 14 days judicial remand.

During hearing ATC was informed that Rehmat residents of Bara is involved in terrorism as well as in other heinous crimes.

Special ATC Peshawar Judge has sent Rehmat a juvenile to jail on 14 days judicial remand after conclusion of arguments.

Students hold protest

PESHAWAR (APP): Scores of students who passed the MDCAT exam on Monday staged a protest in front of the Peshawar Press Club and demanded stern action against the students involved in cheating rather than re-conducting the exam. A large number of successful students of the MDCAT exam chanted slogans against the cheating mafia and protested the possible re-conduct of the exam.

They said that by re-conducting the MDCAT exam, the future of 46,000 students would be put in jeopardy. They demanded that action be taken against the cheating mafia and students from whom cheating devices were recovered. The students who have passed the exam should not be bothered.

They said re-conducting the exam would create suspicions and demanded an independent inquiry through a judicial commission to thoroughly probe the matter and decide about the course of the future.

They further said that they have clearly passed the exam, which should not be cancelled, adding that the arrested accused should be thoroughly investigated and the responsible should be awarded punishment to avert the recurrence of such a situation in the future. They said if the exam's results were cancelled, then they would approach the Court of Justice.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of Overseas Business Forum England led by Chairman Muhammad Farooq Khan meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

Police arrest three drug smugglers

PESHAWAR (APP): In a successful operation, Shahpur Police Station officials have seized a substantial quantity of narcotics and apprehended three individuals involved in drug trafficking.

The operation was initiated based on a tip-off regarding ongoing drug trafficking activities. The police conducted a raid on a suspected residence, leading to the arrest of smugglers, said a news release on Monday.

During the operation, police apprehended three suspects who were part of an inter-provincial drug smuggling network. The suspects were found in possession of a substantial quantity of illegal narcotics, including 3 kilograms of ice, 4 kilograms of heroin, and 5 kilograms of charas.

Two of the arrested individuals are Afghan nationals, highlighting the transnational nature of this drug smuggling network.

The police have registered a case against the suspects under narcotics and drug smuggling laws. Further investigation is currently underway to uncover more details about this illicit operation.

This successful operation underscores the relentless efforts of police to combat drug trafficking and ensure public safety in the province.

KP govt dispatches relief goods

PESHAWAR (APP): KP government on Monday dispatched relief goods along with a high level delegation for affectees of Jaranwala incident to express solidarity with them.

The delegation led by Chief Khateeb KP Maulana Tayyab Qureshi and Bishop Sarfaraz Peter would hand over the relief goods to the affectees. Maulana Tayyab Qureshi said here that the purpose of sending relief goods was to promote inter-faith harmony and express solidarity with the affected families.

He said the delegation would include minority leaders along with officers of Religious and Minority Affairs Department.

Crackdown against power theft continued — Rs10m arrears recovered from defaulters

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) has registered more than 25 cases related to electricity theft against individuals involved in illegal power consumption within the Lala Subdivision.

The PESCO has launched a crackdown against electricity thieves in the city. This crackdown, led by PESCO officials, is being carried out in collaboration with district administration officials.

Over the past twenty days, more than 25 cases related to electricity theft have been registered against individuals involved in illegal power consumption within the Lala Subdivision. In this operation, over 100 illegal connections

have been disconnected to date to curtail electricity theft in the region.

Moreover, the PESCO has recovered Rs. 10 million in arrears from defaulters. The inspection teams are taking strict actions against those involved in electricity theft, sending a clear message that such activities will not be tolerated.

SDO Lala Subdivision said that this operation will continue until the complete eradication of electricity theft in the area.

PESCO removes 5816 illegal connections; 521 power pilferers held

PESCO during its ongoing drive against power pilferers and defaulters removed 5816 illegal connections across the province and 521 persons

were arrested by police on charge of power theft.

PESCO spokesman said here Monday that PESCO submitted various applications to police against more than 4932 electricity thieves while over 2071 cases were filed against the accused. Giving details of the crackdowns, he said that 1249 illegal connections were removed in Peshawar circle, 1126 in Mardan circle, 841 in Khyber Circle, 669 in Swat Circle, 555 in DI Khan and 550 in Bannu Circle apart from direct hooks removed in Abbottabad, Swabi and Mansehra circles.

PESCO imposed over Rs 243.5 million on the pilferers. The spokesman urged masses to report electricity theft by calling 118.

Pesco issues notification of power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from RMT Grid Station on 26th and 30th September from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Subsequently, the consumers of University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad 1,2, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1, Hussain Zai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara

Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, Aksari 6 and Commercial Balding feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from RMT Grid Station on 26th and 30th September from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumers of Safdar Abad 2, RMT, Badizai, Dorani Media Colony, Sheikh Yasin feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Dalazak Grid Station on 26th and 30th September from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumer of Mian

Ghulam, Gulbela, OPF, Pakha Ghulam, Wadpaga 1,2, Gulabad, Lucky Star, Doran Pur, PRT, Guluzai, Muhammadai, Jannah Abad feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Sarai Naurang Grid Station on 26th September from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of the feeder will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Hattar Grid Station on 26th September from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. resultantly consumers of Shadi feeders will face inconvenience.

World Pharmacist Day organized at Khyber Teaching Hospital



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The World Pharmacists Day is celebrated on September 25 every year to recognize the important role of pharmacists in the healthcare system worldwide. The theme for 2023 is "Pharmacists Strengthening Health Systems". The purpose of this day is to create awareness about the contribution of pharmacists in patient care, drug safety and public health. In this regard, a

cake cutting ceremony was organized in the conference room of Khyber Teaching Hospital.

At the beginning of the event, Acting Manager Pharmacy briefed the participants about the day. He said that this year's theme was "Pharmacists Strengthening Health Systems" which meant for pharmacists and other pharmacy professionals around the world. How important it is to support and enhance health care systems.

Hospital Director Dr. Muhammad Zafar Afridi, Medical Director Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Finance Director Waheed Ur Rehman, Nursing Director Asmat Pasha, Sectary BoG MTI - KTH/KMC/KCD, Manager Legal, Manager Facilities, as well as Pharmacy staff of the hospital participated under the leadership of Acting Manager Noor Qadir Afridi.

While addressing the ceremony, Hospital

Director Dr. Muhammad Zafar Afridi paid tribute to all the pharmacy staff on this day and appreciated their efforts. He further said that former Associate Hospital Director Dr. Saud Islam Malik played a key role in stabilizing the pharmacy system of Khyber Teaching Hospital, who improved the pharmacy system.

In the event, Medical Director Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan said that whenever a disaster or epidemic occurs anywhere in the world, immediate measures are taken for it. Just as the recent Corona outbreak has claimed many lives but also taught us a lot, so we should emphasize to increase the awareness campaign regarding pharmacy and make the pharmacy department of our institution stable and strong. Make it so that there are no shortages in the access of services to the people.

He further said that today on World Pharmacist Day, I pay tribute to all pharmacists and hope that together we will improve the health system of this province and the country.

Ezdmc, Pesco joint team visits Bannu

PESHAWAR (APP): The Energy & Power team of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-Ezdmc) along with officials of PESCO visited Bannu Economic Zone to facilitate its electrification, said a press release issued here on Monday.

PESCO officials expressed their gratitude to KP-Ezdmc contributions towards the industrialization in the southern region of the province and assured their complete support in supplying electricity to the

Bannu Economic Zone.

Meanwhile, a group of students from Peshawar University, under the umbrella of Capital Media Group visited Rashakai Special Economic Zone as part of their study tour.

They were given a comprehensive presentation and a site visit that shed light on the promising opportunities and potential of the special economic zone initiated under the CPEC in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The students will prepare artwork to highlight the friendship between Pakistan and China.

Arrival of 12th Rabiul Awal: People decorates houses

PESHAWAR (APP): With only three days left in Eid Miladun Nabi (SAWW) celebrations, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including seven merged tribal districts have decorated their houses and vehicles with colourful bunting to express their immeasurable love with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on His birthday anniversary.

From Chitral to DI Khan and Kohistan to Waziristan, people of all

districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have artistically beautified their residences, shops, markets, bazaars and vehicles with colourful fancy lighting and bunting besides green flags to celebrate 12th Rabiul Awal with great religious enthusiasm on Friday.

"I completed decoration of my house with colorful bunting and fancy green lights to celebrate the birthday anniversary of the Holy Prophet (SAWW) in

most befitting manner," said Professor Ehtisham Qaiser, a resident of Wapda Town Peshawar while talking to APP on Monday.

"The arrival of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was a great blessing for entire humanity, and it was our collective duty to celebrate the historic day with great religious enthusiasm," he said.

Maulana Tayyab Qureshi, Chief Khateeb

KP said that the life and seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the beacon of light of entire mankind. He said 12 Rabiul Awal was a significant day of realization for entire humanity including Muslim Ummah that Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW) was sent for their reformation, so they must follow His (PBUH) Seerah for peace, brotherhood, kindness, progress and prosperity in this world and hereafter.

"Before advent of Islam, Arabs were deprived of all human, political, social and economic rights in the Arabian Peninsula where the custom of slavery, burial of female infants' alive, worship of idols and tribal guerrilla warfare for petty issues were common phenomena," he said.

He said the absence of a representative government, political organization, law and order institutions including police, courts and infighting among Arab tribes on petty issues like water, land and mountains besides denying property rights to women at that time of ignorance had pushed poor Arabs to the wall.

"The nonexistence of government and law and order mechanisms including police, administration and courts during that dark era had often led to guerrilla infighting among tribes to bring the offender to justice on their own, which caused anarchy and lawlessness in Arab society."

He said slavery was a common practice in the Arab peninsula where slaves were sold like animals, and the rate of interest charged by capitalists and money launderers on loans were exorbitant. Women were deprived of all rights including inheritance in property and maltreated besides the ugly practices of burying of female infants alive and worship of idols and statues built from stones and woods were in fashion.

In that era of ignorance and darkness, he said the arrival of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had proved as a great blessings of Allah Almighty for the entire humanity including Arabs and non-Arabs, who had broken the shackle of slavery, inequality, cruelty and injustice besides eliminated the inhuman practice of worship of idols

and burying of girls alive forever.

Maulana Tayyab Qureshi said the life of holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a perfect example of an honest, merciful, compassionate, brave, truthful and a role model for mankind, who showered peace and mercy upon all creatures' lives on the face of earth.

In spite of all the bitter experiences of the past, he said the Holy Prophet had set a great example by announcing amnesty for everyone on the historic occasion of the conquest of Makkah.

"Following the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (PBUH) had neither taken any revenge nor let others harm anyone and announced open amnesty for everyone and was called Rehmatul Lil Aalmeen for the entire humanity. After the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet had demonstrated that the message of peace, love, brotherhood, forgiveness and tolerance was not for any specific community but for every creature," said Maulana Tayyab Qureshi.

He said, "The conquest of Makkah has given a clear lesson to keep mov-

ing consistently towards the right direction with a trust in God to achieve a goal, believing in Allah's help and promoting tolerance, high moral values and forgiveness."

In a historical Hajjat-ul-Wida sermon, he said the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized upon justice, equality of all human beings, equal socio-economic rights for women and declared racial supremacy unacceptable.

He (PBUH) gave the concept of Tauheed (oneness of Allah), that there was no one worthy of worship except Allah Almighty and belief in the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) were the basis of Islamic faith.

The last Prophet of Allah also denounced all sorts of discrimination among human beings and declared that there was no superiority of Arabs or non-Arabs on the basis of gender, colour and caste rather "Tauqwa" (Good deed) was the hallmark of superiority of an individual over others.

The last messenger of Allah declared that killing of a person and forceful possessing of one's property was against the teaching of Islam and declared

such negative practices as Haram (prohibited).

He (PBUH) also called for honoring the human lives and declared that protecting the life of an individual was tantamount to protection of whole humanity.

The holy Prophet restored the dignity of women whether she is a mother, wife, daughter or sister and emphasized on people to treat their women with kindness. The holy Prophet taught to treat the slaves with kindness and give them what the owners eat and wear themselves besides other facilities.

Maulana Tayyab said Hajjat-ul-Wida's sermon was a perfect roadmap to establish lasting peace, economic stability and promote interfaith harmony especially in Muslim Ummah besides making the globe a cradle of peace, justice, equality and righteous deeds.

He said the best way to celebrate 12th Rabiul Awal was to hold firmly the rope of Allah Almighty together and not become divided besides strictly follow the Seerah of the Holy Prophet imperative for success in this world and hereafter.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali talking to a delegation from PK-69 during a meeting.



In brief

Swat witnessing influx of tourists Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Known as the Switzerland of Pakistan, the Swat district was nowadays witnessing an influx of foreign tourists specially from European countries to explore the beauty of nature in this one of its kind areas. According to the district administration, during the month of September, a large number of foreign tourists including from European countries visited the scenic valleys of Swat in Mahudhand, Mankiyal, Kalam, Gabin Jabba and Mallam Jabba. The tourists were seen taking the pleasure of the serene and scenic mountain tracks in these areas. The foreign tourists were also visiting the glaciers of Kalam in groups to enjoy their trips and the taste of the local food, especially the trout fish. Some of the tourists said they were very much impressed with the beauty of the mountains and valleys of Swat. They were also highly appreciative of the hospitality and behavior of local people. They said their visit to Swat will long be remembered and wished to revisit the area in future. The tourists said the people of Swat were very much friendly, adding that the locals and personnel of the Pakistan Army provided them special care and facilities during their trip. The tourists added that they found the Pakistan Army as a very professional and disciplined force.

Maid goes missing

LARKANA (PPI): A 13-year-old girl working as a maid in the house of a spiritual figure went missing mysteriously, police said. Rahela Chandio had been working at Pir Khaliq Mushvari's house for five years, but on the day of the incident, she left the house and did not return. Pir Mushvari told police that the girl had been missing for two days. Police are interrogating the other members of the family after registering a case.

JUI meeting held F.P. Report

LARKANA: A meeting of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) was held in Larkana in connection with the upcoming elections. In the 12-hour continuous meeting, apart from fully participating in the upcoming elections, it was agreed to establish a new election alliance in which political, religious and the struggle to solve the problems of Sindh by including the nationalist parties was announced. In this regard, Rashid Mahmood Soomro, Secretary General of Jamiat Ulema Islam Sindh, gave a briefing on the important agenda of the meeting. From Karachi to Karachi, a peaceful march will be started to get the people's rights of Sindh and a decisive struggle for the problems of Sindh will be started and they will come out to solve the public problems. A national conference will be held in Larkana in memory of martyred Dr. Khalid Mahmood Soomro, in which important personalities of the country will announce to participate in the gathering. We welcome elections because of the country. The solution to people's problems is clean and transparent elections, while it is the duty of the sensitive institutions of the country to announce the elections to ensure the law and order situation. It is necessary, the central salary of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Abdul Razzaq Abid Lakho and other leaders participated in the continuous twelve-hour meeting.

2nd phase of enrollment drive begins

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Additional Assistant Commissioner Nowshera Amir Mustafa said on Monday that parents and teachers active involvement can improve enrollment & retention of the children. Education is a fundamental right for everyone and without educating our females; we cannot achieve sustainable development goals and prosperity of the country.

He expressed these views at launching ceremony of enrollment campaign held at Government High School No-1 Nowshera Cant. Deputy District Education Officer Nowshera Tahir Shah Kakakhel, DDEO Female, Ms Nancy, representatives of Voluntary Service Overseas, Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS) and other dignitaries also graced the occasion.

Additional Assistant Commissioner was of the view that the rural population in Nowshera is in much need of attention as girl's education is ignored mostly in rural areas due to cultural and other barriers. There is a dire need to aware the people that education is not only for men but also for women. It is equally important for them. He said that street children are also being neglected and this can create many problems in future, there-

fore we must focus on them.

Other speakers said that more than 2 million children are out of school in Pakistan; therefore it is the prime responsibility of every parent, teacher and all relevant stakeholders to help enhance the literacy rate in the country by enrolling the out of school children into schools. Education officers told the participants that they have set target to enroll more than 0.1 million children during ongoing campaign in Nowshera.

Earlier the participants were informed that under the MYR program, funded by VSO-UNECW in 3 districts of the province i.e. Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera, logistic, technical and educational support is being given to the government to improve the education environment as well as to help bring out-of-school students back to the schools and provide them with basic necessities and teacher's training. The education department is also providing free books to these children; therefore each and every parent should bring their child to the school.

At the end, shields and certificates were distributed among the teachers while the participants also participated in a walk to create awareness among the people regarding the enrollment campaign.

Police arrests 5 alleged robbers

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police officials claimed to have arrested five alleged robbers who were involved in a robbery case of over Rs. 7 million.

The SP investigation Muhammad Suleman flanked by SP City Inam Jan Khan, DSP circle Ijaz Khan and police station city SHO Mukaddam Khan was briefing and giving details about the robbery incident and its perpetrators to media-persons in a press conference held in hi office here on Monday. SP investigations told that few weeks back unidentified robbers snatched over Rs7 million from manager of a medicine company at gunpoint.

The police officer said that after occurrence of the robbery incident, Syed Numan, manager of the company, told police that he along with his driver, Lal Mohammad, was taking Rs7.3 million in the company's vehicle to deposit the amount in a bank located at the College Square. He said they were intercepted by unknown armed robbers a few meters from their company office as they started moving towards the bank.

The manager said five robbers snatched the amount from them at gunpoint and fled in a car bearing registration number LES-6627. He told the police that he could identify the robbers from their faces. The SP investigations Mr. Muhammad Suleman claimed that after a hectic efforts, they succeeded to trace out and arrest the five accused who were involved in the said robbery. He said that police had recovered the snatched amount along with one Kalashnikov and two pistols from the alleged robbers' possession which they used in their robbery. He said that the alleged robbers were identified as Ali Shan, Irsalan, Matiullah,

Muhammad Sajjad and Hamdaan. He claimed that the accused had admitted their crime of robbery.

Residents compelled for adulterated milk: The Livestock Department of Mardan colluded with the milk sellers, the urban population was forced to consume unhealthy milk made from chemicals the fake milk factories in the urban and suburban areas of Mardan started supplying the city with white poison. The meaningful silence of the district administration, the citizens suffering from dangerous diseases, the Chief Secretary KP has been requested to take immediate notice.

According to the details, with the connivance of Livestock Department Mardan, the crowded commercial centers of Mardan, Khaksar Manzil Bank Road, Bickit Ganji, Bajli Ghar, Kaskuroona, Mardan Khas, Nahar Chowk, Chato Chowk, Shamsi Road, Baghdada, Charsadda Road, Mir afzal Khan Bazar, Gaju Khan Road, Farm Kuroona Sikandri, Bari Cham, Haider Road, Gujar Garhi, Cantt Mardan, Sharifabad, Bypass Road Karwan Road apart from Muslimabad, in the suburbs of Fatima, Babin, Mayar, Toru, Nawan Kali, Chamtar, Kuragh, Muhabat abad, Muhib banda, Bahram Khan, Ghala Dher, Dag and others, polluted milk is made from dangerous chemicals in tons per day across the city. It supplies milk to the sellers.

Also, on a daily basis, more than 100 tons of milk mixed with water and chemicals from the dairy farms of Punjab are transported in small and big tankers to various commercial and densely populated areas of Mardan through Dubyan interchange and other internal routes including Rishki Police Naka, Wali Interchange and Colonel Sher Interchange.

Snowfall in Neelum Valley turns weather cold

MUZAFFARABAD (PPI): The mercury sharply fell as Neelum Valley of Azad Kashmir continued to receive snowfall for the second consecutive day on Monday. Upper areas of Neelum Valley were blanketed as the snowfall continued after brief intervals. Several areas and tourist places including Ratti Gali Lake, Baboon Valley and Patlian Lake received the snowfall.

The intensity of cold has increased after the snowfall. The nomads and their goats were stranded due to snowfall in the upper areas of Neelum Valley. Neelum Valley Deputy Commissioner Nadeem Janjua advised the tourists to take precautions during snowfall. He directed the camp administration of the Ratti Gali and Patlian lakes to provide every possible facility to the tourists. The Neelum Valley received the first snowfall of the winter season on Sunday.

Ratti Gali Lake, Baboon Valley and Shounter Lake had received the first snowfall which ushered in winter in the upper areas of Neelum Valley. Tourists in large numbers were also seen at Ratti Gali Lake, Baboon Valley, Chitta Katha Lake, and Patlian Lake. Also, the upper mountains and tourist spots of Diamar received the first snowfall in the wee hours on Sunday. Nanga Parbat including Babusar Top, Getty Das, and Fairy Meadow also received snowfall on Sunday morning.

The snow-capped mountains were adding to the beauty of the area. Tourists were seen enjoying snowfall at Babusar Top and Gatti Das, the prominent tourist destinations of Diamar.

LEAs foil bid to smuggle urea

JACOBABAD (PPI): Law enforcement agencies on Monday claimed to have seized a truck smuggling 1,200 bags of urea to Afghanistan. Secret agencies carried out a raid at Jacobabad Bypass within jurisdiction of the new Fojdari police station here. The truck carrying urea bags was destined to Afghanistan via Balochistan from Mirpor Mathelo in northern Sindh, police said.

It may be noted that police on a tip-off carried out a raid on the National Highway yesterday and seized 26 trucks loaded with sugar and urea in Shikarpur. As many as 350 tonnes of sugar and 11,254 urea bags were recovered in the raid. The sugar and urea were to be smuggled to Afghanistan, the police said and added that the seized sugar and urea bags were transferred to the food department.

A countrywide anti-smuggling crackdown has been underway on the orders of the caretaker government. In February, Mochko police in Karachi during checking of a passenger coach found 150 bags of urea that were illegally being smuggled to Afghanistan via Balochistan. In another raid in Quetta, the Customs department seized huge quantities of urea.

A spokesperson for the department said that 300 bags of urea and sweet supari (betel nuts) worth Rs60 million were seized during search of a container and trailer at the Lakpass Checkpost of Customs in Quetta.

Commissioner directs success in campaign against power theft

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has directed the administration, PESCO and police officials to strengthen inter-linkages for the success of the campaign against power theft and kunda culture and prepare daily performance reports in this regard.

Shaukat Ali Yousafzai who was recently transferred here as Commissioner Mardan Division, was addressing a meeting held on Monday in his office to review the campaign against power theft. The meeting was attended by Chief Peshawar Electricity Supply Company Qazi Muhammad Tahir, Additional Commissioner Mardan Naem Akhtar, Deputy Commissioners of Mardan and Swabi, Police and Pesco officers.

While giving a briefing, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain R Abdul Rehman said that till now formal FIRs have been filed against 596 people involved in electricity theft in this campaign while 31 people have been arrested. In the campaign, 1239 connections were disconnected and more than Rs 51.5 Million were recovered from the defaulters.



Similarly, 45 lakh rupees were collected as fines. Chief Pesco Qazi Tahir said that higher ups in the ministry of power have decided to declare Mardan as a model circle. Mardan has done well in the recent campaign but needs to improve its performance. He said that the decision to make Mardan a model district will provide better services to the consumers here and there will be a significant reduction in load shedding as well.

The meeting was told that more than four billion rupees are owed to domestic and industrial consumers in Mardan

and Swabi, for which recovery work is in progress. Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai directed DC Swabi to ensure elimination of power theft and kunda culture by improving coordination with Pesco and police authorities. He said that the campaign against electricity theft and kunda culture is a national cause and its success will be ensured in any case. He urged the concerned authorities to continue the campaign against electricity theft without discrimination and not to take any pressure into account in this regard.

Unpacking causes of failed English communication

Noor Zia

COMMUNICATION is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals. Through this, people can share their thoughts and ideas with others. People communicate well in their native language.

They can comprehend and analyze information in their native language. Sometimes, there is a need to learn a foreign language, like English. Because it is an international language, and people all over the world are supposed to understand it. People try hard to learn the English language, but usually they fail. What are the causes that make them fail to communicate in English?

There are many factors due to which people fail to speak fluently in English. For instance, in Pakistan, the education system is in English. However, most students who have graduated from colleges and universities cannot speak or write a sentence in English. There is a lack of practicality. Language needs to be spoken. Merely studying in English

cannot make a person able to talk in English. Even after graduating from the university, students are not able to talk fluently for five minutes in English. The most surprising thing is that in Pakistan, the majority BS English graduates cannot communicate properly in English.

Many problems arise for students whose native language is not English but who are supposed to study in it. In Pakistan, the negative results are evident. At the university level, the majority of students are passive in the classroom. They never ask or talk to their teachers. Also, at the time of presentation, they suffer a lot. They memorize the content, but still, they go through the process of anxiety. They think that if a teacher asks questions, they will not be able to respond.

In addition, rote learning is also one of the problems that arise due to not understanding the language. Students say that they memorize things because they are not able to understand them. Rote learning is the memorization of

information based on repetition. It does not seem necessary whether students understand it or not; the only aim is to memorize the required stuff. Western countries discourage rote learning. On the other hand, in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other Asian countries, rote learning is highly encouraged. That is the reason while studying in English, students can't understand and speak a few sentences in it.

Hence, it is the 21st century, and people should have good communication skills in English. The reason is that it is an international language. If foreigners can't understand your native language, they can understand English. The institutions should consider this matter and work on it. If, from the lower grades, students start understanding English after graduation, they will be able to speak in it; otherwise, they will not be able to make even a simple sentence structure or differentiate between present, past, and future tense.

The writer is student of 8th Semester at Department of English in Islamia College University Peshawar.

'MARPOL at 50: Our commitment goes on'

Wajahat Abbas

WORLD Maritime Day (WMD) is celebrated on the last Thursday of September each year globally to enhance awareness regarding the importance of the maritime sector among the masses. The maritime community gathers on this day with a collective aim to continue working toward the betterment of the maritime environment, security, and safety. This year the day themed as "MARPOL at 50: Our Commitment Goes On" will be commemorated on 28 September 2023. The theme marks the 50th anniversary of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships also known as MARPOL 73/78.

In 1973, the international maritime community acknowledged the urgent need to address environmental impacts on marine biodiversity due to shipping. This led to the requirement for the creation of an appropriate response strategy in case of oil spills, air pollution, and marine contamination. The convention was initially adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on 2nd November 1973 and was modified by the Protocol of 1978 which was adopted in response to a series of tanker accidents in 1976-1977. As the 1973 MARPOL Convention was not yet implemented, the 1978 MARPOL Protocol absorbed the parent Convention. The combined instrument entered into force on 2nd October 1983.

In 1997, a Protocol was adopted to amend MARPOL, and a new Annex VI was added which entered into force on 19 May 2005. The Convention has evolved during the past five decades by undergoing significant changes, incorporating numerous amendments and annexes to address emerging environmental issues. Resultantly, it has transformed into the main international framework for regulating the disposal of hazardous materials into oceans, managing ship-generated waste, and miti-

gating ship-induced air pollutants.

Broadly speaking, the Convention comprises six annexes each of which deals with a different component of pollution control in the marine sector:

Annex I: Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Oil (entered into force on 2 October 1983). This annex covers the prevention of pollution by oil from operational measures as well as from accidental discharges.

Annex II: Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk (entered into force 2 October 1983). This annex details the discharge criteria and measures for the control of pollution by noxious liquid substances carried in bulk; some 250 substances were evaluated and included in the list appended to the Convention

Annex III: Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form (entered into force 1 July 1992). This annex contains general requirements for the issuing of detailed standards on packing, marking, labelling, documentation, stowage, quantity limitations, exceptions and notifications.

Annex IV: Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships (entered into force 27 September 2003). This annex contains requirements to control pollution of the sea by sewage.

Annex V: Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships (entered into force 31 December 1988). This annex deals with different types of garbage and specifies the distances from land and the manner in which they may be disposed of.

Annex VI: Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships (entered into force 19 May 2005). This annex sets limits on Sulphur oxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from ship exhausts and prohibits deliberate emissions of ozone-depleting substances.

This year's WMD is aimed towards acknowledging MARPOL's pivotal role in advancing and maintaining the mar-

itime sector upon its golden jubilee. Since MARPOL establishes international standards for preventing ship-related pollution, encompassing regulations concerning oil spills, sewage, air emissions, and more, therefore, this year's WMD holds particular significance due to MARPOL's milestone.

As a member state of the IMO, Pakistan actively enforces MARPOL regulations for ships operating within its ports and waters. It has established domestic laws aligned with MARPOL's annexes and conducts state-controlled port inspections to ensure foreign-flagged vessels comply with these regulations. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA) and Marine Pollution Control Department (MPCD) are instrumental in monitoring and regulating pollution-related issues, particularly in addressing air and water pollution. However, the issue of plastic pollution and the direct discharge of untreated sewage water in port areas and the sea are posing severe threats to port infrastructure, docked ships, and marine biodiversity. Urgent measures for proper waste management and sewage treatment are imperative to address these pressing environmental concerns effectively by relevant authorities.

This year's WMD serves as a reminder to all stakeholders for continued efforts to protect our oceans and marine ecosystems. Through the adoption of contemporary trends including decarbonization, alternative fuels, digitalization, prevention of plastic pollution, ballast water management, education and training, circular economy, international collaboration, adaptation to regional challenges, innovative technologies, adherence to regulations, and integration of eco-friendly practices, we can ensure the effective implementation of MARPOL to control pollution. The same will leave behind a cleaner and healthier marine environment for the benefit of generations to come.

Deforestation intensified by timber mafias

Nusrat Bibi

BIODIVERSITY is the genetic pool of the country and both forest and biodiversity are interconnected because forest provides food, habitat and protection to biodiversity and cannot be separated. In the current ruthless forest cuttings how many species would have lost their homes/habitats and food sources and how much economic losses would have occurred to our country and how much time would these trees have taken in growth and how much their important role in flood as a natural buffer would have been? Infinite to write in figures. The Ministry of Climate Change must regulate each natural resource for

the survival of our country.

The forests are our most precious national wealth and a habitat to countless other diversity of life. Biodiversity and forest habitats are interconnected and integral parts and cannot be separated. If forests cut down, the natural balance of habitats conservation is harmed and biodiversity is extinguished. If biodiversity is ended, then human life on earth will stub out. Biodiversity is the most significant factor of the food chain in the natural ecosystem of forests. Both forests and biodiversity maintain the genetic diversity of animals and plants, provide hub to water recharge and CO2 sequestration. It also provides natural resilience to flood and other natural calamities.

Pakistan is a forest poor coun-

try where less than 6% of total area is under forest. The reasons vary from the development pressure to uses of forest as a fuel, as a shelter materials and the government failed policies for not regulating the land use planning as well as the substitutions of forest wood. Moreover the other limiting factor is the weather conditions and topography of land from arid to semi-arid due to which precipitation influences the growth of forest.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the most forested province of the country and makes 45% of the total forest area of the country, included the world's most rear and precious variety of animals and plants. Pakistan due to its geographical location is the most affected area of the globe to the climate change extremes in the world on German

watch's Long-Term Climate Risk Index (1998-2017) which has witnessed more than 152 extreme weather change events from 1999 to the current date. These extreme climatic events are heat waves, flashfloods, heat island, cyclones, landslides, avalanches, glaciers and snow melting, earthquakes, water shortage and multiple health hazards etc.

Every year our communities are due to natural calamities such as flood and earthquakes and leave billions worth losses in infrastructure, property, people in psychological trauma and the greatest loss of biodiversity. KPK is home to the world's highest and most glaciated mountains of Himalaya, Karakorum and Hindu Kush and is the biggest hotspot to flood and earthquakes due to glaciers

melting and proximity to fault line of these mountains.

Despite of the Pakistan's climatic harshness and our vulnerability and the importance of forest and biodiversity as a natural buffer, deforestation is continued at the highest rate. In addition to; a heinous planning for separating the reserve forest from the National Parks of highest importance is the most greedy and stupid planning to make money by harming the habitats of biodiversity by cutting their food sources and developing the national parks in housing societies.

National Parks are the property and food source of biodiversity which are the genetic pools of the country and play an imperative role in pollination and productivity. Preservation of biodiversity and their habitats are crit-

ical for human health and economic well-being, aesthetic value and practical benefits from biological research and worldwide biological stability. Similarly, if National Parks are separated, it will violate the Endangered Species Act.

And do not incline towards those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protector; then you would not be helped, AL-Quran (Sura e Hood, 113).

Now questions arising that: Why massive deforestation and interference in the National Parks of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa? Who is behind such mass destruction? Why Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Climate Change Ministry are silent?



Inside Vietnam's plans to dent China's rare earths dominance

HANOI (Reuters): Vietnam plans to restart its biggest rare-earths mine next year with a Western-backed project that could rival the world's largest, according to two companies involved, as part of a broader push to dent China's dominance in a sector that helps power advanced technologies.

The move would be a step toward the Southeast Asian country's aim of building up a rare-earths supply chain, including developing its capacity to refine ores into metals used in magnets for electric vehicles, smartphones and wind turbines. As an initial step, Vietnam's government intends to launch tenders for multiple blocks of its Dong Pao mine before the year's end, said Tessa Kutscher, an executive at Australia's Blackstone Minerals Ltd, which plans to bid for at least one concession. She cited unpublished information from Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which did not respond to requests for comment.

The auction's timing could change but the government plans to restart the mine next year, said Luu Anh Tuan, chairman of Vietnam Rare Earth JSC (VTRE), the country's main refiner and Blackstone's partner in the project. The proposed restart of Dong Pao - whose timeline, scale and degree of foreign financial support have not been reported previously - comes as many nations fret about their vulnerability to supply disruptions due to China's stranglehold on strategic minerals and its disputes with the US and its allies. Beijing this year imposed export curbs on minor metals used in semiconductors, which an influential Chinese policy adviser warned was "just a start". Vietnam has the second-largest rare-earth

deposits, according to the US Geological Survey. But they have remained largely untapped, with investment discouraged by low prices that are effectively set by China because of its near-monopoly on the global market. Visiting Hanoi this month to upgrade bilateral relations, US President Joe Biden signed an agreement to boost Vietnam's ability to lure investors for its rare-earth reserves.

In interviews with Reuters, 12 industry executives, investors, analysts and foreign officials described plans for Vietnam, including investments they said showed how talk of derisking supply chains to reduce reliance on China is translating into action. Some acknowledged the difficulties of forging a rare-earths hub but said the gambit could make Vietnam a viable player while assuaging strategic worries, even if China remained dominant. Kutscher said Blackstone's investment in the project would be worth around \$100 million if it wins. She added that the company was talking to potential clients, including electric car makers VinFast and Rivian, about possible contracts with set prices that would shield suppliers from fluctuations and guarantee buyers a secure supply chain.

Sealing such deals would address a hurdle faced by developers in Vietnam. In recent years, Japanese investors Toyota Tsusho and Sojitz abandoned projects at Dong Pao after China ramped up supply, pummeling prices. The Japanese firms did not respond to requests for comment. Yet despite the focus on derisking, it is unclear whether clients would be ready to pay a premium for Vietnam, said Dylan Kelly, of investment firm Terra Capital, noting the market in general was opaque.

Asked about VinFast's potential involvement, a spokesperson for parent company Vingroup said the group's entity in charge of raw-material procurement, VinES, had no current plans with Blackstone involving rare earths. He did not address subsequent questions about VinFast specifically. Rivian did not reply to a request for comment. Effective exploitation of Dong Pao - which has sat dormant for at least seven years, according to an official at state-controlled miner Lavreco, which owns a concession - would propel Vietnam into the top league of rare-earths producers. But refining rare earths is complex, and China controls many processing technologies. Dong Pao's estimated deposits also need to be reassessed with modern methods, according to Blackstone.

Still, rare earths at Dong Pao are relatively easy to access and are mostly concentrated in bastnaesite ores, according to the Hanoi University of Mining and Geology. These are typically rich in cerium, used in flat screens, and lanthanides, such as praseodymium and neodymium, which go into magnets. Tuan said VTRE hoped to win a concession that would allow it to extract about 10,000 metric tons of rare-earth oxide (REO) equivalent a year, roughly one-third of the mine's expected annual output. Production could start around the end of 2024, he said.

That would put Dong Pao's output slightly below that of California's Mountain Pass, one of the world's largest mines, which produced 43,000 metric tons of REO equivalent in 2022, according to the USGS. Vietnam also plans to develop additional mines. In July, Hanoi set a target to produce up to 60,000 tons of REO equivalent a year by 2030.



China set a domestic quota of 210,000 tons last year. Those goals would see Vietnam producing 5% to 15% of China's projected output by the decade's end, said David Merriman, a research analyst at consultancy Project Blue, who expects China to increase production over that period.

Vietnam's targets were "ambitious, though they are not entirely out of the question", he said. The US agreed during Biden's visit to help Vietnam better map its rare-earths resources and "attract quality investment", according to a White House fact sheet, a move that could encourage US investors to bid for Vietnam's new concessions.

Reuters could not determine whether concrete plans involving US investors exist at this stage. Officials at the US embassy in Hanoi, the White House and Department of Commerce did not reply to requests for comment. But recent US attempts to gain a foothold in the Vietnamese

industry did not succeed, said John Rockhold, a consultant to the rare-earths sector and president of the Hanoi chapter of the US Chamber of Commerce, adding that one such plan involving VTRE collapsed this year. That plan would have involved the shipment to the US of rare earths refined by VTRE and possible future investment in Vietnam of \$200 million, according to a non-public report for unspecified US investors seen by Reuters.

VTRE confirmed the shipment deal had foundered. Instead, VTRE in April announced a deal to supply 100 metric tons of rare-earth oxides this year to Australian Strategic Materials. ASM declined to comment on Dong Pao's exploitation. Blackstone, which is a partner in that deal, operates a nickel mine in Vietnam and has determined that its processing facility in the country could handle ore from Dong Pao, according to a company statement. Ultimately, VTRE plans to play a role in the whole rare-earth

industry from ore extraction to the final products, said Tuan, who with his wife owns most VTRE shares, according to a list of shareholders he showed to Reuters. Blackstone said the ownership information accorded with its assessment following due diligence. This is not an easy feat. The US currently exports its rare-earth ores to China for processing as it lacks its own facilities.

An existing VTRE factory in northern Vietnam specialises in separating rare-earth oxides from the extracted ore. The plant has capacity to process 5,000 tons of REO a year but the company plans to treble that to accommodate input from Dong Pao, Tuan said. Once separated, oxides are turned into metals for use in magnets and other industrial applications. The metallization process is controlled by China, which produces 90% of rare-earth metals, according to the US Department of Energy. But VTRE is running a pilot project to build a metallization factory with South Korea's Setopia, said Setopia, which has no previous experience in the sector. The initial combined investment would be around \$4 million, mostly from Setopia, a Setopia official told Reuters, with a plant possibly ready next year. In the downstream industry, South Korean and Chinese magnet firms are set to open factories in Vietnam, Reuters reported in August. Dudley Kingsnorth, a professor at the Western Australian School of Mines at Curtin University, said Vietnam had some way to go, including in improving environmental practices, to realise its rare-earth goals. Still, he said, Vietnam "has the resources, the mining and processing expertise to provide alternatives to China".

Venezuelan man and his pet squirrel made it to US border

MATAMOROS (AP): During the weeks it took Yeison and Niko to migrate from Venezuela toward the US, they navigated dangerous jungles and over a dead body. The two are so inseparable that Yeison sold his phone so both had enough bus money to continue their journey. Now as Yeison prepares to finally enter the US, it's likely he will have to leave Niko behind. That's because Niko is a squirrel.

The 23-year-old man and his pet squirrel are an unusual but blunt reflection of the emotional choices migrants make over what to take - and what to leave behind - as they embark on the dangerous trip north. Yeison, who declined to give his last name because he fears for his family's safety in Venezuela, said going without Niko was out of the question. But Mexico is where they might be forced to part ways. Yeison, who is among millions of Venezuelans fleeing political and economic unrest back home, secured an appointment to present himself at the border to seek entry to the US and request asylum. Animals are generally not allowed to cross the border. "It would practically be like starting with nothing, without Niko," Yeison said. Many who set off on the roughly 3,000-mile (4,800-kilometer) journey to the US do so with only what they can carry and their loved ones. For Yeison, that was a squirrel with a black stripe and flecks of white hair, who

made the long trip nesting in a red knit cap stuffed inside a backpack. For six months, Yeison and Niko lived in a tent at an encampment with hundreds of other migrants in Matamoros. The site is across from the Texas border city of Brownsville, which is hundreds of miles east of Eagle Pass and not experiencing the same dramatic increase in migrants that prompted the mayor to issue an emergency declaration this past week. On a recent day, Niko crawled over Yeison's shoulders and stayed close while darting around the tent. Chances are slim Yeison can take Niko across the border, but volunteers at the encampment aren't giving up. Gladys Cañas, the director of a non-governmental organization, Ayudádoles A Triunfar, said she has encountered other migrants who wanted to cross with their pets - cats, dogs and even a rabbit once. But until now, never a squirrel. Cañas helped connect Yeison with a veterinarian to document Niko's vaccinations to provide to border agents. She is hopeful they'll allow the squirrel to cross, whether with Yeison or with a volunteer. "There's a connection between him and the squirrel, so much that he preferred to bring it with him than leave the squirrel behind with family in Venezuela and face the dangers that come with the migrant journey. They gave each other courage," she said. Yeison said he found the squirrel after nearly stepping on him one day in

Venezuela. The squirrel appeared to be newly born and Yeison took him home, where he named him Niko and family members fed him yogurt. The picky squirrel, Yeison said, prefers nibbling on pine trees and is fed tomatoes and mangoes, even in times when food is hard to come by. At first, Yeison said he sought work in Colombia. He returned to find a loose pine splinter lodged in Niko's eye and resolved after that to take the squirrel with him on the next journey to the US. Like thousands of migrants, Yeison made the trip through the perilous jungle known as the Darien Gap, where he said he found the body of a man under some blankets. He said he concealed Niko in a backpack when they boarded buses and crossed through checkpoint inspections in Mexico. But one time, Yeison said, a bus driver discovered the squirrel and made him pay extra to keep the animal on board. Yeison said he sold his phone for \$35 to cover the cost. Once they reached the encampment in Matamoros, the pair settled into a routine. Yeison makes money cutting hair by his tent and often falls asleep sharing the same pillow with Niko at night. He was bracing for a separation. "I don't want for him to be separated from me, because I know that we'd get heartsick. I'm sure of that," Yeison said. "And if he doesn't get sick, I hope he gets to be happy. And that he never forgets my face."

Philippines condemns China

MANILA (Agencies): The Philippines condemned the Chinese coast guard for installing what it called a "floating barrier" in a disputed area of the South China Sea, saying that it prevented Filipino boats from entering and fishing in the area. In a statement on X, formerly known as Twitter, Philippine coast guard spokesperson Jay Tarriela said the floating barrier was discovered by Philippine vessels during a routine maritime patrol and measured around 300 meters (984 feet).

"The Philippine coast guard and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources strongly condemn the China coast guard's installation of a floating barrier in the Southeast portion of Bajo de Masinloc, which prevents Filipino fishing boats from entering the shoal and depriving them of their fishing and livelihood activities," the statement read. Tarriela shared photos of the alleged floating barrier and claimed three Chinese coast guard boats and a Chinese maritime militia service boat had installed the floating barrier following the arrival of a Philippine government vessel in the area. The Philippine coast guard shared footage earlier this week of vast patches of broken and bleached coral, prompting officials to accuse China of massive destruction in the area. "The continued swarming for the indiscriminate illegal and destructive fishing activities of the Chinese maritime militia in Rozul Reef and Escoda Shoal may have directly caused the degradation and destruction of the marine environment in the area," Tarriela said in a statement, referring to Manila's name for parts of the South China Sea within its jurisdiction.

Kremlin critic transferred to a Siberian prison

TALLINN, Estonia (AP): An imprisoned Russian opposition figure has been transferred to a maximum security prison in Siberia and placed in a tiny "punishment cell," his lawyer said. Vladimir Kara-Murza Jr., 42, earlier this year was convicted of treason for publicly denouncing Russia's war in Ukraine and sentenced to 25 years in prison as part of the Kremlin's relentless crackdown on critics. He arrived at IK-6 - a maximum security penal colony in the Siberian city of Omsk, his lawyer Vadim Prokhorov said in a Facebook post.

Prokhorov said the transfer from a detention center in Moscow, where Kara-Murza was being held pending trial and appeals, took less than three weeks. Russian prison transfers, usually done by train, are

China, resource-rich East Timor upgrade bilateral ties

BEIJING (Reuters): China and East Timor have upgraded bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership, potentially giving Beijing more influence in the region while satisfying the young half-island nation's desire for stronger ties with major economies. The agreement to enhance relations came after China's President Xi Jinping met with East Timor's Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou ahead of the opening ceremony of the Asian Games, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Both sides will increase mutual support and strengthen international cooperation," said Xi. Last year, when Jose Ramos Horta was inaugurated as East Timor's fifth president since the country's independence in 2002, the Nobel laureate pledged to forge closer relations with China, especially in energy, agri-

Kremlin critic transferred to a Siberian prison

notorious for taking a long time, sometimes weeks, during which there's no access to prisoners, and information about their whereabouts is limited. Kara-Murza, a journalist and an opposition activist, was jailed in April 2022. The charges against him stemmed from a speech he gave weeks prior to the arrest to the Arizona House of Representatives in which he denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine. An associate of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, who was killed near the Kremlin in 2015, Kara-Murza survived poisonings in 2015 and 2017 that he blamed on the Kremlin. Russian officials have denied responsibility. Kara-Murza rejected the charges against him and called them punishment for standing up to President Vladimir Putin.

culture and infrastructure. He said he would continue to foster a relationship with the United States, but added that East Timor would not be implicated in any rivalry between Beijing and Washington. East Timor welcomes strong ties with all countries, including its southern neighbour Australia, Ramos-Horta said last year. Upgrading ties, China and East Timor agreed to cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative championed by Xi, that could open the way for investment in infrastructure. Looking beyond Southeast Asia, China has built ties with small nations in the Pacific during recent years, worrying the United States and allies Australia and New Zealand, who have long seen the region as their sphere of influence. China sent its military-run hospital ship to the Pacific in July to visit countries including East Timor and the Solomon islands. In a

Kremlin critic transferred to a Siberian prison

He likened the proceedings to the show trials under Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. Prokhorov said that upon arrival to the penal colony in Omsk, Kara-Murza was immediately placed in a "punishment cell" - a tiny concrete cell where convicts are held in isolation for violating prison regulations. Prison authorities have regularly sent imprisoned dissidents to such cells in recent months over alleged minor infractions, a practice that is widely considered designed to put additional pressure on Kremlin critics behind bars. Prokhorov called the news about Kara-Murza's extreme confinement "worrying" given his deteriorating health, undermined by the poisonings and solitary confinement he had undergone in pre-trial detention.

First civilians leave breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh

NAGORNO-KARABAKH (Agencies): Armenia's prime minister has called his country's security relationships "ineffective," in a swipe at Russia after Azerbaijan claimed the breakaway province of Nagorno-Karabakh following a swift military campaign. Armenia is part of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), a Russian-dominated group of six post-Soviet states, that, similar to NATO, requires members to come to each other's aid when under attack.

But this week, Azerbaijan forced the surrender of ethnic Armenian fighters in Nagorno-Karabakh, seemingly bringing to an end a conflict that has simmered for decades and raising the question whether Armenia could rely on long-term ally Russia. "Armenia has never refused from its allied obligations and has never betrayed its allies," Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said according to Armenia's public radio, going on to say that recent events had exposed the country's "vulnerabilities." Pashinyan has previ-

ously criticized Russia for failing to inform him of Azerbaijan's plans, while some Russian commentators have mocked the prime minister for being unable to protect ethnic Armenians beyond its borders. Although internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh is home to 120,000 ethnic Armenians, who make up the majority of the population, and have created their own de facto government, rejecting Azerbaijani rule. Presently, the Armenian government is working with partners to develop international mechanisms that will protect the rights of people in Nagorno-Karabakh. But if these efforts fail, Armenia will accept their "brothers and sisters... with all care," Pashinyan said.

"But this will not only fail to address the existing issues, but will further aggravate those," he warned. Pashinyan's comments come as the first group of civilians arrived in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh. A group of around 30-40 people, mainly women, children and elderly individual, are being

registered at a humanitarian office, according to Armenia's Public Radio. One local official in the disputed region, said that the bulk of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian population would leave for Armenia. "Our people do not want to live as part of Azerbaijan. Ninety-nine point nine percent prefer to leave our historic lands," David Babayan, an adviser to Samvel Shahramanyan, the president of the self-styled Republic of Artsakh, told Reuters. The region is known as Artsakh to Armenians. Azerbaijan says it will guarantee the rights of those living in the region. But Pashinyan and international experts have repeatedly warned of the risk of ethnic cleansing of Armenians in the enclave. "The fate of our poor people will go down in history as a disgrace and a shame for the Armenian people and for the whole civilized world," Babayan said, adding that those responsible will have to answer before God for their sins. "If the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh are not provided with real condi-

Zelensky presents state awards to Polish volunteers

KYIV (Agencies): President Volodymyr Zelensky presented state awards to two Polish volunteers during a stop in Lublin, Poland, on Sept. 23 for their efforts in supporting Ukraine's war effort. "What you do is significant work-helping and supporting Ukrainians on the front lines, who are truly defending not only Ukraine

but, in my view, Europe, the whole world, our common values," said Zelensky.

According to the President's Office, the volunteers were journalist Bianka Zalewska and medic Damian Duda. Zalewska started volunteering in eastern Ukraine in 2014 collecting and delivering humanitarian aid. After Russia's full-scale invasion,

she continued her volunteer work, including helping transport seriously ill children to hospitals in Poland for treatment.

Duda and a team of medics purchased medical supplies at their own expense and traveled to Ukraine to evacuate wounded soldiers to stabilization points on the front lines. He also estab-

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Pak-Turk ties

THE Commissioning ceremony of the 1st Pakistan Navy MILGEM class Ship PNS BABUR was held at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, Turkey. Minister of National Defence Tarkiyê Mr Yasar Güler and Defence Minister of Pakistan Lt Gen (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder graced the occasion as Chief Guests. On this occasion, the technologically advanced and state-of-the-art surface platform specifically constructed for the Pakistan Navy, equipped with the latest Command & Control Systems was handed over to the Pakistan Navy.

The people of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkiye have longstanding fraternal relations which have deep roots in history well before the creation of Modern Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Other than the common bonds of Muslim brotherhood and history, the people of the Indo-Sub-continent have a spiritual affiliation with the Ottoman Empire and Khalafiat-e-Usmania dating back to World War I, when the Muslims of India launched Tahreek-e-Khilafat and collected donations to support Turkey's war efforts against western powers. In the modern age, Pakistan and the Republic of Tuikiye vigorously pursued the aspirations of their forefathers to conceive a shared prosperous future through joint efforts and teamwork. Currently, Pakistan and Turkey have close cooperation in multiple domains including trade and investment, IT, power generation, Science and Technology, Defense and Security, Counter Terrorism, renewable energy, education, culture and tourism.

In recent years, the Pak-Turk defence collaboration has gained tremendous momentum as both brotherly nations have strong militaries and have attained sufficient expertise in the production of defence equipment, the latest arms and ammunition. Pakistan has capabilities in manufacturing modern lightweight fighter jets, tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery ammunition and tactical weapons, while Turkish defence giants constructing modern warships, helicopters, reconnaissance and armed drones. Therefore, the exchange of expertise and the transfer of technology provide a win-win solution for both nations. The MILGEM project is a magnificent joint endeavour of the Pakistan Navy and the Turkish Ministry of Defence along with a private Turkish firm M/S ASFAT under which four MILGEM class corvettes will be constructed through a joint venture simultaneously at Karachi Shipyard and in Turkiye. The MILGEM project has now become an emblem of Pak-Turk friendship as it would provide the foundation for future joint production and technological collaboration between both brotherly nations.

Besides landmark cooperation in the defence and security domain, the Pak-Turk economic and trade cooperation has grown manifold in recent years. Currently, more than 100 Turkish firms are working in multiple fields in Pakistan, while several Turkish industrial giants have expressed willingness for massive investment in renewable energy projects specifically in solar and wind power generation. Presently, the volume of bilateral trade between Turkey and Pakistan is around \$600 million which is quite nominal as compared to the decades-long bilateral relationship of both nations. Besides political consensus and convergence of interest at the global level, Pak-Turkiye trade relations could not boom because of similarities in exports and imports. Both countries signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) last year that might help them to cater for each other's needs to achieve an overwhelming target of \$5 billion per annum for their bilateral trade in the coming years.

At the time, the Republic of Turkiye is a newly industrialized economy and emerging market, that sits at the junction of two major continents. i.e. Asia and Europe. Currently, Ankara is ambitiously expanding its economic and military influence in adjoining regions through Charismatic leadership and kinetic diplomacy. Like other nations in the world, Turkiye and Pakistan face equal challenges to their economies, but both countries could forge a better future through mutual cooperation and teamwork.

France setback in Western Africa

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron has recently announced that France will end its military cooperation with Niger and withdraw its 1,500 troops from the Sahel nation. Following a July coup in the West African country, which overthrew democratically elected Pro-France President Mohammed Bazoum, French President declared that his country would not be held hostage by the Putschist, an open reference to General Abdourahmane Tiani, who ousted elected government in Niger last month.

France, a former colonial power that ruled almost all western Africa during the 18th centuries, is now rapidly losing its political and economic influence in its former colonies. After the emergence of Al-Shabaab and other sisenster terror groups, several African nations, including Nigar, Burkina Faso, Mali and others struck agreements with Paris for deployment of French Special forces for a train and assist mission to counter terrorist groups in their nations. Unfortunately, a majority of African states failed to curb militancy because of scarcity of resources, poorly trained and ill-equipped militaries along with unceasing tribal conflict which sollowup their resources and weaken their strength. Despite internal weakness and shortcomings, African leaders blamed France for their failures and one by one tied their knot with Russian Wagner groups in the past few years. Interestingly, the Nigar military dictator publicly criticised the Macron government for meddling in the domestic affairs of African nation. While, Niamey has become the epicentre of anti-French protests since the July 26 coup, public rallies gathered regularly calling for the exit of French troops from the country.

Such situations have surely tarnished the image of President Macron and his country at the global level. Therefore, the French President gave a tit-for-tat response to Nigar's military junta by refusing to recognize the dictator's rule, pulling back French troops and removing the French Envoy from that nation. Realistically, French influence over its former colonies in West Africa has waned in recent years. French forces have been kicked out of neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso since coups in those countries, which reduced France's role in the region. In fact the rise of Islamist insurgencies was not only a strategic threat to African nations but was a serious risk for western interests in the region and beyond. However, guest can do nothing if host was not ready, therefore France pulling its troops back but wants a dignified return of its soldiers, which seems to be impossible in current conditions.

Important Notice

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



Forgetting the Ottoman past has done the Arabs no good

Mostafa Minawi

IMPERIALISM is a difficult subject to tackle in the Arab world. The word conjures up associations with the days of French and British colonialism and the present-day settler colony of Israel. Yet the more indigenous and long-lasting form of imperial rule, Ottoman imperialism, is often left out of contemporary historical debates.

Some of the states that succeeded the Ottoman Empire have chosen to sum up Ottoman rule in local curricula as simply Ottoman or Turkish "occupation", while others repeat well-rehearsed tropes of "Ottoman atrocities" that continue to have popular purchase on a local level. In places like Syria and Lebanon, probably the best-known Ottoman official is military commander Ahmed Cemal (Jamal) Pasha, infamously nicknamed "al-Saffah" (the Butcher). His wartime governorship of the provinces of Syria and Beirut was marked by political violence and executions of Arab-Ottoman politicians and intellectuals and remains in public memory as the symbol of Ottoman rule.

But as historian Salim Tamari has pointed out, it is wrong to reduce "four centuries of relative peace and dynamic activity [during] the Ottoman era" to "four miserable years of tyranny symbolized by the military dictatorship of Ahmad Cemal Pasha in Syria". Indeed, Ottoman imperial history in the Arab world cannot be boiled down to a "Turkish occupation" or a "foreign yoke". We cannot grapple with this 400-year history from 1516 to 1917 without coming to terms with the fact that it was a homegrown form of imperial rule.

A substantial number of the members of the imperial ruling class were in fact Arab Ottomans, who hailed from the Arabic-speaking-majority parts of the empire, like the Malhamés of Beirut and al-Azms of Damascus. They, and many others, were active members of the Ottoman imperial project, who designed, planned, implemented, and supported imperial Ottoman rule in the region and across the empire. Al-Azms held some of the highest positions in the empire's Levantine provinces, including the governorship of Syria, for several generations. The Istanbul branch of the family, known as Azmzades, also held key positions in the palace, the various ministries and commissions, and later in the Ottoman

parliament during the reign of Abdülhamid II and the second Ottoman constitutional period. The Malhamés were acting as commercial and political power brokers in cities like Istanbul, Beirut, Sofia and Paris.

Many Arab Ottomans fought until the very end to introduce a more inclusive notion of citizenship and representative political participation into the empire. This was particularly true for the generation who grew up after the sweeping centralisation reforms in the first half of the 19th century, part of the so-called Tanzimat period of modernisation. Some of them held positions that ranged from diplomats negotiating on behalf of the sultan with imperial counterparts in Europe, Russia, and Africa to advisers who planned and executed major imperial projects, such as the implementation of public health measures in Istanbul and the construction of a railway linking the Hijaz region in the Arabian Peninsula with Syria and the capital. They imagined an Ottoman citizenship that, at its idealistic best, embraced all ethnic and officially recognised religious groups and that envisioned a form of belonging that, at the risk of sounding anachronistic, can be described as a multicultural notion of imperial belonging. It was an aspirational vision that was never realised, as ethno-nationalism began to influence Ottomans' self-perception.

Many Arab Ottomans continued to fight for it to the bitter end - until their world imploded with the demise of the empire during World War I. The horrors of war in the Middle East and the colonial occupation that followed were traumatic events that found peoples of the region scrambling to construct Western-sponsored nation-states. Nation-building took place as a narrow ethno-religious understanding of nationhood came to dominate the region, sidelining multicultural identities that had been the norm for centuries. Former Ottoman officials had to reinvent themselves as Arab, Syrian, or Lebanese, etc national leaders in the face of French and British colonialism. A prominent example is Haqqi al-Azm, who, among other positions within the Ottoman empire, held the inspector general post at the Ottoman Ministry of Awqaf; in the 1930s, he served as Syria's prime minister.

These visions of an ethno-national future neces-

sitated the "forgetting" of the recent Ottoman past. Narratives of imagined primordial nations left no room for the stories of our great-grandparents and their parents, generations of people that lived part of their lives in a different geopolitical reality, and who would never be given the space to acknowledge the loss of the only reality they understood. These are stories of common people like Bader Doghan (Doʻan) and Abd al-Ghani Uthman (Osman) - my great-grandparents who were born and raised in Beirut but lived an itinerant life as artisans between Beirut, Damascus, and Jaffa until the rise of national boundaries put an end to their world experiences. These are also stories of better-known families like some of al-Khalidis and al-Abids, notable Arab-Ottoman political families who called Istanbul home, but maintained households and familial connections in Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Damascus. Their stories and the stories of their communities that existed for centuries within an imperial imaginary and a wider regional cosmology were often summed up in a reductionist and dismissive official narrative. Their recent history was replaced by a short summary that painted "the Turk" as a foreign Other, the Arab Revolt as a war of liberation, and Western colonial occupation as an inevitable conclusion to the disintegration of "the sick man of Europe".

This erasure of history is highly problematic, if not dangerous. As a historian of the Ottoman Empire with Palestinian and Lebanese roots, I truly believe it is no less than a crime to keep millions of people disconnected from their own recent past, from the stories of their ancestors, villages, town, and cities in the name of protecting an unstable conglomeration of nation-state formations. The people of the region have been uprooted from their historical reality and left vulnerable to the false narratives of politicians and nationalist historians. We need to reclaim Ottoman history as a local history of the inhabitants of the Arabic-speaking-majority lands because if we do not claim and unpack the recent past, it would be impossible to truly understand the problems that we are facing today, in all their temporal and regional dimensions. The call for local students of history to research, write, and analyse the recent Ottoman reality is in no way a nostalgic call to return to some imagined

days of a glorious or harmonious imperial past. In fact, it is the complete opposite.

It is a call to uncover and come to terms with the good, the bad, and, indeed, the very ugly imperial past that people in the Arabic-speaking-majority parts of the Middle East were also the makers of. The long and storied histories of the people of cities that flourished during the Ottoman period, like Tripoli, Aleppo, and Basra, have yet to be (re)written. It is also important to understand why, more than 100 years since the end of the empire, the erasure of the deeply rooted and intimate connections between the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Europe continues, and who benefits from this erasure. We must ask ourselves why is it that researchers from Arabic-speaking-majority countries frequent French and English imperial archives, but do not spend the time or the resources to learn Ottoman-Turkish in order to take advantage of four centuries worth of records readily available at the Ottoman imperial archives in Istanbul or local archives in former provincial capitals? Have we bought into the nationalist understanding of history in which Ottoman-Turkish and the Ottoman past belong solely to Turkish national historiography? Are we still the victim of a century's worth of short-sighted political interests that ebb and flow as regional tensions between Arab countries and Turkey rise and fall?

Millions of records in Ottoman-Turkish await students from across the Arabic-speaking-majority world to take the plunge into serious research that uses the full range of sources, both on the local and imperial levels. Finally, the number of local historians and students with Ottoman history-related disciplinary and linguistic training, in cities such as Doha, Cairo, and Beirut, which have a concentration of excellent institutions of higher education, is alarmingly low; some universities do not even have such cadres. It is high time that the institutions of higher learning in the region begin to claim Ottoman history as local history and to support scholars and students who want to uncover and analyse this neglected past. For if we do not invest in investigating and writing our own history, then we give up our narratives to various interests and agendas that do not put our people at the centre of their stories.

Aljazeera

Younger Republicans more likely to favour gun laws than older ones

Matt Haines

PUBLIC opinion polling by the Pew Research Center says nearly two-thirds of Americans expect gun violence to increase over the next five years. The politics of enacting more restrictive gun laws has long divided most Republicans and Democrats, and now the issue appears to be creating a divide between generations of Republicans as well. Several polls released this year show young Republicans are likelier to support more restrictive gun laws than older voters in their party.

"Older Republicans didn't grow up in a mental health crisis like we have," said Nicholas Stilianessis, a 14-year-old from Passaic County, New Jersey, and a member of the High School Republican National Federation. "Suicides and suicide attempts are higher for us than any generation before, and, of course, so are school shootings," he told VOA. "I'm sad for the loss of life, but I'm also angry because politicians in both parties aren't doing anything about it except using it as a tool to campaign." A YouGov survey in February 2023 reported that 47% of young Republicans support more restrictive gun laws, compared with just 23% of older Republicans. And the figure for young Republicans is growing, up from 41% in August 2022.

"It makes sense," said Ryan Barto, communications manager with March For Our Lives, a student-led organization that demonstrates in support of gun control legislation. "Young people bear the brunt of the gun violence epidemic. We've lived with active shooter drills, constant news coverage of mass shootings, and have lost friends to firearms. There isn't room for partisan politics when lives are on the line." Stilianessis was quick to point out, however, that he doesn't support all - or even most - gun control measures. "Gun control is broad," he said, maintaining that people should be able to own guns for self-protection. "For me, I'm in favor of stronger background checks, I don't think anyone should have automatic weapons, and because mental illness is such a big part of these shootings, I think we need to screen better for mental health before we give someone a gun." Eugene Johnson is a professor at Dillard University in New Orleans. He says younger Republicans tend to support laws restricting gun ownership based on a gun-seeker's age, mental health and history of violence.

"I think Republicans, and possibly most Americans, will want to arm themselves because they care about safety and it's easier to arm themselves than it is to pass public policy," Johnson told VOA. The Gallup polling organization reported in 2020 that 32% of US adults say they personally own a gun, while 44% reported living in a gun household. "Young Republicans seem in agreement that the problem isn't guns, but that the wrong people have access to them," Johnson said. "The kinds of laws they're supporting are popular because they don't fully remove guns. They look at limiting who should have them." But for some older Republicans, even that is too restrictive. Alberto Perez, a 44-year-old development officer from Blairsville, Georgia, believes the younger mem-

bers of his party will change their minds as they get older and take on more responsibility. "They don't bear the weight of raising a family and having to keep them safe," Perez told VOA. "I may agree in theory with some sensible gun laws that make it more difficult to purchase and keep a gun, but the reality is that criminals and psychopaths will find a way around it and that puts the rest of us in danger."

Willow Hannington, 20, said she is open to increased regulations. "I'm willing to consider things like universal background checks and mental health evaluations," she told VOA. "I think implementing mandatory gun safety courses is a good idea, as is hosting community events to destigmatize gun use and promote safe handling and procedures. "Mostly, though," she added, "I want to see legislators address gun violence through mental health reform. That's where the crisis is." While support for gun control among young Republicans is growing, a majority of young party members still oppose restrictions.

"Not only do we not believe there should be any further gun restrictions put in place," said Mark Basta, 19-year-old vice chairman of the California College Republicans, "but we believe all current restrictions should be repealed because they are unconstitutional, and they punish law-abiding citizens rather than actually affect criminals." "Any young Republicans who support gun control," he continued, "are most likely doing so because of a lack of knowledge and brainwashing by their schools and peers." Hannington said opinions like Basta's make her feel stuck. "I think many of us in Gen-Z are passionate about improving our society and open to compromise in areas like gun control," she explained. "But Democrats take advantage of our compassion ... and Republicans tell us we don't have the knowledge or maturity to understand the issues." "Honestly, I'd like to see more people from my generation run for office," she added. "I think we're wiser than most people think, and we'd be able to diminish the political divide we're seeing today."

"One big question is whether support for gun restrictions among younger-generation Republicans is due only to the effects of mass shootings, or if their opinion is stable and will continue into the future," said James Garand, a professor of political science at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. "I don't think it will impact this election, but if it persists, and they make up a higher share of the Republican coalition, I think it could affect some low-intensity gun restrictions in the future." If he were old enough to vote in 2024, Stilianessis said, he would "absolutely support" a Republican who considers some gun control measures.

"Current legislators don't focus on what the youth need and want," he said. "They're not listening to us. But we're the future of the Republican Party, and one day they'll have to pay attention to what we say. Because this is an issue that concerns us, and when they're long gone, we'll still be here dealing with it."

VOA

Zelensky delivers an important message to America

Luke Coffey

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 counteroffensive 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 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.

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.

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 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. Zelenskyy 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.

Russia optimistic on economy but reasons for caution remain

Dr. Diana Galeeva

RUSSIAN Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin this month noted that the Russian economy "has adjusted to the current challenges and shows fairly stable growth." The country's economy, he stressed, reached positive values in all key indicators in the first half of the year. According to the Ministry of Economics, Russia's gross domestic product grew by 1.5 percent in the first six months of 2023; in the second quarter, the growth was 4.6 percent. Industrial production in the country for the first six months increased by 2.5 percent, due mainly to manufacturing, where growth exceeded 6 percent.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the end of July that the growth rate of the Russian economy this year was accelerating from month to month, on which basis the growth for 2023 will completely cover last year's decline. The authorities are counting on growth of more than 2 percent by the end of the year, the head of state noted.

The central bank last month raised its forecast for Russia's GDP growth from 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent from 0.5 percent to 2 percent in the spring forecast. The forecast was made taking into account new data on the dynamics of economic activity in the baseline scenario. According to the forecast, the GDP growth rate will be between 0.5 percent and 2.5 percent in 2024 and between 1 percent and 2 percent in 2025. What is happening within the Russian economy to generate these figures, and what measures are being taken by the

government to adapt to the severe and ongoing Western sanctions?

According to the World Bank's initial forecast of the impact of sanctions, announced in March 2022, by the end of that year it was expected that Russia's GDP would be 11 percent lower, investment flows would decrease by up to 17 percent, inflation would reach 22 percent and exports and imports would fall by up to 31 percent and 35 percent, respectively. However, the figures were revised down and the World Bank later estimated a fall in GDP of only 4.5 percent in 2022 and inflation of up to 13.9 percent. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund estimated a real GDP decline of up to 3.4 percent in 2022, but it also revised this to only 2.1 percent. Among the key explanations for this was the Kremlin's policy of energy weaponization to counteract the sanctions. Russia's economic prospects heavily rely on what happens to its oil and gas exports and on the extent to which the country can find new export markets and new suppliers of essential imports, while reducing its reliance on Western supply chains. As outlined in a statement by Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, revenues from the oil and gas industry increased by 28 percent in 2022. This was not only due to a rise in prices on the world market, but also a 2 percent increase in oil production in Russia and a 7 percent increase in oil exports, despite the imposition

of sanctions.

It is not coincidental that the recent measures rely on both the energy market and close coordination with the Central Bank of Russia. The bank's management, which played an essential role in tackling the economic restrictions due to the Ukraine war, believes that the only way to maintain the validity of the budget rule is to change the taxation of the oil and gas sector.

This is stated in the draft Monetary Policy Guidelines for 2024-2026, which was developed by the regulator of the bank. According to the central bank, an important factor in planning budget policy in the medium term will be "the risks of exhausting the liquid part of the National Wealth Fund and the stability of the current budget rule." The bank admits the possibility of maintaining oil and gas revenues below the baseline for necessary income, even in the event of a moderate weakening of the ruble. In this regard, the only way to maintain the budget rule would be what the regulator called "adjustment of taxation parameters in the oil and gas sector."

A further factor was under discussion last week as, according to The Financial Times, the central bank announced after an emergency interest rate-setting meeting that took place on Aug. 14 that it had raised its key rate by 3.5 percentage points to stem a sharp sell-off of the ruble. The Wall Street Journal put it that "economists see this week's currency gyrations not

as the beginning of a financial crisis but rather as a symptom of the Kremlin's sclerotic economic prospects." Mishustin aims to maintain the pace of economic growth primarily by developing the supply side of the economy, ensuring domestic demand for domestic goods and services. These measures are intended to increase employment, improve the efficiency of the economy and promote investment activity.

Among the ongoing challenges relating to attracting foreign investments is that most are pegged to the US dollar by potential investors. In the current reality, this particularly affects the players from the Middle East, which conduct their sales of energy resources in that currency. It is not a coincidence that Russia has been working on de-dollarization policies, especially since 2014, seeking partner states that are willing to liberate themselves from the dollar's dominance.

While Russian presentations of the economy's development are largely positive and stress its resilience in the face of global restrictions, Western reporting has pointed to how sanctions have at least placed a speed limit on Russia's economy. Although the results of Western pressure have not matched the negative forecasts mentioned above, the overall picture is mixed enough to warrant further observation. The continued positive growth stands against the backdrop of a cautious jumbo interest rate rise and the concerning low level of the ruble against the dollar.

Moscow has shown it will not cross its own red lines in the war

HALF a year into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the world was caught off-guard by President Vladimir Putin's vow to use "all means" necessary to protect the territorial integrity of Russia - including the four newly illegally annexed Ukrainian regions and Crimea. These were, after all, the first explicit threats to use nuclear weapons from a major power since the end of the Cold War.

Moscow's intention was clear: draw a red line and scare NATO out of supplying Kyiv with any weapons that could threaten Russia's occupation and continued assault on Ukraine. Yet, the West doubled down and provided unprecedented amounts of heavy weaponry, ammunition, air defense systems, and training to Ukrainian troops. The Kremlin's bluff was called, but Putin did not push the big red nuclear button. Moscow's threats have been all bark and no bite. Their ability to escalate is limited, and as a result they have forced themselves to rely on bellicose rhetoric. The West should recognize Russia's threats as hollow and stand firm by continuing to deliver weapons and aid and moving toward security guarantees for Ukraine.

Firstly, military concerns and the internal threat of societal backlash like that seen after Russia's 2022 partial mobilization are preventing the Kremlin from seriously retaliating against Ukraine or the West. Although Russia is not facing imminent defeat, it is occupied with Ukraine's counteroffensive. With the majority of its military bogged down in defensive positions in eastern Ukraine after nearly 18 months of war, any consideration of opening an additional front in Ukraine, much less against another country or NATO member, is an absurd prospect. While the frontlines remain relatively stable, Moscow will likely continue its war of attrition and make sporadic threats to project strength internally and externally - all while ignoring most of its mounting problems. Nuclear war is unlikely to be a serious consideration unless there is an existential threat to the Russian state, significant "Russian" territory or the regime's survival. It is hard to see how Western arms supplies would meet this threshold.

Even assuming that Moscow does not opt for a nuclear response, Russia still lacks the capacity for real military escalation. What's more, unless faced with wholesale defeat at the front rather than incremental setbacks, it is hard to see how it would be in Moscow's interests: it could lead to uncontrollable escalation, a full-scale defeat or the end of Putin's authoritarian system. A war with NATO, let alone a nuclear war, would be far too risky. For Moscow to defend its red lines effectively in a conventional military sense, it would need to mobilize hundreds of thousands of additional men, which it is ill-prepared to do. With limited options to stimulate its highly sanctioned economy and growing discontent over the government's handling of the war, a new wave of mobilization could lead to an even greater backlash than the one last year. To preserve the fragile harmony within Russian society and maintain public support for the regime, the Kremlin must make every effort to avoid further mobilization and continue with its narrative that everything is going according to plan. That implies it will not follow through on its outlandish threats.

Furthermore, nuclear sabre-rattling from Russia's political elite, such as former president and current deputy chairman of the Security Council Dmitry Medvedev, are so frequent that Western policymakers should take their significance with a grain of salt. Similar threats have emerged from nearly every corner of the elite, including Russia's propaganda machinery. Margarita Simonyan, the head of the state-controlled broadcaster RT, has repeatedly exclaimed that a red line has been crossed and called for hellfire to rain down on Ukraine and the West - but to no avail. The number of threats with no clear pattern

Joshua R. Kroeker

is reminiscent of the Russian disinformation strategy of maskirovka: the use of deception, intimidation, and disinformation to bewilder the enemy. In recent years, political observers have recognized these tactics in Russia's foreign policy, being used for election interference, hybrid warfare, and pro-Kremlin foreign-language propaganda. Regardless of the level of design around Russia's chaotic information space, maskirovka has been a key strategy directed by the Kremlin at Kyiv and the West since the full-scale invasion last year.

Narratives in the Russian state-controlled information space are multi-layered, inconsistent, and often directed at producing and propagating so much disinformation that few know what to believe. If everything, including nuclear warfare, seems to be on the table, the situation becomes all the more terrifying and opaque. Watching Russia shell Ukrainian cities on a near-

of real retaliation. They have been so frequent, there is now an entire Wikipedia page dedicated to Russia's red lines and the lack of consequences when they were crossed.

The Kremlin's habit of declaring practically everything a red line but never actually acting on violations of these boundaries has created ambiguity about what is acceptable and what is not. Indeed, its lack of response in most situations radically widens the scope for action. As Ukraine's attacks grow bolder, the lack of a serious response only signals Moscow's unwillingness or inability to counter them. Putin's aloofness has exacerbated the situation, giving the impression that everything that happens is within the realm of what is acceptable. The Kremlin's responses are a far cry from its rhetoric of nuclear escalation. Without defined red lines delineating how far it will allow the West and Ukraine to go, and not acting when they have gone too far, the Kremlin has demonstrated weaknesses

At various points, attacks on the Crimean bridge or weapons depots in Crimea have been red lines. By the time Ukrainian drones were thought to have attacked the Kremlin itself in May 2023, Russia's pro-war blogger community was complaining about the lack of real retaliation. They have been so frequent, there is now an entire Wikipedia page dedicated to Russia's red lines and the lack of consequences when they were crossed. The Kremlin's habit of declaring practically everything a red line but never actually acting on violations of these boundaries has created ambiguity about what is acceptable and what is not. Indeed, its lack of response in most situations radically widens the scope for action. As Ukraine's attacks grow bolder, the lack of a serious response only signals Moscow's unwillingness or inability to counter them.

daily basis, it is understandable that the Western public could take Moscow's threats seriously. The consistency and quantity of Russia's threats are intended to scare Western decision-makers and populations into making concessions. Threats directed at NATO countries have sparked small-scale pacifist demonstrations from Prague to London and New York to protest the alliance's existence and call for an end to the fighting.

In some cases, the Kremlin itself may have been behind the protests. In France, Russian intelligence agencies were accused of having organized protests demanding an end to Western support for Ukraine. More famously, Russia has made serious efforts to co-opt Germany's radical right and radical left parties, both of which oppose NATO as well as weapons deliveries to Ukraine. While this strategy has had some limited success in uniting Germany's political fringes, for the most part, Ukrainian and Western politicians have held firm. Finally, the sheer quantity of threats Russia has issued has led to a paradox in which the Kremlin is no longer able to succinctly define what its red lines are, and how it would respond. Kyiv has been emboldened, pushing the boundaries further than previously conceivable.

Since launching its invasion, Russia has threatened that it would not tolerate any incursions into its territory or attacks on its cities. After its illegal annexation of four Ukrainian regions in September 2022, Moscow made it clear that any attempts to retake them would be considered a red line. At various points, attacks on the Crimean bridge or weapons depots in Crimea have been red lines. By the time Ukrainian drones were thought to have attacked the Kremlin itself in May 2023, Russia's pro-war blogger community was complaining about the lack

in its approach to deterrence. The West and NATO have no reason to slow down their arms deliveries.

Against this backdrop, Moscow's threats to sink any vessel entering Ukraine's territorial waters for the purpose of exporting its grain seem particularly empty. The Black Sea shipping route is a lifeline. Not just for Ukraine, which relies on its grain exports as a consequential source of revenue. But also for the rest of the world, as choking off Ukraine risks exacerbating global food scarcity and price hikes. Here, Russia's threats have been effective enough so far: it has put a stop to most of Ukraine's Black Sea grain shipments with little response from the West. The world must understand that Russia is unlikely to escalate the war if transport vessels under NATO or EU protection cross the Black Sea.

With all of Russia's threats, however, the proportionality is out of sync. Moscow is not going to risk global annihilation to prevent NATO from providing Kyiv with military aid, especially now that its defenses are (mostly) holding. It would not serve any strategic goal. Beyond the potential for catastrophic escalation, the use of nuclear weapons would also carry another risk: to Putin himself. Not only would this be seen highly unfavorably in Russia, but actors within the military or the Kremlin may challenge the president's authority if ordered to carry out an escalation of that magnitude. Even in the Kremlin, Putin's power has its limitations. Russia's red lines have repeatedly been proven to be hollow. While it is still faintly conceivable they might follow through, the Kremlin is unlikely to seriously do so if the West continues to deliver weapons to Ukraine. These red lines are purely a method of deterrence, and to believe them would be a mistake.

The Moscow Times

Keir Starmer's caution may be frustrating, but it's right

Rafael Behr

PRIME minister might not be the hardest job in Britain, but it combines the highest level of responsibility with the lowest barrier to entry for inadequate candidates. You don't get to be a rocket scientist, for example, by reckoning you'd be good at it and persuading enough people to give you a go.

But rocket scientists don't need to win a popular mandate to take tough decisions. They don't need to be liable on telly. Running a government is almost impossibly difficult because the skills necessary for winning power are unlike the ones required to use it well. Campaign wizards can lack the temperament to be competent managers. Shrewd judgment doesn't always express itself in memorable phrases; which brings us to Keir Starmer. If the Labour leader reaches Downing Street, his journey will not be remembered for lofty oration along the way. It isn't a gift people suddenly acquire - and if Starmer had it, we'd know by now. Luckily for him, Rishi Sunak has the same weakness. Happily for both leaders, the value of charismatic performance has tanked since the bursting of Boris Johnson's bubble. Liz Truss's spontaneous political combustion had a similar effect on the market for visionary radicalism - or government by dogmatic hallucination, as it turned out.

Sunak's offer to the public, on taking over from Truss, was a period of steady administration; no more stomach-churning loops on the political rollercoaster. The switch to a technocratic style has been cosmetic. The incompetence is less spectacular and erratic, more dull and predictable. He has also delivered up to a point. The ride has been smoother. That was the right pitch for an incoming prime minister with a wafer-thin mandate. But the Tories get no credit because frenzy has been swapped for decay. It would be a mistake for Labour to see Sunak's failure as a repudiation of the idea that Britain is ready to be led by a

professional manager. The vacancy is for someone who can project that approach alongside a credible likelihood of making things better for most people; managed improvement instead of managed decline.

That feels like a bleak proposition to those activists and radicals (of left and right) who like to break things and see incremental change as pointless fidgeting with the status quo. Starmer's eschewal of the more drastic approach is not, as the Labour left alleges, an expression of paltry ambition or some crypto-Conservative abandonment of egalitarian principle. It is a response to the vast scepticism so many voters feel when presented with anything that looks like an undeliverable promise and anyone who claims to have quick-fix solutions.

That monumental disaffection, reported on the ground by Labour and Tory candidates alike, is resistant to the kind of visionary stump speeches that Starmer's critics demand of him. Even if he were capable of doing everything they ask, the words would bounce off his target audience without leaving a mark. The task is more subtle and much bigger than conventional political persuasion. It is nothing less than rehabilitation of the idea that politics can make a positive difference in people's lives. It is making a virtue of what Max Weber, the political theorist, characterised as "the slow boring of hard boards". It is the craft of getting difficult things done without denying that there is a cost; managing trade-offs and competing interests without hunting scapegoats or vandalising institutions that uphold the rule of law.

That isn't a case easily made from opposition, without levers to effect change. It is also a romantic reading of the hypercaution that so frustrates Starmer's detractors. More mundane explanations are available. One is tactical. Why interrupt the government, mid-implosion,

with interventions that could draw the Tories' fire and unite them in partisan rebuttal? Why stick with policies that gladden your enemies and furnish them with campaign ammunition? The perils of learning on the job is another factor. Starmer became leader of a ruined and demoralised party having been an MP for only five years. By Westminster standards that is barely an apprenticeship in operating political machinery. He has been building a plane while flying it.

Policy U-turns that the left interprets as surrender to a Blairite revanche are construed by the leader's allies as rational choices by a man who wants to win an election, has looked at the evidence of how it can be done and will be ruthless in taking down obstacles in his path. The difference between those interpretations comes down to perennial suspicion that anyone taking the pragmatic road to power must be travelling light on principle. On that front, the Labour leader's pre-political career is more instructive than raking over Tony Blair's record and auditing ways in which 2023 is like and unlike 1997. At 61, Starmer is on course to be the oldest new prime minister since James Callaghan and the first since Blair to arrive with zero experience of government. (David Cameron had been a special adviser under John Major; every other 21st-century prime minister had held a big cabinet job before moving into No 10.)

But, unlike most of his predecessors, Starmer ran a large public sector organisation before entering politics. He was director of public prosecutions from 2008 to 2013. The Tories have tried mining that period for evidence of softness on crime or anything with a whiff of "woke". The pickings are thin. They have resorted to a nasty conspiracy theory involving Jimmy Savile never having faced charges. Given how many fissile issues come across a DPP's desk, the notable feature of Starmer's

record is the absence of scandal. He crossed a minefield unscathed. That experience contains clues as to the way Starmer operates now. Speaking to a parliamentary committee in 2013, he explained how the likelihood of securing a conviction was paramount, trumping any public or political pressure to act in high-profile cases. The evidence test "must come first and should always come first," he said.

Prosecute when you know you can win and not just because people are demanding that something be done. It is not hard to see in that adage the kernel of Starmerism as practised in the opposition leader's office. Politics rarely affords leaders the time for meticulous evaluation of evidence and often rewards the opposite. There is a lack of agility in Starmer's method that could be punished by the relentless barrage of events that former prime ministers describe as the hardest part of the job, and the one for which they felt least prepared.

That is just one in a long and gloomy list of ways a Labour government, facing harrowing financial constraints, a disenchanted electorate and a hostile media, could come unstuck. Pessimism is the safer bet given the recent trajectory of British politics. But when it comes to Starmer's management credentials, the evidence is not so disheartening. Under his leadership, a dysfunctional and bitterly divided party that looked destined for another decade in the wilderness has been turned around and brought to the threshold of power.

There is ample dispute inside the Labour party about the merits and methods of that process. Seeds of future strife are sown in the ground that has been cleared for the march on Downing Street. But from the outside, to swing voters who are fed up with Tories and ready for regime change, the quietly ruthless transformation of the Labour party speaks well of its leader. In a country exhausted by political chaos, it is significant that Starmer's way is one thing that appears to be working.

Putin has signed his name on the wrong piece of paper this time

Hamish De Bretton-Gordon

AS Vladimir Putin sits thinking in his bomb-proof office, he may come to regret the fact that the entire world is sure that he ordered the death of the mutinous mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin. The Kremlin is a Camorra, a mafia style parliament, running a gangster operation to fill Putin's pockets and those of his oligarchs and elites. But as the Japanese found in Burma in 1944, if you prosecute a war with terror you will likely come unstuck against a well led, motivated and moral organisation like General 'Bill' Slim's 'Forgotten Army'.

Putin may in fact have signed his own death warrant. His fingerprints may not have been on the firing button when Prigozhin's jet was brought down, and may not have been on the Polonium or Novichok which killed some of his other opponents, but his DNA is all over the orders. He now has two very powerful groups to worry about - quite apart from the International Criminal Court, which no doubt has so much evi-

dence that if he ever gets to the Hague he will never leave.

Firstly, Putin must worry about his oligarchs who have now been holed up in their dachas in Moscow for over 18 months, unable to use their superyachts or villas in the Mediterranean. As their leader is further vilified around the globe over this latest murder, the oligarchs may come to see that their only chance to break out of Russia, now so diminished economically and socially, is to dispose of Putin. Secondly, the Wagner Group might have lost their 'cowboy' leader and his deputy, but they remain a large force of thugs and murderers. Prigozhin was no military commander, but the Wagner Group is the most successful military outfit that Russia has managed to put into the field, no matter that they are paid mercenaries, many of them recruited out of Russian jails. To control such a rabble, you need some very hard 'lieutenants' running the show and these men will now be considering the future in

Belarus and Africa. How ironic it would be if somebody showered them with riches to go and create mayhem within Russia. My experience of mercenaries is that they are not too picky about whose money they take.

It's unlikely to be a coincidence that the final dismissal of 'General Armageddon' Sergei Surovikin was announced on the same day as Prigozhin was taken out. Putin has now disposed of his most effective military commanders and is left with desk jockeys like Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov to run the battles in Ukraine and the defence of Moscow. These men might have chests full of medals, but these medals are for 'needle work and cookery', not for fighting as Surovikin and Prigozhin's were. A poorly led army is a rabble which will likely turn and run, and this is now what Putin has created. I imagine that over the next few days we are also likely to be treat-

ed to a flood of "kompromat" which the late Yevgeny Vitorovich will have gathered on Putin and his baleful regime, for release in the event of his death. This could mean further pressure on an increasingly beleaguered Kremlin.

In the cold light of day, when Muscovites yet again have to dive for their shelters as Ukrainian drones approach, and reflect that their young men are coming home in boxes rather than in triumph, they will surely start to realise that Putin's 'special military operation' is a complete disaster. But I expect it will be the oligarchs and Wagner who finish Putin before he completely destroys the Russian state. What comes next cannot be worse or more evil; we've seen hell on earth in the last 18 months. What is certain is that the next Russian leader will not have a useable army or effective generals to command it for a generation. Things are likely to get messier before they get better, but after the demise of Surovikin and Prigozhin, Putin's coffin won't require many more nails.

The Telegraph



Handicrafts exhibition of KP held at Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Exhibition of handicrafts from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was organized by the Handicrafts Association of Pakistan in collaboration with the Youth Directorate of KP at the prestigious Centaurus Mall Islamabad.

Young Artisans from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated at the event to showcase crafts locally sourced and made in their areas, says a press release.

These included straw baskets, truck art, leather, gemstones and local embroidered suits.

The event was an excellent opportunity for artisans to attract buyers from the federal capital and gain exposure where they also had the opportunity to get orders from international firms as trade attaché of diplomatic enclave were also in attendance.

Prominent among were Sardar Ilyas Khan, CEO of Centaurus, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ahsan Bakhtarwee and Chairperson KPBOIT Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade Engr Said Khan.

A large number of Diplomats and dignitaries

from different walks of life were also in attendance.

Chairperson Handicrafts Association of Pakistan Miss Maryam Iqbal stated that the handicrafts industry has been a neglected industry whereas it has a lot of potential.

Artisans should be encouraged by offering opportunities and financial support to display their art and products in exhibitions. A developed handicrafts sector in Pakistan could guarantee a handsome contribution to GDP; investment opportunities; enhanced foreign exchange earnings; cultural preservation, entrepreneurial development, and alleviation of poverty.

Pakistan is bestowed with the artisans rich in texturing and elegant handicrafts that have a lucrative global demand. The only thing needed is to ensure that production is being done in a systematic and cost-effective way.

For instance, Balochistan is the major producer of salt items, leatherwork, sheepskin items, and mats.

Ajrak, Ralli, Sasi, Khadi and the ceramic work of Sindh reflect a serene pic-

ture of the skill of artisans. KP is rich in traditional embroidery and copper work.

Multan and Bahawalpur regions are famous for the blue pottery, embroidery and camel-skin lamps; Peshawar Misgaran Bazaar is a historic market for brass and silver utensils.

Chiniot wood-crafting could be evolved as a speciality for Middle Eastern and European markets. Swat and D.G Khan produce thread and mirror embroidery. Internationally commended hand-knotted carpets and rugs are the work of artisans of Lahore and Balochistan.

It is indispensable to channelize all the resources to the handicrafts production hubs like Southern Punjab, Karachi, Balochistan and most parts of KP. According to a recent survey of Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry, there are 1140 craftsmen only in the small town of Sillanwali near Sargodha, but it could not get the legal status of the industry till date.

Most of the handicrafts exporters are based in Karachi and consequently, small-scale handicrafts in

different regions are unable to get attention. The exporting hubs should be uniformly distributed at regional locations to promote and facilitate localised artisans. An effective way to achieve this milestone promptly is calling for well-researched proposals to design and implement a methodical plan for handicrafts.

They said provincial governments should take the front line position in promoting handicraft industry and related products. Artisans should be encouraged by offering opportunities and financial support to display their art and products in exhibitions and handicraft should be taken as a priority industry in the country.

The major institutions supposed to be at cutting-edge, by recognising and magnifying their efforts, are Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC), Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority, Export Promotion Bureau of Pakistan, and Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA).



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ahsan Bakhtarwee with others cutting a ribbon to inaugurate Handicraft Exhibition. — F.P. photo

SBP suspends authorization of exchange company

F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan has suspended, with immediate effect, the authorization of an Exchange Company B Namely M/s Premier Exchange Company -B (Pvt.) Limited till further orders on account of serious violations of State Bank's regulations and instructions.

The Exchange Company -B, its head office and all branches have been debarred from undertaking any kind of business activity during the suspension period.

Interbank gold prices lower

BEIJING (APP): China's benchmark prices for spot interbank gold transactions were lower Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

The benchmark price for gold that is 99.95 percent pure or above stood at 470.99 yuan (about 65.66 US dollars) per gram, down 3.46 yuan from the previous trading day, while the price for gold that is 99.99 percent pure or above lost 1.11 yuan to 471.72 yuan per gram.

Spot transaction prices on the interbank price inquiry market are allowed to rise or fall within 15 percent from the benchmark prices each trading day.

Cement exports surge by over 130% to \$39.6 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): The cement exports from Pakistan surged by 130.24 per cent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Pakistan earned \$39.641 million by exporting cement during July-August (2023-24) as compared to its exports of \$17.217 million during July-August (2022-23), a growth of over 130 per cent, according to the latest PBS data.

On a year-on-year basis, cement exports from the country witnessed an increase of 102.74 per cent during August 2023 as compared to the same month last year. The cement exports in August 2023 were recorded at \$23.496 million, compared to the exports of \$11.589 million in August 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the cement exports from the country witnessed an increase of 45.53 per cent during August 2023 when compared to the exports of \$16.145 million in July 2023, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

PIDE presents reports to minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) headed by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice-Chancellor of PIDE called upon Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries and Production Dr. Gohar Ejaz.

The PIDE delegation presented Research Reports on the energy sector, the state of commerce in Pakistan, the state of the engineering industry, SLUDGE and the urgent need for deregulation in the country.

The meeting was also attended by Special Secretary Ms. Sarah Saeed, Mr. Asad Rehman Gillani and Mr. Shahid Abdullah of the Sapphire Group, said in a press release issued here on Monday.

The Minister appreciated the efforts put in by PIDE for evidence-based policymaking and the revival of the economy.

He stressed the need for increasing investment and exports as a top priority for the coming years.

Without a stable macro-economic environment, which includes low inflation, low interest rate, and stable exchange rate, all investors are likely to regard Pakistan as too risky.

Sadly, in Pakistan the business community is stigmatized while in other countries entrepreneurs are lauded for creating economic activity. This mindset has to change. We must celebrate success.

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque pointed out that PIDE agreed with this assessment of the ministry. PIDE's research agenda also shows that the topmost priority for the next decade must be the sharp increase of investments and exports.

And of course, this can only happen if entrepreneurship and business success is celebrated. PIDE is

also determined to find solutions for Pakistan's economic woes and has suggested several deep reforms for the promotion of markets such as real estate market and commodity markets, ease of transactions and business growth.

The Minister concluded by noting that PIDE, being a premier public sector think tank, must work closely with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on this very important agenda of an investment and export emergency.

It was agreed that PIDE will work very closely with all industry experts to develop deep reform ideas and research for the ministry. He noted that it was important to embed PIDE research in his policy agenda. For this he suggested that he would have such meetings on a regular basis so that PIDE research can receive guidance on commerce needs.

100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange loses 27 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday shed 27.47 points, showing a slight negative change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 46,393.68 points against 46,421.15 points the previous day.

A total of 195,674,788 shares valuing Rs.5,530 billion were traded during the day as compared to 172,894,248 shares valuing Rs.6,269 billion the previous day.

As many as 326 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 168 of them recorded gains and 134 sustained losses, whereas the share price of

24 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were PIAC(A) with 29,654,500 shares at Rs.5.38 per share, Pak Elektron with 20,636,559 shares at Rs.10.48 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 8,986,644 shares at Rs.1.13 per share.

Pak Services witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.25.00 per share price, closing at Rs.750.00, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile with a Rs.24.23 rise in its per share price to Rs.518.00.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.177.33 per share closing

at Rs7,866.67, followed by JDW Sugar with a Rs 20.00 decline to close at Rs.330.00.

Rupee gains 90 paise against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed the 15th consecutive recovery session as it gained 90 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs290.86 against the previous day's closing of Rs291.76.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 291.1 and Rs 294 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.05 to close at Rs309.56 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.61, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise to close at Rs1.95, whereas a decrease of Rs1.77 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 356.15 as compared to the last closing of Rs 357.92.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 25 each paise to close at Rs79.18 and Rs77.53 respectively.

Minister for strong regulatory system to control price hike

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr Kausar Abdulla Malik on Monday underscored the need for a unified supply chain coupled with a strong regulatory framework to discourage

artificial hikes in the prices of food items in the country. He chaired a meeting of the Agriculture Policy Institute and was also briefed by Director General Abdul Karim on the function of the Institute and its ongoing projects, said a press release.

The minister was informed that the API analyzed the impact of important agricultural policies on groups such as consumers,

processors, and exporters and advises on policy adjustments needed for greater efficiency and equity in the country.

Dr Kausar Malik said that the Agriculture Policy Institute should work on a unified comprehensive plan for the food supply chain in consultation with provinces which would pave the way for the control of artificial hike in food prices.

The increase in food prices is the result of a mismatch in demand and supply or hoarding due to weak regulatory frameworks, he said adding that API should come forward with a proposal to activate the Food Security Advisory Council to serve as a bridge between the federation and provinces on the impact of important agricultural policies with special focus on food prices.

Govt creating level playing field for businesses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar here on Monday expressed commitment to creating a level playing field for businesses and promoting

healthy competition across all sectors of economy.

She posted on social media cite X. "The Chairman CCP, Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, called on the Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, & Economic Affairs

@Isakhtar, at Finance Division today....The Minister expressed GoP's commitment to creating a level playing field for businesses & promoting healthy competition across all sectors of the economy," the ministry said.

World Maritime Day 2023:

‘MARPOL at 50: Our Commitment Goes On’ to be commemorated

Wajahat Abbas

World Maritime Day (WMD) is celebrated on the last Thursday of September each year globally to enhance awareness regarding the importance of the maritime sector among the masses. The maritime community gathers on this day with a collective aim to continue working toward the betterment of the maritime environment, security, and safety. This year the day themed as "MARPOL at 50: Our Commitment Goes On" will be commemorated on 28 September 2023. The theme marks the 50th anniversary of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships also known as MARPOL 73/78.

In 1973, the international maritime community acknowledged the urgent need to address environmental impacts on marine

biodiversity due to shipping. This led to the requirement for the creation of an appropriate response strategy in case of oil spills, air pollution, and marine contamination. The convention was initially adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on 2nd November 1973 and was modified by the Protocol of 1978 which was adopted in response to a series of tanker accidents in 1976-1977. As the 1973 MARPOL Convention was not yet implemented, the 1978 MARPOL Protocol absorbed the parent Convention. The combined instrument entered into force on 2nd October 1983.

In 1997, a Protocol was adopted to amend MARPOL, and a new Annex VI was added which entered into force on 19 May 2005. The Convention has evolved during the past five decades by undergoing significant changes, incorpor-

ating numerous amendments and annexes to address emerging environmental issues. Resultantly, it has transformed into the main international framework for regulating the disposal of hazardous materials into oceans, managing ship-generated waste, and mitigating ship-induced air pollutants.

Broadly speaking, the Convention comprises six annexes each of which deals with a different component of pollution control in the marine sector: Annex I: Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Oil (entered into force on 2 October 1983). This annex covers the prevention of pollution by oil from operational measures as well as from accidental discharges.

Annex II: Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk (entered into force 2

October 1983). This annex details the discharge criteria and measures for the control of pollution by noxious liquid substances carried in bulk; some 250 substances were evaluated and included in the list appended to the Convention

Annex III: Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form (entered into force 1 July 1992). This annex contains general requirements for the issuing of detailed standards on packing, marking, labelling, documentation, stowage, quantity limitations, exceptions and notifications.

Annex IV: Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships (entered into force 27 September 2003). This annex contains requirements to control pollution of the sea by sewage.

Annex V: Prevention of Pollution

by Garbage from Ships (entered into force 31 December 1988). This annex deals with different types of garbage and specifies the distances from land and the manner in which they may be disposed of.

Annex VI: Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships (entered into force 19 May 2005). This annex sets limits on Sulphur oxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from ship exhausts and prohibits deliberate emissions of ozone-depleting substances.

This year's WMD is aimed towards acknowledging MARPOL's pivotal role in advancing and maintaining the maritime sector upon its golden jubilee. Since MARPOL establishes international standards for preventing ship-related pollution, encompassing regulations concerning oil spills, sewage, air emissions, and more, therefore, this year's WMD holds par-

ticular significance due to MARPOL's milestone.

As a member state of the IMO, Pakistan actively enforces MARPOL regulations for ships operating within its ports and waters. It has established domestic laws aligned with MARPOL's annexes and conducts state-controlled port inspections to ensure foreign-flagged vessels comply with these regulations. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA) and Marine Pollution Control Department (MPCD) are instrumental in monitoring and regulating pollution-related issues, particularly in addressing air and water pollution. However, the issue of plastic pollution and the direct discharge of untreated sewage water in port areas and the sea are posing severe threats to port infrastructure, docked ships, and marine biodiversity. Urgent measures for

proper waste management and sewage treatment are imperative to address these pressing environmental concerns effectively by relevant authorities.

This year's WMD serves as a reminder to all stakeholders for continued efforts to protect our oceans and marine ecosystems. Through the adoption of contemporary trends including decarbonization, alternative fuels, digitalization, prevention of plastic pollution, ballast water management, education and training, circular economy, international collaboration, adaptation to regional challenges, innovative technologies, adherence to regulations, and integration of eco-friendly practices, we can ensure the effective implementation of MARPOL to control pollution. The same will leave behind a cleaner and healthier marine environment for the benefit of generations to come.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Aliaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 190/1. Institution. 16/6/2023. Date of hearing. 26/9/2023. Mst. Farkhbon VS Zenullah Khan etc. Notice tob No. 11. Habibullah Khan s/o Saifullah Khan resident of Kalpani tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 26/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Naseem to undergo surgery

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's pace icon Naseem Shah, who was injured in the match against India in the Asia Cup, is likely to undergo shoulder surgery. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Shah had been asked for the shoulder surgery following his medical examination and consultation with experts. It is expected that recovery of fast bowler will take four months.

Earlier, Pakistan Cricket Team chief selector Inzamamul Haq had also mentioned the health of Shah while he was announcing the squad for the ICC World Cup. Naseem Shah, who is not part of the World Cup 2023 squad expressed his dismay through his Tweet. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), Shah mentioned that "With a heavy heart, I'm sharing that I will not be part of this amazing team that will be representing our beloved country. While I'm disappointed, I believe everything is in Allah's hands. InshahAllah will be on the field very soon." With a heavy heart, I'm sharing that I will not be part of this amazing team that will be representing our beloved country. While I'm disappointed, I believe everything is in Allah's hands. InshahAllah will be on the field very soon.

'So fun!' says skateboarder

HANGZHOU (AFP): She probably ought to have been in primary school, but instead Mazel Paris Alegado -- aged nine -- competed in skateboarding at the Asian Games on Monday. Alegado, thought to be the youngest athlete at the Games in Hangzhou and representing the Philippines, qualified for the "women's" park final and came seventh out of eight. Japan's Hinano Kusaki, a comparative veteran at 15, won gold. Alegado, who turned nine in March and reportedly comes from California, said she got into skateboarding when she saw her brother doing it while they were at a cousin's house. "And I was like, 'Can I try? Can I try?'" she said. "And I got on the board and just loved it." Talking on her feelings about taking part in a major international competition, Alegado said: "I was so excited because I was about to skate the Asian Games -- and I just did, so it was so fun!" Asked if her brother still skates, she replied: "No because he was like, 'Oh dang, she's better than me now', so he stopped." In the final, Alegado avoided the wooden spoon, which instead went to Taiwanese 11-year-old Lin Yi-fan.

India fires 1st world record

HANGZHOU (AFP): India claimed the first world record of the Hangzhou Asian Games on Monday as hosts China snapped up more gold medals and 15-year-old skateboarder Hinano Kusaki triumphed for Japan. The Indian trio of Divyansh Panwar, Rudranksh Patil and Aishwary Tomar blew away the field with a new world best 1,893.7 points to win the men's 10m air rifle team event on day two of the multi-sports extravaganza. They beat the previous mark of 1,893.3 set by China last month in Baku. In doing so they won India's first gold of a Games where the hosts have swept 28 of the 44 titles decided so far. "In the 10m event they are both perfect athletes," Tomar said of his teammates. "Playing with them is huge, it's really good."

Indian govt grants Pakistan squad visas for World Cup, PCB confirms

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): After multiple delays, the Indian government on Monday issued visas for the Pakistan squad, enabling them to travel to the neighbouring country for the World Cup, Pakistan Cricket Board spokesperson Umar Farooq Kalsoon confirmed to Dawn.com.

"Finally received a call from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad to collect the passports," he said. Farooq added that the national team would leave for India tomorrow via Dubai.

The development comes hours after the PCB approached the International Cricket Council (ICC) with concerns regarding "extraordinary delays" in the issuance of Indian visas.

"We have written to ICC raising our concerns about inequitable treatment towards Pakistan and reminding them of these obligations towards the World Cup," Farooq said.

"It's a matter of disappointment that the Pakistan team has to go through the uncertainty ahead of the major tournament."

Farooq said the board had been reminding the

ICC about obligations for the last three years but it had all come down to the last two days with the national team's first warmup game scheduled on September 29.

"We were forced to cancel our original plan to organise team-building exercises in Dubai on the way to India. We have had to rework our plan and book new flights, but these plans are subject issuance of visas," the spokesperson added.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the application for visas was rep-ot-edly made over a week ago.

Due to visa delays, the team had cancelled its pre-World Cup team bonding event in Dubai.

The team is due to travel to Dubai from Lahore on Sept 27 before flying to Hyderabad, India, to play two warm-up matches -- against New Zealand on Oct 29 and Australia on Oct 3.

Earlier, the team was scheduled to leave for Dubai on Sept 25 and stay there for two days. Pakistan will play their first match against the Netherlands on Oct 6.

Fans and journalists who intended to attend the tournament had to apply for

visas through the Indian High Commission's website.

The portal, however, remained inaccessible, leaving the aspirants dismayed. Expressing concerns over visa hiccups, a Lahore-based journalist said he and his fellow sports reporters had to get the online forms filled through agents and paid them for a simple process.

Owing to issues with the accessibility of the high commission's website, visa seekers said they had been advised to use a VPN while accessing the site.

Earlier, the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association issued a statement, saying that even media persons accredited with the Board of Control for Cricket in India, the national governing body of cricket in India, and the ICC were facing difficulties.

The association appealed to the Indian High Commission to accept hand-filled visa applications if the issue persisted. The media persons should be facilitated as limited time was left at the start of the mega event, the statement added.

ECB vows to 'change' cricket after equality report



LONDON (Agencies): The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) published its report in June revealing "widespread" discrimination in the game.

The commission, set up by the England and Wales Cricket Board, made 44 recommendations, including a call for an "unqualified public apology" from the board for its failings, which the ECB made immediately.

The ICEC was established in 2021 following a racism scandal centred around the treatment of Pakistan-born bowler Azeem Rafiq at Yorkshire.

The ECB published its response to the ICEC report on Monday, saying it would be "taking forward most of the ICEC's recommendations".

It said it would set up a new cricket regulator, independent of the governing ECB, responsible for enforcement of regulations and carrying out investigations.

The ECB also said it would invest a minimum of £25 million (\$30 million) a year above fore-

casted women's revenues to grow women's and girls' cricket at all levels.

It also plans to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion standards for county teams.

That would include more ambitious targets for gender and ethnic diversity, with the power to reallocate matches from venues if there is evidence of non-compliance.

However, the ECB did not agree to all of the report's recommendations, including on equal pay for male and female players. The ICEC report called for overall equal average pay at international level by 2030 and equal average pay and prize money in domestic cricket by 2029.

Match fees paid to England's women for international matches are already equal to those paid to England's men. "The ICEC report was a massive moment for the sport and a responsibility we take extremely seriously, to bring about the changes we all want to see," said ECB chief executive Richard Gould.

"We think we are on a

journey to try to change history in terms of what cricket looks like and will look like."

ECB chairman Richard Thompson repeated the organisation's previous apology, adding: "I reaffirm our absolute commitment that cricket will strive to become the most inclusive sport in England and Wales."

But Rafiq said the ECB response was inadequate.

"I expected the three-month response to be detailed, clear with strong commitments and unfortunately from what I've read it falls incredibly short and it's flimsy at best," he told Sky Sports. "How independent is the new regulator? We don't have any detail about it."

"There are a couple of positives with commitments around women's cricket and match-fee equalisation, that should be the bare minimum."

"These commitments are important, but is it going to solve the other issues that led us here in the first place? I don't think it will."

Asian Sports Journalists on Podium, Journalists celebrated



F.P. Report

HANGZHOU : AIPS ASIA awarded certificates to sports journalists who have achieved the distinction of covering five or more Asian Games.

In this regard, a simple but dignified ceremony was held at the Main Press Centre. Korea's former Olympian and IOC member Seung MinRyu was the chief

guest on the occasion and distributed the certificates.

AIPS ASIA President Hee Don Jung, Vice President Mubarak Al Boanin, Secretary General Amjad Aziz Malik, Treasurer Niranjana Rajbansi and Executive Committee member NimSeong Fong were also present on the occasion.

Korea's former Olympian and IOC member Seung Min-Ryu said that he

represented his country in the Asian Games twice and he thinks that awarding certificates to sports journalists is a recognition of their valuable services.

He also paid tribute to all the members of AIPS ASIA who organized the event for sports journalists.

AIPS ASIA President Hee Don Jung said that basically this idea came from the Qatar Sports



HANGZHOU: The Indian women's team pose with the Asian Games gold medal.

"PSL 9 to feature six teams," confirms PCB

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 9, scheduled next year, will feature six teams, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed Monday.

The chairman of the PCB Management Committee Zaka Ashraf presided over the meeting of the PSL Governing Council at the National Cricket Academy here.

The high-profile meeting saw a wide range of issues being discussed, including the number of teams for the upcoming PSL 9.

"The upcoming ninth season will be played with six teams. No additional team will be added in the upcoming season," stated PCB.

For the unversed, former chairman of the PCB Management Committee Najam Sethi, in March this year, expressed his strive to expand the PSL by adding two more teams in the next edition.

"If you ask me what are our plans for the next PSL, keeping it brief my strive is to add two more teams. But obviously, this decision is subject to the approval of the franchisees and is impossible without doing the homework," said Sethi.

"That is because if any franchise suffers a loss by the addition of two more franchises then it is not a good thing to do. It must be a win-win situation for everyone. So I'm doing homework on this."

"We had a brief discussion with the franchisees and after the conclusion of this PSL, we will formally start consulting them the next month about the addition of teams and the model after the completion of 10 years."

After successfully hosting three women's exhibition matches on the sidelines of the PSL 8, the PCB decided that it would continue to explore similar opportunities during PSL 9.

"For the promotion and support of women's cricket, the PCB will continue to explore opportunities for women's league or exhibition matches during HBL PSL," said PCB.

Furthermore, the window for the upcoming PSL 9 was also decided in the PSL Governing Council meeting while the final schedule of the extravaganza will be confirmed in the next meeting.

"The window for the upcoming season is decided between 8 February to 24 March 2024. A final schedule will be confirmed in the next meeting," PCB shared.

India's women strike cricket gold on debut at Asian Games

HANGZHOU (Agencies): They had declined to enter any teams on the two previous occasions cricket was played at the multisport event, at Guangzhou in 2010 and Incheon in 2014.

"It's a gold medal for the whole of India," said batter Richa Ghosh. Batting first India reached 116-7 in their 20 overs with Smriti Mandhana (46) and Jemimah Rodrigues (42) putting on 73 for the second wicket.

"Winning a gold medal is something you dream about," said Rodrigues. "It's a reward for all the efforts we have put in over so many years." Sri Lanka's chase started badly when they were reduced to 14-3 in the fifth over by a devastating spell from right-arm seamer Titas Sadhu. She took two wickets in her first four balls and another in her third over to finish with remarkable figures of three wickets for six runs.

Sri Lanka, who had beaten England in a white-ball series for the first time earlier this month, were always behind the run rate despite Hasini Perera looking to accelerate, hitting four fours and a six in a rapid 25.

When Nilakshi de Silva was out after a battling 23, Sri Lanka were 78-5 needing 39 more with only 23 balls remaining.

Two more wickets saw them face a near-impossible 25 off the last over and could only muster five as India began to celebrate.

"It's a golden first for us," India assistant coach Rajib Dutta told AFP. "Many more to come I hope. It's a low-scoring wicket so we thought 110 would be a good score, but when Jemimah and Mandhana were together we thought 130-135 might be possible so we were a little disappointed by 116," he added.

Sri Lankan all-rounder Oshadi Ranasinghe said they had missed a good opportunity to win gold. "Looking at the way we batted, we have to get more disciplined," she said.

"The pitch was turning" Accumulating runs has not been easy all tournament at the Zhejiang University for Technology Pingfeng Cricket Field, on a flaky wicket affected by rain last week.

India won the toss and opted to bat even though both semi-finals and the bronze medal match were won by the team chasing. They lost star opener Shafali Verma with the score on 16, but steadied to 35-1 at the end of the six-over power play where only two fielders are allowed outside the 30-metre circle.

When Mandhana fell for 46 with the score on 89 in the 15th over, it sparked a succession of dismissals that stalled India's momentum when a testing total in excess of 130 had looked more likely.

Rodrigues, who had been not out 47, and 20 in her two previous Asian Games outings, was finally dismissed in the last over for 42. "We had also struggled while batting on this pitch, so we thought we could defend this total," said Ghosh, who smashed a huge six in her cameo of nine off six balls. "The pitch was turning and holding up a little bit."

Bangladesh took the bronze after restricting Pakistan to 64-9 and crawling to their target of 65 in 18.2 overs in their medal playoff.

It meant Pakistan, who won the gold on both previous occasions that cricket was played in the Asian Games, return home empty-handed. "It's not a good feeling. We never got enough runs on the board," said Pakistan coach Mohtashim Rasheed.



HANGZHOU: Shorna also chipped in with the bat to chase down the small target.

Pakistan to face Bhutan in SAFF U19 Championship semi-final

K A T H M A N D U (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan will face Bhutan in the first semi-final of the ongoing South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) U19 Championship 2023.

The much-anticipated semi-final between Pakistan and Bhutan will start at 12:45 PM (Pakistan Standard Time) on Wednesday, the same day, India will be squaring off against hosts Nepal in the second semi-final of the SAFF U19 Championship 2023.

Pakistan booked their spot in the final four of the ongoing tournament by holding Maldives for a 1-1 stalemate.

The Green Shirts started their second SAFF U19 Championship 2023 fixture on a high as they dominated the possession for a notable period but failed to convert into a goal.

Pakistan's error in conversion allowed the Maldives to capitalize on the situation and they successfully netted the opener in the 39th minute, courtesy of a brilliant outside-of-the-box finish.

Maldives went into the break with a 1-0 lead over Pakistan.

In the second half, Pakistan made numerous efforts but were denied the equalizer by the strong Maldives defence.

Pakistan, however, final-

ly got luck in their favour when Shah Jahan netted the equalizer late into the game before pulling off an animated celebration.

Earlier this week, Pakistan scripted a triumphant start to their SAFF U19 Championship 2023 campaign with a thrilling 1-0 victory over hosts Nepal.

Pakistan and Nepal went hard at each other in their SAFF U19 Championship fixture and showcased thrilling skills and tenacity before the former prevailed.

With a thrilling victory over Nepal, Pakistan ended a 12-year-long victory drought in an international match. Pakistan's U19 team last secured a victory on the international stage in 2011, when they defeated India's U19 team.

Midfielder Ali Zafar netted the lone goal in the 74th minute, which turned out to be the difference maker between the two sides, who appeared inseparable in the first half.

Besides Ali Zafar, Pakistan's goalkeeper Sahil Gul played a pivotal role in his team's triumph over Nepal, denying several threatening efforts from the home side. The ongoing SAFF U19 Championship 2023 is being held at the Dashrath Stadium here from September 21 to 30.

Team Officials: Shadab Iftikhar (Head Coach), Mohsan UI Hussnain (Assistant Coach), Khuram Shahzad (Goal Keeper Coach), Aamna (Media), Muhammad Abdullah and Muhammad Samama (Physio) and Zohair Gondal (Team Manager).



In brief

199,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 199,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 148,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1546.63 feet and was 148.63 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 88,800 cusecs and 110,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1230.10 feet, which was 180.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,700 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 95,200, 117,500, 99,100 and 44,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

7 illegal arm holders arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 07 illegal arms holders and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession during a crackdown here on Monday. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Farhan. Similarly, Sadiqabad police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Haris. While, Sadder Wah police Held Tayyab and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his possession. Following operation, Mandra police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Yousaf. Dhanyal police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Usman. Rawat police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Nadeem. Chontra police nabbed Waqas and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his possession. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress.

The Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police teams said that crackdown against those possessing illegal weapons will be continued without any discrimination.

AIUO to close admission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIUO) has offered admissions in BA (associate degree), BBA, Associate degree in education, B.Ed., BS (ODL), and postgraduate diploma programs in the second phase of the autumn semester 2023 for overseas Pakistani and international students. The last date to apply for these programs is September 30, 2023, and students can only apply online, according to a press release on Monday. It is worth mentioning here that AIUO is the only university in the country providing educational opportunities for Pakistanis living all over the world. In the last semester, more than 500 students enrolled from 36 countries, including Australia, Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, America, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Iraq, Oman, and others. Vice Chancellor AIUO, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has set a target to enroll 10,000 international students in the next five years. It is pertinent to mention here that these programs for international students are offered through the learning management system.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed.

Ashrafi calls for interfaith dialogue to combat blasphemy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi invited all faith leaders for interfaith dialogues to remove differences as burgeoning incidents of blasphemy were promoting an environment of hatred in the community of nations.

Addressing the 36th annual International Conference on Seerat in Mauritania the other day, he said to overcome the menace of Islamophobia was not only the responsibility of Muslims proposing that all faith leaders should come forward and devise a combined strategy to meet the disgraceful acts being occurred worldwide from time to time.

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 who is also the President of International Interfaith Harmony Council categorically stated that the Holy Prophet

Muhammad Peace Be upon Him was not only the blessing for Muslim Ummah but also for the entire world.

He said the solution of Palestine and Kashmir issues was in the unity and solidarity of Muslim Ummah. He said Pakistan was a nation of various faiths and sects but it was facing extremism and terrorism for a long time.

“The Pakistani nation was against all extremist and terrorist elements and standing by its security institutions and armed forces through thick and thin,” he maintained.

Ashrafi said Islam gave the lesson of respect to all celestial books expressing his dismay over the indecent drive against the Muslims sacred sanctities and values. He said Islamophobia was endangering the peace of the world urging the international human rights watchdogs to legislate against it to maintain peace and tranquility.

He opined that those who desecrated the Holy Quran in Sweden and Demark and made caricatures of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him must be given

exemplary punishment as it would help pave the way to create an enabling environment of interfaith dialogue in the world.

Ashrafi said the way Muslim World League had given the message of peace in the “Charter of Makkah al Mukkaramah”, in the same way, the Ulama and Mashaykh of Pakistan had given a clear-cut religious decree against the extremism and terrorism in the “Message of Pakistan”.

Talking to Arab media after the conference, he said Palestine and Kashmir were the issues of Muslim Ummah and it would like to resolve them with peaceful dialogues. He said the brutalities of Israel in Palestine and India’s in Kashmir were not acceptable at all costs.

Ashrafi said the Muslim world appreciated productive leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman expressing the hope that they would further play their proactive role in the resolution of Palestine and Kashmir issues.

Designated support desks for overseas Pakistanis established

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis Jawad Sohrab Malik on Monday said that Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA) has established designated support desks for Overseas Pakistanis to provide multiple essential civic facilities with ease through One Window Operation.

On the special instruction of Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwar Ul Haq Kakar the Capital Development Authority’s special desk will assist with the transfer of residential plots, approval of building designs, issuance of completion certificates, payment of annual property tax, and quarterly payment of water supply and other miscellaneous payments for Overseas Pakistanis, SAPM said.

Jawad Sohrab Malik said that the government has established new support desks for overseas

Pakistanis. The support desks will offer a wide range of services, including assistance with housing, property taxes, and other government services. The goal of the support desks is to make it easier for Overseas Pakistanis to access government services and to increase their trust in the government.

Jawad Malik further said that the official staff from all relevant agencies including CDA, Revenue Department, and Islamabad Police will be present at the support desks to assist and guide Overseas Pakistanis.

SAPM said that the designated support desks services will be extended to other institutions at the federal and provincial levels that offer services to Overseas Pakistanis. This means that overseas Pakistanis can access a wide range of services at the support desks, from all levels of government.

This significant move is

expected to increase the trust that Overseas Pakistanis have in the government, adding said it will also help to make it easier for Overseas Pakistanis living to access government services with ease.

The support desks are located in ICT’s Offices at G-11/4 and CDA’s building at G-7/2 Islamabad, which will be open to all Overseas Pakistanis, regardless of where they live in the world.

Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon said that Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA) has introduced an online feature for applying and verification of International Driving Permit (IDP) to make government services more accessible and user-friendly for overseas Pakistanis and residents.

He also encouraged the overseas Pakistanis to take advantage of the City App to access a variety of other services online.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti meeting with ex-Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Sardar Sher Ali Gurchani Sahib.

Dengue positive cases crosses 1,000 mark

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi’s dengue total tally had reached 1,004 positive cases with the arrival of 39 more patients during the last 24 hours.

Chief Executive Officer, of District Health Authority Dr. Ijaz Ahmad, said that 21 patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, eight from Municipal Corporation, four from Chaklala Cantonment, three from Taxila Cantonment and three from outside the district.

He informed that 902 confirmed patients had been discharged after recovery while 129 patients were admitted to the district’s health facilities of which 102 were positive cases.

During the last 24 hours, Dr. Ijaz said that the district administration had registered 40 FIRs, issued tickets to five, sealed one premise, and a fine of Rs 114,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs.

During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 20,564 houses and larvae were found in 1,234 homes. Similarly, he added that while checking 7,639 places, the teams found larvae at 160 sites during outdoor surveillance.

The CEO asked the residents to adopt precautionary measures as September and October were crucial for dengue spread.

He also urged the residents to remove stagnant water, in outdoor and household settings to stop mosquitoes from breeding.

ANF seizes 115 kg drugs in operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover over 115 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that in two ANF operations conducted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, a total of 64.8 kg hashish was recovered from two vehicles.

The recovered drugs were concealed in the secret cavities of the vehicles. During the operations, four accused residents of Peshawar and Khyber were arrested.

20.4 kg opium, 14.4 kg hashish and 1 kg heroin were recovered from a vehicle stopped near Motorway Toll Plaza Sheikhupura.

During the operation, two accused residents of Nowshera were arrested on the spot.

107 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger, going on flight number GF-787.

The accused resident of Khyber was netted at Bacha Khan International Airport.

15 kg of hashish was recovered during two operations in Zakha Khel area of Khyber.

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

Indian forces commit heinous acts in IIOJK: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Prime Minister’s Special Assistant on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussain Mullick says Pakistan and its public fully support the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his claims against India.

She was addressing a rally in Islamabad on Monday against the human rights violations in India.

The Special Assistant said Indian forces are carrying out heinous acts with complete impunity in the

occupied Kashmir. She urged the participants to raise their voice for the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Mushaal Mullick felicitated the people and the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on the occasion of its national day.

In a message issued here, she extended her heartfelt congratulations to the Saudi King, Crown Prince and the Royal family, saying that Saudi Arabia witnessed a spate of devel-

opments and prosperity under its leadership.

The services of the Saudi Royal family for Islam and Muslims cannot be overlooked, she stated and added that Pakistanis consider Saudi Arabia as their second home.

Mushaal said that Saudi Arabia has always fully supported the stance of Kashmiris on the Kashmir issue, adding that Kashmiris have hopes that Saudi Arabia will play its due role in resolving the Kashmir issue.

Education Minister visits NAVTTC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi visited the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) to set a briefing about the mandate, and its current projects.

Executive Director NAVTTC Muhammad Aamir Jan briefed the Federal Minister regarding various TVET-focused initiatives and joint ventures of NAVTTC including the Prime Minister’s Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP) and Takamol Skill Verification Program (SVP) which are playing a vital role in strengthening and enhancing the TVET sector and empowering youth with

skills excellence in market-driven fields.

The Executive Director NAVTTC underlined the significance of integration with Provincial TEVT sectors and international partners to transform the TVET landscape in Pakistan at par with international standards.

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training appreciated the efforts of NAVTTC for reforming and strengthening TEVT sectors in Pakistan.

He took a keen interest in Takamol SVP which is a joint venture between Saudi Arabia and NAVTTC for skill testing, certification and promotion to Pakistani Skilled force.

Federal Minister apprised that “NAVTTC

can play a more prominent role in the economic role and skill developer of the country by skill the youth with conventional and high-Tech Skills Program”.

ED NAVTTC further shared that their vision is to collaborate with other skill-focused countries to elevate the standard of skills education in Pakistan, ultimately making the Pakistani workforce globally recognized and accepted.

Federal Minister assured his commitment to providing wholehearted support to NAVTTC.

He affirmed his dedication to regularly visiting NAVTTC to further fortify the TVET sector promising future for skill development and education in Pakistan under his leadership.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed visiting Calligraphy Exhibition titled “Sallu Alaihi Wa Aalihi Wasalam” by Wasil Shahid at Centaurus Mall. —APP Photo

Transport minister reviews traffic issues, anti-smog measures

RAWALPINDI (APP): Transport Minister Punjab Ibrahim Murad along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatta here on Monday presided over a meeting at Commissioner Office and reviewed traffic issues, anti-smog measures and matters related to Pirwadhai general bus stand.

Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nizarat Ali, Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority, Saif Anwar Jappa, City Traffic Officer, Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, Secretary Regional Transport Authority Rashid Ali and other officers attended the meeting.

The Minister directed the authorities to improve facilities at general bus stand Pirwadhai to facilitate the passengers. Pollution problem is being faced due to unruly traffic, he said and directed the authorities to formulate emergency plan to address the issue.

He further said that anti-smog Standard Operating Procedures should be strictly enforced and heavy fines should be imposed on the rules violators.

The smoke emitting vehicles should be impounded and legal action should be taken against the owners of such vehicles, he added. Solid steps should be taken regarding improvement in law enforcement and traffic management on city roads, Ibrahim Murad instructed.

Adherence to traffic rules is essential to prevent road accidents and ensure smooth flow of traffic on the roads, the Minister said and ordered that improper parking and illegal parking stands should be eliminated immediately.

The driving license of the driver should be checked first on violation of traffic rules, he said adding, operation against unregistered vehicles should be accelerated. The Minister said unfortunately, the metro bus service was also damaged during protests in Rawalpindi.

The Commissioner directed the departments concerned to speed up their ongoing efforts to eliminate environmental pollution. A zero-tolerance policy is being adopted regarding anti-smog measures, he added. Rawalpindi District administration is proactive to eliminate encroachments from city roads, the Commissioner said.

The Minister was informed in a briefing that total area of Pirwadhai General Bus Stand is over 210 kanals. The bus stand was upgraded this year.

Separate waiting rooms were constructed for male and female passengers where air conditioners were also installed. CCTV cameras were installed to ensure security of the passengers while security guards had also been deployed. Encroachments were also removed from the general bus stand area.

Railways upgrades over 173 un-manned crossings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has upgraded as many as 173 vulnerable un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings, out of 550 which are identified by the department over the entire railway network in over one year.

“The relevant provincial government provided the finances to Pakistan Railways for the upgradation of un-manned level crossings in the country,” official sources in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

They said the department was taking several steps including the upgradation of unmanned and vulnerable railway level crossings across the country in collaboration with respective provincial governments.

The sources said there were two types of level crossings over the Pakistan Railways network, unmanned and manned level crossings, adding that the un-manned level crossings were without gate leaves.

“There are a total of 1,565 unmanned level crossings over the entire railway network and as per railway policy in vogue, the upgradation of any unmanned or manned level crossing is the responsibility of road owning authority,” they added.

The sources said that a joint survey of Pakistan Railways and the Provincial Government was also conducted in 2013-14 to identify accident-prone/vulnerable unmanned level crossings across the country.

ARCS president in Geneva

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Muli-ul-Haq Khalis, the Acting President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), arrived in Geneva, Switzerland on Monday for an official visit. Khalis will participate in a meeting of members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies during his stay in Switzerland. Khalis is also expected to meet with representatives from various international charity organizations during his visit.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 10, 1445 — Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Afghan athlete won bronze

KABUL (Agencies): Mohsen Rezaei, a member of the Afghan National Taekwondo Team, has won a bronze medal in the Asian Games 2023 in China. Rezaei, who is also the team's captain and current champion of the Asian Games in the fifty-eight kilogram weight category, has won bronze medal by defeating opponents from Tajikistan, Japan, Karakstan and lost to south Korea. The event features more than 12,000 athletes from 45 countries competing in 40 sports.

Muttaqi travels to Russia to participate in meeting



KABUL (TOLOnews): A delegation from the Islamic Emirate led by the acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi went to Russia on Monday to participate in the Moscow Format meeting.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, Zabiullah Mujahid, told TOLOnews that this meeting will cover a range of political and economic topics.

"Regional cooperation is crucial for Afghanistan's economy and security. There are also some concerns from neighboring countries, which will be

discussed, and that Afghanistan is safe. Economic issues relating to Afghanistan's reconstruction will be discussed," said Mujahid. The Moscow Format meeting will be held September 29, in Kazan, Russia.

According to political analysts, the presence of a representative of the Islamic Emirate in this meeting is important for solving the country's current challenges.

"The differences between the two sides will be resolved through understanding, but one thing

should be taken into account, that currently, every country wants to include the issue of Afghanistan in its agenda," said Aminullah Ihsas, a university lecturer.

"The most important thing is that practical decisions should be made in these meetings and the recognition of the Islamic Emirate should be discussed," said Abdul Ghafar Kamiyab, a political analyst. Earlier, the Russian special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said that Muttaqi was invited to this meeting.

Lavrov expects talks on problems

KABUL (Pajhwok): Ways of addressing the challenges that Afghanistan is currently facing will come up for discussion at the Moscow format meeting later in the week.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told journalists at UN he hoped neighbours would confer on how they could help Afghanistan overcome its current difficulties.

According to TASS news agency, the Moscow group on Afghanistan will meet in Kazan on September 29 to intra-Afghan reconciliation, regional security and post-conflict reconstruction.

Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are part of the group, which last met in November 2022.

Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi is scheduled to represent the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) at the meeting.

Child dies, 16 injured in accidents

MAIDAN SHAHR/ GHAZNI (Pajhwok): A child was killed and 16 people were injured in two separate traffic accidents in central Maidan Wardak and southern Ghazni provinces on Sunday, police said.

The Maian Wardak police headquarters in a statement said a vehicle overturned in Gardan Masjid area of Chack district and as a result a child was killed and eight others were injured.

The police said the accident occurred due to carelessness of the driver.

The injured were taken to the nearest district hospital with some in critical condition.

Separately, eight people, including a woman, were injured when two vehicles collided on the Kabul-Kandahar highway in Muqar district of Ghazni province, police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok News.

He said the injured were rushed to hospital and their condition was stable.

Goods exported abroad

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that in the first six months of the current year, they exported goods worth 759 million dollars. The statistics of this ministry show that goods to Pakistan worth \$379 million, India worth \$241 million, Kazakhstan worth \$20 million, the United Arab Emirates worth \$18 million, and China worth \$12.5 million were exported.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam, the spokesman for the ministry, emphasized that this year's exports have slightly decreased compared to last year, and the most exported items are coal, cotton, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

"The important export items are coal, cotton, raisins, grapes, tomatoes, cumin, and apricots, and the important import items are linen textiles, oil, petroleum, liquefied gas, car parts, wheat, and cement," said a spokesman for the ministry.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the blocking of the crossings and the continued decrease in coal exports abroad have caused a decrease in exports.

IEA orders all govt entities to procure domestic goods



KABUL (Agencies): Under the guidance of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Office, a meeting aimed at bolstering the industrial sector and supporting locally manufactured goods was held at Marmarin Palace on Monday.

Officials from key ministries, including finance, interior, industry and commerce, economy, the general directorate of intelligence, and representatives from the private sector participated.

Significant decisions were made to strengthen the domestic industrial landscape.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Industry and Mines will formally present domestic products to the Tariff Committee, which will follow a meticulous

process of assessing quality, quantity, and pricing. The Tariff Committee, which is made up of officials from the general directorate of intelligence, Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority, and Afghanistan National Standard Authority, will determine import tariffs so as to ensure domestically made goods are prioritized on the local market.

Their findings will be reported to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. Furthermore, in alignment with Resolution No.19 of the Cabinet of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, all government institutions are mandated to prioritize the use of domestic products in their procurement processes.

This commitment

extends to cases where the quality of domestic products may lag behind foreign counterparts by 10 to 15 percent.

Government entities are directed to maintain comprehensive lists of domestic products and seek quotations accordingly during procurement.

To address security concerns for industrialists and investors and foster effective coordination, it was resolved that within three days, the Ministries of Interior, Finance, Industry and Commerce, the General Directorate of Intelligence, and the Chambers of Afghanistan Trade and Investment and Industry and Mines will designate competent representatives to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic

Affairs. Additionally, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce assumes the pivotal role of submitting product names, marks, and brands for anti-counterfeiting measures to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs.

As a concluding mandate, the Tariff Committee, under the stewardship of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, will comprehensively investigate the existing challenges related to invoice execution between the Chambers of Commerce and Investment and Industry and Mines.

Their findings and recommendations will be presented to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs.

Mujahid: Formation of Ulema Council completed for all provinces

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate's Spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the formation of the councils of Ulema (religious scholars) for all provinces have been completed.

The Ulema councils have been appointed by the Islamic Emirate's leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada.

Mujahid said that the councils are established to increase coordination between the people and the interim government. He said the councils are composed of religious clerics and also some tribal elders.

"It has been two days since the councils have been completed. The latest council was the council of Ulema for Logar province. They will work as a hub

between the people and government," Mujahid said.

He said the councils are comprised of religious clerics and some tribal elders.

"The formation of the Ulema council has differences in various provinces. In some areas, there are tribal elders and also the Ulema. But in some areas, if there are no tribal elders, it does not mean that they will not be included. But their numbers will increase as there are some names under assessment," Mujahid said.

Political analysts gave various opinions regarding the formation of the Ulema council.

"The influential tribal figures should be included in it. It will have a positive impact on solving the issue



and managing affairs," said Habibullah Janibdar, a political analyst.

"The line of their duty should be announced nationwide, so the citizens understand what the difference is between the duty of the Ulema council and the Ministry of Vice and Virtue and other departments," said Mohammad Afzal

Habib Safi, a political analyst.

Earlier, Mujahid said that the councils will share their views regarding women's work and activities in the government, based on Sharia.

The Islamic Emirate's leader ordered the establishment of Ulema councils in Jaddi in 1401 (solar year).

Qatar stresses need for world engagement with Afghanistan



KABUL (TOLOnews): Majed Al-Ansari, spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, said that the complete isolation of Afghanistan did not work, and the only way forward is engagement.

Speaking to Al-Monitor news agency Al-Ansari said: "We fully understand that the situation in Afghanistan today is not easy for the international community to engage with the current government, but

statement. "We are committed to eradicating polio in Afghanistan with the cooperation of our partners. The recent positive cases of polio are worrying and we will continue polio vaccination campaigns and basic health services until the complete eradication of this disease," said Dr. Qalandar Ebaad, Minister of Public Health.

Ebaad further added: "The support of all Afghans, especially the elders of the areas and religious scholars is important in the eradication of polio. They need to participate in the fight against polio."

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a

virus. It invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours.

The virus is transmitted by person-to-person. Initial symptoms are fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness of the neck and pain in the limbs. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis (usually in the legs). Among those paralyzed, 5-10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilized.

Polio mainly affects children under 5 years of age. However, anyone of any age who is unvaccinated can contract the disease.

There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented.

Govt urged to protect historical sites in Uruzgan

TIRINKOT (Pajhwok): The residents of central Uruzgan province of Afghanistan said usurpers are still in control of some historical places and they should be driven away.

Abdul Shakoor Karimi, a resident of Dehrawud district, said a number of people in their area had grabbed historical sites and the government should pay attention to their protection

and maintenance. Qala Murcha, Sra Qala and Sulaiman Takht Dara are historical sites located in Dehrawud district.

Abdullah, a resident of Mehraabad area of Tirinkot, said there was a place called Kafir Qala which was 100 years old.

He said the historic site was built on a high and strategic area during the occupation of British India

about a century ago.

According to Abdullah: "This fort is built on a 300-metre high hill, with several war towers, weapon stores, a place to keep horses and battle lines."

However, he said land grabbing and construction of houses have been ongoing there for the past few years, damaging the value of the historic monument.

Similarly, Nimatullah, a

resident of Sangar area of Chora district, said there were many historical places in their area, including Mazar spring, Tora spring and Niazo Tapa, some of which were on the verge of destruction.

He said historical areas were considered identity of a country and nation and asked the government to pay attention to the protection of such places.

Officials in Uruzgan also acknowledge people's concerns, but assure that they are serious about preservation of historical places and monuments.

Uruzgan Information and Culture Director Qari Aghawali Qureshi told Pajhwok that 36 historical places were registered and they were committed to their safety and protection.

He said: "There is a spe-

cial decree by Amirul Mominin regarding the preservation and protection of historical sites and areas, and it may have been distributed to all institutions."

He added they will pay serious attention to the protection of all historical places in light of the leadership's decree and will not allow anyone to harm them.

According to Qureshi, he has started working on a

strategy together with the police headquarters and the Department of Agriculture to prevent usurpation and take necessary measures for protection of heritage sites.

The Department of Information and Culture assures that with the help of the relevant ministry and partner institutions, historical places and monuments of the province will be restored and protected.



has been ill for 16 years and he can hardly walk.

"He can't work, being on bed rest, he's tired from work and his leg is like this as you can see," said Nik

Mohammad's wife. "Our life is very difficult, we face challenges, and my father is sick," said Palwasha, his daughter.

Nik Mohammad's friends praised his behavior with neighbors and asked the officials and supporting institutions to cooperate and treat his illness.

According to Nik Mohammad, despite repeated requests from his relatives, he traveled to Ukraine only once and always preferred to live in Afghanistan.

However, after Russia attacked Ukraine and disconnected the telecommunications system, he had no contact with his relatives and is worried that Ukraine is being destroyed by war.

Army chief calls for promoting interfaith harmony



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Honourable Dr. Azad Marshall, Moderator / President Bishops (Church of Pakistan and Bishop of Raiwind) along with 13 members' delegation of Christian Community called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at General Headquarters, on Monday.

During the meeting matters of mutual interest, religious and inter-faith harmony were discussed. COAS lauded the contribu-

tions of Pakistani Christian Community in national development, including promotion of quality education, healthcare and philanthropic services and outstanding role played by them for the defence of the motherland.

COAS expressed deep respect for Christian community and stressed upon the need for promoting greater interfaith harmony in society in order to follow Quaid's true vision of a united and progressive Pakistan.

COAS emphasised "Islam is a religion of peace

and there is no space for intolerance and extremism in Islam and society. No one can be allowed to take law in his own hands in a civilised society". Christian Community members acknowledged Pakistan Army's efforts in combatting terrorism and providing secure environment to the minorities in the country. They appreciated Army Chief's gesture as an inspiration for Pakistani minorities to take greater and more active part in nation building and in restoring their faith in a cohesive and tolerant society.

Khawar Maneka arrested

LAHORE (PPI): The Punjab's anti-corruption authorities on Monday arrested Khawar Maneka, the former husband of Bushra Bibi, now wife of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, from Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport in corruption cases.

A case has been registered against Maneka by the Anti-Corruption Establishment of Punjab. He was taken into custody at the airport on charges of building illegal structures on state land. The authorities accused him of having constructed a marriage hall and 26 shops on the land of a graveyard after illegally occupying it. Officials said Maneka was trying to escape to Dubai to avoid arrest.

Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) immigration staff spotted Khawar and then stopped him at the Lahore Airport shortly before he was about to board Dubai-bound flight Emirates Airlines.

The FIA officials said Maneka was stopped from leaving the country as his named was on the Exit Control List (ECL). An Anti-Corruption Establishment spokesman said they were investigating a reference forwarded by the Haveli Lakha deputy commissioner against Khawar Maneka for illegally occupying the state land and carrying out construction on it.

The spokesman said the marriage hall was constructed on four kanals of state land without any approval. Maneka has been in illegal possession of the land of Pir Islam Graveyard in Haveli Lakha where he had also built 26 shops. The spokesman said Maneka was trying to flee the country but they foiled his attempt and arrested him.

KP CM takes notice of jirga decision

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has taken notice of the alleged decision of a local jirga regarding the demolition of the house of a local journalist, Miraj Khalid Wazir in Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan, and directed the Additional Chief Secretary Home for necessary steps on immediate basis to provide full protection to the family members and residence of the said journalist.

He has further directed that the concerned divisional and district administrations be directed to ensure all the required measures to this end. In a statement issued here in this regard, the Chief Minister has said that no individual or group of individuals would be allowed to take such extralegal decision to demolish someone's house adding that if anyone has violated the law, it is the responsibility and authority of relevant departments and courts of law to punish the culprit as per the law. Azam Khan has made it clear that writ of the government would be maintained at all costs, and the law will take its due course against those who were found involved in such illegal actions.

Rupee soars in value against dollar

KARACHI (PPI): There was no looking back for the Pakistani rupee as it built on from where it left at the weekend, appreciating by 96 paisas against the US dollar in the interbank market on Monday.

As per the information obtained from the money traders, the local currency scored 14th straight rise against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs290.80, up by 96 paisas. On Friday last, the Pakistani rupee had maintained its momentum against the US dollar, gaining 0.35% in the interbank market. At close, the rupee had settled at Rs291.76 after an increase of Rs1.02.

During the previous week, the rupee had appreciated by 1.74%, closing positive in all five sessions against the US dollar in the interbank. The rupee's rate in the open market has also become stronger, reducing the 'premium' to negligible values and meeting the benchmark set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



BEIJING: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi in a meeting with Chinese Minister for National Radio and TV, Ms. Cao. Shumin on the sidelines of SCO's Television Festival 2023 in Nanjing, China.

85 new cases of Pink Eye infection surfaces in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The health department officials Monday reported 85 new cases of conjunctivitis, commonly known as Pink Eye, within the past 24 hours in Lahore. People afflicted with this infection are finding it difficult to venture outdoors due to the adverse effects of sunlight and dust on their eyes.

Noted Eye Surgeon, Dr. Intzar Hussain Butt, shared his recommendations with the APP, urging affected individuals to use prescribed eye drops, cold water, and tissues for eye cleansing. Dr. Butt explained that conjunctivitis is an inflammation or infection of the transparent membrane, known as the conjunctiva, which lines the eyelid and covers the eyeball.

He emphasized the importance of avoiding physical contact with infected individuals and refraining from sharing personal items such as handkerchiefs, pillows, and makeup. Dr. Butt also advised those affected to wear sunglasses and take a temporary leave from their official or private duties for a few days. Self-medication was discouraged, and joining gatherings was to be avoided. Frequent handwashing with soap was recommended.

Symptoms of Pink Eye include redness, a gritty or scratchy sensation in the eye, and itching. Dr. Butt further noted that many individuals with

conjunctivitis experience eye discharge, leading to the formation of crusts on the eyelashes, particularly at night. These symptoms can be caused by various factors, including infections, allergies, or irritants.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Health Department reported over 85 cases in Lahore hospitals' outpatient departments in the past 24 hours. Dr. Bushra from Services Hospital stated that 40 per cent of patients in the outpatient department were seeking treatment for this infection.

Dr. Bushra emphasised the importance of precautionary measures and recommended the use of eye drops. She advised affected individuals to maintain stringent hygiene practices, including keeping their personal items such as towels and toiletries separate from others. Patients were directed to use prescribed eye drops and tissues for eye cleansing, with the option of using cold water for temporary relief.

The provincial government health department stressed the need to use hand sanitizers and cautioned against touching one's eyes without washing hands thoroughly. The health department advised against sharing items with those suffering from eye infections, including pillows, clothes, medicine, and bedding, which should be kept separate. Additionally, patients were urged not to reuse facial

items.

Meanwhile, the Punjab health department on Monday suspended 11 drug inspectors over negligence in a matter related to Avastin injection that allegedly caused 'loss of vision' in the province.

The eyesight of as many as 40 diabetes patients was affected due to substandard injections in Lahore. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Chaudhry Manzoor revealed that his brother and a friend's eyesight was affected when they received the shot inside their eyes. According to the Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Punjab, Dr. Jamal Nasir 11 drug inspectors of Multan, Sadiqabad, Khanewal, Sahiwal and others have been suspended.

Dr. Jamal further said the supply of Avastin injection will be restored by the DRAP after its inspection. On Sunday, Caretaker Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the sale and dispensation of the injection of Avastin had been stopped.

The minister made these remarks after holding a meeting with the Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Care Dr. Jamal Nasir. It is to be noted that a case against the suppliers of Avastin injection has been registered, while a five-member committee to probe the cases of alleged 'vision loss' has been constituted.

Erdogan meets Aliyev as thousands flee Nagorno-Karabakh

BAKU (Agencies): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev have hailed Baku's military victory in Nagorno-Karabakh as thousands of ethnic Armenians flee from the breakaway region into Armenia. Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory that is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but has an ethnic Armenian majority, were forced into a ceasefire last week after a 24-hour military operation by the much larger Azerbaijani military.

Several days after the fighting, the first refugees arrived in Armenia on Sunday and 6,650 people have so far entered, Yerevan said on Monday. Valery Airapetyan, a Nagorno-Karabakh resident who spoke to Al Jazeera, was among those fleeing to Armenia. "We found a litre of gasoline, ran away and came here," he said in the middle of his journey out of the region.

Dozens of people were injured late on Monday at a petrol station just outside of the breakaway region's capital, Stepanakert, where a fuel tank exploded. Dozens of people were lining up at the petrol station at the time as they sought to leave the region. It wasn't immediately clear if there were any deaths. Armenian Health Ministry spokeswoman Angelina Isakhanyan told The Associated Press news agency that there were "several dozens of wounded, with burns of different (degrees)."

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that he expected about 120,000 civilians to leave the region for Armenia due to "the danger of ethnic cleansing". The majority of Karabakh Armenians do not accept Azerbaijan's promises to guarantee

their rights. The ethnic Armenian leadership said it would remain in place until all those who wanted to leave what they call Artsakh were able to go. They urged residents to hold back from crowding the roads out but promised free fuel to all those who were leaving.

A second round of talks between Azerbaijani officials and separatist representatives began in Khojaly on Monday following the opening meeting last week. Turkey's Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan exclave on Monday for talks Aliyev to discuss Turkey-Azerbaijan ties and regional and global issues. Nakhchivan is cut off from the rest of Azerbaijan by Armenian territory but forms a slim border with Turkey.

At a joint news conference with Aliyev, Erdogan said Azerbaijan's victory in Karabakh inspired pride. "It is a matter of pride that the operation was successfully completed in a short period of time, with utmost sensitivity to the rights of civilians," Erdogan said. Erdogan and Aliyev signed a deal for a gas pipeline and the Turkish leader said "I'm very pleased to be with all of you as we connect Nakhchivan with the Turkish world."

Senior US officials meanwhile visited Armenia as the Armenian government rowed openly with Russia – all signs of shifts in the wider geopolitical landscape that form the backdrop to the crisis. Russia warned Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan that he only had himself to blame for Azerbaijan's victory over Karabakh because he had insisted on seeking to work with the West rather than working with Moscow and Baku for peace. Russia said Pashinyan had "shied away from working in rhythm

with Russia and Azerbaijan and instead ran to the West" to resolve the Karabakh crisis.

Pashinyan said on Sunday that Russia had not helped Yerevan over Karabakh. Washington expressed its alarm at the Karabakh crisis as US Agency for International Development (USAID) chief Samantha Power and US State Department Acting Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasian Affairs Yuri Kim arrived in Yerevan. "The United States is deeply concerned about reports on the humanitarian conditions in Nagorno-Karabakh and calls for unimpeded access for international humanitarian organizations and commercial traffic," USAID said in the announcement of the trip.

Nagorno-Karabakh is located in a region that has come under the control of Persians, Turks, Russians, Ottomans and Soviets over centuries. After the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917, it was claimed by both Azerbaijan and Armenia. It was designated an autonomous region within Azerbaijan before the Soviet Union collapsed.

After the fall of the USSR, the region's Armenians overthrew Azerbaijani control in the First Karabakh War from 1988 to 1994, which killed tens of thousands of people. Azerbaijan regained swathes of territory in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in the second war over the region in 2020. According to Yerevan, more than 200 people were killed and 400 wounded in last week's operation, which was slammed by Western countries. Pashinyan is facing protests and calls for his resignation for failing ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.

20th death anniversary of Nawabzada Nasarullah today

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): The 20th death anniversary of the great politician known as father of democracy, Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan will be marked today (Tuesday).

Nawabzada Nasarullah's relentless 70-year-long struggle for the supremacy of the constitution, parliament, and democracy remains an enduring legacy. Distinguished religious scholar Moulana Syed Kafeel Ahmed Shah Bukhari will grace the occasion. He will address the audiences, comprising political and social leaders, along with representatives from various sectors of society.

The 20th-anniversary ceremony is set to take place at 5 pm at Marhaba Marriage Hall in his hometown, Khangarh. Moulana Syed Kafeel Ahmad Shah Bukhari, the grandson of

Moulana Shah Ahmad Noorani Bukhari, will deliver an insightful speech, shedding light on the importance of democracy and unity in the nation. This event stands as a symbol of unity, bringing together leaders from different political parties across Pakistan.

Among the notable attendees will be former provincial minister Nawabzada Mansoor Ahmed Khan, the son of the late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, along with several other political luminaries of south Punjab. The public is warmly invited to participate in this commemoration, paying tribute to a man whose unwavering dedication to democracy shaped the course of Pakistan's political history, said Nawabzada Mansoor Ali Khan.

Elaborating the services of the great

politicians, Nawabzada Mansoor remarked, the late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, was a great statesman, a visionary, and a beacon of hope. Throughout his illustrious career, he exemplified the values that were the cornerstone of any thriving democracy – integrity, honesty, and unwavering dedication to the service of the people.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Nasarullah Khan's political journey was his ability to transcend political party's line and forge meaningful connections with politicians from across the spectrum. He was a unifying force in our often-divided political landscape. His popularity was not limited to any particular party or ideology; it transcended all boundaries because he was a man of the people, a man of the nation, Mansoor added.

Comments in SC Practice, Procedure case submitted

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The respondents in a case pertaining to the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act, 2023, on Monday submitted written comments to the top court. Khawaja Tariq Rahim, the counsel for petitioner Raja Aamer, filed the written answer on behalf of his client.

The lawyer requested the court to dismiss the said act, adding that parliament could not make changes in the judiciary's powers. The response detailed that the alleged interference by parliament

into the powers of judiciary was against the constitutional division of powers. Parliament could not bring such changes through act in judicial power under Article 184/3, it added.

Khawaja Tariq Rahim said that the full court could itself amend the rules of 1980. He said that lawyers and journalists could challenge a law on violation of fundamental rights, adding that high courts were not a forum to view the legislations about the top court. The counsel for the Pakistan Muslim

League (PML-Q) also filed the answer, and requested the bench to terminate the cases against the said act.

The response detailed that the said act had made the judiciary more independent, adding that parliament had introduced the legislation as per the constitution. It said that the law had shared the authority of chief justice of Pakistan with two senior judges. It may be mentioned here that the top court had sought written answers from respondents in the said case.

Martyred soldier laid to rest with mily honour

KHANEWAL (PPI): Pakistan Army soldier Shakeel Shafqat, who was martyred in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan, was laid to rest with full military honours in his hometown Khanewal.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the funeral prayer of Shafqat was performed in his native village Kabirwala. The civil and military officials, relatives and others participated in the funeral prayer. The ISPR further said Shafqat was buried with full military honours. Shafqat had lost his life during an intel-

ligence-based operation against terrorists in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan.

A day earlier, Shafqat had made the ultimate sacrifice during a fierce fire-fight that occurred during an intelligence-based operation in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. The operation involved a significant exchange of fire between army troops and terrorists, with the troops effectively engaging the terrorist location, as reported by the ISPR.

The brave soldier who laid down his life in the line of duty was identified as 21-year-old Sepoy Shakeel

Shafqat, a resident of Khanewal district.

The ISPR reaffirmed the commitment of Pakistan's security forces to eradicate the menace of terrorism and emphasised that the sacrifices made by courageous soldiers only strengthen their determination. Earlier this month, another soldier had embraced martyrdom during a similar firefight with terrorists in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. Lance Naik Jamshed Khan, 28, who hailed from District Upper Dir, had gallantly fought before making the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

SHC orders blocking of Hammad Siddiqui's ID

KARACHI (PPI): The Sindh High Court on Monday ordered authorities to block passport, identity card and bank accounts of Hammad Siddiqui, an accused in the Baldia factory fire tragedy case.

In the Sindh High Court, the issue of repatriation of the absconding accused in three cases, including the Baldia factory tragedy, was heard. The federal interior secretary appeared in the court. During the hearing, the court asked the federal interior secretary what steps were taken to bring

Siddiqui back to the country. On this, the interior secretary said the accused had left Abu Dhabi in 2017. Justice KK Agha said he had already left Abu Dhabi before trial of the case began. Siddiqui had left Pakistan in 2013, the interior secretary said.

The court asked if the passport and identity card of Siddiqui were blocked. On this, the interior secretary said that Siddiqui's passport had expired. The SHC ordered blocking of the passport and identity cards of Siddiqui, Taqi Haider Shah, Khurram Nisar, besides freeing

their bank accounts. The court said details of Siddiqui's last landing in Pakistan should be furnished. The court sought a report on the absconding accused Taqi Haider and Khurram Nisar and also asked the prosecutor general Sindh for a list of absconding and advertising accused across the province.

The court issued a show cause notice to the secretary of external affairs for non-appearance and asked for a report from Nadra and the secretary of external affairs by October 2 on the next hearing.

Siraj should not misguide masses: Kundi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday lashed out at Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq. In a reaction to the press talk of Mr Haq, Mr Kundi said: "Sirajul Haq should not misguide the masses for the sake of cheap publicity stunts. Sirajul Haq needs to have information of the negotiations made by the PPP with independent power producers (IPPs)."

"If the PPP had not reached an agreement with the IPPs, the country would have been dragged

into a quagmire today," Mr Kundi added. Mr Kundi stated: "During the tenure of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Sirajul Haq was the senior minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)." "The country's economy would have been strengthened if the industrial zones were established," Mr Kundi said. Earlier today, JI Emir Sirajul Haq fired a fresh broadside at the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and PTI.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Mr Haq asserted: "The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders

had waived their cases. The PTI government had vowed to end poverty and create an opportunity of 50,000 jobs in the country." Mr Haq took a jibe at former finance minister Ishaq Dar, saying, "Ishaq Dar had made claims of controlling the rate of the greenback against the rupee."

Speaking about the international lender, Mr Haq rued: "The nation has been made slaves of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)." "Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced the economic revival," Mr Haq added.