

Three terrorists killed
F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: The security forces killed three terrorists during an intelligence based operation (IBO) in general area Tirah of Khyber district. According to ISPR, during the operation, intense fire exchange took place between the troops and terrorists which also resulted in the killing of terrorist commander Kifayat Tor Adnan.

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Dar summoned
ISLAMABAD (PPI): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday summoned former finance minister Ishaq Dar in assets beyond means case on October 10. Accountability Court Judge Muhammad Bashir issued the order. After the enactment of the National Accountability Ordinance (Amend), the accountability court had closed assets beyond known sources of income case against Dar.

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LONDON: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visiting the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.

US urges India to cooperate in Canadian investigation

Jalil Afridi
WASHINGTON DC: When asked by *The Frontier Post* to comment on the recent transnational murder in Canada of a Sikh individual who was supporting the Khalistan movement in India, US State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller stated that “we have urged India publicly and

privately to cooperate with the Canadian investigations.” Matthew Miller further said that the US was deeply concerned about the allegations by Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau and that the US remains in close contacts with their Canadian counterparts. While referring to the statement of US Secretary of State, Matthew Miller said that it is very

critical that the Canadian investigation proceeds and that the perpetrators are brought to justice. To another question by *The Frontier Post* that whether the US was aware that the extremist ideology of Indian PM Modi led RSS has reached the US in states like North Carolina with active members, Matthew replied by saying that he was not aware of it.



Maneka handed over to Punjab ACE

OKARA (PPI): Khawar Maneka, the ex-husband of Bushra Bibi, was on Tuesday remanded to the Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment on an eight-day physical remand in a corruption case .

According to anti-corruption, Khawar Maneka got a marriage hall and some shops constructed “illegally” on the land of a graveyard in Haveli Lakha. On the reference of the Okara deputy commissioner, an inquiry is underway against him.

Maneka, who was arrested yesterday, was presented before a court of Senior Civil Judge, Abrar Ali Khan in Okara. The Punjab ACE officials pleaded with the court to grant a 13-day physical remand of Khawar Maneka, however, the court approved an 8-day physical remand. Following the remand, the team of anti-corruption left the court premises with Maneka.

On Monday, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) barred Khawar Maneka from flying to Dubai as his name was placed on the Exit Control List (ECL). Maneka is a senior official of Customs department, belonging to Pakpattan and is a spiritual devotee of the 13th century mystic Baba Farid Ganj Shakkar. According to reports, Khawar’s father Ghulam Muhammad Maneka was a politician and also served as a federal minister under Benazir Bhutto. Ghulam Muhammad Maneka passed away in 2011.

Writ of state to be maintained at all costs

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has said writ of the state will be maintained at all costs. During a visit to Police Line Headquarters in Islamabad, he said martyrs are our valuable asset who sacrificed their today for our tomorrow.

The Interior Minister was given a detailed briefing on the law and order situation in the federal capital. The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer informed the interior minister that crime rate has reduced in Islamabad as compared to previous year and that the police is conducting a vigorous campaign against drugs.

Pakistan to promote coop with SCO states: Solangi

NANJING, (China (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said Pakistan was fully committed to promote cooperation with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states in the field of media.

Addressing the participants of the SCO Television Festival here, Murtaza Solangi said that Cooperation among its members in the fields of radio, television and other audio-visual products was a manifestation of the success of the organization. “Collaboration in mainstream media and social media is very important to promote communication at the public level”, Murtaza Solangi opined.

In order to promote cultural affinity, the minister said the media organizations of SCO member countries needed to increase ties in various fields including joint publication projects and documentaries. The minister said that seven decades old Pakistan-China friendship was unique and both countries had the status of “iron brother” to each other.

Pakistan and China had centuries-old cultural linkages, which have been further strengthened by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, said Murtaza Solangi. He said that Pakistan and China were celebrating the 10th anniversary of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor this year. The CPEC has taken the shape of historic economic cooperation between the two neighbour countries.

The minister said that China and Pakistan had declared 2023 as the year of tourism exchange between the two countries and its aim was to promote exchanges at the public level as well as create a vibrant tourism and cultural ecosystem for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries. Murtaza Solangi maintained that the SCO was a useful and promising platform for member countries of the region to promote comprehensive and sustainable cooperation in social, economic, communication, media and cultural fields.

The minister invited the media organizations of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to partner with Pakistan in various projects including joint production. “The member countries of the SCO can benefit from each others’ experiences and advanced technologies,” Murtaza Solangi remarked. He said joint production projects will help

promote the culture and tourism of SCO countries.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said that speculations regarding prices of petroleum products be avoided. Using his X account, formerly Twitter, while tagging a news item of Khaleeq Kiani he said he appreciated the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) for asking everyone to avoid speculations.

Thanking Khaleeq Kiani the minister said, “I was not in the business of speculations. During a presser, i was asked if the prices of POL were about to go up north. I clearly said the prices of petroleum products are mainly determined keeping in the prices in the international market and the dollar-rupee exchange rate.” The minister clarified that he did mention a published report the same day predicting a price cut, without saying if that possibility was around the corner or not.

Murtaza Solangi said it remained the domain of OGRA and it was the only body to make any announcement about the petroleum products prices. The minister said he did not hint at what was reported in a national English daily.He said it would help both the newspaper and Khaleeq Kiani to listen to the question asked to him and his complete answer before making any conclusion about it. The minister also shared a paragraph from the news report : “ Interestingly, the hints at price reductions were made by caretaker commerce Minister Gohar Ijaz and Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi, both of whom have no role in determining the prices”.

Moreover, the Caretaker Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi emphasized to start joint production and training programmes with Russia in the field of mass media.

During a meeting with Russian Deputy Minister for Information Bela Cherkasova both reiterated to promote cooperation in the fields of mass media. Murtaza Solangi invited the Russian Deputy Information Minister to visit Pakistan which he accepted. The Russian Deputy Minister of Information also wished to extend cooperation with Pakistan in other spheres of life besides media. She said that Pakistani television dramas were very popular in Russia. The exchange of plays and other productions between the two countries was also discussed in the meeting.

Rana asks Bugti to stop worrying about Nawaz

LAHORE (INP): Former interior minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Punjab president Rana Sanaullah has asked Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti to stop worrying about Nawaz Sharif.

On September 25, Bugti, while talking to with a news channel said Nawaz Sharif would be arrested upon arrival in Pakistan if he is denied bail by the courts. The former premier is all set

to reach Pakistan on October 21. “Sarfraz Bugti should keep Sheikh Rasheed’s end in mind before commenting on Nawaz Sharif”, Rana Sanaullah responded.

The former minister claimed the people of Pakistan paid for the ‘conspiracy’ hatched against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The PML-N leader asked Sarfraz Bugti to stop worrying about Nawaz Sharif and focus on his

‘work’, as the former premier has always respected the rule of the law in the country.

Masses will decide, where Nawaz Sharif will go after landing in Pakistan, he added. Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced Nawaz Sharif’s return to Pakistan on October 21. “Nawaz Sharif will be given a splendid welcome on his arrival in Pakistan”, he added.

PTI chief shifted to Adiala Jail on IHC order

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was shifted to Adiala Jail from Attock prison on Tuesday following the Islamabad High Court order.

A day earlier, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq ordered the authorities concerned to shift the PTI chairman from Attock prison to Adiala Jail.

IHC CJ Aamer Farooq expressed his annoyance over keeping an ‘under-trial prisoner’ in Attock prison instead of Adiala Jail and directed the concerned authorities to move the former prime minister – who is currently serving a three-year sentence in the Toshakhana case. – to the Adiala Jail.

Yesterday, a confusion arose when Naeem Panjhota, who is the spokesperson for the PTI chairman on legal affairs, claimed that the ousted premier had been shifted to the Adiala Jail.

However, the Adiala Jail administration refuted the lawyer’s claim. Earlier on Tuesday, heavy contingents of police reached the Attock prison to shift the former PM to the Adiala Jail. An 18-vehicle convoy – including 15 vehicles of Islamabad police, two armoured vehicles and an ambulance escorted Khan from Attock to Adiala Jail via motorway.

Maryam departs for Pakistan

LONDON (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz vice president and chief organiser, Maryam Nawaz has departed for Pakistan after her short stay in London.

As per details, Maryam Nawaz spent four days in London after being summoned by her father Nawaz Sharif. According to media reports, it stated that Nawaz Sharif finalised the plan for his much-awaited ‘homecoming’ after consultation with Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz. The daughter of the former premier will review the arrangements to welcome Nawaz Sharif upon his return to Pakistan on October 21.

Earlier, former finance minister Ishaq Dar said that there are no hurdles in PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif’s participation in elections. Ishaq Dar said that article 62 (1) (f) which decreased the disqualification sentence to five years was passed by the parliament and also approved by the president.

Moonis’s warrants issued

LAHORE (PPI): An accountability court in Lahore on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for former federal minister Moonis Elahi in a case pertaining to alleged corruption in development projects. Moonis Elahi is facing allegations of billions of rupees of corruption in development projects.

Accountability Court Judge Naseem Ahmad Virk conducted the hearing and issued the arrest warrants which are valid until October 5. On July 22, the Lahore district court declared Moonis Elahi – son of PTI President Parvez Elahi – an absconder over his continued absence in the money laundering case. Moonis is currently living in Spain.

The FIA had pleaded to declare Elahi an absconder for not appearing before the investigation agency even after issuance of non-bailable arrest warrant against him. The court also started the process to freeze his assets, computerized national identity card, passport, and bank accounts. Last month, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) lodged a case against Parvez Elahi and his son Moonis over alleged money laundering in the Panama scandal.

PM says slashed govt expense

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that his foremost priority to fix the problems of the country during his tenure in office would be to cut the government’s expenditure and increase revenue.

“The economy is extremely pressing right now and these are the problems which are hitting a common man very hard,” he told TRT World when asked about his vision during the last four months of the caretaker setup., Kakar said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal was an opportunity for the country to focus on how the economic behaviour was influencing the life of the common man in Pakistan.

“I am quite positive that this current stint of ours no matter how short it is, we will try our level best to provide a blueprint for the future mandated government who can take some benefit of it, stay the course, and deliver on the economic front to the people of Pakistan,” he said. On the transparency of the upcoming general election, he termed Pakistan as a transitional democracy and assured that the electoral process would be neutral, fair, and free.

He stressed that there would not be any organizational or institutional involvement, either in favor of one or a political group. On protests by Imran Khan’s supporters, he said the protest, if remained peaceful, was their basic and democratic right. The government will try to protect the democratic right of any political party be it Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Pakistan Muslim League-N, and Pakistan Peoples Party, he said.

However, he stressed that any kind of vandalism in the name of protest would not be allowed. Asked about the alleged involvement of the United States in the ouster of Imran Khan, he called it a conspiracy theory that was used for public consumption. “At times politicians do things for populist reasons, but as far as the responsible caretaker government is concerned, we ensure that no one whether it is United States of America or any other power, meddles in our domestic affairs,” he said.

Pakistan is a sovereign country that exercises things according to its own interests, he said. Kakar said the ouster of Imran Khan was “lawful” as it was carried out constitutionally and without a military coup. To a question on civil-military relations, he said to ensure functional governance, the civilian institutions had been relying on the military due to

its organizational capabilities and to deal with day-to-day challenges in areas including health, education, disaster management, and tax revenue collection.

He said the civil institutions needed to enhance their capability to improve service delivery. On Pakistan’s national security, he said the country faced a perpetual challenge of attacks for 16 years and was quite successful in managing the violence to a certain level. He mentioned that the Afghan-led government had the capacity issues to respond to certain terrorist groups on their soil, which he termed as a threat to Pakistan and the world.

He said Pakistan was the only nation that lost around 90,000 individuals in fighting terrorism. To a question comparing Pakistan’s progress with India, he said there are cycles of life within the lifespan of an individual or nation with good and bad patches. “If you want to turn around your adversarial time and turn it into a fortune, you have to learn lessons and be quite optimistic and sanguine about the future,” he said.

He said though Pakistan faced difficult times in terms of economy and security, there was no reason to become paranoid and feel insecure due to India’s

(Continued on Back Page)

All parties including PTI are free to join polls: Govt

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker government on Tuesday said under the constitution and prevalent electoral laws, all political parties had the equal right to participate in the general elections and categorically stated that the remarks of the caretaker prime minister during a recent interview to the foreign wire service Associated Press had been “misunderstood and misreported”.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in its official statement issued the original text from the Associated Press to clarify that Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was plain speaking to suggest that whereas participating in the elections was a right, but retribution for crimes was legally warranted.

The ministry lamented that the interview had been “twisted by some outlets” to give the impression that someone will not be allowed to take part in the general elections. The ministry drew attention to the following text of Prime Minister’s interview: “We

are not pursuing anyone on a personal vendetta,” Kakar said. “But yes, we will ensure that the law is appropriate. Anyone, be it Imran Khan or any other politician who violates, in terms of their political behavior, the laws of the country, then the restoration of the law has to be ensured. We cannot equate that with ... political discrimination.”

Kakar said fair elections can take place without Khan or hundreds of members of his party who are jailed because they engaged in unlawful activities including vandalism and arson, a reference to the violence that rocked the country following Khan’s initial arrest in May.

The caretaker prime minister added that the thousands of people in Khan’s party who didn’t engage in unlawful activities, “will be running the political process, they will be participating in the elections.” The Information Ministry reiterated in its statement that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its leaders are free to participate in the elections like

any other party. It has been clarified that there is no impediment to contesting elections by any leader of PTI or the party as a whole.

The statement further added that every citizen is equal before law and the law will take its course with respect to any person currently facing legal charges. The courts are free and independent and the caretaker government has neither authority nor intention to influence the courts at any level. It was further clarified that any person aggrieved by any order or ruling of a statutory or judicial forum has a constitutionally guaranteed right to approach the next forum in judicial hierarchy for relief.

“The caretaker government is committed to holding free and fair elections. The caretaker government will support the constitutional and legal structure for holding elections and would ensure that all orders and directions of the Election Commission of Pakistan and independent judiciary are complied with in letter and spirit,” the government said in its statement.

KP CM reviews foreign funded development projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting to discuss and review progress on Foreign Funded Development Projects in the province including newly merged areas was held here on Tuesday with the caretaker Chief Minister KP Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair. Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Quraishi, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments and other high ups attended the meeting.

The participants were given detailed briefing about the progress made so far on the foreign funded development projects and other related matters. It was told that under the foreign funded development portfolio, a total of 66 development projects worth Rs. 849 billion were

reflected in the Annual Development Program of the current financial year adding that Rs. 114 billion have been allocated for the aforementioned projects in the current fiscal year, out of which Rs. 10.9 billion have been released so far.

Briefing about the details of development projects in the various sectors, it was informed that five projects were reflected in Agriculture sector, three in Public Health Engineering, four projects in the Elementary & Secondary Education and seven projects in the sector of Power & Energy, four projects in the Health, three projects in Local Government, five in Road Communication, two in Tourism, three projects in Irrigation, one project each in Forests, Home, Industries and Labour whereas nineteen in multi-sectoral development sector. It was informed

that as compared to other provinces, progress on the development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was much better.

The Chief Minister, while expressing his satisfaction over the overall progress on these projects, has directed the quarters concerned to take necessary steps in order to further expedite the pace of work on these projects and to ensure their timely completion. He has directed the administrative secretaries of concerned departments to regularly review the progress on foreign funded projects under their respective departments so that bottlenecks hindering the smooth implementation of those project could be identified and removed timely. He made it clear that no unnecessary delay would be allowed in the completion of these public welfare development projects.



Governor meets highlights investment opportunities

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has said that world has changed into a global village that has created endless opportunities of investment and exploring resources through use of modern technology.

He was talking to a ten-member delegation of UK Business Forum, here at Governor House.

The delegation was included Chairman Overseas Business Forum UK, Muhammad Farooq, General Secretary, Salman Dosa, Ahmad Ali, Naeemullah and Noman Ali.

The delegation appreciated the keen interest of governor to promote business activities in the province and urged him to establish overseas commission in KP like Punjab and Sind to facilitate business community.

Delegation said thousands of overseas Pakistanis are facing difficulties in UK Europe and Central Asian states due to absence of overseas commission added that expatriates wants to invest in vast natural resources of the province and play a role in its development.

Governor said that trans-

formation of world into a global village has created new vistas of business and utilization of resources through use of modern technologies. He said that Pakistan has abundant resources of various kinds that can be utilized by foreign investors.

He also suggested formation of a joint venture of business community of both Pakistan and UK to create opportunities of investment and explore vistas of education, health and mineral resources exploration.

He also highlighted tourism potential of KP and

appreciated vision of the delegation to develop tourist places in the province.

Haji Ghulam Ali underscored the importance of business forum to divert attention of world towards scenic places of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to attract foreign investment for development of tourism sector. Governor also presented shield and gifts to delegation members.

Later, Chairman Red Crescent KP, Dr. Habib Orakzai called on KP governor and discussed matters to further improve performance of the organization.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of in Pakistan Poland Maciej Pisarski meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting to review progress on foreign funded projects.

Meeting discusses infrastructure projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Communication & Works and Irrigation Engineer Ahmad Jan Khan, on Tuesday presided over a meeting regarding mega projects of Communication & Works Department here at Peshawar.

During the meeting progress on provincial flagship mega projects and timeline of it's completion were reviewed.

Chief Engineer C&W North Engineer Shakir Habib, Additional Secretaries, Riaz Khan and Miss. Fariha Malahat, Project Directors of various developmental projects, representatives of relevant projects consultants and other officials attended.

During the meeting the caretaker minister was briefed regarding mega

development projects executed regarding communication, works, links roads of rural developments and informed him about it's main characteristics, funding status, ongoing work progress and completion timeframe.

On this occasion the minister was briefed that in order to make accessibility to various tourism spots in the province, a mega project for integrated tourism development has been executed through C&W department wherein, the main tourism zones are being linked through new roads. It was told that 70 million dollars foreign fund and 3 billion ADP budget have allocated for the same project.

Similarly, for the conservation and development of historical mosques and archeological places, a mega project has been initiated

and the developmental work on same places has been completed.

It was told that on the assistance of World Bank, under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Accessibility Project a project has been started so that to link the rural areas with urban areas through roads connection and under the same scheme, 463 kilometer rural roads, 305 kilometers flood effected roads and 16 flood effected bridges are being constructed.

Furthermore, in Merged Districts and few Settled districts, under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment Support Program, various complexes are being constructed, while, under PaRRSA and US Aid funded project, the C&W department completed at least 124 schemes wherein, rehabilitation of 25 schools also included.

Execution of policy announced

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker CM on Health, Dr Riaz Anwar has announced implementation of the pharmacy policy, which is pending for the last several years.

He was addressing a function organized in connection with World Pharmacist Day under the auspices of the Young Pharmacist Community here in Nishtar Hall on Tuesday.

Those who attended included former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister, Inayatullah Khan, former MPA Shagufta Malik and beside pharmacists from across the province, students also attended the function at large.

The advisor on health said that pharmacy is a crucial segment of the health sector and the health system is incomplete without it. He said that pharmacy is the only means through which diseases could be arrested and pain of the patients could be mitigated.

He said that medicine is guaranteed to human health and correct use is impossible without a pharmacist. He further said that pharmacists also play a crucial role from the manufacturing of medicines to till its impact and usage.

The advisor on health on this occasion assured the resolution of problems faced by the pharmacists and pharmacy sector.

Gang held for thefts in BRT

PESHAWAR (APP): A 4-member female gang involved in stealing mobile phones, cash and other valuables from women in BRT Peshawar was arrested, police informed on Tuesday.

Police said two of the gang members belonged to Rawalpindi while the other two were the residents of Imamia Colony Gulbahar, Peshawar.

According to details, a woman, wife of Allah Dad filed a report of mobile phone theft in BRT to Thana Town Police, following which the police started investigation and traced the gang by obtaining the recording of CCTV cameras installed on different routes of BRT.

The police accompanied by the lady staff arrested four women including the wife and daughter of Sherdil, resident of Rawalpindi and the wife and daughter of Baraan, resident of Imamia Colony Gulbahar.

Police recovered 8 valuable mobile phones and cash worth thousands of rupees from the arrested gang members and registered a case at Town police station against them.

Minister stress importance of govt transparency

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In an event hosted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Commission, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, the Caretaker Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stressed the importance of government transparency and public awareness through access to information regime.

He emphasized that informed citizens are essential for holding governments accountable and cited Hazrat Umar's exemplary response to a question as a historical precedent.

Furthermore, he underscored the relevance of the Holy Quran in guiding our lives and urged for proactive disclosure to information to evaluate government performance.

Barrister Kakakhel also expressed concern over the recent MDCAT test incident, highlighting the need for merit-based rewards for the youth.

Provincial Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel acknowledged the challenges facing the province and called for responsibility and corrective measures to instill confidence in the youth.

He emphasized the importance of meritocracy

and transparency, asserting that public access to information is a fundamental component of achieving this goal.

He pointed out the province's efforts, with 1146 Public Information Officers working diligently to provide timely information. The commission's performance, having resolved over 23,000 of 25,000 requests promptly, indicates its effectiveness he said.

Barrister Kakakhel informed the audience that Chief Commissioner Farah Hamid Khan and her team are making significant strides in their roles, with plans to appoint more commissioners shortly.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including Secretary Information and Public Relations Syed Jabbar Shah and former Chief Commissioner Azmat Hanif Orakzai and Professor Kaleem Ullah and others. In the event recognizing the outstanding performance awards were distributed.

In the category of Media, Journalist Muhammad Faheem, in PIO Category Deputy Secretary Finance Anwar Zeb, and in Citizen Category Majid Ali received awards. The ceremony drew the participation of numerous media representatives and public as well.

Canada, KP government collaborate to empower women

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, along with its subsidiary departments including Local Government, Social Welfare, Planning and Development (P&D), and the Commission on the Status of Women with the support of Canada concluded a four-year project here at a local hotel on Tuesday to empower women in the province.

The primary objective of this project, undertaken in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada through Cowater International, is to integrate women into social, economic, and political spheres, ensuring their participation in policymaking, governance, and the enforcement of laws and policies related to women's rights.

During the concluding conference, Justice Retired Irshad Qaisar, Caretaker Minister for Social Welfare, highlighted that over 55 percent of Pakistan's population comprises women, yet a significant number of them struggle to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families.

She said that the government is committed to empowering women and addressing unemployment issues.

She stressed that providing basic amenities to the public is the state's responsibility and solid measures are being taken in this regard.

Luke Myers, Head of Global Affairs Canada, emphasized that substantial efforts can be made to ensure Pakistani women's

complete and equitable participation in society and praised the collaboration between the Canadian and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments in advancing women's progress.

Shabina Gulzar, team leader of the Empowerment and Political Participation Program, provided detailed insights into the project's goals and objectives, shedding light on the importance of women's representation in governmental processes.

The conference also featured a panel discussion with speakers including Mr. Muhammad Naeem, Director of Social Welfare Department; Amna Durani, Director of Program Commission on the Status of Women; Rabia Sattar, Special Assistant to P&D;

Dr. Rifat Sardar, former Chairperson Commission on the Status of Women Atiq-ur-Rehman, Deputy Director Local Government School; Zaher Shah Senior Journalist; and Shakeela Rubani, Chairperson DSW.

Speakers collectively stressed the need for Pakistani women to have equal rights and opportunities in political, social, and economic life.

They underlined that Pakistan stands at a critical juncture economically and politically, and women's empowerment is essential for its future development.

Every girl and woman in Pakistan should have control and autonomy over their education, meaningful employment, and sustainable income for their future.

CISNR holds one-day workshop

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Center for Intelligent Systems and Networks Research (CISNR), UET Peshawar, organized a one-day workshop aimed at engaging targeted municipalities in Abbottabad and Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) the other day. These municipalities had witnessed successful implementation of SCADA system under CISNR guidance. The event was funded by REEE-SCALE, GIZ - Pakistan.

During the event, Prof. Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan, Project Director, unveiled the transformative potential of IoT technology and its diverse advantages for municipalities throughout Pakistan. Dr. Khan emphasized over its capacity to amass valuable data that can revolutionize decision-making processes and facilitate efficient planning and implementation of innovative technologies, thereby conserving time, energy, and valuable municipal resources.

Mr. Rehan Yousaf, the Chief Guest



and CEO of the Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) in Abbottabad, appreciated GIZ, CISNR, and the municipalities for their cooperation in the project. In his address, he highlighted the potential of the SCADA system in empowering municipalities. He said that this technology would enable municipalities to identify and address existing gaps

within their systems, ultimately leading to more efficient monitoring and attainment of rapid, effective results.

Mr. Asher from REEE -SCALE GIZ shared that GIZ has been providing training programs on digitization and SCADA systems for the past 2-3 years, with plans to expand these initiatives for Pakistan's municipalities in the future.

Minister conveys condolences to Sikh community at Peshawar Gurdwara

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Human Rights, Auqaf, and Minority Affairs, Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, alongside Auqaf Secretary Dr. Asad Ali, paid a visit to Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh Namak Mandi in Peshawar. During this solemn occasion, they expressed their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Sikh community in the wake of Hardeep Singh's tragic killing by India's RAW agency in Canada.

The leaders of the Sikh community expressed their gratitude to Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah for his visit to the Gurdwara. Speaking to the media during this visit, the caretaker provincial minister extended his condolences to the Sikh community, emphasizing that they share in the grief of the

Sikh community. He personally visited Bhai Joga Singh Gurdwara to offer his condolences and sympathy. He strongly condemned the killing of Hardeep Singh by India's RAW agency and called upon the United Nations to take notice of India's actions. He reaffirmed that ensuring the safety of the lives and property of the minority community is their top priority.

Furthermore, he stated that he has directed the

Auqaf and minority affairs department to address the problems faced by the minority community on a priority basis to ensure they do not encounter any difficulties. He also criticized India's actions in reaching out to Canada to target the Sikh community, which he believes has exposed India's actions to the world.

Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah assured the Sikh community leaders that they will work

together to resolve the issues faced by the minority community. The visit was attended by Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaq Wazir and ADC Peshawar Sania. On this occasion, the Provincial Minister for Law, Human Rights, and Minority Affairs had an extensive meeting with Sikh community leaders, during which they highlighted their challenges. The provincial minister offered assurances of resolving these issues.



PESHAWAR: President Mafkoora Hayat Roghani presenting a book to CCO CECVE KP Dr. Ayaz Khan.



In brief

Teenager girl killed in firing

MANSEHRA (INP): A teenage girl was killed and two others were seriously injured in firing over petty dispute in North-eastern village of Mansehra on Tuesday. According to details, armed men sprayed bullets at three people over issue of collecting walnuts from their land in Battal. As a result of firing, an 11-year-old girl was killed on the spot while Zulfiqar s/o Ishaq and Zia ur Rehman s/o Amanullah sustained critical wounds. The body and wounded people were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Free eye camp arranged

F.P. Report

KHYBER: As many as 750 patients in Tehsil Landi Kotal were provided free treatment in a three-days camp held here on the last day. The camp was organized by the Al-Khidmat Foundation, Khyber chapter and hundreds of patients including women and children visited it. According to the vice-President, Al-Khidmat Foundation Murad Hussain Afridi, the aim of establishing the camp was to provide quality eye services to the poor of Landi Kotal. Besides Free Out Patient Department facility, free of cost medicines, spectacles/glasses, computerized eyesight checking and specialist consultation were provided, in addition 51 surgeries were also carried out in the camp. During the camp, patients with conjunctivitis, corneal opacity and other eye diseases were treated. Locals thanked the Foundation for providing free eye cure to marginalized groups of the tribal society. Al-Khidmat Foundation established in 1990 works as non-profit, on-political and autonomous humanitarian organization to deal with real life problems, emergency situations and humanitarian assistance.

Clean Indus drive conducted

SUKKUR (INP): The Living Indus Initiative by the United Nations and the Ministry of Climate Change jointly conducted an event on Tuesday called "Clean the Indus Drive" in collaboration with a number of groups, including the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO), WWF, and other stakeholders. At the Indus River's Sadh Belo point in Sukkur, the drive took place. Its main goal was to increase public awareness of the value of maintaining the Indus River's cleanliness and protecting its environment. This was accomplished by organizing cleanup efforts with the help of numerous partners from the community, civic society, academia, the media, local bodies, and authorities. WWF-Pakistan organized community members from the riverine area. SRSO managed the EMO Hub School in Numaish Colony Sukkur and schoolchildren, Sukkur Municipal Corporation, Media and Hindu Panchayat, and others participated in the Clean the Indus Drive and contributed to the event's success and played a role in the event. While highlighting the importance of local authorities in environmental initiatives, the Team Leader of the Living Indus Initiative-UN Pakistan, Ms. Humaira Jhanzeb, shared the initiative's objectives, emphasizing the critical role that the Indus River plays in livelihoods and the need for collective responsibility to protect it from pollution. The cleaning drive symbolized the community's commitment to the conservation of the river and aimed to inspire joint actions toward this goal.



HYDERABAD: Members of HDA Mazdoor Union CBA holding a sit-in for nonpayment of their salaries.

KKKU hosts Orientation HEC Policy

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak hosted an orientation session on Tuesday on the recently introduced Higher Education Commission (HEC) Undergraduate Education Policy 2023. The event was actively participated by academic heads, faculty members, and administrative staff. The session was conducted by Muhammad Rahim, Deputy Registrar Academics, who served as the resource person. Rahim passionately highlighted the key components and various provisions of the HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2023.

The policy focuses on reshaping undergraduate education in Pakistan, emphasizing essential elements such as General Courses, Major Courses, Interdisciplinary Studies, Field Experience/ Internships, and Capstone Projects in BS scheme of studies. Besides, it also provides guidelines for 02-year Associate Degree Program



and enabling the students to receive a similar degree in case of exit from BS degree program after completing the 02 years education.

During the orientation, Rahim precisely discussed each aspect of the policy, shedding light on how these changes will benefit both students and the academic institutions. The session aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the new policy to ensure its effective implementation at Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak.

All heads and faculty members from various academic departments, including the Controller of Examinations, as well as the Director and Assistant Director of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) attended the session. The University's academic com-

munity demonstrated their commitment to staying informed about the latest developments of Higher Education and their dedication to providing students with a high-quality education.

The HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2023 is a significant milestone in Pakistan's higher education sector, and it is expected to bring about positive changes in the way undergraduate education is structured. Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak generally adopts such policies to ensure its students receive a standard education. The orientational session served as an essential platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, aligning the university's academic programs with the new policy's guidelines.

Rising inflation requires urgent attention

Aqsa Liaquat

THE relentless rise in prices of essential goods and services is deeply affecting the daily lives of ordinary citizens and demands immediate attention from both the government and policymakers.

Inflation erodes purchasing power and creates financial instability, especially for the marginalized segments of society. It impacts not only basic necessities like food, healthcare, and education but also impedes economic growth by dampening consumer spending and hindering investment. The major problem remains there in the form of big borrowing by the government.

While global factors such as fluctuating oil prices, food and supply chain disruptions contribute to inflation, there is a pressing need for the government to implement effective domestic policies. Strengthening agriculture, improving infrastructure, and fostering a conducive business environment can help mitigate inflationary pressures.

Furthermore, inflation rate in Pakistan averaged percent from 1957 until reaching all time high of 37.97 percent in 2023. In conclusion, the rising inflation in Pakistan is a matter of serious concern that warrants prompt action. It's imperative for the government, policymakers, and relevant authorities to work collectively to address the root causes of inflation and ensure a stable economic environment for all citizens.

Residents hold protest

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Dozens of local residents, mostly parents and social activists, took to the streets against the blockage of a pathway to a girls' higher secondary school in Timergara. The protest was held on the call of an action committee working against the land mafia.

The protesters walked on the roads and chanted slogans against the district administration and the land mafia for grabbing the state land in the area. They gave a weeklong deadline to the administration to evacuate the state land from the occupants. The protesters gathered at the Shaheed Chowk near the Timergara press club. They were protesting the blockade of a pathway to the government girls' centennial model high school Timergara wherein more than 1700 students are enrolled.

While addressing the protesters, the committee members Shuaib Ahmad, advocate Alam Zeb, Usman Khan and others alleged that the path of girl students was being blocked by some influential people with the support of the district administration under a planned conspiracy. They said the land grabbers were busy building a market in the way despite the matter having been brought into the notice of local administration. The speakers said the land in question was owned by the state but it had been handed over to the influential on lease.

Girl students excel in Malakand board HSSC examination

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Ms Tayyiba Qazi, of the Islamia Model College Timergara got 1035 marks and stood first in the higher secondary school certificate (HSSC) annual examination 2023 held under the board of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) Malakand.

The BISE Malakand controller of examinations Muhammad Naseem Khan announced the results during a function at the board here on Tuesday. Another girl student Aiaqa Javed of the Edward Model College Timergara secured 1012 marks and Faiza Shams of the Islamia Model College Timergara got 1009 marks and stood second and third respectively in the board.

A total of 35728 students appeared in the HSSC part I examination out of which 28260 were declared successful and the result remained 79 percent. Similarly a total of 33588 students appeared in HSSC part II examination out of which 30857 were declared successful and the result remained 92 percent. In the pre-engineering group Suliman Ahmad obtained 947 marks, Muhammad Rafi 945

marks and Sunbal Jabin 938 marks and stood first, second and third respectively in the board. In the humanities group Riyan Muhammad got 959 marks, Saima Naz 944 marks and Jalwa Ahmad 936 marks and stood first, second and third respectively in the board.

Students' rights movement: The Islami Jamiat Tulba (IJT) provincial nazim Wasim Haidar on Tuesday announced a 'Huquq e Talba Tareek' (students' rights movement) from Nov 22 during which the students would be mobilized for their rights. He made the announcement during the conclusion session of a two-day students' training workshop held at Timergara. The IJT Timergara chapter arranged the event which was attended by hundreds of school, college and universities' students.

The IJT leader said that students were leaving educational institutions due to an increase in their problems with the passage of time. He said that students of both the lower and higher levels were facing serious problems while getting education. The IJT nazim said that a total of 22.8 million students in

Pakistan were still out of schools due to poverty as they were unable to pay the expensive schools' fees.

The IJT leader said the economic crisis in the universities had badly affected the research work of the students. He said the fee of medical colleges had been increased by 300 percent that would never be accepted by the students' organizations. He demanded the government to declare an education emergency in the country. He said the IJT had set up the anti-harassment and drugs' complaint cells at the varities which provided legal and moral support to students against harassment and drug abuse.

He said the IJT complaint cell also protected students against the illegal demands of faculty. He said that girls' hostels were being provided with drugs but there had been no action against the elements involved in it. He said that 12 of the national universities were short of permanent vice chancellors that adversely affected administrative affairs in those institutions. He demanded restoration of students' unions and its elections in the country.

Officials directed to serve public with dignity

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has said that practical and concrete steps for making the Division a model for rest of the province. He urged all the officers and officials to work with integrity in the execution of government affairs so that there is no hindrance in delivering their rights to the people at their doorsteps. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at the divisional level regarding efficiency and revenue in his office on Tuesday.

A d d i t i o n a l Commissioner Mardan Naem Akhtar, DC Mardan Captain (R) Abdur Rahman, DC Swabi Gohar Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Shahzeb Khan, Assistant Commissioners, Additional Assistant Commissioners and officers of other relevant departments participated in the meeting. The meeting was given a detailed briefing by Deputy Commissioners Mardan and Swabi regarding the important issues of their respective districts and revenue collection.

While giving a briefing, DC Mardan said that all the tasks given on the task management system have been completed. Price-

checking, sanitation check, checking of substandard food items, bans are being done in the markets so that quality food items are available to the public at cheaper rates. Apart from this, schools, health centers, patwari houses and ADP schemes are also being checked and inspected.

Commissioner said that our team is working to redress the complaints on the Pakistan Citizen Portal (PCP) apart from this open court is also being organized in the light of the instructions of the provincial government, which are redressing the public complaints and having positive effects.

He said that Mardan is on the first place in revenue generation and the recovery of government dues, land tax, stamp duty, death, registration fee, CVT, local rates, usher, has improved in the recovery. Commissioner Mardan Division strictly directed to plan a special campaign to eliminate plastic shopping bags by taking the business community into confidence and hold special meetings with the presidents of the markets to eradicate it from the root.

He also directed that special attention should be paid to the quality of construction works and special monitoring of these proj-

ects, he said that the performance of service delivery centers will be developed on better and modern lines. He said that all officers should pay attention to market checking, elimination of illegal encroachments and price checking and open court to reduce public problems.

Meanwhile, another meeting regarding polio task force was organized in the office of Commissioner Mardan Division in which Regional Police Officer (RPO) Mardan Sulaiman Khan, DC Mardan, DC Swabi, DHO Mardan Javed Iqbal, ADC Mardan and Officers from other concerned departments participated. Giving a detailed briefing to the meeting, WHO Coordinator Dr. Nazir Ahmed said that the polio campaign will continue from October 2 to October 6.

During the campaign, a total of 766,000 targeted children will be given polio vaccines in Mardan Division. For which 2965 mobile teams, 166 fixed, 88 transit and roaming teams have been formed and in addition to this, adequate security arrangements have been made to avoid any untoward incident and to make this campaign safe in all respects. And 6 thousand people have been deployed for security.

Two-day moot held in Islamia's University

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: To explore the challenges posed by newer forms of communication on social networks and tools offered by Artificial Intelligence, to address those challenges, the Department of English Linguistics at Islamia University of Bahawalpur organized a two-day International Conference titled 'Corpus Tools & Language Sciences: Exploring the Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Applied Linguistics'.

On the first day, research scholars from Department of Linguistics, University of Okara and Department of English Linguistics presented their presentations. On the 2nd day, three speakers from Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications, Shanghai International Studies University, China called upon the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar in his office and exchanged views of mutual interests. The Chinese speakers shared their findings on how Artificial Intelligence was empowering humanities in the form of tools of Artificial Intelligence



available for Discourse Analysis.

Prof. Dr. Hu Kaibao, Assistant President of Shanghai International Studies University, China, Dean of Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications, China, Prof. Dr. Geng Qiang, Vice Dean of Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications, China, Dr. Muhammad Afzaal, Associate Professor of Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications, China delivered their talks. Dr. Riaz Hussain, head, Department of English Linguistics gave a comprehensive talk on advantages and disadvantages of Artificial Intelligence and how it was being used in language analysis tools. The sessions on the synergy of AI and Corpus technology were chaired by Dr. Tahira Asghar, Dr. Zahoor Hussain, Dr. Waseem Hassan Gillani, faculty members, Dept. of English

Linguistics. Prof. Dr. Mamuna Ghani Director ETC, and Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Mahmood, Head, Department of Linguistics University of Okara were guests of honour on the occasion.

Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal, Director Academics & Dean Faculty of Management Sciences and Commerce also addressed the conference attendees. The Chinese speakers had a meeting with Prof. Dr. Jawad Hassaan Chandio, Dean Faculty of Arts & Languages and discussed avenues of collaborations and explored possibilities of building corpora for regional languages of Pakistan. The conference concluded with recommendations of the conference declared by the focal person, Dr. Riaz Hussain, Associate Prof & Head, Dept. of English Linguistics the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

Protest against incompetency of Chandka hospital staff held

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The public sector Chandka Medical College Hospital of Sindh, which has been artificially closed. The patients coming from various districts of Punjab including Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Qamber-Shahdadkot, Dadu Khairpur Meris, most of the districts connected to Sindh are being harassed and disturbed by the staff appointed in the hospital for not depositing money, but it is a pity that they raised their voices again and again.

No one is paying attention to the problem, the government staff of the blood bank laboratory is accepting money from poor and indigent patients, in this regard, various patients admitted to Chandka government hospital, Ghulam Ali Mirani, Gulshir Shar, Talking to the media, Minister Jamali, Nooran, Amrzi and others said that this government hospital is not showing off, there is an atmosphere of Andherinagari Charbat Raja here because the central labo-

ratory administration of the hospital has established a bank for poor and untouchable patients.

The blood bank laboratory has been closed by issuing the Pharaoh's decree to close the doors, from which the number of thousands. In India, patients are forced to join private laboratories every day, while the blood mafia, under the patronage of Khalil Memon, earns millions of rupees monthly through black marketing, which after separating the white cells from the blood, sells them in foreign countries for exorbitant amounts.

The corrupt officer Habib Soomro, who has been appointed to the post of Assistant Medical Superintendent in Chandka Hospital, while talking to the media, the relatives of the patients admitted to Chandka Hospital said that Sindh's most Legal action should be taken against the staff and officers of the big government Chandka Medical College Hospital, others have the right to approach the

Supreme Court.

Police performance meeting held: Police performance meeting of Larkana district was held under the chairmanship of SSP Larkana Abdul Rahim Shirazi, in which police officers and officers posted in traffic including SHOs and DSPs participated.

While doing this, SSP Larkana Abdul Rahim Shirazi said that on receiving the strictest instructions from the Inspector General of Sindh Police Rifaat Mukhtar, a crackdown is being carried out against robbers, smugglers, rogues, extortionists and drug dealers in Behar district and they have not been spared under any circumstances. He further said that all the officers should bear in mind that the strictest legal action will be taken against them in case of unsatisfactory action, because the arrest of the accused involved in racketeering and extortion is proof of restoring law and order, while not taking action against them.



S Korea hosts Japan, China as US allies try to reassure Beijing

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea hosted senior diplomats from China and Japan for a rare trilateral meeting on Tuesday seen as aimed at assuaging Beijing's concerns over the two US allies' tightening cooperation between themselves and Washington. The meeting aims in part to set the stage for the resumption of three-way summits among the countries' leaders, which were last held in 2019. Those talks were suspended amid legal, diplomatic and trade disputes between Seoul and Tokyo over issues dating to Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have since taken steps to mend ties and in August held a historic trilateral summit with US President Joe Biden, where the three vowed to boost cooperation, including on defence and economic security. A senior South Korean government official said China has been proactive in seeking trilateral cooperation and arranging meetings since relations soured between Seoul and Beijing in 2017 over the deployment of a US THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea. "I'm sure there should be some discomfort on their side regarding our increasingly close trilateral security partnerships with the United States and Japan," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation. "There seems to be a view there that they need to properly manage bilateral ties with us, as they



saw how their THAAD responses backfired and fuelled anti-China sentiment to serious levels."

Beijing will most likely look to leverage trilateral trade ties to counterbalance the US friend-shoring strategy, promote people-to-people exchanges, and enhance communication and dialogue with Seoul and Tokyo on security and defence matters, said Tong Zhao, senior fellow at the US-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Japan and South Korea have an interest in avoiding conflicts and maintaining a stable security relationship with China, and Beijing's assistance in slowing down, if not halting, North Korea's extensive nuclear development program, he added. "These shared interests open up new avenues for strategic communication, confidence-building, and measures to pre-

vent crises," Zhao said.

The trilateral summits have traditionally involved China's premier, but South Korea is also pushing for a separate visit by President Xi Jinping. South Korea is this year's host for three-way meetings and proposed a trilateral summit in December during the talks on Tuesday, Japanese broadcaster TBS reported.

The latest meeting involved South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-won, Japanese Senior Deputy Foreign Minister Takehiro Funakoshi, and Nong Rong, China's assistant minister of foreign affairs. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a briefing that China, Japan and South Korea are close neighbours and important cooperative partners, and strengthening trilateral cooperation serves their common interests.

Chairman of HK's leading journalist group gets jail term

HONG KONG (AP): The chairman of Hong Kong's leading journalist group received a five-day jail term after he was found guilty of obstructing a police officer in a case that sparked concerns about the city's declining press freedom. Ronson Chan, chairman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association and a journalist of online news outlet Channel C, was arrested last September while he was on his way to a reporting assignment. He was accused of refusing to show the plainclothes officer his identity card upon request.

Chan's arrest fuelled concerns about the erosion of media freedom in Hong Kong after Beijing imposed a national security law to crush dissent following the city's massive pro-democracy protests in 2019. The former British colony was promised to keep its Western-style civil liberties for 50 years when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Magistrate Leung Ka-kie ruled that Chan had deliberately obstructed the officer from carrying out her duty and failed to take out his identity card in a timely manner. He kept asking the officer questions "recklessly," she said. Leung sentenced him to five days in prison but later granted him bail pending an appeal.

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, Chan said his case could affect Hong Kong's image but he hoped every journalist would "stand firm" in their jobs. "Everyone sees how the court views the case. I think justice lies in people's hearts," he said. In the crackdown following the 2019 protests, two vocal media outlets - Apple Daily and Stand News - have been forced to shut down and some of their top managers have been prosecuted. Two former top editors at Stand News, where Chan used to work, were tried for sedition. A verdict is scheduled for November. Pro-Beijing media outlets have attacked the association and Chan, calling the professional group an anti-China political tool in their reports.

Hong Kong, once seen as a bastion of media freedom in Asia, ranked 140th out of 180 countries and territories in Reporters Without Borders' latest World Press Freedom Index. The organization said the city saw an "unprecedented setback" since 2020, when the security law was imposed. But Beijing and Hong Kong authorities said the law helped bring stability back to the city following the anti-government protests in 2019.

Activist sentenced to 4 years for royal insults

BANGKOK (Reuters): A prominent activist and lawyer made famous for his open calls for reform of Thailand's powerful monarchy was on Tuesday sentenced to four years in prison for royal insults, a judge and his lawyer said. Human rights lawyer Arnon Nampa is widely known for his taboo-breaking speech during pro-democracy protests in 2020 during which he called for public debate on the role of Thailand's powerful king. Arnon had denied wrongdoing.

Thailand's lese-majeste law shields the palace from criticism and carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years for each perceived insult of the monarchy, a punishment widely condemned by international human rights groups. "We are trying to get him bail," his lawyer Krisadang Nutcharus told Reuters.

The verdict was the first of 14 lese majeste cases against the outspoken Arnon, one of hundreds of people who have been charged under the law, among the strictest of its kind in the world. He was a leader in the youth-led pro-democracy movement that swept the capital Bangkok in 2020, drawing hundreds of thousands into the streets. Protesters had called for former Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to step down after he came to power in a coup, and for reforming the monarchy and abolishing the royal insult law, known as article 112 of the criminal code.

Libya's top prosecutor jails 8 officials for potential negligence

CAIRO (AP): Libya's chief prosecutor said he ordered the detention of eight current and former officials pending his investigation into the collapse of two dams earlier this month, a disaster that sent a wall of water several meters high through the center of a coastal city and left thousands of people dead.

The two dams outside the city of Derna broke up on Sep. 11 after they were overwhelmed by Storm Daniel, which caused heavy rain across eastern Libya. The failure of the structures inundated as much as a quarter of the city, officials have said, destroying entire neighborhoods and sweeping people out to sea. Government officials and aid agencies have given estimated death tolls ranging from more than 4,000 to over 11,000. The bodies of many of the people killed still are under rubble or in the Mediterranean, according to search teams.

A statement by the office of General Prosecutor al-Sidiq al-Sour said prosecutors questioned seven former and current officials with the Water Resources Authority and the Dams Management Authority over allegations that mismanagement, negligence and mistakes contributed to the disaster. Derna Mayor Abdel-Moneim al-Ghathi, who was sacked after the disaster, also was questioned, the statement said. The eight former and current officials didn't provide evidence to spare them from potential charges, and prosecutors ordered them jailed pending the completion of the investigation, the statement added. The chief

prosecutor said eight other officials would be summoned for questioning. The questioning and jailing of officials were a first crucial step by the chief prosecutor in his investigation, which is likely to face daunting challenges due to Libya's years of divided leadership. Mounting calls for an international investigation into the disaster reflects the deep public mistrust in state institutions.

The oil-rich North African nation has been in chaos since 2011, when an Arab Spring uprising, backed by NATO, ousted longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi, who was later killed. For most of the past decade, rival administrations have claimed authority to lead Libya. Dach is backed by armed groups and foreign governments. The country's east has been under the control of Gen. Khalifa Hifter and his self-styled Libyan National Army, which is allied with a parliament-confirmed government. A rival administration is based in the capital, Tripoli, and enjoys the support of most of the international community. The dams were built by a Yugoslav construction company in the 1970s above Wadi Derna, a river valley which divides the city.

They were meant to protect the city from flash floods, which are not uncommon in the area. The dams were not maintained for decades, despite warnings by scientists that they may burst. A report by a state-run audit agency in 2021 said the two dams hadn't been maintained despite the allocation of

more than \$2 million for that purpose in 2012 and 2013.

A Turkish firm was contracted in 2007 to carry out maintenance on the two dams and to build a third one in between them. The firm, Arsel Construction Company Ltd., said on its website that it completed its work in November 2012. It didn't respond to an email seeking further comment. Two weeks after the dams collapsed, local and international teams were still digging through mud and hollowed-out buildings to look for victims. They also are combing the Mediterranean Sea off Derna for the bodies of people who were swept away. The flood of water from the dams left as much as one-third of Derna's housing and infrastructure damaged, according to the UN's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA. Authorities have evacuated the most impacted part of the city, leaving only search and ambulance teams, the UN office said. The World Health Organization says more than 4,000 flood-related deaths have been registered, but the head of Libya's Red Crescent previously cited a death of toll of 11,300. OCHA says at least 9,000 people remain missing.

The dead in eastern Libya included foreigners living in the North African countries. The storm hit other areas in eastern Libya, including the towns of Bayda, Susa, Marj and Shahatt. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced in the region and took shelter in schools and other government buildings.

Talks over mega dam end without breakthrough

ADDIS ABABA (AP): The latest talks over the mega dam that Ethiopia is building on the Nile River's main tributary have broken up without an agreement. The two-day talks between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on the disputed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam ended in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

Ethiopia's chief negotiator, Seleshi Bekele, said the countries had "exchanged constructive ideas on various outstanding issues" and added that his country remains committed to continuing the negotiations. Egypt's water ministry blamed Ethiopia for the failure to make a breakthrough, alleging that Addis Ababa was "opposed to any compromise." It expressed concern and said an agreement was needed to protect Egypt's water security and national interests. Talks have rumbled on for years over the con-

troversial \$4.6 billion project, whose construction started in 2011. It is expected to produce over 6,000 megawatts of electricity - double Ethiopia's current output and enough to make it a net energy exporter. Ethiopia sees the dam as essential to its development but downstream Egypt - the Arab world's most populous country - fears it will restrict its share of the Nile water, critical for its huge population of 100 million people. About 85% of the river's flow originates from the Blue Nile in Ethiopia though Egypt has received the lion's share of the Nile's waters under decades-old agreements dating back to the British colonial era.

Sudan, also downstream from the Blue Nile where the dam is located, wants a deal to regulate the amount of water Ethiopia will release in the event of a major drought. Talks resumed in August after a

long hiatus, with Ethiopia and Egypt hoping to reach a deal by November. Earlier this month Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the final phase in filling the dam's reservoir had been completed. Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said his country is already facing serious water scarcity issues and criticized Ethiopia for having embarked on the dam's construction without consulting fellow Nile states.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen told the UN body that the dam represented the "legitimate development aspirations of Ethiopians," and asserted that it would help increase regional integration and prosperity. Ethiopia's foreign ministry said Egyptian and Sudanese concerns were also "legitimate" but added that its rights need to be protected.

Mexican goods worth \$1b stuck at US border

CIUDAD JUAREZ (Reuters): Trade across the US-Mexican border has been slowed over the past week as US authorities have shut down crossings and imposed extra security checks amid an increase in migration, sparking concern in Mexico. About 8,000 trailers carrying an estimated \$1 billion worth of goods have been stranded on the Mexican side over the past week, said Manuel Sotelo, president of the transport association of Ciudad Juarez, a major manufacturing hub across from El Paso, Texas.

Some companies were sending merchandise through entry points in New Mexico and Arizona to avoid the long wait times at the Texas border, Sotelo told Reuters. The delays forced a Canadian snowmobile and off-road vehicle manufacturer to suspend production at three factories in Ciudad Juarez that employ some 9,000 people. "Due to the waiting times on the international bridges in Ciudad Juarez, we have had a significant reduction in the volume of units that we can export daily," the Quebec-based

company, BRP, said in a statement. Jesus Salayandia, a representative of the Mexican industry association Canacintra, said he expected other companies in Ciudad Juarez would announce temporary work stoppages if the long wait times at the border continue.

US border authorities suspended cargo processing at one of El Paso's international bridges last week to shift officers to process more migrant arrivals. Some 500 northbound trucks normally cross that bridge each day, though only 40% are carrying cargo into the United States, US Customs and Border Protection said in response to a Reuters request for comment. It added that "suspending services there would have the least total impact on our trade partners." Texas authorities also began conducting enhanced vehicle inspections of commercial trucks and trailers at the city's other two bridges.

The moves prompted Mexico's foreign ministry to urge US authorities not to take "unilateral measures" complicating trade.

Truck drivers in Mexico told Reuters they had to wait hours to clear the bridges. In addition to the slowdown for trucks and trailers, some 2,400 Union Pacific railroad cars were also stalled after border officials temporarily halted processing at the international railway crossing bridge in Eagle Pass, Texas. Union Pacific told Reuters it expected to finish working through the backlog by Tuesday morning. It declined to estimate the financial impact.

Some cargo train service was also disrupted in Mexico, when Ferromex temporarily suspended the operations of some 60 northbound trains last week after about a half dozen migrants were injured or died. Previous slowdowns at US-Mexico border crossings have resulted in billions of dollars in total losses, according to analyses by the Texas-based economic research group, The Perryman Group. It estimated that the last such slowdown, in April 2022, represented a daily loss to GDP of \$996.3 million dollars.

Philippines removes Chinese barrier at disputed shoal in 'special operation'

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines said it executed a "special operation" to remove a floating barrier installed by China at a prime fishing patch in the South China Sea, a move that could stoke tension after a years-long detente in Asia's most disputed waters. The Philippines expressed outrage and shared images of Chinese coastguard policing a long, ball-buoy barrier near the Scarborough Shoal, a rocky outcrop 200 km (124 miles) from the Philippines and the site of years of intermittent flare-ups over sovereignty and fishing rights.

Hours after the national security adviser had vowed to take action, the Philippine coastguard said it had removed the floating cordon, at the behest of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and his special task force on the South China Sea. "The barrier posed a hazard to navigation, a clear violation of international law. It also hinders the conduct of fishing and livelihood activ-

ities of Filipino fisherfolk," it said in a statement, describing the shoal as "an integral part of the Philippine national territory". China's foreign ministry made no direct mention of the floating barrier but defended the actions of its coastguard as "necessary measures" after a Philippine bureau of fisheries vessel "intruded" into its waters.

The trading of barbs underscores the strained relations between China and the Philippines at a time when Manila is rapidly strengthening military ties with rival power Washington, a move that has riled Beijing. The strategic Scarborough Shoal, named after a British cargo vessel that ran aground on the atoll in the 18th century, was seized in 2012 by China, which has maintained a constant presence of coastguard and fishing trawlers there ever since.

Under the Philippines' pro-China former President Rodrigo Duterte, Chinese

and Filipino fishermen had since 2017 enjoyed a peaceful coexistence at the shoal, known for its stunning turquoise lagoon that serves as a sanctuary for fishing boats during storms. The Philippines' foreign ministry said the barrier was a violation of international law and Manila would "take all appropriate measures to protect our country's sovereignty and the livelihood of our fisherfolk".

Japan's government urged calm and said the South China Sea was central to regional stability. "Our country strongly opposes any conduct that heightens tension in the South China Sea," Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said at a regular press conference. Control of the shoal is a sensitive issue for China as it formed part of a legal case filed by the Philippines at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, which in 2016 ruled that Beijing's claim to 90% of the South

China Sea had no basis under international law.

China has refused to recognise the landmark ruling. Though the tribunal did not rule on sovereignty over the shoal, located within the Philippines 200-mile exclusive economic zone, it said the area was a traditional fishing site for several countries and that China's previous blockades were unlawful. The Philippines last week said it was weighing legal options over what it called China's destruction of coral in its EEZ, which could be another arbitration case.

China said the shoal, which it calls Huangyan Island, was "China's inherent territory", over which it had indisputable sovereignty. "The Chinese coastguard have taken necessary measures in accordance with the law to intercept and drive away Philippine vessels, and the relevant operations are subject to professional restraint," foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said.

South Korean opposition leader attends court hearing

SEOUL (AP): Coming off a 24-day hunger strike, South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung appeared in front of a judge on Tuesday who will decide whether he will be arrested on broad corruption allegations. Walking slowly with a cane, Lee, a former presidential candidate, refused to answer questions from reporters as he arrived at Seoul Central District Court for a hearing on prosecutors' request for an arrest warrant.

Despite a light rain, hundreds of Lee's supporters and critics occupied separate streets near the court amidst a heavy police presence, holding dueling signs reading "Stop the prosecution's manipulated investigation" and "Arrest Lee Jae-myung." In an unexpected outcome last week, the opposition-controlled National Assembly voted to lift Lee's immunity to arrest, reflecting growing divisions

within his liberal Democratic Party over his legal problems months ahead of a general election. The court is expected to decide on whether to approve an arrest warrant. Lee has been recovering since ending a hunger strike that he had staged in protest of conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol's policies. Lee is being investigated over various criminal allegations, including accusations that he provided unlawful favors to a private investor that reaped huge profits from a dubious real estate project in the city of Seongnam, where he was mayor for a decade until 2018. Prosecutors also believe that Lee pressured a local businessman into sending millions of dollars in illegal payments to North Korea as he tried to set up a visit to that country that never materialized.

Lee has denied legal

wrongdoing and accused the Yoon government of pushing a political vendetta. The Democratic Party selected Lee as its chairperson in August last year, months after he narrowly lost the presidential election to Yoon. Ahead of last week's parliamentary vote, Lee pleaded with lawmakers to vote against the motion submitted by the government to remove his immunity, saying his arrest would "attach wings to prosecutors' manipulated investigation." Lee had previously said he was willing to give up his immunity because he was confident about proving his innocence.

Ahead of vote, some reformist members of the Democratic Party called for Lee to stay true to his words and endorse the motion seeking his own arrest. They said that would rally public support for the party, which has been sliding

since Lee's presidential election loss, and silence suspicions that he conducted the hunger strike to avoid arrest. Lee said the hunger strike was to protest a worsening economy and a broad range of Yoon's foreign policy decisions, including the government's refusal to oppose Japan's release of treated wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea. Lee has also accused Yoon of raising tensions with North Korea by expanding military training and security cooperation with the United States and Japan. Under law, courts cannot hold hearings on requests for arrest warrants for lawmakers during National Assembly sessions unless the assembly allows them to do so by a vote. The Democratic Party blocked a previous attempt by prosecutors to arrest Lee in February.

Shabab, Austin said he had met with Somalia's president and that both agreed that the country had made "significant progress in the last year against al-Shabab." But Austin also said that "progress is not always a straight line so we may see things improve significantly on one day and maybe we'll see challenges on the next day."

"Somalia last week asked the UN to pause for three months the withdrawal of 3,000 troops in the second phase of drawdown to allow the country's forces to regroup. Somalia is expected to take up its full security responsibilities by end of 2024.

US and Kenya sign defense agreement ahead of planned Haiti deployment

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP): The US and Kenya signed a defense agreement that will see the East African nation get resources and support for security deployments as it is poised to lead a multinational peacekeeping mission to Haiti to combat gang violence. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Kenya's Defense Minister Aden Duale signed the accord at a meeting in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The agreement guides the countries' defense relations for the next five years as the war in East Africa against the al-Qaeda linked al-Shabab extremist group intensifies.

Austin thanked Kenya

for volunteering to take the leadership of the Haiti multi-national force and reiterated that the US government would work with Congress to secure the \$100 million in funding that it pledged on the sidelines of the U.N General Assembly. Austin said the rest of the world ought to follow Kenya's commitment to global security and "step up and provide more personnel, equipment, support, training and funding." Kenya has pledged to send 1,000 security officers to Haiti to combat gang violence in a mission that is pending the U.N Security Council's formal approval but has received support from the UN and

US. Duale said his country is ready to deploy to Haiti and cited Kenya's "very long history of global peacekeeping" in Kosovo, neighboring Somalia and Congo. Human rights activists, meanwhile, have expressed concerns over the deployment, citing a history of human rights abuses during security operations in the country. Some security analysts have expressed concerns that there will be a language barrier between the deployment from Kenya, an English- and Swahili-speaking country, and the people of Haiti, where the official languages are French and Creole. On the regional fight against al-

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Rising Islamophobia and the world’s meliginance

PAKISTAN strongly condemned 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 Pakistan Foreign Office categorically mentioned that it was a deliberate Islamophobic act that has hurt the sentiments of Muslims around the world and such acts cannot be condoned under the guise of freedom of expression, opinion and protest in any case.

The advocates of civil freedoms, human rights and democracy once again weighed a war against Islam and Muslims in the garb of those divine values/ philosophies which promote respect for manhood, demand equal rights for all human beings irrespective of their faith, colour and creeds or geographical association and ask for putting humanity first above all kind of differences to achieve greater cause of global unity, peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, after grasping excel in education, development and technology, the supremacists in Europe and North America threw away their clock of civilization and ruthlessly reinvented old age idiocy and innocence of medieval Europe. Islamophobia is a manifestation of hate speech and religiously motivated crimes against Muslims due to their beliefs, religious attire, physical appearance, culture, and traditions which has gained an unbelievable upsurge in Western nations in recent years.

There had been unceasing incidents of hate crimes, religious bigotry and desecration of the holy Quran and Islamic verses in so-called Western democracies in Europe, North America, India and a few other destinations around the globe that shocked the civilized world and seriously hurt the religious sentiments of Muslim Ummah. Besides, rising Islamophobia in Western nations, there has been a sharp spike in anti-Muslim slurs in Modi's India where Hindu extremists hold regular rallies in a show up of Hindu supremacy, to wage war against minorities, specifically attacking Muslims and their properties for the sole purpose of vanishing Muslims from India. There has been an endless series of anti-Muslim incidents including the profanation of poise personality, desecration of the Holy Quran, and physical attacks on Mosques, Muslims and their properties across India, that has transformed the so-called largest democracy into a radical Hindu state in the contemporary world.

Ironically, the Western nations and peddlers for human and religious rights displayed extreme religious bigotry and tried to reduce the sensitivity of such grave crime under the garb of freedom of expression and civil liberties. Historically, hate speech and racial crimes have increased in recent years after the rise of Nationalism and far-right politics in nations across the world because far-right politicians and religious clerics use hate speech and racism to their advantage to boost their politics and increase public rating.

The United Nations has acknowledged the menace of Islamophobia and condemned it in all its forms and manifestation while designating March 15 as a global day to combat Islamophobia to create awareness against hateful acts, racism, and religious bigotry against Islam and Muslims in the world. However, this acknowledgement and condemnation by the global forum could not produce the required results and the Islamophobic incidents are regularly occurring in Europe, North America and India and the Muslims residing in non-Muslim nations feel themselves vulnerable and insecure.

In fact, symbolic recognition and condemnation of Islamophobia by the global community proved to be insufficient to curb this evil, as anti-Muslim bias, hatred and racism are still being used by multiple leaders and political groups to flourish their politics in their countries. It is high time, that the global community, the UN Secretary-General and Vatican City feel their responsibility and play due role by criminalizing the Islamophobic acts, hate speech and racism, while binding member states and their followers to uphold their obligations in true letter and spirit, so the wrongdoers could be penalized and an atmosphere of religious harmony and peaceful coexistence be preserved in the universe.

Qatar, tiny nation, global impact

THE Spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of Qatar told the media that the complete isolation of the Afghan interim government has not worked so far, and the only way forward is engagement with the cleric regime. According to the Qatari diplomat, the current situation in Afghanistan is favorable to the international community, but complete isolation neither worked in the past nor is likely to work in the future and the only way forward is engagement. The Qatari official claimed that his country is mediating between Afghanistan and the rest of the world.

The State of Qatar is a tiny nation on the northeastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East, that has emerged as a global diplomacy broker and mediator in the modern age. The oil-rich Arab nation not only diversifies its oil-oriented economy into a future tech hub and industrialization. Qatar has a long-held quest for global influence that has become a reality over the past decades. The Qatari government has earned such unique titles/success which no other nation in the region achieved so far despite the abundance of resources, military might and colossal size. Ranging from vibrant media to hosting FIFA football World Cup, opening of the Taliban political office in Doha when the group was a most wanted terror outfit to the western world, from brokering the historic Doha peace deal between the Trump administration and the Taliban, to managing negotiations between Biden Administration in Taliban ruled Kabul, all endeavours were unique and glaring.

Present day Qatar has worked as a fulcrum in forging friendship between the determined Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and hardcore Raisi regime in Tehran, while Doha played the role of a bridge between Washinton and Tehran in materializing historic prisoner swap and unfreezing of hard earned money of Iranian people from Seoul banks. Interestingly, today's Qatar is eyeing working to calm an ever growing tussle between China and Taiwan and ready to perform a bridging role between Russia and Ukraine to end years long war in Eastern Europe that ruined the entire world. Realistically, Qatar leadership has proved that plenty of resources, military weakness and tiny size is not an issue in playing a great role in the comity of nations. It is the courage and sagacity of leadership which builds a nation from scratch and turns a nuclear armed state into a sick man.

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Trudeau’s India crisis shows he has lost control of Canada’s spies

Andrew Mitrovica

FOR anyone with functioning sight and synapses, it's become obvious that some rogue Canadian spies are, in effect, in charge of Canada's foreign policy. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds the titular title of the nation's top diplomat, with his foreign minister, Melanie Joly, claiming the nominal role of second-in-command.

But if events during the past year have confirmed anything, it's this: The prime minister of Canada is being forced to act at the mercy of what is likely just a handful of conniving, leak-happy members of the country's unaccountable security services, which Trudeau, the cabinet and his hapless national security advisers have lost control over. Rather than acknowledge this disturbing fact, giddy editorial writers and columnists have been applauding the calculated conduct of anonymous bureaucrats with badges intent on getting their way, whatever the human and geopolitical consequences.

With their handpicked, credulous conduits in the press at the agreeable ready, for months, a bunch of entitled spooks has been behind the leak - drip by drip by drip - of fragments of cherry-picked so-called "intelligence" concerning China's alleged interference in Canada's domestic affairs. I think Trudeau and close company recognised early on that bowing to the pressure would set a grievous precedent. So Trudeau opted for a middle course - appointing a special rapporteur to consider the brewing allegations.

He bungled it, and then ultimately capitulated to the spooks' explicit demand at the root of the domino-like series of hyperbolic, uncorroborated "revelations" - the establishment of a public inquiry. Now brimming with confidence and certain they will never be found out, Canada's scheming spies appear to have moved their roving crosshairs onto the latest target: India. A Globe and Mail correspondent, speaking on the national newspaper's podcast, admitted that he had been tipped off by "sources" to the halting accusation that India had assassinated Canadian Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.

Later, the paper's editor was contacted, he said, by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), asking that it postpone the story's publication for at least a week to allow Canada's intelligence agencies to continue their "work" - presumably to gather and substantiate the still nebulous "evidence" connecting India to the murder plot. The Globe refused. The counteroffer: Given the story's significance, the newspaper was prepared to hold off for a day or two. Eventually, the Globe posted its story online just as Trudeau was set to make his harried, qualified address to parliament and the nation in which he claimed there was a "potential link" between

Instead of being roundly censored for overstepping their authority and behaving recklessly, these scoundrels in the shadows are feted as "whistle blowers" by starry-eyed pundits and writers who have lost sight of the profound damage being done. Here's the other uncomfortable truth that journalists-turned-cheerleaders with little, if any, understanding of the grubby, subterranean world of "espionage" fail to grasp: It is populated mostly by sinners, not saints - no matter their country of origin. Consider the "disclosure" that one of Canada's part-

This is an unacceptable affront to the will of Canadians and an egregious violation of the advisory role security services are supposed to play in a constitutional democracy. Instead of being roundly censored for overstepping their authority and behaving recklessly, these scoundrels in the shadows are feted as "whistle blowers" by starry-eyed pundits and writers who have lost sight of the profound damage being done.

Indian "agents" and the killing of Nijjar in the parking lot of a Sikh temple in British Columbia in June.

From what I hear informally, the PMO had quietly approached a few select reporters to tell them that the prime minister planned soon to make a statement concerning India's purported part in Nijjar's death.

The pre-emptive aim was to blunt questions and criticism about Canada's aborted trade mission to New Delhi and Trudeau's limp, awkward handshake with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 summit. That Trudeau was compelled to "get ahead" of the leak to the Globe is more evidence that emboldened spies are at the helm of what amounts to a parallel government determined to embarrass and coerce a sitting prime minister to do their bidding - or else. This is an unacceptable affront to the will of Canadians and an egregious violation of the advisory role security services are supposed to play in a constitutional democracy.

ners in the Five Eyes - a consortium of electronic spy services that also consists of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand - had snooped on Indian diplomats and reportedly passed on to Ottawa incriminating information about Nijjar's killing. In the black-and-white universe these naive apologists inhabit, the Five Eyes alliance is devoted to spying solely on "bad guys" because that's what the "good guys" - that's us - do to protect you and me.

I'm obliged to break it to the wish-upon-a-star-Jiminy-Cricket crowd, but the Five Eyes spies on its dear friends and each other all the time too. Why? To collect reams of classified diplomatic, military and commercial secrets and all sorts of intimate, salacious tidbits for future leverage and influence. Meanwhile, India - nudge nudge, wink wink - is probably busy spying on its "strategic allies" in kind.

Where, oh where, is all the foreign- interference-

fuelled outrage? The nadir of the West's always convenient and galling hypocrisy on the "extrajudicial" killing score was given fulsome voice in the pages of that champion of "foreign interference", The New York Times. This is how the Times recently provided predictable cover for the "good guys" when they do the interfering and the "targeted killings" - the sterile euphemism for murder. "The killing, and the alleged involvement of the Indian government, has shocked officials in Washington. While democratic countries conduct targeted killings in unstable countries or regions and the spy services of more authoritarian governments - namely Russia - orchestrate assassinations anywhere they choose, it is unusual for a democratic country to conduct a lethal covert action in another democracy," the Times wrote.

Simply put: Yes, the "good guys" murder people, but they do it only in "unstable countries or regions". That seems to constitute, these days, much of the turbulent planet. Anyway, unlike the democratic "good guys", the authoritarian "bad guys" - such as Putin - murder people everywhere. The White House and the US Department of State are said to be shocked and confused. They don't know if their pal Modi is a "good guy" or a "bad guy" after all. As for "orchestrating assassinations anywhere they choose", the Times has forgotten, of course, about America's lengthy, lethal, not-so-distant and recent history of choosing to encourage and help orchestrate coups against democratically elected governments in the Balkans, Central and South America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia - along with the catastrophic invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Apparently, they don't count. Look, Trudeau must, if possible, lasso Canada's freelancing spies and remind them - clearly and pointedly - who their boss is.

He might want to discover as well how they, along with their equally comatose colleagues at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, permitted - if true - a Canadian to be shot and killed on Canadian soil by Indian agents who are destined to get away with it. That, dare I say, would merit another public inquiry.

Aljazeera

EU hesitant in taking bold steps on Turkiye’s accession process

Yasar Yakis

THE European Parliament this month published its yearly report on Turkiye and its accession process. As expected, very few positive remarks were made about it. Oliver Varhelyi, the European commissioner in charge of EU enlargement, paid a visit to Turkiye at the beginning of this month and held talks with several authorities in Ankara. The general tone of his subsequent statement gave the impression that there had been a sea change in the EU's attitude toward Turkiye.

He said that, after the general elections of May this year, Turkiye was now at an important juncture and that he had heard encouraging messages from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and also from the new government. He got the impression that Ankara wanted a new start in its relations with Europe. The European Council was quick to discuss the matter and it asked the European Commission to create the parameters for a positive agenda with Turkiye.

Varhelyi was trying to map out the areas in which a positive agenda could be developed. He pointed out that Turkiye is a member of the EU's customs union, it is a very important market and investment country, it is one of the most powerful NATO members, it has a lot in common with the EU and - if you look at the geography - it is very clear that the EU and Turkiye are dependent on one another. He continued by saying that he believed there had been a new approach to EU enlargement since the outbreak of war in Ukraine. Enumerating the many positive factors in favor of Turkiye's relations with the EU is a new phenomenon.

While this was Varhelyi's attitude, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in her annual state of the union speech on Sept. 13, mentioned Turkiye only in the context of a new agenda for the Mediterranean, adding that the EU would continue to work on different aspects of its relations with Ankara. However, the EU's yearly Turkiye report criticized the country's human rights record, its fundamental rights and freedoms, democracy and freedom of expression. In fact, Turkiye's conformity with the EU's acquis communautaire has gone down to 7 percent. It will need gigantic efforts to bring this to an acceptable level.

The EU pointed out in its yearly report that Turkiye's accession process cannot be resumed under the present circumstances. And it called for the EU to explore "a parallel and realistic framework" for its ties with Ankara. When all these facts are put together, one gets the impression that both Turkiye's and the EU's minds are blurred regarding the accession process.

While a potentially suitable atmosphere was prevailing, Erdogan poured cold water on this relatively optimistic environment by saying that Turkiye might part ways with the EU, if necessary. He implied the country could end its mem-

bership bid. However, cutting ties with the EU would not be an easy step. It would cause tectonic movement in both the Middle East and trans-Atlantic contexts. It would be unfair to put all the blame on the EU. Ankara also has several shortcomings. As expected, Turkiye issued a harshly worded statement refuting almost every remark in the EU report.

There were, however, also several positive elements in the report. Turkiye's endeavors in setting up the Black Sea grain deal was one. Its positive approach regarding irregular Syrian refugees and asylum seekers was another. On the other hand, as expected, the EU did not like Turkiye's improving economic and political ties with Russia. Cyprus and Greece continued to use their one-sided view on the Cyprus issue as if it were the EU's common attitude. There was a decision of principle adopted at the Lisbon summit of 2007 that says that, when an EU member state's interests clash with those of a non-member, fellow EU members have to side with it. This decision binds EU countries even if the interests of that country are illogical. In other words, Turkiye cannot be right in a controversy that involves its interests colliding with those of any EU member.

Two paragraphs in the report summarize a lot of the points in the EU's attitude toward Turkiye. In paragraph 21, it states that, as demonstrated by the growing gap between Turkiye and the EU, the European Commission is led to the conclusion that the Turkish government has no intention of closing this gap. A clear lack of willingness had been noticed in the last few years in Turkiye's attitude in the fields of the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms, and the protection of all ethnic and confessional minorities. Turkiye did not show any interest in respecting the Copenhagen criteria or in harmonizing its policies with those of the EU. Paragraph 38 used bolder language, saying that if Turkiye does not change its direction, "its EU accession process cannot be resumed."

As a backdrop to these developments, France and Germany last week tabled a proposal to relaunch an old idea of Europe with four concentric circles. The first of these would be the "deep integration" countries, followed by a group of present and future European countries attached to the bloc's political objectives, principles and values. The third group would be composed of associate members that would have to abide by the EU's principles and values regarding democracy and the rule of law. The other European countries would remain outside the "red line" and would not be required to join in with integration. The fourth group would be composed of countries that would be called the European Political Community. Turkiye expects that it would be included either in the third circle with the UK or in the fourth circle. This is where we are in terms of Turkish-EU relations today.

The Telegraph

Ukraine must now take the war into Russia

Richard Kemp

The regime is already looking fragile. The Prigozhin march on Moscow showed Russia that its would-be Tsar is no longer above all challenge. Rebellious generals have been sacked. Putin has gone cap in hand for armaments to North Korea, one of the world's most isolated pariah states. The latest flare-up in Nagorno-Karabakh, caused partly by Russia's inability to maintain its peacekeeping commitments, is another illustration of Moscow's diminishing grip. An intensified campaign into the Russian heartland may well be a tipping point. While some might argue it could have the opposite effect, stiffening resolve among the Russian people, its impact on the current all-out trajectory of the conflict

in supplying vital combat capabilities, including tanks and F16s, cost lives and handicap Kyiv's efforts to drive the Russians out. Behind this is a fear of provoking Putin and triggering escalation.

That fear is unfounded: Moscow is already throwing everything it's got into this war and the last thing it can afford is a direct fight with Nato. Nor would Putin dare hit the nuclear button, despite his earlier bluster, now muted. Every one of his red lines crossed so far by Ukraine or the West has been met with the same bluster. True to sabre-rattling form, the day after the ATACMS decision was made public, Sergey Lavrov, the foreign minister, again trotted out the familiar line that the West is "directly at war" with Russia.

Another consequence of Washington's unfounded

would be marginal at best. Zelensky and his generals are well aware of the potential strategic impact of taking the war into Russia and, despite a furious fight in the east and south, have put significant effort into a campaign of drone and sabotage attacks that are now becoming almost daily occurrences.

Using only locally-produced munitions, many inflict limited physical damage, although they often cause disruption such as the closure of Moscow's airports, and divert other resources that are needed at the front. Some strikes have been more significant: an attack by up to 20 drones destroyed four military aircraft in Russia's Pskov region last month and an explosives attack on Chkalovsky military air base near Moscow severely damaged two planes and a helicopter.

These operations show us what could be done with more powerful assets. During a recent visit to Kyiv, General Kyrlyo Budanov, chief of military intelligence, told me that one of his priority needs from the West is long range attack drones or, as a bare minimum, supply of stealth coating to increase the chances of Ukrainian drones getting through to their targets.

He believes this "has the potential to transform the enemy's operational and strategic rear into an absolute sieve". Wars are not won by fear of the enemy but by boldness and risk-taking. If the West is serious about wanting Ukraine to prevail in this conflict it should send in weapons capable of penetrating Russian territory and give Kyiv a free hand to use them.

Israel angered by UNESCO due to its fear of history

Ramzy Baroud

JERICHO does not belong to the Palestinians alone. It belongs to the whole of humanity. For Israel, however, last week's recognition by UNESCO of Jericho as a "World Heritage Site in Palestine" complicates its mission of erasing Palestine, physically and figuratively, from existence. The decision was described by Israel's foreign ministry as a "cynical" ploy by the Palestinians to politicize UNESCO. This is ironic, as Israel has long politicized history by removing anything that could be interpreted as being part of Palestinian heritage, while elevating a self-centered and largely fabricated view of history that supposedly belongs to Israel alone.

Though Israel has succeeded, thanks to its massive military power, in dominating the Palestinian physical landscape, it has largely failed to dominate Palestine's history. Apartheid walls, military checkpoints and illegal Jewish-only settlements are easy to construct. Constructing and sustaining a historical narrative that is dotted with lies, half-truths and omissions, however, is almost impossible. All of this is part of a protracted Israeli-US war on UNESCO. In 2019, the US and Israel officially withdrew from the organization, citing anti-Israel bias. This followed repeated threats by various US administrations and a cut in funding by the Obama administration in 2011.

But why launch such a fierce and determined war against an organization that describes itself as a promoter of "peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture?" In fact, among all UN-linked international institutions, UNESCO is one of the least politicized, as it is based

on the belief that the past - and whatever remains of it - is a common heritage that belongs to all of us. As acceptable as such a claim may be for most countries around the world, UNESCO's innocuous gestures to the Palestinians are, for Israel, simply heretical. Not only do Jericho and Tell Es-Sultan belong on the list of World Heritage Sites, but the two should actually top the list. This is not grandstanding or another "cynical" utilization of history, but simply due to the fact Jericho is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world and Tell Es-Sultan is the oldest town in the world, as it dates back to the 10th millennium B.C.

For example, Tel Es-Sultan's pre-pottery Neolithic-era tower, built circa 8,300 B.C., is believed to have been used to mark the summer solstice. It was, for nearly 6,000 years, the tallest human-made structure in the world. This is just one of numerous astonishing facts about Tell Es-Sultan. All of Palestine is rich with such history, tracing our common ancestry to ancient civilizations that have merged or fused into other cultures, giving us the fascinating tapestry that is humanity.

And because the history of Palestine is the history of humankind, serious Palestinian historians, archaeologists and intellectuals rarely display any ethnocentric ownership over that history, thus refusing to claim any ascendancy over other cultures. "All archeological and historical evidence shows that Palestine was inhabited by many people," wrote respected Palestinian archaeologist Dr. Hamdan Taha in the recently published volume "Our Vision for Liberation." Palestinian history spans a period from "the early times of

Homo sapiens until the 21st century and, over this history, marked by many wars, invasions and conversions ... the Indigenous population was never completely eliminated," Taha wrote. A careful reading of Taha's comments is enough to explain Israel's fears, bordering on panic, whenever Palestine and the Palestinians are linked to a credible historical narrative.

Two points are worth a pause. One is that all the "wars, invasions and conversions" did not succeed in interrupting the demographic flow and continuity of the "Indigenous people" of Palestine, culminating in today's modern Palestinians. And secondly, those Indigenous people were "never completely eliminated," though some invaders tried in vain to achieve this. Israel has done more than merely attempt to rewrite history and marginalize the main actors of Palestine's historical narrative. It has also actively and continuously tried to eliminate the natives altogether.

But it has failed. The number of Palestinians living in historic Palestine today at least equals, and according to some estimates is even higher than, the number of Israeli Jewish immigrants from Europe and elsewhere. Failing at the "elimination" part of history, Israel is now resorting to the two-pronged strategy of ethnic cleansing and racial separation, or apartheid. This practice is now increasingly recognized by international human rights groups, including Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and many others.

The ghosts of the past are another problem facing Israel. A brilliant cadre of Palestinian historians and archaeologists, like Taha, joined by courageous and equally brilliant

Israeli historians, including Ilan Pappé, are determined to unearth the truth about Palestine's history and Israel's meddling in it. It is because of such respected individuals that a parallel history to the one invented by Israel following the Nakba has emerged. Another "tell" - the Arabic word for hill - aside from Tell Es-Sultan was recently unearthed. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported earlier this month that the excavation of Tell Qedesh was a "first-of-its-kind project" uncovering a not-so-distant past. In this Palestinian village near the Lebanese border, war crimes were committed and hapless villagers, after doing their best to resist Zionist militias, were forced to flee. To ensure the villagers never returned, Israeli authorities bulldozed it entirely.

"The dig is the first in Israel specifically dedicated to archaeologically exploring the legacy of what Palestinians remember as the Nakba," Haaretz wrote. For decades, Palestinians have been doing exactly that. Several generations of Palestinian archaeologists have helped reanimate much of Palestine's history, both ancient and modern. "The rule of archeology is to reconstruct the past in order to build the future," according to Taha.

Unlike Israel, however, Taha's vision aims to "incorporate the voices of all peoples, groups, cultures and religions that have lived on the land of Palestine." This inclusive vision is directly at odds with Israel's exclusivist, selective and often fabricated "vision," which is predicated on military domination and cultural erasure. In its World Heritage Committee session in Riyadh last week, UNESCO confirmed the validity of the Palestinian vision. Naturally, Israel is angry because invaders hate the truth.

Developing Afghanistan's mines will uplift Afghans

Abdullah Azzam

AFGHANISTAN is one of the world's most resource-rich nations in the world, boasting over 1,200 mineral fields. According to estimates, its mineral wealth is worth \$3 trillion and it includes resources such as gold, chromite, copper, iron, lead, zinc, coal, natural gas, petroleum, precious stones, lithium, talc, and various rare earth elements.

Recognising the transformative potential these resources could have for the Afghan economy, the interim government of Afghanistan has sought various ways to develop them. On August 31, Afghan government officials inked seven mining agreements with local and international corporations.

These landmark contracts entail long-term commitments spanning five to 30 years. The projects include the development of four iron blocks in Herat, one lead and zinc block in Ghor, the gold reserves in Takhar, and the copper resources of Aynak Two. The participating companies are poised to invest more than \$6bn over the next three decades. The revenues from these projects and the associated development and job opportunities will give a major boost to the Afghan economy. They are essential for improving the wellbeing of the Afghan people.

It is currently not possible to estimate the exact profits the government will receive from these projects, as exploration of the mining sites is ongoing. However, per the contracts, the Afghan state retains 56 percent of the shares in the gold mine, 12 percent in the copper one, 20 percent in lead one, and 13 percent in each iron block. Apart from that, the finance ministry will also levy relevant taxes on these projects which would create another revenue stream for the state. The economic benefits stemming from these contracts extend beyond revenue generation. Notably, they are expected to catalyse industrial development across the country.

For example, the lead and zinc project, given to the Kabul-based Afghan Invest company, comes with the

added responsibility of completing the remaining 13 percent of a 500-kilovolt power interconnection project which would ensure the import of electricity from neighbouring Turkmenistan. This would help meet our growing energy demands and supply electricity to almost all industrial parks in the country, allowing their operational hours to be extended from 12 to 24. Increasing the power supply could also help develop Afghan agriculture. Currently, the majority of agricultural activities in the country rely on manual labour; better access to electricity could help with the mechanisation of this sector.

According to the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Industry and Mines (ACIM), Shirbaz Kaminzada, the additional supply of electricity from Turkmenistan could boost agricultural and industrial production to the account of \$2bn. Furthermore, the power interconnection project would also lower the electricity bill of the country. Turkmenistan's electricity is sold at lower prices; importing it would decrease costs and allow the Afghan government to negotiate better rates with its other two power suppliers: Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The development of the iron mines will also benefit the industrial development of Afghanistan, as it will supply iron ore to numerous steel factories in the country. Simultaneously, the lead mine will ensure a consistent supply of raw materials for eight domestic battery-producing companies, potentially transforming Afghanistan into a battery-exporting nation. These mine projects will also benefit the country by helping tackle the high unemployment rate resulting from the termination of employment for Afghans working for foreign contractors and subcontractors following the withdrawal of foreign troops in 2021. Activities related to the projects are expected to create job opportunities for more than 50,000 individuals across various fields. These

include jobs for geologists, engineers, miners, machine operators, transportation personnel, equipment manufacturers, logistics specialists, and security personnel.

Furthermore, the mining companies are obligated to invest in community development initiatives as part of their contracts. This will create additional employment opportunities in healthcare, education, and other sectors aimed at enhancing the quality of life for local communities. These initiatives have the potential to alleviate poverty and elevate living standards, particularly in severely underserved provinces, such as Ghor. The mining projects will also help the Afghan government with another major issue: the instability of the Afghan currency. Following the withdrawal of foreign troops and the departure of numerous contractors, depositors in Afghan banks swiftly transferred hundreds of millions of dollars to foreign accounts, leaving the country grappling with a severe shortage of foreign currency. This depletion negatively impacted the value of the Afghani and banks faced the looming threat of bankruptcy. Da Afghanistan Bank had to resort to urgent monetary stabilisation policies to save the Afghan currency and it succeeded, but the country is still in need of foreign currency.

The mining projects are poised to bolster the influx of foreign currency into the country. Each of these seven mines boasts European and Asian partners who are well-equipped to facilitate the export of processed materials to international markets. This influx of foreign currency is expected to contribute significantly to the Afghani's stabilisation, fortifying the nation's economic outlook. Indeed, the mining contracts signed last month mark a transformative opportunity for Afghanistan. Not only are they going to provide the government with much-needed revenue, but will also improve the lives of Afghans, providing them with jobs and better living conditions. This could be a pivotal moment in economic history of the country.

Iraq's militia state replicates Daesh's terrorism and criminality

Bariia Alamuddin

ONE of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani's key governing pledges was to normalize the situation throughout central Iraq by transferring control from the military to civilian police, and regular military forces have indeed obediently withdrawn in many provinces.

However, Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi paramilitaries, the Popular Mobilization Forces, clearly aren't going anywhere, as they continue to loot billions of dollars from Iraq's cities that suffer under militia occupation comparable in criminality, corruption and brutality to that of Daesh.

A PMF commander, Ali Al-Husseini, categorized his factions' presence in the liberated cities as "official forces deployed with the knowledge and approval of" the prime minister. He menacingly added: "Calls for withdrawing PMF forces are suspicious and serve an agenda that does not desire stability for Iraq." PMF researcher Michael Knights describes Sudani as a puppet. He says: "The real powers are three warlords, each closely tied to Iran" - Hashd leaders Qais Khazali of Asa'ib Ahl-Al-Haq and Hadi Al-Amiri of Badr, and former Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. A PMF deputy described Iraq as having a "resistance" government. He said: "The resistance has come to represent the official view of Iraq, and it is the one running affairs today."

The Hashd is often misrepresented as posing only a military threat to Iraq, particularly with the recent doubling of its forces to around 240,000 personnel and a similar increase in its budget. But, as with Hezbollah in Lebanon, the PMF has become highly adept at manipulating the corridors

of power to monopolize political, judicial, economic, and administrative positions.

Knights has highlighted how in recent months Iraq's National Intelligence Service, Baghdad airport, anticorruption bodies and customs posts have all fallen under the group's control. This is in addition to major institutions such as the Interior Ministry, already dominated by the Hashd. PMF influence over Iraq's Supreme Court, via senior judge Faiq Zaydan, enabled the PMF to dominate the incoming government, despite suffering humiliating losses in the 2021 elections.

In many larger cities, such as Mosul and Tikrit, a dozen different PMF factions rival one another for paramilitary and commercial dominance via various "economic offices." In Sunni-majority cities and ethnic melting-pot rural regions, sectarian Shiite forces behave as conquering military armies, while parasitically bleeding every last dinar out of local economies. When Hashd forces captured the multiethnic city of Kirkuk in 2017, large numbers of Kurds fled, including members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party who warned that the city had been "occupied" by hostile Shiite militias. This month, in response to KDP plans to reopen an office in Kirkuk, the Hashd's Asa'ib Ahl-Al-Haq faction set up a protest camp and blocked major roads, reducing the city to chaos.

When citizens protested against these actions, the police opened fire on them, resulting in numerous casualties and one death. In May, a Turkmen PMF faction engaged in a gun battle against Badr PMF forces for control of lucrative checkpoints

around Kirkuk airport, prompting intervention by Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers. Investigators have shown how throughout central Iraq, the PMF illegally seized vast lands and thousands of houses as "war spoils." A real estate lawyer investigating these matters in Mosul said that what occurred after 2017 was a continuation of what happened under Daesh "with only some changes in the titles." He said the Hashd "took advantage of the security vacuum... and manipulated property records through their economic offices."

Nineveh's governor, Nawfal Sultan Al-Akoub, was jailed for crimes including colluding with PMF powerbrokers to embezzle more than \$70 million of reconstruction funds. Akoub blamed Asa'ib Ahl-Al-Haq for corruptly seizing vast tracts of Mosul real estate, lamenting that they exploited him then abandoned him to his fate. The Nineveh Criminal Court investigated a network of PMF-affiliated real estate brokers complicit in forging documents to steal 9,000 properties. With the establishment of the PMF's Muhandis General Company, named after deceased Hashd leader Abu-Mahdi Al-Muhandis, militias can dominate Iraq's economy with billion-dollar revenue streams, monopolizing government tenders and securing preferential trading terms. The PMF meanwhile controls government departments with multibillion-dollar budgets. One academic paper describes the phenomenon of "crime-terror convergence," as Hashd forces and Daesh remnants transform the Iraq-Syria borders into "a hub for the smuggling of weapons, drugs, oil,

and people."

This corruption, brutality and organized crime is the surest way of driving Iraqi demographics back into the arms of groups such as Daesh. Thousands of individuals have been "forcibly disappeared" by Hashd militias. In one single incident in 2016 in Saqlawiyah in Anbar, at least 643 men and boys were abducted and presumably massacred by PMF paramilitaries. As the Hashd has become more widely hated, even among Shiite demographics, it has become increasingly impossible to exploit election processes to cling on to power: so at some point the Hashd will inevitably abandon the sham "democratic" process altogether and use its military and political might to stage a full-blown coup, bolstered by Hezbollah and other aligned region-wide forces.

I lose count of the articles I write warning that the international community is asleep at the wheel, failing to respond to events with glaring global ramifications. The West will clearly not lift a finger to help cut the Hashd down to size. But we should at least be conscious of the ramifications of states such as Lebanon, Syria and Iraq falling under monopolized control of factions who are overtly committed to attacking the West and Arab states. The Iran-GCC détente has merely neutralized international focus on the Hashd and its allies, allowing them to quietly and uninteruptedly expand in size, power and wealth - to the extent that they have become the dominant face of the Iraqi state. The Hashd has never had it so good. And one day soon it will fully emerge to constitute the region-wide threat of a hundred new Daeshes.

Arab News

Putin is betting on a new class of asset owners to shore up his regime

Alexandra Prokopenko

RUSSIA'S elites are unhappy about many things, not least President Vladimir Putin's decision to unleash a disastrous war against neighboring Ukraine and the sanctions that ensued. Yet this frustration-evident in off-the-record conversations with journalists, leaked telephone calls, and even the televised comments of the staunch propagandist Margarita Simonyan-is not being converted into any kind of action, such as a plot against Putin. Even as the elites grumble, they continue to show loyalty to their boss.

Loyalty is what Putin values above all else-but it's no longer enough. Having apparently lost faith in the old elites, Putin is forming a new class of proprietors in Russia, doling out the assets of Western companies and Russian entrepreneurs among them. These people will be indebted to Putinism for their position and their fortune, and it will therefore be in their interests to preserve the regime.

Putin's unique selling point for the oligarchs when he came to power was his willingness to accept the outcome of the controversial wave of privatization in the 1990s. The guarantee given for his first presidential term was that all the riches amassed before his presidency could be kept by their owners, and this has never changed. This pact is the foundation of Russian capitalists' loyalty, and personal devotion to Putin is handsomely rewarded with extremely lucrative state contracts or control of entire economic sectors. The Putin regime also hinges on loyal businessmen and the professional technocrats managing the economy. Following

Russia's invasion of Ukraine last February, the technocrats managed to protect the Russian financial system not only from the pressure brought by Western sanctions, but also from that of the country's wealthiest tycoons, who were desperately trying to get their money out of Russia.

Even so, Russia hemorrhaged a record \$243 billion in 2022. Transactions made by private individuals accounted for \$47 billion of that: a fifth of the total amount. This outflow of capital is essentially the only form of protest against the war that the Russian elite has adopted.

Sanctions have kindled resentment and a feeling of injustice against the West among Russia's elites. Meanwhile, a spate of mysterious deaths within Russia's oil industry, have served to boost fears of and submission to the Putin regime. The lack of any real prospect of breaking free from the system has forced the elites to hunker down inside the country, abiding by the Kremlin's message that only Russia can provide a safe haven. Any war means a reduction in resources, however, and that includes the political capital distributed by the president. Amid decreasing rents, Putin can't live on loyalty alone. Should the regime undergo a systemic crisis (which, as the Wagner mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's brief mutiny back in June showed, is entirely possible), the devotion of the old elites to Putin and his regime is far from guaranteed. Accordingly, the system needs a new elite.

Back in a January meeting between Putin and the prosecutor

general, the return of state control over strategic enterprises was mentioned as being under way. By the summer, a long list of assets had already been requisitioned-including ones previously owned by people loyal to the Kremlin.

The first candidates for nationalization and subsequent redistribution to new owners were the Russian assets of companies from countries declared "unfriendly" by the Kremlin. Under a law passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, foreign companies wishing to leave the Russian market have to sell their assets for half of their value, and also pay one-tenth of the sale proceeds to the state. But the process is constantly getting tougher, and any deal may be blocked by the Russian authorities. Heineken chose to cut its losses and sell off its vast business in Europe rather than try to find a way to salvage its investment. Ironically, all of these legal impediments have been introduced by the same officials who before the war were responsible for attracting foreign investors, and who had themselves worked in the private sector and at foreign companies before joining the state service.

Putin's nationalization decree made it legal for the state to appropriate foreign companies' assets in response to similar measures taken by Western countries. The Russian operations of two foreign energy companies-Finland's Fortum and Germany's Uniper-are already under new management linked to Putin associate Igor Sechin, CEO of the Russian oil giant Rosneft. The assets

of the French dairy giant Danone, meanwhile, were inherited by the nephew of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, while Baltika, the Russian subsidiary of Denmark's Carlsberg, went to Putin's old friend Taimuraz Bolloyev. Previously, another businessman close to Kadyrov was given a factory in the destroyed Ukrainian city of Mariupol, as well as shares in OBI hypermarkets and Starbucks coffee shops. Russian officials in Crimea, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine back in 2014, have appropriated 700 real estate assets from Ukrainian oligarchs.

Officially, the Russian authorities continue to insist that they welcome foreign investment. But foreign investors, regardless of where they are from, require predictable terms and conditions and guarantees that their rights of ownership will be upheld. The Kremlin can provide neither-and nor does it need to. Instead of foreign investors, it has "heroes of the special military operation," young FSB officers and their associates, the many participants of the Leaders of Russia state management contest, the children of regional governors, and other managers. Anyone who is "one of us" can be given an asset or two for safekeeping, along with the chance to profit from it. Those people will owe their new position and wealth to Putin and his entourage, making them directly dependent on the Kremlin to preserve that new status and wealth. The calculation, therefore, is simple: when Putinism encounters a crisis, these new asset owners will come out to defend their property-and in doing so, save the regime.

The Moscow Times

Cuts, war, Brexit

Steve Richards

THE "centre ground" commands much of the political stage. Bookshelves creak with new works from famous authors analysing what fellow centrists get right and wrong. Podcasts launch on a near daily basis hosted by self-proclaimed centrists aimed at an audience that is sometimes described self-mockingly as "centrist dads" - the mockery a sign of confidence. In the political arena, Keir Starmer hails Labour's return to the centre ground. Tony Blair gives interviews most weeks celebrating his party's occupation of the terrain he has always appeared to occupy. The centre ground is getting crowded.

But what is this much sought-after terrain over which so many political and media stars seek to coalesce? The answer is far from clear. The ubiquity of the term and its unique imprecision distorts the way British politics is perceived and conducted. In order to highlight the lack of clarity, here is a brief guided tour of the centre ground via its most articulate advocates. The tour could be a lot longer.

On economic policy, the former Conservative MP Rory Stewart was and is a supporter of the austerity policies introduced by David Cameron and George Osborne in 2010, the real-terms spending cuts that went deeper than any of Margaret Thatcher's in the 1980s. In contrast, the Labour MPs who formed the short-lived centrist Change UK party were passionate opponents of Osborne's economic policies - a problem as the Conservative backbenchers who defected to the same party were proud advocates of the cuts. On the most fundamental issue, a radical economic policy, "centrists" take opposite positions. In terms of delivering public services, Stewart describes Labour's former health secretary Alan Milburn as "heroic" for his attempted reforms of the NHS. But in his otherwise convivial memoir, the centrist Ed Balls describes Milburn's reforms as "unacceptable and ridiculous". The term "reform" is enough in itself to get some centrists excited, even if the advocates do not specify in detail what form any change might take. Blair invented the juxtaposition "reform versus anti-reform". Cameron copied it. But who is against reform? I

know of no one who enters politics in order to keep everything as it is. The essence of the democratic debate is the nature of reform - and that is where the centre ground fractures.

Meanwhile in the pivotal area of tax and spend, Blair insists that if anything, taxes are too high and increased spending is not the solution to current crises. With a more forensic analysis, Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests taxes will have to rise. More specifically, the shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, rules out wealth taxes as part of Labour's centrist pitch. The centrist journalist Matthew d'Ancona, the author of an elegant essay in Prospect on the centre ground, suggests there is a case for a wealth tax. On foreign policy, Stewart regards the war in Iraq as a disaster. Blair continues to insist that it was "the right thing to do". As for the attempts by centrist Labour MPs and others to seek a second referendum on Brexit, Stewart describes the doomed move as "insane". Stewart also condemns Starmer's handling of Jeremy Corbyn. Stewart is a pluralist who welcomes, as part of his centrism, a range of views within parties. Starmer seeks definition in his move to the centre ground by preventing prominent figures on the left from standing for Labour at elections.

The difference on internal party matters raises a wider dilemma. In theory, most centrists advocate a big transfer of power from Westminster. Yet understandably they want to show that every halfpenny raised by central government will be spent prudently. In which case they need to keep a firm control on how money is spent away from Whitehall. Here is why the vague ubiquity matters. The BBC is not biased to the left or right, but it can sometimes lose all rigour when faced with those that claim to be on the "centre ground". A few years ago, Radio 4 broadcast a programme with the title Can the Centre Hold?. Its two star guests were Blair and Osborne. There was no questioning of whether they were "centrists" and what that meant. Was it "centrist" to invade Iraq or respond to the 2008 global crash with real-terms spending cuts? There was an acceptance that both

guests were on the centre ground.

Similar assumptions took hold when the former Conservative chancellor Nigel Lawson died earlier this year. Cameron paid an unqualified tribute on the World at One. The surprised presenter suggested to Cameron that as a "centrist" he was to the left of Lawson. The question was depressingly absurd, reflecting the mindset of large parts of the media at the time. The more substantial and textured Lawson was an inspiration for Cameron's reheated Thatcherism, a policy distant from the "centre", wherever that is. The UK's big election winners, Thatcher and Blair, in different ways continue to have a hold on political and media culture. Blair's continuing impact lies in the fashion for the ill-defined "centre". For years he has argued that the terms "left" and "right" no longer have relevance - and the fundamental divide is "open v closed", a reference to Brexit among other issues.

But open v closed has been a divide for centuries. The historic divisions over protectionism and free trade split parties in the 19th century. The issue of Britain and Europe has always triggered alliances between parties. The same applies to social liberalism, a cause that has long attracted inter-party support. That does not mean left and right no longer exist. They remain more useful terms to make sense of British politics than "centre". Rishi Sunak's reasonable demeanour has led some commentators to describe him as "centrist" or a "technocrat". Fortunately he has offered greater clarity himself by hailing his "fiscal conservatism". He is a figure of the right. Labour and the Liberal Democrats will have to be quite some way to the left of Sunak to be anywhere near the centre. The UK is at a potential turning point, with most voters concluding that nothing works. In such a striking context, the media should stop applying the term "centrist" as if it is self explanatory. Meanwhile, no leader should depend on "the centre ground" as a reliable guide. "Centrists" do not agree on where they are, how they got there and where they need to turn next. They do not concur because there is no clearly defined terrain in politics marked "the centre ground".

The Guardian



FPCCI, Forest join hands to accelerate forestation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Region and Department of Forest have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for acceleration of tree plantation and joint efforts against deforestation.

In this connection, a MoU signing ceremony was held at the office of the Chief Conservator (Forest), Fazal Elahi the other day, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Besides, Regional Coordinator FPCCI KP Region,

Sartaj Ahmad Khan, Deputy Conservator (Forest), Amjad Samad, Director (HR) Forest Development, Hazrat Mir, Director Business Facilitation KP Board of Investment & Trade (BoIT), Iqbal Wazir and other authorities of the Department of Forests also attended the ceremony.

On this occasion, the officials of FPCCI KP Region and Department of Forest, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed their resolve to jointly work for the eradication of growing pollution, massive cutting of trees and further strength-

ening of the tree plantation drive in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Regional Coordinator FPCCI, Sartaj Ahmad Khan said that keeping in view the climate change and prevailing situation, the federation has decided in larger public interest to join the practical struggle and utilise energies and resources in a better manner.

He said that beside, bringing the growing population under control, we should also have to strictly avoid the wastage of water and massive cutting of forest to prevent the devastations of floods.

In his speech, the Chief Conservator (Forest), Fazal Elahi expressed gratitude to the officials of FPCCI, BoIT and other organizations and said that joint efforts with private sector organizations result in the accomplishment of even those targets, which usually looks impossible.

He said that keeping earth and environment clean and green is need of the hour and we all should have to support each other in this regard as it is the matter of the salvation of our future generations.

Planning meeting for ATC and Exhibition 2023 organized



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Planning meeting regarding 29th Annual Technical Confer-

ence (ATC) and Exhibition was held at Islamabad. Leaders of the E&P Industry of Pakistan were invited for briefing over the

various events planned and to seek their participation. The response was overwhelming with a number of participants from different

companies in Pakistan who will continue to support the event.

Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) Pakistan Section and Pakistan Association of Petroleum Geoscientists (PAPG) are holding Annual Technical Conference (ATC) and Exhibition on 7th and 8th November 2023 at the Serena Hotel, Islamabad. The theme of this year's conference is "Exploring the Unexplored: High Risk Plays and Economic Challenges".

ATC is a mega event of Petroleum Industry of Pakistan which is held annually and attracts over 1200 delegates from local and international E&P Companies, Services Companies, Regulatory Authorities and academia who bring and share their experience along with 35 stalls where global exhibitors display their technology.

Rupee gains Rs1.06 against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed the 16th consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs 1.06 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs289.80 against the previous day's closing of Rs290.86.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs289.15 and Rs292 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.67 to close at Rs306.89 against the last day's closing of Rs309.56, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.94, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.12 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.03 as compared to the last closing of Rs 356.15.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 29 and 28 paisa to close at Rs78.89 and Rs77.25 respectively.

Gas theft crackdown:

233 connections disconnected

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In Lahore, the regional team disconnected seventeen connections on illegal use of gas, another Four on use of compressor and 164 Commercial/SP domestic, industrial under billing cases processed and also Rs 0.22 million booked against gas theft, Rs0.30 million booked against under Billing.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected Eight connections on use of compressor while another 03 against illegal use of gas and Rs 0.001 Million has been booked against under billing. The company disconnected 61 connections on illegal use of gas in Multan. The regional team imposed fine of Rs 0.888 Million volume against gas theft and Rs 0.165 Million booked against under billing.

In Sheikhupura, Twenty connections were disconnected by the region and 67 under billing cases have

been processed.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 72 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also lodged four FIR against gas thieves and booked Rs 0.64 million against gas theft.

In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected five gas connections while 12 under billing cases have been processed and 127 HM3 volume has been booked against theft and under billing cases while imposing fine of Rs. 0.45 Million on gas theft. SNGPL's team in Mardan 04 fake meters removed, 20 domestic under billing cases processed and 259 HM3 volume booked against domestic under billing cases while imposing fine of Rs 0.328 million.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected two connections against illegal use of gas and one commercial meter under billing case processed. In Sargodha 21

under billing cases processed 02 meter disconnected on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Gujranwala 23 under billing cases processed, 04 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor and 03 removed on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.228 million on gas theft and under billing cases.

In Gujrat, one connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The company disconnected 12 connections on illegal use of gas in Islamabad.

In Sahiwal, eight connections were disconnected on illegal use of connection, 11HM3 volume and Rs 0.016 have been booked against gas theft.

The regional team in Faisalabad 23 under billing cases processed and 04 disconnected on illegal use of gas and another 03 on the use of compressor.

Fine of Rs0.25 million was also imposed against gas pilferers.

President FCCI visited SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Dr. Khurram Tariq visited Sialkot Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahub Jahangir and Vice President (VP) Amer Majeed Sheikh welcomed the distinguished guest.

During the meeting held here, President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik and President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Dr. Khurram Tariq discussed One Window Operations, with a focus on creating a clear process flowchart for improved efficiency.

Court Notice

In the court of Madam Brekhna Hameed, Civil Judge-VI Swabi, Farman Ali etc. VS. Meer Ajab etc, Institution date: 11-02-2023. Hearing date: 12-10-2023. Case number: 20/1. Subject: Dakhalyabi Notice to: (2) Ali Afsar, (5) Ijaz, (7) Sartaj sons Meer Ajab R/o Bachai, Tarakai, Tehsil Razar. Defendant The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court on 12-10-2023 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Public Notice

It is Published Through This Notice That I, Haroon S/o Adam Khan Resident of Mohallah Shiree Vylla Jungle Khat Tehsil & District Kohat is the owner of Plot no 325 Size 11.1 Marla Sector. 4, Phase 1 KDA Kohat. He Has Requested That The Original Papers and Allotment Letter of The Said Plot Has Been Lost Somewhere and now Issuance of Duplicate Papers is Desired The Plot is not Mortgaged There Has Been Appointed no Attorney and not Sold to Anybody if any Bank/Institution/Firm or Person Has any objections He/She Should Contact The Housing Officer UADA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of this Notice in Writing with Proof otherwise Duplicate Papers and Allotment Letter will be Issued and no objection will be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).

100-index of Stock Exchange loses 116 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Tuesday shed 116.02 points, showing negative change of 0.25 per cent, closing at 46,277.66 points against 46,393.68 points the previous day.

A total of 259,046,624 shares valuing Rs 6.688 billion were traded during the day as compared to 195,674,788 shares valuing Rs 5.530 billion the previous day.

As many as 328 compa-

nies transacted their shares in the stock market; 142 of them recorded gains and 165 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 21 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were PIAC(A) with 39,589,500 shares at Rs 5.54 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 26,122,922 shares at Rs 1.15 per share and K-Electric Ltd with 11,090,355 shares at Rs 1.96 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 190.00 per share price, closing at Rs 7,190.00, whereas the runner-up was Raffhan Maize with a Rs 123.33 rise in its per share price to Rs 7,990.00.

Allwaysaya Textile witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 100.00 per share closing at Rs1,460.00, followed by Sapphire Fiber with a Rs 85.40 decline to close at Rs 1,120.25.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where fourships namely, Maersk

Correction

My father name has wrongly been mentioned as Muhammad Sayyar in DMC and Certificate of SSC, which may be corrected as Muhammad Sayyar Khan in DMC and Certificate of SSC.

Nisar Ahmad s/o Muhammad Sayyar Khan, House No. 14, Street No. 12, Ittehad Colony, Ring Road, Peshawar.

Brooklyn, MSC Agrigento, Hafnia Tanzania and Neutron Sound carrying Containers, Soyabean oil and Gas oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Canola seed, Kapta, Talara and Al-Bida with Canola Seed, Coal, Mogas and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on today morning 26th September, 2023.

A total of six ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, a containership, MSC Agrigento left the port on today morning, while two more ships, Maersk Brooklyn and Avraare expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo throughput of

Public Notice

In the Fasih Uddin Civil Judge III/Illaqa Qazi Kabal District Swat. Case # 135/1. Institution 20/09/2023. Next Hearing date 12/10/2023. Bawar din s/o Amer din VS Sher Zada etc. Notice to respondent. 12) Nisar 13) Kamal Ahmad sons Bakhat Shareen Khan 17) Mst. Jehan Wala w/o Amer Saeed 23) Ajamal s/o Khan Gul 26) Mst. Shakeela r/o golden Daulai Tehsil Kabal District Swat. 27) Nisar Ali s/o Nadar Khan r/o tall Tehsil Kabal District Swat. 30) Sher Muhammad 32) Gul Muhammad sons Gul Sherwan r/o Golden Daulai Tehsil Kabal District Swat. Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 09/10/2023 at 8.30 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.

108,198 tonnes, comprising 79,077 tonnes imports cargo and 29,121 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,504 Containers (791 TEUs Imports and 1,713 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are ten ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three-ships, BeksHalil, Kapta Dimitrios and Al-Bida& four more ships, PVT Flora, MSC Monica-III, Maersk Seletor and MSC Greenwich carrying Wheat, Coal, LNG, Palm oil and Containers are expected to take berths at Grain Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Elengy Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Tuesday, while three more container ships, MSC Jimima, X-Press Bardsey and Maersk Pelepas are due to arrive at Port Qasim on 27th September, 2023.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi's Center for Executive Education (CEE) has inked an MoU with Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) to collaborate on a range of leadership development, research, and consultancy initiatives of OGDCL.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director, OGDCL; and Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi, at a ceremony held at the OGDCL headquarters in Islamabad. The IBA team included Mr. Kamran Bilgrami, Director CEE; and Mr. Furqan Tamoor, Senior Manager CEE. While OGDCL was represented by Mr. Shahzad Safdar, Executive Director; and Mr. Talat Haider, Head of OGTL.

Dr. Zaidi expressed his delight in partnering with OGDCL, calling it one of the leading state-owned enterprises in Pakistan. "OGDCL has a valuable relationship with IBA as earlier this year, we launched the IBA - OGDCL Talent Hunt Program, a fully funded scholarship scheme. Now they have also become a part of Center for Executive Education, where they will conduct 10 training programs under the IBA CEE umbrella called 'LEAP (Learning Excellence for



Accelerated Progression) for their mid to senior level staff and executives."

Mr. Ahmed Hayat Lak MD, OGDCL said, "We have always considered IBA-CEE as one of the leading centers for excellence in continuing education. Recently, we have started an exceptional training series with CEE at IBA for training and development of our officers. This program will henceforth become an integral part of our HR policy and collaboration system. Following this program, we will select candidates for the Postgraduate Diploma Program happening at IBA in Islamabad as well as some officers for the MBA program at IBA."

OGDCL and IBA-CEE

have agreed to collaborate on a range of leadership development, research, and consultancy initiatives. The leadership development programs will blend academic expertise with real-world industry insights and will be led by a team of experienced trainers from both organizations. The research and consultancy projects will leverage the collective knowledge and experience of both organizations to address key challenges and opportunities in the energy sector.

The MoU reflects OGDCL's commitment to developing its human resources and promoting innovation within the energy sector. IBA-CEE is confident that this partnership will produce mutually ben-

eficial results for both organizations and will contribute to the continued success and sustainability of OGDCL.

The Center for Executive Education (CEE), IBA, Karachi is a leading provider of executive education programs in Pakistan. IBA-CEE offers a wide range of programs for Public Sector, Corporate Enterprises and Family Businesses. CEE's programs are designed to meet the needs of busy professionals and are delivered by a team of experienced faculty from both academia and industry. IBA-CEE is committed to providing high-quality executive education that helps professionals develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their careers.

Addressing ongoing struggle against poverty in Karachi

Leema Khan

I am writing to shed light on a persistent and deeply concerning issue that plagues our city of Karachi: poverty. While Karachi continues to grow and develop in numerous ways, the harsh reality is that poverty remains a significant challenge for a substantial portion of our population.

The issue of poverty in

Karachi is multi-faceted and has dire consequences for individuals and families living in its grip. Many are unable to access basic necessities such as food, clean water, and healthcare, which affects their overall quality of life. The lack of educational opportunities for impoverished children further perpetuates the cycle of poverty, limiting their prospects for a brighter future.

In addition to the personal toll, poverty also affects the social fabric of our city. It can lead to increased crime rates, strain on social services, and reduced overall community well-being. The disparity in living conditions within Karachi is a stark reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive solutions.

While there have been efforts to address poverty through various govern-

ment and non-governmental programs, it is clear that more needs to be done. These initiatives should focus on providing sustainable livelihoods, improving access to education and healthcare, and creating opportunities for economic empowerment.

Furthermore, it is crucial for the community to come together and support these efforts. Whether through volunteering, donating, or

advocating for change, we can all play a part in alleviating poverty's grip on our beloved city.

As residents of Karachi, we have a collective responsibility to address the issue of poverty head-on. Let us work together, along with government agencies and charitable organizations, to create a Karachi where every citizen has the opportunity to lead a dignified and prosperous life.



In brief

Naila Kiani to scale China's formidable peaks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiani, who is also a resident of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, has successfully obtained the permits required to summit China's formidable 8,000-meter peaks, marking a major step in her 14-peak mission. Just days after successfully summiting her ninth from the world's fourteen 8,000m peaks, Naila now turns her sights towards the towering heights of Shishapangma and Cho Oyu, both nestled in the breathtaking landscapes of China. "Securing permits for ascending these two Chinese mountains is an intricate and highly regulated process. Naila's success in obtaining these permits means that she can now look forward to climbing her 10th and 11th summit from her 14 peak mission. She is expected to make the trip from Kathmandu, Nepal, just days after her successful summit of Manaslu," Pakistan Press Counselor in Dubai, said in a press release, on Tuesday. As Naila Kiani prepares to embark on her challenging ascent of Shishapangma and Cho Oyu, the residents of Dubai, the nation of Pakistan and mountaineering community worldwide eagerly anticipate what would mark a momentous achievement of her mission, it was added. Naila Kiani is an accomplished Pakistani mountaineer and adventurer. Her passion for pushing the limits of human endurance led her to embark on a mission to ascend all fourteen of the world's highest peaks, earning her recognition in the global mountaineering community.

UoS volleyball team qualifies for final round

SARGODHA (APP): University of Sargodha volleyball team has qualified for the final round of Intervarsity Volleyball Championship. According to UoS press release issued here on Tuesday, the University of Sargodha volleyball team qualified for the final stage of the Intervarsity Volleyball (Zone-I) Championship in the competitions which were held at Thal University Bhakkar from September 22 to 25. In the competitions, the University of Sargodha defeated University of Mianwali, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Thal University Bhakkar, GC University Faisalabad in the volleyball matches. The final round of the Intervarsity Volleyball Championship would be held from October 1 to 5, 2023 at the University of Engineering and Technology, Taxila. On the occasion, UoS Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qaiser Abbas congratulated the players, students, Director of Sports Maher Ahmad Khan Haral and the staff of Sports Office on this achievement and expressed good wishes.

Karachi Stallions clinched KHA U-15 title

KARACHI (APP): The Stallions won the KHA Under -15 Boys Hockey 5As Challengers Cup 2023 by beating Team Dolphins by 3-2 in the final at KHA Sports Complex. The Tournament is being organized by the Karachi Hockey Association in collaboration with Education and Sports Technologies, a community said. Syeda Shehla Raza former Sindh Minister for Women Development and currently the President of the Women Wing of Pakistan Hockey Federation with Olympian Hanif Khan, Haider Hussain Secretary General PHF.

Babar Azam eyes ICC Men's ODI World Cup glory for Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Cricket Captain Babar Azam on Tuesday said that no less than a victory in the ICC ODI World Cup 2023 in India was his ambition and he was not satisfied with less than that.

Responding to the former South African batting great Hashim Amla's comment in which he had included Pakistan among the four likely semi-finalists at the mega event in India, Babar said it was too low an expectation from the Pakistan team at the ICC ODI World Cup and the Men in Green will lift the trophy.

At a pre-departure press conference at the Gaddafi Stadium here, the ODI top-ranked batsman said he had more confidence in his team than himself, adding that he was confident the men in green would win laurels for the country despite below-par performances during the last two games of the Asia Cup 2023 in Sri Lanka.

Pakistan Cricket team was due to leave for Hyderabad (India) via Dubai in the wee hours of Wednesday morning to take part in the ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023 which starts from October 5, 2023. Pakistan team was scheduled to play two warm-up matches against New Zealand and Australia before it faces-off Netherlands to kick-start their campaign.

On the team-selection for the World Cup in India, Babar said he believed in consistency and continuity, adding that, after all, it was the same team which catapulted the team to World No. 1 ICC rankings. He said Chief Selector Inzamam-ul-Haq and team Director Mickey Arthur had also reposed confidence in the team.

On Naseem Shah, he said Naseem Shah would be missed as he made up a formidable bowling duo with Shaheen Shah Afridi and gave Pakistan team an edge, adding it was not

easy to pick his replacement. He said Hasan Ali's experience made him an ultimate choice of the team management for the world cup, adding, Hasan had already played a world cup and was a good exponent of the old and new ball.

On the below-par bowling performances in the middle overs during the Asia Cup 2023, Babar Azam said, "The issue has been taken up during the team meetings and we will come up with new plans during the ICC Men's ODI World Cup in India."

About the spin bowling department, he said there had been a lot of criticism on the spinners, adding that the Pakistani spinner had had few bad days but they were not ordinary players. He said it was not easy to play for the Pakistan team and all of them had got here on the back of their performances, adding he had full faith in them.



On playing in India with minimum Pakistani spectators at the stadiums, Babar said the team would miss their presence, adding he had heard all the games were sold out and 'we will be playing in jam-packed stadiums'. "Although our fans will not be there, I know they will make sure their love is heard on social media. I have heard that the fans in India also show their love, although I have not experienced that as of yet but I am

excited to play in India as well," Babar responded.

About playing for the first time on the Indian soil, the Pakistan Captain said the playing conditions were similar to Pakistani playgrounds, adding he had spoken to former players on the Indian tracks and stadiums and 'we have shared knowledge on it'. He said, "Playing conditions will not make a difference for the team as we are used to such conditions."

On his personal goals for the

ODI World Cup, Babar said he was proud of leading the Men in Green at the world stage for the first time, adding that he always set high goals as batsman and the world CUP in India was not an exception.

Babar Azam, to another query, said he had given a pep talk to the team and reminded them how the World Cup provided a bigger stage to the young cricketers to become a hero overnight through their performances.

Pakistan beat Bangladesh 5-2 in Asian Games hockey

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan downed Bangladesh by 5-2 in the hockey competition of the ongoing 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou, China.

Pakistan hockey team showcased their mettle with yet another triumph and emerged victorious in their second pool match against Bangladesh, triumphing with a decisive score line of five goals to two.

Despite a momentary setback when Bangladesh seized the lead in the 19th minute through a penalty corner, Pakistan rallied valiantly.

Afraz came to the fore, leveling the score with a field goal in the 30th minute, setting the stage for Pakistan's eventual triumph. In the 40th minute of the game,

Pakistan's youthful right striker Shahzeb Khan fortified Pakistan's advantage by notching a field goal. Shortly after, in the 43rd minute, Pakistan's left striker Mohammad Imad extended the lead by slotting the third goal for the team.

Bangladesh managed to narrow the gap, striking a field goal in the 46th minute. However, Pakistan remained relentless, as drag flick maestro Sufyan Khan thundered a rapid flick from a penalty corner, securing Pakistan's fourth goal in the 48th minute.

In the 57th minute of the game, Pakistan's talented drag flick specialist, Arbaaz Ahmed, showcased his exceptional skills by executing a precise and

swift drag flick during a critical penalty corner, resulting in Pakistan's fifth goal of the match.

Set to embark on their third match at 6am Pakistan time on September 28, the Pakistan hockey team was ready to face Uzbekistan in the Asian Games.

The tournament boasts twelve teams, divided into two pools. In Pool A, Pakistan was placed alongside India, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Uzbekistan, while Pool B includes Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia. Pakistan's hockey team has displayed a striking offensive performance, scoring a remarkable 16 goals across their first two pool matches.

Pakistan beat India by 3-0 in volleyball match

HANGZHOU (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan downed India by 3-0 in men's volleyball match on Tuesday to clinch fifth place in the competition at the ongoing 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou, China.

The national team defeated the traditional rivals in straight sets, maintaining a scoreline of victory as 25-21, 25-20 and 25-23.

Pakistan dominated proceedings throughout the match and registered a comprehensive victory over India. This is the first time in 33 years that the side secured a spot in the top five since 1990.

Earlier, in a thrilling quarter-final match, Qatar emerged victorious against Pakistan. The clash saw the 51st-ranked Pakistan team going up against the 17th-ranked Qatar side. The match began with Pakistan displaying a strong performance right from the first set.

At one point, Pakistan held a five-point lead, but Qatar mounted a remarkable comeback, overcoming deficits of 20-15 and 24-22 to snatch the first set from Pakistan. However, Qatar was unable to maintain their momentum.

In the third set, Pakistan dominated Qatar right from the start. Unfortunately for Pakistan, in the fourth set, Qatar didn't leave any room for a comeback and clinched the victory. The final score of Qatar's triumph over Pakistan stood at 24-26, 19-25, 25-23, and 18-25.

Remember, the Men in Green beat South Korea 3-0 to reach the quarter-final with the scores of 25-19, 25-22 and 25-21. Pakistan also cemented their place in the top six teams with their win over South Korea. This was when the side reached the top six for the first time since the 1994 Asian Games.

Pak-China Cricket match on Wednesday

LAHORE (INP): First time in the history of Pak-China Relations, Pak-China Cricket Match is all set to be held in collaboration with Chinese Consulate Lahore and Institute of International Relations and Media Research (IIRMR) on Wednesday.

More than ten Chinese nationals will play the cricket match and former Pakistan cricket players will also play in the match. Festeoned by flags of China and Pakistan on city roads, groundbreaking Pak-China Cricket Match will be held at Lahore Cricket Club Association (LCCA) ground adjacent to Qaddafi Stadium near PCB head-quarter, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

Chinese diplomats, officials, and high-ups of

Chinese enterprises will make their special appearance in the match. The chief guest will be the Acting Chinese Consul General Lahore Cao Ke. Special colorful kits and cricketing stuff will make the Pak-China Cricket Match enthralling and thrilling.

Pak-China Cricket Match will prove to be har-binger of new dimension of iron-brotherhood and congeniality titled "Sino-Pak Cricketing Friendship: New Era, New Perspective, New Trajectory".

In the backdrop of return of cricket in ongoing Asian Games in China, Pak-China Cricket Match will add new dimension in Pak-China relations.

Before the onset of the Pak-China Cricket Match, students of educational

institutions will present their convivial shows through performances of Pak-China songs, national anthem, as well as exhibiting playful extravaganza in a style.

Eventually, after the conclusion of the match, not only winning trophy will be given to the victorious team but honorary shields will be conferred to dignitaries.

Chinese Acting Consul General Lahore Cao Ke welcomed the holding of Cricket match. "Looking back on the past year, China and Pakistan have witnessed increasing and closer exchanges and cooperation in various fields and cricket is new one.

The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has achieved fruitful results," he said.

Milne, Young give New Zealand series win

MIRPUR (Agencies): A four-wicket haul for Adam Milne, some useful contributions from their part-time bowlers, and Will Young's 70 gave New Zealand a seven-wicket win in Mirpur in their final fixture before the ODI World Cup. The hosts were always behind in the game after being bowled out for 171 and, barring a double-wicket jolt from Shoriful Islam, failed to put New Zealand under any pressure.

Young's start was watchful, needing ten balls to get his first run, but once he got off the mark with a boundary, he didn't let go of the tempo. Bangladesh's seamers tested him with the short ball, but he was up to the challenge on the pull, apart from the occasional boundaries through mid-wicket and cover.

It was a crucial innings given New Zealand lost Finn Allen and debutant Dean Foxcroft off back-to-back deliveries in the tenth over, leaving a slow-to-start Henry Nicholls needing to survive a period of Bangladesh bowling that was by those dismissals.

Young, though, didn't feel the heat, bringing up his fifty in 64 balls, and even changing gears in its aftermath. Young raced through the 50s and 60s with consecutive fours off Hasan Mahmud in the 26th over, followed by ten runs in two balls off Nasum Ahmed in the 28th. He eventually fell for 70 in the 30th over, bowled by a skiddy Nasum delivery, but by then New Zealand needed only 42 more to win.

Nicholls, who stayed unbeaten on 50, and Tom Blundell did the rest with more than 15 overs to spare.

In the afternoon, Najmul Hossain Shanto's counter-attacking half-century on ODI captaincy debut took Bangladesh to 171. The No. 3 batter crunched ten fours in his 84-ball 76, but with the second-highest contribution being Mahmudullah's 21, Bangladesh ended with an underwhelming total.

It was Milne, replacing Kyle Jamieson in the XI, who dealt the early blow. He sent in a searing yorker in the second over of the match to dismiss debutant Zakir Hasan and, then, in the sixth over, had Towhid Hridoy slicing to cover. Sandwiched between those two dismissals was Trent Boult getting opener Tanzid Hasan caught at first slip. All that left Bangladesh at 35 for 3 and desperately searching for stability.

Shanto - the stand-in captain for the original stand-in captain Litton Das - provided part of it by holding one end up. He hit six fours inside the first ten overs to race away to 31 in just 26 balls, and also looked comfortable against the bouncers that the New Zealand pacers peppered him with. He was not afraid to take on Ish Sodhi early, and even successfully played the reverse sweep. By the time the 20th over ended, Shanto had reached his fifth ODI half-century.

But New Zealand captain Lockie Ferguson ended Mushfiqur Rahim's 25-ball

vigil with a short ball that rolled back onto his stumps, and Milne returned to dismiss Mahmudullah. That left Shanto to play with the lower order and even though he shepherded the innings for a while, he eventually fell to the part-time offspin of Cole McConechie while attempting another reverse sweep.

That was just the opening New Zealand needed, and over the next three overs, they cleaned up the tail. McConechie had Nasum stumped, Rachin Ravindra had Hasan lbw, and Milne finished with 4 for 34 when he had Shoriful, the last man to be dismissed, caught at cover.

For Sodhi, who took 6 for 39 in the second ODI, it was a forgettable outing, conceding 40 runs in six wicketless overs. With Ferguson looking for spin overs from elsewhere, Ravindra and McConechie stepped up on Sodhi's off-colour day to prise out lower-order wickets. Together, the pair returned figures of 10-1-38-3, while Boult finished with two wickets.

After sealing the series, New Zealand now fly to Hyderabad in India for their World Cup warm-up fixture against Pakistan. Bangladesh, who just announced their squad for the competition, will go to Guwahati in north-east India for their warm-up match against Sri Lanka. The two sides will link up again for two Tests after the World Cup.



New Zealand won the three-match ODI series 2-0.

Sri Lanka retain Shanaka as skipper for World Cup

COLOMBO (AFP): Sri Lanka retained out-of-form skipper Dasun Shanaka on Tuesday in its 15-member squad for next month's World Cup in India despite pressure from fans and the media to drop him.

The island nation is still smarting from its ignominious defeat by India at the six-nation Asia Cup finals this month in which they were all out for just 50 runs.

The thrashing on home soil prompted scathing social media attacks on the board and its players, and demands for Shanaka's sacking.

"Perhaps it's time Sri Lanka moved on from Shanaka before the country ends up being an absolute joke in the World Cup," the Daily Mirror said in a scathing editorial last week.

But after much internal debate, the board decided to stick with him and the rest of the team, a Sri Lanka Cricket source told AFP.

Bowling all-rounder Wanidu Hasaranga is still recovering from injury and was not included in the squad but could still play in the tournament if his condition improves, the board said.

The board said in a Friday statement that selectors and officials "were in agreement that the national team is in the right direction towards making further progress".

It said they were "optimistic that the upcoming World Cup will bring glory to the nation".

Sri Lanka won the 1996 title and has reached the finals twice, in 2007 and 2011.

Sri Lanka squad: Dasun Shanaka (capt), Kusal Mendis, Kusal Perera, Pathum Nissanka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Dushan Hemantha, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Kasun Rajitha, Matheesha Pathirana, Lahiru Kumara, Dilshan Madushanka.

Tamim left out of Bangladesh's squad

DHAKA (Agencies): Bangladesh squad for the ICC World Cup 2023 will not feature their best batter Tamim Iqbal, who has been left out due to his persistent back injury.

According to the details, Tamim Iqbal had notified the selectors a few days ago that they should consider his persistent back injury before selecting the final squad.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), however, did not officially clarify the decision to exclude Tamim from their ICC World Cup 2023 squad. Bangladesh squad for the ICC World Cup 2023 was originally scheduled to be announced at 5:45 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time) but the BCB later postponed the announcement until following the third ODI between Bangladesh and New Zealand.

Tamim scored 44 runs in Bangladesh's 86-run defeat against New Zealand in the second ODI on Saturday, his comeback international match, after reversing his retirement decision in July. Tamim Iqbal disclosed that he still felt discomfort in his injured back in the second ODI against New Zealand, which the team physios were trying to help him recover from.

Besides Tamim's exclusion, the rest of the Bangladesh squad is almost identical to what featured in the Asia Cup 2023, led by Shakib Al Hasan while Litton Das (vc), Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Mahedi Hasan, Tanzid Hasan, Tanzim Hasan, Mahmudullah.



In brief

186,300 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 186,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 137,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1545.90 feet and was 147.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 79,100 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1229.35 feet, which was 179.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 9,900 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 120,600, 110,600, 104,600 and 46,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

15 beggars arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a major crackdown on professional begging, the Islamabad Civil Defense arrested 15 beggars from different areas on Tuesday. The operation was carried out under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner Secretariat Aneel Saeed and the Assistant Director of Civil Defense, on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon. The beggars were arrested from various areas of the city, including Margalla Road, Aabpara Market, and Faisal Mosque. They were then transferred to the police station for further action. The minor children who were begging were sent to the Edhi Center. The operation against beggars is being carried out daily under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners in Islamabad. The operation aims to discourage professional begging and to protect the citizens from harassment.

Crackdown to be launched

ISLAMABAD (PPI) The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has decided to launch a crackdown against spurious medicines, it emerged Tuesday. According to a report, the National Task Force has finalised homework for the countrywide crackdown against the sale of fake medicines. Provincial DRAP offices have been issued directives for the crackdown. It emerged that raids would be conducted in the medicines markets of Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Quetta, Peshawar and others to seize the fake medicines. Those found selling fake medicines will be booked under DRAP Act and strict action will be taken against them for risking the masses' lives, the sources said. The decision for action follows after a number of cases of vision loss were reported in Punjab due to Avastin injection. On Monday, Punjab health department 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. PPP leader Chaudhry Manzoor revealed that his brother and a friend's eyesight was affected when they received the shot inside their eyes.

Balochistan's development depends on utilizing its mineral resource: Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday said that full utilization of mineral resources was needed for the development of Balochistan and situation in the province could be improved by increasing political commitment and capacity.

Addressing a concluding ceremony of a seminar titled "Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment," the minister thanked European contributors on behalf of people of Pakistan for holding the event.

He asked the European union to continue its efforts for holding such informative seminars which could help to sensitize people of the province living in remote areas. The minister said that non-Balanced development was the problem of all developing countries and politics over this issue was not the solution to the problem.

He said that the country would have to focus on plan for development of our new generation. The minister said that everyone should hold themselves account-

able before pointing a finger at anyone. "I belong to a rural area. When the state gave me an opportunity, I reached this position through hard work," he said adding that every individual could get opportunities and success through hard work.

Later, the minister also participated in the High Achievers Awards ceremony organized by Roots International Schools and Colleges. Addressing the function, he congratulated the best performing students, adding the high performing students had achieved the success through their hard work.

Sarfraz Bugti visits police line HQs Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti here on Tuesday visited Police Line Headquarters and paid homage to the martyrs of the police.

He was received by Secretary Interior Aftab Durrani and ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in police line headquarters where the

minister laid the wreath on monument of martyrs and offered fatiha.

Addressing the gathering, the minister said that the martyrs were blessed by the Allah almighty and were an asset for the country who sacrificed their lives for prosperous future of the nation. He also inaugurated women driving center and visited central police office where he was greeted by the officers and briefed on the functioning of capital police.

ICCPO informed the minister that capital police were actively running a campaign against drugs and smuggling and declining trend was witnessed in crimes. The minister appreciated the police for maintaining law and order situation in the federal capital while making an announcement that the police would be equipped with the modern techniques and gadgets to control crimes.

He urged the officers to perform their duties with devotion and dedication and behave friendly with the citizen and resolve their issues on priority. The minister said the writ of the state would be ensured at all costs.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairing briefing at CPO Office. —APP Photo

Health minister visits Bhara Kahu BHU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Tuesday visited Bhara Kahu Basic Health Center to examine the services being provided to patients.

The purpose of the visit was to take stock of the health facilities being provided by the BHU.

The minister met the patients and inquired about the treatment facilities. He also inspected the immunization facilities. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that improvement in the health sector cannot be made without strengthening the primary healthcare system.

All Rural Health Centres and Basic Health Units are being fully operationalized, he said. The burden of patients in federal hospitals is very high. "We have created an integrated strategy for providing the best medical facilities to the people of rural areas," he said.

The minister directed the DHO to share details of staff shortage and take practical measures to address the issue. He also directed to ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines in the BHU. He emphasized that rural communities should have access to the same healthcare facilities as urban populations.

Education, only way towards uplift, progress: Madad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindhi has said that the education is the only way towards development and progress.

This was stated by him was speaking during his meeting with Director General Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Amjad Ahmed during his visit to FDE on Tuesday.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that there are countries that were decades behind us but now due to better education are miles ahead of us. Pakistan is our home and we should try to resolve its problems like we resolve our personal issues, he added.

He said that there are challenges faced by every institution but we should try to resolve them with

complete dedication and hard work. He said that government institutions hold immense importance for the employees as they not only provide salaries but also pensions after retirement.

The minister said that in today's age, such facility was a blessing. He said that every employee should keep this into consideration and try to benefit the organization, as it is responsible for the maintenance of several hundred employees.

Madad said that teachers should not hold administrative positions and should solely focus on their duties as teachers. He said that teachers have the most important responsibility of all and should give their hundred percent to this task only.

Minister was briefed by DG FDE Amjad Ahmed. Minister was told that FDE faces a regular budget deficit. He was told that the current year deficit is almost PKR 7 billion. Minister was told that a biometric system has been placed in all institutions of FDE to ensure attendance of teaching and non-teaching staff.

The minister was told that almost 24k students are enrolled in all of the FDE institutions. He was told that 2839 teachers were trained in the last year as well. Furthermore, indoor sports facilities have been established in 391 schools and colleges of FDE in addition with enrolment of 17k out of school children in the last year.

CTP devise traffic plan for Eid Milad un Nabi

RAWALPINDI (INP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has devised a comprehensive traffic plan to maintain traffic flow on the occasion of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (PBUH) to be celebrated on Friday.

More than 455 traffic police officers and traffic wardens will be on special duty to provide the best traffic facilities to the citizens under which parking of vehicles or handcarts on the route of the Milad processions would be prohibited.

According to a CTP spokesman, two main processions will be taken out and the first procession will start from Jamia Masjid Hanafia Jamia Masjid Road at 10:00 am which will pass through different routes of the city including Pul Shah Nazar, Bani Chowk, Murree Road, Committee Chowk, Liaquat Road, Fawara Chowk, passing through Dungi Khoi and will return back to starting point.

The routes of the procession will be closed to traffic

by putting up a diversion. Traffic going from Rawalpindi to Islamabad will be diverted from Jang Building U-turn towards Kachhari Chowk. Whereas, Traffic from Liaquat Bagh to Fawara Chowk will be diverted from DAV College towards Gawwalmandi.

The second procession will be taken out at 9:30 AM from Chungi No. 22 which will start from Tench Road Dhok Syedan Chowk, Kalma Chowk, No. 22 Chowk, Adara Road, State Life Building Turn, MH Chowk, Mahfooz Chowk, Mansehra Adda, Cantt, Nishtar Street, Adamji Road, Mithukhan Hata, Railway Road Military Account, Kamran Market to GTS Chowk (Old Varan Adda) and after passing through will be culminated.

During the procession, traffic coming from Kalma Chowk to Chungi 22 Chowk will be diverted to Harley Street. Traffic going to Khattak Chowk CMH and Tench will be diverted towards Harley Street, while when the procession

reaches Mall Road, traffic coming from Peshawar Road will be diverted towards Qasim Market. Traffic coming from Kachery Chowk towards TM Chowk will be diverted towards Murree Road.

He said that Murree Road from Marir Chowk to Benazir Bhutto Hospital would remain closed during the main procession while the traffic coming from Islamabad to be sent to Rawal Road and Islamabad bound traffic from Saddar, Rawalpindi would be diverted towards Kachery Chowk from Marir.

On the occasion, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan said that the entry of heavy traffic would be prohibited during the Milad procession. He directed the officers concerned to remove all kinds of encroachments from the routes of the processions besides keeping a vigilant eye on suspects. Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the delinquent officials, he added.

PHPP now empowered to issue driving licenses

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Punjab Highway Patrolling Police (PHPP) has been empowered to issue driving licenses, according to a notification issued by the Inspector General of Punjab Police (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar.

The notification states that under Article 27 of the Police Order 2002, all Regional Officers and District Officers of PHPP have been given the status of Licensing Authority and shall have the authority to issue driver's license under the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1965 and all traffic laws within their respective district and region limits.

This new development is expected to provide more convenience to the public, as they will now be able to apply for and obtain driving licenses from PHPP offices in addition to Traffic Police offices.

It is important to note that the PHPP has been empowered to issue driving licenses only after regular approval. This means that the PHPP has met all of the necessary requirements and is now considered to be competent to issue driving licenses.

The PHPP is a specialized unit of the Punjab Police that is responsible for patrolling and enforcing traffic laws on highways and motorways.

The PHPP is equipped with modern vehicles and equipment, and its personnel are highly trained in traffic management and enforcement.

The empowerment of the PHPP to issue driving licenses is a welcome step that will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the driving license issuance process in Punjab. It will also provide more convenience to the public, as they will now have more options for applying for and obtaining driving licenses.

IESCO recovers Rs 20.24 mln from 1,342 defaulters

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday recovered over Rs 20.24 million from 1,342 defaulters in various circles of the company during the ongoing power anti-power theft and recovery drive.

The IESCO Spokesperson said that collectively a sum of Rs 200 million has been recovered from 14,112 defaulters so far. Meters of the defaulters have also been removed, he added.

Sharing the details, he said that an amount of over Rs 3.8 million was recovered from 360 defaulters in Islamabad Circle, Rs 5.1 million from 253 defaulters in Attock Circle, Rs 1.9 million from defaulters in Rawalpindi City Circle, Rs 1.12 million from 211 defaulters in Jhelum Circle, Rs 3.8 million

from 235 defaulters in Chakwal Circle and Rs 6.5 million from 210 defaulters in Rawalpindi Cantt circle.

Local administration and police were fully assisting the operation teams of the company in the drive, he said.

The spokesperson said that over 62,000 meters of various tariffs/categories have been checked so far during the ongoing drive.

Around 1,082 consumers were charged over 1.5 million units on account of power theft and slow meters. A Rs 7.21 million fine has also been imposed on them besides registering 336 FIRs against them.

The police have also arrested 28 power pilferers so far.

The drive would continue till the complete elimination of power pilferage, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Motorecyclists crossing from the bridge at Srinagar Highway. —APP Photo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, to combat the rising dengue fever cases, has ordered anti-dengue teams to carry out dengue spraying and fogging key areas of the city, including the buildings of Supreme Court, Election Commission, PM Secretariat and NADRA Headquarters.

DC Memon also directed officials to improve sanitation arrangements in different areas of the city to prevent dengue and to launch an awareness campaign among the people about anti-dengue measures.

He further emphasized the need to spray dengue in schools and colleges of Islamabad.

In a statement, the ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said that the Deputy Commissioner has assured that all possible resources will be used

to control the deadly virus in Islamabad.

He added that the rural area of Islamabad is among the top priorities of the administration and every possible step will be taken to protect the lives of the citizens.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad's timely action is a welcome step in the fight against dengue fever. It is important for the public to cooperate with the authorities and take all necessary precautions to protect themselves from this deadly disease.

Talking to APP, medical expert Doctor Attiya Karim Khan said that the dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection that can cause flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, and nausea.

In severe cases, dengue fever can lead to life-threatening complications, such as hemorrhag-

ic fever and dengue shock syndrome, she added.

Dr Attiya further said that there is no specific treatment for dengue fever, but early diagnosis and supportive care can help to improve the prognosis.

She said that, the best way to prevent dengue fever is to avoid mosquito bites.

This can be done by using mosquito repellents, wearing long sleeves and pants, and using mosquito nets when sleeping.

Dr Attiya urged the public to take following precautions to protect themselves from dengue fever: use mosquito repellents, wear long sleeves and pants, use mosquito nets when sleeping, remove stagnant water from around your home, keep your home clean and tidy, seek medical attention immediately if you experience any symptoms of dengue fever.

Two shepherds killed

FARYAB (Khaama Press): Two young shepherds lost their lives due to the explosion of a landmine in the Grizwan district. Shamsullah Mohammadi, the head of information and culture in Faryab province said that this incident occurred Monday in the Grizwan district when the two shepherds were playing with a landmine. The victims of this incident were a 12-year-old boy and a 17-year-old boy, both of whom were engaged in shepherding in the Ghulian area of this province.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 11, 1445 — Wednesday, September 27, 2023

60 Afghan prisoners released

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Consulate in Pakistan's Sindh province announced the release of 60 additional Afghan inmates from the province's jails. According to a statement released on Tuesday by the Afghan Consulate in Karachi, sixty additional Afghan detainees, including ten children, were freed from various prisons in Karachi and returned to Afghanistan. The persons were arrested by the local police in different crimes.

Increase of malnourished mothers, children: Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Health said that the number of malnourished mothers and children in the country has slightly increased compared to past years.

According to the director of the ministry's public nutrition department, more than 896,000 children and over 444000 breastfeeding and pregnant women have visited malnutrition treatment centers since the start of the 1402 solar year.

"444,541 mothers have been included in the program for treatment, and out of these, nearly 200,000 children have been treated. 449,000 children with moderate malnutrition have been treated," said Mohammad Wazir Hamid,

head of the nutrition department.

"The patient's family should pay attention when a child is born at home, they should pay a lot of attention from the very first day of birth, which is to give them their own milk," said Mohammad Arif Hassan, a doctor.

T e n - m o n t h - o l d Hedayatullah has been malnourished for the past two months.

His mother said that she cannot give healthy food to her child due to economic challenges.

"My child is malnourished, and our economic situation is not good. My husband is working in a cart and does not have a job, that is why my son is

malnourished," said Farzana, the mother of the child.

Meanwhile, some residents of Helmand and Uruzgan provinces also said that due to economic challenges and lack of healthy food, their children are suffering from nutritional diseases.

"We cannot provide the children with the food they need," said Sayed Reza, a resident of Uruzgan.

According to figures from the Ministry of Public Health's Department of Public Nutrition, in the 1401 solar year, 1,963,621 children and 845,155 pregnant and breastfeeding women visited malnutrition treatment centers across the nation.

Women on brink of losing last lifeline: WFP

KABUL (Khaama Press): Following the budget reduction of the World Food Programme in Afghanistan, this organization states that women are on the brink of losing their last lifeline.

On Tuesday, the World Food Programme tweeted that the budget reduction means one million women and their children will be deprived of nutritional assistance.

According to the official of the Emergency of WFP in Afghanistan, "Women are being gradually excluded from social life every day, with minimal opportunities for livelihood and nutrition for their offspring." Earlier, WFP's deputy Executive Director Carl Skau said he had a plan for an urgent funding appeal during a Brussels meeting, explicitly focusing on Afghanistan. The primary objective is to prevent a potential winter catastrophe in the country.

Before the meeting hosted by the EU Commission, Skau stated, "I am currently in Brussels for a high-level meeting on Afghanistan, attended by partners and donors, generously hosted by the European Commission."

The meeting's main objective is to formulate a plan and strategy to support the Afghan population during the upcoming winter, as highlighted by Skau. Due to financial constraints in recent months, WFP has had to reduce its essential humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan.

"The operational conditions are challenging, but we are committed to delivering assistance in a principled and effective manner." Meanwhile, the organization emphasizes the need for one billion dollars to address the needs of the vulnerable in the upcoming harsh winter.

The World Food Programme is talking about budget shortages at a time when 15 million people in Afghanistan are still determining where their next meal will come from.

According to the United Nations report, 97% of the Afghan population lives below the poverty line, and the number of people needing humanitarian aid is increasing.

Restrictions on afghani helps stabilize currency

KABUL (Agencies): Billions of US dollars, flowing into Afghanistan, in the form of cash aid, is helping to stabilize the local currency so much that the AFN has been propelled to the top of the global rankings this quarter.

According to America's Bloomberg news agency, the afghani (AFN) has maintained its value against foreign currencies, especially the US dollar, on the back of the cash aid and other factors.

Additional actions are also helping to stabilize the currency including the Islamic Emirate's ban on the use of Pakistani rupees and US dollars on the local market, and an increase in cross border trade, Bloomberg reported.

Currently, the AFN is trading at just under 80 afghanis to the dollar.



The international community has shipped in on over \$40 million dollars a week since the fall of the former government. This money is handled by the UN and used for aid in the country. Bloomberg reported

ed however that the cash aid and increased trade with Afghanistan's neighbors has propelled Afghanistan's currency to the top of global rankings this quarter — an unusual spot for a poverty-stricken country.

The IEA's tight restrictions on taking dollars out of the country, banning online trading and imposing prison sentences on those who break the rules, have also contributed to this stability.

Female doctor makes herbal medicines for heart disease, strokes

HERAT (TOLONews): A female doctor in the capital claimed that after 20 years of research, she was able to treat heart disease and strokes with her herbal medicines, and treat more than 200 patients.

"I am asking the Islamic Emirate to help me to make the medicine available for people, I am not asking the Islamic Emirate to help me by giving me money or whatever," said

Gul Sanam Ahmadzai, a doctor.

Abdul Rahman, 50, emigrated to Germany 33 years ago and he returned to the country a month and a half ago, he said that he has been suffering from heart disease for more than 10 years and has recovered after being treated by one of the female doctors in the country.

"My heart was hurting, it was always painful, I had

pain on the left side; within 10-12 days the pain disappeared, and I felt very comfortable," said Abdul Rahman.

Meantime, some other doctors and citizens asked the current government to support the achievements of doctors in the country.

"The side effects of the herbal medicine given to patients are zero, which means that you and I are aware of medical drugs

that if we treat a disease, it can have other side effects," said Safaaddin Safa, head of the private hospital.

"We must support the doctor for this great scientific achievement," said Abdul Ghiace, a patient.

Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Public Health, 93% of the drugs are imported from Pakistan, Iran, India, Turkey, and Bangladesh.

Kabul delegation to Nangarhar addresses immigrant issues

J A L A L A B A D (TOLONews): The delegation to Nangarhar formed by the order of the leader of the Islamic Emirate met with the immigrants who had recently returned to the country from Pakistan at the Torkham crossing.

According to members of the delegation, they are fully prepared for newly returned migrants in Nangarhar and neighboring provinces and have started efforts to solve the problem of their accommodation.

"We have to find a place for our immigrants inside Afghanistan, to make their lives," said Abdul Rahman Rashid, deputy of the Refugees and Repatriation Ministry.

Meanwhile, the newly returned immigrants said that they are happy to have returned to their homeland and asked the current government to provide them with work opportunities.

"I have no house, no property. I have nothing in the country. I ask the Islamic Emirate to give us shelter," said Shafiqullah.



"I am from Kunduz province. Winter is coming, it will be snowing there. We have nothing there, no work, we need help," said Asadullah, a returned refugee. Officials in Nangarhar said that they have made the necessary

preparations for temporary shelters and are trying to provide permanent shelters for returning migrants.

"The first shelter may be a tent or something else they need, that need will be fulfilled, we will do it and we have decided about their

shelter as well."

According to the information of the local officials of Torkham Crossing, 150 families return to the country from the crossing every day and after receiving first aid, they move to predetermined places.

Polio vaccination campaign started

KABUL (TOLONews): A polio vaccination campaign began Monday in 33 provinces of the country.

During this four-day campaign, eleven million children will receive vaccinations, according to Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, a spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health.

"Our aim in this campaign is to apply the vaccine to eleven million children. This campaign will last for four days. Vitamin A tablets are also given to

children under the age of five at the same time as the polio vaccination," the spokesman said. Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the countries in the world where the polio virus has not been eradicated.

Some citizens of the country asked the Ministry of Public Health to do more to eradicate this disease in Afghanistan.

"In the remote areas, villages and districts, there should be cooperation with doctors," said Sayed Akbar,

a resident of Jawzjan.

"We want that the polio vaccination campaign to be implemented in remote districts," said Bismillah Nusrat, another resident of Jawzjan. According to some doctors, in addition to launching these campaigns, the Ministry of Public Health and organizations that help the healthcare industry should also inform people about the illness.

"Through religious scholars, we can continue our campaign and inform

our people that with two doses of vaccine, we can eradicate polio from all children under the age of five," Rohid, a doctor, told TOLONews.

According to figures from the Ministry of Public Health, 5 positive instances of polio have been reported in the nation since the start of this year, and 3 national vaccination programs and 2 secondary campaigns have been carried out in the nation since the start of this year.

Islamic Emirate weighs using US mass surveillance plan

KABUL (Reuters): The Islamic Emirate is creating a large-scale camera surveillance network for Afghan cities that could involve repurposing a plan crafted by the Americans before their 2021 pullout, an interior ministry spokesman told Reuters, as authorities seek to supplement thousands of cameras already across the capital, Kabul.

The Islamic Emirate's administration — which has publicly said it is focused on restoring security and clamping down on Islamic State, which has claimed many major attacks in Afghan cities — has also consulted with Chinese telecoms equipment maker Huawei about potential cooperation, the spokesman said.

Preventing attacks by international militant groups — including prominent organisations such as Islamic State — is at the heart of the interaction between the Taliban and many foreign nations, including the US and China, according to readouts from those meetings. But some analysts question

the cash-strapped regime's ability to fund the program, and rights groups have expressed concern that any resources will be used to crackdown on protesters.

Details of how the interim Afghan government intend to expand and manage mass surveillance, including obtaining the US plan, have not been previously reported.

The mass camera rollout, which will involve a focus on "important points" in Kabul and elsewhere, is part of a new security strategy that will take four years to be fully implemented, Ministry of Interior spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani told Reuters.

"At the present we are working on a Kabul security map, which is (being completed) by security experts and (is taking) lots of time," he said. "We already have two maps, one which was made by USA for the previous government and second by Turkey."

He did not detail when the Turkish plan was made.

A US State Department spokesperson said Washington was not "part-

nering" with the Taliban and has "made clear to the Taliban that it is their responsibility to ensure that they give no safe haven to terrorists."

A Turkish government spokesperson didn't return a request for comment.

Qani said the Islamic Emirate had a "simple chat" about the potential network with Huawei [RIC:RIC:HWT.UL] in August, but no contracts or firm plans had been reached.

Bloomberg News reported in August that Huawei had reached "verbal agreement" with the Taliban about a contract to install a surveillance system, citing a person familiar with the discussions.

Huawei told Reuters in September that "no plan was discussed" during the meeting.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said she was not aware of specific discussions but added: "China has always supported the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan and supported Chinese enterprises to carry out relevant practical coop-

eration."

Electricity cuts, rights concerns

There are over 62,000 cameras in Kabul and other cities that are monitored from a central control room, according to the Islamic Emirate. The last major update to Kabul's camera system occurred in 2008, according to the former government, which relied heavily on Western-led international forces for security.

When NATO-led international forces were gradually withdrawing in January 2021, then-vice president Amrullah Saleh said his government would roll out a huge upgrade of Kabul's camera surveillance system. He told reporters the \$100 million plan was backed by the NATO coalition.

"The arrangement we had planned in early 2021 was different," Saleh told Reuters in September, adding that the "infrastructure" for the 2021 plan had been destroyed.

It was not clear if the plan Saleh referenced was similar to the ones that the Islamic Emirate say they

have obtained, nor if the administration would modify them.

Jonathan Schroden, an expert on Afghanistan with the Center for Naval Analyses, said a surveillance system would be "useful for the Taliban as it seeks to prevent groups like the Islamic State... from attacking Taliban members or government positions in Kabul."

The Islamic Emirate already closely monitor urban centres with security force vehicles and regular checkpoints.

Rights advocates and opponents of the regime are concerned enhanced surveillance might target civil society members and protesters.

Though the Taliban rarely confirm arrests, the Committee to Protect Journalists says at least 64 journalists have been detained since the takeover. Protests against restrictions on women in Kabul have been broken up forcefully by security forces, according to protesters, videos and Reuters witnesses.

Implementing a mass

surveillance system "under the guise of 'national security' sets a template for the Taliban to continue its draconian policies that violate fundamental rights," said Matt Mahmoudi from Amnesty International.

The Islamic Emirate strongly denies that an upgraded surveillance system would breach the rights of Afghans. Qani said the system was comparable with what other major cities utilize and that it would be operated in line with Islamic Sharia law, which prevents recording in private spaces.

The plan faces practical challenges, security analysts say.

Intermittent daily power cuts in Afghanistan mean cameras connected to the central grid are unlikely to provide consistent feeds. Only 40% of Afghans have access to electricity, according to the state-owned power provider.

The Islamic Emirate also have to find funding after a massive economic contraction and the withdrawal of much aid following their takeover.

The administration said

in 2022 that it has an annual budget of over \$2 billion, of which defence spending is the largest component, according to the Taliban army chief.

Militancy risks

The discussion with Huawei occurred several months after China met with Pakistan and the Islamic Emirate's acting foreign minister, after which the parties stressed cooperation on counter-terrorism. Tackling militancy is also a key aspect of the 2020 troop-withdrawal deal the United States struck with the Taliban.

China has publicly declared its concern over the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), an armed separatist organisation in its western Xinjiang region. Security officials and UN reports say ETIM likely has a small number of fighters in Afghanistan. ETIM couldn't be reached for comment.

The Islamic State has also threatened foreigners in Afghanistan. Its fighters attacked a hotel popular with Chinese businesspeople last year, which left several Chinese citizens

wounded. A Russian diplomat was also killed in one of its attacks.

The Islamic Emirate denies that militancy threatens their rule and say Afghan soil will not be used to launch attacks elsewhere. They have publicly announced raids on Islamic State cells in Kabul.

"Since early 2023, Taliban raids in Afghanistan have removed at least eight key (Islamic State in Afghanistan) leaders, some responsible for external plotting," said US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West at a Sept. 12 public seminar.

A July UN monitoring report said there were up to 6,000 Islamic State fighters and their family members in Afghanistan. Analysts say urban surveillance will not fully address their presence.

The Afghan "home base" locations of Islamic State fighters are in the eastern mountainous areas, said Schroden. "So while cameras in the cities may help prevent attacks... they're unlikely to contribute much to their ultimate defeat."



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Jordan Major General (retired) Ajmal Iqbal in a meeting with President Dr. Arif Alvi at Awn-e-Sadr.

Cipher case: Imran, Qureshi's remand extended

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi to remain behind bars for the next fourteen days as a special court — established under the Official Secrets Act — has extended their judicial remand till October 10 in the cipher case on Tuesday.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain conducted the hearing of the case at the Attock jail. PTI lawyers Barrister Salman Safdar, Latif Khosa, Umer Niazi and Naem Panjutha appeared before the court where the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team was also present.

On the other hand, Qureshi was brought to the Federal Judicial Complex handcuffed by the FIA team where the court staff marked his attendance. Later, the court extended his judicial remand till Oct 10.

Last month, the FIA booked the PTI chief and the party's vice chairman under the Official Secrets Act for allegedly misplacing and misusing classified document for vested political interests.

"Consequent upon the conclusion of the enquiry No. 111/2023 dated 05.10.2022, registered in the CTW, FIA Islamabad, it transpired that former prime minister namely Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi, former foreign minister namely Shah Mahmood Qureshi and their other associates are involved in communications of information contained in the secret classified document (Cipher Telegram received from Parep, Washington dated 7th March, 2022 to Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to the unauthorised person (i.e. public at large) by twisting the facts to achieve their ulterior motives and personal gains in a manner prejudicial to the interests of state security," read first information report (FIR) registered against the PTI leaders.

Subsequently, both leaders were

arrested in connection with the investigation into the case and a special court was established under the Official Secrets Act to try the accused. Speaking to the media, lawyer Khosa said had the FIA submitted the challan in the court, the PTI chief would have been granted bail today.

He also lamented that the law and Constitution are being violated in the country. Speaking about the arrest of PTI leaders despite being granted bail by courts, the PTI chief's counsel said court orders are being violated by the authorities. "Parvez Elahi has been granted bail many times, but he is still under arrest," he added.

During his appearance at the FJC, Qureshi briefly interacted with journalists. When asked what would happen if the PTI is not allowed to contest elections, the PTI leader said the polls would then be "meaningless" and "worthless". He also lamented that the PTI leadership being punished for the crimes they haven't committed.

"[Our] conscience is content, intentions are clean... [we] are innocent... God can change hearts and overturn decisions," he said. "The importance of the polls would end without PTI participating in it," Qureshi said. He insisted on the need for transparent elections in the country as the "only solution" to the prevailing issues. "The country will suffer an irreparable loss if transparent elections are not held," he said. The senior politician asserted that people will lose faith in the current democratic system in the absence of free and fair polls.

The controversy first emerged on March 27, 2022, when Khan — less than a month before his ouster in April 2022 — brandished a letter, claiming that it was a cipher from a foreign nation, which mentioned that his government should be removed

from power. He did not reveal the contents of the letter nor mention the name of the nation that had sent it. But a few days later, he named the United States and said that Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs Donald Lu had sought his removal.

The cipher was about former Pakistan ambassador to the US Asad Majeed's meeting with Lu. The former prime minister, claiming that he was reading contents from the cipher, said that "all will be forgiven for Pakistan if Imran Khan is removed from power".

Then on March 31, the National Security Committee (NSC) took up the matter and decided to issue a "strong demarche" to the country for its "blatant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan". Later, after his removal, then-prime minister Shehbaz Sharif convened a meeting of the NSC, which came to the conclusion that it had found no evidence of a foreign conspiracy in the cipher.

In the two audio leaks that took the internet by storm and shocked the public after these events, the former prime minister, then-federal minister Asad Umar, and then-principle secretary Azam could allegedly be heard discussing the US cipher and how to use it in their interest.

On September 30, the federal cabinet took notice of the matter and constituted a committee to probe the contents of the audio leaks. In October, the cabinet gave the green signal to initiate action against the former prime minister and handed over the case to the FIA. Once FIA was given the task to probe the matter, it summoned Khan, Umar, and other leaders of the party, but the PTI chief challenged the summons and secured a stay order from the court. The Lahore High Court (LHC), in July this year, recalled the stay order against the call-up notice to Khan by the FIA.

IHC to hold open court hearing on Khan's plea

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday ruled that the next hearing of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's bail plea in the cipher case will take place in an open court. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued a two-page written order in response to the prosecution's request for in-camera proceedings.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had initially sought closed-door hearings, citing the presence of "privileged" and "sensitive" documents and information. The court has, consequently, instructed the FIA prosecutors to submit a separate petition for in-camera proceedings during the upcoming hearing.

The order further said that the special prosecutor for the agency had contended that when the bail application before the trial court was argued, the public was isolated, however, the official conceded that the petitioner argued its case in open court. However, the order mentioned that the PTI counsel said he had no objection if unnecessary people were barred from

the courtroom.

The FIA prosecutors, in their request, also mentioned that the hearing of the case in the special trial court was also held in-camera and unauthorised people were asked to leave the courtroom. "Be that as it may, Section 14 of the Official Secret Act, 1923 permits exclusion of the public from the proceedings, however, the reading of the section shows that if such is to be undertaken, the prosecution has to make an application," it added.

The court mentioned that the prosecution may move an appropriate application if it is interested in the public's exclusion from the proceedings.

In a separate hearing, the IHC declared null and void the authorities' notification to keep PTI chairman in Attock jail. In a written order, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq approved the request to transfer Khan to Adiala jail. The court stated that the PTI chief had been sentenced to three years in the Toshakhana case.

The trial court had directed to keeping the PTI chief in Adiala Jail, but due to security concerns, he was transferred to the

Attock jail to complete his sentence on the recommendation of the Inspector General of Prisons. Despite the suspension of his sentence in the Toshakhana case by the IHC on August 28, the former prime minister remained incarcerated in the prison as he was also arrested in the cipher case.

The additional advocate general of Punjab stated that shifting Khan to Adiala jail poses a security risk. Under-trial prisoners of all cases registered in the federal capital are kept in the Adiala jail, while only convicted prisoners can be shifted to any jail in Punjab. The court said that Khan, as a former prime minister, is entitled to better class facilities in jail.

In its written order, the court stated that the PTI chairman's lawyer had requested the provision of gym equipment to his client in jail; however, the court said it cannot issue such instructions because it is not clear whether such facilities are allowed or not. The superintendent jail, the court said, is the authorised authority in this regard, and appropriate requests should be filed with them.

Promotion under PSP rules: PHC reserves verdict

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali reserved judgment in promotion case of police officers serving at Basic Pay Scale (BPS-18) seeking elevation from 2015 under Police Services of Pakistan (PSP) rules, on Monday.

Deputy Attorney General Iltaf Khan, Sangeen Khan advocate and counsel for petitioner Anwar-ul-Haq appeared on behalf of District Police Officers Orakzai, Swat Salah-u-Din and Shafiullah respectively along with six other officers.

The writ stated that petitioners were promoted to Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) in 2012 while Governor

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa forwarded their candidature to Central Selection Board in 2015 for promotion to BPS-18 as per PSP rules but to no avail.

Latterly, the petitioners were promoted to BPS-18 but they are eligible since 2015, the writ argued. The counsel argued that petitioners had served at key positions in sensitive stations during war against terrorism.

Central Selection Board has jurisdiction to promote petitioners to the next grade under PSP rules but unfortunately, it doesn't happen, the counsel added. He argued that the petitioners would be evaluated to senior positions if their promotion is considered from earlier dates as per law and requested for upgradation from 2015.

The Deputy Attorney General argued that the provincial government has competent jurisdiction for the promotion of petitioners because they are provincial cadre officers. However, PHC inquired how would exercise the power of federal or provincial government, because PSP rules lay in the jurisdiction of the federation. PHC further observed that informed the court regarding jurisdiction for promotion in this regard.

DAG further argued that the petitioners are employees of the provincial government and it is the competent authority for promotion. DAG added that he will submit some necessary synopsis which will clear the situation while PHC reserved judgment after the conclusion of arguments.

ECP all set to unveil new delimitations

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to approve initial delimitations on Wednesday (tomorrow) as the work entered its final phase. The process of initial delimitations for the national and provincial assemblies has entered its final phase.

The ECP committees completed their work on initial delimitations under digital census data which would be approved tomorrow. The initial delimitations will be publicised following the approval of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ECP members.

For the National Assembly (NA), the voter quota for Punjab province was fixed at 905,595, 913,000 for Sindh, 907,913 for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 930,900 for Balochistan and 787,954 for Islamabad. The voter quota for the Punjab Assembly will be 429,929, 428,431 for the Sindh Assembly, 355,270 for the KP Assembly and 292,047 for the Balochistan Assembly.

Pakistan Navy ship gifted to United Kingdom as goodwill

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Transfer Agreement Signing Ceremony for the ex-Pakistan Navy Ship TARIQ to Falls of Clyde International (FOCI) of United Kingdom was organized at Pakistan High Commission in London. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the ceremony as Chief Guest. Former First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff Royal British Navy, Admiral Lord Alan West attended the ceremony as Guest of Honour.

Ex PNS TARIQ was formerly decommissioned by Pakistan Navy on 4 Aug 23 and has been gifted by the Government of Pakistan to a UK based firm Falls of Clyde International (FOCI) that plans to convert the ship into a floating museum. The ship will be on static display at Clyde

Maritime Heritage Centre in Glasgow as a symbol of common naval heritage of the Royal and Pakistan navies.

Speaking on the occasion, Admiral Lord Alan West said that the close relationship between the navies and nations of Pakistan and UK are clearly shown by the historic agreement focused on one ship that served both each countries over many years.

While addressing at the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi acknowledged the meritorious services of PNS TARIQ for the defence of Pakistan. The Chief Guest hoped that handing over of TARIQ to FOCI will further strengthen the bonds of friendship between UK and Pakistan as the ship will continue to symbolize the shared maritime heritage of both the navies in times to come.

The historical ship served in the Royal Navy as HMS AMBUSCADE for 18 years and participated in the Falklands War before being inducted and re-commissioned in Pakistan Navy as PNS TARIQ in 1993. The ship served for over 3 decades in PN & distinguished herself on many operational deployments, earning the reputation of a versatile, agile and ever-ready combat ship. The ship was famously involved in Search and Rescue mission in Maldives during the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2005 which helped save precious lives of 377 tourists belonging to various nationalities.

The ceremony hosted by High commissioner of Pakistan to UK, H.E. Dr Mohammad Faisal was attended by Director FOCI, Mr David O'Neill, veterans from Royal Navy and representatives of Pakistani community in UK.

Swedish police open arson case after mosque fire

STOCKHOLM (Agencies): Swedish police said on Tuesday that they were investigating whether a fire that reduced a mosque to rubble the previous day in central Sweden was arson.

"The investigation into the fire is continuing. Police will question witnesses and verify whether there were security cameras in the area," the police said in a statement on their website. The fire broke out on Monday around noon in Eskilstuna, a town of 108,000 people 150 kilometres (93 miles) west of Stockholm, causing no injuries, a police spokesman told AFP.

There are no suspects and no arrests have been made. "The mosque is almost completely destroyed, nothing can be saved," mosque spokesman Anas Deneche told AFP. Deneche said the mosque had been the target of several acts of violence in the past year and his family had been threatened.

"But it's still too early to draw any conclusions (about the cause of the fire), we'll have to wait for the

police to do their work," he said. Police said they were investigating several leads but provided no other details. Between 15,000 and 20,000 Muslims live in Eskilstuna. The mosque fire coincides with a spate of public desecrations of the Holy Quran in Sweden in recent months. The burnings have sparked widespread outrage and condemnation in Muslim countries.

The country has condemned the desecrations of the Holy Quran but upheld its laws regarding freedom of speech and assembly. The government has vowed to explore legal means of stopping protests involving the desecration of holy texts in certain circumstances, though a majority appear to be opposed to such a change.

In July, the United Nations Human Rights Council approved a resolution on religious hatred, which was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. The resolution called for the UN rights chief to publish a

report on religious hatred and for states to review their laws and plug gaps that may "impede the prevention and prosecution of acts and advocacy of religious hatred".

The same month, the UN General Assembly adopted, by consensus, a Moroccan resolution, co-sponsored by Pakistan, calling for countering hate speech and strongly deploring attacks against places of worship, religious symbols and holy books.

The resolution, titled 'Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech', won the approval of the 193-member assembly and stated: "Strongly deploring all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their religious symbols, holy books, homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law."

PMS induction into PAS rejected

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a fervent statement, the Association of Administrative Federalism, Pakistan, led by President Noman Wazir, has vehemently opposed the induction of Provincial Management Services (PMS) into the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS). The organization is resolute in its position that PAS (Pakistan Administrative Service) and Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) recruitments, promotions, and postings on provincial subjects are unconstitutional.

The Association views the recent notification of newly inducted PMS/PCS officers into PAS Grade 19 as an attempt to legitimize an unconstitutional service through Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs), circumventing parliamentary and provincial assembly procedures.

The federal government, through SRO 1046(1)2020 dated 14-10-2020, and a subsequent notification on 12 March 2021, amended the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) rules, altering the definition of

"Federal government" and "provincial government" to "Prime Minister and the person authorized by him" and "Chief Minister and the person authorized by him," respectively.

Subsequently, the Secretary of the Establishment Division, under this SRO, assumed the role of "the government" and modified the Intra-Provincial Cadre Change (IPCC) formula from percentage-based to fixed numbers. This confidential formula, used since 1993, reserves provincial posts for PAS during caretaker governments, a fact revealed only in 2020.

The induction of Provincial Management Services (PMS) and Provincial Civil Services (PCS) into Pakistan Administrative Service Rules, 2020, via SRO 274(I)/2021, as notified by the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC), is considered a transgression by the Association. Article 242(1) of the Constitution, which governs the establishment of Public Service Commissions, is cited as the basis for their argument. The Association further

asserts that FPSC has exceeded its jurisdiction, leading to a distortion of the constitution. To address these concerns, the Sindh government established a committee chaired by Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Minister of Local Government, Forest, and Information. PAS officers were part of this committee. Minutes from May 4, 2021, reveal that SRO-1046 encroaches upon provincial government authority by reserving and appropriating posts related to provincial affairs without prior consultation, as required by CSP rules of 1954 (Section 17). The "saving clause" (Article-241) is considered irrelevant, as separate Civil Servant Acts under Article 240-A and Article 240-B have been enacted by respective legislatures.

In conclusion, the Association of Administrative Federalism emphatically rejects the induction of PMS/PCS into PAS and refuses to endorse what they view as an unconstitutional and illegitimate colonial service. They assert that Administrative Federalism must prevail.

PM says slashed

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"apparent success". Kakar expressed confidence that Pakistan had a "very shining and promising future and would come out of the economic mess and security challenges". On Pakistan's democratic process, he said even democracies die if political differences are turned into enmities.

"If we turn our political differences into personal enmities, the kind of liberal democracy which we are hoping for would have very serious challenges and there would be forces who would jump in and rationalize the sort of a governance structure which probably would not be that great for many political players in the country," he said. He said Pakistan desired meaningful dialogue with all its neighbours including India.

"We do want peace with India but with justice, which is linked with the resolution of the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the United Nations Security Council to hold a plebiscite in the valley. He said India was pursuing a skewed political view by changing the religious and social background of Jammu and Kashmir with the introduction of Hindu population, terming it an "ambitious and dangerous" step having implications on Muslim, Christian and Sikh minorities.

Asked about the status of minorities in Pakistan, he said the government

fully supported their religious faith and rights. "The difference between the religious freedom of Pakistan and India is that Pakistan's State and the government always stands with the oppressed, not with the oppressor," he said. Kakar mentioned that after an incident of ill-treatment to Christian community in Jaranwala, the top officials including the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the army chief were firm with their public position to sympathize and empathize with the affected minorities. The attacked church was renovated within 24 hours, he said.

"Our minorities include Sikhs, Hindu and Christian minority and it is the moral, constitutional and religious duty of all the Pakistanis to protect our vulnerable groups," he said. Asked about any change in blasphemy law, he said it was out of the legislative domain of the caretaker government, but the parliament was empowered to bring any change in it. "We have to wait for a parliament and there are multiple political parties including PTI, PML-N, PPP, and others who should actually debate and have a public discourse on such issues and bring it on the floor of the parliament. If they feel that there is a need to change the law," he said.

PM lauds British Pakistani diaspora for their contributions: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Tuesday commended the

dynamic British Pakistani diaspora for their significant contributions to both countries' development and urged them to consider the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a valuable platform for investments in key sectors. The prime minister attended a dinner reception hosted in his honour by Lord Zameer Choudrey at the House of Lords, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The event was attended by a large number of British parliamentarians from various parties and a select group of prominent members from the Pakistani community.

In his address, the prime minister assured the audience of Pakistan's resilience in the face of economic and political challenges, emphasizing the nation's strategic importance and youthful population. Regarding Pakistan's democratic process, he reaffirmed the nation's commitment to democratic ideals, emphasizing the importance of an inclusive, free, and transparent election process.

The prime minister expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and underscored the enduring Pakistan-UK relationship grounded in shared values and aspirations. The reception ended with a Q&A session, during which Prime Minister Kakar gave insightful replies to the questions from the British parliamentarians. The event offered a great opportunity for a constructive dialogue on issues of shared interests.

LHC gives RPO one week for recovery of Sh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (INP): Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench on Tuesday ordered regional police officer (RPO) Rawalpindi to immediately recover and release former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed within a week and submit a report in this regard in the court.

The court adjourned hearing of the case till October 2. RPO Khurram Ali appeared in the court and expressed his ignorance about kidnappers. He sought one week's time for recovery of the senior politician. Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench Justice Sadaqat Ali heard the petition filed against detention of former interior minister Rashid. The RPO attended the case hearing. The court asked the RPO about progress in the case. The police officer replied that Rashid was not in custody of Rawalpindi police. He further told the court that the place from where Rashid was detained did not fall in their jurisdiction.

Rashid's lawyer said the AML head was arrested by the Rawalpindi police and they had proofs about that. The court said, "Are you ready to give us in writing that Rashid is not with you? If he is recovered from Rawalpindi in future, a case will be filed against you." However, the RPO sought one week time from the court.

The court then gave the RPO one week time for recovery and release of the senior politician and two other people and adjourned case hearing till October 2.

Fatima murder case: Main accused held

KHAIRPUR (PPI): Main accused Hina Shah, who went underground for almost a month after the death of nine-year-old maid Fatima Firoo in Ranipur Pirs Haveli, was arrested by Khairpur police on Tuesday.

The accused Hina was shifted to the Women Police Station Khairpur. The accused will be produced in the anti-terrorism court tomorrow (Wednesday). According to SSP Samiullah Somroo, accused Fiaz Shah, the father of Hina Shah, convinced his daughter to turn herself in. Three days ago, Khairpur police arrested accused Fiaz Shah from Ranipur.

Fatima Farroo was employed as a domestic help at the Haveli of a local Pir Asad Shah (also arrested) in Ranipur. But on August 14, the young maid was found dead under mysterious circumstances in her house. Fatima's mother lodged an FIR in which Pir Asad Shah, his wife Hina Shah, and father-in-law Fiaz Shah had been nominated.