

Robbers loot passenger bus

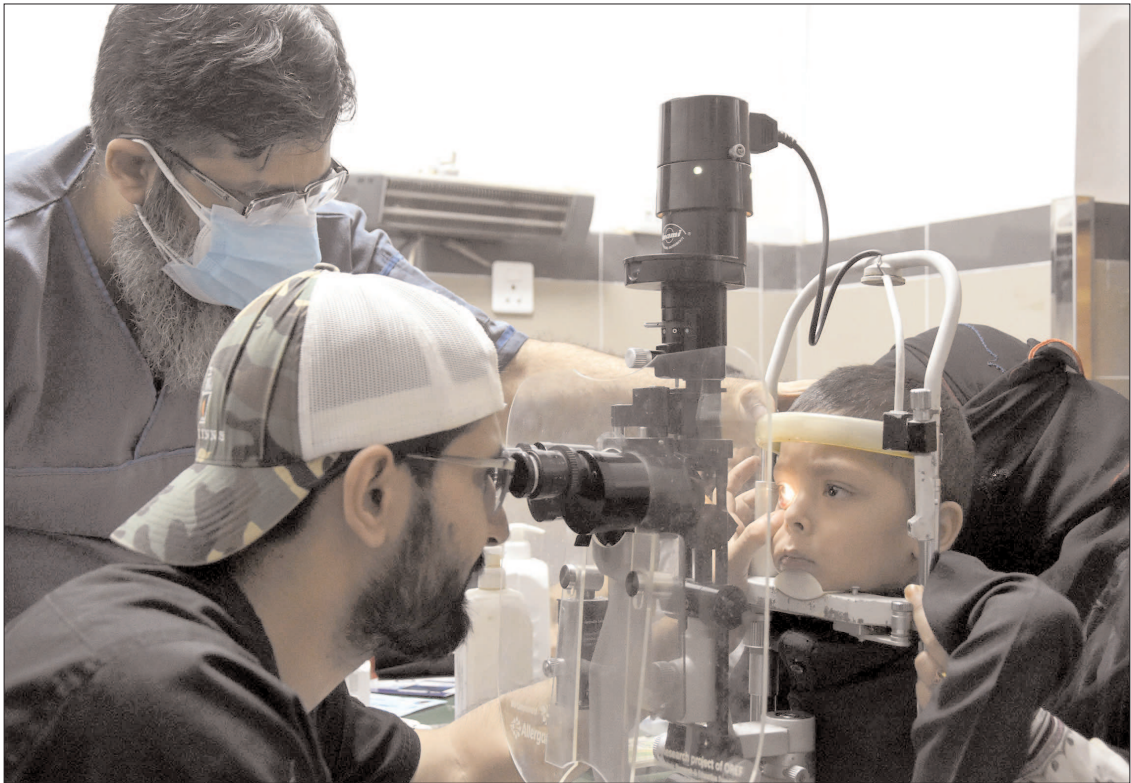
KARACHI (PPI): An intercity bus en route from Usta Muhammad, Balochistan to Karachi fell victim to a robbery, resulting in the theft of valuables from all 30 passengers onboard, police said Thursday. The bus was dropping off some passengers at a bus stop near Maymar More when a group of four armed individuals approached the bus on a motorcycle and deprived the passengers of mobile phones, cash, and other valuables.

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RAWALPINDI: A doctor examining a child suffering from an eye infection at a hospital.

Shehbaz returns to Lahore
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif returned to Pakistan from London. Shehbaz Sharif visited London twice in recent days and met Nawaz Sharif. During the meeting the two brothers discussed the political situation of Pakistan and Nawaz Sharif's return to the country.

Speaking to media persons in London, Shehbaz Sharif said ex-PM Nawaz Sharif would return home on Oct 21 and it had been decided. He said the people of Pakistan would extend a historic welcome to their leader. The former premier has asked the party leaders to remain in the country until the arrival of their leader Oct 21.

Eid-e-Milad to be celebrated today
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW) will be celebrated with great religious zeal and fervor across the country today (Friday). The day will dawn with thirty-one guns salute at the federal capital and twenty-one guns salute at all the provincial capitals.

Special prayers for the unity of Muslim Ummah and progress and prosperity of the country will be offered in the mosques after Fajr prayers. Special conferences, events and Mehfil-e-Milad are being arranged to pay respect to the last messenger whose life and teachings are beacon of light for the whole mankind.

A two-day National Seerat-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon) is commencing in the federal capital in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW). Prominent Ulama, Mashaikh and scholars will participate in the Conference and throw light on various aspects of the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW). Buildings, streets, roads, mosques and houses are being decorated with colourful lights in connection with the auspicious occasion.

The Muslims all over the world, and in Pakistan, are marking the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) on Friday (today). Preparations for the celebration of Eid-e-Milad began with the sighting of Rabiul Awwal moon. Enthusiasm of the faithful has peaked across Pakistan; buildings and mosques have been illuminated not only in big cities but in villages also. Streets have been decorated and illuminated to mark the day.

There will be a national holiday on the occasion. Processions will also be taken out in which models of holy Kaaba and the Gumbad-e-Khizra (green dome) will be carried. Children prepare models in streets according to their passion.

Special prayers, gatherings, and recitation of the Quran will also be arranged all over the country. Food will also be shared with the poor. The Muslims in India, Bangladesh and other countries in the region will also celebrate Eid-e-Milad.

Caretaker govt to begin talks with IMF

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar has revealed that the government will begin talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the quarterly review at the end of October to get the next tranche.

In a briefing to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue on Thursday, she said that she took charge on August 17 and the macro-economic indicators at that time were "very bad". The inflation had reached 38% but the "good news" was that it was declining, she added.

The interim finance czar said that in 2023 inflation reached a record level and the GDP declined to 0.3%. But the minister also believes that the inflation had stopped increasing but was not declining due to high demand. "In 2023, the production of major industries decreased by 10%,"

Dr Akhtar said. She added that in 2022 the agricultural product also declined by 2.5%.

"The country's economy was affected by the floods and Ukraine war," Dr Akhtar said, adding that in 2023, 4 million people became victims of poverty and unemployment in the country has reached 10%. "Pakistan is under pressure due to debt repayment," the federal minister further said. The caretaker government, she said, was working to restore the economy through institutional stability and her ministry was working on an economic recovery programme by taking short and medium-term measures.

"We are trying to make better economic decisions to help the future government," she said. According to her, the provinces have been instructed to reduce their expenses. The minister assured the senators that the interim government is determined to implement

the IMF programme. She also said that the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) foreign exchange reserves can cover 1.5 months of imports while the country requires \$20 billion this year.

"The country's economy is recovering, confidence is increasing," believes the finance minister. She added that Pakistan was expecting more support from friendly countries. "We have requested Saudi Arabia and China for financing." The finance minister added that the government is also requesting Riyadh to provide oil on a loan.

Last month, Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar had an introductory virtual engagement with the staff mission of the global lender and was reported to have promised steadfast implementation of the policy actions committed under the SBA during the tenure of the caretaker government to ensure economic stability.

PTI leader Farrukh Habib held

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Authorities on Friday achieved yet another success in their ongoing crackdown on the PTI leaders and workers following the incidents of violence of May 9 as now they have succeeded in picking up a party stalwart and former federal minister Farrukh Habib, his brother and four others, who had gone into hiding, from Gwadar.

According to reports, all six of them have been shifted to an undisclosed location. Confirming the news, the party's spokesman has said that one man dressed in a police uniform and seven to eight men in plain clothes came to the place where Farrukh was staying along with five others and whisked them away without arrest warrants.

The spokesman has expressed the hope that all those taken into custody would be produced in a court of law as per law. It was only yesterday that permanent arrest warrants had been issued for another PTI leader Azam Swati in the case of making controversial tweets.

LHC petition seeks recovery of PTI leader Farrukh Habib: A petition has been filed in Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday seeking recovery of former PTI minister Farrukh Habib. Abuzar Salman Niazi Advocate has filed petition in the high court on behalf of Farrukh Habib's brother.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Farrukh Habib was picked up by Punjab police personnel from a house in Gwadar yesterday, according to the petition. He was taken into custody from the house along with his brother and four other companions, petitioner said. Petitioner requested to the court for recovery of Habib and others taken into custody along with him. PTI earlier in a statement claimed that Farrukh Habib was taken into custody from Gwadar.

Nawaz to appear in court on Oct 22

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab, Rana Sanaullah has said that the party supremo Nawaz Sharif will appear in the court on October 22, the very next day of his arrival and after the rally on Minar Pakistan.

In a statement issued on Thursday, he said that Nawaz Sharif will reach Lahore on October 21, first he will address a rally at Minar Pakistan and start the election campaign of PML-N and then he will appear in court the next day. Rana Sanaullah observed that Nawaz Sharif will announce the final strategy of PML-N on October 21 at Minar Pakistan.

Caretaker Prime Minister regarding any legal action on the return of Nawaz Sharif had said that a legal opinion will be taken regarding the return of Nawaz Sharif, many legal aspects related to his return have to be looked at and whatever, we will do will be in according to the law of Pakistan.

PM offers nawafil at Roza-e-Rasool

MADINAH MUNAWRAH (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visited Masjid-e-Nabvi (the Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah and paid his respects at Roza-e-Rasool (SAW).

The prime minister offered nawafil at the Roza the Wednesday evening. Afterwards, the caretaker Prime Minister visited the International Fair and Museum of the Prophet (SAW)'s Biography and Islamic Civilization, located adjacent to Masjid-e-Nabvi. Dr Nasir Misfir Al-Zahrani, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Prophet (SAW)'s Museum, warmly welcomed the prime minister.

The prime minister was given a comprehensive briefing about the historical museum, which showcases the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as well as the Islamic civilization. PM Kakar expressed his deep appreciation for the museum and applauded the efforts made to preserve and present the rich Islamic heritage.

As a token of appreciation, Dr Nasir Misfir Al-Zahrani presented the prime minister with a shield and books, symbolizing the cherished connection between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in promoting Islamic heritage and fostering mutual understanding. The museum chronicles the Prophet's (SAW) journey and highlights significant events and teachings through multimedia. It also showcases Islamic civilization's achievements in various fields. The museum promotes inter-faith dialogue and understanding, fostering respect for diverse beliefs and cultures.

PM urges nation to follow Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s teachings of compas-

sion, unity: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar urged the nation to obey the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s teachings of brotherhood and compassion besides following his message of unity to become an example of tolerance and coexistence.

The prime minister, in his message to the nation on Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) 1445 Hijri, extended his greetings to the whole of the Pakistani nation as well as the Muslim world. He said the Muslims were fortunate to be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who was the embodiment of all traits being inimitable for every human being.

He said the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s life was a shining example of compassion, tolerance and love with his character teaching kindness, justice and mercy to become a ray of hope in today's divided world. The prime minister called for turning to the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s teachings, particularly at a time when Pakistan was faced with different challenges.

Kakar also called for compassion for the poor and needy as emphasised by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). "Let us come together to help those who are struggling, become a supporting hand for those in need, and build a better and more equal society for all," he remarked.

The prime minister said the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) was also a moment to renew the pledge to inculcate the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s values in personal lives. He prayed to Allah Almighty to make Pakistan a cradle for peace, progress and brotherhood and enable his countrymen to follow the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s teachings both collectively and individually.

COAS reviews contry's overall security situation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Lahore on Thursday and attended meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee along with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

During the Apex Committee meeting, COAS was briefed about overall security situation, including Law Enforcement Actions against electricity and gas theft, hoarding and foreign currency smuggling. Forum was also briefed on measures taken for protection of minorities and progress of operations in Kacha area.



The forum also reviewed repatriation of illegal foreign nationals.

COAS emphasised "Law Enforcement Actions against spectrum of illegal activities will continue with full force in collaboration with the LEAs and the concerned government departments to rid Pakistan from the substantial economic losses it continues to suffer due to pilferage done by different methods". Forum was also apprised on progress on SIFC and Green Punjab initiatives. COAS underscored the need for synergy among all relevant departments for gainful effects of the landmark initiatives. The participants affirmed that state institutions, government departments and people are united for progress and prosperity of the province. Earlier, upon arrival, COAS was received by Commander Lahore Corps.

US govt report accuses China of 'information manipulation'

WASHINGTON: China is spending billions of dollars globally to spread disinformation, threatening to cause a "sharp contraction" in freedom of speech around the world, warned a US State Department report published Thursday.

China's "global information manipulation is not simply a matter of public diplomacy -- but a challenge to the integrity of the global information space," said the report. "Unchecked, Beijing's efforts could result in a future in which technology exported by the PRC (People's Republic of China), coopted local governments, and fear of Beijing's direct retaliation produce a sharp contraction of global freedom of expression."

The report, released by the State Department's Global Engagement Center, said Beijing spends billions of dollars annually on "foreign information manipulation" -- through the use of propaganda, disinformation



and censorship -- while promoting positive news about China and its ruling Communist Party. At the same time, it said, China suppresses critical

information that contradicts its narratives on contentious issues such as Taiwan, human rights, and its flagging domestic economy.

"When you look at the pieces of the puzzle and you put it together, you see a breathtaking ambition on the part of the PRC to seek information dominance in key regions of the world," James Rubin, special envoy and coordinator of the GEC, told reporters. The report said China's approach to information manipulation includes promoting "digital authoritarianism," exploiting international organizations and exercising control of Chinese-language media.

These efforts could enable Beijing to "reshape the global information environment," it added. The report comes after Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday said China was seeking to surpass the United States as the "dominant power in the world - militarily, economically, diplomatically." -- Agence France-Presse

Journalist Khalid gets bail

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A local court in Islamabad Thursday granted bail to journalist Khalid Jamil in a case pertaining to spreading provocative narrative against the state institutions through social media platforms. Khalid Jamil, the bureau chief of a private news channel, was taken into custody from his residence at Media Town. Special Judge Central Shahrukh Arjumand granted post-arrest bail to the journalist against a surety bond of Rs50,000.

Pak-China relations to be stronger, more stable

BEIJING (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi has expressed confidence that relations between Pakistan and China will further strengthen and become more stable.

In a conversation with China Media Group's Urdu service in Beijing before his return home from an official visit to China, Murtaza Solangi congratulated the Chinese government and people on the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He said that the BRI has provided new development opportunities to developing countries, including Pakistan.

Speaking about the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, the flagship project of the BRI, Murtaza Solangi said that it was a golden chapter in the relations between China and Pakistan. He said that the CPEC has provided significant investment in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure, and communication sectors, creating new development opportunities and employment opportunities.

Murtaza Solangi said that Pakistan was entering a new era of CPEC, with new projects such as ML-I getting underway. He said that these projects will prove to

be a milestone in Pakistan's rail service and introduce new employment and development opportunities. The minister also expressed his confidence that the upcoming visit of the top leadership of Pakistan to China in October will begin a new era in relations between the two countries. He said that despite the changing global political landscape, Pakistan-China relations are improving with each passing time.

Solangi felicitates China on its 74th National Day: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi extended heartfelt felicitations to the People's Republic of China and its citizens on the occasion of their 74th National Day. Solangi extended the felicitation during a special ceremony hosted by the Embassy of China in Pakistan to commemorate its 74th National Day.

On the occasion, Minister Murtaza Solangi highlighted the enduring bond of friendship between Pakistan and China, acknowledging China's unwavering support to his country during its challenging times. He lauded China for its remarkable journey of development, which, over the course of 74 years, had steered its people out of darkness and led them to an

era of progress and prosperity.

The minister said China had achieved substantial progress in areas of economy, science, technology, social development, national unity, and border defence. He emphasized that China's emergence as a global economic power was a testament to the dedication and efforts of its people. Solangi commended China's presentation of its development and prosperity plan at the world stage, which had garnered respect and admiration across the globe.

He said China's development and prosperity plan underscored the nation's steadfast commitment to the principles of "shared prosperity and shared development." The level of development, China achieved during the last 74 years, had the potential to benefit not only Pakistan but also neighbouring countries in the region, he added.

He said the cherished journey of friendship between Pakistan and China would continue to thrive and strengthen in the same spirit. The minister also joined in Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and other distinguished guests in the cake-cutting ceremony of China's National Day.

Pakistan renews call for independent Palestinian State

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Jalil Abbas Jilani on Thursday said that around one-and-half to two dozen MoUs with different countries were expected to be signed within the next few days as the one-window forum of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had become popular.

The foreign minister, in a news conference, told the media that during the interactions with the foreign delegates including the business community on the sidelines of the UNGA session in New York, the response about the SIFC was very positive. He said a delegation of the Pak-US businessmen was expected next month which was also the outcome of the SIFC's establishment as well as the positive indicators of Pakistan's economy.

He said as SIFC was focused on the promotion of agriculture, IT and mining, the country was striving to enhance its IT exports to \$10 billion. The foreign minister, who apprised the media about his as well as Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-

Haq Kakar's engagements in New York, rubbished the notions of rolling back the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"The CPEC is a very transformative project. There is absolutely no question of rolling it back... I can say with 100 percent surety that you will just see progress in CPEC in the coming years. There should be no doubt about it," he remarked. He told the newsmen that apart from his address at the UNGA session, the prime minister did address the meetings on Sustainable Development Goals, Global Development Initiative, climate change and pandemic, besides holding bilateral meetings with world leaders.

Similarly, Foreign Minister Jilani said he also held around 20 bilateral meetings besides attending the OIC Contact Group's meetings on Kashmir and Palestine, besides media interactions. To a question, he reiterated that there had been no change in Pakistan's foreign policy vis-a-vis Palestine and Israel as the country always advocated for the self-determination rights

of the Palestinians.

Likening the issue of Kashmir with Palestine, the foreign minister said Pakistan's position was based on the policy of protecting its own interests as both issues involved the denial of self-determination rights. He called the participation in UNGA session the "most cost-effective" way to highlight Pakistan's position before the world under one roof and said the delegation comprised the prime minister, foreign minister, and foreign secretary.

He said many countries expressed their condemnations of the Islamophobic incidents which also persuaded Denmark to initiate legislation to criminalize the desecration of holy books with many other countries also mulling over a similar approach. The foreign minister opposed the notion of Pakistan facing any isolation rather said that except a few, all of the foreign ministers he had met, expressed their desire to interact with Pakistan's delegation, considering the country an important player on multiple forums.



LAHORE: People participating in religion procession in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) celebrations. —APP Photo

Journalists call on political parties to stand for press freedom

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the situation of journalists in Pakistan worsens in the run-up to the general elections, 16 media organisations launched a crucial appeal to the key mainstream and regional political parties involved in the election campaign to commit to concrete measures in favour of press freedom.

As Pakistan is about to hold general elections and political parties draft new election manifestos to offer voters a package they would like support for as they go to the polls, the country's leading press clubs, national and provincial unions of journalists, Paris-based global media watchdog organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and RSF's Pakistan partner Freedom Network call on mainstream and provincial heads of contesting parties to pen their commitment to defending freedom of expression and protection of journalists in their party manifestos.

"Impunity for crimes against journalists and media is very high in Pakistan, which was among the five countries included in a pilot project of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. RSF's Pakistan partner Freedom Network's Annual Impunity 2022 Report stated that there were "no Convictions in 96% of journalist killings" in the past 10 years," the joint letter said, according to a press release RSF Pakistan representative issued here Tuesday.

It said: "Such a high percentage of impunity for crimes against media practitioners and assistants is alarming

and puts journalists in extreme danger for practising journalism, thus, denying citizens of Pakistan their right to know and access information – the two fundamental rights enshrined in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, guaranteed by Articles 19 and 19A."

Karachi Press Club, Lahore Press Club, Quetta Press Club, National Press Club, Islamabad, Peshawar Press Club, Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Karachi Union of Journalists, Punjab Union of Journalists, Balochistan Union of Journalists, Khyber Union of Journalists,

Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists, Digital Media Alliance of Pakistan (DigiMAP), Pakistan Journalists Safety Coalition (PJSC)-Federal chapter, Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND), Freedom Network, Reporters Without Borders and TV journalist Hamid Mir co-authored this joint letter.

"In the run-up to elections, the ball is now in the court of the political parties as regards defending press freedom, as well as journalistic independence and pluralism, as fundamental guarantees of a functioning democracy. Pakistan's press clubs along with journalists unions, press freedom organisations and editors body for electronic media, call on the leaders of the main political parties to make a concrete commitment to our proposals, starting with the search for legislative guarantees for the protection of journalists and the fight against impunity for crimes of violence against them."

The statement recalled that tradi-

tionally, political parties were strong supporters of freedom of expression and press freedom in Pakistan. "Journalistic institutions such as press clubs and unions of journalists remained steadfast in upholding the constitutional rights to freedom of expression, of which journalism is an important tool used to exercise the right," the statement said.

"We ask these federal and regional political parties to take our call into consideration and state unambiguously that they will support press freedom, the right to reliable information and the defence of journalists, that they will end impunity for crimes against media through Pakistan's legal framework and that they will bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against journalists," the press freedom organizations, key press clubs, unions of journalists, editors of electronic media and journalist Hamid Mir emphasized.

The following political parties were delivered this joint letter to seek their commitment to defending press freedom if they are elected to national and provincial parliament in the forthcoming general elections:

Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz group), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman group), Jamaat-e-Islami, Awami National Party, Muttehida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Baluchistan Awami Party, Baluchistan National Party (Mengal group), Qaumi Watan Party, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q), Hazara Democratic Party and National Party.

Another 139 dengue cases reported

LAHORE (APP): Dengue fever cases are increasing relentlessly as 139 cases were reported in various districts of Punjab over the past 24 hours. As of Thursday, a total of 4,053 confirmed dengue cases were registered across 36 districts in Punjab this year.

The provincial capital takes lead with a distressing 1,641 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 1,035, Multan with 503, Faisalabad with 190, and Gujranwala with 163 cases. As many as 54 cases were reported from Lahore, 45 in Rawalpindi, 12 in Multan, 3 in Faisalabad, 6 in Gujranwala, and 3 cases were reported in Sheikhupura during the past 24 hours.

Furthermore, Kasur, Gujrat, Narowal, Sahiwal, and Vehari each reported 2 new dengue cases during the same period. Muzaffargarh, Chakwal, Toba Tek Singh, Mandi Bahaudin, Rajanpur, and Bhakkar each reported 1 new case. As of now, 149 dengue patients are under treatment in various hospitals across Punjab, with 55 of them located in hospitals within the Lahore district.

Secretary Health Punjab, Ali Jaan Khan, appealed to the citizens to maintain clean and dry surroundings as a preventive measure against dengue fever. He also called upon them to cooperate with health department teams in their relentless efforts to combat this outbreak. For dengue treatment, information, or complaints, concerned citizens can reach out to the health department's free helpline at 1033. Vigilance and proactive measures remain paramount in containing the alarming spread of dengue in Punjab.

City lights up on the eve of Eid Milad-un-Nabi

LAHORE (APP): Lahore has become even livelier than usual, preparing to celebrate the birth anniversary of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on Rabiul Awwal 12, being observed on Friday (tomorrow) with great traditional religious enthusiasm and devotion.

All mosques, shrines, historic sites, public and private buildings, markets, commercial areas, main city roads and streets have been illuminated with colourful lights and bunting. Special decor has been placed on model roads, including The Mall, Multan Road, Ferozpur Road, Jail Road and Gulberg Main Boulevard.

Strings of fairy lights, festoon buildings and houses of the provincial metropolis and some even adorned with flags specially prepared in relevance to the occasion. Echoes of Na'ats, Hamd resound in streets as mosques across the city present a spectacle, decorated with jubilant lights. Capturing the true spirit of the auspicious occasion, citizens are seen offering food to the needy, more often than the usual, while neighbours and relatives send each other sweet dishes in the spirit of celebration.

Meanwhile, ahead of the day, religious scholars including ulema and other speakers are paying glorious tribute to the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Upon Him) for his great and remarkable services for showing a straight path and giving a right direction to the humanity through flourishing and

conveying the message of Allah Almighty particularly for the Muslim Ummah besides upholding the teachings of Islam. The city streets and roads including bazaars and shopping centres have been beautifully decorated with lights and colorful banners, depicting the writings about celebration of the birthday of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

The 13 gates of Walled City have also been decorated and some makeshift gates have been erected at all major roads and streets in all areas of the city in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations.

For a night view, private and public buildings are being beautifully illuminated with colored lights to express jubilation over the most sacred day in the Islamic history, the world over.

A large number of Lahorites and other nearby area residents throng to view the illuminated view of Railway Station building and shrine of Data Darbar, decorated with colourful lights on the eve of Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations. Various Eid Milad-un-Nabi processions and rallies will be taken out in provincial metropolis and other cities of the province, which would be the hallmark of the sacred day.

Likewise, ulema and scholars in their sermons at the Milad processions would pay tribute to Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Milk 'sabeels' will be set up by various Islamic bodies and organization along the entire routes of the Milad processions in the city and

the adjoining areas.

Cooked food will be distributed among people including the poor, orphans and downtrodden to mark the jubilation over the sacred day of Eid Milad-un-Nabi. The Eid Milad-un-Nabi processions will be taken out and 'Mahaafil-e-Milad' will be hosted in all areas of the city to celebrate the sanctified day and an icon of exceptional religious significance in over 1400 years old Islamic history.

Major ceremonies, to be followed by the Eid Milad-un-Nabi processions, to celebrate the sacred day, will be held at the provincial capital as well as in Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujrat, Sargodha, D.G. Khan, Sahiwal, Sialkot including villages, towns, tehsil headquarters, and districts of the province. However, even as citizens find themselves jubilant in celebration, the prices of celebratory food items have risen significantly.

It is estimated that makeshift stalls, especially set up ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, have raised the prices of flags, badges, lights, bunting and miniature models of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sandals, among other items, by 30 to 50 per cent from those of the last year.

It is worth mentioning here that the main Milad procession will be taken out from the Lahore Railway Station and it will pass through its traditional route before culminating at Data Darbar. Prominent religious scholars and ulema will highlight various aspects of Seerat-un-Nabi.

CM Naqvi urges people to stop being pessimistic

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi urged the people to stop being pessimistic about Pakistan and work for its development.

Chief Minister Naqvi addressed the Rahmat Ul Lil Alameen (SAW) Conference in Lahore on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering of religious scholars at the conference, CM Naqvi said that the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) was never disappointed and true followers of the holy prophet could also not disappoint at any stage.

Showing some optimistic side of the development of the

country, CM Naqvi also announced that rice exports from Punjab would reach two billion dollars this year, doubling the amount from last year.

CM Naqvi stressed the importance of protecting the rights of minorities and said that after the Jordanwala incident, Christians were allowed to worship in mosques in the morning.

He said that the Prophet Muhammad laid the foundation of the Riyasat-e-Tayyaba (Holy State) and if people believed even one word of his teachings, their lives would change.

Later, CM Naqvi visited the Alhambra Arts Council

at Mall Road and saw a calligraphy exhibition at the Al-Hamra Art Gallery in connection with the celebrations of 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal.

He expressed deep interest in the art of calligraphy of the name of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) and appreciated the artists for their high-quality work.

Secretary Information Ali Nawaz Malik presented a souvenir of beautiful calligraphy to CM Naqvi. Provincial Ministers Azfar Ali Nasir, Amir Mir, Mansoor Qadir, and Secretaries of Awqaf, Information and other officials were also present on this occasion.

LDA demolishes 14 properties

LAHORE (APP): In a recent series of operations, Lahore Development Authority on Thursday demolished another 14 illegal properties, targeting various areas, including Thokar Niaz Baig, Canal Road and their surroundings.

Two illegal constructions on Thokar Niaz Baig, Canal Road were demolished by the teams, reinforcing their commitment to combating unauthorized structures.

Additionally, the crack-down on commercialization fee defaulters resulted in the sealing of more than 12 properties. These properties encompassed private banks, grocery stores, shopping centers, food outlets, and various other retail establishments. The sealing was prompted by violations related to parking spaces.

The entire operation was carried out under the vigilant supervision of Director Town Planning-II Sidra Tabassum, ensuring that it proceeded efficiently and in line with the city's urban planning policies.

It's worth noting that prior to these actions, multiple notices had been issued to the these properties, giving them an opportunity to rectify their infractions.

SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No: 77/1 of 2023 Date of hearing: 13-11-2023 Suit for the recovery of Rs. 884,083/- HBL Through its Manager, Khar Branch Bajaur vs M/S Bajaur Filling Station, through Abdul Azeem Khan, R/o:- Khar Nawagi road, Sadiq abad Khattak Distt: Bajaur Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.884,083/- Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 26-09-2023 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar Banking Court,1 Peshawar

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING (Single stage two envelope E-Bidding System)

1. C & W Department (Building Division, Bannu), Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from the eligible firms/bidders in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage two envelope procedure for the following works:

S. No.	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Tender Form Entry Fee	Bid Security +S/ Duty	Period of completion	Last date of submission of Bids and time	Date of opening of Technical Bid	Date of opening Financial Bid
1	Re-Constn: of 300 Govt. Schools (100 Pry: 100 Middle & 100 High) (B&G) on need basis in K.P, A.D.P. No. 3/86/200131 (2020-21 to 2022-23)							
1.	SH:- Reconstr: of GPS Kalan mira Khel District Bannu.	C-5	0.03%	2% on E/C+ S/D	As per W/Order	17/10/2023 At 12.00 PM	17/10/2023 At 12.30 PM	Date of opening Financial bid will be announced after the approval of Tech: bids from the competent authority.
2.	Reconstr: of GGPS Zulqadir Mandan District Bannu.	C-5	--do--	--do--	--do--	--do--	--do--	--do--

2. Bid documents and instruction to bidders can be downloaded from C&W web site (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date/time.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS (KPRA Single stage two envelope bidding procedure)

- Technical bid/ proposal should accompany the following:
 - Certificate that Bid Security in the shape of Call deposit (original) has been enclosed in financial bid.
 - Enlistment Order of C&W Department (photocopy)
 - Renewal of registration for CFY 2023-24 (Photocopy)
 - National Identity Card (CNIC Photocopy)
 - Pakistan Engineering Council registration copy for calendar year 2023-24
 - Form H of the Company/ Firm.
 - Documents showing general capabilities, financial soundness, general and relevant experience record, personnel capabilities, equipment capabilities and Income Tax/ NTN Certificates.
 - Any other document to support the technical bid.
- Technical evaluation will be carried out on marks threshold in passing all the fields including PEC Registration, Enlistment with C&W Deptt., Tax Payer proof, Relevant experience in past 05 years, Performance, Technical Personnel, required Equipment, Financial status, Auditors report, Managerial capabilities, Litigation status etc.
- Incomplete/ Conditional / Electronic bids and bids received after closing time shall not be entertained. Bids shall be signed by authorized persons.
- Bid security 2% in shape of call deposit (in Original) and 0.03% Tender Firm Entry Fee of the estimated cost in cash (non-refundable) should be enclosed along with bidding documents.
- The contractors quoting their bids upto a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security to the extent of 2% of Engineer Estimate only.
- The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit alongwith their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer Estimated Cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of Additional Security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Govt. and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer Estimated Cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate alongwith detail rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security then they said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted alongwith such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Govt. and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons therefor.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids are may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- After commencement of work by the successful bidder, the procurement entity may replace the additional security with a bank guarantee of the same amount from the schedule banks, if the already deposited security is not in the form of bank guarantee.
- The additional security shall be released to the contractor in (04) Four installments i.e. r. 1st Installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 25% of the project 2nd Installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 50% of the project 3rd Installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 75% of the project & the 4th Installment of 25% to be released after 100% completion of the project.
- Any bidder who provides incorrect information, fake documents should be disqualified.
- Time allowed for completion of the work is as specified in the NIT which will start from the issuance of work order.
- Bids will be valid for Ninety (90) days.
- Successful Bidder should sign the agreement with the department within stipulated time after acceptance of bid.
- Call Deposit of Scheduled Banks shall be acceptable.
- If the evaluated bid costs of two or more than two bidders are same then the successful bid will be declared through draw.
- A copy of the technical proposals in the required format is mandatory and to be uploaded as a part of E-Bidding before submitting Financial Bids.
- Scanned copy of bid security i/c Tender Entry Fee shall be submitted electronically along with technical bid on E-Bidding System.
- Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest electronic bidder for the specific work will be retained by the Department till the approval of bids.
- The bidder must be enlisted with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority as per KPRA Rules.
- Pay Order is not acceptable as per Notification No. of KPRA vide No. KPRA/M&E/Estt/1-12/2017-18, dated: 05/04/2018.
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act XXVII of 2019 2nd Schedule under S.No.14, in case of projects funded under the Government's ADP Budget, Tax shall be charged at the rate of Two Percent (2%).
- Venue of bids opening is **office of the Executive Engineer, Building Division Bannu.**

Note: 1. Differential amount, if a contractor quote e.g. 25% below Engineer Estimate bid than he has to deposit alongwith his bid 2% bid security and 25% Additional Security of Engineer Estimate.
2. It is mandatory to all contractors, who are participating in the bidding should sign every page of their brochure with page numbering and mentioning here total No. of Pages i.e. 1 of 200 before submitting in the office of the undersigned, unsigned brochure will not be considered in the bidding process.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
BUILDING DIVISION BANNU

INF (P) 2371/23

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

TENDER NOTICE

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT BACHA KHAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PESHAWAR

1. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is inviting tenders from Companies / Firms / Joint Ventures and Sole-Proprietors in accordance with the criteria for eligibility of bidders as described in detail in tender terms & conditions on a single stage / two-envelope basis, i.e. Technical & Financial offer for award of following concession at Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA/P).

CONCESSION NAME	RESERVE PRICE (P.M.)	LICENSE PERIOD	TIMINGS & CONTACT PERSON DETAILS	LAST DATE OF PURCHASE OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	TENDER FEE (NON-REFUNDABLE)	DATE, TIME & VENUE OF SUBMISSION	DATE, TIME & VENUE OF OPENING
Placement of 10 Branding Cut Outs inside Conveyor Belt area at International and Domestic Arrival Lounges	Rs. 236,000/-	Three (03) years	0900 to 1700 hours on working days Dy. Director Commercial CAA BKIA/P, Peshawar Tel: 091-9211517	16th October, 2023	Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only)	17th October, 2023 at 1100 hrs C.O.O. / APM Office BKIA/P Peshawar	17th October, 2023 at 1130 hrs C.O.O. / APM Office BKIA/P Peshawar

2. For a detailed Tender Notice kindly visit: www.caapakistan.com.pk & www.ppra.org.pk

DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL & ESTATES
Headquarters, Civil Aviation Authority, Terminal – 1, Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, Pakistan
PID/K/1001/23 Telephone: +92 21-99242531, Fax: +92 21-99242532, E-mail: dcc@caapakistan.com.pk
www.caapakistan.com.pk



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a special meeting of provincial cabinet.

Minister underscore critical importance of water resources

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a consultation workshop titled "Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan," Engineer Ahmed Jan Khan, the Caretaker Minister for Irrigation and Communications & Works in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, underscored the critical importance of water resources and their responsible management.

He invoked Islamic principles and stressed the need for sustainable practices in the face of climate change. The workshop, held in collaboration with UK Aid and the International Water Management Institute, brought together experts to discuss the challenges faced by Pakistan's water governance and the urgent necessity of safeguarding this precious resource for future generations.

During his address, Minister Ahmed Jan Khan highlighted the indispensable role of water in sustaining life, remarking that "the survival of life is not possible without water."

He emphasized that water is a divine gift and a responsibility bestowed upon humanity by Allah, and it is our duty to use this precious resource judiciously.

Drawing from Islamic teachings, the minister emphasized that Islam advocates the responsible and efficient use of water while discourages wasteful practices. He called upon all citizens to heed these teachings and contribute to the conservation of water resources.

Considering the escalating challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation,

Minister Ahmed Jan Khan emphasized the urgent need for robust water management practices and sustainable measures to protect water resources for future generations. He acknowledged that climate change threatens water availability and quality, making proactive conservation measures imperative.

The workshop delved into discussions on water governance and the unique challenges faced by Pakistan in this regard. Special attention was given to addressing the existing threats to water resources arising from the effects of climate change. Experts stressed the importance of enhancing the water resource management system and implementing a comprehensive water accountability framework.

In his concluding

remarks, the caretaker minister reiterated that water's significance cannot be overstated, as it plays a pivotal role in sustaining life and fostering prosperity.

He reminded attendees that Pakistan is blessed with abundant water resources, vital for drinking, agriculture, and energy production. Minister Ahmed Jan Khan urged responsible management and utilization of these resources to ensure their availability for future generations, even in the face of mounting global challenges.

The consultation workshop served as a platform for constructive dialogue among experts, officials, and stakeholders, reinforcing the commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's water resources through effective governance and sustainable practices.

Minister for Interior visits FF Steel

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Minister for Interior, Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti paid a visit to FF Steel's head office with an aim to revitalize and fortify the economic prospects of the steel sector, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

During his visit, Sarfaraz placed particular emphasis on comprehending the economic landscape and its repercussions on the steel industry.

The notion of the discussion highlighted the key indicators to help the economy with political instability, massive currency depreciation and shortage of raw materials.

Subsequent discussions between Sarfaraz Ahmad Bugti and former Senator Nauman Wazir, Chairman FF Steel concluded in an agreement that industries are the enablers of long-term economic growth and FF Steel eagerly anticipates collaborating to bolster Pakistan's economic stability. Their commitment reflects a positive step towards a stronger and safer economic future for the nation.

D&SJ Hidayat appointed as Asst Registrar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: District and Session Judge (D&SJ) Khyber Hidayatullah Khan has been posted as Additional Registrar (Admin) at Peshawar High Court (PHC) with immediate effect, on Thursday.

In this regard PHC has issued notification stated that Chief Justice and Judges of this court is pleased to order the posting/transfer of Judicial Officer D&SJ Hidayatullah Khan with immediate effect.

Qaiser appointed as AAG

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Syed Qaiser Ali Shah Advocate has been appointed as Additional Advocate General (AAG) at Advocate General Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In this regard, Department of Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights stated that Syed Qaiser Ali Shah appointed as Additional Advocate General Peshawar with immediate effect as per Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Appointment of Law Officers Act.

Trader kidnapped

PESHAWAR (INP): A trader was kidnapped from Peshawar's Saddar area on Thursday. According to CCTV footage of the incident, the kidnappers came to a shop in a white car and took the trader named Ikram with them.

On the other hand, police have said they are investigating the incident on technical grounds and have obtained CCTV footages from the cameras installed along different routes in order to get to the culprits.

Over a week ago, police in Peshawar in an operation had safely recovered two transporters abducted for Rs100 million ransom and also arrested one of the kidnappers.

Some men had kidnapped a transporter along with his friends from near Sarband Police Station in the Achini Double Road area on September 6.

Later they shifted them to an undisclosed location and demanded Rs100 million from their families in ransom. The incident was reported to Sarband Police Station on September 17, 2023, by a man named Amanullah.

Crackdown to be held over criminals

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information & Public Relations, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has said that a small disruptive segment, constituting approximately two percent of our society, has been engaged in various illicit activities, thereby negatively impacting our nation's economic and social well-being. These elements have been linked to widespread currency smuggling, hoarding, extortion, and other serious crimes, ultimately jeopardizing peace and public order.

In response to these challenges, the State is committed to a rigorous crackdown on these disruptive elements. Stricter actions are imminent to safeguard life and property of the citizens. The Apex Committee convened in Peshawar for six long hours yesterday reviewed the ongoing measures within the province.

The Chief of Army Staff, DG ISI and Federal Interior

Minister also graced the meeting keeping in view the importance of the subject.

He said this during a press conference held at the 'ITLA'A Cell' Civil Secretariat following the caretaker cabinet meeting here on Thursday.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel emphasized the government's dedication to enhancing law and order. Plans include bolstering police capacity, tightening regulations on illegal firearms, establishing a forensic science laboratory, and tackling the issue of illegal SIM cards and drug control in the province he said.

The Provincial Minister highlighted that the government has already taken proactive measures, leading to the apprehension of individuals involved in unlawful activities, with more arrests in progress. These efforts have notably improved the overall situation in the province, underscoring the caretaker government's commitment to fostering progress during

this transitional period.

In addition to this, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel spoke about the Medical Test Scam. He acknowledged the grave injustice inflicted upon bright students and announced the decision of the caretaker provincial cabinet to re-conduct the test through KMU, within six weeks. The caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pledges to uphold the principles of merit, ensuring that intelligent students are not denied opportunities he said.

He said that the Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, has ordered the formation of a committee tasked with recommending measures for the competitive testing process in the province. Those involved in the medical test scam have been apprehended, and the caretaker government remains committed to holding both them and the parents who mislead their children accountable for their actions he said.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Information Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel addressing a press conference.

RTS orders to address woman complaint

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC/RTS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ordered Deputy Commissioner Peshawar to address woman's complaint land dispute within one month, on Thursday.

The Chief Commissioner RTS Muhammad Salim Khan along with two commissioners heard three complainants including Naem Akhtar plea seeking possession of two Kanal land from her mother inheritance.

The complainant plead-

ed that her nephew playing different tactics to grab two Kannal land after death of her mother in 2009.

Another, complainant Dr. Shahid Iqbal resident of Hayatabad approached RTS against Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) for failure in maintenance of sanitation in the premises.

PDA's Director Water and Sanitation Ashraf Khan appeared before RTS in the complaint. PDA has been obliged for provision of sanitation services in the premises two days a week on Monday and Thursday,

RTS orders stated.

RTS ordered PDA to display sign boards, cleaning of herbs& shrubs and to caught stray dogs in the jurisdiction.

However, RTS had withdrew Banaras Khan resident of Abbottabad regarding provision land's Fard due to his consecutive absence in two hearings.

In this regard, a statement issued by RTS further stated that the provision of public services in stipulated timeframe is fundamental right of every citizen and the commission will stand its protection with public.

Pashto to be introduced as compulsory subject

PESHAWAR (APP): The Private Schools Regulatory Authority (PSRA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has directed the management of all private schools in the province to introduce Pashto and other regional languages as compulsory subject.

In an official communiqué dispatched to the principals of all private schools in the province in the province have been asked to apprise the author-

ity as to whether Pashto/regional languages are being taught in their schools or and implementation of the action plan for introduction of Pashto/regional languages as compulsory subject in all private schools in true letter and spirit.

Through the dispatch, the authority has also directed the management of all private schools to submit the action plan and syllabus with them.

The directives to all private schools in the province have been issued in light of the judgment of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Peshawar for implementation of the cabinet wherein action plan for introduction of Pashto/regional languages as compulsory subject was approved in all schools, operating in the public and private sector in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: A group photo after TB screening camp held at Peshawar Jail organized by NCHD, Health Department and Dopasi Foundation Foundation.

Civil society demands to increase admission quota for minorities

PESHAWAR (APP): In a significant move to foster inclusivity and equal access to education for minority communities, civil society organizations, call upon Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to extend the existing two percent admission quota for minorities to all degree colleges and higher educational institutions across the province.

In a press release issued here Thursday, civil society organizations highlighted that despite the promising step taken by the KP government in 2021, when it approved a two percent admission quota for minority candidates in 27 public

sector universities, the actual implementation of this quota remains disappointingly low. This failure to effectively enforce the allocation underscores the urgency of extending this quota and its vital role in empowering minority communities within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The original intention behind the quota was to promote inclusivity, diversity, and equitable educational opportunities for minority groups, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and others residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"We believe that extending the two percent education quota for minorities to

all degree colleges and higher educational institutions can be a crucial step towards achieving true inclusivity and equal educational opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," stated Qamar Naseem, Program Manager at Blue Veins.

"By doing so, we not only uphold the principles of diversity and fairness but also ensure that minority communities have the chance to contribute meaningfully to society through education and skill development."

Shams Naveed member of the CSO support group an active minority rights activist said "The education quota for minori-

ties is of paramount importance as it serves as a powerful tool for promoting inclusivity, diversity, and social equity within educational institutions. By providing a dedicated percentage of seats to minority candidates, this policy not only ensures equal access to education but also acknowledges and values the contributions of minority communities".

The initiative holds particular significance in KP where minority communities have long grappled with socio-economic and educational challenges due to their smaller populations and unique cultural backgrounds.

Jazz inaugurates state-of-the-art 'Digital House' in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator inaugurated its state-of-the-art Regional Office, 'the Digital House,' on University Road in the vibrant city of Peshawar. Embodying the Jazz identity, this state-of-the-art office boasts an innovative design with spaces geared towards providing a healthier work environment.

This cutting-edge office space has been meticulously designed to cater to the diverse needs of its employees, offering a range of facilities such as wellness rooms, a state-of-the-art gym, recreational areas, sit-stands, and ergonomic seating. The office space encourages teamwork and collaboration, with spaces fully equipped to cater to virtual team collaborations, a critical part of the digital workplace strategy.

At Jazz, inclusivity is not just a buzzword but a core value. The Digital House has been thoughtfully designed to ensure accessibility for



all, including individuals with disabilities. This aligns perfectly with Jazz's vision to champion and safeguard the rights of differently-abled individuals.

Jazz has garnered recognition as an employer of choice by championing a work culture that emphasizes work-life balance and

flexibility, especially for working mothers.

Central to this ethos is the notion that employee wellness is the cornerstone of achieving organizational success.

In addition to a robust array of competitive programs, Jazz introduces the Jazz Fit initiative, a holistic

employee wellness program rooted in the SEMP model: Social, Emotional, Mental, and Physical well-being.

The Jazz Digital House is not just a workplace; it's a testament to Jazz's unwavering commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and employee well-being.

Preparations for Livestock, Agri-Fisheries Expo finalized

PESHAWAR (APP): Preparations for International Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries Exhibition scheduled during the first week of October 2023 have been completed, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Last presentation regarding preparations regarding the expo was given to the Secretary Livestock, Dr Mohammad Israr. The two-day expo scheduled for October 4-5 at Paramount Club on Northern Bypass will be inaugurated by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gov-

ernor, Haji Ghulam Ali.

The aim of the expo is to make farmers aware of modern farming and shift them towards profitable farming by improving production.

Beside, Vice Chancellors of all Agricultural Universities, provincial ministers and secretaries to the provincial government, thousands of the dairy agri-fishery farmers will also attend the inaugural session of the exhibition.

The crucial meeting for finalizing preparations for the expo was attended by

the president, Livestock Farmers Welfare Association, Mohammad Asif Awan, Qazi Zia-ur-Rehman, Ruqia Nadeem, Chief Executive Inbox Pakistan, Waqas Ali Jatt, Director General (DG) Livestock, Dr Alamzeb Khan, DG Fisheries, Dr Khisro Kaleem, DG Livestock (Research), Dr Ijaz Ali, Deputy Secretary Livestock, Yousaf Ali, Muddasir Mushtaq and other senior officials of the livestock, agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Secretary Livestock, Dr Israr assured that the provincial government is providing all possible cooperation for the success of the expo.

He said that about 60 national and international firms and companies are participating in the expo and will highlight their modern technologies. Similarly, he said that 10,000 farmers will also participate.

He said that during the technical session, modern machinery and technology will be introduced to the participants.



In brief

Army martyr laid to rest F.P. Report

KARAK: Another son of Karak sacrificed to the motherland, Lais Naik Mafkar Nazar was buried in his ancestral graveyard. Zarki Nusrati, Pakistan Army's troops saluted to the martyr. The deceased received his primary education in his native village of Takht Nusrati and joined the Pakistan Army on November 10, 2006. After completing his training, he became a part of the 34th Punjab Regiment, a distinguished unit of the Pakistan Army. Martyr Lais Naik Mafkar Nazar who died protecting mother earth in Sathan on 26th September 2023. The funeral prayer of martyr Lais Naik Mafkar Nazar was performed in Zarki Nusrati ancestral cemetery. Scholars and thousands of local people participated, on this occasion, under the leadership of Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Muhammad Usman, the soldiers of Pakistan Army saluted the martyr Lais Naik Mufkar Nazar and handed over the flag of Pakistan and the martyr's uniform to the family members. At the end, Maulana Saqlain Durrani and Mufti Ashfaq paid their respects to Shaheed Lais Naik Mafkar Nazar and prayers were also offered for his elevation.

ASJ hold body meeting F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Additional Session Judge (ASJ) Maidan Action Committee held an emergency meeting regarding transfer of Camp Court and other issues under the chairmanship of Haji Saeed Gul, President Action Committee condemned the cruel decision of High Court and established a permanent session court in Maidan. Demanded and passed a unanimous resolution that there is peace on the field and some officers are trying to defame it under conspiracy. In the meeting, the meeting demanded restoration of BS departments in the degree college and immediate completion of shortage of teaching staff. Leaders of other political parties including Malik Amanullah Khan People's Party, Inayatullah Armani PTI, Malik Asrar and Malik Shaukat Advocates from the lawyers' community, Hafizullah Khaksar Advocate from Jamaat-e-Islami, Atiqur Rehman, Fazl Wadud and other elders attended the meeting.

High School inaugurated F.P. Report

MIRANSHAH: Under the direction of General Officer Commanding Seven Division Major General Anjum Riaz, the Government Boys High School built in Shamzan Kot Drazanda under Corporate Social Responsibility. Did the renovation also included the construction of six classrooms and electric wiring work. In addition, more facilities were provided for the curriculum and extracurricular activities of the students in the school. Addressing the locals on the occasion, the Wing Commander said that with the cooperation of the Pak Army MPCL, all the public sectors of North Waziristan, especially the health and education sector, are constantly striving for peace and prosperity in the area. Will cause, God willing Local countries and leaders expressed their happiness over the establishment of Government Boys High School in the area and appreciated the role of Pak Army's restoration in North Waziristan as well as working in the field of education.



GILGIT: IGP Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt visiting Central Jail Gilgit and taking brief from the officials of jail about security and other issues of prisons.

AWKUM secure 1st position in research

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) Shines in Times Higher Education Ranking 2024 and emerged as a frontrunner in the highly esteemed publication. The results, announced have placed AWKUM at the pinnacle of academic excellence in various categories.

AWKUM has secured 1st position in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2nd position in Pakistan in the Times Higher Education Ranking 2024. This recognition underscores the university's dedication to excellence in education and research. AWKUM's influence extends far beyond national borders, as the institution has been ranked 601-800/ 1904 overall and an impressive 313th worldwide in research quality.

This global recognition speaks volumes about the university's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and scholarly pursuit. What truly sets AWKUM apart are its extraordinary scores. With a Citation Impact Score of 96.2 and a Research Strength Score of 99.8, the university has demonstrated unparalleled prowess in producing impactful research and nurturing academic talent.

In his message, the vice chancellor congratulated the students, faculty, and staff of AWKUM and said that the outstanding achievement is a testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of the faculty members at AWKU. Their commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge and nurturing the next generation of scholars has been instrumental in this success.

This remarkable milestone not only cements AWKUM's position as a leader in higher education in Pakistan but also highlights its global relevance in the realm of research and academia. As the university celebrates this remarkable achievement, it remains committed to its mission of advancing knowledge and shaping the future of education.

The Peace Group secures top positions in HSSC: Yusra Jamsheed, a girl student of The Peace Group of Schools and Colleges Mardan, topped the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan in the annual results of higher secondary school certificate (HSSC), announced by the relevant official.

Announcing the HSSC results, Ishrat Ali, controller of examinations, disclosed names of the top three position holders in pre-medical, pre-engineering, general science and humanities groups in a function held in the auditorium hall of BISE, Mardan.

As per the results' announcement, Yusra Jamsheed of the peace group of schools

and colleges Mardan clinched the first position by getting 1056 marks, Muhammad Saad Amir of Punjab College Mardan bagged second position by securing 1047 marks while the third position was jointly shared by Maryam Fatima of Tufail Shaheed Army College Mardan and Sanam of the Quaid-e-Azam girls college Mardan by achieving 1043 marks each. All the top three position-holders belonged to pre-medical group.

In pre-engineering, the first position was jointly shared by Faiza Ishtiaq of Girls Cadet College Mardan and Muhammad Jibran Tariq of Karnal Sher Khan Cadet College Swabi by getting 1022 marks each. Salva Zahid of the Girls Cadet College Mardan bagged second position with 1018 marks while the third position was jointly shared by Umama Wahab of the Quaid-e-Azam Girls College Mardan and Sinan Khan of The Pioneer Higher Secondary School Shargh Swabi by securing 1014 marks each.

In the general science group, Salman Khan and Muhammad Wahab Khan of The Glorious College of Science and Technology Bam Khel Swabi and Syed Muhammad Yousuf of Punjab College Mardan stood first with 990 marks, second with 986 marks and third with 983 marks respectively.

In Humanities group, the first position was jointly shared by Ruqayya Arif of The Glorious College of Science and Technology Bam Khel Swabi and Samreen Gul of F.G Girls Degree College Nowshera Cantt by gaining 967 marks, Gul Rukh of Government Girls Higher Secondary School Shaidu Nowshera bagged second position with 962 marks and Fatima Israr of Moon Light Public School and College Topi Swabi got stood as third position holder with 957 marks.

Mr. Ishrat Ali, the controller of examinations BISE Mardan, on the occasion said that total 42579 candidates of the HSSC part-I appeared in the examinations, of which 34252 were declared as successful with overall passing percentage 80.44%. Similarly in part-II, 38180 out of total 42432 candidates who appeared in the HSSC examinations were declared as successful with overall passing percentage 89.98.

Later, addressing participants of the function, Farid Khan Khattak- chairman of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan-congratulated all the top position holders. He claimed that they were going to introduce Student Learning Outcome (SLO) based examinations in all the government educational institutes related to BISE Mardan in near future with the purpose to improve the quality of education as well as their results in board examinations.

JI political committee meets admn officer in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The political committee of the Jamaat-i-Islami Lower Dir on Thursday called on the deputy commissioner Muhammad Fawad at his office. The committee members including former MPA Saeed Gul, JI district general secretary Hafiq Yaqubur Rehman, tehsil chairman Saeed Ahmad Bacha, former tehsil chairman advocate Riaz Muhammad, former tehsil nazim advocate Imran ud Din, Haji Kalimullah and others discussed various matters related to education, health, power and water supply on the occasion.

The committee also raised the issue of closure of a pathway leading to a girls' higher secondary school in Timergara and demanded of the district administration to resolve the matter positively. The JI activists also informed the deputy commissioner about the people's grievances regarding the opening of the Timergara Medical College and issues related to the district headquarters hospital Timergara. They also

pointed out that male officials had been serving in the management of girls' education in the district which according to them was a sheer violation of local norms and traditions. The JI activists demanded the deputy commissioner to take notice of the matter and replace the male officials in the girls' education. The deputy commissioner while responding to the committee suggestions assured that the administration would take up the issues with the concerned high ups.

Meanwhile a delegation of the Lower Dir chamber of commerce and industries led by its president Mian Noor Alam Bacha also met the deputy commissioner at his office. The chamber's leaders briefed the DC about the chamber's activities and problems faced by it. The DC said that traders played a vital role in the economic development of a country. He asked the traders to play their role in marketing of the locally embroidered caps, shawls and other household items.

Chairing a meeting of

the district steering committee on education at his office, the DC directed the concerned officials to take disciplinary actions against the teaching and non-teaching staff for their frequent absence from duties. The Lower Dir district monitoring officer Tariq Jamal, deputy district education officer Mehboob Ilahi, sub-divisional educational officers and other stakeholders were also in attendance.

The DC asked the education department to provide adequate staff to the schools with heavy enrollment. He also stressed on solutions to problems of schools regarding water and power supply. He directed the education officers to arrange proper training for the newly inducted schools' leaders in the district. The government high school Banda Talash headmaster Gul Rehman, principal GHSS Samarbagh Ziaud Din and headmistress GGMS Gulkor Kulsoom Bibi were awarded appreciation certificates for their active role and utilizing schools' funds on constructive activities.

20 govt schools equipped F.P. Report

KHYBER: As part of a rehabilitation program, learning, cleaning kits and other facilities were supplied to the 20 government-run schools in Landi Kotal on Tuesday. It is to be stated here that in 2022 floods had damaged scores of government schools in addition to losses to private properties.

In this connection, a gathering was organized in Government Primary School Gul Ahmad Kelley, Walibaig Khel, Landi Kotal that was attended by Assistant Commissioner (AC), Irshad Mohmand as a chief guest besides other officials, teachers and students.

Under the supervision of Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP), district administration and district education department 289 learning, cleaning kits and books were distributed among the students and teachers of government educational institutions.

Addressing on the occasion AC Irshad Mohmand thoroughly highlighted the importance of education and facilitated the SRSP and Educational department for providing learning and security kits and initiated fruitful training sessions for the teachers. He informed the participants of rehabilitation schemes of schools, initiated by the provincial government.

With support of foreign commonwealth fund, rehabilitation of the first phase of the state-run will be completed at the end of 2023.

PPP flays violence against leader F.P. Report

MARDAN: Nawabzada Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti, a prominent figure in the PPP and former federal minister, has voiced his strong condemnation of a recent violent attack on the President of People Youth Rustam. He also expressed concern over the perceived bias of the police in handling the case, calling for swift and decisive action against the perpetrators while demanding justice for the victim.

Speaking at a press conference held alongside the victim's family at the Mardan Press Club, Khawaja Muhammad Khan Hoti recounted the incident in question. He explained that a few days ago, a tenant named Muhammad Iqbal and his son Javad, who were residing in the house of People Youth President Ibrahim Khan's daughter-in-law in Rustam Bazar, brazenly opened fire in broad daylight. Instead of promptly pursuing the accused mentioned in the First Information Report (FIR), the police allegedly conducted a raid on the residence of the President of Alta People Youth, seemingly at the request of Senator Dilawar Khan and his brother. This act, according to Hoti, violated the sanctity of the home.

Hoti went on to assert that certain individuals, specifically the said senator and his brother Azam Khan, have established a monopoly in the area. They are accused of aiding the main suspect in the case, Javad, in escaping abroad overnight with official protocol.

No place for corrupt officers in Mardan, says Commissioner

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, the newly appointed Commissioner of Mardan Division, has wasted no time in igniting the flames of change and progress since assuming office just last week. With an unyielding zeal for public service, he has set the stage for an era of dedication, transparency, and efficiency in the division.

One of Commissioner Yousafzai's first acts was to rally his team of Deputy Commissioners, urging them to work with unwavering dedication and to prioritize the welfare of the general public above all else. In a passionate address, he emphasized that they were the servants of the people and, as such, must not confine themselves to their offices. Instead, he encouraged them to venture into the

heart of communities to promptly resolve the issues faced by the public.

However, Commissioner Yousafzai did not stop there. With a stern tone, he made it abundantly clear that there would be no room for leniency when it came to those engaged in corrupt practices, regardless of their position. He firmly declared, "No matter how lofty a position one may occupy, corruption will not be tolerated under my watch."

Recognizing the pivotal role of the Revenue staff in the lives of the citizens, he stressed the importance of facilitating the public and minimizing inconvenience. Commissioner Yousafzai issued a stern warning that any complaints against revenue officers would be dealt with decisively, ensuring that justice prevailed.

But his vision goes beyond administrative effi-

ciency; Commissioner Yousafzai envisions Mardan Division as a model for the entire province. His dedication and hard work are evident in his extensive career, having previously served as Commissioner in four other divisions. Mardan now marks his fifth division, and with each assignment, he has left a legacy of progress and positive change.

As Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai embarks on this new chapter in Mardan Division, his commitment to the public's welfare and his determination to root out corruption promise to elevate the region to new heights. His leadership serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring not only his team but also the entire community to work collectively towards a brighter future for Mardan Division.

Impact of inflation on mental health

Fareeha Riaz

I am writing to express my deep concern about the severe and far-reaching consequences of the high inflation rates that our country is currently experiencing. While inflation is primarily viewed as an economic issue, it is essential to recognize the profound impact it can have on the mental health of individuals and communities.

Traditionally, the strain imposed by high inflation rates has, in some instances, contributed to a rise in mental health issues and in the most heart-wrenching cases, suicidal tendencies. The emotional

toll of struggling to make ends meet and the fear of an uncertain financial future can be overwhelming.

Raise Awareness: Work with government agencies, mental health organizations, and the media to raise awareness about the link between inflation and mental health. Educating the public about available support services is crucial.

Mental Health Support: Allocate resources to expand mental health services, particularly those accessible to vulnerable populations. Ensuring that individuals in distress can access professional help is of utmost importance.

Economic Relief Measures: Advocate for

policies and initiatives that aim to stabilize the economy and control inflation. By addressing the root causes, we can alleviate some of the stressors contributing to mental health challenges.

Community Outreach: Organize community-based programs and support networks to assist individuals and families facing financial difficulties. Local initiatives can provide much-needed assistance and foster a sense of belonging. It is vital that we acknowledge the profound consequences of high inflation rates on mental health and take proactive steps to mitigate the suffering it can cause.

Viral eye disease spreading in Larkana

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Eye virus started spreading rapidly in Larkana district Larkana due to this epidemic the attendance of male and female students in educational institutions and schools was suspended. Including the children of Laga areas.

Adults have also been affected by this epidemic. Attendance of students in schools and other educational institutions of the district has been almost suspended, while the principals of schools and colleges have insisted on organizing medical camps in educational institutions. No initiative is being taken due to which there is a wave of fear among the residents who have demanded immediate medical camps in schools and colleges.

In this regard, Government Arts Degree Boys College, In other schools and colleges including Government Arts and Commerce College, Government Pilot Higher Secondary School, Government Municipal Higher Secondary School, Government High School Gajinpur, more than a thousand students have been infected with eye virus and have to stay in their homes. In this regard, the headmaster of Gajinpur High School, Qazi Jameel Ahmed Junejo, said that the virus of the eye disease is spreading rapidly due to which more than 250 stu-

dents have been affected by this disease.

They have been advised to follow the instructions of shaking hands with each other and applying cold water to the eyes frequently. A program should be made to continue the education of male and female students by organizing camps.

Municipal committees facing several crisis: Provincial Department of Town Planning and Rehabilitation Minister Mubeen Jumani has said that all the municipal corporations and town committees of Sindh, including Larkana, are in total loss, whose expenses are more than the income, 300 in each town committee and municipal.

More than 500 employees have been recruited in the corporation, while the conditions of all the districts and cities of Sindh are the same, most of the officers of the local government do not know the recruited employees. Apart from this, no development is possible while we have all. The salary of the employees has been digitized by verifying through NADRA.

Only 1100 ghost

employees have been identified from the 7 districts of Karachi, while such ghost employees may be in other districts as well. Our effort is to improve the employees of the department. Biometric system will be brought for the attendance of the employees through

which the salaries of the employees will also be made online.

While addressing the officers in the Durbar Hall of Deputy Commissioner Larkana, the caretaker provincial minister Mubeen Jumani further said that to join the caretaker government we need to eliminate corruption and The task of conducting fair and transparent elections has been assigned while the current caretaker government is neither political nor working under pressure from anyone, so the officers should not do anything wrong under the pressure of any political parties and the people.

I promise you all that every effort will be made to solve your legitimate problems. The job of sweeper in Municipal Corporation and Town Committees is reserved for non-Muslims, but unfortunately, white-clad Muslims become ghosts after being recruited here. He said that the caretaker government of Sindh is not related to any political party, none of the 10 ministers of the cabinet are related to any political party and all work sincerely and honestly. After the meeting, a delegation of journalists headed by the president of Larkana Press Club, Murtaza Kalhor, met with the supervising provincial minister Mubeen Jumani and gave a briefing to solve the problems faced by the journalists.

Plan for elimination of crimes directed

F.P. Report

BANNU: Commissioner Bannu Parwez Sabatkhel has called for formulation of coordinated and effective mechanism by police, excise and other departments to eliminate the menace of narcotics and a tribal custom Ghag in land disputes.

Chairing a meeting regarding National Action Plan (NAP) at his office in Bannu, he said that the law enforcement agencies should put in place stringent and proactive meas-

ures against drug barons and narcotic sellers. He said that eliminating narcotics related activities should be kept on priority as those involved in them were the enemies of humanity.

Among others, Lakki Marwat DC Rehmat Ali, Bannu DPO Iftekhar Shah and additional DC Islahuddin and North Waziristan additional DC Bashir Ahmad were in attendance. The divisional commissioner said that the movements of Afghan

refugees were strictly being monitored in Lakki Marwat, Bannu and North Waziristan districts and their data residing would be shared with higher quarters concerned for further necessary action.

On the occasion, a representative of Afghan commissioner submitted the data of Afghan families residing in the region legally. He also directed the relevant authorities to provide required funds for the completion of police department projects.



Curtains, sleeping with teachers: 2024 Republican debate takes strange turns

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Two White House hopefuls squabbled over curtains on live television, while a third boasted he had been sleeping with a teacher for the past 38 years who happened to be his wife as a Republican presidential debate took some strange turns. The seven Republicans on stage at their party's second 2024 presidential primary debate sought to convince voters they could be a viable alternative to frontrunner Donald Trump, who skipped the televised event.

Instead, the debate often devolved into petty fights and some bizarre comments. US Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina criticized former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley over the purchase of \$50,000 curtains at the residence of the US ambassador to the United Nations in New York. Haley, UN ambassador in Trump's administration, said the curtains had been bought during the previous Obama administration, and told Scott to "do your homework."

Scott responded by asking three times: "Did you send them back?" before the exchange devolved into cacophony with the two candidates, joined by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, talking over one another. The New York Times in 2018 reported that \$52,701 had been spent for "customized and mechanized curtains" for the residence. The article said plans to buy the curtains were



made in 2016, before Trump took office. In another moment, former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie used a question about education to mention that Democratic President Joe Biden was "sleeping with a member of the teachers' union" - a reference to his wife Jill Biden, a teacher.

Building on that comment, Trump's former vice president, Mike Pence, said he had to admit that "I've been sleeping with a teacher for 38 years" - a reference to his own wife, Karen Pence, Trump supporters claimed the level of debate showed why he was in the lead. "Trump's primary non-challengers are spending their night debating about curtains," pro-Trump con-

sultant Alex Bruesewitz posted on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter. "Trump 2024."

The debate ended with a proposal from a moderator for the candidates to write down who should be "voted off the island" to help winnow the field of candidates vying with Trump for the Republican nomination. The proposal, reminiscent of the reality TV show "Survivor," was swiftly rejected by the candidates, led by DeSantis, who said it was "disrespectful." Only Christie answered, saying he would vote off Trump. "He needs to be voted off the island, and he needs to be taken out of this process," Christie said.

Bahrain says a third soldier has died in attack

DUBAI (AP): Bahrain's military said a third soldier died of his wounds after an attack by Yemeni rebels on a Bahraini contingent patrolling Saudi Arabia's southern border. The attack, which also wounded a number of soldiers, threatened recent progress in winding down Saudi Arabia's eight-year war against the Iran-aligned rebels, known as Houthis. The rebels have not commented on the attack.

Bahrain says the rebels launched an unprovoked drone attack on the soldiers. Bahrain and its close ally Saudi Arabia condemned the attack, and the Saudi-led military coalition said it had "the right to respond at the appropriate time and place." The Pentagon condemned the attack in a statement. "Such unacceptable attacks threaten the longest period of calm since the war in Yemen began," it said. It was unclear what impact the attack would have on the ongoing peace efforts. Yemen's war began in 2014 when the Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and seized the capital, Sanaa, along with much of the country's north. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to try to restore the internationally recognized government to power. The fighting soon devolved into a stalemated proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran, causing widespread hunger and misery in Yemen, which even before the conflict had been the Arab world's poorest country. The war has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more. Saudi Arabia and Iran restored diplomatic relations earlier this year in a deal brokered by China. Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia welcomed a Houthi delegation for peace talks, saying the negotiations had "positive results." A UN-brokered cease-fire largely halted the violence, and Yemen has seen only sporadic clashes since the truce expired nearly a year ago. Bahrain's military announced the third death on its social media sites.

China issues warning for military exercises

Vietnam jails environmental activist for three years

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam has sentenced prominent environmental activist Hoang Thi Minh Hong to three years in prison on tax fraud charges. The state-run Thanh Nien newspaper said Hong, the founder of CHANGE, a now-defunct environmental campaign group, was convicted after a one-day trial in southern Ho Chi Minh City. She was found guilty of dodging nearly \$275,000 in taxes related to CHANGE, her lawyer Nguyen Van Tu told the AFP news agency.

"This conviction is a total fraud, nobody should be fooled by it," said Ben Swanton, co-director of The 88 Project charity. "This is yet another example of the law being weaponised to persecute climate activists who are fighting to save the planet." The United States and a number of human rights groups had expressed their concerns about Hong and the crackdown on CHANGE when she was arrested in June. In advance of the trial, Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged the Vietnamese government to drop all charges against Hong. "The Vietnamese authorities are using the vaguely worded tax code as a weapon to punish environmental leaders whom the ruling Communist party deems a threat to their power," Phil Robertson, HRW's deputy Asia director, said in a statement. "The government should stop punishing activists for peacefully advocating action on climate change and for green policies and drop the case against Hoang Thi Minh Hong." Hong, 51, founded CHANGE in 2013 to tackle problems related to climate change, pollution and endangered wildlife. She secured international recognition for her campaigning but abruptly shut the organisation down in October 2022.

Kim urges greater nuke arms production in response to a 'new Cold War'

SEOUL (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for an exponential increase in production of nuclear weapons and for his country to play a larger role in a coalition of nations confronting the United States in a "new Cold War," state media said Thursday. The Korean Central News Agency said Kim made the comments during a two-day session of the country's rubber-stamp parliament which amended the constitution to include his policy of expanding the country's nuclear weapons program.

The Supreme People's Assembly's session came after Kim traveled to Russia's Far East this month to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and visit military and technology sites. The trip sparked Western concerns about a possible arms alliance in which North Korea would supply Putin with badly needed munitions to fuel his war on Ukraine in exchange for economic aid and advanced Russian technologies to enhance North Korea's nuclear and missile systems. As North Korea slowly ends its pandemic lockdown, Kim has been actively boosting his partnerships with Moscow and

Beijing as he attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against Washington. He has described the world as entering a "new Cold War" and that North Korea should advance its nuclear capabilities in response. KCNA's reports on Kim's comments came a day after North Korea confirmed the release of US Army Pvt. Travis King, who is now being flown back to America, two months after he sprinted across the heavily fortified border into the North. King's relatively swift expulsion defied speculation that North Korea might drag out his detention to squeeze concessions from the United States, and possibly reflected the North's disinterest in diplomacy with Washington. KCNA said members of the assembly gave unanimous approval to a new clause in the constitution to "ensure the country's right to existence and development, deter war and protect regional and global peace by rapidly developing nuclear weapons to a higher level."

North Korea's "nuclear force-building policy has been made permanent as the basic law of the state, which no one is allowed

to flout with anything," Kim said in a speech at the assembly. He stressed the need to "push ahead with the work for exponentially boosting the production of nuclear weapons and diversifying the nuclear strike means," KCNA said. Kim pointed to what he described as a growing threat posed by a hostile United States and its expanding military cooperation with South Korea and Japan, accusing them of creating the "Asian version of NATO, the root cause of war and aggression." "This is just the worst actual threat, not threatening rhetoric or an imaginary entity," he said.

Kim urged his diplomats to "further promote solidarity with the nations standing against the US and the West's strategy for hegemony." Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest level in years as North Korea has test-fired more than 100 missiles since the start of 2022 and the US has expanded its military exercises with its Asian allies, in tit-for-tat responses. Last year, the assembly passed a new nuclear doctrine into law which authorizes pre-emptive nuclear strikes if North Korea's leadership is perceived as under threat.

China issues warning for military exercises

BEIJING (Agencies): Chinese authorities have issued a navigation warning over planned military exercises in some parts of the South China Sea. The Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration said the warning would be in place from 6am (22:00 GMT) to 11:30am (03:30 GMT) and from 6pm (10:00 GMT) to 9:30pm (13:30 GMT) on September 28.

"Military exercises will be conducted in some waters of the South China Sea and navigation is prohibited," state broadcaster CCTV reported. It did not elaborate on the location of the exercises. China claims almost the entire South China Sea under its controversial nine-dash line.

In recent months, tensions have risen with the Philippines, whose claims overlap with China's, over the Second Thomas Shoal and Scarborough Shoal. Both are within Manila's Exclusive Economic Zone

(EEZ), defined under the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as generally extending 200 nautical miles (about 370km) from shore, within which the coastal state has the exclusive right to explore and exploit. Earlier this week, the Philippines coastguard cut a 300 metre floating barrier installed by China that it said was blocking fishing boats' access to Scarborough Shoal, which Beijing seized from Manila after a months-long standoff in 2012. The Chinese coastguard disputed that version of the events, saying the barrier had been deployed on Friday when a Philippine vessel entered the area "illegally" and was removed the following day. "I would also like to reiterate once again, Huangyan Island is China's inherent territory," Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson at the Chinese Foreign Ministry, claimed at a regular press briefing, referring to

Scarborough Shoal by its Chinese name. Manila refers to it as Bajo de Masinloc. The rocky outcrop is a prime fishing spot and has been a site of contention for years.

Both countries claim sovereignty over the shoal, which lies about 120 nautical miles (about 222km) from the Philippine island of Luzon, and 594 nautical miles (about 1,100km) from China's southern island of Hainan. China has maintained a coast guard presence there ever since the 2012 standoff. Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam also claim parts of the sea near their coast and have reported incidents of harassment by Chinese ships. In a separate report early on Thursday, China's state media also reported several bombers from the Southern Theater Air Force, which covers the South China Sea, held night-time exercises. The report did not elaborate on exactly where the exercises took place.

S Africa floods: 11 people die after Western Cape deluge

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): At least 11 people have been killed after heavy rain and winds hit South Africa's Western Cape province, including Cape Town, over the weekend leaving a trail of destruction. Authorities warn that the death toll may rise as the floodwater subsides.

The destructive weather flooded homes, tore off roofs, destroyed crops and damaged roads and other infrastructure. Rescue teams are still searching for people who are feared trapped in their partially submerged homes. Eight of the 11 people who died were electrocuted in an informal settlement when waters swamped illegal connections to the power lines. Seventy-two primary school pupils and 10 adults were trapped in a resort in

the town of Oudtshoorn after the nearby Le Roux River overflowed. They were rescued, after the water had subsided. About 200 farm workers remain stranded in areas that were cut off by flooding. Efforts are being made to rescue them.

More than 80 roads were closed and at least 15,000 homes were cut off from the power grid. Electricity Minister Kgosisetso Ramokgopa said. Rail services in parts of both the Western and Eastern Cape provinces have been suspended. The floods also badly affected the area's farmland, including its famous vineyards, with the impact on harvests expected to be severe. City of Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis has signed a major incident declaration appealing for additional

resources and relief measures to deal with the aftermath of the rainfall. The city has also closed the popular Steenbras Nature Reserve and Gorge hiking route to assess the impact of the floods. Anton Bredell, a provincial cabinet minister in charge of environmental affairs, said that helicopters were searching for some people who had been trapped. "We expect the worst there," he said. The damaging rains, which ended, came a week after larger than normal spring tides hit the area. Climate change has been blamed for some recent weather-related incidents in South Africa. In 2022, flooding in KwaZulu-Natal led to the deaths of more than 430 people, while the coastal city of Gqeberha almost ran out of water last year.

Bulgaria okays additional weapons to Ukraine

SOFIA (AP): Bulgaria's parliament approved the provision of additional military aid to Ukraine in its war with Russia. At a closed-door meeting, lawmakers voted 141-40, with three abstentions, in favor of supplying Ukraine with defective surface-to-air missiles for the Russian-made S-300 air defense system and small-caliber automatic weapon ammunition discarded by the Interior Ministry, the state-run BTA

news agency reported. Military experts said the missiles cannot be repaired in Bulgaria, but Ukraine has the needed facilities to fix them or use them for spare parts. The Chief of Defense, Adm. Emil Eftimov, assured lawmakers that the provided weapons do not harm Bulgaria's defensive capabilities. "We have no intention of giving (Ukraine) the entire S-300 missile complex until we find a replacement capability," he said.

The vote mirrored divisions in the Balkan country over sending military aid to Ukraine. It sparked criticism from the Socialist Party and the pro-Russia nationalists from the Revival Party who voted against sending the aid. Bulgaria, which joined NATO in 2004, still maintains stocks of Soviet-designed weapons and has numerous factories making munitions for them.

UN peace envoy, Egypt working to restore calm along Gaza fence

GAZA (Reuters): International mediators have stepped up efforts to prevent a new round of armed confrontation between Israel and the Islamist Hamas group, which runs Gaza, amid an escalation in violent protests along the border fence. "The United Nations is talking to and working with all concerned to improve the lives of people in Gaza, particularly the most vulnerable," UN Middle East peace envoy Tor Wennesland said on social media platform X, a day after he met Hamas officials in Gaza.

"The situation inside the Strip is dire and we must avoid another conflict that will have grave consequences for all. The people of Gaza have suffered enough and deserve more than a return to calm." A regional diplomat said Egypt, which brokered numerous truces between Israel and Gaza militants in the past, had also stepped up its efforts to prevent a

slide into another war. Palestinians in Gaza have held protests along the fence for nearly two weeks, breaking from a period of relative calm.

Gazans say they are protesting over issues including the treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and Jewish visits to the Al Aqsa mosque compound, a site holy to both Muslims and Jews, who know it as the Temple Mount. Youths have thrown stones and improvised explosive devices at Israeli troops, who have responded with live fire, killing one Palestinian and wounding dozens of others. Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari told Israel's Kan Radio the protests would fail to win concessions from Israel. "The priority is to mount a strong defence and prevent the incidents going beyond the fence. Whoever turns the incident into one of terrorism - gets hit and is killed ... They won't get concessions through terror-

ism," said Hagari. Israel had shut crossings and stopped workers from coming into its territory since early last week. Israel said reopening "will be subject to ongoing evaluation on the evolving situation in the region."

A Hamas spokesman had no immediate comment. The group has defended the demonstrations, saying they aimed to protest at Israel's closure and "assaults" against Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Several wars and a 16-year Israeli-led blockade, backed by Egypt, have devastated the economy of Gaza and sent the unemployment rate to around 46% percent, one of the highest in the world. The regional diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media, said mediators sought more Israeli economic improvements, further ease up on crossings it controlled with Gaza, and

an increase in the number of work permits. In return, he said, Hamas would curb protests and end the use of improvised bombs and incendiary balloons. He said the protests were not isolated from a financial problem Hamas is facing, worsened by Qatar's slashing of funds. Qatar has cut a grant it used to offer to support the wages of 40,000 Hamas employees to \$5 million from \$7 million. In August, employees received 55% of the wages, not the usual 60%. The group has not paid wages in full for many years. "Hamas understands that it is not in the interests of anyone in Tel Aviv, Washington, or the region to have wars or engage in open battles with Gaza and therefore, it began to activate tough tools and demonstrations along the border east of Gaza as tools of field pressure on the politicians in Tel Aviv and Washington," said Gaza economist, Mohammad Abu Jayyab.

Azerbaijan arrests former minister as exodus tops 50,000

BAKU (Agencies): Azerbaijan has arrested the former head of Nagorno-Karabakh's separatist government as he tried to flee into neighbouring Armenia along with tens of thousands of others who fled the region following Azerbaijan's military operation last week. The arrest of Ruben Vardanyan was announced by Azerbaijan's border guard service.

Vardanyan, a billionaire businessman who made his fortune in Russia where he owned a major investment bank, moved to Nagorno-Karabakh in 2022 and served as the head of the regional government for several months before stepping down earlier this year. His wife Veronika Zonabend said on his Telegram channel that he had been arrested while trying to flee as part of a mass departure by ethnic Armenians after Azerbaijan took back control of

Karabakh in a swift offensive last week.

Azerbaijan had previously expressed reservations about Vardanyan, calling him an obstacle to peace. Moreover, his relations with Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan - over the role of Russian peacekeepers - were also strained. Azerbaijan's border service said he had been taken to the capital Baku and handed over to other state agencies. Nagorno-Karabakh is recognised internationally as part of Azerbaijan, but the 120,000 ethnic Armenians living there dominate the region. Baku and Yerevan have been vying for control over the region for decades and have fought two wars. Many ethnic Armenians are fleeing, abandoning their homes and boarding cars and trucks that have clogged the snaking mountain road that leads to Armenia.

Karabakh authorities said more than 50,000 had left so far. Azerbaijan has rejected Armenian accusations of ethnic cleansing. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said at the United Nations on Thursday that his country is determined to guarantee Nagorno-Karabakh residents "all rights and freedoms" in line with the country's constitution and international human rights obligations, including safeguards for ethnic minorities. The European Union said it was sending more humanitarian aid "in solidarity with those who had no choice but to flee" - a significant change from an earlier statement where it referred to people who had "decided to flee". UN Special Rapporteur Morris Tidball-Binz said Azerbaijan must "promptly and independently investigate alleged or suspected violations of the right to life

reported in the context of its latest military offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh".

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has called on Azerbaijan to be transparent when it comes to a potential international observer mission to the fought-over Nagorno-Karabakh region. "We look to Nagorno-Karabakh with the greatest concern. Nobody really knows how the people there are doing and what they have to go through," Baerbock said, according to a statement. The US State Department said it will work with allies and partners in coming days on an international monitoring mission. Matthew Miller, the State Department spokesperson, told journalists that despite Russia facilitating negotiations in the past, something that Washington has welcomed, its role in the past week has not been productive.

Egypt aims to double the number of tourists

CAIRO (AP): Egypt is seeking to double the number of visitors to the country in the next five years, its top tourism official told The Associated Press. Egypt is aiming at reaching 30 million visitors by 2028, as its once-thriving tourism sector recovers from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and the grinding war in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa said.

"We're seeing unparalleled demand, unprecedented demand for travel into Egypt," Issa said in an interview. He said Egypt had received 10 million tourists in the first eight months of

2023, and was "well on track to achieve around 15 million this year, which is going to be a record year for the tourism industry." The sector is a major source of foreign currency for the cash-strapped North African country. Last year, tourism revenues surged to \$10.7 billion, up from around \$5 billion in 2021, according to the Egyptian central bank. The government's plan focuses on what he calls the "supply side," which includes increasing the number of hotel rooms in the country and seats on flights to Egypt by more than 30% annually, as well as encouraging more private investment in the tourism sector. Issa said they

would add 25,000 hotel rooms to Egypt's current capacity of about 210,000. Such an increase, he said, would help the government achieve its target of 18 million tourist visits in 2024.

"That will be the fastest growth in (hotel) rooms in Egypt over the past 20 years," he said. Egypt has made a years-long effort to revive its battered tourism industry. The sector was badly hit during and after the popular uprising in 2011 that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak and the ensuing unrest. The country received over 14 million tourists in 2010. The coronavirus, followed by the Russian invasion of

Ukraine, dealt another blow, just as the sector was getting back on its feet. In recent years, the government has touted its ancient history as a major selling point. It has publicized pharaonic discoveries, building and renovating museums and tourist sites across the country. Issa spoke to the AP from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, a neoclassical structure built in the late 19th century and the first purpose-built museum in the Middle East and North Africa.

The museum is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Cairo, drawing an average of 10,000 visitors a day, said museum director Ali Abdel-Halim.

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World Maritime Day and national obligations

THE 50th World Maritime Day was observed on Thursday, September 28th by the world nations particularly the communities located on global shores, dealing in the fishery industry, sea explorations, maritime trade, tourism and travel as well as maritime organizations, and civil rights activists around the globe. However, the majority of the global populace living away from seashores is commonly unaware of the importance of the blue economy and the urgency for the preservation of sea life and the ocean environment in the contemporary world. The World Maritime Day is a reminder of maritime safety, security and environmental conservation, and is marked annually, urging nations to work together for sustainable maritime practices to ensure collective security, shared prosperity and common good.

World Maritime Day is annually commemorated in remembrance of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) which aims at combating pollution and protecting the environment from pollution through the impact of shipping via a robust regulatory framework and emphasis on its ongoing commitment to prevention of our oceans from pollution. In fact, Maritime Pollution MARPOL's legacy stretches beyond the past five decades including the 73/88 era, which marked the five years long global discussions which led to the approval and implementation of International Maritime Law (IML) and MARPOL accords at the global level.

Fundamentally, International Maritime Law and MARPOL Convention provide foundations for global cooperation in the fields of international shipping, maritime trade, tourism, under surface minerals exploitation along with the use of Sea water even the multipurpose use of the riverine, canal and lake water for fishing, boating, sports and leisure etc. In fact, the global seas owe a treasure of untapped wealth that awaits a sagacious use of those opportunities without disturbing the ecology and natural environment of global waters. The idea of the Blue economy purely relates to traditional ocean-related economic activities such as fisheries, coastal and sea tourism, and maritime transport, as well as new emerging opportunities like off-shore renewable energy, aquaculture, deposit exploration and sea-bed extraction activities. All such endeavors surely demand a significant financial investment, technical expertise, and time along with strict implementation of the International Maritime Law and MARPOL Convention which is the essence of all sea-based human activities otherwise maritime and industrial pollution turns blue sea waters into filthy ponds and valuable sea lives perished in days instead of years.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, a source-deficient developing nation faces serious issues relating to water pollution and preservation of ocean ecology within its territorial jurisdiction as well as relating to its coastal areas, water reservoirs, rivers and canals. Industrial and domestic wastes, encroachments and plastic pollution have seriously damaged the seawater, coastal areas and riverine life in the country. The Pakistan Navy has always remained at the forefront of conserving the maritime environment in line with the MARPOL principles and it has always been a major driving force behind all national endeavours for the preservation of maritime ecology and promotion of the blue economy in the country. The government of Pakistan, the Ministry of Ports and Shipping, the Pakistan Navy and civil society along with the business community have been working hard to preserve the natural environment and ecology by implementing pollution prevention strategies in Pakistan's coastal waters, through coordinated efforts and joint work. Although the government departments had been working on this agenda over the past decades, but most of the efforts had been merely symbolic, and event-driven arranged on special occasions such as World Maritime Day, World Oceans Day, International Clean Air Day, or Global Day for Biodiversity etc. It is high time that the government of Pakistan and relevant quarters initiate a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about the preservation of the maritime environment and its importance for the survival of human and sea life, so each citizen plays his due role in achieving this national as well as global objective in the future.

World's largest economy on brink

THE United States Senate has recently agreed once again to a stopgap measure designed to prevent an imminent government shutdown over budget legislation. The deal hashed out between Republicans and Democrats, would help the Biden administration to keep the government working for six additional days until September 30.

The world Superpower faces acute economic challenges and its position resembles many third one nations like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and several others embattled with the worst effects of global energy crisis and skyrocketing inflation in the current age. The US government is less than five days away from its deadline to pass budget legislation at midnight on September 30. If the Biden administration fails to do so, much of the government business would halt including nonpayment to federal employees such as Congressional staffers, Capitol Police, FBI agents, NSA silent lessors and hardcore CIA Operatives. all would be compelled to take loans from banks, borrow money from friends, make cuts to their meal or go on strike to sensitize the lawmakers about needs of the public that were struck due to the impasse in the provision of liquidity.

In fact, bad governance, politically motivated economic policies and irrational trade decisions are not the sole dilemma of the poor and developing nations but such political ailments have seriously damaged multiple developed economies including the United States, the UK, Germany, Italy and others. The public is in hot water but governments are pouring billions of dollars into the Ukraine war, global tussles in the Indo-Pacific region and preparation of so-called star wars that might not happen any time in future, while those economies are heading to collapse under their own weights. The global economic rating agency Fitch had already downgraded US's score from AAA to AA+ during the past months while Moody has issued a stern warning to American Economists about impending economic disaster in their nation. US lawmakers are evading the economic collapse of their country on a yearly basis through legislative measures instead of the implementation of darley need economic discipline. How long the doomsday could be eluded through such flimsy recipes in the years to come.

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Blair and Brown still rule Britain. Rishi's only hope is to crush them

Allister Heath

DESPITE 13 years of Tory rule, Britain remains trapped in a dysfunctional paradigm shaped by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. They transformed Britain far more comprehensively than almost anybody realised at the time, empowered a nomenklatura of lawyers, bureaucrats and cultural propagandists committed to entrenching their revolution, and succeeded in bamboozling Tory wets into believing that their brand of technocratic social-democracy was the only morally acceptable way to govern.

The fashionable attempts at rehabilitating Blair are absurd. The Left has been a disaster whenever it has been in office, and would be so again if it wins next year. The moribund NHS, probably the worst health system in the Western world, and our inane, anti-housebuilding planning system, were dreamt up by Old Labour. Woke, neo-Marcusian ideology was first promoted by Labour governments, starting in the 1960s. Most of the other pathologies plaguing Britain can be traced to New Labour, though the Tories are now just as much to blame: instead of fixing the problems they inherited, they made them worse, out of cowardice and incompetence. Tory MPs have been in office, but Labour ideas have been in power.

Take our weak economic growth, dragged down by tax, regulation, a destructive monetary policy and insufficient investment: the slowdown began in 2005, even before the financial crisis, but the Tories have pushed more of the same anti-free market policies. Or consider the problems created by defective, one-sided devolution, from Ulez and handouts from England to the SNP to 20mph speed limits in Wales and the uselessness of the Met Police: Blair is to blame, but the Tories have extended his framework.

The Human Rights Act, the rise of lawfare and the quangoisation of decision-making, which has spawned monsters such as the Climate Change Committee, our complex and punitive tax system, our bloated, mismanaged, wasteful state, the broken approach to immigration,

the growing dependency on government for jobs, incomes and lifestyles, the top-down environmental dogmatism that threatens to ruin the lives of millions, our over-extended university system: all of these originated under New Labour and were built upon by clueless Conservatives.

In a shocking case of political Stockholm Syndrome, many leading Tories turned out to be

party consensus, a repudiation of much of what Blair, Brown, Cameron and Osborne stood for. Yet it was largely neutered by foot-dragging Tories and, after he finally extracted us from the EU, by Johnson's unwillingness to drastically remake our economy, welfare state and machinery of state. His successor, Liz Truss, a woman genuinely committed to breaking with the Blairite orthodoxy, was

Brexit was the greatest wasted opportunity of all: it was the ultimate thumbs down to the Blair project, a grassroots revolution against the failed cross-party consensus, a repudiation of much of what Blair, Brown, Cameron and Osborne stood for. Yet it was largely neutered by foot-dragging Tories and, after he finally extracted us from the EU, by Johnson's unwillingness to drastically remake our economy, welfare state and machinery of state. His successor, Liz Truss, a woman genuinely committed to breaking with the Blairite orthodoxy, was immediately destroyed by it. Yet there is a glimmer of hope again.

Blairites or even Brownites in disguise, in awe of their political achievements, obsessed with triangulation, terrified of being seen as conservative and ashamed of the views of their long-suffering electorate. In the rare cases where David Cameron and George Osborne sought to break with Labour, they picked the wrong battles: austerity turned out to be a reversible damp squib. The state was salami-sliced, rather than reengineered and privatised, and in some cases the wrong projects were cut. Theresa May was to the Left of Blair, and Boris Johnson turned out to be a tax-and-spend social democrat and net zero radical who couldn't even successfully oppose endless lockdowns.

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immediately destroyed by it. Yet there is a glimmer of hope again. Rishi Sunak started off poorly but appears to have had a change of heart. His first radical intervention, in defiance of the spirit of devolution, was when he torpedoed

Nicola Sturgeon's awful plan to allow gender self-recognition. He then pledged to reverse the assault on cars, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, a centre-piece of the technocratic consensus. The real fight-back started earlier this month when he watered down many of the more extreme net zero proposals, until now a taboo subject, before signing off on more North Sea oil. These were all excellent moves.

Sunak may now go to war against HS2, perhaps the ultimate neo-Blairite folly. This hideously expensive TGV wannabe was first mooted by Labour in 2009, when the original

state-owned company was created. It was backed by the arch-Blairite Andrew Adonis before being embraced enthusiastically by Cameron and Osborne. Like arbitrary foreign aid targets, HS2 is a symbol of our ruling class' constructivist ideology, a totemic project that mixes pseudo-greenery, bureaucratic empowerment and EU-envy, hence the elites' disproportionate fury at the prospect of its demise. Sunak must stand firm: he would be right to scrap it. Immigration is his next big rejection of the neo-Blairite consensus: he allowed Suella Braverman to deliver a well-argued critique of unrealistic refugee conventions, and to make a case for nation states, against open borders and for the integration of migrants. This is a position supported by the vast majority in every European nation - Emmanuel Macron has just said that France "cannot welcome all the misery of the world" - and yet it was met by hysteria and quasi-racist attacks on the Home Secretary, who was effectively lectured that ethnic minority Britons cannot morally support restrictions on immigration. We shall see how Sunak responds to the legal verdict on his Rwanda plan: will he disavow the European Convention on Human Rights?

Let's hope so, for whenever he takes aim at the Blair-Brown-establishment project, his polling goes up; when he succumbs to the technocratic status quo, it slumps. The Tory party's central problem since the mid 2000s is that it has proved unable to decide what it truly is. Is it a New Labour remake, selecting proto-Rejoiners such as James Cracknell for safe seats? Or is it a proper conservative party, committed to free market-driven growth, technological solutions to environmental issues, low tax, cultural conservatism, family and individual reliance, controlled and limited immigration and the forging of a new, patriotic, anti-woke, multi-racial civic identity? For the first time, Sunak appears to be acting as if he understands that the latter approach is his party's only hope. He must ignore the Tory wets, and finally banish the Labour era.

The Telegraph

The politics of net zero could ultimately amount to zero

Mohamed Chebaro

AS the next general election approaches in the UK, there appears to be a renewed effort by the ruling Conservative Party to spin climate issues for electoral gains, since it has been smelling potential defeat. Yes, who could blame Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for resorting to all the tricks in the trade to get a chance of victory? After all, that is what politicians do best, and maybe his recent U-turns mean his party's, government's and nation's green pledges are being sacrificed in return for a few votes or maybe more.

Sunak last week said that the British government's self-imposed 2030 deadline for banning the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles would be pushed back to 2035, while the migration to cleaner, more ecologically friendly domestic heating systems would not be fully enforced until 2035, rather than 2026. These are just two steps that show how the UK government is, for electioneering purposes, rowing back on the emissions targets set in the wake of the Paris climate agreement of 2015. Sunak has not said how he plans to offset these changes if Britain plans to keep its green transition pledges alive and be able to meet its 2050 net-zero target.

Sunak's announcement was apparently made in the name of helping the people, and in the interest of voters, as the economic crunch felt by UK households due to the cost-of-living crisis apparently pushed him to make this grave and serious U-turn. This is of course in the hope that Britain will later double down on its efforts to meet its climate obligations.

However, it comes when the natural world is offering little comfort, with record-breaking temperatures in the summer accompanied by wildfires and droughts, shrinking rivers and higher pollution, depending on where in the world you look. To these blows, we could add the loss of Antarctic ice five times the size of the UK, rising sea water temperatures and a generally hotter atmosphere, which are scary to any reasonably minded individual, let alone climate scientists.

Many believe that Sunak's U-turn on environmental policies was the result of pressures that are also affecting leaders across the world, but specially in the Western democracies. Politicians everywhere have, for years it seems, embraced a half-truth about climate change, claiming that the road to net zero would be beneficial to the people by generating economic growth, boosting the coffers of the state and offering green jobs for the unemployed. No one wanted to factor in the true costs of the transition, such as the behavioral sacrifices needed. Nor did they factor in the huge costs or technological limitations, with many still hopeful that new fuels, new batteries, cleaner energy and factories that suck in methane and pollutants all have a large role to play in mitigating the emissions produced.

For the majority of people, the transition to net zero seemingly remains a broad aspiration on paper

only. In reality, it might be a source of trouble for sitting governments, as we saw in France in 2018, when a new green fuel duty triggered the so-called Yellow Vest protests. In Germany, the far-right Alternative for Germany is likely to capitalize electorally if Berlin goes ahead and bans the installation of new gas and oil boilers in favor of cleaner heat pumps, with the party having denounced the "green fascism" of the ruling elite. In the US, climate deniers are very vocal and the populist right has never hidden its dismay regarding net zero.

In the poorer Global South, the narrative is slightly different but still usually leads to the same skepticism and is hooked on either waiting for the rich world to pay for the transition or simply defending idleness on climate issues. Instead, people in poorer countries claim they are more troubled about how to feed their kids until the end of the week and are far from caring about how to prevent the end of the world.

What is alarming for Britons is that climate change might well be weaponized by Conservative Party politicians who are desperate to hang on to power against all odds. Looking at the "honest" endeavor by PM Sunak to protect the people and their near-empty purses, the party's machinery is now hard at work seemingly trying to mislead the public. Britons should prepare for what looks set to be more disinformation campaigns that will be a reminder of those that circulated before the Brexit referendum in 2016.

Emails sent to journalists from the Conservative Campaign Headquarters have revealed the lines of attacks to be used during the next election campaign. These range from attacks on the Climate Change Committee to the opposition Labour Party's pledged £28 billion (\$34 billion) investment in a low-carbon economy. These are in addition to last week's false claims by Sunak that he is determined to scrap nonexistent taxes on meat and flying, compulsory car-sharing and the imposition on households of seven different rubbish and recycling bins.

Such misleading lines of attack obviously point to a desperate party trying to cling to power at all costs. But they also point to the fact that net zero and saving the environment, which had the backing of politicians across the British political spectrum, could become a divisive electoral issue, turning climate change into a political football. This risks sacrificing the UK's green transition and rendering it a poisonous and toxic subject, potentially derailing the years of effort that made the net-zero pursuit a noble cornerstone of policymaking, investment and the economy.

In doing so, Britain will finally join many other nations from the richer Global North and the poorer Global South that are skeptical about the climate crisis, driven solely by a refusal to be transparent with the public about the human and financial costs that will surely be associated with the green transition.

Arab News

Israel could make or break America's trade plans to rival China

Joseph Dana

IN the summer of 2011, I was aboard a ship bound for the Gaza Strip from Athens. I was covering the second Gaza flotilla. A year before, Palestinian solidarity activists sent several aid ships to Gaza to highlight Israel's maritime blockade of the Palestinian territory. The Israeli navy intercepted the ships, commandos boarded the vessels and several activists were killed by soldiers. Given the international outcry, activists arranged another flotilla in 2011, but the boats never left port.

Before the boats entered the open ocean, the Greek navy intercepted the ships. According to activists and sources inside the Greek government, Israeli officials threatened to derail talks concerning prospective gas pipelines between the two countries if Greece failed to prevent the activists from setting sail. Israel did not want a repeat of the first flotilla and had no problem

threatening a significant economic deal with Greece, even though the Greek economy was in freefall at the time.

This story highlights the complex nature of regional economic deals with Israel. Since the discovery of massive natural gas fields off Israel's northern coast, there have been myriad efforts to export that gas to Europe. Greece, Cyprus, Turkey and Lebanon have tried to hammer out some infrastructure to benefit all parties involved. But politics has always found a way to intrude. Israel's willingness to put political interests ahead of trade should be top of mind for American officials punting a new economic corridor linking India with Europe through the Middle East. US President Joe Biden unveiled the plan at the recent G20 summit in India. If implemented, the project will be a serious challenge to China's ascendant trade and investment strategy, which has brought

several countries into the Chinese sphere of influence over the past decade.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, the Chinese have invested heavily in regional trade infrastructure with the goal of making economic routes that lead to Beijing. Through various state-owned companies, the Chinese have also lent substantial amounts of money to countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa in a further bid to create a new Chinese-led global economy. While China has sought deeper influence in global affairs for years, smaller countries increasingly seek non-Western alliances to serve their political and economic futures.

Yet, the Chinese economy is in a prolonged slump and the US appears to sense an opportunity to play China's game by creating its own trade project. Connecting India with Europe through the Middle

East is a logical place for America to lean on its partnerships and exercise soft power. The US desperately needs to underline its position as the world's superpower through fresh economic initiatives that remind nations of the value of working with Washington. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is one such initiative. However, the plan is fraught with hazards primarily due to America's key allies in the project. Cooperation among these allies in the Middle East will be at the heart of this trade plan. The Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between the UAE and Israel, were a significant step in creating a new economic bloc in the Middle East that could enable a trade corridor to take shape. The prospect of a Saudi Arabia-Israel normalization agreement is equally vital to

enabling new trade infrastructure conditions. This agreement is proving to be elusive.

Given that Saudi Arabia and Israel are America's most important allies in the region, the failure to agree a normalization deal would be a significant blow to US prestige and power. Saudi Arabia and Israel both have growing relations with China and, at least in the case of Israel, a track record of ignoring Washington's direct requests. America has a lot to lose if this trade deal falls apart. Israeli trade deals do not generally unfold due to sound economic interests alone. Instead, Israel leans on its financial clout to advance geopolitical objectives. This was evident in its behavior with Greece around the Gaza flotilla.

Consider Israel's growing relationship with China. Since establishing diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, China has sought to entrench its ties with Tel Aviv in technology and

innovation. This helps the Chinese knowledge economy and adds an essential node to China's ongoing competition with the US. In recent years, China has directly invested in Israeli infrastructure, including major port facilities in Haifa, which would likely be a vital part of America's economic corridor proposal. China could seek to torpedo America's trade corridor plan through its investments in Israel. The balance of power is slowly shifting away from the West toward countries in the emerging world. Smaller countries like Israel and the UAE are discovering that they have much more to gain by keeping their geopolitical and economic options open in this new landscape of geopolitics. If the US wants to remain the world's sole superpower, it needs to hammer out substantial trade deals and remind its key allies that Washington can be relied upon.

What is still shocking about Donald Trump

Frida Ghitis

IT was yet another startling moment in the seemingly endless legal saga of former President Donald Trump, the front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. A New York judge on Monday declared Trump and his adult sons liable for "persistent violations" of state law. Judge Arthur Engoron found they engaged in insurance and bank fraud and other manner of misdeeds, canceled the Trump Organization's business certification and set the stage for a trial in which the state is asking for \$250 million in damages.

If the judge's scathing decision in the civil case was remarkable, it was not particularly surprising given all we have learned in the past few years. The judge found that Trump wildly inflated valuations for his businesses and his homes to secure loans and conduct other business. He ordered that Trump's New York businesses be dissolved. A trial could begin next week to consider the amount of damages owed in the lawsuit by New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Of course, Trump denounced the ruling, saying his company had "been slandered and maligned by this politically motivated Witch Hunt." (Trump's company, by the way, had already been convicted of tax fraud in New York in an unrelated case.) Trump's record of civil and criminal cases is so long that journalists have struggled to keep up, routinely publishing articles that summarize, catalog and compile the astonishing volume of scandals and court actions, all involving behavior by the former president that ranges from disturbing to outrageous.

Trump, as we know, is the first former or current president in the history of the United States to be charged with a criminal offense.

Not only did he make history, but his record is unlikely - God help us! - to be surpassed. He has been indicted in four cases. And that's not counting his two impeachments - another record - during his presidency. (He has pleaded not guilty in the four criminal cases and denies any wrongdoing.)

The only part of this that is genuinely surprising is that Trump still enjoys so much support. He remains the top choice for his party's nomination, with 52% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independent voters backing him, according to a recent CNN poll. Nothing Trump does or says can shock us anymore - not his thinly veiled calls for the execution of a US general, or his continuing claims that he won an election he lost by a wide margin or even his threats to punish his critics if he wins reelection.

But how is it possible that such a man is not only the leading candidate for a once-conservative, traditional-values party but also that few of those challenging him in the primaries dare spell out the truth that he nearly destroyed US democracy - and is still at it? The digest of Trump's misdeeds is filled with transgressions big and small. Over the years, he stifled small businesses, plumbers, electricians, even waitresses, who worked for him, refusing to pay what they said he owed them.

He used his purported charitable fund, the Trump Foundation, to settle legal problems. He even took \$20,000 from the donations to buy a 6-foot-tall portrait of himself, according to The Washington Post. The foundation was dissolved, and Trump paid \$2 million to charities as part of a legal settlement. There's Trump University, alleged to be a fraud by would-be students who paid tens of thousands of dol-

lars to learn from the supposed genius businessman. Trump paid \$25 million to settle a class action lawsuit, insisting he did nothing wrong.

Then there are the women. Even the accusations from women who say Trump sexually abused them have done nothing to erode his support among voters who describe themselves as evangelical Christians. When a jury in a defamation lawsuit found that Trump had committed sexual abuse against the writer E. Jean Carroll, the former president's lawyers sought to have the verdict thrown out, arguing that Carroll did not accuse Trump of abuse but of rape. The judge then clarified that "the jury found that Mr. Trump in fact did exactly that." In other words, the judge in the civil suit said Trump raped Carroll.

The list goes on. The most serious cases are still pending. Trump stands accused of trying to overturn the 2020 election, of mishandling secret national security documents, of trying to subvert the election in Georgia. That he retains his hold over the GOP is proof of Trump's one overarching talent, his skill as a demagogue, and of the success of the strategy he put into place early on - one designed to discredit and undercut anyone who sought to point out his lies.

In his first press conference after winning the 2016 election, Trump berated CNN's Jim Acosta when the journalist tried to ask a question. He thundered, "You are fake news!" Gradually, Trump persuaded his backers that if they ever heard a negative comment or a disturbing piece of news, it was inevitably fake news. His allies in right-wing media, particularly Fox News and its stars, magnified the effort. And by the time Fox was forced to settle and pay \$787 mil-

lion over lies about the election, smaller right-wing outlets had multiplied, promoting Trump's dangerous fantasies and vengeful conspiracy theories.

The bulk of the GOP leadership has fallen into line, either for fear of upsetting Trump's supporters or because they, too, are true believers. Few are willing to point out that Trump's resume is hardly presidential or that his legal problems are of his own making. If anything goes wrong, it isn't Trump's fault. Ever.

Bad news? Blame the fake news media. Criminal federal indictments? Must be a politicized Justice Department. Damning investigation, thousands of pages of evidence? Must be a "deranged" prosecutor. Nineteen people, including Trump, indicted in Georgia? That would be another "racist" prosecutor. Or maybe the problem is that an Indiana-born judge looking into one of Trump's cases is "Mexican." Whatever the case, whatever the circumstance, it's not Trump's fault. He is always the victim, and his followers - astonishingly - seem to believe it.

After decades of him facing no consequences, it looks like the mountain of legal troubles is threatening to topple the former president. But his political strength appears intact. In his ruling on Monday, Engoron trashed Trump's "preposterous" legal arguments, even citing an earlier judge's order in another case fulminating about Trump's "history of abusing the judicial process." It's not surprising that the court found Trump committed fraud, or that a former loyal aide now calls him the gravest threat to US democracy. What is most unsettling and disappointing is how many millions of people believe his version of events regardless of the evidence. Or simply don't care.

CNN

Can ‘mini-lateralism’ improve global governance?

Ong Tee Keat

HAS the existing global order survived its relevance? This is a common question asked not just by elites but even by any thinking individual across the world. Never have we witnessed such incoherent and ineffective global governance as what we experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of our vulnerability against the novel coronavirus and a gamut of other common challenges, the global leadership tasked to address the pressing concerns is nowhere to be seen. The pandemic of the century only left us with a heavily fragmented world scene with dysfunctional global institutions.

While we are still reeling from the pandemic-induced economic fallout, the various global exigencies have never ceased to take a heavy toll on our planet. Yet the prognosis for multilateral cooperation continues to look bleak. The reigning hegemon, holding sway over global governance for the past seven decades, since the end of World War II, is more obsessed with the anguish of possible displacement as the sole global leader than anything else deemed threatening our very survival. Ideological lines are deliberately drawn with such binaries as "democracy versus authoritarianism". Nonetheless, its thinly veiled intention of isolating and alienating China from the rest of the world does not obscure the dire need for addressing the immediate global concerns.

In reality, no amount of hubris and rhetoric can save the day without concerted efforts by the international community. Perhaps that's why many developing countries, in their quest for development and solutions to the pressing problems, have resorted to what can be termed as "mini-lateralism".

Since unilateralism has been rearing its ugly head while existential exigencies are escalating to a near catastrophic level in the absence of effective intervention at sight, "mini-lateralism" presents the only viable alternative. It is not at all a new concept. It has been resurrected from oblivion at a time when major powers are playing a relatively passive role in spearheading initiatives to tackle common challenges.

To many small and developing countries of the Global South, "mini-lateralism" is a diplomatic architecture characterized by its emphasis on shared interests instead of shared values or ideological alignment.

As such, it allows countries to collaborate on critical issues without having to agree on everything or holding the same worldview. In recent years, it has been gaining prominence, as it is a flexible and innovative approach to diplomacy, particularly in terms of tackling global challenges such as climate change, global healthcare and food security. As more nation states seek to form partnerships and coalitions to help them address shared challenges concertedly "mini-lateralism" has become their natural choice. It may give rise to sub-regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism that involves China, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, where the remarkable results over the past seven years have made it a veritable "golden example" of regional cooperation.

The flexibility and adaptability of "mini-lateralism" may also open the door to new cross-continental configurations or formats of cooperation which were previously unimaginable. The Mangrove Alliance for Climate launched by the United Arab Emirates with Indonesia and five other countries at the UN Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November last year is an apt example illustrating this. The "mini-lateral" alliance is intended to strengthen the preservation and rehabilitation of mangrove ecosystems. Parallel to this, "mini-lateralism" also allows mid-level powers in the Global South to harness their diplomatic outreach for mitigating common challenges. A case in point is the International Solar Alliance, formed in 2015 with its headquarters in India. The ISA is a coalition of nearly 120 countries that serves as a collaborative platform for ensuring energy security and driving energy transition among member states by helping them develop low-carbon growth trajectories. While small and vulnerable nation

states are seeking "mini-lateral" partnerships to have their priorities addressed, "mini-lateralism" is not meant to help only the least-developed and small island developing states. Even developed countries are resorting to "mini-lateralism".

In recent years, it has become the favoured form of the security cooperation for the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. The revival of the Quad (a security partnership among the US, India, Japan and Australia) in 2017 and the formation of a military pact, AUKUS (comprising Australia, the United Kingdom and the US) in 2021, both with cross-continental membership, are examples of this trend. The US further extended it to the economic front with the announcement of the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" which is part of its "Indo-Pacific strategy" designed to target China. In other words, "mini-lateralism" can also be weaponized as a geopolitical tool through forming selective and exclusionary alliances to target others. Washington may seek to justify the inception of the IPEF in the name of ensuring resilience of supply chains. But the exclusion of China, touted with its complete range of industrial supply chains, from the framework is by itself a travesty of multilateralism as inclusivity is conspicuously not in place. After all, inclusivity is the bedrock of multilateral cooperation.

In the interest of improving global governance, the reigning superpower is expected to provide coherent global leadership with coordinated emergency response in times of global crisis. On the contrary, by resorting to hostile exclusionary "mini-lateral" partnerships, the superpower will only exacerbate the trust deficit in global governance. In this context, the US' misplaced "mini-lateralism" is virtually doing a great disservice to the multilateralism underpinning the global order. Amid the evolving world order, "mini-lateralism" may complement multi-lateralism for common good, but it is certainly not designed to substitute the latter, much less a wedge to be driven by the insidious hegemon in the web of global cooperation and solidarity.

Why the UN has struggled to reform and stay relevant

Kristian Alexander

AS the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly commenced last week in New York City, it is crucial for member-states to come together and address endemic challenges to ensure that the UN remains relevant and effective in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development.

The United Nations (UN), founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, was hailed as a beacon of hope for a world weary of conflict and devastation. Its mission to promote peace, protect human rights, and foster international cooperation appeared noble and indispensable. However, as the decades have rolled on, the UN has faced a litany of problems that have hindered its effectiveness, leaving us to ponder whether it can ever truly be reformed. Despite the numerous reform proposals, the UN remains mired in inefficiency and inaction. This begs the question: Why has meaningful reform proven to be an elusive goal? The UN's problems are manifold. First and foremost, its decision-making processes are cumbersome and often gridlocked by the veto power held by the five permanent members of the Security Council - the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. This power structure, established in the aftermath of the Second World War, is a relic of a bygone era and undermines the principles of equality and fairness. Attempts to reform this system, such as expanding the Security Council or eliminating the veto power, have been met with staunch resistance from the nations that benefit from

the status quo.

One of the glaring challenges the United Nations faces is the recurring issue of member states not fulfilling their financial obligations. Notably, the United States, while being the largest contributor to the UN budget, has a history of arrears and underpayments. This has often led to financial crises within the organisation, hindering its ability to carry out critical missions and projects. Similarly, some other affluent nations have been inconsistent in meeting their dues. The reasons for this inconsistency vary, including disputes over the effectiveness of certain UN programmes, domestic political considerations, and debates about the allocation of funds within the organisation.

This financial instability not only affects the UN's ability to respond to global challenges promptly but also undermines its credibility and independence. The UN's dependency on a small group of major contributors leaves it vulnerable to their whims, and it lacks a sustainable and equitable funding mechanism. Furthermore, the UN's sprawling bureaucracy and overlapping mandates among its various agencies create inefficiencies that affect its ability to address global challenges. Reform proposals have called for streamlining and consolidating these agencies, but entrenched interests and political manoeuvring have stymied such efforts.

One notable example of overlapping mandates among the United Nations' specialised agencies is the case of food security and agricultur-

al development. The United Nations has multiple agencies responsible for addressing these issues, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP). While each of these agencies serves a valuable purpose, their overlapping mandates in food security and agricultural development have often led to inefficiencies and coordination challenges. They all work to combat hunger and improve agricultural practices, but the duplication of efforts can lead to the misallocation of resources and a lack of a unified approach. The United Nations also struggles with credibility and accountability. Its peacekeeping missions have been marred by allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct by UN personnel, undermining its moral authority. The lack of transparency in decision-making processes and the opacity of internal investigations have eroded trust in the institution.

Numerous reform proposals have been put forth over the years, but none have made significant headway. One proposal is to democratise the Security Council by expanding its membership and reducing or eliminating veto powers. However, powerful nations resist any dilution of their influence. Another suggestion is to establish a more equitable and stable funding mechanism to reduce the UN's financial dependence on a few countries. Yet, donor nations are reluctant to cede control over their contributions. Efforts to

streamline the UN's bureaucracy and improve coordination among its agencies have also faced resistance. The entrenched interests of those within the system who benefit from the status quo make it difficult to enact meaningful reforms.

So, why has the UN not been reformed, and why does it seem unlikely to change in the near future? The answer lies in the complex interplay of geopolitics, power dynamics, and the inherent flaws of the institution itself. Powerful nations are often unwilling to relinquish their advantages, and the fear of losing influence on the global stage outweighs their commitment to a more effective and equitable UN. Additionally, the UN's structure, designed in a different era, makes reform a formidable challenge. Any meaningful change requires the approval of member-states, many of whom are resistant to alterations that may diminish their power or financial contributions.

Ultimately, the United Nations faces a multitude of problems that have hindered its ability to fulfil its lofty goals. Despite numerous reform proposals, the institution remains trapped in a quagmire of political interests, financial instability, and bureaucratic inefficiency. While the UN's mission is undeniably important, its inability to adapt and reform may lead us to question whether it can ever truly be the effective global institution it was envisioned to be. To ensure a more peaceful and just world, we must continue to press for reform, even as we acknowledge the formidable obstacles in its path.

Gulf News

I advised Starmer on his plan to ‘stop the boats’. This is why Labour’s policy will work

Thom Brooks

THE prime minister's pledge to "stop the boats" has become an easy target for ridicule. Small boats continue to cross the English Channel in near record numbers. More than 20,000 people have arrived on Britain's shores this year, with up to 500 people (sometimes more) arriving on any given day. In fact, the only boat that has been stopped is the Bibby Stockholm barge, commissioned to house asylum seekers, after legionella was found in its water system - a perfect symbol for the disastrous handling of this crisis.

It couldn't be clearer that the government's plans aren't working. Only weeks after saying the Illegal Immigration Act will stop the boats, the home secretary, Suella Braverman, claimed yesterday that the United Nations refugee convention needs to be rewritten for the asylum system to work. Doing nothing is not an option. Asylum seekers are risking, and occasionally losing, their lives in dangerous crossings. Criminal gangs are thriving, profiting on the trade in human misery. Small boats have become seen as a test for ensuring control of Britain's borders.

But it's not enough to watch the government make a mess of it. Something must be done. It raises the crucial question of how Labour can succeed where the Tories have failed. When I was asked by Labour to look into possible solutions, I considered the facts and

examined the root causes. There were no small boats recorded before 2018, but they exploded to tens of thousands since 2020. Why did the rise happen then?

The reasons behind the increase in small boat crossings are many and complex. But I found that a significant factor is the UK exiting a returns policy with the EU called the Dublin regulation. The deal meant that anyone coming across illegally could be returned to the first EU country they had entered. The arrangement was never "a panacea": not everyone who could be returned was removed, and sometimes the UK received more migrants than it sent away. For this reason, some critics claim the returns policy didn't work because it did not remove migrants in large numbers.

These critics ignore the returns policy's role as a deterrent. The Home Office referred to these migrants as "clandestines" because they travelled clandestinely, as detection at any time meant possible removal. When there was a returns policy, overall numbers were low and there were no small boats. Yet when the government got Brexit done, it chose to surrender that policy. This wasn't necessary because there are non-EU countries such as Norway and Switzerland that have the returns deal that we needlessly, and wrongfully, gave up.

But the implications were predictable, as I noted even before the EU referendum. If people couldn't be easily returned, more would attempt dangerous crossings in the knowledge that removing them would be difficult, maybe impossible, as some refugees have attested. Tragically, my prediction has come true and small boat crossings have grown from none to about 46,000 people a year in just five years. Keir Starmer's Labour is right to see a new returns agreement with the EU as critical to actually stopping the boats. There were no small boats when we had a deal, and having it again would make every difference.

The government can't criticise this plan with a straight face. Rishi Sunak boasts that the number of Albanians in small boats has plummeted this year. The reason why is that the UK struck a returns deal with Albania. Anyone coming can now be sent back, so new arrivals have quickly dried up. Their own arrangement shows it works. Since all small boats are coming from the EU, an EU deal is necessary - and it makes sense (and saves more taxpayer money) to send those from France back to France or other safe EU states.

I would best describe Keir Starmer's approach as competence with compassion. We need to act to save lives and work with our allies

to ensure those who require asylum protection receive it as soon as practically possible. A cross-border issue requires cross-border cooperation. As an immigrant, I want an end to the anti-migrant rhetoric that neither brings the Labour party nor our country together. This is in stark contrast to Sunak's approach, which has been a series of unworkable and divisive gimmicks continually backfiring, while blowing a hole through public finances.

The most awkward part for the government is they were warned repeatedly by Labour since 2017 about the impact of leaving the EU returns policy. The government claimed it might seek a new deal, but in the end surrendered any such hope. Today we pay the price, but it's a mistake that Starmer has promised not to repeat. Labour is in opposition for the time being, but a general election victory in 2024 would give Starmer a new mandate to reassert Britain on the world's stage and strike a returns deal after 13 years of decline and distrust under the Tories.

The small boats must be stopped. But a returns policy - coupled with a crackdown on the criminal gangs - is the only formula for success. As Conservatives become increasingly shrill in writing Labour's strategy off, it's a sure sign the government is existentially rattled that Starmer has adopted a policy formula that will actually work.

The Guardian

Nuclear deterrent part of Labour’s heritage

THE 1945 Attlee Labour government faced the daunting task of rebuilding Britain's battered post-war economy against the backdrop of a rising Soviet threat and emerging Cold War. It is proudly remembered for founding the NHS, making the UK the first country in the world to provide free healthcare for all its citizens. But just as Aneurin Bevan created the NHS to be the heart of Britain's new era of social security, so Ernest Bevin established Nato and our UK nuclear programme as its strong arm for a new era of national security.

This is our party's heritage. We're proud of it. And with Keir Starmer, our commitment to Nato and the UK's nuclear deterrent - maintained on behalf of Nato allies - is unshakeable.

Our joint visit to Washington DC last week - for meetings in the White House, State Department, Pentagon and Congress - reinforced the seriousness and scale of the challenges Labour aims to inherit after the election.

The world has become less stable and more dangerous since we served as ministers in the Blair and Brown governments. Putin's bloody war in Ukraine confirms we face a dictator ready to use military force to redraw the map of Europe, while his irresponsible nuclear rhetoric continues to be a cause for concern. China is increasingly assertive in its neighbourhood and expanding its military reach in all domains. Iran continues to breach the enrichment limits of the JCPOA nuclear deal in

pursuit of its nuclear programme, while North Korea threatens Britain's friends like Japan and South Korea.

We must be sober about the threats we face, and honest about the state of our Armed Forces. Concerns have been growing among allies about the UK fulfilling its Nato obligations, with the former defence secretary Ben Wallace telling the Commons earlier this year that Conservative governments have "hollowed out and underfunded" our Armed Forces since 2010. Over the last 13 years, our Army has been cut to the smallest size since the days of Napoleon. In government, Labour will chart a new direction for UK foreign and defence policy that ensures our Armed Forces are properly strengthened to keep our country safe. During our first year, we will undertake a strategic defence and security review and, within our first 100 days, we will conduct a "Nato test" on major programmes to ensure our Nato commitments are fulfilled in full.

One constant that continues to underwrite our national security is Britain's nuclear deterrent. Labour's commitment to our independent nuclear deterrent is total. Labour will build the four new submarines at Barrow and undertake the future upgrades necessary to maintain our continuous at-sea deterrence. For seven decades, this independent, credible deterrent has protected the UK and our allies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As a P5 UN Security Council member, we also want to see Britain doing more to

lead efforts to secure strategic arms limitation and multilateral disarmament. We're a party with deep pride in forging international law and security - the Geneva Conventions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were all signed by Labour prime ministers.

Britain's security depends on well-established foundations but it also relies on fresh approaches to the alliances of our future. American friends described the Aukus agreement between the UK, US and Australia as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" for all three nations, but there's a worrying lack of leadership and vision from the British Government. Nato will remain the cornerstone of European security but Labour's proposed EU-UK security pact will complement our existing alliances in Nato through new foreign and defence policy cooperation, with regular EU-UK summits and structured dialogue to tackle Europe's shared threats in areas like cyber, energy security and organised crime.

In this more divided world, keeping the peace demands both strong deterrence and vigorous diplomacy in equal measure. Sound defence policy is sound foreign policy. That is why we have jointly visited Ukraine, the US, Germany, Belgium and Singapore in the last 18 months; and we plan to continue such joint visits if Labour enters government next year. Together, we are determined to support our armed forces, strengthen Nato and revitalise our diplomacy.



Fuad elected unopposed as president of SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fuad Ishaq and Sanaullah were elected unopposed as president and senior vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry for next term 2023-24.

This announcement was made during the executive committee meeting of the chamber, chaired by the SCCI acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi here at the chamber's house on Thursday.

Leader of Businessman Forum former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour was present during the meeting.

Former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, former presidents Zahidullah Shinwari, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Engr Maqsood Anwar Pervaiz, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former senior vice presidents Engr Saad Khan Zahid, Inran Khan Mohmand, former vice presidents Haji Abdul Jalil Jan, Abidullah Yousafzai, members of the chamber's executive committee Javed Akhtar, Pervez Khan Khattak, Haji Ghulam Hussain, S Minhajuddin, Farhad Asfandiyar, Affaf Ali

Khan, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Monawar Khurshid, Kashif Amin, Qurat Ul Ain and Nadeem Rauf, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazal Wahid.

During the meeting, Muhammad Ismail was elected unopposed through Co-option as member of the chamber's executive committee as the seat had fallen vacant after the death of his father and executive member Laal Badshah.

Senior leader of the businessman forum Ilyas Ahmad Bilour during his opening remarks in the meeting extended heartfelt felicitation to Fuad Ishaq, Sanaullah and Muhammad Ismail for being elected unopposed as president, senior vice president and member of executive committee of the SCCI respectively.

Under visionary and dynamic leadership of Fuad Ishaq, the SCCI office bearers and executive members will perform responsibilities efficiently and serve the business community selflessly and in an efficient manner and would also play a pivotal role in the chamber's further progress, betterment and advancement, he hoped.

Ilyas Bilour said Fuad Ishaq is a highly experienced businessman with countless skills through which business community grievances and issues would be addressed in an appropriate way.

Furthermore, he hoped SCCI's newly elected office bearers under a team will work as a team with full dedication, hard work for putting the chamber on sustainable progress, stability and betterment.

While speaking on the occasion, the newly elected president Fuad Ishaq extremely thanked businessman forum leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, ex-FPCCI chief Ghazanfar Bilour, members of core committee and executive body, former presidents for reposing trust on him and electing him unopposed as president of the SCCI.

He promised that he will try his best to come up to the expectations of the leadership and members and the business community and will not disappoint them.

Fuad Ishaq vowed he along with his team will work under a new vision

and passion with unflinching support of the business community and trade and industries and put the chamber on further advancement and improvement.

The newly elected president assured that close liaison will be built between the chamber and relevant government departments and authorities to resolve the issues of the business community promptly.

Fuad Ishaq said the doors of the chamber will always remain open for the business community.

Earlier, the former president Zahidullah Shinwari presented the annual budget for 2023-24, which was approved by the house with full unanimity.

Former presidents of the chamber congratulated the newly elected office bearers.

At the opening of the meeting, fateha khawani was held for departed souls of executive member Laal Badshah and former executive member Sabir Saraf, Haji Abdul Rauf Sahib who was the father of the former president Adeel Rauf, and uncle of vice president of the chamber Ijaz Khan.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM on OP&HRD Jawad Sohrab Malik speaking at launching ceremony of National Report on the General Scheme of Preferences Plus.

PSX loses 132 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday, losing 132.45 points, showing negative change of 0.29 per cent, closing at 46,232.59 points against 46,365.04 points the previous day.

A total of 177,617,061 shares valuing Rs.6,932 billion were traded during the day as compared to 177,497,178 shares valuing Rs.6,928 billion the previous day. As many as 327 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 122 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Oil and Gas Dev. with 10,868,813 shares at Rs.96.46 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 9,629,472 shares at Rs.1.14 per share and Agritech Limited with 9,567,000 shares at Rs.8.56 per share.

JDW Sugar witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.24.00 per share price, closing at Rs.374.00, whereas the runner-up was Highnoon (Lab) with a Rs.12.66 rise in its per share price to Rs.379.91.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.42.79 per share closing at Rs.7,100.00, followed by Small Ind with a Rs.40.69 decline to close at Rs.650.00.

Rupee gains Rs1.02

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed the 18th consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs 1.02 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs287.73 against the previous day's closing of Rs288.75.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs286.15 and Rs289 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.59 to close at Rs302.44 against the last day's closing of Rs305.03, according to SBP.

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs1.92, whereas a decrease of 88 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs349.86 as compared to the last closing of Rs350.74.

National Report on GSP+ launched

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik has assured International Labour Organization (ILO) and European Union (EU) that Pakistan is resolute to fulfill its commitments with regard to compliance of fundamental labour standards which include elimination child & forced labour, freedom of association and gender discrimination.

He was speaking as a Chief Guest at the launch of National Report on the General Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) at Marriott Hotel Islamabad organized by Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development with the support of ILO and EU.

The SAPM on OP&HRD Jawad Sohrab

Malik reiterated that we are cognizant of the challenges concerning labour rights and committed to overcoming them.

Pakistan is on a journey to becoming an ethical and responsive global partner and the GSP+ is a critical part of that journey to which we remain fully dedicated, he added. He also emphasized for close cooperation and coordination amongst all partners to comply with international convention of labour rights successfully for uninterrupted benefits from the GSP+ status which is imperative for export of our goods to EU countries.

The GSP+ is a special incentive arrangement by the European Union for sustainable development and good governance that supports venerable development countries.

Countries graded GSP+ status are required to ratify and compliance with 27

international conventions including labour rights and the Pakistan has already ratified all these 27 core international conventions. This has enabled Pakistan to export goods to the European Union while benefiting from reduced or zero import duties.

The event was attended by Geir Tonstol, ILO Country Director for Pakistan, and Dr. Stephen Langrell, Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation of EU Delegation to Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, the Country Director ILO to Pakistan assured to providing technical assistance to the Government of Pakistan in undertaking the required reforms to meet GSP+ conditionalities.

The senior officers of Federal Government Ministries and officers of the concerned provincial governments also attended the event.

TDAP to host showcase of women-led businesses

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The excitement is palpable as Lahore gears up for the 11th annual Women Entrepreneurs' Exhibition, WEXNET 2023, at the Lahore Expo Center. The much-anticipated event is set to open its doors to the public tomorrow (Saturday) from 10 AM to 10 PM.

The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) has been steadfast in its commitment to support women-led businesses through a variety of initiatives, with WEXNET being a prominent showcase of their efforts. Each year, TDAP brings together women entrepreneurs from all corners of Pakistan to participate in this event, emphasizing gender inclusivity on a national scale.

This year's theme, "Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship," underscores the importance of women's economic empowerment and the contributions to the national economy.

Renowned organizations also joined TDAP for empowering women, like Daachi Foundation, The COTHM Culinary Institute, PSEB, Sanat Zaar, SMEDA, USAID-ERDA are prominently featured, offering a unique shopping experience for visitors.

Adding to the excitement, the event will host cooking competitions featuring Chef Gulzar and a delectable food court. Beyond shopping and gastronomic delights, WEXNET 2023 boasts a vibrant entertainment line-

up, including cultural shows, seminars, work-

shops, and a dedicated kids' play area, making it an ideal destination for families.

One of the most appealing aspects of WEXNET 2023 is its accessibility to the public. Entry to this three-day event at the Lahore Expo Center is absolutely free for families, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to partake in the excitement.

This year's event has already generated buzz and anticipation, with influential bloggers and celebrities, including Iqra Aziz and Jannat Mirza, eagerly promoting the exhibition. This weekend promises to be thrilling in Lahore, and WEXNET 2023 is a must-visit destination for all.

Join us at WEXNET 2023, where entrepreneurship meets empowerment, and together, we celebrate the achievements and potential of women-led businesses in Pakistan.

OGDCL announces financial results of fiscal 2022-23

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), in its meeting held on September 28, 2023, at Islamabad, announced the financial results for the year ended June 30, 2023, of fiscal year 2022-23. Net sales revenue clocked at Rs. 413.594 billion, translating to profit after tax of Rs. 224.617 billion, showing an increase of 59 percent compared to a profit of Rs. 133.783 billion in the same period of last year and earnings per share of the company clocked at Rs. 52.23 from Rs. 31.11.

The Board of Directors announced the final cash dividend for the year 2022-2023 on the basis of accounts for the period ended June 30, 2023 @ 2.75 per share i.e., 27.50 percent. This is an addition to interim dividends

already paid @ Rs.5.80 per share, i.e. 58 percent to its shareholders. The dividend will be paid to the shareholders whose names will appear in the Register of Members on Wednesday, October 18, 2023. The share transfer books of the company will be closed from Thursday, October 19, 2023, to Thursday, October 26, 2023.

During the period under review, the company paid Rs. 159.154 billion on account of Taxation. The

annual general meeting (AGM) of shareholders of the company will be held on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 09.00 hours in Islamabad. On the exploration and development side, the company recorded significant enhancements in seismic efforts and drilling activities. The Board of Directors appreciated the efforts of the management for taking effective steps for the implementation of the company's aggressive exploration program.

Tokyo stocks close lower

TOKYO (FAP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed lower on Thursday, led by tech shares as investors remained wary of further US rate hikes.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index dropped 1.54 percent, or 499.38 points, to end at 31,872.52, while the broader Topix index fell 1.43 percent, or 34.02 points, to 2,345.51.

The Japanese market "extended the trend in US trade where economic cycle-sensitive and high-tech shares were under pressure from soaring yields in 10-year US bonds", Iwai Cosmo Securities said.

Impact of inflation on mental health

Fareeha Riaz

I am writing to express my deep concern about the severe and far-reaching consequences of the high inflation rates that our country is currently experiencing. While inflation is primarily viewed as an economic issue, it is essential to recognize the profound impact it can have on the mental health of individuals and communities.

Tragically, the strain imposed by high inflation rates has, in some

instances, contributed to a rise in mental health issues and in the most heart-wrenching cases, suicidal tendencies. The emotional toll of struggling to make ends meet and the fear of an uncertain financial future can be overwhelming.

Raise Awareness: Work with government agencies, mental health organizations, and the media to raise awareness about the link between inflation and mental health. Educating the public about available support services is crucial.

Mental Health Support:

Allocate resources to expand mental health services, particularly those accessible to vulnerable populations. Ensuring that individuals in distress can access professional help is of utmost importance.

Economic Relief Measures:

Advocate for policies and initiatives that aim to stabilize the economy and control inflation. By addressing the root causes, we can alleviate some of the stressors contributing to mental health

challenges.

Community Outreach:

Organize community-based programs and support networks to assist individuals and families facing financial difficulties. Local initiatives can provide much-needed assistance and foster a sense of belonging.

It is vital that we acknowledge the profound consequences of high inflation rates on mental health and take proactive steps to mitigate the suffering it can cause.

Gas theft crackdown:

235 connections disconnected; Rs3.38521 million fine imposed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 235 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 3.38521 million and 347 under billing cases processed

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected twenty-three connections on illegal use of gas, another three on use of compressor and 26 Commercial meters under billing cases processed and also Rs0.360 million booked against under Billing.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected four connections on use of compressor while another 22 against illegal use of gas and Rs 0.03 Million has been booked against under billing.

The company disconnected 28 connections on illegal use of gas and one booked against under billing in Multan. The regional team imposed fine of Rs 0.078 Million volume against gas theft and Rs 0.057 Million booked against under billing.

In Sheikhupura, Twenty one connections were disconnected by the region and 05 under billing cases have been processed and the regional team also imposed fine of Rs 0.078 million against theft and Rs 0.057 million against under



billing.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 70 connections on illegal use of gas and meter tampering.

The regional team also booked Rs 0.54821 million against gas theft.

In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected six gas connections while 01 under billing case has been processed and 151 HM3 volume has been booked against under billing cases while imposing fine of Rs. 0.6 Million booked against under billing cases. SNGPL's team in Mardan 14 fake, tampered meters removed, 100 domestic under billing cases processed and 210

HM3 volume booked against domestic under billing cases and 58 HM3 volume has been booked against gas theft while imposing fine of Rs 0.416 million.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected five connections against illegal use of gas, 04 on the use of compressor and RS 0.33 Million booked against under billing.

In Sargodha 24 under billing cases processed 01 meter disconnected on illegal use of gas and Rs.0.53 Million booked against under billing.

The regional team in Gujranwala 03 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor and 03 removed on illegal use of gas.

The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.301 million on

gas theft and under billing cases.

In Gujrat, two connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The company disconnected 14 connections on illegal use of gas and 156 under billing cases have been processed in Islamabad.

In Sahiwal, six connections were disconnected on illegal use of connection.

The regional team in Faisalabad 16 under billing cases processed and 04 disconnected on illegal use of gas and another 02 on the use of compressor.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Tree ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, X-Press Bardsey and Sunray carrying Containers and Mogas, berthed at Container Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Seaspan Ganges and APL Le Havre with Containers also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, four ships, X-Press Bardsey, MSC Greenwich, Maersk Pelepas and Hafnia Tanzanite left the port on today morning, while another bulk carrier KaptaDimitros is expected to sail on Thursday.

Cargo throughput of 162,544 tonnes, comprising 113,737 tonnes imports cargo and 48,807 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,990 Containers (1,119 TEUs Imports and 2,871 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are ten ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Yankul and ALP LE Havre & another ship 'Singapore' carrying Palm oil and Containers are expected to take berths at Liquid Terminal and Containers Terminal respectively on Thursday, while two more container ships, SSL Mumbai and Suape Express are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

Court Notice

In the court of Fasih Rehman civil judge III/illaqa Qazi kabal district Swat. case# 3/6. Institution 3/2/2023. Next Hearing date. 11/10/2023. Gul Zameen s/o toor Sam etc.VS Amer Nawab etc. Notice to Heirs 3/1.Mst Wahid zada 3/2 jamila zada 3/3 Mst. Aisha zada 3/4.Mst. khista zada. Daughter's Mst. Nazak aliya widow of sher zada r/o Aligrama 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 11/10/2023, at 8.30 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.

Court Notice

In the court of Amjad ullah civil judge II/ judge family court kabal district Swat. Case #. 92/2 institution 20/12/2022. Next Hearing date. 12/10/2023. Mst. Taj Meena w/o lal zada VS Amer Rehman etc. Notice to. #33. Lal syed 34. Muhammad syed khan 35. mian gul son's Malang 37. Defendant Haleem s/o Muhammad Jan r/o shah Dheri tehsil kabal district Swat. Presently Abroad. 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 12/10/2023, at 8.30 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Sadia Ali Civil Judge-IV, Bannu Suit No. 184/1 Institution 04.07.2023 Next date of hearing is 09.10.2023. Case title: Shakir Ullah Khan etc vs Banaras etc. To: Defendant No. 02 Mr. Fazal Mahmood Khan Son of Ghulam Sher Khan R/O Mumbai Barakzai Bannu presently abroad. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 09.10.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this court.



In brief

Trials of squash players

SARGODHA (APP): Under the Prime Minister Youth Programme, trials of squash players for Talent Hunt Youth Sports League were held at Squash Complex Sargodha in which 149 players from across the region participated on Thursday. Participants included 60 male and 89 female players. Chief Selector Director Sports Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan Madam Abida Khan said the selected players would be able to participate in Squash Hunt Youth Sports League, being held in Multan. She said the aim of the league was to develop skills of squash players all-over the country. President Sports Journalists Association Sargodha Malik Tariq Awan, Director Sports Sargodha University Maher Ahmad Khan Khari and Madam Shazia were also present.

Spanish police raid referee offices

Barcelona (Agencies): Spanish police raided the offices of the referees' committee as part of an investigation into Barcelona's alleged corrupt payments to an official. Barcelona face charges of corruption over payments made to Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira, a former vice-president of the committee, in return for favourable refereeing decisions. Uefa is also investigating the matter. Barcelona deny any wrongdoing and no arrests were made during the search in Madrid. The Spanish Civil Guard searched the Spanish Technical Committee of Referees (CTA) headquarters on Thursday. BBC Sport has been told that the judge presiding over the case demanded documentation from the CTA. This was not sent, which prompted the raid. The initial criminal investigation was brought by the Barcelona public prosecutor's office in March, with European football's governing body Uefa launching its own investigation shortly after. It is alleged that Barcelona paid 8.4m euros (£7.4m) to Negreira and his Dasnil 95 company. The payments were initially investigated as part of a tax probe into the company run by Negreira. Barcelona made payments to the company totalling a reported 1.4m euros (£1.2m) between 2016 and 2018, and paid Negreira about 7m euros (£6.2m) between 2001 and 2018, the year he left his role with the referees' committee. Barcelona acknowledged they had paid Dasnil 95, which it described as "an external technical consultant", to compile video reports on referees "with the aim of complementing the information required by the coaching staff".

Cricketer found not guilty of rape

C O L O M B O (Agencies): A Sri Lankan cricketer accused of raping a woman while in Australia for the T20 WC has been found not guilty. Danushka Gunathilaka, 32, was accused of assaulting the Sydney woman at her home after a Tinder date in November. Initially he was charged with multiple counts of rape, but only one count of stealing - removing a condom without consent - proceeded to trial. The case tested new laws criminalising the act in New South Wales (NSW). During a four-day trial in a NSW District Court, the complainant - who legally cannot be named - said she had only consented to protected sex. She said she did not see the batsman remove the condom, but saw it on the floor shortly after the intercourse ended. She further alleged Mr Gunathilaka had kissed her "forcefully" and at times choked her so hard she feared for her life.

Pakistan beat Uzbekistan to in Asian Games hockey

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan hockey team earned its third consecutive victory in the ongoing 19th Asian Games when it downed Uzbekistan in the extravaganza at Hangzhou, China on Thursday. According to details, the Pakistan team clinched a commanding victory over Uzbekistan, triumphing by a resounding 18-2 win in their third pool match. Right from the outset, Pakistan established their dominance on the field, relentlessly slotting con-

secutive goals. Impressively, they have amassed a total of 34 goals across their three pool encounters thus far. Arbaaz Ahmed showcased his scoring prowess by netting an impressive five goals, closely followed by Rana Waheed and Afraz, each contributing three goals. Umar Bhatta and Abdul Rehman exhibited their skill with two goals apiece, while Arshad Liaquat, Ruman Khan, and Sufyan Khan each notched one goal in their

remarkable performance against Uzbekistan. Pakistan's team remains steadfast in their position at the top of the points table in the hockey competition, securing victories in all three of their matches so far. Trailing closely behind was their formidable rival, India, currently holding the second spot, and Japan in third place, both after two matches. The anticipation for an electrifying encounter was building up as the

Pakistan hockey team gears up to clash against their arch-rivals, India, in their upcoming fourth pool match scheduled for September 30. The competition boasts a total of twelve participating teams, segregated into two competitive pools. Pool A comprises teams from India, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan, while Pool B, includes Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Up and down Pakistan seek consistency in WC

ISLAMABAD (AFP): Just a month ago, Pakistan were riding high as the world's top-ranked ODI team and one of the favourites to win the World Cup in India. But a crushing 228-run defeat to arch-rivals India and a narrow two-wicket loss to Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup have cast a shadow over their prospects. This unpredictability is a constant feature for Pakistan, who frequently swing between highs and lows. Adding to their challenges, the team suffered a major blow with the loss of key fast bowler Naseem Shah, who was ruled out of the World Cup with a shoulder injury. Nevertheless, team director Mickey Arthur remains optimistic. "Losing a player of Naseem's calibre is a massive setback," Arthur told AFP. "But we have a mix of experienced and young bowlers who are more than capable of stepping up to the challenge." To fill the void, Pakistan have recalled experienced pacer Hasan Ali, who has regained fitness after finger surgery last month. Arthur, Pakistan's head

coach at the 2019 World Cup when they failed to make the semi-finals, is confident the team can bounce back from recent disappointments. "This is a very capable team that can turn things around. Remember that we were ranked number one before the Asia Cup, and we've only lost two games," he said. "This team has the potential to go all the way." The challenges facing the team reflect the broader issues plaguing Pakistan, including a struggling economy, rampant inflation, and political turmoil, with cricket legend Imran Khan, who led Pakistan to their only World Cup victory in 1992, currently behind bars. The Pakistan Cricket Board has also seen instability, with three different chiefs in the last ten months and current leader Zaka Ashraf uncertain about his position. On the field, Babar Azam faces the dual challenge of lifting the team's performance and improving his own much-criticized captaincy. Despite being the top-ranked ODI batter, Azam had a lacklustre Asia Cup, scoring just 207 runs in four matches — 151 of those

came against Nepal. However, Azam remains confident that the team can overcome its issues. "Our preparation for the World Cup is on track despite our Asia Cup setbacks," he said. In addition to concerns about spinners Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz not taking enough wickets, opener Fakhar Zaman — a specialist in white-ball cricket — has been struggling with form. Zaman, the only Pakistan batter to score a double century in an ODI, managed just 65 runs in four Asia Cup matches and was on the brink of being dropped. The middle-order, comprising wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan, Itikhar Ahmed, Agha Salman, and Saud Shakeel, needs to fire on all cylinders if Pakistan hopes to qualify for the semi-finals, a stage they last reached in 2011. Despite these challenges, Pakistan remains a formidable and unpredictable team, capable of upsetting expectations, particularly on slow and turning pitches in India, conditions similar to those they are accustomed to at home.

Messi misses Inter Miami cup final defeat

FORT LAUDERDALE (Agencies): The injured Lionel Messi watched from the stands as Inter Miami lost 2-1 to Houston Dynamo in the final of US Open Cup. Forward Messi, 36, was substituted against Toronto FC last week because of an "old injury" and sat out Miami's draw at Orlando City on Monday. Griffin Dorsey and an Amine Bassi penalty put Houston 2-0 up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Josef Martinez scored a consola-

tion for Miami in stoppage time. Houston goalkeeper Andrew Tarbell made three saves as Dynamo clinched their second US Open Cup in five years. Miami's Spain defender Jordi Alba also missed the game because of injury. Miami manager Gerardo Martino said Argentina World Cup winner Messi's return to full fitness was the club's top priority. "It was not prudent for him to play. We couldn't even consider playing him

for a few minutes because we would be taking risks," said former Barcelona and Argentina boss Martino. Martino said Messi will "certainly play before the league is over." The regular MLS season ends on 21 October, with the play-offs taking place from 25 October to 9 December. Messi has scored 11 goals and provided five assists for the MLS franchise since joining in July after his Paris St-Germain contract expired.

Dew factor to make WC interesting – India coach



NEW DELHI (Agencies): Excessive moisture on the field at the Cricket World Cup will make the top-flight ODI competition all the more interesting, India coach Rahul Dravid said. The 50-over tournament kicks off next Thursday across 10 cities, and all but six of the 48 matches will be day-night contests. In India that usually means high moisture on the field after sunset, which makes the ball moist and difficult to grip. "India is a big country and there are many venues so it's hard to say it (dew) is going to be the same everywhere," Dravid said after India's 66-run loss to Australia in their third and final ODI in Rajkot on Wednesday. "Each venue and each day will be different. It's one of the hardest things to predict with dew," he said. Dew mainly affects bowlers and fielders as day-night matches progress, with most captains opting to bowl first after winning the toss as a result. But whether it will be a factor at all is in itself unpredictable. Dravid, a former India captain, said he had played games on fields where the ground would be "soaked" the day before but bone-dry by match time. "As the tournament goes on, at some venues it will be a factor and at some it may not. It's going to make it more interesting," the 50-year-old said. India, the top-ranked team across all formats, begin their World Cup campaign against Australia on October 8 followed by their hotly anticipated clash against Pakistan. They will also play two warm-up matches beginning with England in Guwahati on September 30.

Oman to host FIH Hockey Olympic qualifier

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Men's FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers which was earlier withdrawn from Pakistan, would now be hosted by Oman from January 15 to 21, 2024. Oman, had already expressed an interest to bid at an early stage to host the event, during the bidding phase, said a press release. The other three FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers would be played in China (Women's – January 15-21, 2024) and Spain (Women's and Men's – January 13-21).

A total of 6 Women's and as many Men's teams would qualify for Paris 2024 through these FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers, for which the participating teams from Oceania and Europe are already known. Australia and the Netherlands (Women's and Men's) have already secured their spot at the Paris 2024 hockey Olympic tournaments by winning the 2023 Oceania Cup and EuroHockey Championships respectively, therefore joining hosts France.

The Asian Games – being played currently in Hangzhou, China – as well as the upcoming Pan American Games and African Hockey Road to Paris tournament will determine the remaining teams qualifying directly for next year's Olympics (3 Women's and as many Men's teams) as well as the teams playing the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers. The Paris 2024 hockey Olympic tournaments would take place from July 27 to August 9 next year.

Novak Djokovic praises Carlos Alcaraz

LONDON (Reuters): Novak Djokovic has won three out of the four Grand Slams in 2023 and has no plans of slowing down at 36, but the world number one believes the future of tennis is in good hands with young gun Carlos Alcaraz leading the way. Djokovic's hopes of winning all four Grand Slam titles in the calendar year were dashed at Wimbledon, where he was beaten in five sets by the 20-year-old Alcaraz with the result being hailed as the changing of the guard in men's tennis. But the Serbian bounced back to beat Alcaraz in a thrilling final at Cincinnati

before going on to claim a record-equalling 24th major at the U.S. Open earlier this month. "I think tennis, definitely the future is looking good with Carlos leading that field," Djokovic told Sky Sports during the All Star Match in the build-up to golf's 44th Ryder Cup. "We've had some thrilling encounters... This year with the final at Wimbledon and also Roland Garros and Cincinnati - that was one of the best three-set matches I've ever played. "It's great for our sport there are more rivalries happening but rivalries

with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal particularly and also with Andy Murray are right up there for me." Djokovic and Alcaraz have split their four meetings on tour and the veteran hoped they would continue having matches. "Hopefully I'll play him as many times as I played the other guys and that will mean I'll be playing for years to come. But I doubt that, let's see how it goes," Djokovic added. "I've had a fantastic year. Grand Slams are the ones that count the most for me at this point of my career, they're the ones where I want to play my best tennis.

Ashwin replaces Axar in India's World Cup squad

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Offspinner R Ashwin has replaced left-arm spinner Axar Patel in India's final 15 for the 2023 World Cup*. ESPNcricinfo has learned that Axar, who left the Asia Cup with a quadriceps strain, needs at least three more weeks to recover fully. Today is the deadline for teams to make changes - no questions asked - to their World Cup squads, as per the ICC's regulations. From tomorrow, any further changes will need the consent of the World Cup's technical committee. This means Ashwin joins Virat Kohli as one of only two players in this squad who also featured in India's 2011 World Cup winning run. Ashwin's inclusion has come as a surprise, with things changing quickly. He was not part of the 15-man squad announced by the BCCI in late August. At the time, India's chief selector Ajit Agarkar pointed out that while Ashwin was one of the contenders, the selectors and the team management had opted for Axar, whom they felt provided batting depth. In the Asia Cup, when Axar got injured and returned to the National Cricket Academy

(NCA) in Bengaluru, the BCCI drafted Washington Sundar as his replacement. Both Washington and Ashwin were included three-match ODI series against Australia that followed, which India won 2-1. That series was the first time Ashwin, 37, had played in India in ODIs in 18 months. He played the first two of those Australia games, taking 1 for 47 and 3 for 41, before being rested for the third ODI in Rajkot where Washington replaced him. Rahul Dravid, India's head coach, had said at a media briefing on Wednesday, after the third ODI, that "there were no changes" to the World Cup squad. Dravid said that Agarkar had been in touch with the NCA on Axar's rehab. However, following the latest update on Axar, Ashwin has been slotted in, and Washington will fly to China on Friday to join India's squad for the Asian Games. Ashwin is the only specialist offspinner in India's World Cup squad, and brings with him the experience of 115 ODIs (155 wickets, economy rate 4.94). He had made his ODI debut a year before the 2011 World

Cup, and was part of India's successful campaign with four wickets in two games. He also played the 2015 World Cup in Australia, where he took 13 wickets in eight matches. He was not part of India's 2019 World Cup squad in England. India captain Rohit Sharma had said on the eve of the third ODI against Australia that all this experience worked in Ashwin's favour. "Ashwin has got the class, he's got experience of playing the sport and handling the pressure. It's just that he hasn't played ODIs [for] a year or so. But you cannot take away the class and the experience that the individual has over the years, and in the last couple of games [against Australia], we saw how well he bowled. He's got a lot of variations up his sleeves." India's updated World Cup squad Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya (vice-capt), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, R Ashwin, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj.

Pakistan set up thrilling last day on pools stage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Seeded No.4 Pakistan produced a spectacular performance to shock top seed India and blow the race to join Malaysia and Hong Kong, China in the semi-finals wide open on the second day of the men's team event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou. With today's string order 2-3-1, it was up to 19-year-old Noor Zaman to lead out the 2010 champions, with the Peshawar native impressing as he got his side off to a perfect start with a 3-1 win over India's Abhay Singh. Indian No.1 Saurav Ghosal, part of title-win-

ning 2014 side, quickly restored parity with a 30-minute 3-0 win against Muhammad Asim Khan. In a frenetic and tense decisive match that wowed the crowd at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre, Nasir Iqbal was able to complete the upset, with the 29-year-old's grit under pressure helping him to an 11-6, 13-11, 9-11, 11-8 win over Mahesh Mangaonkar. "It's a really proud moment for me and my country. We knew how tough this India side is and they're playing very good squash. We really prepared ourselves for their level

and it's a very happy moment for me, my country and my boys," said Pakistan team manager Fahim Gul. That win for Pakistan ensures a three-way fight tomorrow for the two qualifying positions at the top of Pool A. The pools stage of the Hangzhou Asian Games team squash events concludes tomorrow, September 28, with play beginning at 12:30 (GMT+8). The semi-finals would take place on September 29 and finals on September 30. The singles and mixed doubles events begin October 1.

Pakistan wheelchair team to participate in Asia Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan wheelchair cricket team will leave for Nepal on October 2 to participate in the second edition of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023, Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council (PWCC) said on Thursday. The event will take place from October 2 to 8 at the neutral venue of Kathmandu, Nepal. "A strong 15-member Pakistan team will feature in the five-nation tournament," Rookhsana Rajpoot, President of PWCC told APP. Teams from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will participate in the Asia Cup. Seasoned Muhammad Zeeshan, who led Pakistan to victory in the inaugural edition in 2019 in Nepal, has again been handed over the reins of team's stewardship. The event, being hosted by Pakistan was earlier scheduled to be held in July but was pushed to October due to rainy season in Kathmandu," Rookhsana

said. "We wanted to hold the event in Pakistan but due to some travelling issues of Indian team it was decided to move it to Nepal. Rookhsana said geographically Nepal was the best destination for all the participating teams to arrive. She said the PWCC would be responsible to cover the event cost, while Nepal's National Disability Sports for All Organization (NDSO) and Physically Challenged Cricket Association of Nepal (PCCAN) would provide logistic support. All the fixtures will be held at Kathmandu's Tu International Cricket Ground. Every day, there will be two matches. The opening match will be held between Nepal and Bangladesh on October 4, while in the second on the same day Sri Lanka will face India. Pakistan will launch their campaign against Nepal on October 5, whereas in the second match of the day Nepal will

face Sri Lanka. In their second match, Pakistan will meet traditional rivals India on October 6, while in the other match of the day Nepal will clash with Sri Lanka. On October 7, Bangladesh will meet India in the first match of the day, while in the second match Pakistan will lock horns with Sri Lanka. Similarly, on October 8 Nepal will compete against India in the first match, whereas the second match of the day will be held between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The top two teams on the points table will advance to the final, scheduled to be held on October 9. Pakistan team: Muhammad Zeeshan, Muhammad Fiaz, Muhammad Latif, Muhammad Imran Ameen, Sajid Ali Abbasi, Mozan Nawaz, Ahmed Yar, Umargul, Mohsin Thabel, Muhammad Shahid, Misal Khan, Muhammad Adnan, Asif Nadeem, Zulfiqar Swati, Khalid Shah.

Labuschagne replaces Agar in Australia's World Cup squad

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Australia will carry an injured Travis Head through the first part of the World Cup but have provided themselves with extra batting cover by including Marcus Labuschagne at the expense of Ashton Agar who has been ruled out with a calf injury. Head, who suffered a fractured hand against South Africa, has been included in the final 15-player squad but will be unavailable for first half of the tournament. However, given he did not require surgery, there is confidence he will be fit to play later in the round-robin stage and he is viewed as so valuable to Australia's chances that they are willing to initially go in with 14 available players. Since returning to the ODI side in March 2022, Head has made 791 runs at 60.84 and a strike rate of

119.84. While he recovers, Mitchell Marsh will likely continue to open with David Warner. Agar's injury, which was confirmed by scans when he returned home from South Africa for the birth of his child, created a vacancy in the squad and the selectors have opted to change tactics and include Labuschagne rather than pick another frontline spinner. Glenn Maxwell's four-wicket haul in Rajkot was timely in that regard, suggesting that he can be a second spinner alongside Adam Zampa, but it remains a gamble by the selectors given the uncertainty over how Maxwell will cope with the workload as he continues to feel the effects of the broken leg he suffered last year. It also means there is no specialist spin cover for Zampa. Fellow legspinner

Tanveer Sangha will remain with the squad until at least the end of the warm-up matches along with allrounder Matt Short. "There has been one change to the original preliminary squad of 15 announced a month ago with Marcus replacing Ashton," chair of selectors George Bailey said. "This was a tough call but unfortunately, we couldn't carry both Travis and Ashton into the tournament with the injuries they have. "We have made the decision to carry Travis through the early stages with the aim of him being available around the mid part of the tournament. He has been a really important player in this ODI team and we are hopeful his return can provide a positive impetus as it gets to the business end of the tournament." It has been a rapid revival of Labuschagne's

one-day fortunes after he was initially not meant to play a part in either the South Africa or India series this month. He was recalled as a replacement for Steven Smith as the latter recovered from a wrist injury, and in the opening match against South Africa in Bloemfontein was parachuted in as Cameron Green's concussion sub where he made a match-winning 80 not out. He went on to make 421 runs at 60.14 in eight matches, including a century, also in Bloemfontein, and 72 off 58 balls in Rajkot on Wednesday. Agar initially suffered a calf strain in pre-season and was ruled out of the T20I series in South Africa. He recovered to play the opening match of the one-day series but pulled up sore after that outing and did not feature again.



In brief

IRSA releases 167,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 167,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 118,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1543.98 feet and was 145.98 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 63,700 cusecs and 90,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1228.10 feet, which was 178.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 15,700 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 112,200, 87,800, 102,900 and 49,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seizes drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover over 3.5 kg of drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, 2220 grams of Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Bahrain-bound passenger resident of Kohistan, going on flight number GF-785. The drug was tactfully concealed in the bottom of the passenger's bag. He informed me that the drug recovery was managed with the help of ANF's sniffer dog. In another operation, 1590 grams of heroin was recovered from a parcel recovered at a courier office in Dina. Heroin which was concealed in a dinner set carton was being smuggled to the United Kingdom. The parcel was booked by a resident of Poonch, Azad Kashmir. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are in process.

19 drug peddlers held

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 19 accused besides recovering over 10 kg charras, five liters liquor, six 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Rattaamral, Sadiqabad, Airport, Chakri, Gujjar Khan, Taxila, Naseerabad and Bani police held Khurram, Jahangir, Arslan, Razaq, Khurram, Sanaulah, Shahid, and others on recovery of over 10 kg charras. Similarly, New Town, Sadiqabad, Race Course, Saddar Wah, Kalar Syedan and City police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Owais, Majid, Akram, Babar, Sajid and others and recovered five liters liquor, six 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zaidong are cutting cake along with other officials on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China. —APP Photo

Holy Prophet perfect model to be emulated for success in both worlds

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the perfect model to be emulated for success in both worlds.

In a message on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), he said that the teachings and practices outlined by the last Prophet (PBUH) have been a true beacon of light for the humanity.

He said, "It is the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s perfect teachings and practical model which guide the Muslim Ummah in all

spheres of life and also guide them to overcome socio economic challenges.

Raja Pervez Ashraf said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has been a torch bearer to whole mankind. He emphasized that every human society can achieve goals of progress and prosperity by implementing teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

He said, "Tolerance and forbearance practiced and taught by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are essential to create pluralistic society." He expressed that Pakistani

society needs practical implementation of teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for harmony and national unity.

The Speaker said that the Muslim Ummah is facing a serious challenge of Islamophobia. Every Muslim must practically follow and highlight true message of Islam in order to tackle this challenge.

He stressed youth to keep themselves abreast to the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and practically follow these teachings in their lives.

Govt to take action against smuggled drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan issued an order to start a crackdown against counterfeit, unregistered, and smuggled drugs.

According to a spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, the minister directed that the sale storage and distribution points of all such medicines should be stopped immediately. Dr Nadeem Jan said that strict legal action should be taken against the elements involved in these unregistered fake medicines.

He said that the scope of surveillance in the market should be increased with checks on distributors, medical stores, and wholesalers in the markets. The minister said that effective measures are being taken for the uninterrupted supply of quality and safe medicines to the people.

QAU ranked as country's top university

ISLAMABAD (APP): Upholding the mission of providing quality education to the students, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) has achieved the prestigious distinction of being ranked as Pakistan's top university in the Times World University Rankings 2024.

Globally, it has secured the impressive position of 227 in research quality and 401-500 overall, said a news release. This outstanding accomplishment is a testament to the unwavering dedication, tireless efforts, and exceptional contributions of QAU's hardworking and committed faculty members, brilliant students, dedicated staff, and accomplished alumni.

Their passion for excellence and commitment to academic and research pursuits have propelled QAU to be among the world's top universities. The QAU is the only university in Pakistan that consistently holds the distinction of being the best institution according to renowned global ranking agencies.

With the recent ranking of 315 in the QS ranking, in addition to its significant position in the Times World Rankings, the university continues to achieve remarkable progress in the realm of higher education.

The university has achieved such excellence due to the efforts of each and every member of QAU community for their invaluable contributions in making this achievement possible.

Aneeq highlights CII's role in addressing national issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed emphasized the indispensable role of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) in establishing enduring foundations for addressing the national and religious issues.

Addressing former non-Muslim parliamentarians and community leaders here at the CII the other day, he also highlighted the Council's crucial support in the research endeavors of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

Minister Aneeq stressed the importance of Muslims being knowledgeable about their responsibilities and urged for adherence to the noble character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). He emphasized that there

sized the Quranic injunction to verify information brought by wrongdoers and indicated that "in cases of injustice against non-Muslims within the state, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) call for advocacy on their behalf."

Furthermore, he urged the public not to take the law into their own hands, stating that any wrongdoing against non-Muslims brought shame to the entire community.

Reflecting on the Council members' recent visit following the incident in Jaranwala, the minister remarked positively on the engagement and efforts of the Council. He expressed concern about ongoing attempts to destabilize Pakistan internally and emphasized that there

could be no compromise on blasphemy against the Holy Quran and the Prophet Peace Be Upon Him. He called for a firm end to the vilification of Prophets and misuse of laws, pledging that measures would be taken to ensure their prevention.

Aneeq also expressed concern about the threat faced by all minority communities in India due to rising Hindu extremism. He reaffirmed a commitment to peace and stated that elements promoting violence and extremism would not be allowed to tarnish their identity.

CII Chairman, Qibla Ayaz lauded the minister for his commendable views on behalf of the Council members and the non-Muslim community.

BISP is an expression of care for deprived

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has said that BISP is a manifestation of love and care for the less fortunate members of our society.

"BISP is about much more than providing monetary aid; it is not charity, it's our expression of love for the deprived segments of society", he said during a heartwarming address to a gathering of BISP employees at the BISP Auditorium Hall.

Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib expressed his unwavering commitment to altering the prevailing perceptions about the program.

While addressing, he passionately spoke about the crucial role that education plays in uplifting indi-

viduals and society as a whole. He expressed concern over the fact that millions of children in Pakistan do not have access to education and emphasized the need to change this reality.

"Education is the real game-changer," he stressed, underlining that it is a national, social, and religious responsibility to ensure that every child in Pakistan receives education. Chairperson BISP called upon the BISP employees to be custodians of this noble mission and to start a movement and campaign for a reformed society.

He envisioned a society where every child has access to education, and where love, humanity, brotherhood, and sacrifice form the core of our values.

Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib acknowledged that 9.3 million families benefited from BISP's support and the program operates on the principles of humanity, brotherhood, and responsibility.

Despite limited resources, BISP serves as one of the largest platforms dedicated to supporting those in need. It is a blessing and a privilege to be part of this initiative, he said.

Chairperson BISP stressed that all BISP's offices across the country must commit to creating a positive mindset and encourage families to send their children to school.

He urged all the stakeholders to join hands in this transformative journey toward a more inclusive, loving, and educated Pakistan.

Pakistan too vulnerable to issue of water shortage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has become too vulnerable to the disastrous issue of water shortage due to tree loss resulting in declined rainfall as the Forest Department in the north of the country is rapidly removing snags under the garb of dead, infected and dried up trees.

Senior biodiversity expert and Chairman Scientific Committee of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, Prof. Dr. Z.B. Mirza told APP that the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department was removing snags from the forests, under a false excuse of removing the diseased dead and dried up forest trees (3-Ds). The fact is that often the tallest trees, such as Silver Fir and Deodar in a forest are killed by lightning of storm clouds.

"It is not understandable, how can one tallest single tree in a dense forest can suddenly die due to a disease? A dead tree is called a 'Snag' in language of forestry. As a snag stands for years and it rots very slowly by the microbes and insects. The dead tree loses its dense canopy of leaves and the dried branches remain. The sunlight reaches the ground. This gives the opportunity to the seeds of surrounding flora to germinate around it, covering the soil," Prof Mirza said.

Mostly, the moist Temperate forests of the Himalayan slopes have snags. These stand along with live trees to protect the precious top soil of the forest from erosion. Heavy rainfall, even cloud burst, cannot erode the soil, for the simple reason that close-pack tree trunks, undergrowth of shrubs, bushes, herbs and densely growing long grasses do not let the rain water flow fast, at least at the floor of the forest to wash down the soil. Water may come down the slopes rushing and gushing, but it is above the slow-moving water close to the ground cover.

Why call forest topsoil, precious? Simply, because forests cannot grow again on eroded slopes of the mountains. Soil can be formed again, with the rubbing and crushing action of nature. It may take thousands and millions of years to cover the rocks with soil. Try making a tea spoon full of soil by rubbing two stones and then imagine how much time nature might have taken to form billions and trillions of tons of soil on the rocky slopes of mountains.

He said topsoil covered with flora is fertile, because the dead leaves that form the covering layer, function as an insulating layer, that retains moisture. The mois-

ture favours the growth of Microbes (bacteria and fungi). The moist dead leaves below the dried upper insulating layer, get rotten by the soil microbes, which also need solar energy trapped in the biomass of dead leaves. This activity forms the compost for the trees.

The trees get the nutrients from the compost with the help of mycorrhiza or root fungi. The trees cannot live without the help of these microscopic creatures, and the microbes cannot live without decomposing the fallen leaves.

"We all know that during timber harvesting, the roots of the trees are also removed as fuelwood. Uprooting loosens the forest's fertile soil, which is eroded from the slopes of the mountains, during the first rainfall. With that, the soil biodiversity is also lost. The soil biodiversity includes microbes, macroinvertebrates and vertebrates. Not only do these creatures create nutrients from the dead organic matter of the fallen leaves, but also their mobility increases the porosity of the soil. This enhances the rainwater absorption capacity of that soil. The subsoil aquifers are replenished and the springs flow in the valleys, even in the dry season," Dr Mirza said.

Pakistan needs strategic clarity amid transforming world

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed Thursday said that the country needed strategic clarity to avoid becoming 'a cat's paw' for any nation in the new Cold War era and transforming world that is emerging into a multilateral comity of nations shunning the old unipolar world order.

He was delivering his keynote address at the book launch ceremony of Collected Works on Foreign Affairs and Security Policy by Dr Huma Baqai here at the Institute of Regional Studies.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed termed the book a fine piece of document that would guide the professionals and common people alike. However, he also deliberated his criticism on the book.

He said that foreign policy was a subject that used to get comments everyday and termed the essence of the book as "seeing truth from facts", a classic Chinese idiom highlighting approach of ancient Chinese scholars who paid great attention to acquiring solid facts in order to arrive at the correct understanding or conclusion.

While opining his critical views, he said the terminology of Indo-Pacific term was overloaded in Dr. Baqai's book because the original term was Asia Pacific. The Indo-Pacific term was used by the European Union (EU), US and others to rope in India which had its own ego of self-projection, he added.

The aspect of cold-war aspect is very importantly highlighted in the book, whereas mentioning of KSA-Iran reproachment was

also significant is also crucial as it is one of the biggest achievements in the region, he said.

He commented that the way the world was developing needed to be focused as there was a lack of institutionalized decision making forum at the civilian and military side of the country which left it with only reactive approaches which also should be harnessed for prudent approaches.

"Pakistan has a strategic location and it needs to be friendly with all and should avoid becoming cat's paw for any other nation in the new Cold War. We are on the right side of history and this century belongs to Asia as predicted by Allama Iqbal in his poetry some 90 years back," he said while ending his comments with the verses of Dr Allama Mohammad Iqbal.

President, IRS, Ambassador

Nadeem Riyaz moderated the panel discussion that highlighted discourse on the book.

Ambassador, Naghmana Hashmi in her remarks congratulated Dr. Huma Baqai on the publication of her book and termed it an excellent piece of publication.

She underscored that the book would be guiding document for intellectuals, Foreign Office professionals and youth interested in understanding the world affairs. The book, she said was based on the columns and articles of the author.

The author made a very careful selection of 46 articles out of a 100 written over the years by her and divided them in a chronological order while arranging them into the book's content.

"She (Dr Baqai) has brilliant-

ly covered the flux the world had witnessed. She takes us through the various stages the world passed from 2019 to so far. The author also covered the flux Pakistan is going through from different levels of political, social and others," she said.

Senior Journalist, Zahid Hussain while expressing his view said that the country was back to a brief 9/11 situation after the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan. He said the author Dr Huma has described how resetting of the nation could take place in this scenario.

The author, Dr Huma Baqai said that it was her third book in which she wrote with the vision that a book should be written in an eloquent manner which should be easily understandable to the readers.

The articles were picked up keeping in view their subject matter shelf life as out of my 100 articles there were many of her articles on contemporary issues that lacked shelf life.

"Our youth are directionless and our nation is intellectually starved because there is no book reading and writing culture in the society. However, youth is the only hope for our nation as they can drive the real change," she added.

She commented that her book could serve as a brand of Pakistan which should have more Pakistani perspective in its projection. She added that intellectual hygiene was very important and this book would also be a guiding document for the journalists fraternity to understand the complex concepts of geopolitics and international relations.

Five killed in road accident

HERAT (Xinhua): Five commuters lost their lives and another injured as their car turned turtle in Herat province, police spokesman Abdullah Insaf said on Thursday. The deadly road crash, according to the official, took place in Gazara district on Wednesday evening, leaving five travelers dead and badly injuring another. Insaf also blamed reckless driving for the accident, saying driving on congested roads carelessly often claims the lives of travelers in province.

Sixth polio case reported

KABUL (Agencies): A new polio case has been reported in the Nangarhar province, marking the 6th such incident since the start of 2023. The recent case was recorded in the Khogyani district of Nangarhar, according to a statement released by Ministry of Public Health. All the six polio cases this year have been reported in the same province. In response to the escalating situation, the Ministry of Public Health initiated a nationwide polio vaccination program two days ago.

UN’s Roza urges aid continuation

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan as well as representatives of the UK, China, Pakistan and Iran called for the continuation of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

Speaking at the UN Security Council Meeting, the head of UNAMA, Roza Otunbayeva, said that the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan had received US \$872 million, approximately only 28 per cent of the \$3.2 billion requested.

“Many programmes have already closed due to insufficient funding just as winter is fast approaching and lives are most at risk. This means that 15.2 million Afghans now facing acute food insecurity could be pushed towards famine in the coming months,” Otunbayeva said.

Speaking at the UN

Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, the US deputy ambassador to the UN, Robert A. Wood, said that the current Afghan government has created an increasingly difficult operating environment for partners who are aiding the Afghan people.

“The Taliban have created an increasingly difficult operating environment for partners who are staying and delivering life-saving aid to the Afghan people. Any interference in or diversion of humanitarian aid is totally unacceptable. We continue to expect the Taliban to allow unhindered humanitarian access and the flow of aid, consistent with humanitarian principles,” said Robert A. Wood.

“The UK has contributed over half a billion dollars to address the humanitarian crisis since April 2021 and

we call on fellow Member States to step up support where they can,” Barbara Woodward, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the UN said at the UN meeting.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate said that it does not interfere in the distribution of aid and it asked the international community to continue its aid to the people of Afghanistan.

“The Islamic Emirate does not interfere in the distribution of aid. We ask the humanitarian organizations and international community to provide aid to the people of Afghanistan. And we try to monitor the aid so it is distributed to the people of Afghanistan,” said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy of the Ministry of Economy.

China’s ambassador to the United Nation once again asked the US to release Afghanistan assets.

18,000 Afghans contracted COVID-19

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Health of the Islamic Emirate said that more than 18,000 people in Afghanistan have contracted COVID-19 since the beginning of 2023, but said the number of COVID-19 patients has fallen down during the last two months.

“So far in 2023 we have had 18,000 positive cases of COVID-19, in 2022 the number was less than 45,000 which shows decline,” said Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health. Nasir, 57, has come from Baghlan province to the Afghan capital, Kabul. He said he contracted COVID-19 and has been hospitalized in the Afghan-Japan Hospital for the last ten days.

“I could not even walk and enter the hospital, they brought me in a wheelchair but now I feel better,” said the COVID-19 patient Nasir. “I could not breathe, I was laying at my home and when opened my eyes I found myself in the hospital,” said COVID-19 patient Rajab.

Meanwhile, authorities at the Kabul-based Afghan-Japan Hospital say that the number of COVID-19 patients has decreased in the last one month.

“We have 20 patients hospitalized here, 219 people were tested for COVID-19 last month, among them nine were found to have been positive,” said Zalmay Rishteen, head of the COVID-19 ward in the Afghan-Japan Hospital.

“As the winter nears, signs of COVID-19 are appearing,” said Shireen Agha Naseri, a doctor. Based on the statistics of the Health Ministry and World Health Organization, 225,000 Afghans have contracted COVID-19.



KANDAHAR: Afghan farmers pack fresh pomegranates at an orchard.

Systematic restrictions threaten Afghan Journalists’ future: NAI

KABUL (Agencies): Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan (NAI) on World Access to Information Day said that systematic restrictions on accessing information in Afghanistan have created uncertainty for the future of journalism.

September 28 marks World Access to Information Day.

On Thursday, September 18, coinciding with World Access to Information Day, the organization issued a statement revealing that 89% of journalists surveyed by them confirmed that access to information has

become restricted since the insurgence of the Taliban administration.

NAI continues to emphasize that journalism and information dissemination in Afghanistan face serious challenges. According to their statement, concerns about job security and physical violence against journalists and media personnel are also problematic, in addition to limited access to information.

Furthermore, the Afghan Independent Journalists’ Union released a report on World Access to Information Day, stating

that based on their findings, 73.9% of journalists believe that access to information is one of the most fundamental rights of citizens significantly affected by recent developments.

The political transformations in Afghanistan have wrought a significant and concerning impact on the media landscape. With the recent changes, 50% of the country’s media outlets have ceased operations, leaving a void in the information ecosystem that once played a crucial role in disseminating news and fostering public discourse.

Furthermore, this tumultuous shift has resulted in a dire situation for journalists and media professionals, as approximately 70% of them have found themselves unemployed, facing uncertain futures in an environment marked by uncertainty and instability.

These developments underscore the challenges faced by Afghanistan in preserving its press freedom and media diversity, highlighting the urgent need for international attention and support to sustain a vibrant and informed society in the face of adversity.

Police discover ammunitions

SARI PUL (Xinhua): Police have discovered arms and ammunition in north Afghanistan’s Sari Pul province, provincial police spokesman Din Mohammad Nazari said.

The weapons cache was discovered in two houses located in Kohistanat district, including a US-made M16 assault rifle, an RPG-7 rocket, and thousands of bullets and cartridges, the official added.

In similar operations, police recovered arms and ammunition, including three pieces of AKM-type assault rifles in east Afghanistan’s Paktia province a couple of days ago.

Seven persons were taken into custody on charge of involvement in criminal activities such as selling drugs and robbery in the eastern Kapisa province on Tuesday.

Harvest time for pomegranates

KANDAHAR (Xinhua): Farmers are busy harvesting pomegranates at an orchard in Afghanistan’s southern Kandahar province. Pomegranate production significantly contributes to the country’s agricultural sector.

Pomegranates are a major fruit crop in many provinces, particularly in Kandahar, and are the source of the livelihoods of thousands of people.

KABUL (TOLONews): Amnesty International called for the release of Matiullah Wesa, founder of the PenPath campaign and advocate for girls’ education, and woman protestor Neda Parwani.

On X social media platform, Amnesty International said that six months have passed since Wesa was arrested, and the Islamic Emirate has not yet released him.

“Today marks 6 months since the Taliban arbitrarily arrested education activist Matiullah Wesa simply for protesting the ban on girls’ education in Afghanistan,” the organization said.

“Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the arbitrary arrest of woman protestor Neda Parwani, her husband and four-year old son. After a week, there is no information on her whereabouts. The Taliban de facto authorities must immediately and unconditionally

release Parwani and her family.”

“There is Neda Parwani, and before her, Wesa and several other activists or those who criticized the work and discriminatory policies of the Taliban were detained. We urge that the arrests stop,” said Zaman Sultani, South Asian researcher of Amnesty International.

Meanwhile, some of Neda Parwani’s relatives asked the Islamic Emirate to release her as soon as possible.

“Neda Parwani was arrested with her husband and son from the Khairkhana area at nine in the morning on the 28th of Sunbola solar calendar,” said Maryam, a relative of Neda Parwani.

Some members of the UN, and civil society activists in the UN meeting called for the release of Neda Parwani.

“I’m gravely concerned about the recent arrest of

Neda Parwani and her family and here this is her photograph and I call for her immediate release,” said Karima Bennouna, Professor of Law at the University of Michigan.

The Islamic Emirate did not comment on this matter, but it did state that anyone who engages in abnormal conduct will be dealt with in accordance with the law.

“No one should be concerned; the Islamic Emirate is responsible for providing security and is responsible for punishing those who have suspicious and abnormal activities,” Zabihullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate spokesman, said.

Including the United Nations, some international organizations asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to release civil society activists, journalists, and human rights defenders, but so far this demand has not been met.

Farah city residents demand public bus and taxi services

FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of western Farah province say no taxi or public transport services are available in Farah city, the provincial capital, and people are facing problems.

Mohammad Younis Sapand, a resident and civil society activist in Panjali village, says: “Unfortunately, Farah still does not have national bus service and taxis, if someone wants to go from one area of the city to another, without personal conveyance, he has to hire a rickshaw.”

He added there were no taxi services for people up to Bagh Pul or Dehak areas, which were five kilometers away from the city center.

He said: “Taxis and buses are not available for students to reach the Farah University which is located 15km from the city.”

He urged the government to provide public transport service in the city to make it easier for people to commute from one place to another.

Marzia Farahi, a resident of Farah city, also considered urban taxi services important and said the city was crowded so the Transport Department should provide them with



facilities to travel.

She said: “Farah City lacks many facilities including taxis and its residents only travel in three-wheelers and if taxi services are provided, it will be better.”

Mohammad Naseem, a student of Education Faculty of Farah University, said the lack of taxi services in the city had created many problems for students.

He said the university was far from the city there were no taxi services due to which students could not

reach their classes on time. He added: “The university is 15km away from the city amid no regular taxi services and students often cannot reach classes on time.”

He urged the department of transport to provide taxi services in the whole city, especially on the university route.

Balkh Transport Department officials acknowledge the problem and say that they are planning to start taxi service in the city soon.

Maulvi Hikmatullah

Sobhani Agha, director of the department, told Pajhwok some time ago they provided a coaster car services for the university, the provincial hospital and brigade areas, but the service had to be stopped due to lack of passengers.

He added: “We have plan to start taxi service in central areas of Farah such as Bagh Pul, Provincial Hospital, University and villages and areas near the city and we have also discussed this issue with the private sector.”

Parents of psychologically unwell Ali Sina’s seek help

KABUL (Pajhwok): The parents of one of the Kaj Academy student whose psychological condition got worsen after horrific attack on the academy appealed for assistance for the long-term treatment of their son.

On September 30, 2022, the Kaj Educational Academy situated in the Dasht-i-Barchi locality of Kabul came under attack when a large number of girls and boys were performing Kankor examination demo in a big classroom. The attacker first opened fire at students and then blew himself up inside the classroom.

Security forces than said that 25 people were killed and 31 others injured but the UNAMA report said 53

people were killed and 110 others injured in the attack.

Pajhwok Afghan News reporter on September 17 visited the Aliabad Hospital in Kabul where the reporter met Ali Sina, 20, one of the victims of the Kaj Academy attack.

Ali Sina Dawlatzada, the resident of Surkhbad, Dasht-i-Barchi, enrolled in the Kaj Academy for Kankor preparation. He dreamed for his bright future after completing high school at the Sayed Ismael Balkh High School.

Hussain Ali, the father of Ali Sina recalling the horrific story said: “I lost conscious when I heard there that a blast occurred in the academy, I went there and started search when I found

him he was hiding under a table among bodies and injured.”

He said he son suffered superficial injuries in the incident but he was crying and said: “My friends martyred, got bullets and my teachers are no more here.”

He had recovered from his injuries but he is still psychologically unwell. His friends bodies that he saw, the injury and blood-bath that happened could not be eradicated from his mind.

Hussain Ali said his son’s health had improved and he had appeared in the Kankor examination. He was able to pass the Kankor test and became eligible to study engineering at Mazar-i-Sharif University,

but three days after his university began he was unable to continue. “From his school time my son was very intelligent, he memorized the holy Quran and studied at Muslim, Mawoud and Kaj educational academies,” he said.

His family had failed to look after him and now he was brought to Aliabad Hospital for treatment.

Alisina ran here and there in the Aliabad hospital mansion, punched and kicked the cars parked in the courtyard of the mansion, practiced math questions with himself, and sometimes repeated the website address of media such as BBC and Azadi with himself.

Ali Sina’s father is not

educated and currently work at a bakery to support his 9-member family.

Due to economic problems they were unable to keep Ali Sina at home and according to the doctors’ directions they hospitalized Ali Sina at the Kabul Maraston where severe mental patients are looked after.

I took him to the hospital in Aliabad, they gave me a letter to take him to the Maraston, when I went to the Maraston, they told me that we could not look after him, he should be in front of his family, he should have interaction with people in the community, if we look at him in the Maraston his situation could be deteriorated.

Ali Hussain, his wife and their four daughters live in a single room house of his brother.

He said they raised Ali Sina with love and care, he was a curious child and always wanted things that he did not have.

He added: “My son had some problems at first, but he was very cute, we used to say that he was being cute, but after the explosion in Kaj Academy, our child’s mental state deteriorated, he became unwell started screaming, crying, hitting everyone and even beating others.”

When asked why he handed over Ali Sina to Marston, he said: “After the blast his condition are not good, he attacked me sever-

al times, nobody is safe from his hand not we neither the neighbors, he hits people with stones, break windowpanes, we have to be alert from dawn to dusk and look after him.”

He said not only others but he harms himself as well, he bite himself and tear his clothes.

“I accepted death for the sake of my child and requested him several times to be conscious, he relaxes for sometimes but after again start doing harmful things,” he said.

Ali Hussain said that doctors had advised that his son needed long term treatment but he did not have the ability to afford this because by working in the bakery he could just afford

his daily expenses.

He asked the acting government and welfare organization to support his son’s treatment.

Shukria, the mother of Ali Sina, asked government and welfare organisations to provide support for the treatment of her son.

“My husband work, how much should he earn to pay for Ali Sina’s treatment, our dream was Ali Sina that he will become something in the future and support his father.”

Psychological experts said that mental illnesses are treatable but if not seriously taken into account they could be threatening.

They said patients like Ali Sina should be taken to the doctors for treatment.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation of the members of the British Parliament and the representatives of the Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora in the UK, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President and British delegation for stopping HRs abuses in IOJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, and members of the United Kingdom's Parliament have expressed deep concern over the human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the persecution of the minorities in India, and have urged the world to put pressure on India to stop its human rights abuses in IOJK.

This was discussed during a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and a delegation of the members of the British Parliament and the representatives of the Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora in the United Kingdom (UK). The delegation, which called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, was led by the Chairman of Labour Friends of Kashmir UK, Shadow Minister Andrew Gwynne. While talking about the human rights situation in the IOJK, the President said that India was involved in a genocide

of Muslims, persecution and suppression of minorities, burning and destroying the churches in Manipur, and the extra-judicial killings of the leaders of minority communities regionally and internationally. He stated that the psyche of India was changing as it had been influenced by the extremist Hindutva ideology which aimed to marginalize minorities, particularly the Muslims. He mentioned that Pakistan was committed to safeguarding the rights of its minorities, and took prompt action if any injustice was being done to them.

He highlighted that India was trying to change the demographic structure of the IOJK to transform the Kashmiri people into a minority in their own land. He urged the world to put pressure on India to reverse its illegal demographic changes in the occupied territory. Expressing grave concern over the human rights violations and denial of rights to the people of IOJK, the head of the delegation, Mr Andrew

Gwynne, said that the torture and brutalities being committed by India were unacceptable. He added that they had been supporting the Kashmiri cause in the British parliament. He also underscored the need for putting pressure on India to hold a plebiscite in IOJK to grant the people of Jammu and Kashmir their right to self-determination.

He remarked that revoking the special status of IOJK was allowing India to change the demography of the valley. He further said that Pakistan and the UK enjoyed excellent relations in the fields of education and business that needed to be further improved for the betterment of the two countries. The delegation also expressed concern over the plight of minorities, particularly the Muslims, in the Indian Gujrat and IOJK. The President appreciated the support of the Kashmiri diaspora in the UK and members of the British parliament for supporting the Kashmir cause.

Bilawal paid tribute to the 16 workers

F.P. Report

KARACHI / ISLAM-ABAD/ NAWABSHAH, September 28: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid glowing tribute to the 16 workers of his party on their 40th martyrdom anniversary who, during the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), were brutally killed by General Zia Regime on September 29, 1983 in village Punhal Chandio of Shaheed Benazirabad district.

According to the press release issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, the PPP Chairman, in his message, said that 16 party workers, Shaheed Tharoo Chandio, Shaheed Rajab Ali Chandio, Shaheed Ali Sher Chandio, Shaheed Ghulam Mustafa Chandio, Shaheed Pir Bux Chandio, Shaheed Urs Chandio, Shaheed Siddique Chandio, Shaheed Gulab Chandio, Shaheed Hashim Khaskheli, Shaheed Janib Khaskheli, Shaheed Miro Khaskheli, Shaheed Ali Gul Khaskheli, Shaheed Muhammad Ramzan Khaskheli, Shaheed Mehboob Ali Solangi, Shaheed Allah Rakhio Solangi and Shaheed Hussain Bux Manganhar were brave democratic and political activists. "Humanity will forever be ashamed of the Zia regime's atrocities on PPP workers, whose only crime was to call for the restoration of democracy in the country," he added.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that after the judicial assassination of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the first elected Prime Minister of the country, the determination and courage shown by the people of the entire country in the movement led by 'Madar-e-Jamhuriat' Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is a unforgettable chapter of our national history. "Democracy in Pakistan is the result of the long struggle and great sacrifices of our party's leadership and workers," he added.

Three killed over love marriage

GUJRANWALA (INP): Three including two women were killed over love marriage feud in Dhule police station jurisdiction in Gujranwala on Thursday. According to details, key accused Ashraf and his family was displeased over love marriage of his daughter who tied the knot at her own will one month earlier.

In the evasion of resolving the dispute, they called the newly-wed couple and mother of the youth to their home. The culprits shot dead Abbas, his wife Laiba and mother Shama and fled the scene after committing triple murder.

Faizabad sit-in judgment: 'Why so scared'

— asks CJP Isa after many seek to withdraw review pleas

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa Thursday expressed annoyance after multiple petitioners seeking a review of the Supreme Court's 2019 verdict against the Faizabad sit-in decided to withdraw their pleas.

"Why everyone is so scared?," the chief justice remarked, as a three-member bench — comprising Athar Minallah and Justice Aminuddin Khan — heard the review pleas. Multiple pleas were filed challenging the verdict on the Faizabad sit-in staged by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in 2017 against the then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government.

CJP Isa, who was a member of the three-member bench that issued the 2019 verdict, also expressed annoyance over the non-implementation of the years-old order. The chief justice told the parties seeking to withdraw their pleas — the federal government, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, the Election Commission of Pakistan, and others — to submit their responses in writing and explain the reasons behind their decision.

"I am surprised over the petitioners request to call back their petitions," the CJP remarked, noting that he wanted to give time to the petitioners as he adjourned the hearing till November 1. Briefly, before adjourning the hearing, the CJP told the parties that their decision to withdraw their pleas meant that they had accepted the SC's order to be true. "Now is your chance to stand with the truth," the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan also read out the SC decision on Faizabad sit-in in the courtroom.

"After this [Faizabad] sit-in, many other similar incidents came to light," the CJP said adding that had the court's verdict been implemented back then other incidents would not have taken place. "We will move in the right direction by implementing the 17 directions highlighted in the judgment," the AGP assured.

The attorney general requested the court to adjourn the hearing for two months. To this, CJP said that "two months is a very long time". AGP Awan then said, "give a month to let you know about the progress".

PPP urges ECP to promptly declare election date

KARACHI (NNI): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sharjeel Memon on Thursday urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the election date immediately. Expressing his thoughts in Karachi, Mr Memon reiterated: "There is a dire need to hold elections quickly to ensure transparency."

He underscored the contributions made by the PPP in the country's political scenario. "None of the parties has made sacrifices like the PPP. The PPP has made great sacrifices to uphold democracy". Recalling the events that transpired on May 9, Mr Memon said, "May 9 event is the blackest chapter of the

country's history." Mr Memon took a swipe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "The selective people were deliberately subjected to the political vendetta by the PTI." "The PTI had harmed the country on all grounds," he added.

On the auspicious occasion of Eid Miladun Nabi, Mr Memon felicitated the nation. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro demanded on Wednesday the announcement of the election date. Expressing his thoughts, Mr Khuhro said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had announced that general elections cannot take

place within 90 days. Mr Khuhro had indicated that the electoral watchdog had revealed the initial constituency delimitation on September 27. He had expressed disappointment over the delay in announcing the election date. He was of the view that it is not appropriate the way the masses are facing delays in the announcement of the election date.

Mr Khuhro said: "The ECP had indicated that development projects will commence in Sindh after August 15". "There were no restrictions on development projects in Punjab, whereas restrictions exist in Sindh," Mr Khuhro rued.

Shehryar case: IHC rejects apology of DC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday rejected the unconditional apology of Deputy Commissioner ICT Irfan Memon in a contempt case against him and others pertaining to the issuance of MPO orders for the arrest PTI's leader Shehryar Afridi.

The court instructed the prosecution to prepare a schedule of further proceedings in the case. Justice Babar Sattar of IHC heard the case wherein DC Irfan Memon, SSP Operations Jameel Zafar and others also appeared. At the outset of hearing, Irfan Memon extended unconditional apology before the bench.

To this, the bench expressed annoyance with him and said that why not a show-cause notice should be served to him as he was approaching the judge through family and friends. He said that he assured that he never tried to make any approach. The court rejected the unconditional apology of the Deputy Commissioner and said that the apology with such conduct wouldn't benefit him.

Malpractices in MDCAT; PHC to decide on Oct 3

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Education and Testing Evaluation Agency (ETEA) along with Medical University (KMU) to submit reply regarding Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) while adjourned further hearing till 3rd October, on Thursday.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Syed Arshad Ali heard petitions regarding malpractices during MDCAT as well as fate of the test while observed that the court will decide the subject on next hearing. Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed and counsel for petitioners named Zia-ur-Rehman Tajik along with Yasir Khattak advocates appeared before the court.

Advocate General Khyber informed that provincial cabinet has decided rearranging of MDCAT test within six

weeks. He added that Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) are also established in Karachi and Lahore in identical cases.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed argued that 200 candidates were caught by concerned authorities on malpractices because competent sectors were aware regarding the usage of unfair means during MDCAT exam centers. Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) looks after registration and result procedures while ETEA is only organizing the test, Advocate general argued. In the meantime, Justice Abdul Shakoor observed that it is strange PDMC is issuing result despite ETEA took the test.

The counsel for petitioner informed that the son of JIT member obtained 136 marks and failed the test. He added that provincial government has no jurisdiction to cancel the test and argued that PDMC can conduct or reconduct the test. The counsel further argued it is

the jurisdiction of provincial government under the ACT while as per Regulation laid under the domain of universities. He added that Sindh's government had cancelled the test but Sindh High Court has stopped reconducting of the exam.

As many as test of 219 candidates had cancelled and First Information Reports were also registered against them while added that reconducting of the MDCAT will impact intelligent students, the counsel argued. He argued that the rules had clarified that paper will be cancel neither the whole exam/test.

The counsel for petitioner argued that to inquiry for identification of culprits involved in the scandal and demanded cancellation of candidates involved in malpractices. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered ETEA and PMDC to submit while adjourned further hearing till 3rd October.

JI: Interim govt must prioritize peaceful polls

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Siraj-ul-Haq has emphasized that execution of peaceful general elections rather than becoming embroiled in the privatization of national assets and institutions should be priority of the caretaker government.

Addressing a press conference held at Idare Noor-e-Haq on Thursday, he also called for the constitutional empowerment of local government representatives in Karachi, asserting that the city's challenges could have been resolved if local authorities had been granted the necessary powers. Karachi Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman was also present on the occasion.

Sirajul Haq expressed his disappointment that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had governed the province for 15 years, yet it had failed to address even the most fundamental issues in the provincial capital. He noted that the PPP's previous administration had displayed little interest in conducting local government elections, and it was largely due to the efforts of the JI that these elections were eventually held.

Reiterating the demand for a forensic audit of Independent Power Producers (IPPs), he asserted that the government must either renegotiate the agree-

ments with the owners or escalate the matter to international courts should any legal issues obstruct local-level settlements. The JI chief urged the Chief Justice to take action against the costly agreements and hold those responsible accountable.

He criticized the former governments for their flawed decisions, attributing the misery of the masses to their actions. He pointed out that the former governments of the PPP and the PML-N had entered into agreements with companies to produce expensive electricity, neglecting the potential for cheap and accessible electricity through local resources. He said the PTI had also failed to address the issue of costly electricity generation in the private sector during its three- and half-year rule over the country.

Siraj demanded a reduction in electricity tariffs and stressed that the caretaker government should shift its focus from sending high bills to consumers to addressing the billions lost due to line losses and power theft, as well as recovering funds from both private and government sectors. He highlighted that electricity bills consisted of a substantial 48 per cent in taxes and noted that Pakistan produced significantly more expensive electricity than the entire South Asian region.

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