

Fazl condemns Israel
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur has condemned Israel's actions, characterizing it as detrimental to the Arab world, amid ongoing tensions in the Middle East. In a statement, he accused Israel of intensive bombing at Gaza, consistent human rights violations, and a disregard for international principles of war.

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No talks with TTP: PM

— reiterates sternness against smuggling, corruption as efforts coming to fruition

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday ruling out any talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), said that state of Pakistan was powerful enough to fight them even for next 100 years.

"Don't you see that their people are being killed on daily basis. Our people are also being martyred. So what kind of talks or impediments (you are talking about)? They are killing my children and I am killing them... The state of Pakistan is so powerful to fight TTP, not just one year rather 100 years," the prime minister told the media during his visit to Peshawar.

Caretaker KP Chief Minister Azam Khan and Governor Haji Ghulam Ali were also present. Asked what were the impediments in talks with TTP, the prime minister said the biggest obstacle was that no one was willing to talk to them. "We don't want to talk to them. Who told you that we have any intention to talk with TTP," he remarked. Prime Minister Kakar, who earlier offered Fateha and laid wreath at the grave of former FC Commandant Shaheed Sifwat Ghayur said, "If you want me to announce the same in North Waziristan or South Waziristan, take me there. Keep in mind, I may die but not Pakistan."

Rubbishing the notions of any registered Afghan refugees being expelled from Pakistan, the prime minister said only the foreigners living illegally in Pakistan were being ousted. He said through such measures, Pakistan did not want to undermine its relationship with Afghanistan rather desired to have the ties based on international standards in which the movement of the people would be subject to the visas.

He said as the illegal residents had no registration in Pakistan's database, the state was unable to distinguish between those playing a productive role in the society and the criminals. He clarified that the expulsion of illegal residents was not out of any vengeance rather the state wanted to rid the country of those causing social ills as well as becoming a challenge of terrorism and crimes.

To a question, he said no reports have so far been received about the burning of

houses in North Waziristan, Bajaur or Orakzai. However, he asked the IG Police, Chief Secretary and intelligence agencies to provide a reality-based report on the matter. Asked about the fate of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif on his return, the prime minister said the government would act as per the law. Regarding the elections, he said the caretaker setup would play its role in accordance with the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to announce the final date for polls.

Commenting on the economic situation, Prime Minister Kakar said with the depreciation of the dollar, the country's loans had been reduced by Rs4000 billion besides impacting the prices of petroleum products, sugar, ghee and other eatables. All this is going to provide relief to the people, but it is not being duly highlighted, he added. To another query, the prime minister reiterated that all the political parties registered with the Election Commission would be allowed to go into the electoral process and in case of any complaint, the PM Office could be approached.

Sharing his memories of alma mater Kohat Cadet College and the time he had spent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Prime Minister Kakar, who wore the traditional turban of Pashtun culture said the people of Peshawar were unique, hardworking and courageous which was evidenced by their immense sacrifices against terrorism. Earlier, talking to a delegation of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, reiterated that the sacrifices of the soldiers could never be paid in form of salaries instead, the reverence and dignity also promised by Allah Almighty was their due reward.

He said by laying his life for the country, Shaheed Sifwat Ghayur also became a symbol of courage like other 90,000 people martyred during the war against terrorism. The prime minister, who was on first visit to Peshawar after assuming the office, assured the business community to address their genuine issues through consultation. He also lauded his cabinet as "capable and dedicated" people who were serving the country within their mandate.

(Continued on Back Page)

Parvez Elahi reaffirms support for Imran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi, while responding to a question regarding his political future, reaffirmed to stand by the party despite facing prison time.

The PTI president was presented in a local court following the completion of his judicial remand in the case, the hearing for which has now been adjourned till October 24. "I will not leave, that is why I am serving prison," Elahi said while responding to a journalist's question about whether the senior politician would leave or stay with the party.

The veteran politician's response came during his appearance at the Federal Judicial Complex in Islamabad, where he was produced before duty judge Shahrukh Arjumand, who heard the PTI leader's case in the absence of anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain. When the judge asked about the submission of a

court challan for Elahi, the ATC staff said only Elahi's judicial remand has to be extended.

The investigation officer said a challan and notice had been received for the senior politico. "Let's also schedule Parvez Elahi's next [hearing] date along with the co-accused," the judge said. Elahi walked to the rostrum and objected to October 24 as the next date for the hearing, while his lawyer also requested more days.

"Parvez Elahi also has to appear in a Lahore court," the counsel added. But the judge fixed October 24, as the date for the next hearing. During the course of the hearing, the police attempted to stop Elahi from speaking on the telephone in the courtroom. "I have taken permission from the judge to speak on the telephone," the politician said.

A journalist asked Elahi about an exchange of a message between him and PTI Chairman Imran Khan in the Adiala jail. "Were suggestions regarding ticket distribution sought?" the

journalist asked. "No. Nothing like that happened," the politician denied, adding that the judge came to the jail and pulled down the wall outside Khan's cell.

However, the PTI's politico complained about sub-standard food being served in jail, causing him to suffer from food poisoning and affecting his health. "I have reached here with great difficulty," the septuagenarian said, complaining that he is also being given the facility of treatment by a personal physician. "Jailers are not obeying any court order regarding facilities," he said.

Elahi said the wall in front of his cell has also not been removed yet, and newspaper and television facilities are not being provided. "The judge has visited the PTI chairman's cell in Adiala Jail but has not visited mine." Another journalist asked Elahi why his sons were not visiting him, as he remained in trouble. "I have no problem. I am fine, thank God," he replied.

Solangi: Election date after constituencies' delimitation

F.P. Report

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that the final election date would be announced after completion of the constituencies' delimitation process.

He expressed these views while speaking on Radio Pakistan's news and current affairs program "Lahore Insight" on Friday. He anticipated that elections would be held by the end of January 2024, in accordance with the Election Act of 2017, providing a minimum of 54 days for campaigning. Minister Solangi expressed his commitment to revive Radio Pakistan and emphasised the importance of adapting it to modern demands.

He clarified that major policy decisions rest with the elected governments, and Radio Pakistan's transition to digital broadcasting would help conserve electricity. Minister Solangi also addressed financial issues faced by Radio Pakistan, particularly the review of past government decisions on radio licensing fees.

Furthermore, he highlighted his efforts in expanding Radio Pakistan's online presence and the significant progress in connecting all Radio Pakistan centers via satellite during his tenure. He expressed hope that the incoming elected government would continue revitalization of Radio Pakistan and other national broadcasting institutions.

Earlier, the Caretaker Federal Minister a touch of nostalgia and innovation to

Radio Pakistan Lahore during his visit on Friday. Welcomed by the station director, Javed Akhtar, and esteemed TV actor Khalid Abbas Dar, Minister Solangi was presented with a bouquet, symbolising the harmony between traditional and modern broadcasting.

During his visit, Minister Solangi delved into the rich history of Radio Pakistan by exploring its oldest artifacts and even graced the office with a melodious surprise, playing an antique piano, which left everyone in awe. The federal minister's curiosity led him through various sections of the radio office, taking in the vibrant atmosphere of the music library, the creative hub of the podcast studio, and the bustling News and Current Affairs Channel (NCAC).

7 killed in suicide attack on Afghan mosque

KABUL (AFP): At least seven people were killed and 15 more wounded when a suicide blast tore through a Shia mosque in northern Afghanistan on Friday, the Taliban government said. The number of bomb blasts and suicide attacks has reduced dramatically since the Taliban ended their insurgency after seizing power in August 2021, ousting the US-backed government.

However, a number of armed groups — including the regional chapter of the Islamic State organisation — remain a threat. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, which rang out as Shia worshippers gathered for Friday prayers at the Imam Zaman mosque in Pol-i-Khomri, the capital of Baghlan province.

"Security and investigative forces went to the area of the incident to investigate how this heart-breaking incident happened," said provincial information and media chief Mustafa Asadullah Hashimi. "Investigations are still ongoing," he said in a statement confirming the casualties. A source at Baghlan Provincial Hospital — who asked to remain anonymous — put the tally higher, saying 19 bodies and 40 wounded patients had been brought to the facility so far.

"Some of the dead and wounded were taken to other private hospitals as well," he told AFP. Local resident Abdul Hamid said he heard a "terrible sound" as the bomb detonated. "After the explosion, a large number of martyrs and injured people were transferred to the hospital," he said. "The situation is not good at all."

Another local said security forces were ushering people away from the area. One resident who feared his father and brother were in the blast zone was struggling to find out their fate. "The situation around the hospital is very bad. Everyone is trying to find their family members but no one is allowed to go inside the hospital," he told AFP, also speaking anonymously.

KP CM takes notice of MTIs' issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan while taking notice of financial issues being faced by Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs) of the province, has directed his advisor for health and Chief Secretary to take immediate steps to arrange the required funding for these hospitals on priority basis.

He has said that all kinds of emergency services at MTIs should not be affected in anyway adding that required funds be arranged on priority basis for the purpose so that uninterrupted emergency services are ensured in these hospitals.

He was talking to his advisor on health Dr. Riaz Anwar and Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry who called on him here at Chief Minister's House on Friday and discussed with him matters related to the financial issues of MTIs.

The Chief Minister said that it was the top most priority of the caretaker provincial government to ensure uninterrupted healthcare facilities to the public, and added that despite financial crunches, the provincial government would make no compromise on the provision of treatment facilities to the masses; and health sector would be given top priority in the allocation of available financial resources. He further directed to work out a feasible plan for the financial sustainability of MTIs in the long run.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali and Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Israel issues 'impossible order'

Thousands flee to South Gaza after Israel's evacuation warning

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: Thousands of Palestinians rushed to the southern Gaza region in search of refuge following Israel's warning to evacuate before an anticipated ground offensive against Hamas in response to the deadliest attack in Israel's history.

Earlier, the United Nations had told Reuters about the Israeli military's warning, which, as feared by Palestinians, could result in Israel's planned ground offensive. Israel's call for evacuation came six days after Hamas militants breached the heavily fortified border around the Gaza Strip, resulting in more than 1,300 casualties, primarily civilians. This attack was likened to 9/11 in the United States.

Nearly 1,800 Gazans, the majority of whom were civilians, including over 580 children, have been killed in waves of missile strikes on the densely populated enclave. Hamas, recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States and Europe, took approximately 150 Israeli, foreign, and dual-national hostages back to Gaza during its initial attack. The militant group claimed that 13 hostages had been killed in Israeli air strikes, with an additional four reportedly dead due to bombardments, which could complicate any Israeli ground offensive.

Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, during a visit to Jerusalem, accused Hamas of using residents as "shields." Tensions escalated across the Middle East and beyond, with protests in support of the Palestinians, while Israel faced the threat of a potential confrontation with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The United Nations expressed concerns over Israel's evacuation order, deeming it "impossible" to move approximately 1.1 million people, nearly half of Gaza's population, in such a short timeframe. Aid agencies warned that mass evacuations would strain resources due to the Israeli blockade, causing shortages of fuel, food, and water. Hospitals were overwhelmed with the dead and wounded, and the health system was already at a "breaking point."

Jordan's King Abdullah II called for "humanitarian corridors" to be urgently opened, and various international leaders condemned the ongoing siege and called Israel's evacuation order a "forced transfer" that constitutes a "crime." Hamas threatened to kill captives if Israel bombed civilian targets without advance warning.

Israel faced the potential of a second front in the north, with Hezbollah in Lebanon stating it was "fully prepared" to join the war alongside Hamas. Cross-border fire raised concerns about regional stability. The United States sent additional munitions and its largest aircraft carrier to the region, with President Joe Biden warning other regional powers not to get involved. The Pentagon assured Israel of "iron-clad" US support.

Iran, a long-time financial and military



'We reject the forced displacement' in Gaza: Abbas tells Blinken in Jordan

AMMAN (Agencies): Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken that he "rejects the forced displacement" of Palestinians from Gaza, following Israel's order for all of the enclave's civilians to move to the south. Abbas said at Friday's meeting in Jordan's capital Amman that such an event would constitute a "second Nakba", referring to the mass displacement of Palestinians in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported. He also said that humanitarian corridors must be allowed in the blockaded coastal enclave immediately to prevent a humanitarian disaster, the report said.

Al Jazeera's diplomatic editor James Bays said Blinken was in Jordan to negotiate, not to ask for the cessation of hostilities. "Blinken is expected to also travel to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt to make progress on the release of American captives held by Hamas and negotiate the safe exit of 500 to 600 US citizens or dual nationals currently in Gaza," he said. "The diplomatic trip is also aiming to avoid a regional escalation of the war. But not the cessation of hostilities. He is not saying Israel should stop the aggression on Gaza," Bays added. Earlier on Friday, Blinken met Jordan's King Abdullah II who also called for "opening humanitarian corridors to allow for the entry of urgent medical and relief aid to Gaza, and protecting civilians and stopping the escalation and war on Gaza", a statement from the royal court said.

itary backer of Hamas, praised the attack but denied involvement. There were reports of an agreement between US and Qatari officials to prevent Iran from using a \$6 billion humanitarian assistance fund following the Hamas attack. The situation remains highly volatile, with a potential ground offensive by Israel and an escalation of conflict in the region.

In another development, Russian President Vladimir Putin compared Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip to Nazi Germany's siege of Leningrad during World War II and called for a resolution to the conflict to be reached through mediation.

But appearing to confirm a warning took place, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, said: "The UN's response to Israel's early warning to the residents of Gaza is shameful." Erdan said the UN should focus on condemning Hamas and supporting Israel's right to self-defence.

Salama Marouf, head of the Hamas government media office, said the relocation warning was an attempt by Israel "to broadcast and pass on fake propaganda, aiming to sow confusion among citizens and harm our internal cohesion." He added: "We urge our citizens not to engage in these attempts".

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said fuel power-

ing emergency generators at hospitals in Gaza could run out within hours and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned food and fresh water were running dangerously low. "The human misery caused by this escalation is abhorrent, and I implore the sides to reduce the suffering of civilians," ICRC regional director Fabrizio Carboni said.

In the wake of Israel's 24-hour ultimatum, Gaza's Health Ministry has informed the World Health Organisation (WHO) that it is impossible to evacuate vulnerable hospital patients from northern Gaza. The UN Humanitarian Office (OCHA) said more than 400,000 people had fled their homes in Gaza and 23 aid workers had been killed.

So far, Israel's bombings have martyred over 1,500 Palestinians hundreds of which include children, Gaza authorities said. The Israeli forces have also killed four medics, which the Palestinian Red Crescent claimed were murdered deliberately. Israel has put Gaza, home to 2.3 million people, under siege and launched a bombing campaign that destroyed whole neighbourhoods. Pro-Palestinian protests were expected around the world and the United States and regional leaders planned meetings amid fears that conflict could spread.

Hundreds rally across Pakistan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hundreds of Pakistanis took to the streets in several parts of the country today to protest Israel's siege and fierce bombing on the Gaza Strip, demanding an end to the oppression of the Palestinian people.

After Friday prayers, Pakistanis from all walks of life held rallies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parts of Punjab. The demonstrators raised Palestinian flags and held posters that said 'From land to the sea, Palestine will be free' and 'Stand in solidarity with Palestine'. They also burned Israeli flags.

In KP, protest rallies were also held in the Malakand and Hazara divisions against Israeli atrocities in Gaza Palestine. The Karakoram Highway was blocked in Kohistan and a rally was staged against Israel's actions in Gaza. The protesters demanded that the United Nations stop the genocide of Palestinians.

Protester Shahid Husain, 47, said the leaders of Muslim nations were failing to stand up for Palestinians. "We came to the streets to make our

rulers realise that they don't need to be scared of the US and that the public wants them to be on the side of Palestine — not Israel and America," he told media from Peshawar's historic Qissa Khwani Bazaar. A bike rally was also held in Parachinar. Meanwhile, PTI supporters gathered in Kohat, Peshawar, Hangu and several other cities after the party decided to mark today as "Palestine Solidarity Day".

In Lahore, a huge rally was held at Mall Road by the Jamaat e Islami Pakistan, with scores of women and children in attendance. The protesters carried a giant flag of Palestine. Addressing the gathering, JI Emir Sirajul Haq criticised the US and European countries for supporting Israel in its oppression of Palestinians. He demanded that Muslim countries should come together for the Palestinian cause.

"Raising our voices for Palestinians is the responsibility of Muslims and a part of their faith," he added. On the other hand, the PTI claimed that party members who had taken to the streets in Lahore were arrested by the police.

Several protests were held in Karachi after Friday prayers to express solidarity with Palestinians.

More than 200 supporters of the Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM) gathered in the Kharadar area. They demanded that the atrocities being faced by the people of Gaza at the hands of Israel should immediately come to an end. In a statement earlier, it said the protest was "against the massacre of the oppressed Palestinian people and the Zionist occupation of the Palestine land". Separately, the JI held a solidarity walk from the Maripur Road. The demonstrators would cross Keamari Road and finally conclude the rally outside Bilawal House.

In Malir, JUI-F supporters took to the streets. The party demanded that Muslim world leaders should "break the chains of silence" and speak up for their brothers and sisters, according to a statement. In Quetta, a rally was organised by the JUI-F. During the demonstration, protesters condemned Israel's "brutal oppression" of the Palestinian people and also burned an Israeli flag.



Zafar urges campaigns to curb vehicle emissions

PESHAWAR (APP): Zafar Ullah Khan Umarzai, the Special Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Transport and Housing, has instructed the relevant authorities within the transport department to initiate campaigns in various cities across the province aimed at reducing the harmful emissions from vehicles.

He emphasized that all department officers should collaborate as a team to

enhance the performance of the transport department. Umarzai issued these directives during a meeting held at the Directorate of Transport, which was attended by the Secretary of Transport, Director General, Secretary of the Provincial Transport Authority, and other officials.

During the meeting, the Secretary provided a comprehensive overview of the department's performance

and its various divisions. The discussions covered topics such as the Motor Licensing Authority, Motor Vehicle Examiner, Vehicle Emission Testing Stations, Government Driving School, Peshawar Bus Terminal, Bannu Transport Complex, and the Road Transport Board, among others.

Additionally, the meeting addressed the job descriptions of permanent, project, and contract

employees within the transport department.

It's important to note that the transport department's system is computerized, and the Vehicle Emission Testing Station (VETS) has been actively working since 1997 to monitor and penalize drivers for emitting air-polluting smoke from their vehicles. Drivers are issued certificates after their vehicles undergo emission testing at VETS.

2 Afghans among four arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): In a crackdown against the illegal business of Hawala Hundi, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested four accused including two Afghan nationals from different cities of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to Spokesman Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) KP Zone on Friday, the Composite Circle continued its crackdown against people involved in the illegal business of Hawala Hundi in Kohat, Abbottabad and Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar.

He said four accused including two Afghan nationals involved in illegal foreign exchange were arrested.

Minister unveils affordable loan scheme for youth

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Youth Affairs, Sports, science and Information Technology Dr. Najeeb Ullah Marwat Friday unveiled an affordable loan scheme for Youth to run Small Businesses in collaboration with Bank of Khyber.

Dr. Najibullah said that the provincial government is set to extend loans to young entrepreneurs and small to medium-sized businesses at favorable terms through the Bank of Khyber. The concessional loan scheme, facilitated by the State Bank of Pakistan, will carry a remarkably low interest rate.

Dr. Najibullah expressed that this initiative aims to empower unemployed youth

in the province by offering them access to dignified employment opportunities through these loans.

Additionally, the scheme will provide much-needed support to entrepreneurs during the current economic conditions, and both men and women can benefit from this program.

These remarks were made during a meeting chaired by Dr. Najibullah at his office in the Civil Secretariat, Peshawar. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Bank of Khyber, including Sher Muhammad, as well as Sajjad Hussain Shah, DG Science and Technology, and Basit Khalil.

During the meeting, the

Bank of Khyber representative presented comprehensive details of the facilities provided by the scheme to business owners and various classes. The minister was briefed about the highly discounted loans that will be extended to the youth and business communities within the province.

The representative highlighted the positive impacts of this scheme on youth employment and small to medium-sized enterprises during the current economic challenges.

This scheme is expected to play a crucial role in combating unemployment and providing much-needed support to disadvantaged sectors in the province's economy.

EO Islamabad visits RMI and IMSciences, signs MoU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) Islamabad Chapter visited two esteemed institutions in Peshawar - Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) and Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) on Friday.

The visit was aimed to inspire and support young entrepreneurs and foster an environment conducive to innovation and enterprise.

The delegation included President EO Islamabad, Taimur Adil; Forum Chair, Shafiq ur Rehman; Global Student Entrepreneur Awards (GSEA) Chair, Ahmed Jalal; Learning Chair, Arham Khalid; SAP Chair, Khalid Farooq Qazi; AP Waheed uz Zaman

responsible for business incubation Center and Chapter Manager, Asad Khan.

In his address to the event, Taimur Adil reiterated EO's commitment to provide support and guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. He highlighted the importance of nurturing unique ideas and turning them into successful ventures. The EO Forum Chair and CEO of RMI, Shafiq Ur Rahman, also shared valuable insights with the young audience, emphasizing the importance of not getting discouraged when pursuing their ideas.

He underscored the vital role of entrepreneurship in creating new employment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, shedding light on RMI's remarkable



journey. During the visit, EO and IMS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for GSEA to solidify their commitment to mentor students' startups and provide them with valuable assistance through the GSEA.

EO is a network of like-minded peers helping each other learn and grow. Over the past 25 years, EO has grown into the world's

most influential community of entrepreneurs. This collaboration between EO and Peshawar-based institutions marks a step forward in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation among youth in the province.

EO remains dedicated to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit in the region and is committed to empowering young individuals to bring their innovative ideas to life.

SBP: Conventional banking being shifted to Islamic mode

PESHAWAR (APP): Additional Director State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr Mohammad Salim has said that under a ruling of the Federal Shariat Court, conventional banking in the country was being shifted into Islamic banking system to get the people rid of interest-based banking.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the business community including office bearers of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here in the Regional Office, the other day, said a press release issued here on Friday. Beside, Regional Coordinator FPCCI, Sartaj Ahmad Khan, DCM Mohammad Haroon, Deputy Director Maqsood Bhatti, former president Mohmand Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sajjad Ali, representatives of various commercial banks and a large number of university students also attended the meeting.

The central bank official said that granting banking sector relief to the business community and giving share to its various schemes was aimed that their efforts for economic stability not go to dustbin and rather cause further growth in it.

Section-144: Sale of SIMs in open market banned

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahad under Section-144 has imposed a ban on sale of mobile phone SIMs in the open market.

The directive said on Friday that sale of SIMs in the open market has been banned without permission of the authorities concerned.

The district administration said under the order those indulged in sale of illegal mobile phone SIMs will be arrested and stern legal action be initiated against them.

The administration further said that illegal SIMs were being used in illegal and subversive activities. The administration further said that stern action would be initiated against those selling SIMs in the open market without the permission of the concerned police station.

Five arrested for issuing illegal SIMs on Afghan passports

The officials of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) have arrested five accused for issuing illegal phone SIMs on Afghan passports.

FIR spokesman told media on Friday that action was taken at Kohat Road, Peshawar from where five accused were arrested from a franchise of a mobile phone company. The accused had issued illegal phone SIMs on Afghan passports, the official said, adding that five laptops containing the data of scanned passports and eight mobile phones were confiscated from the franchise.

It was learnt that the accused were involved in providing illegally activated SIMs to Afghan citizens for a price of Rs 3000.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar offering fateha and lays floral wreath at grave of former commandant of FC Shaheed Sifwat Ghayur.

Farooq Afridi resigns from AAG

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional Advocate General (AAG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Farooq Afridi resigned from his position due to personal schedule, on Friday.

Muhammad Farooq Afridi was appointed as AAG in March 2023 while dispose-of 1400 petitions during seven months.

AAG appreciated working with Amir Javed as Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

AG office issues annual performance report

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Attorney General (AG) office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa issued annual performance report while 2571 petitions were disposed-of during last year, on Friday.

According to report, Additional Attorney General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sana Ullah appeared in 1174 petitions on behalf of federal government.

The status quo had vacated from 90% of cases against Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) while

Rs22.1 billion had been deposited to national exchequer after disposal of one case, the report revealed.

Peshawar High Court along with coordination of AG and Attorney General Offices special benches were constituted for disposal financial cases timely.

The Attorney General Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa record was streamlined for the first time in the history while 90 percent petitions regarding FBR were dispose-of in favor of the federation.

The status quo on Point

of Sale is also vacated after 2020 in favor of FBR, the report stated.

Moreover, Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah has demanded list of focal persons and legal advisors of federal departments to ensure proper follow-up of the cases, the report added.

Attorney General of Pakistan had directed provision of appreciation certificates for competent officials as well as assured to take concrete steps for timely disposal of cases against state.

Afghan delegation visits UET Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An official Afghan delegation headed by Dr. Nazar Muhammad Irfan, Director of Foreign Affairs and Scholarships, Ministry of Higher Education, Afghanistan including Afghan officials from the Afghan International Islamic University (AIU) accompanied by Jehanzeb, Project Director HEC and Mujahid Aziz, Project Manager, HEC visited UET Peshawar here on Friday.

The purpose of the visit was to see opportunity for initiating the joint faculty exchange program with the Afghan International Islamic University.

Dr. Rafiullah Atta, Chancellor of AIU said, the visit is aimed to build institutional linkages with the leading Pakistani universities particularly in engineering and technology as AIU needs foreign faculty from Pakistan to teach MS and Ph.D. level courses

to reduce the faculty gap resulted after the US exit from Afghanistan.

The delegates affirmed that Pakistan and Afghanistan have been enjoying brotherly relations and the collaboration in higher education would further strengthen this relationship. The faculty exchange will bring about real change in the HE sector of Afghanistan, he added.

The delegates were keenly interested to develop cooperation for faculty exchange program and research collaborations with UET Peshawar. Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar assured every possible support that might be helpful for AIU in the fields of Mining, Agriculture and Structural Engineering running under the supervision of qualified Ph.D. faculty and state-of-the-art laboratories. He said, UET Peshawar has already enrolled 200 Afghan students

at its undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Dr. Safdar Nawaz, Director QEC UET Peshawar gave a detailed presentation of UET Peshawar's academic and research activities. Mr. Jahanzeb Khan said, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has specifically directed HEC to establish collaborations in Higher Education in Afghanistan after visiting the leading education institutions. The HEC would enter into a larger agreement where a consortium of Pakistani universities would work together with AIU in faculty exchange.

Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Pro-Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Sahar Noor, Dean Mechanical, Prof. Dr. Siraj-ul-Islam, Dean Architecture and Allied Sciences, Prof. Dr. Amjad Ullah, Dean Electrical, Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, Registrar, and other senior officials were present on the occasion.



PESHAWAR: VC SBBWU Prof. Dr. Safia giving shield to Minister Higher Education, Archives & Libraries KP Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan at SBBWU.

Technical education vital for employment, economic growth

PESHAWAR (APP): Enjoying the mesmerizing national song 'A jawan-manzil hain aasman' (O Youth-your goal to reach sky) on his mobile phone during installation of a CNG tank in a motorcar, auto mechanic Usman Ali (32) was working against the time to install as many tanks as possible keeping in view its high demands in the wake of unprecedented hike in petroleum products.

Assisted by two labourers Iftikhar and Manzoor, Usman Ali was so concentrated in installation of CNG kits in vehicles that he even could not spare time to have meal with fresh mouthwatering "Chappli Kabab" in his two-room auto workshop

established in 2015.

After passing a three-year diploma in associate auto engineering from Government Polytechnic Institute Peshawar, the motivated mechanic had applied for a number of jobs in public sector departments but failed mostly on the grounds of insufficient experience in the field.

Terming unemployment as a social curse, the Peshawar-born mechanic said, "I never looked back after my father asked his childhood friend Waheed Khan, a resident of Lala Kallay Peshawar to help him in securing a dignified job. "Waheed took me to Shoba bazaar, a hub of autos workshops where I started fitting CNG kits

and auto repairs in his relative workshop."

Following five-year experiences, Usman who was called "Ustad" now by his fellows has established his own workshop at Tarnab Peshawar where customers from Nowshera, Peshawar and even from Afghanistan were coming for the installation of CNGs tanks and kits, thus financially contributing to the country's development process.

"The labour charges of CNG installations varies keeping in view of size of the vehicles and number of CNG tanks," said Usman, adding normally we charge Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per CNG tank installation.

He said an increase in

the conversion of vehicles to CNG has been witnessed recently due to a hike in petroleum products owing to the global economic recession and the Palestine-Israel conflict.

"I have come from Nowshera district to get CNG tank installed in my car as petrol was beyond my purchasing power," said Riazul Haq, a retired PST teacher while talking to APP. However, he complained about increase in prices of CNG tanks and labour charges that needed to be regulated by the district administration.

Dr Rehman Khattak, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar said that technical education encourages self-

employment and ensures financial independence.

He said that about 58.9 million population of Pakistan was aged below 30 years and providing jobs to all of them was impossible for any government, adding out of 58.9 million youth population, about 40 pc is associated with labour workforce.

"Pakistan's population is growing with about two percent rate and likely to become double in 2050 for which thousands of jobs would be required in government and private sectors besides overseas for which technical education was key," he said.

More than 11 million Pakistanis had proceeded to over 50 countries for employment till December

2019 and sent about USD 21.84 billion during 2019 that was very low compared and it could be enhanced by promoting IT, civil, electrical and auto engineering.

Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) KP spokesman said that agreements with 32 reputable private organizations were signed to provide technical education to youth.

He said Rs1 billion projects were started for the purchase of equipment and other schemes while the authority's budget was increased from Rs3 billion in 2016-17 to record Rs7 billion in 2022-23.

Under Education for All Vision 2030, he said about 5,000 students in each dis-

trict of KP would be provided vocational training in IT and other technologies every year besides Rs2,000 scholarship per month to capture Gulf's viz a viz EU markets.

Besides launching of Rs 1.30 billion self-employment scheme to provide soft loan up to Rs 0.3 million to skilled youth, he said 11 technical colleges were constructed and eight new technical colleges were being built in different districts of KP.

He said a sub-campus of the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore would be established at Peshawar where architecture, fine art, textiles and other designs would be taught.

Ms Javeera, spokeswoman for Benazir

Income Support Program (BISP) said talented FA/FSc students from over 9.3 million beneficiaries would be selected for training in information technology and other technical cadres for self-financial empowerment.

She said Nowshera district has been selected for the pilot project to provide IT training to the FA/FSc students of BISP beneficiaries.

Scholarship of Rs1500 for primary, Rs2500 for elementary and Rs3500 for higher secondary level boy students and Rs 2000, Rs 3000 and Rs 4000 per girl student respectively were being proved after every three months to BISP beneficiaries, she concluded.



In brief

Science exhibition held F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The youth affairs' department in collaboration with the district administration organized a science exhibition for government and private schools and colleges at government high school Khungi here on Friday. The students from more than 30 educational institutions across the district took part in the event. The additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan and Assistant Commissioner Timergara Dr Nida Iqbal participated as special guests while president of the private education network (PEN) Abdul Wadood, district monitoring officer education Tariq Jamal, district youth officer Malik Shahzad Tariq, social activist Izharul Haq Durrani, principals and teachers of various schools and colleges were also in attendance. Different stalls related to scientific information were set up in which the students showed keen interest.

Teachers' hold protest F.P. Report

SHAHDAKOT: Last day in Shahdaktot, a rally was by the Government school teachers association (GSTA) out from the high school against the district and taluk treasury officers of the district. Qamber Shahdaktot, against the non-acceptance of the demands of the teachers' organization (GSTA). The protestors were carrying banners and placards with slogans against the District Treasury Officer. Addressing the protest on this occasion, Gsta leaders Sayindad Vidhu, Shakeel Sattar Bhatti, Faheem Ahmed Khoso and others protested. He said that the district officer of the treasury, Abdul Rauf Soomro, has become the enemy of the teachers of the entire district. Qamber Shahdaktot and he is keeping the bribery market hot in his office. Every teacher and employee is worried about his behavior. The work of the government department employee is not being done without paying bribe, while with the blessings of the influential people, the Finance Department District Accounts Officer has been appointed, who misbehaves with all retired and serving teachers and employees of other government departments.

Police to render sacrifices: DPO F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: District Police Officer Hafizabad Faisal Gulzar has said that police will not hesitate to render any kind of sacrifices for formation of peaceful society and it is top priority of the police to bring criminal in the arena of court whereas all citizens are equal without any discrimination in the eyes of law. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of journalists consisting of Ch. Amjid Pervez Chatha, Abdul Jabbar Ansari, Rana Muhammad Arshad Anjum, Ch. Imtiaz Ahmad Taj, Sheikh Zahid Sohail, Muhammad Naem Qamar and Hafiz Abdul Qadeer. DPO Said that elimination of anti-social elements was far most target of the police while protection of life, property and honour was prime duty o police and no negligence or lethargic attitude of cops would not be tolerated in this regard. He said that police officers and 'Jawan' were played vital role to ensure maintain law and order always whereas Hafizabad police would be not be refrain from taking action against drugs paddlers and other anti-social elements for providing peaceful atmosphere to the citizens.

Solidarity rallies staged in support of Palestinians in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: To express solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians, different organizations staged protest rallies against the Israeli forces after the Friday prayers here in the Lower Dir district. The Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl district chapter staged a solidarity rally, the participants of which marched on the roads and gathered at the Gorgorai Chowk. The participants were holding banners and placards inscribed with anti-Israel slogans condemning the bombardment of the refugees' camp in Gaza.

The JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din, tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanud Din, religious scholar Muhammad Rahim Haqqani, Qazi Ayazud Din and others addressed the rally. They said that Palestinians, particularly women and children were being targeted by the barbaric Israeli forces in the air strikes on the behest of the United States of America (USA).

The speakers termed the Israeli bombardment as an inhuman act and demanded the world power to immediately stop the atrocities in the Gaza strip. They said

that Palestinian buildings were being destroyed which was against morality and human rights. The speakers said the UN and OIC should stop Israel from its cruelty. The speakers appreciated the Hamas fighters and said that they would succeed in their fight for freeing the soil of Palestine from the Zionist regime.

The Pakistan Muslim League Markazi also staged a solidarity rally in Timergara which was attended by party workers and the general public. The rally was addressed by Maulana Fazal Rahim, Hafiz Matur Rehman, Maulana Azizur Rehman and Shafullah.

They announced to fully support the unarmed and innocent Palestinians in their fight against the Israeli aggression in Gaza. They said that sufferings of the Palestinians were increasing day by day as the world power had kept criminal silence over the issue. The speakers said that children, women and aged people were being martyred in Gaza and refugee camps as Israel was violating human rights. They said that Israel had illegally occupied the soil of Palestine. They demanded

the UNO and world power to force Israel to stop collateral damages and destroying buildings in Palestine.

Road accident: A youth identified as Rahmanullah 35, a resident of Usheraai Dara was killed while another youth Naseer Shah 25 was injured when a pickup vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a deep ravine at Katkala area in the jurisdiction of Talash here on Friday due to over speeding. The dead and the injured were taken to the district headquarters hospital Timergara. The Talash police registered a case and started investigations.

Gas theft: The Sui-Northern Gas Private Limited (SNGPL) regional manager Mardan division Wiqasullah Khan has said that different raids were conducted at Awleya Banda, Damamo area, Bandagai and Munjai by the company's officials along with local police wherein illegal gas connections were disconnected and the pipes were confiscated. He said that cases were also registered against the consumers involved in the gas theft. He said the crackdown against gas theft would be continued in the district.

JUI-F take out Palestine solidarity rally

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: On call of the party leadership, volunteers of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Fazalrehman (JUI-F) staged a protest at Iqra Chowk, Landi Kotal bazaar on Friday in solidarity with Palestinians and against the Israeli government.

Led by local leader of the JUI-F, Mufti Muhammad Ijaz, a number of the party workers, religious scholars and general people participated in the rally, marched from Quba Masjid, Station to Iqra Square. The protestors hold banners and placards engraved with slogans

against Israeli state violence as they took part in the demonstration in support of Palestine.

Addressing on the occasion speakers including Mufti Muhammad Ijaz, Qari Mujahid, Maulana Ibhahim, Jihad Shah and others strongly condemned the Israeli atrocities against Palestinians and said that Hamas latest attacks on Israel were the result of decade long silence and ignorance of Palestine rights.

They demanded the Muslim countries to come forward for the rescue of the Palestinians as the western world had turned blind

eyes towards the Israeli violence against Palestinians.

The United Nations should take practical steps to ensure peace in Palestine; they added and said the people of Pakistan stood stern beside their Palestinian brothers to win independence from Israeli occupation and to get a separate state for them. In the same way, pro-Palestinians demonstrations were held in Jamrud and Bara subdivisions of Khyber. At the end the participants offered prayer for the success of Palestinian people and dispersed.

Citizen hold protest against load shedding

F.P. Report

TANK: Hundreds of citizens of Tank protested against the illegal forced load shedding here on Friday and announced to boycott the polio vaccination till resolution of the load shedding problem and acceptance of their demands.

Scores of people came out of their houses in the early hours of the day in order to mark their protest against forced prolonged load shedding on a call of shutter down strike by the "Tank Action Committee". The citizens assembled near Spin Jamia Masjid in main bazar wherefrom a protest rally of hundreds of citizens was led to the Kashmir Chock by the leaders of Action Committee.

Addressing a large protest assembly at Kashmir Chock, Haji Muhammad Zaman Bittani,

Shams Mahsood, Shoukat Armai, Pir Salim Shah and other leaders of the Action Committee and social activists deplored that the eighteen hours unannounced load shedding in Tank city and forced suspension of electricity on various rural feeders has made the life hard for the citizens.

The protesting citizens chanted slogans against the authorities of district administration and WAPDA for their alleged deliberate negligence to resolve the issue. Later authorities from the district administration and WAPDA arrived at the protest scene to have a dialogue with the leaders of the protest demonstration, however the dialogue ended without any agreement between the parties.

After having not reached any agreement with the authorities, the leaders of the Tank Action

Committee announced to set a permanent hunger strike camp in front of WAPDA office and boycott the polio vaccination for their children until the forced load shedding is resolved and their demands are accepted.

FIA recovers over 2 million: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Dera Ismail Khan Region claimed to have seized over two million from the dealers involved in the illegal alternate remittance services during different drives during the month of September.

Talking to media persons in his office Friday, Deputy Director FIA DIK Region Abdul Hai Babar informed that on special directives of Director FIA KPK Nisar Ahmad, FIA DIK region conducted different drives against the dealers involved in the illegal money transfer (Hawal Hundi).



HYDERABAD: People holding a rally to show solidarity with the oppressed Muslims of Palestine.

Native youth camp started at summer campus F.P. Report

BARAGALI/ABBOTTABAD: The NATIVES in collaboration with Directorate of Youth Affairs kicked off its 7th Youth camp in Baragali campus of University of Peshawar.

On the first day of the camp, the participants visited Murree where they are exposed to nature and a different culture. At the evening time, the participants reached Baragali campus where an ice breaking session was conducted by Fahad Ali from Aman Movement.

The aim of this camp is to empower and enhance the skills of youth to cope with the issues of contemporary world. Directorate of Youth Affairs Khyber Pukhtunkhwa is striving its best to empower the youth of the province. Dozens of likewise events are organized by the directorate of youth affairs KP. This five-days camp will comprise of interactive sessions, exposure visits, group works and many more learning exercises.

As many as 85 participants from different parts of the province are participating in this event hailing from all districts of KP especially the newly merged districts. The Natives is committed to organize more events for the youth of the province in the near future.

FC to honour martyrs in every way F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The grand opening ceremony of the Shuhada-e-Chitral Football League - 2023 took place in Chitral, organized by the Frontier Corps North to honour the courageous sons of the soil who made the ultimate sacrifice for the motherland.

The event is a vibrant celebration of unity, resilience and talent, with 20 teams participating in the league. The Opening Ceremony was a spectacular display of patriotism and culture. Participants' teams marched past in unity, while school children proudly sang the National Anthem.

Employees rally for unpaid salaries

Anees Takar

MARDAN: The employees of Mardan Medical Complex Hospital voiced their frustration over unpaid salaries by staging a protest and taking to the streets. Their rally disrupted the hospital's OPD services, leaving them with no choice but to boycott work. The demonstrators marched from the Hospital OPD to Bacha Khan Medical College, holding signs that listed their demands and chanting slogans for their rights.

The Paramedical Association, represented by President Sajjad Ahmed and General Secretary Muhammad Riaz, led the protest. Sajjad Ahmed issued a stern ultimatum, giving the government and the finance department three days to release the long-overdue salaries. He highlighted the irony of government expenditures rising while its own employees struggle to put food on the table.

Sajad Ahmed blamed the finance department for delaying salary payments and criticized the failing MTI system, suggesting it be abandoned. Furthermore, he revealed that the finance department had imposed the MTI

agreement on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hospitals, adding that the administration would pay the department along with the employees.

In response, a spokesperson from Mardan Medical Complex pointed out the lack of funds to cover employee salaries. While funds were initially provided for July and August, subsequent months remained unpaid. The spokesperson clarified that they had shifted from quarterly to monthly funding, leaving September's salaries unpaid. To resolve the crisis, senior officials from the hospital are holding daily meetings with the health department and finance department, striving to secure funds promptly and compensate the deserving employees.

Journalists attend workshop: A one-day training workshop for journalists, focused on election reporting, took place at a local hotel in Mardan. This event, supported by the non-governmental organization TDEA and IRSP, aimed to boost media involvement in election-related activities. The workshop covered topics such as election laws, addressing false news and misinformation, and pro-

moting inclusivity by involving disadvantaged groups in elections, such as women, transgenders, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and minorities.

During the workshop, participants discussed the media's role, code of conduct, and responsibilities in addressing election violations. TDEA Program Manager Mehwish Muneeb and IRSP Program Coordinator Aziz Ahmed provided insights into reporting election results both before and on election day. They highlighted the importance of accurate reporting and explained how reporters should present their findings. The training also delved into how journalists should interact with polling station staff and understand election rules and regulations. The workshop emphasized the significance of ethical journalism and the safe reporting of elections, encouraging journalists to prioritize facts and maintain public trust.

The event underscored the vital role that media plays in Pakistan's democratic processes and the need for transparent election coverage, from campaign to counting, to strengthen electoral democracy in the country.

Street crimes in Karachi

Dilawar Ali

I am writing to express my deep concern about the rising incidence of street crime in Karachi. Every day we hear about incidents of theft, mugging, and robbery on the streets of the city. The situation has become so alarming that people are now afraid to leave their homes after dark.

The root cause of street crime in Karachi is the rising poverty and unemployment rates in the city. Many young people are unable to find employment and are forced to turn to crime as a means of survival.

Moreover, the law enforcement agencies should be strengthened and provided with the necessary resources to effectively combat street crime. This includes increasing the number of police officers on the streets, providing them with modern equip-

ment and training, and ensuring that they are held accountable for their actions. Another important step is to address the issue of drug addiction. The government should launch awareness campaigns to educate people about the dangers of drug use and provide treatment facilities for those who are addicted.

Finally, community engagement is also critical in reducing street crime in Karachi. The government should work with local communities to establish neighborhood watch programs and encourage people to report any suspicious activity to the authorities. In conclusion, street crime is a serious issue that needs to be addressed urgently. By implementing the measures outlined above, we can reduce the incidence of street crime in Karachi and ensure that our city is a safe place for all its residents.

Comparing appointment and promotion of university teachers

Dr Imtiaz Ahmad

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY of Science and Technology (NUST) is a federally recognized university by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) known for its exceptional performance and international rankings.

It operates differently from most public sector universities, as it employs its faculty on contracts, similar to COMSATS, with the added nuance of a tenure track system (TTS). Let's explore this phenomenon through an easy approach to the frequently asked questions:

Q1. Why does NUST employ its faculty on contracts?

A. It follows the educational system of the armed forces, which necessitates proper training for regular recruitment, so it keeps its faculty on contracts under its Act and statutes, as the alternative is complex.

Q2. Is NUST HEC recognized?

A. Yes, indeed, all its faculty

are hired following HEC's stringent appointment policies and other degree and program requirements.

Q3. Why is the right to promotion guaranteed to the faculty of NUST even though they are on contracts?

A. It's intriguing that faculty members are promoted based on HEC criteria as soon as they meet the minimum requirements for advancement to a higher position.

Q4. Why does HEC allow such promotions in a specific university, even though it provides grants to them?

A. HEC officials approve and attend selection board meetings for promotions but remain silent on this issue, although it appears discriminatory since this right is granted only to contract faculty, leaving more deserving regular faculty out in rest of the country.

Q5. Is this right illegal or discriminatory?

A. The main point here is that HEC's ordinance permits pro-

motion rights for all faculty members, whether on contract, TTS, or regular. While this right is legitimate and legal, it is discriminatory, as it is denied to others on the grounds that HEC supposedly does not allow promotion policies in universities.

Q6. Why hasn't HEC clarified promotion policies in other universities?

A. HEC, as a regulatory body, appears to maintain complexity and create problems rather than resolve them, despite clear provisions for teacher promotions on par with other government departments and regular employees in its 14-page ordinance.

Q7. Why is the same promotion right granted to TTS in all countrywide universities by HEC?

A. TTS is a system modeled after the USA, and HEC, in its attempt to adopt and adapt this system, extended the same provisions to universities, allowing them to benefit from backdated

grants. COMSATS and all faculty on TTS in universities nationwide have promotion policies, and HEC has granted them backdated benefits through the same grants.

Q8. Why are specific BPS teachers deprived of these rights?

A. The HEC chairman might be the best person to answer this, as he has been issued several notices for not notifying the promotion policy drafted by APUB-TA and NASC, the Senate, and the Federal Ministry of Education, yet he remains reluctant.

Q 10. Why have these deprived teachers, highly educated, remained silent on these severe violations and discrimination?

A. Teachers are a highly respectful and peaceful community that believes in resolving issues through dialogue with their representatives. However, they also possess the courage to stand against such extreme vio-

lations. Q10. Is there a deadline for HEC to resolve these issues?

A. NASC has directed HEC to notify the promotion policy within a fortnight while addressing seniority issues. If HEC continues to be reluctant, staging a protest, sit-in, and the closure of all universities may become the last resort by the end of October.

Q11. How is it possible for every faculty member to become a professor?

A. The question is indeed straightforward. Career growth is a legitimate fundamental right, and if the government supports and emphasizes this, HEC and others need not worry. Just as any clerk at HEC can be promoted to a Director with a master's degree, every teacher can become a professor with a Ph.D. Moreover, international ranking is directly proportional to number of professors in a university that's why NUST has secured its position.

Q12. Why does the govern-

ment stress the importance of granting the rights of promotion to teachers?

A. The answer to this question remains unknown to HEC and many readers. The government understands not only the importance of equal rights but also the long-term benefits. Achieving a high worldwide ranking is possible when a university has more professors, and international students can be attracted through this. This, in turn, can boost the economy by creating a space in international universities similar to the USA and the UK. NUST, COMSATS, AWKUM, and QAU have secured their positions in rankings, although relatively weak, due to their higher number of professors, resulting in a more satisfied faculty.

The author is a PhD from the university of Essex UK and serving the university of Malakand as an Associate Professor of Mathematics.



France bans all pro-Palestinian demonstrations

PARIS (BBC): The French government has banned pro-Palestinian demonstrations. Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin warned that foreign nationals who break the rules would be "systematically" deported, while President Emmanuel Macron called for unity. The move comes as European governments fear a rise in antisemitism triggered by the Israel-Hamas war.

Despite the ban, a large crowd of pro-Palestinian demonstrators protested in Paris. Police made 10 arrests and used water cannon to disperse the 3,000-strong rally at Place de la République, where demonstrators chanted "Israel murderer" and "Palestine will win" and waved Palestinian flags. Mr Darmanin, who ordered the ban, said those who defy it should be arrested "because they are susceptible to disrupt public order." But Pro-Palestinian groups said it risked threatening freedom of expression and pledged to continue demonstrating in support of the Palestinian people. Charlotte Vautier, who attended the rally, told Reuters News Agency: "We live in a country of civil law, a country where we have the right to take a stand and to demonstrate.

"[It is unfair] to forbid for one side and to authorise for the other." Meanwhile, police in Germany's capital Berlin have also banned planned pro-Palestinian demonstrations, citing the risk of antisemitic statements and glorification of violence. Police said around 60 demonstrators complied with an order to leave Potsdamer Platz. In a video address, President Macron urged the French people to stay united, saying "let's not add national divisions to international divisions". He described Hamas as "a terrorist organisation that wants the death of the people of Israel".

Some 13 French citizens have been confirmed dead in Hamas' attack on Israel on Saturday. President Macron said 17 French nationals were missing and were likely among the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, adding: "France is doing everything it can alongside Israel and our partners to bring them home". Four children are among the missing. Israel, he said, had the right to defend itself by eliminating terrorists, but "has to preserve civilian

lives because it's the duty of democracies".

"The only response to terrorism is one that is strong but fair," he said. France has a Jewish community of almost 500,000, the largest in Europe. France's Muslim community is also among Europe's largest - an estimated five million. Mr Darmanin told regional representatives that Jewish schools and synagogues should be protected by a visible police presence. He told French radio that 100 antisemitic acts had been recorded since Saturday, most involving graffiti showing "swastikas, 'death to Jews,' calls to intifadas against Israel". Some incidents included people being arrested attempting to carry knives into schools and synagogues, he added. French police are already guarding the homes of leading MPs. National Assembly President Yaël Braun-Pivet and MP Meyer Habib, who are both Jewish, have been offered further protection.

It has emerged that Ms Braun-Pivet, a member of Mr Macron's Renaissance party, has received death threats. She had parliament lit this week in the colours of the Israeli flag, and called a minute's silence before an Assembly session. Ms Braun-Pivet also announced that Maryam Abu Daqqa, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), would be banned from attending a documentary screening in parliament next month. The militant organisation is recognised as a terrorist organisation by the EU. Meyer Habib represents a constituency for overseas French citizens, which includes Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and is a vocal supporter of Israel. After the Hamas attack he said "we are witnessing the return of pogroms". French politics has been riven by the Hamas attack and its aftermath. While most parties have condemned Saturday's "terrorist attack" and expressed support for Israel's right to respond, the initial response from Jean-Luc Mélenchon's far-left La France Insoumise (France Unbowed) party was more equivocal. A statement by the party referred to the Hamas attack as "an armed offensive of Palestinian forces", prompting fierce criticism from other parties, including left-wing allies such as the Socialist and Communist parties.

UK to deploy Royal Navy ships to Mediterranean

LNODON (BBC): The UK will send two Royal Navy ships and surveillance aircraft to the eastern Mediterranean in plans to "bolster security". No 10 says. The aircraft will begin patrols on Friday to "track threats to regional stability such as the transfer of weapons to terrorist groups".

Three Merlin helicopters and a detachment of Royal Marines are also being dispatched. Rishi Sunak spoke to Israel's PM to reaffirm the UK's support. His call to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was meant to "reaffirm the UK's steadfast support for Israel following Hamas' appalling terrorist attack". Downing Street said. "The additional

military assistance would be deployed in the coming days to bolster security in the wider region and mitigate any attempts to escalate the conflict," it added. "He [Mr Sunak] reiterated that the UK stands side by side with Israel in fighting terror and agreed that Hamas can never again be able to perpetrate atrocities against the Israeli people. "Noting that Hamas has enmeshed itself in the civilian population in Gaza, the Prime Minister said it was important to take all possible measures to protect ordinary Palestinians and facilitate humanitarian aid." The two prime ministers "agreed to remain in close contact and to explore any further support the UK can

provide".

The prime minister said earlier: "Our military and diplomatic teams across the region will also support international partners to re-establish security and ensure humanitarian aid reaches the thousands of innocent victims of this barbaric attack from Hamas terrorists." He also asked for military teams in Israel, Cyprus and across the region to be bolstered to support contingency planning. Mr Sunak spoke to Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi to discuss the importance of opening the Rafah crossing into Gaza to allow for humanitarian access and provide a route for British and other nationals to leave.

Estonian govt approves transfer assets to Ukraine

TALLINN (Agencies): The Estonian government has approved a draft law that, if passed by parliament, will allow frozen Russian assets to be transferred to Ukraine, Prime Minister Kaja Kallas announced on Oct. 12. "The money to compensate for the damages caused by Russia in Ukraine should not come only from the taxpayers of other countries," Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said.

The bill intends for assets frozen in Estonia to be used to compensate for war damages, Kallas said, adding that the country "must be an example and an encouragement" to others in establishing similar regu-

lations. "Russia must compensate Ukraine for all the war damages caused," Kallas said. Tsahkna said that he hopes that the law will influence Russia to follow international law, as the bill entails that the assets "will remain frozen until the war damages are compensated." "Applying punishment to every single person who contributes to aggression can ultimately influence the political leadership or people of the aggressor country," the foreign minister said.

The Estonian government estimates that assets worth around 38 million euros (\$40 million) have been frozen in the country following international sanctions

on Russia. The news from Estonia comes the day after Belgium announced it has created a 1.7 billion euro (\$1.8 billion) fund for Ukraine financed by the tax revenue from interest on frozen Russian assets. Banks in Belgium who hold frozen assets must pay income tax on the interest they earn, which goes directly to the national government. "The taxation of income from these assets should go 100% to the benefit of the population of Ukraine," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander de Croo said on Oct. 11 in Brussels. Belgium holds about 180 billion euros (\$191 billion) in frozen Russian assets, de Croo said in May.

European Bank earmarks 30m euros for Ukraine

BERLIN (Agencies): The European Investment Bank (EIB) is allocating an additional 30.7 million (\$32 million) to Ukraine for infrastructure development projects covering municipal reconstruction and urban public transport, the lender announced Oct. 12. Funding will cover Kyiv, Odesa, Sumy, Lutsk, and Lviv, and is aimed at modernization initiatives to ensure critical municipal needs are met.

The EIB package includes 22 million (\$23.1 million) for modern buses and trams and 8.7 million (\$9.1 million) for other ini-

tiatives including landfill reclamation, energy-efficient measures in schools, and better water and drainage systems. "This new funding underlines our commitment to support not only the immediate relief, but also the long-term reconstruction of the country. Regardless of whether it is a new tram connection or improving local services, everything we do is aimed at promoting economic recovery and normalizing the everyday life of the war-torn Ukrainian people," the bank's chief said. In 2022 the EIB allocated 1.7 billion (\$1.8 billion) to

Ukraine for energy infrastructure repair efforts and has provided over 4 billion (\$4.2 billion) for emergency humanitarian assistance.

"These funds, backed by an EU guarantee, are another contribution to financing the urgent needs of Ukraine, which seeks to restore basic services damaged by Russian aggression. This is part of the steady support of Ukraine from the European Union, which remains unchanged, an EU Commission official said. The EIB is the lending arm of the European Union and the world's largest multilateral lender.

Hungarian Foreign Minister arrives in Moscow

MOSCOW (Agencies): Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto arrived in Moscow on the evening of Oct. 12, according to photos he posted to Facebook. "Arriving in Moscow. Cold weather is coming, energy security is in the spotlight again," he captioned the photos. Unlike other European officials, Szijarto is a regular visitor to Russia, with this trip being his fifth to the country since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The minister is in Moscow to take part in the Russian Energy Week forum, according to Russian media. He previously attended Russian Energy Week in October 2022, following his July 2022 trip to the country to discuss natural gas transportation. He again flew to Moscow in April 2023 for energy talks. In June 2023, he was the only high-ranking official from the West to attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. The event is held under the patronage of Russian President Vladimir Putin. On Sept. 22, Szijarto told the Russian state news agency TASS that new sanctions against Russia "are not necessary" and "cause more harm to Europe than to Russia." Budapest has a history of opposing international sanctions against Russia while blocking funding for Ukraine, despite Hungary being a member of the European Union and NATO. Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said that Ukraine is a financially "non-existent" and "no longer sovereign" state due to its "dependence" on international support. On Oct. 3, Budapest proposed cutting a 50 billion European Union funding package for Ukraine down to 25 billion.

Tunisian protesters show support for Palestine

TUNIS (Agencies): Tunis has become the latest Arab capital to voice its support for Palestinians amid the most significant crisis to have erupted across the region in recent memory. Following the lead of protesters in Amman, Baghdad and Cairo, around 3,000 people took to Tunis's streets in a groundswell of solidarity for Palestinians currently facing Israeli bombardment. Meanwhile, in Gaza, Israel continued its sixth day of air strikes in response to Saturday's surprise attack from the Palestinian group Hamas, which resulted in hundreds killed and more than 150 Israelis held captive.

But the Israeli response has also left civilians killed, injured and displaced. Gaza's health ministry estimates that 1,537 Palestinians have died in the bombardment as of Friday morning, and an Israel-imposed blockade has cut off supplies of food, water, electricity and fuel to the territory, home to 2.3 million people. Marching through a tunnel of trees on the Avenue de la Liberté in downtown Tunis, 18-year-old student Ayoub Alouj expressed concern for what he considered Israeli abuses in Gaza.

"This is a critical moment and we want to say that we're with Palestine and against the Zionist movement," he said as he and other demonstrators approached the massive synagogue in central Tunis that the march filed past. "I have no problem with Jews," Alouj added. "Only with Zionists." Protesters like Alouj are part of a growing call for justice that has united countries across the Arab world. Even government critics joined the marches in Tunis, defying an order banning them from appearing at public gatherings. Their appearance was a reflection of the surge of public support for the Palestinian cause.

Lawyer Ayachi Hammami was placed under such a ban for his activism work. Nevertheless, he and other critics of Tunisian President Kais Saied hit the streets to raise their voices in protest.

Russia attacks Avdiivka stronghold in Ukraine

KYIV (Agencies): Russian troops have launched a major offensive on the town of Avdiivka in eastern Ukraine. Three battalions involving some 2,000 troops, dozens of armoured vehicles as well as jets have been reportedly involved in what is described as the largest-scale attack in this area. The General Staff of Ukraine says they have managed to repel dozens of attacks in Avdiivka and nearby areas.

"They launched their offensive on a wide front," Serhiy Tsekhovskiy, an officer from the 59th brigade, told the BBC. "Since the beginning of the invasion, we haven't dealt with such an intensive attack [in the area near Avdiivka]. They are using multiple rocket launchers, artillery, tanks and infantry - all at the same time." Avdiivka is described as a gateway to the city of Donetsk, the capital of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. Although Russia and its proxy forces have occupied Donetsk city since 2014, they have been unable to use its resources as a key military communications hub because it is too close to the front line. By capturing Avdiivka, the occupying force could push the front line away. But Avdiivka is important not just because of its strategic role. This town has been right on the front line since Moscow annexed Crimea nine years ago and the conflict in eastern Ukraine began.

As a result, the town of Avdiivka has turned into a symbol of Ukrainian resistance and resilience. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, has shared photos of Avdiivka on social media saying: "We are holding our ground. It is Ukrainian courage and unity that will determine how this war will end."

Military positions and residential areas of Avdiivka have been relentlessly pummelled for the last three



days. "On average, there are 50-60 instances of intense shelling with artillery and rockets targeting the town," says Vitaliy Barabash, the head of Avdiivka's military administration. "As for military positions, they get hit at least 500-600 times a day." Apartment blocks, office buildings and a hospital have been damaged, he complains. "The firing doesn't stop," he adds. "There were about 20 air strikes yesterday during the day time. At night, 12 FAB-500 bombs were dropped on the town." The BBC cannot verify his comments. Some 1,600 residents remain in Avdiivka. Most of them moved into basements long ago, but they don't always provide good protection. According to Mr Barabash, as a result of the latest attacks, one person was killed and at least two more are feared dead under the rubble.

Russian attempts to move forward appear to be aimed at seizing the villages of Berdyche and Stepove to the north of Avdiivka and the villages of Tonenke and Severne to the south. Moscow asserts that its troops have "improved their positions" near

Avdiivka and Russian military bloggers report that Russian forces have taken some strategic positions belonging to Ukrainians and already entered Stepove. Ukraine's military denies those reports but these intense battles suggest that Russia is trying to encircle the city of Avdiivka by pushing from the north and the south. The town has been well fortified and protected since 2014, making a Russian breakthrough inside Avdiivka much harder. For that reason they are trying to cut it off from the rest of Ukrainian-controlled territories and encircle it. Russia has launched massive attacks along other parts of the front line in eastern Ukraine. Its forces are pushing in the direction of Kupiansk in Kharkiv region and Lyman in Donetsk region. Analysts from the Institute of Study of War argue that these operations in Avdiivka and other parts of the Donbas are aimed at fixing Ukrainian forces to "prevent them from redeploying to other areas", particularly to Zaporizhzhia region further west where Ukraine is making a slow progress.

Australia counts down to landmark vote on Indigenous Voice

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australians go to the polls on Saturday in an historic referendum that will determine if Indigenous people are recognised in the country's constitution through a new parliamentary advisory board. Victory for the 'Yes' campaign will ensure the creation of the Voice to Parliament, which will allow representatives of First Nations communities to provide independent advice to lawmakers on issues that affect them.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were Australia's first inhabitants, but they have been largely marginalised since colonisation by the British in 1788. There are now more than 980,000 Indigenous people living in Australia, making up roughly 3.8 percent of the population at the last count in 2021. First Nations people are the most disadvantaged in Australia, with a life expectancy that is about eight years less than non-Indigenous people. They also suffer from higher rates of suicide and imprisonment and have less access to healthcare services. Saturday's referendum was one of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's major policy pledges during his successful election campaign last year. But the build-up to the vote has stirred divisions in

Australia, with reports of racism and abuse triggered by rampant misinformation on social media.

"They [Indigenous people] are definitely feeling depressed and a sense of distress because the racism has completely hardened within Australia," said Dani Linder a Bundjalung, Kungarakany woman and senior lecturer of law at the University of Queensland. Polls have consistently placed the 'No' vote ahead, with experts pointing to a lack of bipartisan support from lawmakers. It has left some from the Indigenous community feeling dismayed. "We're starting to have to come to terms with exactly how our fellow Australians feel about us and what they really truly think about us," Linder told Al Jazeera. Here is all you need to know about Australia's first referendum since 1999. Australians will be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to one single question at the ballot box. The exact wording was finalised in June and will read: "A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?" Voting is compulsory and more than 2.2 million people have already voted in

early polling according to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). On Saturday, polling stations will be open from 8am to 6pm (21:00 GMT Friday to 07:00 GMT Saturday). Vote counting will begin as soon as the polls close, with the AEC displaying a rolling tally on their website.

If there is a clear winner, then results could come as early as Saturday night. But if it is tight, there could be a delay while the remaining postal votes are counted. If the 'Yes' campaign is to win, they need to secure a double majority. That means over half of the national vote as well as a majority in at least four of the six states. Referendums have a record of failure in Australia, with only eight succeeding from 44 votes since federation in 1901. The idea for the Indigenous Voice to Parliament was put forward by 250 First Nations representatives during a meeting at Uluru, the famous sandstone rock in central Australia. Members of the Voice would be from First Nations communities and would be selected by fellow Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. They would serve for a fixed period of time. They will provide independent advice to parliament and government on Indigenous matters. However, they will not be

able to direct or veto government policy. Supporters of the Voice hope it would ensure that Indigenous communities are better served by government policy decisions, which could help to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

"It's like going to surgery after having consulted the patient, checked the patient's x-rays and gathered all the information that you want," Ron Levy, an associate professor at ANU College of Law told Al Jazeera. "If you're going to act on someone's behalf or for somebody, then the more information and the more you speak to them, the better." The Voice would not be the first of its kind - several other countries have already created similar types of Indigenous advisory groups. "If we look abroad to places like Finland, Norway and Sweden, they have established Sami Parliaments, which are elected bodies that are regulated by Parliament, they advise lawmakers on how to best solve issues affecting Sami communities," said Linder. The 'Yes' campaign, heavily backed by Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, argues that this is an opportunity for Indigenous culture to finally be recognised in Australia's 122-year-old constitution.

US Senator charged with acting as unregistered agent for Egypt

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A new charge against United States Senator Bob Menendez has accused the Democrat of serving as an unregistered agent of Egypt, heightening the legal jeopardy he already faces. Menendez, 69, and his wife Nadine were previously indicted on federal charges related to allegations they accepted bribes in exchange for using the senator's official position to benefit the Egyptian government.

But a superseding indictment, filed in a Manhattan federal court, raised the stakes further: It added a charge that Menendez conspired to act as "an agent of a foreign principal".

Menendez has served as a senator from the state of New Jersey since 2006. Until he was charged last month, he also chaired the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, giving him significant sway over US foreign policy. He has since stepped down as chair, though he continues to resist calls to resign his elected position. But corruption allegations have trailed the senator for years, coming to the fore once

again with the bribery indictment unsealed on September 22. US federal prosecutors said that, between 2018 and 2022, Menendez and his wife accepted "hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of bribes" from three New Jersey businessmen also charged in the indictment. Among the alleged bribes were gold bars, a luxury Mercedes-Benz convertible, home mortgage payments and envelopes stuffed with cash, hidden among the clothing in the Menendezes' closets as well as in a safe.

Both Menendez and his wife have pleaded not guilty to the original indictment. The senator has also sought to frame his actions as the ordinary business of US foreign affairs, rather than nefarious conduct. "I firmly believe when all the facts are presented, not only will I be exonerated but I will still be the New Jersey senior senator," Menendez said in a September news conference. He also argued that his track record on foreign policy towards Egypt contradicted the allegations against him. "Throughout

my 30 years in the House of Representatives and the Senate, I have always worked to hold accountable those countries, including Egypt, for human rights abuses, the repression of its citizenry, civil society and more," he said. But prosecutors painted a different portrait of Menendez as someone who entered into a "corrupt agreement" to help Egyptian interests.

They have said he agreed to "approve or remove holds on foreign military financing and sales of military equipment to Egypt" in exchange for bribes. Menendez has also accused of revealing sensitive, non-public information about US embassy staff in Cairo to his co-defendants, who then passed the message along to an Egyptian government official. Those co-defendants include Egyptian-born businessman Wael Hana; Jose Uribe, a New Jersey real estate developer; and Fred Daibes, who works in insurance and trucking. In addition, the indictment alleges Menendez used his official position to interfere with criminal prosecutions that would have otherwise dis-

advantaged his co-defendants. He was originally charged in September with conspiracy to commit bribery, conspiracy to commit honest services fraud and conspiracy to commit extortion. The latter two counts carry a maximum sentence of 20 years a piece.

But the September indictment is not Menendez's first brush with corruption charges. In 2015, he faced an 11-week trial over separate accusations that he used his government office to offer favours to a Florida donor, in exchange for bribes. Menendez was never convicted, though: The trial ended in deadlock. Still, the latest allegations have renewed calls for Menendez to leave his Senate post. His fellow senator from New Jersey, Cory Booker, joined those calls in September. "Stepping down is not an admission of guilt but an acknowledgment that holding public office often demands tremendous sacrifices at great personal cost," Booker wrote in a statement. "I believe stepping down is best for those Senator Menendez has spent his life serving."

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US’s support for apatheid and fascist regime

US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken reached Tel Aviv, just days after Palestinian freedom fighters weighed a surprise war against Israel in a protest against the Saudi-Israeli normalization drive that has entered its final stage. Blinken shared a podium with Israeli far-right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and reiterated America's unequivocal support for the state of Israel and categorically told his Israeli friends that Israelis may be strong enough on their own to defend themselves but as long as America exists they will never have to. The Israeli Prime Minister termed the US's assistance visitngible example of America's unequivocal support to Israel. The far-right Israeli leader compared Hamas with Daesh and vowed to Crush the Palestinian resistance just like Daesh, a notorious terror outfit which was dismantled through a global consortium in the past decade.

The fierce hostility between heavily armed Israel military and Palestinian resistance movements including Hamas and Islamic Jihad continued over the past six days. Israel's army has hammered Hamas with thousands of strikes resulting in hundreds of deaths and multiple thousands of injuries after Hamas killed 1200 Israelis and took hostages of nearly 200 Israeli troops over the past weekend. Another 1,300 Palestinians have died in fresh Israeli airstrikes in Gaza as Israel has levelled entire city blocks and destroyed thousands of buildings since Hamas launched its unprecedented bloodiest attack in Israel's history. Presently, Palestinian cities including the West Bank and Gaza present scenes of destruction and ruin all around, buildings turned into rubble, hospitals filled with dead bodies and overcrowded with patients. Thousands of people took shelter in UN buildings that too are not safe from Israeli shelling and aerial airstrikes. Meanwhile, the Israeli government has imposed an unceasing blockade of Palestinian territory from the ground, through sea as well as air while blocking the provision of electricity, water, fuel and dearly needed medicines and life-saving drugs. Currently, Gaza's 2.4 million residents face serious risk of hunger and famine along with a brutal ground operation at the hands of their worst enemy.

Amid such devastations and heart-wrenching scenarios, the Israel solidarity trip by the US Secretary of State and the provision of military and economic assistance to Tel Aviv against poorly equipped Palestinians undoubtedly sent dispiriting signals to Palestinians and Muslim nations in the Middle East and people around the globe. The world's sole superpower has unilaterally put its weight behind an occupier and apartheid state as the Palestine-Israel conflict did not begin with Hamas's surprise attack against the Jewish state nor did history start from October 8, D-Day. Hamas' operation was a reaction to decades-long suppression and state atrocities of the Israeli regime, hence the United States and the Western world must correct their perspective regarding the history.

Historically, the US's unconditional support for Israel has been a longstanding and contentious issue in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has significant geopolitical implications on the Palestine dispute and geo-political dynamics in the Middle East region. Washington's nexus with Tel Aviv exacerbates tensions in the Middle East and contributes to anti-American sentiment among Arabs and Muslims around the globe. The US-Israel alliance has undermined the Middle East peace process, intensified intra-Arab rivalry and caused violence and frustration among the Palestinians.

The successive US administrations had been in a race to garner support from the powerful Jewish lobby in the United States. In pursuit of domestic political goals, Republicans and Democrats both parties have blatantly abandoned global norms and UNSC resolutions on the Palestine issue, tarnishing American social and democratic values by linking US interests with the apartheid policies of the occupier Jewish state. Currently, biased and politically motivated policies of the Biden administration have not only endangered global peace but a major hurdle for the Palestinian nation to get its globally recognized right to self-determination which is essential for an ultimate resolution of the Palestine dispute and sustainable peace in the broader Middle East region. Historically, Washington's failed policies and US-Israel alliance have sharply declined US influence in the region, as the Russo-China alliance is fully prepared to fill this gap through kinetic diplomacy and economic partnerships. As of now, such fascism will not prevail for a longer period, and it will surely come to an end in the future.

The curse of early marriages

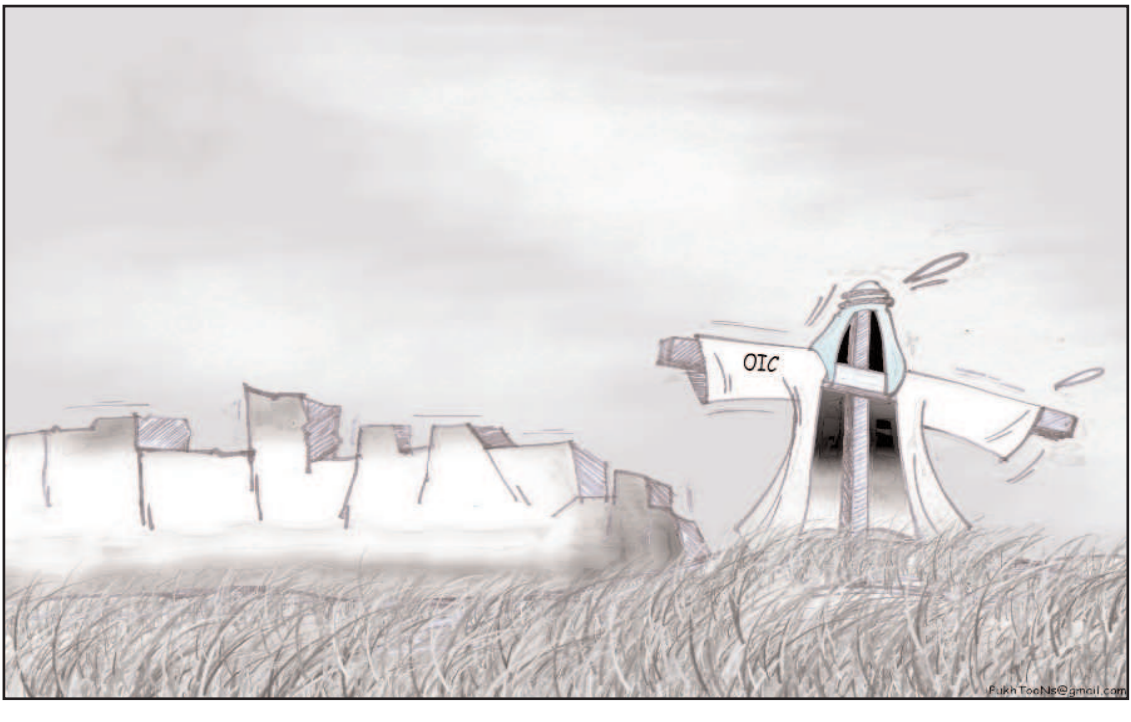
DURING a seminar on combatting the menace of child marriage, the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), Dr. Qibla Ayaz has observed that after extensive discussions on underage marriage, the council had concluded that it should not be solely considered a religious matter. According to him, the issue of underage marriages should also be viewed in the broader societal and cultural perspective, while the gateway to interpretation (Ijtihad) in social matters should always remain open by the all segments of the society.

Early marriages in Pakistani society are common phenomena and old aged family tradition which have detrimental consequences, both for individuals and the broader community. Some of the key issues associated with this evil practice include illiteracy, discontinuation of education for children at an early age, especially for young girls. This limits their future opportunities and economic independence. There have been serious social, physical and mental health issues along with societal and family problems in our society due to the ever growing trend of early marriages, which the common population links with Islamic culture and religion.

Child marriage often led to economic and social depression due to economic dependency and reduced decision making power of the under aged newly married couple. This practice contributes to a higher birth rate, which strains resources and services, such as education, healthcare and employment. Historically, the young girls in rural areas were often subjected to early marriages, which merits community debates and counseling with the couple as well as parents to ascertain pros and cons of this social evil that had shaped into necessity in our society. The government of Pakistan and relevant institutions are endeavoring hard to tackle this problem through legal reforms, educational initiatives, and awareness campaigns. It's important to continue working toward ending the curse of early marriages and promoting the well-being and empowerment of young individuals in the society, while local politicians, area notables as well as religious scholars should be involved to motivate and indoctrinate the public on this serious issue, so no innocent girl pay a lifelong price for that social evil in the future.

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Fanon’s conception of violence does not work in Palestine

Mark LeVine

IN the immediate aftermath of the unprecedented Hamas attack on Israel from Gaza, my Facebook feed lit up with friends sharing variations of a famous quote by the Martinique-born anti-colonial philosopher and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon on their feeds, to the effect that the violence of colonialism can only, and will naturally, be met by the violence of the colonised.

The actual quote is from Les Damnés de la terre (Wretched of the Earth), and can only be understood in the context of the fuller argument Fanon is making: "Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence."

No one can deny Fanon's brilliance or his pioneering and profound understanding of the psychological effects of colonial violence on the colonised and the coloniser (as a psychiatrist, he treated French colonial officers and Algerians alike and found them to suffer similar psychiatric ailments). But the second and more famously quoted part of Fanon's argument is not comprehensible without the first part, and the first part - especially in the Israeli context - is in fact profoundly wrong. Colonialism, especially settler colonialism - and even more particularly Zionist settler colonialism - is very much a "thinking machine" with very powerful and longstanding logic and rationalities that are the key to its success. Because of this, considering what "a greater violence" would look like and how it can be measured, never mind achieved, is a crucial task for those analysing and fighting colonial violence alike.

I have yet to see any plausible scenarios in which Palestinians acquire the means to deploy "far greater violence" vis-a-vis Israel/the Zionist entity for any length of time in any conceivable geostrategic balance of power. Even if Iran (the only major power that supports Palestine in any meaningful way), for example, wanted to deliver heavier weapons to Palestinians, Israel's control over access points, as well as Egypt's and Jordan's, will prevent that from happening. Palestine is not Ukraine, supported by major powers and able to utilise land, water and air corridors to obtain an unending stream of weapons deliveries to fight a much larger and better-armed adversary. Quite the

opposite, in fact. More broadly, Palestine today is not Algeria in 1956, which was Fanon's most important reference point. Nor is Israel France, with a metropole to which settlers can return (unless we consider Tel Aviv the metropole). There will be no long-fought war of independence resulting in the vast majority of Jews leaving à la française a reconquered Palestine. But there are several scenarios that could lead to a redux of the Nakba, as many Israeli politicians are now screaming for.

Moreover, when Fanon talks about the "cathartic" and "cleansing" effect of violence by/for the colonised in Peau Noire, Masques Blanc (Black Skin, White Masks), another oft-quoted argument, it's important to recall that he is referencing first to the colonised "subjectively adopting a white man's attitude", not the use of violence to cleanse him or herself of the psychological illness of colonialism in preparation for the long struggle for independence. When the moment of revolutionary violence does occur, he explains in The Wretched of the Earth, it is still at the beginning of the struggle, when the long-degraded colonised subject "discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin; and it must be said that this discovery shakes the world in a very necessary manner."

At this moment, "violence ... frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; mak[ing] him fearless and restor[ing] his self-respect". In the case of Palestine, this kind of violence occurred in 1921, 1929, and most famously 1936, not in 1987 or 2000. And it built on a self-recognition of Palestinians as an independent nation that arose at the beginning of the 20th century, coterminously with Zionism.

My fear is that in focusing on the psychological component and power of violence, and the feeling of freedom and self-respect produced by violence such as that of the most recent mass attack, people are misplacing Palestinians at a far earlier stage of national development than they are today, which in turn leads to strategies of resistance that do not match the present state of national development or the strategic and political moment. This also

enables Israeli leaders, such as Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, predictably to declare that "we are fighting human animals and we act accordingly" as Israel begins what can only be termed a death siege of the Gaza Strip, while much of the world nods in seeming understanding. Indeed, for over 50 years of occupation, and 30 years of the post-Oslo Palestinian "self-rule" rather than "the native curl[ing] himself of colonial neurosis ... through force of arms", what has occurred (as I learned in interviews with therapists at the few mental health centres in Gaza as far back in the later 1990s through 2000s) is the passing on of trauma, with former Fatah prisoners tortured by Israel torturing Hamas members using the same techniques as the Israelis used on them - often screaming at their victims in Hebrew while torturing them in the very same rooms where they were tortured. Hamas has continued this cycle in the two decades of effective control over Gaza. And now we see this with crowds cheering kidnapped, beaten, and murdered Israelis. Whatever catharsis this constitutes, it is not one that will lead to victory over an Israeli society that has been using violence against Palestinians as its own traumatic catharsis for 75 years, in a world that has a very high tolerance for Palestinian civilian casualties, with most people in the West still supporting Israel whenever there is a high level of Israeli Jewish casualties.

Finally, it's worth noting that Fanon saw France's presence in Algeria through the lens of European colonialism/imperialism more broadly, explaining that "because in a very concrete way, Europe interfered excessively with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries: Latin America, China and Africa. From all these continents, under whose eyes Europe today raises its tower of opulence, diamonds and oil, silk and cotton, wood and exotic products have been flowing to this same Europe for centuries. Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth that is suffocating it is that which has been stolen from underdeveloped peoples." Whatever one wants to say about Zionist/Israeli colonialism and the immense theft of Palestinian resources it has involved, its primary goal has been theft and settlement of land to establish its own sovereign-

ty on that territory for its citizens to live on. It's much closer to North American and Australian settler colonialism - where disease, ethnic cleansing on an immense scale and ultimately genocide decimated the Indigenous population, than to the French in Algeria or even South Africa, where Indigenous Africans remained the large majority of the total population. Indeed, like these other European settler colonies, Zionist Jews from the start imagined themselves as the Indigenous population, and as far back as the early 1970s attempted directly to identify themselves with Fanon's colonial subjects in need of cathartic violence to create their (re)new(ed) nation. Tragically, Fanon died in 1961, a year before Algeria achieved independence. He did not live to see the realities of postcolonial politics in Algeria, or across Africa for that matter, where, as Kenyan novelist and decolonial thinker Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has so powerfully showed, leaders of newly independent states almost immediately began treating their peoples in much the same manner as their former colonisers (a phenomenon also experienced with the Palestinian Authority and Hamas since Oslo).

Forty years ago, when he was describing this dynamic of postcolonial governance in his groundbreaking prison memoir Wrestling with the Devil: A Prison Memoir, Thiong'o used the term "neocolonial" - not to indicate the continuation of European control by other means, but rather to describe how anticolonial leaders adopted (and adapted) the same brutal and authoritarian techniques of rule as their colonisers to cement and maintain their power; a critique of the "coloniality of power" that is today at the heart of the ever more popular decolonial thought. That coloniality of power fundamentally will never allow for anything approaching actual independence for Palestinians, neither via the neocolonial PA nor with Hamas at the helm. If Palestinians are to defeat Zionist colonialism, it will likely take a much different sort of analysis of its violence and power than Fanon offered three-quarters of a century ago, and it will probably require a paradigm shift in the core concepts of what a nation, freedom and independence are at a moment when the entire world, not just Palestine/Israel, is heading towards conflagration.

The next House speaker should listen to the Republicans who ousted McCarthy

W. James Antle III

FROM the "ungovernable" to the "chaos caucus," the eight House Republicans who toppled Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy as speaker get called a lot of names. But they do have some valid points that McCarthy's eventual replacement will need to take into consideration in order to have a longer-lasting speaker-ship: getting better control over federal spending and returning to regular order for considering these bills. One is a matter of process, the other a matter of substance.

The federal spending process is indeed in shambles. Congress has passed its required appropriations bills on time only four times in nearly five decades, with the most recent happening in 1996. Not a single appropriations bill has become law on time since 2009. In place of the appropriations measures, Congress instead passes massive omnibus spending packages or temporary spending bills known as continuing resolutions.

Conservatives wanted to see some changes when Republicans took over the House earlier this year. While dragging out McCarthy's speaker election to 15 ballots, approximately 20 House Republicans were insisting that appropriations bills be voted on individually, that members be given adequate time to read them and that rank-and-file members of the House have the opportunity to offer amendments. Many of these Republicans did not feel the 45-day continuing resolution just passed by Congress kept these promises, and a subset of them were willing to oust McCarthy over it.

The country badly needs to get its fiscal house in order before there is an economic reckoning. The chaotic nature of the federal budget process isn't the only reason the national debt now exceeds \$33 trillion. There has been a balanced federal budget only a handful of times since 1969, most recently in 2001. Republicans have campaigned for decades on the idea that the country's current fiscal trajectory is unsustainable, most recently making the argument that elevated federal spending levels had proved inflationary. Where the eight Republicans who seized McCarthy's gavel get into trouble is that it is impossible to alter that fiscal trajectory while controlling by the narrowest of margins one half of the legislative branch. They simply don't have the votes to pass the kind of sweeping spending cuts they would like, and their attempts to govern as a minority within a small majority make it difficult to govern at all.

Making progress toward these goals without shutting down the government will be one of the biggest challenges the next speaker faces. McCarthy found he had too many needles to thread to please everyone, and was ultimately beset on all sides. The two declared candidates for speaker, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, have some advantages in this area McCarthy lacked. Rep. Kevin Hern, chairman of the Republican Study Committee, is another name that has been floated if they cannot break the impasse.

All three are seen as more conservative than McCarthy, though Scalise had already migrated from the conservative faction to leadership long before the current dust-up. Hern leads the House GOP's largest caucus of conservative lawmakers, while Jordan was a co-founder of the Freedom Caucus, its most exacting one. Jordan may have one asset that eluded McCarthy: the benefit of the doubt from conservatives. He would be the first Freedom Caucus speaker. At least some of his supporters appear willing to entertain getting rid of the rule that allows a single member to force a vote on vacating the speaker's chair. And perhaps most critically, Jordan has former President Donald Trump's endorsement.

While Jordan supported retaining McCarthy as speaker, he would not be approaching the eight GOP rebels as an outsider. Unlike most recent Republican speakers, he rose up through the ranks as a thorn in the side of leadership. The experiment of treating the conservative faction as a problem to be managed, or an insurrection to be suppressed, has clearly failed. There is no guarantee that a speaker from that faction will be successful.

Perhaps it will be a whack-a-mole problem that shifts to the GOP moderates in swing districts who will then feel the need to assert their independence from leadership, as Rep. Matt Gaetz and company are doing now. With a majority this small and this fractious, any speaker could fail. But someone may have the credibility to make compromises (and the knowledge of which compromises to avoid) that past speakers dating back to John Boehner have lacked. One obstacle may be that Jordan is closely associated with the investigations into President Joe Biden. Even some conservatives revealed they were not enamored of impeachment and may even view it as a distraction from other unrealized conservative goals.

McCarthy also sounds like he has not completely ruled out a return to the speakership at some point, though he is telling allies to stand down in the upcoming vote rather than renominate him. His farewell remarks last week suggested he had not exhausted his political ambitions, though at that time there was no obvious outlet for them. The war in Israel has perhaps created a new opening for him to reenter the fray. If his would-be successors, both of whom supported McCarthy against the motion to vacate, deadlock without any resolution in sight, it cannot be ruled out. Stranger things have happened. But it would appear to be a missed opportunity to address the underlying problems that led to his removal in the first place.

The main question would be: What has changed in the last week to make McCarthy 2.0 more viable than the original version? It would be highly ironic if in this "America First" era of the GOP, the answer was a foreign war. Bob Dole quipped upon becoming Senate majority leader that he was really the "majority pleader." The next speaker is going to have to be willing to listen to those who rebuked McCarthy.

CNN

‘A natural extension’

Carola Ramon

Road Forum held in Beijing in May 2017, two countries from Latin America - Argentina and Chile - were present. At that opportunity, President Xi mentioned that Latin America was the "natural extension" to the BRI. Currently both countries are members of the BRI and the AIIB, Argentina becoming the 20th Latin American country to join the initiative in February 2022 during the Argentine president's visit to Beijing to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The signed memorandum of understanding included several issues to ensure a win-win outcome and for enhancing economic complementarity between both countries, particularly by increasing bilateral investments, expanding bilateral trade, and incentivizing trade diversification. With the signing of the Belt and

Road, both Argentina and China need to focus not only on the potential economic complementarities between them, but also on addressing the challenges that lie ahead and devise a joint roadmap. In order to achieve balanced, sustainable and long-term development, investments in infrastructure that lead to greater connectivity and foster inclusive development are needed. For Argentina, as stated in the MoU, it is crucial that the BRI supports the objective of enhancing our export capacity, export diversity, value added and local component share.

A few weeks before the signing of the BRI in 2022, Argentina and China held the fifth meeting of their strategic dialogue for economic cooperation and coordination. The main infrastructure projects to be developed in Argentina were identified at this dia-

logue. Several projects are incorporated into the Integrated Plan for China-Argentina Cooperation within the Strategic Dialogue, the others being included in the BRI Cooperation Plan, which was signed during the visit in June by Argentina Economy Minister Sergio Massa. This cooperation plan is crucial for advancing and enhancing infrastructure cooperation in the projects identified above. During that visit, Minister Massa also met Wang Jingjun, vice-minister of the General Administration of Customs of China, to discuss issues regarding market opening negotiations for Argentine products. This is also a significant step for addressing two of the long-standing and most salient challenges in Argentina's bilateral economic exchanges with China - the growing trade deficit and the lack of export diversification. Argentina's main

exports to China are historically concentrated in a few agricultural and agri-industrial products.

High-level meetings are therefore crucial to advance market access issues. Some of the ongoing negotiations include products such as swine and bovine offal, corn, nuts, and sorghum, among others. Over the past several decades, China and Argentina have forged a solid economic partnership, based on complementarities, and increasing mutual trust, framed within our strategic economic partnership which has been in place since 2014. The signing of the Belt and Road Initiative marks another landmark in our bilateral relations with great potential and attractiveness. However, this is not free of challenges. Instead, local, national, and regional economic development of an inclusive, balanced, and long-term nature is needed to be able to realize our full potential and, consequently, derive win-win outcomes for both countries.

UK effort to imitate Japan’s shinkansen falls short

EARLIER this summer, U.K. Transport Secretary Mark Harper extolled the virtues of Japan's bullet train network in a video that has aged even more poorly than most government fluff pieces. "Japan's rail infrastructure is an exciting vision of what we can do with HS2 - our very own high-speed rail network for the future," Harper said from a bullet train seat, referring to the project that less than three months later would be radically scaled back. "Building it shows we believe in Britain."

The U.K. seems to have suffered a crisis of belief, then, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak last week scrapping the project's northern leg in favor of a vague initiative for road improvements and nebulous mass transit systems. Though there is indeed much for the U.K. to learn from the safety and punctuality records of bullet trains, if it wants to learn from Japan's experience in building railways, it's the value of sticking to a plan. As a project, HS2 was less than 15 years old before Sunak's announcement derailed it. To be sure, there were notable problems with inflation, budget overruns and ballooning costs. But the place to make those cuts isn't in overhauling long-term infrastructure objectives.

What the U.K. should copy is Japan's stick-to-itiveness. Blueprints for the expansion of Japan's high-speed rail network were laid out in legislation almost exactly 50 years ago in the Nationwide Shinkansen Railway Development Law. It called for the building of five routes on three lines, extending the bullet train (which had opened a decade earlier to link Tokyo and Osaka), as far north as Sapporo and as far south as the bottom tip of Kyushu, as well as connecting Tokyo with a looping route to the Sea of Japan

and back to Osaka. Although it's not yet all complete - notably on the final linking of the Hokuriku Shinkansen to Osaka, which might not be completed until some 75 years after it was first envisioned - a remarkable amount has materialized from the vision put into law in 1973 and featured in then-Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's 1972 book, "Building a New Japan: A Plan for Remodelling the Japanese Archipelago". Despite 25 different premiers in the half-century since, the country continues to follow that same plan - and the benefits to society from not chopping and changing accrue accordingly. Tanaka was often somewhat unfairly accused of pork-barrel politics for the line that runs to Niigata, his home prefecture, from Tokyo. These days, that route helps shuffle deep-pocketed foreign tourists to the region's ski and hot spring resorts, tapping a market that barely existed in the 1970s.

For all the not-in-my-back yard sentiment surrounding HS2's construction, the advantages are clear to British regions that would have been fortunate enough to be near the stations. Japan's Hokuriku Shinkansen (which uses some of the same track as the Niigata route) has transformed the likes of Nozawa Onsen from an aging ski town to a prime site for foreign investors, following the opening of a nearby bullet train station in 2015. Morioka in northern Iwate Prefecture - ranked second in the world on the New York Times "52 Places to Go in 2023" - would have taken six hours to visit from Tokyo in 1982, before the Tohoku Shinkansen opened. Now it's a mere two-hour jaunt and will serve as a link in the route that will connect Tokyo and Sapporo early next decade. One estimate put the value of time saved from the shinkansen

Gearoid Reidy

at ¥500 billion (\$3.3 billion) a year. Other studies have shown a marked increase in population, companies locating and tax receipts in cities with a high-speed rail stop, versus those without. There's no benefit from flip-flopping; instead, the U.K. should tackle the outrageous cost overruns, which led to estimates that the London to Birmingham leg of HS2 would have cost more than twice as much as Japan has allocated for the 500 kilometer-per-hour maglev line that will connect Tokyo and Nagoya later this decade. Despite the initial outlay, one estimate expects a economic impact of ¥10.7 trillion from the maglev after 50 years of operations.

Despite constant doubts that each shinkansen expansion would be a boondoggle usurped by increasingly efficient and cheaper air travel, the bullet train is as healthy than ever - while emitting less than a fifth the carbon dioxide of aircraft. Predictions that the COVID-19 pandemic would wipe it out were far off the mark, with demand recovering nearly to pre-2020 levels during weekdays, while leisure travel has already returned.

It's no wonder that the US ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, raves about Japan's system. To get these projects through the door, however, "what is often needed is a master facilitator willing to expend personal and often political capital to ensure a project's realization," analysts from PricewaterhouseCoopers wrote in a 2011 examination of how the shinkansen was built. Safe to say, then, that Sunak, whose government declared that "HS2 is part of the problem and not the solution," isn't that person. Japan was fortunate to have Shinji Sogo, the president of what was then Japanese

National Railways, and Hideo Shima, the shinkansen's chief engineer. When the original bullet train joined Tokyo and Osaka just days before the opening of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, neither were there to celebrate, having resigned to take responsibility for budget overruns that came to nearly twice that of initial estimates. But who now thinks the government should have pulled the project (perhaps declaring, to channel Sunak, a "Network Nagoya" of strategies to boost regional roads and buses)?

Not everything has worked out according to the 1973 outline - a planned shinkansen to link Tokyo and the distant Narita Airport never materialized due to what might now be termed "NIMBYism." Other routes only sketched out in the original plans for less densely populated areas such as Shikoku seem unlikely to ever leave the drawing board. The Hokkaido Shinkansen currently suffers from very low ridership, as it has yet to link Tokyo and Sapporo, which won't happen until early in the 2030s. Last week, as I traveled along the Kyushu Shinkansen - a route entirely new to me that joins Kagoshima and Fukuoka, or about the same distance as London and Sheffield - in a little over an hour, it was hard to believe high-speed rail can be "part of the problem." These generational projects can only come from the coordination of strong national and local governments together with private industry - the very job of leadership to promote, not vacillate over. Next year, with HS2's London to Birmingham route still years from operation, Japan's shinkansen will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Ironically, for something famed for its swiftness, when it comes to high-speed rail, slow and steady wins the race.

The Japan Times

Russia will emerge from the darkness

Oleg Orlov

FIRST, I would like to remind you that many of my like-minded individuals have been harshly punished: many years of imprisonment for their words, for peaceful protests, for the truth. Let's remember Alexei Gorinov and Vladimir Kara-Murza, who are currently being killed and placed in punitive isolation. Let's remember Alexandra Skochilenko, whose health is being deliberately undermined in the detention facility.

Let's remember the seriously ill Igor Baryshnikov, to whom the court denied the right to attend his mother's funeral, and who is now effectively deprived of medical assistance. Let's remember Dmitry Ivanov, Ilya Yashin, and all those sentenced to long years of captivity for protests against the war.

Against this backdrop, the punishment that the prosecution is seeking for me seems extremely lenient. After all, in the end, paying such a small price for expressing a position that I consider to be the truth doesn't bother me. But no. In the event of any guilty verdict, we will appeal it. Because any guilty verdict, whether harsh or lenient, would be a violation of the Russian Constitution, a violation of the norms of the law, and a violation of my rights. I do not repent!

I do not repent of participating in anti-war pickets and writing the article for which I am on trial. My previous life left me no other choice. I cannot help but recall the favorite motto of my teacher, the great human rights defender, Sergei Adamovich Kovalyov, a motto formulated by Roman thinkers: "Do what must be done, and be what will be." I do not regret not leaving Russia. This is my country, and I believed that my voice would be louder from inside Russia. And now, thanks to the joint efforts of the political police, the investigation, the prosecutor's office, and the court, my modest newspaper article has received the kind of publicity I could only dream of. And I don't regret working at Memorial for many years, working for the future of my country. Now it may seem like "everything has gone to hell." It may seem that everything I and my friends and colleagues have done has been destroyed, and our work was meaningless. But that's not the case. I am confident that it won't be long before Russia emerges from the darkness in which it is currently immersed. And this inevitability is to a considerable extent the achievement of the Memorial community and all our friends and colleagues in Russian civil society, which no one will be able to destroy.

So why did I participate in pickets and write this little article? Today, the concept of a "patriot" is compromised. In the eyes of a vast number of people, Russian patriotism has become synonymous with imperialism. But for me and many of my friends, it's not like that. From my point of view, patriotism is primarily not pride in one's country but a burning shame for the crimes committed in its name. How ashamed we were during the First and Second Chechen Wars, and how ashamed we are now of what citizens of my country are doing in Ukraine on behalf of Russia. German philosopher Karl Jaspers wrote a treatise in 1946, "The Question of German Guilt." In this work, he formulated theses on the four types of guilt held by Germans after World War II: criminal, political, moral, and metaphysical. In my opinion, the thoughts outlined there are very much in line with our current situation as citizens of Russia in the 21st century. I won't talk about criminal guilt now. Those who committed crimes will either be punished for it or not. But the future of present-day Russia (similar to the future of Germany in 1946) depends to a significant extent on whether all of us, without exception, are ready to reflect not on the guilt of others but on our own. Here's a quote from Jaspers' work:

"The phrase 'This is your guilt' can mean - you are responsible for the crimes of the regime you tolerated; this is our political guilt. Your guilt is that you also supported this regime, participated in it - this is our moral guilt. Your guilt is that you did nothing when crimes were committed nearby - here, metaphysical guilt is suggested."

In my opinion, people who love their homeland cannot help but think about what is happening to the country with which they feel an inseparable connection. They cannot help but think about their responsibility for what has happened. And in doing so, they cannot help but try to share their thoughts with others. Sometimes, there is a certain price to pay for this... So, I tried. Let me provide one more quote. This time from an official statement made on March 22 of this year. "Russia and China call on all countries to promote such universal values as peace, development, equality, justice, democracy, and freedom, to engage in dialogue rather than confrontation."

This is stated on behalf of the state that sent its troops to the territory of a neighboring country, Ukraine, whose territorial integrity it recently recognized. On behalf of the state that is waging war there, qualified as aggression by the vast majority of UN member states. This is stated on behalf of the state where all freedoms are suppressed, where laws that directly contradict the current Constitution are hastily adopted and actively enforced, laws that declare any critical expression a crime. Including the law under which you are now judging me. Well, yes, "war is peace, freedom is slavery," and "Russian troops in Ukraine support international peace and security."

Dear court, isn't it obvious that all of us - you and I - now find ourselves in George Orwell's world, in his novel "1984"? An amazing time loop! In real history, rather than in literature, the year that followed 1984 would mark the beginning of change in the USSR.: perestroika, followed by the democratic revolution of 1991. Back then, it seemed like the changes were irreversible... And now, more than 30 years later, we find ourselves in the year 1984... Currently, there is no such thing as a "thought crime" in the Russian Criminal Code, and citizens are not punished for doubting the correctness of the state's policies, even if voiced in whispers in their own apartments. People are not punished for making the wrong facial expression. However, if someone expresses such doubts outside their apartment, there can be reports and punishment. Wearing clothing of the "wrong" colors is already subject to punishment.

Publicly expressing a different opinion from the official standpoint is punishable. Sharing the views of international organizations is punishable. Expressing the slightest doubt in the accuracy of the Defense Ministry's official reports is punishable.

Under these circumstances, it is inevitable that a new law will be introduced in the future to punish thought crimes. Currently, books are not burned in Russia's squares. However, books by authors who are not favored by the authorities are labeled with the humiliating tag "foreign agent." In bookstores, they are placed on distant shelves, and in libraries, they are issued to readers almost in secret. Actors who allow themselves to

say something that does not align with the party's and government's line are being dismissed from theaters. The great actress Liya Akhedzhakova was removed from the profession for her civic stance. All of this is happening while the majority of those who were once called the "theatrical community" remain silent. In a totalitarian state, there should be no public, everyone should be afraid and keep silent.

What it needs are expressions as simple as bleating, and only in support of what the government currently proclaims as correct. The state not only controls the public, political, and economic life of the country, but it also seeks full control over culture and intrudes into private life. It is gradually becoming all-encompassing. This trend did not start on Feb. 24 of last year but was evident earlier. The war only accelerated this process. How did my country, which had moved away from communist totalitarianism, slide into a new form of totalitarianism? What do we call this type of totalitarianism? Who is to blame for what has happened?

Furthermore, I am immensely grateful to that community, those wonderful people who were not afraid and came to this trial, and who continue to attend other political trials. This is very important to me. Thank you very much!

Currently, what is happening is something that was unimaginable in Russia not so long ago, such as the arrest of director Zhenya Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petreychuk. For what? For a play that reflects on the reasons why young women are pushed into terrorist organizations. The established regime in Russia doesn't need people to think. What it needs are expressions as simple as bleating, and only in support of what the government currently proclaims as correct. The state not only controls the public, political, and economic life of the country, but it also seeks full control over culture and intrudes into private life. It is gradually becoming all-encompassing. This trend did not start on Feb. 24 of last year but was evident earlier. The war only accelerated this process. How did my country, which had moved away from communist totalitarianism, slide into a new form of totalitarianism? What do we call this type of totalitarianism? Who is to blame for what has happened?

My little article, for which I am currently on trial, was dedicated to these questions. I understand that there will be people who say, "There's nothing you can do, the law is the law. If a law is passed, it must be followed." I recall that in 1935, the so-called Nuremberg Laws were enacted in Germany. And later, after the victorious year 1945, those who enforced them were tried for their compliance.

I am not entirely certain that today's Russian enforcers of these anti-legal, unconstitutional laws will personally face judicial consequences. But punishment is inevitable. Their children or grandchildren will be ashamed to talk about where their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers served and what they did. The same will be true for those who are currently committing crimes in Ukraine in compliance with orders. In my opinion, this is the most severe punishment, and it is inevitable. As for me, punishment is also inevitable since, under the present circumstances, a not-guilty verdict for such an accusation is impossible.

We will soon see what it will be. However, I did not participate in the preparation of the law of the new Russia, on the rehabilitation of victims of political repressions, back in the 1990s for nothing. In the free Russia of the future, this law will definitely be expanded and amended to rehabilitate all current political prisoners, those convicted for political reasons, including those sentenced for their anti-war stance.

The Moscow Times

The coming Labour government has just revealed how dangerous it will be

WHAT fresh hell is this? Thirteen years of Tory government are likely to end in dismal failure. And this week's Labour Party conference in Liverpool has offered a frightening glimpse of the future under Sir Keir Starmer. Conservatives need to brace themselves: Britain is set to elect a dangerous new government just as the West tips into a dark age of geopolitical entropy and economic stagnation.

But it is not so much Labour's zeal as its insipidity that the country should fear. The good news is that militant Corbynism has faded into carnivalesque background music: as the queues snake to attend Dawn Butler's Jamaica Party, the CND, as it bangs the drum for Wages not Weapons, has been shunted to cupboard room 11C. With the exception of Apsana Begum MP, there has been little pro-Hamas agitation in the conference fringe tents. The bad news is that a desolate new chapter of rudderless centrism beckons.

Labour reborn is dead behind the eyes. Yes, all the signs of biological life are there. Its Liverpool annual meeting has attracted more CEOs than Davos. The main conference hall has been consistently packed. But at the heart of all the hubbub is a disquieting emptiness. And if the air at Labour's conference is electric, it is not with jubilation but with panic. The official Labour line, implicit in shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves's speech yesterday, is that it has limited scope to be bold given the mess left by the Tories. While this might be partly valid, the elephant in the room is that Starmer is on the verge of coming to power just as the social democratic model across the West is imploding.

Germany, once the model for state-directed prosperity, is now the sick man of Europe, trailing in the advanced manufacturing race against China and clueless about how to shift from traditional industry to innovation. Amid a backlash against mass migration and crime, the Scandinavian Third Way has collapsed. The White House is going into meltdown, as funds dry up for Biden's Green New Deal, which has failed miserably to translate into votes. Underlying these simultaneous combustions is the centre-Left's failure to answer the question that threatens its future. How can social democratic parties deliver on promises of mass prosperity in an increasingly volatile world - one where governments can't just dig their heels in on their "liberal principles" while hosing around loadsamoney?

The question clearly has Labour stumped. One of the grand plans it has flirted with - the "entrepreneurial state", inspired by London-based Italian celebrity-economist Mariana Mazzucato - is a calamity in the making. Such states have a bad habit of prioritising sectors that offer the best hard-hat photo ops rather than actually drive growth. True to form, and despite reining in its spending ambitions, Labour still wants to bet the farm on a green industrial plan in a country where 80 per cent of output comes from services, and when Brexit presents Britain with a golden chance to become a regional haven in new sectors such as AI. Net zero projects are unlikely to deliver anywhere near the kind of growth and productivity gains that are needed to save the country from its torpor.

Labour is at a similar loss when

Sherelle Jacobs

it comes to Britain's other crises, including healthcare. Labour's token heretic Wes Streeting, the shadow health secretary, has been out in force in Liverpool, trolling the grassroots with his favourite line: "If people want a shrine, sign up to a religion." But despite rhetorically breaking from the NHS cult, Labour still doesn't have a comprehensive plan for reform. Starmer's business-as-usual announcement that Labour will invest £1.1?billion in staff overtime and pool hospital resources to get waiting lists down is revealing. Can we deduce that he has lost his nerve for more controversial solutions? Certainly, a step-by-step war plan for reforming the NHS is still nowhere to be found.

How will Labour shift money from day-to-day operations and administration to preventative healthcare and early diagnosis, which is ultimately what needs to happen to prevent the country being bankrupted by its ageing society? Where is its plan to fix Britain's broken social care system? These questions hang in the air as Starmer drones vacuously about an NHS "fit for the future". But perhaps it is on the totemic issue of immigration where Labour is most clearly out of its depth. Its plan to clear the asylum backlog by expediting cases is staggeringly naive. As she enjoys the moral high ground, Yvette Cooper doesn't seem to have grasped the wickedness of the mess she is poised to inherit: some suspect that Home Office mandarins have been quietly encouraging Suella Braverman's dog-whistle politics to distract from the scale of the department's systems failure. By the time Labour comes to power, the coun-

try will likely be facing another migrant surge, as a rash of coups in Africa possibly coincides with another war in the Middle East.

Despite the coming storm, Labour does not have anything that remotely resembles a policy to deter new arrivals. The EU has slapped down Starmer's hopes for a bespoke immigrant return deal as "delusional". His vow to "smash" the exasperatingly nimble criminal gangs seems equally fanciful. Most baffling of all is that front-benchers such as David Lammy still seem to think that the basic choice is between an open "Great Britain" and insular "Little England". Any serious Labour politician should surely by now comprehend that the real choice is between a scenario in which established parties fix the broken international asylum system, balancing a spirit of generosity towards genuine refugees with a reduction in legal migration - and the alternative in which populists shove liberal politicians aside and enforce border controls for them.

That even now, as a second populist wave threatens to sweep Europe and America, the centre-Left continues to talk so much sanctimonious claptrap about shifting from a "hostile" to "compassionate" refugee system and to indulge in moronic pipe dreams that everything can be fixed by allowing refugees to work and vote is jaw-dropping - I say this as someone who is instinctively liberal on migration. One can't help but wonder whether, in a way, the next Labour government has already failed. It has had more than a decade to think through the flaws in the social democratic project. It hasn't done this. As a majority government beckons, one can hardly bear to look.

The Telegraph

Spain, Saudi Arabia working together to face modern challenges

Jorgehevia Sierra

SAUDI Arabia and Spain share cherished, valued and special bonds and their strong ties have created a unique relationship between our countries and peoples. Suffice to say there is a long period of common history, with the deep traces of the Arab presence in Spain over the centuries reflected in its architecture, monuments, Spanish language, geography and even music, as well as the remarkable closeness that exists between the two royal houses.

Since the birth of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Abdulaziz, the contacts have increased and progressed and the relationship has become stronger. The mutual sympathy among our peoples has grown to a new level of commitment. We want to appeal to these solid foundations when building our shared future.

Saudi Arabia has embarked on a promising and fascinating voyage under the framework of Vision 2030. Spain, a friendly and close country, wants to accompany Saudis in this adventure, standing ready to make its contribution and support them in achieving their

ambitious goals. Spain is pleased that every member of Saudi society is committed to achieving Vision 2030 and looks forward to being part of this great transformation. We can offer a number of ideas and projects to develop economic cooperation in energy, water, technology, tourism, education, infrastructure and the environment, to name but a few.

Allow me to refer specifically to the importance of our economic relations in the present moment. We are happy to see that the presence of Saudi companies and the volume of Saudi investments in Spain have grown and advanced in the last few years. At the same time, in recent decades, new Spanish firms have joined a large number of enterprises operating in the Kingdom. The situation would be very different without these companies and their faith and hope in the future of the country. Let me pay due homage to the men and women working in these firms and living in Saudi Arabia for their incredible contribution to the richness and strength of our bilateral relationship. Moreover, I would

like to highlight the expertise and seriousness of our entrepreneurs and the complexity of the tasks they are performing in the Kingdom.

I would also like to express my satisfaction with the work of the Saudi-Spanish Business Council after the reforms recently introduced in the structure of this institution and the approval of a new action plan. This initiative has built confidence in developing new opportunities for cooperation and the continuous review of what has already been done and where more improvements can be made. Subsequently, having strengthened and consolidated our presence in the traditional sectors where we have been particularly active - public infrastructure, engineering design, shipbuilding and architecture - we are now exploring opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as tourism, culture, entertainment and sports.

The chronicle of past years has shown that the present and future of our world is full of challenges of various kinds. It is therefore extremely important that Saudi

Arabia and Spain join forces at the bilateral and multilateral levels to constructively address global challenges. This shared vision of a better future, aimed at easing global tensions that threaten international peace and security, will strengthen our fraternal relationships, which not only unite our royal houses but also reinforce our people-to-people bonds. Last but not least, Spain has assumed the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second semester of 2023. During our presidency, we will continue supporting Ukraine and denouncing the war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation against that country in violation of international law and the UN Charter.

We will continue acting to convince our friends that this is not only a European matter, but an essential issue that affects all members of the international community. We will also continue working to broaden and deepen the EU's engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council and its member countries, as we have seen in the ministerial meeting held recently in Muscat, Oman.

Arab News



Stabilization measures start yielding results: SBP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jameel Ahmad said on Friday that stabilization measures had started yielding results with inflation coming down and position of external account improving.

The governor was briefing international investors during events organized by global banks, including Barclays, JP Morgan, Standard Bank, and Jefferies on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank meetings in Marrakech, Morocco.

He said, inflation had come down to 31.4 percent in September 2023 after peaking at 38.0 percent in May 2023 and was expected to continue its downward trajectory over the coming months, whereas the external account had improved considerably and foreign exchange buffers were being built up.

Jameel shared that with the policy rate at 22 percent, the SBP assessed the real interest rates turning substantially positive on a forward-looking basis, as inflation was expected to come down significantly during the second half of this fiscal year.

Going forward, the Stand-By arrangement with the International Monetary Fund is expected to support the ongoing policy efforts to stabilize the economy.

The governor briefed the investors about the recent macroeconomic developments, policy responses to current challenges, and the outlook of Pakistan's economy, and also answered their questions.

He informed the investors that the current policy mix adopted by the government and the Central Bank was geared towards achieving stabilization through addressing macroeconomic imbalances.

He apprised that the SBP was among the first central banks that began to tighten monetary policy in the wake of the rising inflation globally. However, certain domestic challenges, most notably the unprecedented floods in the beginning of the previous fiscal year, complicated SBP's efforts to bring down inflation.

On a cumulative basis, SBP has increased the policy rate by 1500 bps over the last two years. Likewise, the government has also stepped up its fiscal consolidation efforts.

The governor also highlighted the shock-absorbing role of the market-determined exchange rate and the support from multilateral and bilateral lenders in addressing the external sector challenges.

The current account deficit (CAD) reduced to 0.7% of GDP in FY23 from 4.7 percent in FY22.

The earlier administrative measures that had contributed towards the lowering of CAD last year, are now withdrawn.

Nonetheless, the ongoing stabilization measures and flexible exchange rate are expected to keep the CAD within the range of 0.5-1.5 percent of GDP in FY24.

Jameel Ahmad informed the investors that the foreign exchange buffers were improving with both build-up in reserves and reduction in forward foreign exchange liabilities.

He explained that since January 2023, SBP's foreign exchange reserves improved from a low of \$3.1 billion to \$7.6 billion as of end-September 2023.

The reserves build-up was largely supported by non-debt creating inflows amid favorable market conditions. At the same time,

SBP's forward foreign exchange liabilities have declined and the forward book target of \$4.2 billion for end-September 2023 agreed with the IMF has already been met by a wide margin.

Similarly, SBP is also very comfortably placed to meet the other end-September IMF targets, including Net International Reserves (NIR) and Net Domestic Assets (NDA).

The Governor SBP emphasized that emerging economies are faced with multiple challenges, such as access to capital markets, growing anti-trade sentiments, debt sustainability, and building climate-resilient and inclusive economies and there is a need for multilateral institutions like the IMF and World Bank to take the lead role in shoring up global buy-in to address these challenges.

For Pakistan's part, the country is on-track to address the longstanding structural weaknesses, and with the support from its multilateral and bilateral partners, it would be able to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth over the medium term.



LAHORE: Farmers busy making bundles of sugarcane to deliver market in their farm field.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Express Rome, Aurelia and Ginga Saker carrying Containers, Palm oil and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Multi-Purpose Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Clemens Schulte and Sea Affluence also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on same day.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, Express Rome, Al-Rayyan, Zoe Schulte, Nav Andromeda and BBG Forever left the port on today morning, while another containers ship Clemens Schulte is expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 115,048 tonnes, comprising 101,567 tonnes imports cargo and 13,481 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,017 Containers (1,224 TEUs Imports and 793 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Seaways Huron, Sea Affluence and Clemens & two more ships, Myny and SLL Mumbai carrying Mogas, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at Oil Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Friday, while three more container ships, Maersk Chesapeake, Anil Gipsland and X-Press Salween are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Sunday, while another containers ship 'MSC Gina' is due to arrive on Sunday.

Cars' sale drops 43% in July-Sept

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of cars during the first three months of the current financial year 2023-24 has dropped by 43.92 percent as compared to the same months of last year, a recent data released by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA) said.

According to the data, as many as 16,021 cars were sold during the months under review as opposed to 28,571 units in the same months of last year.

The breakup figures showed that 1,860 units of Honda Civic and City were sold during July-September 2023-24 as compared to the sale of 5,045 units during July-September 2022-23.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars sales also declined by 49.55 percent as it went down to 3,236 units from 6,415 units in the previous year. Suzuki Swift's sales also decreased by 40.40 percent as its sales went down to 1,261 units from 2,116 units last year.

Sale of Suzuki Cultus declined to 814 units during the first three months of the current year, whereas during the same months last year, the sale was recorded at 1,823 units while the sale of Suzuki WagonR also decreased to 963 units from 1,413 units last year.

Suzuki Alto's sales also witnessed a sharp decline of 27.17 percent from 9,283 units to 6,760 units during the current year, whereas the sales of Suzuki Bolan decreased to 541 units as opposed to sales of 1,189 units in the same month of last year.

Oversight Board on post-flood 4RF activities

Planning Minister chairs 2nd meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Friday chaired the 2nd meeting of Policy & Strategy Committee/Oversight Board on post-flood Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) activities.

This meeting was attended by high officials including the Gilgit-Baltistan Minister for Planning, Secretary of Planning, Secretary of Economic Affairs Division, GB Chief Secretary, the World Bank Country Director, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director, European Union Islamabad Country Director, UNDP Deputy Resident Director and representatives from National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a news release said.

Additionally, Chief Minister Baluchistan and Secretaries from all provinces actively participated via video conference.

The meeting addressed several significant aspects of the 4RF projects, focusing on streamlining project implementation and evaluating the status of approved projects from provinces.

Secretary Planning Awas Manzoor Sumra provided a comprehensive overview of the progress, emphasizing the importance of fast-tracking implementation and financing arrangements under the 4RF initiatives.

Planning Minister Muhammad Sami Saeed highlighted the government's commitment to supporting and facilitating donor agencies throughout the implementation and completion of these important projects.

He urged all relevant institutions to ensure that pending PC-1s of the 4RF projects were promptly approved.

During the meeting, donor agencies commended the Ministry of Planning for its diligent oversight and monitoring of 4RF projects and their execution.

Furthermore, they expressed their commitment to continue providing support for these projects in the future. The second meeting of the Oversight Board signifies a step towards building post-flood resilience, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

The government's dedication, along with the ongoing support of donor agencies, underscores the collective commitment to the well-being and sustainable development of the affected regions.

UK approves Microsoft's Activision acquisition

LONDON (AFP/APP): British regulators on Friday approved Microsoft's \$69-billion takeover of Activision Blizzard, maker of the "Call of Duty" video game, paving the way for one of the biggest technology tie-ups.

The Competition and Markets Authority said in a statement that it had cleared "the new deal for Microsoft to buy Activision without cloud gaming rights" after concluding "it would preserve competitive prices and better services".

Microsoft launched its blockbuster takeover in January last year, an acquisition that would make it the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue, but it faced stiff scrutiny from regulators, including also in the United States.

The CMA blocked the deal in April over fears it would damage competition in the fast-growing cloud gaming sector, where

games are bought virtually and players can use a variety of devices rather than just consoles.

But it dropped those objections last month ahead of its final approval.

"We're grateful for the CMA's thorough review and decision today," Microsoft vice chair and president Brad Smith said Friday.

"We have now crossed the final regulatory hurdle to close this acquisition, which we believe will benefit players and the gaming industry worldwide."

Microsoft, which makes the Xbox console and already has a stable of games under its belt including "Minecraft", "Elder Scrolls" and "Fallout", is already the dominant player in the cloud-gaming world - its Game Pass service claims 25 million subscribers.

The original deal would have seen hugely popular Activision games including

"Call of Duty", "Overwatch" and "World of Warcraft" added to its cloud roster, which was too much for the UK regulator to stomach. Under the new deal, Microsoft has agreed it would not take control of the cloud portion of Activision's business, which will be transferred to French studio Ubisoft for 15 years.

Aside from the concerns over cloud gaming, regulators had also worried that the initial deal would have allowed Microsoft to make Activision's games exclusive to its Xbox.

Microsoft and Sony, which had previously tried to block the Activision deal, agreed in July to keep releasing "Call of Duty" on the PlayStation.

The European Union cleared the deal in May while the US antitrust regulator recently paused its attempt to block the buyout following a setback in court.

Turkish CG visits LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Consul General of Türkiye Durmus Bastug said here on Friday that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was a good step for both investors and countries as the embassy of Turkey was closely monitoring the activities of the SIFC and was hopeful that the initiative would produce good results.

He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry during a meeting with LCCI President Kashif Anwar.

The consul general said that the SIFC initiative would bring new investment and also help in resolving the issues being faced by investors in the country. He said that Türkiye was aware of the potential of Pakistan as the investors of Türkiye had invested around \$2 billion in Pakistan and half of its investments was in Punjab which would hopefully rise to \$5 billion.

"We want to solve the problems being faced by the investors," said Durmus Bastug, adding that "we are monitoring the PTA with Pakistan and will move to the second phase which is FTA after results of PTA".

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, while appreciating the SIFC, said "we are really keen to take a reasonable share in the overall trade of Türkiye. The global exports of Türkiye were around 225 billion dollars while total imports were nearly 271 billion dollars in 2021. Taking the latest bilateral trade figures in consideration, we come to know that the share of Pakistan in total trade of Türkiye is just 0.25 percent."

LCCI President believed that there are multiple Pakistani sectors where both countries can enhance economic cooperation, especially the pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan secondly the sectors identified in SIFC, which are ideal for joint ventures between the two sides.

Rupee gains 96 paise against US dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed the 27th consecutive recovery session as it gained 96 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.62 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.58.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs275.9 and Rs278 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.85 to close at Rs 293.08 against the last day's closing of Rs 295.93, according to the

State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost one paise to close at Rs1.85, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.43 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs339.19 as compared to the last closing of Rs342.62.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 26 and 25 paise to close at Rs75.58 and Rs74.01 respectively.

Gold decline by Rs.100 to Rs.197,100 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.100 and was sold at Rs. 197,100 on Friday com-

pared to its sale at Rs.197,200 the previous day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.89 to Rs.168,981 from Rs. 169,070 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold down up to Rs.154,900 from Rs.154,978, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,500 and Rs.2,143.34 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$1,892 from \$1,885, the Association reported.

ICCI for promoting domestic commerce

ISLAMABAD (APP): The business community on Friday urged the government to focus on promoting domestic commerce that would stimulate economic activities, enhance exports, and stabilize the economy.

Faad Waheed, Acting President ICCI while addressing a seminar on "The State of Domestic Commerce in Pakistan" organized in collaboration with the Policy Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), said that domestic commerce is an important segment, that provides employment to 40 percent of the non-agricultural workforce, but the development of domestic commerce and domestic markets has been neglected in the policy-making even though it contributes significantly to the GDP.

He urged the government to improve the infrastructure for domestic commerce in wholesale and retail sectors and focus on developing a network of business centers, markets, and shop-

ping malls to make Pakistan a thriving economy.

He lauded the initiative of PIDE for developing a research study on The State of Domestic Commerce in Pakistan and hoped that the government would benefit from this study report to bring needed policy reforms for the promotion of this sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Nadeem ul Haq, Vice Chancellor, PIDE highlighted the too many regulations, complicated documentation & registration processes, complexity and multiplicity of taxes, high cost of compliance, fear of penalties, and difficulty accessing formal finance to businesses as the main hurdles in the growth of domestic commerce and stressed that the government should address these issues to promote this important sector of the economy.

He said that there are 120 regulatory authorities in the federal government alone and stressed that the

government should simplify the regulatory regime with an aim to facilitate the better growth of domestic commerce.

Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the government should give better focus to the promotion of domestic commerce that will provide Pakistan a strong platform for international trade as it encompasses wide-ranging sectors and sub-sectors of the economy including transport, storage, communication, wholesale & retail trade, construction, entertainment, tourism, real estate and domestic marketing etc.

He said that strengthening these areas would help bail out Pakistan's declining economy and put it on sustainable growth.

Omer Siddique, Senior Research Economic PIDE gave a detailed presentation on The State of Domestic Commerce in Pakistan with necessary remedial measures to make it a vibrant segment of the economy.



In brief

National Hockey C'ship

ISLAMABAD. (APP): Mari Petroleum, Police, Pakistan Rangers and Pakistan Air Force earned victories in the AWT 67th National Hockey Championship at Mari Petroleum Hockey Ground, Rawalpindi on Friday. In the first match of the day, Mari Petroleum beat Gilgit-Baltistan in a one-sided affair by 15-0. Arshad led the charge for Mari Petroleum with 4 goals, followed by Sufyan with 3, and Amir Sattar and Hasher Ali with 2 goals each. Ali and Rahman Butt also contributed a goal apiece. The match was officiated by umpires Afsar Ali Shahzib and Zahid Hamid. In the second match, Pakistan Police defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 3-2. Zahid Khan scored twice and Jameel Bostan added another goal for the police, while Shahbaz and Waqaz scored one goal each for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Umpires Yaser Khurshid, Anwar Hussain, and Wajhat Jangoo supervised the match. In the third match, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa B lost to Pakistan Rangers by 0-7. Tauseef Iqbal's brace, along with single goals from Salman Dawood, Zishan Ahmed, and Shehroz, propelled Pakistan Rangers to victory. Umpires Muhammad Bilal, Fahad Ali Khan, and Wasim Abbas officiated the match. The fourth match of the day saw Pakistan Air Force out-play Sindh B by 8-0. Umpires Muhammad Salim Abdul Sattar and Asad Abbas supervised the match.

Pakistan winning ICC CWC final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Asian Bradman Zaheer Abbas has predicted that Pakistan would win the final of the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, if Green-shirts outplay India in Saturday's encounter of the mega tournament. Abbas, who was awarded the Pride of Performance Award in 1971, believes the team which would control it's nerves in the game will win the Pakistan-India match. "The world awaits to witness the Pakistan-India World Cup encounter and both teams are playing very well in the tournament, but the team which will control its nerves in the game will win," he said while talking in APP's live ICC World Cup 2023 transmission. Pakistan downed The Netherlands by 81 runs in their opener of the World Cup while beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in the second game. Abbas, who was inducted in ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2020, said he hopes Pakistan plays well on the day and win the game. "I hope and pray Pakistan wins the game against India," he said. Speaking about Skipper Babar Azam, who didn't performed well in the last two matches against Netherlands (scored 5 runs) and Sri Lanka (scored 10 runs), he said he hoped Babar would perform very well in the game against India. "This is the right time for him to prove his mettle and show the whole world that he's a big game's player," he said. Abbas, who became ICC president in 2015 (the third cricketer after Colin Cowdrey and Clyde Walcott, to hold the post), said Pakistan would win the final if it gets passed through India by a thumping victory on Saturday. "Pakistanis batters play spinners very well. I fell the ball will come late on the bat on that pitch as India will try to make a turning wicket. Sometimes it does not spin on the first day but it depends on the wicket of how they make it," he said.



CHENNAI: Towhid Hridoy became Trent Boult's 200th scalp in ODIs.

Williamson stars on return as New Zealand beat Bangladesh

CHENNAI (Agencies): Kane Williamson retired hurt after hitting a fine 78 on his return as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in Chennai. After seven months out with a knee injury, the Black Caps skipper started slowly but soon found his rhythm before a blow to the thumb forced him off.

Daryl Mitchell struck an unbeaten 89 to lead New Zealand past their target of 246 with 7.1 overs to spare.

A third win in as many games takes the Kiwis back to the top of the group. But they will hope the injury to Williamson, suffered when he was hit by a throw as he ran through for a quick single, does not prove too serious.

Despite that worry, this was another strong all-round performance, with the bowling attack quickly putting Bangladesh under pressure. Lockie Ferguson took 3-49 and Trent Boult claimed his 200th one-day international wicket before the Black Caps batters put on another clinical display.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh stay sixth after a second loss in three games and

also have fitness concerns over their captain, with Shakib Al Hasan limping off before the end. The all-rounder appeared to sustain the leg injury while batting as he and Mushfiquur Rahim shared a stand of 96 to lead a recovery from 56-4.

However, once they departed, the momentum was lost again and Bangladesh were unable to claw their way to a total that would challenge New Zealand.

Injury concern for Williamson after classy comeback

When Williamson suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury in the first game of the Indian Premier League in March, many doubted whether he would feature at all at this World Cup.

However, the 33-year-old has worked his way back to fitness and, after scoring just one from his first 16 balls as he battled through some probing new-ball bowling from Bangladesh, his trademark deft touch and elegance began to shine through.

An 81-ball half-century is his joint-slowest in ODIs but, with a relatively low total to chase,

Williamson had the opportunity to gain some valuable time in the middle and regain some sharpness. There were signs he is still not quite 100% fit as he grimaced when having to stop quickly while running. But otherwise his return from such a serious injury was going as well as it could be, the right-hander looking in control as he started to go through the gears.

That was until he called for a quick single and was struck on the hand by a shy at the stumps. He tried to continue but, when the pain persisted, with the game all but won, the sensible decision was made and he headed off. New Zealand will now nervously await the results of an x-ray because, for as well as they have started the tournament without him, just this one knock from Williamson shows the poise and the class they lose when he is not there.

'It got a bit fat and colourful' - reaction

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson: "[My thumb] got a bit fat and colourful straight away, which made holding the bat difficult. I'll have a scan and hopefully it's OK."

Zaka Ashraf meets Pakistan team ahead of India match

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman met with the Green Shirts and conveyed his best wishes to the team ahead of their much-anticipated match against arch-rivals India on Saturday (tomorrow).

The two sides are set to lock horns for their eighth World Cup match at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi stadium.

In the meeting, Ashraf motivated the national side and conveyed the nation's wishes for the team ahead of tomorrow's match.

"Everyone back home prays for you [team], said the chairman. Meanwhile, skipper Babar Azam reaffirmed that everyone on the team is focused on performing well in the mega event.

Separately, the PCB Management Committee chairman will also attend a dinner hosted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) which will be attended by all BCCI officials and senior Indian government officials.

It is pertinent to know that Ashraf has travelled to India in response to the BCCI's invitation

On the other hand, the Men in Green had their second practice session today at the Narendra Modi Stadium.



AHMEDABAD: Pakistan's cricketers attend a practice session ahead of their ICC Cricket World Cup match against India in Ahmedabad, India.

'Records meant to be broken': Skipper Babar Azam shrugs off India's World Cup stranglehold

AHMEDABAD (Agencies): Defiant Pakistan captain Babar Azam declared Friday that "records are meant to be broken" as his team looks to break free of India's World Cup stranglehold when the bitter rivals clash on Saturday.

India boast a 7-0 record over their neighbors in World Cups despite Pakistan having a healthy 73-56 overall advantage since their first one-day international clash back in 1978.

"I don't focus on the past," said Azam on Friday. "Let's focus on the thing to come as we know records are meant to be broken."

"We will try to play well and it all depends on how you play on the day, just like we did in the first two matches," added the skipper whose side have two wins from two at the World Cup after seeing off the Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Azam said he has told his players that Saturday's clash inside the 132,000-capacity Ahmedabad stadium is a "golden opportunity" to write their names into World Cup folklore.

"The India-Pakistan match is a big game, high intensity. Every such game is challenging," added Azam, a survivor of the 2019 World Cup clash in Manchester which India won by 89 runs.



"I have told (the players) it's the best opportunity to perform. It is a big stadium that can accommodate many fans, it's a golden opportunity for us to perform in front of these fans." Under Azam, Pakistan broke a Twenty20 World Cup sequence of five defeats (from 2007 to 2016) against India with a 10-wicket rout at Dubai in 2021.

"Didn't we break the Twenty20 record? I am not worried about the past."

Azam also shrugged off the prospect of having virtually all of the 132,000 spectators screaming support for India with no Pakistan fans having been successful in securing visas to cross the border.

"It's not pressure," said Azam. "We have played at big stadiums like at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground). But, yes, all the support, I think, in Ahmedabad

will be for India. It would have been better had Pakistan fans been allowed. "But I expect fans will also support us as well."

Pakistan fans from around the world have faced visa glitches due to strained relations between the two countries, who have not played a bilateral cricket series since 2007.

Pakistan did tour India for limited-over matches in 2012 but that did not revive full tours which stalled in the wake of the Mumbai attacks in 2008.

Azam admitted conditions in Ahmedabad are different from those at Hyderabad where Pakistan played two warm-up matches and their first two World Cup games.

"Yes, the conditions here are different," said Azam whose team beat the Netherlands by 81 runs and Sri Lanka by six wickets.

"You are better off at a venue where you have spent a few days but we will adapt."

Azam admitted Pakistan will look for wickets from pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi who has yet to fully fire at the tournament.

Shaheen has just two wickets from two matches at a cost of 113 runs.

"He is our main bowler. Shaheen himself has a belief that he is a big match bowler," said the captain.

Pakistan target ending World Cup jinx against India

A H M E D A B A D (Agencies): Buoyed by a record run chase, Babar Azam's Pakistan are on the hunt for their first ever World Cup win over India in Saturday's blockbuster match between cricket's biggest rivals in a 132,000-capacity arena patrolled by 11,000 police officers.

India and Pakistan are bitter adversaries and only play against each other in international tournaments due to longstanding political tensions.

Any meeting between them always raises fan interest with millions watching around the globe in a bonanza for broadcasters and sponsors.

Fans desperate to watch the match have even booked beds in city hospital wards after hotels ran out of rooms.

By signing up for health check-ups and overnight stays in private hospitals, the accommodation has proved a cheaper option with some hotels hiking rates by as much as 10 times.

Both teams remain unbeaten coming into the match at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, named for the Indian prime minister.

This is Pakistan's first match after their record World Cup chase of 345 against Sri Lanka, with wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan scoring an unbeaten 131 and Abdullah Shafique making 113.

"We now have momentum," Rizwan said after

his man of the match show in Hyderabad. "But they will also come with a plan, we will also come with a plan."

Pakistan boast a fiery bowling attack led by left-arm quick Shaheen Shah Afridi but they still conceded 344 runs to Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

Security concerns saw the match brought forward a day from its original date, which coincided with a major Hindu festival in the city.

Authorities are deploying 11,000 police officers to keep order — around one for every 11 spectators in the event of a full house.

The match is sold out with media reporting that scalpers are asking for eight times the original price for tickets.

India came into the World Cup as the top-ranked ODI team and lived up to the billing of tournament favorites with a six-wicket win over five-time winners Australia.

They are fresh from their eight-wicket thrashing of Afghanistan after skipper Rohit Sharma smashed a record seventh World Cup century on Wednesday.

But Rohit played down the hype around the tournament's most anticipated fixture. "For us it's crucial that we don't worry about external factors and just look at things we can control," Rohit said after his blistering 131 in New Delhi.

"We just need to show up and do well. Things like what the pitch is like, what combo we can play is what we can control. What happens outside, we won't be worried about it."

Top-ranked ODI batsman Azam is yet to fire and has scores of five and 10 in Pakistan's two victories.

Pakistan have never won against India in the World Cup in their seven outings since 1992.

Their previous loss was by 89 runs in a rain-hit league match of the 2019 edition in Manchester.

India remain behind in their overall ODI head-to-heads against Pakistan with 56 wins and 73 losses but have clearly been the stronger team in recent meetings.

Rohit's men hammered Pakistan by 228 runs in their Asia Cup Super-Four clash last month and went on to win the regional tournament.

Top Indian batsmen have been among the runs in the two victories at the World Cup so far with Virat Kohli hitting 85 and KL Rahul an unbeaten 97 against Australia.

Kohli then made an undefeated 55 in the win over Afghanistan.

Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah's 4-39 on Wednesday gave the Indian bowling unit a boost ahead of Saturday's match.

Journalists from Pakistan have arrived in India for the match after delays in their visa approvals saw them miss the team's opening two games.

As crowded as it gets at the Cricket World Cup: India vs Pakistan before 100,000-plus spectators

AHMEDABAD (Agencies): Tens of millions of sports fans in South Asia will have their eyes and ears focused on one thing on Saturday — the much-anticipated Cricket World Cup match between host India and archrival Pakistan.

Political reasons constantly obstruct their bilateral series. The quarrelling neighbors haven't met in a test series in 16 years and one-day international and Twenty20 series in 10 years. As recently as last month at the Asia Cup, India refused to go to host Pakistan, so Pakistan accommodated by sharing hosting duties with Sri Lanka. When the teams usually meet at world championships, whether its the pressure or not, their games often fail to rise to

the occasion.

Pakistan has never beaten India at the Cricket World Cup. Even when Pakistan won its only title in 1992 it lost to India in Sydney. The trend continued in 1996, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The 7-0 scoreline is a huge topic of contention among the rival fans. Pakistan broke the streak in T20 World Cups in 2021 by dishing out a 10-wicket beating.

Pakistan is in India for the first time since the 2016 T20 World Cup and it took high-level intervention this week for Pakistan journalists and supporters to be allowed to travel to India for the round-robin match at the 134,000-capacity Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Dismal spectator attendance and poor organization have been major talking points of the tournament which started only eight days ago. India hasn't had a problem drawing crowds, but Indian locals have stayed away in droves from the other games. Mere hundreds were in the giant Narendra Modi Stadium for the opening match between England and New Zealand.

India and Pakistan have raised expectations for Saturday by winning their first two games.

India defeated five-time champion Australia by six wickets in Chennai and Afghanistan by eight wickets in New Delhi. It was a dominant batting display headlined by skipper Rohit Sharma's record-

extending seventh Cricket World Cup century. Pakistan played its opening fixtures in Hyderabad, beating the Netherlands by 81 runs and Sri Lanka by six wickets, thanks to a record batting chase under lights.

"I will be playing my first ODI at my home ground, which really excites me," India pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah said. "The atmosphere is going to be exciting — there are a lot of people expected to come in. It is going to be a sight to see. We are hoping to play our best there." India opener Shubman Gill, sidelined so far by dengue fever, has rejoined the team in Ahmedabad but is still expected to miss the Pakistan game. Ishan Kishan should continue

to open the batting with

Sharma. India will also toy with the idea of bringing back off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. Bowling allrounder Shardul Thakur played against Afghanistan but the Ahmedabad pitch will be on the slower side in comparison with New Delhi's batting beauty. It again makes a case for Ashwin, who returned 1-34 in 10 overs against Australia at Chennai.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's batting change against Sri Lanka worked wonders, with Abdullah Shafique scoring a fine hundred on his Cricket World Cup debut. It consigns out-of-form Fakhar Zaman to the bench at least in the short term, while also adding

strength to the batting lineup that is so dependent on captain Babar Azam and Mohammed Rizwan.

While Rizwan's century won the day against Sri Lanka, Azam has yet to fire. He's scored 5 and 10 and has faced only 33 balls in total. Azam has an ordinary record against India — in seven ODIs he has managed only 168 runs at an average of 28, without crossing 50 once.

"Going to Ahmedabad, we have momentum from these two wins (against the Netherlands and Sri Lanka)," Rizwan said after his match-winning 131 in the second game. "We have plans against India. They will also have plans against us. It should be exciting."



In brief

Police arrest 3 street criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Friday arrested three street criminals and recovered Rs 100,000 cash, two snatched and four stolen motorcycles, mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Dhamial police arrested three members of a gang, wanted in various cases. Police recovered Rs 100,000, two snatched and four stolen motorcycles, weapons, mobile phones and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Nabeel Khokhar appreciated the police team and directed them to accelerate operations against street criminals and other lawbreakers.

CPO pays surprise visits to police stations

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani has paid surprise visits to the City, Gungmandi, Rattaamral and Pirwadhai Police Stations and inspected front desks, records, lockups, and buildings of the police stations. The CPO instructed the Police officers to perform their duties diligently and make all-out efforts to net the criminals. "Prime responsibility of police is to control crime," he said and directed the Station House Officers to formulate effective strategy to make police patrolling more effective. The CPO directed the police officers to improve service delivery at the police station level. Ongoing operations against proclaimed offenders, court absconders, drug peddlers and other lawbreakers should be accelerated. He ordered the officials to take effective measures to facilitate the public besides taking all possible steps to provide relief to the citizens. The CPO said that negligence on the part of the police officials in public service delivery would not be tolerated, adding that all-out efforts should be made to resolve complaints of the citizens at the police station level. He directed the police officers to protect the lives and property of the citizens and accelerate ongoing operations against criminals. He said, delay in registration of FIRs would not be tolerated.

Imtiaz Ali Taj remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned writer, researcher and playwright Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj was remembered Friday on the occasion of his birth anniversary. Born in Lahore on October 13, 1900 in a family of artists and literary scholars, his father Syed Mumtaz Ali was a writer, journalist and religious scholar. His father had started an educational magazine for children Phool which became a household name, running successfully for over forty years. Imtiaz Ali Taj took over the magazine as editor, catapulting it to newer heights after his father's death in 1935. Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj is remembered above all for his 1922 play Anarkali, based on the life of "Anarkali", which was staged hundreds of times and was adapted for feature films including the Indian film Mughal-e-Azam. "Chacha Chakan" was a hilarious comedy of plays for children with themes of satire and humour. "Chacha Chakan" is considered the funniest character in Urdu drama. Imtiaz Ali Taj also wrote short stories, novels, and screenplays. He also remained active in the theatre both as an actor and a director.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of France HE Nicolas Galey called on Federal Minister for Privatization Fawad Hasan Fawad.

Health minister meets Iranian counterpart

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan on Friday met Minister of Health Iran Dr. Bahram Eynollahi on the sidelines of 70th Session of the WHO's Regional Committee for Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo.

Dr. Nadeem Jan stated that historical relations between Pakistan and Iran were bound

by common faith, history and culture. The leadership and people of Iran and Pakistan enjoy cordial relations.

The minister of Iran stated that Iran not only view Pakistan as a neighbouring but also as a brotherly country. The two ministers discussed the new challenges for the health sector and identified way forward to respond such challenges for the betterment of residents of the two countries

and the region.

It was agreed to make joint efforts for ensuring better healthcare through adoption of best practices in each country.

The minister invited his Iranian counterpart to attend Global Health Security Summit at Islamabad this December. The Iranian Health Minister extended an invitation to Dr. Nadeem Jan to visit Iran at a convenient date.

Ethiopia, Pakistan for formation of joint working group on education cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and Pakistan have agreed on the formation of a Joint Working Group (JWG) in order to pursue and coordinate collaboration between the two countries in the education sector.

The formation of JWG on education collaboration came under discussion during a meeting between Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDRE to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula and Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi.

During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation in the education sector especially in areas of higher education and vocational training. On the occasion, the Minister said that a Joint Working Group

would be formulated which could pave the way for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries.

Madad Ali Sindhi emphasized the importance of exchanging expertise and knowledge in the field of Vocational and Technical Training, highlighting the immense benefits that both countries could derive from each other's experiences.

Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula welcomed the idea of the formation of a Joint Working Group and stressed the need for exchanging experts' delegations for advancing the cooperation in the education sector. He said his country was keen to boost bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the education sector and would make all-out efforts in this regard.

The Ambassador also requested the minister to

provide scholarships to Ethiopian students in Pakistan's public sector universities. There is a strong connection between the people of Ethiopia and Pakistan, he said while recalling 2022 floods in Pakistan when the Ethiopian doctors, who studied from Pakistani universities, expressed their readiness to support their brothers and sisters in the trying times.

Furthermore, the ambassador invited the minister to visit Ethiopia which was not only the land of origins but also the land of Hazrat Bilal Habashi and King Nejashi. The Federal Minister thanked the Ambassador and highlighted the cordial and friendly relations between the two countries that are deeply rooted in shared history and values including justice, peace and global development on equal grounds.

Dr. Qibla condemns Israel's expansionist policies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz and its members on Friday strongly condemned Israel's expansionist policies, as they were using the recent conflict to further their reprehensible colonial objectives.

He, in a statement, said last week's attacks on Gaza by Israel had blatantly violated international laws, targeting civilian populations, including children, elderly and women.

Dr. Qibla emphasized that the Pakistani people stood in solidarity with

the Palestinian resistance movement, and the founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's policy regarding Palestine was still considered relevant by the Pakistani people.

Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz said it was imperative for the world to understand that Israel had been occupying Palestine aggressively for nearly 75 years, depriving Palestinians of their rights and disregarding international laws and United Nations resolutions.

He said the council asserted that a viable solution to this issue was impossible without the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

He called for an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to initiate effective diplomatic actions.

These actions should not only prevent aggression by Israel but also make earnest efforts to establish an independent Palestinian state, with Al-Quds as its capital, based on clear and just policies, he maintained.

ANF seizes 88 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 88 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 15.6 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on M-1 Motorway Islamabad. The recovered charras was concealed in secret cavities of the car. During the operation, weapons were also recovered from two accused residents of Charsadda.

In another operation, ANF arrested an accused along with a woman riding a bike near Sangjani Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the operation, drugs weighing 2.2 kg hashish, 500 grams opium and one kg

motorcycle were recovered.

In third operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, 87 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a passenger. The accused, resident of Khyber, was leaving for Qatar by flight number QR-601.

In fourth operation, ANF conducted a raid in Jamrud Khyber area and arrested two accused residents of Khyber along with weapons. 5 kg heroin, 200 grams Ice and 50 narcotic (ecstasy) tablets were recovered from the house of the arrested accused. In an operation conducted in Quetta, 62 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a pick-up vehicle. Cases have been registered against all the accused under Anti-Narcotics Act while further investigations are under process.

PUC observes 'Palestine Solidarity Day' across nation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Friday observed 'Palestine Solidarity Day' across the nation expressing unity with the oppressed Palestinians and offering special prayers in Friday sermons.

The PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with other prominent religious leaders, spoke out in support of Palestine.

They highlighted the critical juncture in the Palestinian issue and called on Muslim leaders to play their role immediately.

Addressing the issue of human rights, PUC Chairman Ashrafi deplored the silence on the mass killings of the oppressed Palestinians.

He emphasized that for decades, Israel had been subjecting innocent civilians, hospitals, schools, and ambulances to its ruthless aggression. Notably, he said the United States, India, the United Kingdom, and other Western nations remained silent in the face of Israeli brutality, disregarding the principles of human rights.

He called for swift action from the Muslim leaders to halt Israel's aggression stressing that at this moment, the entire Muslim world stood with their oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters.

He appreciated the unwavering efforts and stance of the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, and other Muslim-majority countries. He urged the Kingdom to take a leadership role in resolving the Palestinian and Kashmir issues expressing its pivotal position in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He stated that without the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state, no solution could be achieved, and the support of Saudi Arabia was crucial in this regard.

He announced an International Conference of Solidarity with Palestine scheduled to be held in Islamabad on October 18th, 2023, under the umbrella of PUC, where key discussions and plans

would be presented to work towards the recognition of a free and independent Palestinian state by the international community. Besides PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi (Lahore), the religious scholars and leaders included, Maulana Dr. Abu Bakr Siddique (Islamabad), Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid (Multan), Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid (Lahore), Maulana Asad Zakaria (Karachi), Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Ubaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahirul Hasan (Faisalabad), Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Hanif Usmani (Sahiwal), Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa (Dera Ghazi Khan), Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan (Rawalpindi), Maulana Abu Bakr Sabri, (Islamabad), Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahid, Maulana Abdul Malik Asif (Multan), Maulana Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Abdul Hakeem Athar, Qari Muhammad Aslam Qadri (Lahore), Maulana Muhammad Khurshid Nomani (Bahawalnagar), Maulana Abdullah Haqqani, Maulana Abdullah Rashidi (Kasur), Maulana Asim Shad, Maulana Abdul Waheed Farooqui (Narawal), Maulana Abu Bakr Hamza (Chakwal), Maulana Habibur Rahman Abid, Maulana Aminul Haq Ashrafi, Maulana Izharul Haque Khalid, Sahibzada Hamza, Tahir-ul-Hasan (Faisalabad), Maulana Saadullah Ludhianvi (Toba Tek Singh), Maulana Anis-ur-Rehman Baloch (Gujrat), Maulana Abdul Rasheed (Hafizabad), Mufti Muhammad Umar Farooq (Khanewal), Maulana Abdul Ghafar Shah Hijazi (Lodhran), Maulana Tanveer Ahmad (Bahawalpur), Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Makki, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pitafi (Muzaffargarh), Maulana Kaleemullah Muawiyah (Nankana), Maulana Azizur Rehman Muawiyah (Talagang), Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi (Rajapur), Maulana Saadullah, Shafiq (Rahim Yar Khan).

MoITT to introduce standardized quality test in universities: Dr. Saif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Dr. Umar Saif, has announced that his ministry will introduce a standardized quality test across universities in Pakistan to ensure job opportunities for fresh graduates.

In a statement, he said, "We have made significant decisions to revamp IT education in universities in collaboration with HEC, the National Computing Accreditation Council, the Examination Testing Council, the Pakistan Software Export Board,

and the Pakistan Software Houses Association."

Dr. Umar Saif emphasized that students who pass the test will be offered job opportunities through the Industry Placement Program. He added, "We will allocate funds to support special industry courses in universities, designed to prepare students for current industry trends and needs." The minister further explained that the National Computing Accreditation Council will consider the pass rate of students to determine a university's rating and the permissible enrollment of IT students. Dr. Umar Saif

stressed the importance of aligning educational institutions with industry requirements and facilitating industry-specific training.

He pointed out that each year, around 75,000 graduates enter the job market from educational institutions. However, he expressed concern that fewer than ten percent of IT graduates find employment in the IT industry, a situation the government aims to rectify. Dr. Umar Saif is determined to enhance job prospects for students and improve the alignment of education with industry demands.

Police implement state-of-the-art security measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have recently adopted a series of comprehensive security enhancements throughout the federal capital which would cover the entire city to ensure high vigilance. One of the key implementations is the deployment of a cutting-edge entry and exit system, strategically integrated into the High-Security Zone and various other key locations within the city.

The police spokesman said this advanced system had significantly bolstered security measures, leading to heightened efficacy in surveillance and management of critical areas within the capital. Integrated with data from multiple government agencies, the system enables real-time monitoring of individuals and vehicles, facilitating a proactive approach to fortifying the capital's security and promptly identifying any suspicious activities.

In the past month alone, the system has successfully verified the identities of 2,950 individuals frequenting various offices and regions, contributing to a cumulative total of 85,861 individuals verified to date.

Notably, this advanced technology has aided in the identification of 147 suspicious individuals, all of whom were promptly handed over to the appropriate authorities for necessary legal action. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan emphasized the paramount importance of safeguarding governmental institutions, diplomatic missions, offices, and residential areas within the High-Security Zone and the entire city. The protection of citizens' lives and properties and the maintenance of peace and security in Islamabad

remain central objectives for the Islamabad Capital Police.

Emphasizing the consistent efforts toward these goals, he highlighted the continuous utilization of cutting-edge technology and resources to strengthen security measures.

Moreover, the system has proven instrumental in the detection of unregistered and non-custom paid vehicles, leading to stringent legal measures against such violations. With a vision for expanded utility and effectiveness, plans are underway to integrate this system with other provinces, ensuring that unauthorized individuals or elements find no easy access to critical areas within the city. This proactive approach exemplifies the Islamabad Capital Police's unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of security and safety for all its residents.



ISLAMABAD: Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Mushaal Hussein Mullick visiting stalls during exhibition and a celebration of handicrafts by 600 plus Afghan women refugee artisans from all over Pakistan, hosted by the Indus Heritage Trust, supporting Afghan women for sustainable livelihoods.

Blast targets religious place

POL-E-KHOMRI (TOLNews): A blast has been heard in the Takiakhana Imam Zaman in Pol-e-Khomri, Baghlan province. The blast occurred during Friday prayers. The director of Baghlan Information and Culture department, Mustafa Hashemi confirmed that some people have been killed and injured in the blast. Hashemi did not provide further details regarding the type of blast and the exact number of casualties, saying that details will be shared after initial assessments.

Majority of women, kids killed

KABUL (Agencies): More than 90% of the people killed by a 6.3-magnitude earthquake in western Afghanistan last weekend were women and children, UN officials reported. Taliban officials said Saturday's earthquake killed more than 2,000 people of all ages and genders across Herat province. The epicenter was in Zenda Jan district, where 1,294 people died, 1,688 were injured and every home was destroyed, according to UN figures.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Moscow calls for inclusive govt in Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Russia's special representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has said that relations with Afghanistan should not be held hostage or obstructed by the issue of recognizing the Islamic Emirate.

In an interview Kabulov said that the recognition is important for any country that wants to develop normal relations with other members of global society, and the very pulse of life will motivate the IEA government to take the necessary steps in this direction.

Zamir Kabulov also said that Russia has no com-

plaints about the Islamic Emirate's foreign policy, and the Kremlin also approves the Islamic Emirate's fight against Daesh.

This Russian diplomat also said that Moscow's request does not mean that the Islamic Emirate should include the officials of the previous government in its administration.

"On domestic policy, we still have differences, as the president and the foreign minister have repeatedly said. We are more concerned about political inclusivity, rather than ethnic inclusivity, which the Taliban (IEA) insist on,

this does not mean that Russia insists on including fugitive Afghan statesmen in the Afghan leadership. They have already made their choice. Let the Afghan people draw their own conclusions about them," Kabulov said.

They envoy also added that non-Pashtun ethnic groups, which make up more than half of Afghanistan's population, should have the right to participate and vote in the government.

Disparities persist concerning large non-Pashtun ethnic groups in Afghanistan – Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and Turkmens – who are called a "minority" but collectively make up more than half of the Afghan population and should have the right to vote and participate in the country's governance, he said.

The Islamic Emirate has repeatedly emphasized on establishing good relations with all countries, but has said that it does not allow interference in internal affairs.

Afghan journalist injured

KABUL (Khaama Press): Media officials in Russia say that Ahmad Khaibar Akafi, an Afghan journalist living in Russia, has been severely injured due to an attack by an unmanned Ukrainian drone in Belgorod.

Margarita Simonyan, the head of the Russian television network (RT), wrote on her Telegram social media page: "Following the unmanned Ukrainian drone attack, Akafi is currently in a coma, an attack in which a four-year-old girl and her pregnant parents were killed," as cited by Voice of America.

She said that the 29-year-old reporter, who had been covering the earthquake in Herat for some time, had taken leave to visit his family who lived in Belgorod in western Russia. One of Akafi's relatives has confirmed this news, and his wife's condition is not a cause for concern.

Previously, Vyacheslav Gladkov, the region governor, had stated that three people, including a child, were killed due to the wreckage of an unmanned Ukrainian drone crashing into a house.

According to reports, the wreckage of this drone destroyed several houses upon impact. Authorities had previously reported the discovery of a man's and a woman's bodies under the rubble. They said another injured man and woman had been taken to the hospital.

The Russian Ministry of Defense has stated that the attack by an unmanned Ukrainian drone in the Belgorod region was thwarted.

However, the ministry has not provided information regarding casualties resulting from the incident, and whether these were separate incidents remains undisclosed.

Qatari and Afghan companies sign contracts

KABUL (TOLNews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) signed contracts for the Jabal Saraj Parwan cement plant with a Qatari company and two domestic companies worth more than \$200 million.

Speaking at the signing meeting, the acting Minister of Petroleum and Mines, Shahabuddin Delawar, said that this contract will last for 30 years and that one and a half million tons of cement will be produced annually from the cement plant.

"We will be self-sufficient in cement production in the next one or two years, and we may also export cement," Delawar said.

The acting Minister of Petroleum and Mines called investment in the country important for economic growth and development.

He said that in January 2024, 1,000 tons of oil will be extracted from the Qashgari mine.

"In January, our oil extraction will increase to 1,000 tons. Yesterday I saw the global price, one ton is \$709 dollars," Delawar said.



Meanwhile, the official said that with the implementation of this project, employment opportunities will be provided for five thousand people in Afghanistan.

"Our company had over ten months of negotiations with the Ministry of Mines, and we achieved an agreement. After signing this contract, we will start our operations in Afghanistan

as soon as feasible," said the head of the Qatari company.

In the meeting, an official of MCC China said they want to extract the Logar Mes Aynak copper in a practical way.

"We hope that the Mes Aynak copper project will proceed under the leadership of the minister, and we will see the day when the work of Mes Aynak copper

starts, and we will witness the same stage and development," said a representative of MCC company.

Earlier, the Deputy Ministry of Mines and Petroleum also gave a local firm the contract for the cement in Kandahar, and that company invested \$100 million in the project, which will have a production capacity of 1 million tons of cement annually.

Aid services in affected areas halted due to storm

HERAT (Agencies): Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) said that all humanitarian services program run in the earthquake-affected areas of Zinda Jan district of Herat province, have been halted due to the severe storm that began.

Additionally, the camp set up by Afghan Red Crescent for rescue, sanitation, and shelter purposes have been demolished, ARCS said.

"During the storm, Afghan Red Crescent has relocated 256 families affected by the earthquake from the Naib Rafi camp to the Babaji camp. Unfortunately, some Afghan Red Crescent employees were injured while rescuing individuals impacted by the heavy wind storm and been shifted to the hospital for medical treatment," ARCS said in X platform.

Thousands of people

have been left homeless, most of whom also lost all their belongings. Coupled with this is the loss of lives. So far over 2,400 people are confirmed dead while another 2,000 were injured.

This came after another 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit the same area early Wednesday. A further 140 people were injured in this quake. All of them are now being treated at the Herat Provincial Hospital.

Nangarhar youths collect 8 million Afghanis for earthquake victims



HERAT (Agencies): After the deadly earthquakes in Herat province, the process of collecting aid for the earthquake victims began in many provinces of the country, and in Nangarhar, this process was started by young volunteers.

After the three-day campaign, these young people have managed to collect eight million Afghanis in cash, as well as some

clothes and food.

"Fortunately, four million cash donations were made by the merchants of Nangarhar province, and with the cooperation and help of young people, nearly another four million Afghanis have been collected, and donations have been collected from the districts also," said Noor Mohammad Hanif, director of information and culture

in Nangarhar province.

A number of the young Nangarhari volunteers called by the government authorities to distribute the aid to the Herat earthquake victims in a transparent manner.

"Whenever natural disasters happen to our people and they need our help, we should not hesitate to provide any kind of help," said Sami, a resident of

Nangarhar province.

"Everyone has helped as much as they can in this campaign, even the children who work on the streets and earn a hundred or two hundred Afghanis a day have helped, women have also participated in this campaign," said Zakirullah, a resident of Nangarhar province.

Officials of the Nangarhar Information and Culture Directorate assured of the transparent distribution of the aid with a regular mechanism.

"We appreciate all those who have helped the earthquake victims from inside and outside the country, especially the youth of Nangarhar who worked hard for this campaign," said Noor Mohammad Hanif, the director of information and culture in Nangarhar province.

The impact of the disaster in Herat province is very big, so the victims need greater help because they have lost all their belongings.

Contracts for 53 mines worth \$7 billion signed, says Ministry

KABUL (TOLNews): Mining agreements for 53 mines worth \$7 billion this year have been signed with domestic and foreign companies, officials said.

According to officials in the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, memorandum of understandings have been signed in the field of mineral extraction for iron, lead and precious stones.

"A total of nine large-scale mines have been contracted and 44 small-scale mines. "Large mines are left to domestic and foreign companies and small mines to domestic companies only," said Hamayun Afghan, the spokesman of the ministry.

Afghan emphasized that the processing of raw materials in the country is a condition laid down by the Ministry of Mines and

Petroleum for all contracts. "In no way will the raw materials be exported from the country for processing," he said.

On the other hand, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that until Afghanistan becomes self-sufficient, 100% processing will not be possible in the country.

"We are trying to extract our mines in such a way that the process takes place in Afghanistan, but by the time we get to the process, we have to have 50 percent of the process here and then go abroad," said Yuunus Momand, First Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment. Some experts insist that mining should be done in a standard way.

"It is better that a commission be established in



this sector and at the head of the commission there should be professional people who are under the control of the Islamic Emirate," said Maiwand Samadi, an economic analyst.

"There are two important issues in mines: the first is how Afghanistan's mines are extracted, whether they are extracted

technically or professionally, or the former way that is non-technical, and non-technical ones whose losses were more than their benefits," said Abdul Nasir Rashtia, another analyst.

Most of the foreign companies that have won contracts for Afghan mines are from Iran, Turkey, China and the UK.

US provides \$12 million aid to Herat earthquake victims

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United States of America has allocated \$12 million in humanitarian aid for the earthquake victims in Herat. On Thursday, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced that it has allocated \$12 million in immediate humanitarian assistance for the earthquake victims in western Afghanistan.

"In response to the magnitude 6.3 earthquakes that struck northwestern Afghanistan on October 7 and October 11, the United

States, through the USAID, is providing \$12 million in immediate humanitarian assistance to meet the urgent needs of the affected people.

The devastating earthquakes have resulted in at least 1,295 deaths and injury to at least 1,800 people, according to the United Nations, and compound the country's ongoing humanitarian crisis," according to a statement released by reliefweb.

On the other hand, Thomas West, the Special Representative of the United States for Afghanistan, said on his social media platform X that the United States is providing \$12 million in immediate humanitarian aid to the earthquake victims in Western Afghanistan.

West added that this assistance will include essential resources such as clean drinking water, emergency shelter kits, cooking equipment, water storage, and blankets for the earthquake victims.

quake victims.

The Special Representative of the United States for Afghanistan expressed sympathy for the earthquake victims and emphasized that the United States stands firmly with the people of Afghanistan to help them through this crisis.

This comes as the global food program has referred to the recent earthquakes in Herat as a "disaster on top of disaster in Afghanistan" and has called on the international community to assist the earthquake victims.

World Food

Programme (WFP) reported that the earthquake-affected individuals in Herat are going hungry and spending the night in ruins.

Simultaneously, Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also wrote on the X network that increasing aid to the earthquake victims in Herat is essential.

He stated that these two powerful earthquakes have shaken the vulnerable western region of Afghanistan into a very fragile situation, leading to destruction and loss of life.



Garmser residents rail against scarce health services

L A S H K A R G A H (Pajhwok): Some residents of the Garmser district of southern Helmand province rail against what they call limited access to health services, but officials insist all inhabitants enjoy enough medical facilities.

Gul Agha, a resident of Saffar area, told Pajhwok News there were two health centers in their locality, but they were located at a distance of 20 kilometer.

He noted: "Ours is a vast and heavily populated dis-

trict, where clinics are situated away from population centres and in a place that isn't easily accessible for patients."

He pointed out: "Over 10,000 families are living in our area, whose inhabitants badly need five more well equipped health centres."

According to Agha, some residents of this area take their patients to the provincial capital Lashkargah or neighbouring Pakistan.

Lal Gul, another resident

of the same area, complained there was not even a single health centre in their locality, whose people faced problems.

Gul revealed: "An ailing young man recently passed away here because of the lack of health services."

But Dr. Abdul Zahir, head of vaccination department at the Binader health clinic, told Pajhwok: "The number of patients visiting this facility is very high... as the area is home to 19,000 families."

Turkiye delivers support to earthquake affected families in Herat

HERAT (Agencies): The Turkish consulate office in Herat said in a statement that Türkiye remains committed to helping families affected by the recent earthquakes in western Afghanistan.

The statement said that in response to the earthquake, Türkiye mobilized its resources, leveraging the capacities and personnel of its Consulate General in

Herat, along with other Turkish institutions and NGOs in Afghanistan.

The relief efforts began immediately, providing essential supplies, including tents, medical equipment, and food to those affected, the statement reported.

Turkiye's Charge d'Affaires in Kabul, Cenk Ünal, demonstrated a strong commitment to aid-

ing the region by being one of the first foreign diplomats to visit Herat on October 8.

His visit aimed to assess the situation on the ground and to oversee Türkiye's humanitarian assistance and relief operations in the area.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) Herat office swiftly initiated the distribution of

food parcels to earthquake victims on the second day following the disaster. To date, TIKA has distributed 2,000 parcels of essential provisions.

On October 9, a Turkish Air Force cargo plane arrived in Herat, carrying a Turkish search and rescue team, a field hospital, medical professionals, and necessary medical equipment. Two Turkish doctors joined the medical team at Herat Regional Hospital, immediately commencing the provision of critical healthcare services, according to the statement.

The Directorate for Disaster and Emergency Management of Türkiye (AFAD) contributed to the relief efforts by delivering 250 tents, 1,500 blankets, and medical supplies, including 79,168 boxes of medicine and 13,480 bottles of serum to local authorities.



Apex court ruling striking down amendments to NAB law challenged

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's September 15 ruling that struck down some amendments made to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO), 1999, was challenged on Friday.

In the wake of the top court's verdict upholding the Practice and Procedure Act 2023, Abdul Jabbar — through his counsel Farooq H Naek — filed a plea in the apex court, calling for setting aside the ruling on the NAB law.

The Supreme Court had in a majority decision of 10-5 on October 11, upheld the law formulated to regulate the affairs of the top court, but noted that although the right to appeal provided against a decision taken under Article 184(3) will not be applicable retrospectively, it will apply to those ruling which were issued after the law came into effect. The NAB amendments case was related to public importance; thus, it fell under the original jurisdiction of the superior court i.e. Article 184(3) of the Constitution.

Parliament passed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, in April, and the apex court struck down the amendments to the NAB law in September, allowing the right to appeal. In his petition, Jabbar stated that he had "condemned unheard" but mentioned that although he was not a party to the case earlier, the court had also not issued a notice to him in this regard.

The petitioner also said that the

court should exercise its jurisdiction under Article 184(3) "sparingly" and that the conditions precedent for the exercise of this original jurisdiction is "not fulfilled in this case". He claimed that the September 15 judgment was issued "without considering the fundamental principles of parliamentary democracy as well as laid down a principle for striking out legislation".

"The [...] judgment has declared the provisions of the amending Acts of the Parliament on the policy consideration and contrary to the 'will of the people' which the later scribed through the subject amendments," the petitioner read. Jabbar also mentioned that through the judgment, the court assumed the position of being a 'legislator' and 'policy maker', which is beyond the scope of powers of the Supreme Court under Article 184(3).

"The [...] order suffers from errors floating on the surface of the record and is liable to be reviewed," the petitioner added. Concluding the plea, Jabbar prayed that the top court set aside its September 15 ruling and provide "any other relief" that the superior court "deems fit and proper". A three-member bench of the Supreme Court in a majority 2-1 verdict had approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's petition challenging amendments made to the country's accountability laws during the tenure of the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government.

The three-member bench, headed

by CJP Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, held more than 50 hearings on PTI chief Khan's petition against the amendments and reserved the judgment on the hearing on September 5. In the majority verdict, the Supreme Court restored graft cases against public office holders that were closed down following the amendments.

The apex court ordered restoring all graft cases worth less than Rs500 million that were closed down against the political leaders belonging to different political parties and public office holders and declared the amendments void. Furthermore, the court directed the NAB to return all records related to cases to relevant courts within seven days. The verdict on Khan's appeal further added that the NAB amendments under question affected the rights of the public listed in the Constitution.

The verdict has some far-reaching consequences as the striking down of the amendments would mean that references against some of the country's political bigwigs will once again land in the accountability courts. These include the Toshakhana reference against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, along with the LNG reference against former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and the rental power reference against former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi conferring the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at a special ceremony.

Naval Chief decorated with award

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has conferred the insignia of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon newly-appointed Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

The President decorated the Naval Chief with the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) award in recognition of his meritorious services at a special ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad on Friday. Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, services chiefs and other senior officials attended the ceremony.

It may be mentioned here that Admiral Naveed Ashraf had taken charge as the 23rd Chief of the Pakistan Navy at a ceremony held in Islamabad on October 7 last. At the change of command ceremony, outgoing Naval Chief Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi handed over the command to the new Naval Chief.

In his farewell address, the outgoing naval chief had congratulated Admiral Naveed Ashraf for assuming command. He said the Admiral has a distinguished career, studied with notable achievements. He was confident that Admiral Naveed Ashraf will prove to be an able and worthy successor who will lead the Navy to new heights.

Amjad Khan Niazi had said Pakistan Navy stands as a strong and vital arm of the country's armed forces capable of protecting our maritime frontiers. He said Pakistan believes in collaboration when it comes to maritime security. New Naval Chief Naveed Ashraf got commission in the Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1989. He is a graduate of National Defence University Islamabad, US Naval War College and UK's Royal College of Defence Studies. Naveed Ashraf has vast experience of working in key command and staff positions.

ECP rebuts 13m ineligible voters charges

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) strongly refuted a news report that was replete with inaccuracies and false information, incorrectly suggesting that 13 million people won't be able to vote in the next general elections. ECP spokesperson said in a statement that the news report featured in Friday's edition of a local newspaper is saturated with inaccuracies and misinformation.

The spokesperson clarified that voters' registration was based on their permanent or current address as per their computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), and this process has no connection to population statistics. "A census requires a person's physical presence, whereas voter registration is based on the address specified on the CNIC with no connection to population statistics," he said. Additionally, the Election Commission has lifted the freeze on electoral rolls, effective from September 28, 2023, ensuring the registration of all eligible individuals. This freeze had been in place since July 20, 2017, under the provisions of Section 39 of the Elections Act, 2017.

Pak 'very comfortably' placed to meet IMF targets

Monitoring Desk

RABAT: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad on Friday assured investors that the country is "very comfortably placed to meet" International Monetary Fund's (IMF) targets for end-September, net international reserves (NIR) and net domestic assets (NDA).

The governor made the assurance during his meeting with key international investors during events organised by global banks, including Barclays, JP Morgan, Standard Bank, and Jefferies on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank meetings in Marrakech, Morocco. As per a State Bank press release, the investors were briefed about the recent macroeconomic developments, policy responses to current challenges, and the outlook of Pakistan's economy, and also answered their questions.

The governor informed the investors that the "current policy mix is geared" to achieve stabilisation by addressing the "macroeconomic imbalances". He stated that the SBP was among the first central banks that began to tighten monetary policy in the wake of the rising inflation globally. However, certain domestic challenges such as the 2022 floods had "complicated SBP's efforts to bring down inflation".

"Stabilisation measures have started yielding results. Inflation has come down to 31.4% in September 2023 after peaking at 38.0% in May 2023 and is expected to continue its downward trajectory over the coming months, whereas the external account has improved considerably and foreign exchange buffers are being built up," the governor was quoted. He added that the central bank expects inflation to "come down significantly during the second half of this fiscal year".

"Going forward, the Stand-By arrangement with the IMF is expected to support the ongoing policy efforts to stabilise the economy," said the governor. He stated that the "foreign exchange buffers are improving with both build-up in reserves and reduction in forward foreign exchange

liabilities".

He explained that since January 2023, SBP's foreign exchange reserves improved from a low of \$3.1 billion to \$7.6 billion as of the end of September 2023. The reserve build-up was largely supported by non-debt-creating inflows amid favourable market conditions. "At the same time, SBP's forward foreign exchange liabilities have declined and the forward book target of \$4.2 billion for end-September 2023 agreed with the IMF has already been met by a wide margin. Similarly, SBP is also very comfortably placed to meet the other end-September IMF targets, including Net International Reserves (NIR) and Net Domestic Assets (NDA)," said the governor.

The governor also informed the investors that Pakistan is "on-track to address the longstanding structural weaknesses", adding that with the support from multilateral and bilateral partners the country "would be able to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth" in the medium term. Last week, a brokerage firm report had stated that Pakistan was likely to receive the next tranche of the \$3 billion stand-by arrangement with the IMF even though it may miss a few deadlines.

Topline Securities said the country had met the targets for net international reserves, net domestic assets, and foreign currency swap/forward position as of the end of June 2023 but highlighted that Islamabad had missed the targets of the primary deficit, which measures the fiscal balance excluding interest payments, and for external public debt disbursements.

The report also said that Pakistan is yet to implement the gas price adjustment it had agreed with the global lender. The adjustment was a prior action for the completion of the second review of the program. Pakistan got the first installment from the IMF in the amount of \$1.2 billion in July after the Executive Board of the lender approved the bailout package to stabilise the country's economy.

No talks with TTP: PM

(Continued from Page 1)

Earlier, the prime minister also listened to the issues highlighted by the delegation members.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar reiterated that the government would in no way tolerate smuggling and corruption in the country and its ongoing efforts against the menaces were coming to the fruition.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters pertaining to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said the dollar's value had depreciated in the market consequent to the timely action by the government.

The prime minister, who also interacted with the media during the visit, told that the dollar depreciation had led to reduction of country's loans by Rs4,000 billion besides impacting the prices of petroleum products and eatables. Addressing the participants of the meeting, the prime minister said that support extended by the Pakistan Army in the efforts to curb smuggling and hoarding was laudable. The prime minister who was on his first visit to Peshawar after assuming the office, was briefed on the law and order situation as well as the financial issues confronting the province.

He said only the illegal foreign nationals were being expelled from the country, and directed the authorities to ensure that the registered foreign nationals faced no difficulties during the process. He instructed the relevant authorities to utilise all-out resources to improve the security and law and order situation and also emphasised the strengthening of KP Police and Counter Terrorism Department.

Appreciating the KP Police and administration's efforts against incidents of

terrorism, Prime Minister Kakar said no outfit or group would be allowed to pick up weapons and challenge the state's writ. He instructed to equip the KP Police with modern equipment to build its capacity against the challenge of terrorism, and assured the federal government's maximum support to the provincial government.

He said the armed forces and the police had rendered immense sacrifices against terrorism and the whole nation stood by them. Moreover, he said the federal and provincial governments were striving for the true implementation of the National Action Plan.

Besides assuring to resolve KP's financial issues, he told the meeting that a strategy would be formulated for the resolution of the problems faced by the province and merged districts. KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan, Caretaker provincial ministers Syed Masood Shah, Barrister Feroz Jamal, Justice (Retd) Irshad Qaiser, Ahmed Rasool Bangash, Asif Rafiq, Dr Najibullah, Dr Muhammad Qasim Jan, Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah, Syed Amir Abdullah, Engineer Amir Nadeem Durrani and Engineer Ahmed Jan, CM's advisors Dr Riaz Anwar and Dr Sarfaraz Ali Shah, Special Assistant to CM Zafarullah Khan, KP Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

PM offers fetea at graves of former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, martyred Sifat Ghayur: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar offered fetea and laid floral wreath at the grave of former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan here. He also offered fetea and laid floral wreath at the grave of former FC commandant, Shaheed Sifat Ghayur.

The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate ranks of their souls in paradise. On the occasion a contingent of frontier constabulary presented salute to Shaheed Sifat Ghayur. PM Kakar paying tributes to the martyred, commended his services for the nation and the country.

He said Shaheed Sifat Ghaur sacrificed his life for a great cause. "We are indebted to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of country's security", he added.

Governor, CM KP call on Kakar: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali and the Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

During the meeting, the prime minister was informed about law and order situation and other affairs of the province. The prime minister assured that federal government would ensure all possible cooperation for welfare of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PM pays tribute to KP Police sepoy Umar Saeed: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar paid tribute to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police constable Umar Saeed, who fought the terrorists bravely in the Hangu terrorist attack.

The prime minister felicitated the bravery of the Jawan belonging to Swabi who braved the firing during the Hangu attack. He also gave a reward of Rs 500,000 to Umar Saeed as encouragement. He said brave young men like Umar Saeed were safeguarding the nation like an iron wall. "Our police is always ready to thwart the nefarious efforts of anti-national elements." He said the police acted as a leaden wall against anti-national elements at every occasion even in the most difficult situations.

Cold wave likely to hit Pakistan from next week

E.P. Report

KARACHI: A cold wave will likely grip Pakistan next week under the impact of fresh rain and snowfall on mountains in parts of the country, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said in latest weather advisory. "A westerly system is likely to enter upper parts on 13th October (evening/night) and likely to spread upward/central parts on 14th (night)," a weather advisory issued by the Met Office stated.

The PMD forecast intermittent rain with wind thunderstorm in moderate isolated falls in the upper areas including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Malakand, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Swabi, Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Kurram, Kohat, Hangu, Orakzai, Bannu, Karak, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan from the evening of October 13 till 17. Moderate to isolated heavy falls are expected in Kashmir's Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur, and Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar areas of Gilgit Baltistan, during the same period.

Areas including Islamabad, Potohar region, Murree, Galiyat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Okara, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Sargodha, Khushab, Noorpurthal, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Kasur expected to witness similar weather conditions from October 13 to 17.

Snowfall over the high mountains of KP, Kashmir and GB and isolated hailstorms in the plains of KP during the forecast period are also expected. Meanwhile in Sindh and Balochistan, areas of Jacobabad, Kashmore, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Ghotki, Khairpur, Sanghar and Umerkot, and Sherani, Musa Khel, Zhob, Qilla Saifullah, Loralai, Barkhan, Kohlu, Sibbi, Bolan, Kalat, Harnai, Naseerabad, Dera Bugti, Jaffarabad, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, Quetta and Ziarat will receive rain with wind and thunderstorm on October 17 and 18.

Temperatures are likely to drop significantly. Moderate to heavy falls may increase water flows in local nullahs/streams and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galiyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra & Abbottabad during the spell. Heavy rain may generate urban flooding in Rawalpindi and Lahore on October 15 and 16. The Met Office also advised the farmers to manage their crop activities accordingly, while tourists and travellers were suggested to remain cautious during the forecast period.

Nawaz ended menace of terrorism: Shehbaz

E.P. Report

SHEIKHUPURA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Friday praised former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, saying the latter had ended the menace of terrorism. Addressing the public gathering in Sheikhupura, Shehbaz said: "During the tenure of Nawaz Sharif, the prices of sugar were Rs52 per kg and petrol was Rs105 per litre."

Nawaz Sharif recounted the ouster of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, saying, "Former president Gen Perviz Musharraf had toppled the government of Nawaz Sharif by enforcing the martial law." He credited Nawaz Sharif for addressing the issues in connection with the power outage, saying, "The country was witnessing 20-hour loadshedding. But due to the utter dedication of Nawaz Sharif, the issue of power outages was addressed successfully."

Earlier, PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's role will be vital in a bid to control the inflation in the country. Maryam Nawaz held a meeting with the

members of the union council of NA-134. On this occasion, matters in line with the preparations for welcoming Nawaz Sharif to the country were reviewed. "Only Nawaz Sharif came to meet the expectations of the masses. Nawaz Sharif is coming back to the country with the solution of reviving the country's economy," Maryam Nawaz added. She recounted the contributions made by the PML-N, spearheaded by Nawaz Sharif.

"When Nawaz Sharif was in power, the masses were provided with all the basic amenities of life like flour, ghee, and sugar," she added. Separately, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is returning to change the fate of the country. Addressing the workers convention in Rawalpindi, Tarar said: "The atmosphere here in Rawalpindi is no less than the festival. The city has always belonged to Rawalpindi. Nawaz Sharif will return to the country within a few days."

He recounted the tenure of Nawaz Sharif, saying, "The price of petrol was merely Rs100 per litre

when Nawaz Sharif left the power." Tarar took a dig at the opponents, saying, "Those who used to make big claims are now escaping." Moreover, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Musadik Malik vowed on Friday that his party will end poverty in the country. Addressing the workers' convention in Attock, Malik said, "We will welcome PML-N supremo with the great verve. It's time to erase the darkest chapters of history."

"It is our responsibility to serve the people. If we commit mistakes, then we will be answerable to the masses," Malik added. Furthermore, PML-N leader Chaudhry Tanvir rued, "Whenever the country leads to prosperity, it is harmed." Recalling Nawaz Sharif's ouster, he said, "Nawaz Sharif was disqualified for not taking salary from the son." He recounted the events that transpired on May 9, saying, "The nation demands the accountability of those who attacked the military installations. We could sacrifice our lives for the sake of the country's defence." "The PML-N workers love Nawaz Sharif. We want to see the same situation in the country as it was in 2017," Chaudhry Tanvir added.



ISLAMABAD: People holding placards during a protest against Israel attack on Gaza.

Nawaz performs Umrah

MECCA (Agencies): Former prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) chief Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's flight will land in Lahore at half past 12 on Oct 21. All arrangements to receive the politician have been made.

Sharif left the UK on Wednesday and reached Saudi Arabia where he performed Umrah. Hussain Nawaz, son of former premier, Nasir Janjua, Rashid Nasrullah and others also performed Umrah with Nawaz Sharif who landed Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Thursday night. Sources said that Nawaz Sharif would start important meetings with top Saudi officials including the Saudi royal family from Saturday. He

will then travel to Dubai.

According to details, the former premier will land at Lahore's Allama Iqbal Airport on October 21 (Saturday). "Ummeed-e-Pakistan" flight will take off from UAE at 8:30am and reach the provincial capital at 12:30pm. In this flight, more than 150 passengers will travel along with the PML-N leader including party members and journalists. The special flight will land in Islamabad from Dubai before proceeding to Lahore, where Nawaz will address the gathering arranged by his party faithful.

The former prime minister arrived in London nearly four years ago in November 2019 in an air ambulance to

seek medical treatment for multiple diseases after he was allowed to leave Pakistan by the Lahore High Court. He was accompanied by his brother Shehbaz Sharif and a personal physician as he was taken to his London residence at Avenfield apartments. Nawaz had arrived in London for a few weeks only and he has been getting regular medical check-ups at the Harley Street clinic. He decided not to return to Pakistan and initiated his speeches to party workers from London and has been conducting party affairs ever since from here. This is Nawaz's second exile term after first being deposed in a bloodless military coup in 1999.