

Shutter down in Balochistan

MASTUNG (INP): A shutter down strike was observed on Sunday throughout the province on the call given by the Etihad Ahl-e-Sunnat, Balochistan, against the Mastung tragedy. All markets and trade centres are closed in Quetta, Mastung, Ziarat, Kalat and other cities and towns of Balochistan. Rallies are being taken out to condemn the attack and offer Fateha for the victims.

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ANKARA: Members of Turkish Police Special Forces secure an area following an explosion near the Interior Ministry in Turkey.

Afghan embassy suspends operations in India

NEW DELHI (Agencies): More than two years after the Taliban took control of Kabul following the fall of the Western-backed government, the Afghan embassy in India officially shut down on Sunday. Most foreign nations, including India, do not recognise Afghanistan's Taliban-led government as the country's ruler, leaving many Afghan embassies and consulates across the world in limbo. Diplomats appointed by the former government refused to cede control of embassy buildings and property to Taliban representatives. "It is with profound sadness, regret, and disappointment that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi announces this decision to cease its operations," said an embassy statement posted on the social media platform X. India will take control of the embassy in a caretaker capacity, it said. The unsigned statement claimed that maintaining operations had become "increasingly challenging" due to staff and resource reductions, including a

"lack of timely and sufficient support from visa renewal for diplomats". The closure decision came as a result of rumours that the ambassador and other senior officials had just left India due to squabbling among those who remained in New Delhi. The embassy, however, asserted in its statement that it "categorically refutes any baseless claims regarding internal strife" among its employees and denied any diplomats were "using the crisis to seek asylum in a third country". In August 2021, New Delhi evacuated its entire mission from Kabul due to Taliban attacks but returned a small team last year to reopen its embassy. Most foreign nations withdrew diplomatic staff during this time and have not returned, but a few embassies, including Pakistan, China, and Russia, have ambassadors in Kabul. The Kabul power change left tens of thousands of Afghan students, businessmen, and medical tourists worldwide stranded. Most chose not to return, including Afghan army

cadet officers fearing persecution. Some have returned, with Taliban authorities promoting their faith in their leadership. The Taliban authorities have full control of around a dozen Afghan embassies abroad — including in Pakistan, China, Turkey and Iran. Others operate on a hybrid system, with the ambassador gone but embassy staff still carrying out routine consular work such as issuing visas and other documents, AFP reported. In January last year, Italian police were called to Afghanistan's Rome embassy after scuffles broke out when a junior diplomat claimed he had been appointed by the Taliban's leaders to take over from an ambassador loyal to the former government. Most senior Afghan foreign ministry officials are currently in Moscow attending a Russia-brokered conference on the country and were not available to comment on the closure of the embassy in New Delhi. There was no immediate response from India.

PM greets new Maldives President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday felicitated Dr Mohamed Muizzu on his victory in the Maldives Presidential elections. "Heartiest congratulations to Dr. Mohamed Muizzu on his victory in the presidential elections of Maldives. Look forward to working with him for further strengthening Pak-Maldives relations and regional cooperation," the prime minister said on X, formerly known as twitter. Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar conveyed his warmest felicitations to President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and the Chinese nation on the 74th National Day of the People's Republic of China. "Pakistan takes great pride in the achievements of our Iron Brother. In today's world, China is an anchor of peace & stability as well as the engine of development & progress. Long live Pak-China friendship," the prime minister posted on X.

Solangi greets China on national day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday congratulated the People's Republic of China on the occasion of its national day. Using a social media account on X, the minister said: "The people of Pakistan share the spirit of the festivities of the 74th National Day of the People's Republic of China." "We hope this year and many years ahead of us will reinforce our all-weather relationship and promote peace and progress for us and the world at large", he added.

Pakistan, S Arabia sign MoU

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to work together in the sector of information technology (IT), according to a report on Sunday. The MoU has been signed by caretaker Federal Minister of IT and Telecom Umar Saif and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdullah A Al-Sawahah in Riyadh. "Pakistan has signed an MoU with the Ministry of Communication & IT in Saudia. This will facilitate Pakistani companies to work in KSA, provide trained IT manpower to Saudi companies, promote joint ventures with Saudi companies and establish a startup exchange program with the top Saudi tech incubators," Umar Saif wrote on X.

Two terrorists killed, cop martyred in shootout

MIANWALI (PPI): Two terrorists were killed and a police constable martyred in crossfire while several others suffered injuries between a group of terrorists and a Punjab Highway Patrolling Post security men in Mianwali in the wee hours of Sunday. According to a Punjab Police spokesman, a group of more than 10 terrorists attacked Eisa Khel Kundal patrolling post in early hours. An exchange of fire took place between the suspects and Punjab police officials who foiled an attempt of the suspects to enter the patrolling post's building. The firing left two suspects dead and PHP head constable Haroon Khan martyred. Khan suffered bullet wound in his eye. The spokesman further said the gun battle ensued for about four hours and PHP officials repulsed the attack. Punjab police chief Dr Usman Anwar said the deceased suspects were

involved in terrorists activities across the country. He said a hunt had been launched to trace the runaway suspects. He said Punjab police along other security forces were fighting the terrorists, adding CTD has so far conducted 130 intelligence-based operations. The Punjab police were put on high alert to protect life and property of the masses, the Punjab IG said. The IG left for Kundal in morning. He will attend the funeral of the martyred cop. A spike in terrorism has recently been witnessed in recent days as terrorists are either attacking law enforcement agencies or committing suicide attacks. On Friday, two suicide bombings in Balochistan's Mastung and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu had left 64 martyred and over 75 injured. Meanwhile, the Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti expressed strong condemnation for

the terrorist attack on a police checkpoint in Mianwali. In his statement, he lauded the brave efforts of the police officers who courageously prevented the terrorist assault. He remarked, "The courageous police officers sent two terrorists to their demise," and he paid tribute to Police Officer Haroon Khan for his martyrdom. Bugti beseeched Allah Almighty to elevate the Head Constable to higher ranks in Jannah. Sarfraz Bugti declared his solidarity with the bereaved family during this moment of mourning. He asserted that the terrorists' cowardly actions would not diminish their determination. He pointed out that those aiming to disrupt peace and progress in Pakistan are the nation's adversaries. He underscored that the contributions of the police and law enforcement agencies in the battle against terrorism are indelible.

Hangu attacker's prints not in Nadra database: Police

PESHAWAR (INP): The fingerprints of a suicide bomber, who left five people dead when he blew himself up at a mosque in Hangu on Friday, do not match any available in the Nadra database, suggesting that he may be an unknown man or a foreigner. According to police, "initial probe suggests that the suicide attack on the police station was carried out by

Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Five lives were lost and nine people were injured in the bombing of the mosque, located inside a compound along with the living quarters and police barracks, officials said. Policemen posted at the Doaba police station and owners of nearby shops usually attended prayers there. On Friday, two assailants on a motorcycle tried to enter

the compound. However, when confronted by policemen at the entrance of the compound, one of the men was shot dead. According to an initial assessment report, an explosion took place after the man was shot, which was attributed to a grenade. In the smoke and confusion, the other attacker managed to enter the mosque and blew himself up.

The Frontier Post

Nation to welcome Nawaz

SAHIWAL (INP): JUI-F head Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that the nation should welcome PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif on his return to Pakistan. Fazl said its be good if the ex-PM Nawaz Sharif is returning to Pakistan and the people should welcome him. Fazl lambasted the Imran saying that he landed the country in an economic crisis meanwhile his cases are in court and the disqualification will confirm that he will stay out of elections.

Attackers set off bomb at Turkish govt building, both die

ANKARA (Agencies): Two terrorists carried out a bomb attack on Sunday outside the ministry buildings in Ankara with one of them blowing himself up while the other was "neutralised" by authorities, the Turkish interior minister said. Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said two police officers were slightly injured during the attack that echoed through the Turkish capital Ankara. "Two terrorists, who arrived in a light commercial vehicle in front of the gate of the General Directorate of Security, carried out a bomb attack. One of the terrorists blew himself up," wrote Ali Yerlikaya, the minister, on X. He added that one blew himself up and the other was "neutralised", which usually means was killed. "Our struggle will continue until the last terrorist is neutralised," Yerlikaya wrote. A loud explosion in the Kizilay area, in the heart of the city, was reported at around 9:30am local time followed by reports of gunfire. Security forces have since set up barriers in the area, while TV footage showed bomb squads working near a parked vehicle in the area, located near the Turkish Grand National Assembly and other government buildings. Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation into the terrorist attack, according to Anadolu Agency. Following the explosion, police forces took increased security around the area. The main Atatürk Boulevard was closed to traffic due to the explosion, close to one of the gates of the Grand National Assembly. Special operations police also were dispatched to the scene. The Grand National Assembly will open in the afternoon after a 3-month break. Turkish media earlier reported that an explosion was heard near the parliament and ministerial buildings, and broadcasters showed footage of debris scattered on a street near the Interior Ministry. Reuters footage showed soldiers, ambulances, fire trucks and an armoured vehicle gathered near the centre of Turkey's capital, where police had blocked several nearby roads. Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) condemned the terrorist attack that targeted Turkey's Ministry of Internal Affairs. "Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack targeting the Ministry of Internal Affairs of brotherly Turkey earlier today," an official statement issued by MoFA said. "We pray for the swift and complete recovery of those injured in this heinous attack."

The Foreign Office (FO) also said, "Pakistan resolutely stands with Turkey in its fight against the scourge of terrorism.... The Turkish nation will defeat this menace and emerge ever stronger." Meanwhile, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar expressed solidarity with the Turkish people following the "dastardly terrorist attack". "Pakistan strongly condemns the dastardly terrorist attack in Ankara on Sunday. We stand in complete solidarity with our Turkish brothers and sisters in the fight against the scourge of terrorism," the premier wrote on his official X handle. "I have no doubt that under the dynamic leadership of my brother Tayyip Erdogan, the resolute Turkish nation will emerge ever stronger from this challenge." Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif denounced the terrorist attack and prayed for the quick recovery of the injured. "I strongly condemn the terrorist attack near the Turkish Parliament in Ankara. Our prayers are with the injured police officers for a swift recovery and the safety of our Turkish brothers and sisters. The people of Pakistan express unwavering solidarity with the citizens and government of Türkiye," he added. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also condemned the blast and urged the international community to unite against terrorism. "The world should unite to end terrorism. Terrorists are a threat to world peace," Zardari was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the PPP media cell. Former foreign minister Bilawal said the ideology of terrorism can be defeated with the help of the best strategy, strong determination, and courage. "The world will have to continue its struggle against subversive thinking until the end of the last terrorist," he added.

Balochistan govt declares 'all-out war' against terrorists

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Two days after a deadly bombing in Mastung claimed over 50 lives, Caretaker Balochistan Information Minister Jan Achakzai on Sunday said "enough is enough" and declared an "all-out war" against terrorists. During a press conference in Quetta on Sunday, Achakzai was asked about a possible grand operation in the wake of terrorist attacks in the province. In his response, the minister said he could not comment on that but reassured journalists that the state would defend each and every inch of its territory and carry out intelligence-based operations if needed. Achakzai said terrorist incidents were occurring in all of the country "daily and it has a set pattern", questioning why these attacks were only happening in Pakistan and not other regional countries. "This means there is a mastermind behind it who is systematically destabilising us. Enough is enough.

Now there will be no appeasement or concession... we declare all-out war on these terrorists." He further said: "Pakistan's resolve is very important. It (Mastung incident) is such a case where we won't say that we will go after [only terrorist] operatives and foot soldiers. "We will go after their masterminds, the lynchpins managing all these proxies and will ensure that we will go wherever they are holed up, drag them out and take revenge for each and every martyr." He said the state's resolve to combat terrorism was strengthened by "1000 per cent" after the Mastung carnage, adding that the state was ready to go to any extent required. "If there is a need to do operations in every inch of territory then we will do them," Achakzai said. "If there are links [to terrorism] in Pakistan with our neighbouring country, and it seems [that way because] we have clear evidence of Indian state terrorism in Balochistan in the recent past. "If these links are

found there [in Balochistan] today as well then we will make sure that our enemies are cut by thousands." The information minister also said the families of the martyrs would be provided financial aid and not left disappointed. Detailing the financial package for the victims, Achakzai said every martyr's family would be given Rs1.5 million, Rs0.5m would be distributed to the critically injured and Rs0.2m to the nominally injured by the provincial government. He said the Balochistan government was also in talks with the Centre to improve the package. The interim minister also said that security protocols were being revisited in the wake of the incident and any loopholes would be plugged to ensure no security lapse occurs. The information minister's declaration of concerted efforts against militancy and foreign elements comes a day after similar calls from other civil and military leadership.

Death toll from Mastung suicide blast rises to 60

QUETTA (INP): The death toll from the Mastung suicide blast rose to 60 on Sunday. Four victims are still said to be in a critical condition. It has been reported that 18 victims are still admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and three others are getting treatment at Civil Hospital. The Quetta's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) registered a first information report (FIR) of the case. A powerful suicide blast had rocked Balochistan's Mastung district on Friday. The dead and the injured were initially shifted to the DHQ Hospital and other infirmaries. The incident took place at a bazaar near Madina Masjid on Al Falah Road. Rescue 1122 ambulances, police and Bomb Disposal Squad officials reached the crime scene. A state of emergency has been declared in all hospitals. Security forces cordoned off the area soon after the incident. DSP Nawaz Gashkori was among the dead. According to a spokesman of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Balochistan, a suicide bomber blew himself in a gathering of people. India's

foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), is behind the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan, Federal Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti alleged on Saturday, a day after a grisly suicide bombing targeting a 12th Rabiul Awwal procession in Mastung district claimed lives of 59 people. Interacting with media here, Bugti accused India's RAW of orchestrating Friday's suicide bombing through its facilitators based in Balochistan province. "All major incidents that occurred in Balochistan before this one...they were all unearthed — India's RAW was behind all these, and the forces who want to destabilise Pakistan," said the minister. Bugti did not provide any evidence to support his claims, but added that investigations were in progress and that violence, regardless of the group claiming responsibility, would be met with a befitting response from the state. It is important to mention here that there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the Mastung attack by any group. Even the banned

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in Pakistan, denied its involvement in Friday's bombing. The interior minister vowed to relentlessly pursue terrorists, signalling a departure from the policy of appeasement adopted in recent years. He said that the state was aware of terrorists' locations and safe havens and would take action against them. Bugti also mentioned a previous attack on JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah earlier in the month, stating that the mastermind behind that attack had been eliminated. The minister expressed frustration with past instances wherein the state adopted an appeasement policy when dealing with terrorist elements. He made it clear that from now on the state would not hesitate to hunt down any terrorist group, be it Daesh or TTP or anyone else. In response to a question about the suspension of district commissioners and superintendents of police, Bugti said that Balochistan Information Minister Jan Achakzai could answer it in detail, but emphasised that a thorough investigation would be conducted.

Joint Special Forces drills conducted

F.P. Report

R A W A L P I N D I : Multinational Joint Special Forces Exercise Eternal Brotherhood-II has been conducted among Special Forces of Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Turkey and Uzbekistan in Counter Terrorism domain. Two weeks long Exercise Eternal Brotherhood-II commenced on 17 September 2023 in Barotha. F.P. ReportCorps Commander 11 Corps attended the Closing Ceremony as Chief Guest along with Director General Military Training and General Officer Commanding Special Service Group. Besides the Exercising troops; officers from the friendly countries also witnessed the Closing Ceremony. Special Forces of participating countries displayed their professional excellence on the final day. The exercise was aimed at further harnessing the historic military to military relations amongst brotherly countries and helped nurture joint employment concepts against counter terrorism besides; identifying areas of mutual interest for future military collaborations.

Namira arrives in US for space travel

KARACHI (INP): First Pakistani female astronaut, Namira Salim, has landed America for her space journey from the Virgin Galactic commercial space liner. She is also a first female astronaut of South Asia and the Commonwealth of Nations. Ms Salim arrived in Dallas, Texas from Karachi and now she will travel to space on Oct 5 and the mission will depart to space from New Mexico airport. On this occasion, she said, "I am very grateful that my country has supported me a lot. I will take the flag of Pakistan into space with great pride." Dubai-based lady is first Pakistani astronaut who hoisted the Pakistani flag at the North Pole in 2007 and South Pole in 2008. At the end of June this year, the Virgin Galactic succeeded in taking the first commercial flight to space but this flight carried experts from Italy instead of ordinary tourists. In August and September, the company launched the first space flight for tourists into space.



Ashrafi calls for action against India's terrorism

LAHORE (APP): In a gathering of religious and political leaders, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and President of the International Interfaith Harmony Council, raised concerns about India carrying out state-sponsored terrorism.

Speaking at the Seerat-e-Rehmat-ul-Alameen Conference, held at Alhamra Hall here on Sunday, Ashrafi urged the international community to take collective action against the Indian government, citing recent incidents in Canada and Pakistan that he believes highlight India's role in promoting terrorism.

The PUC chairman also pointed to incidents in Sargodha and tensions between Shia and Sunni communities in some parts of the country, alleging India's interference was fomenting

unrest. He emphasised that India's actions were detrimental to global peace and stability, referencing the Canadian Prime Minister's recent statements.

To address these concerns, Ashrafi announced plans to organise joint public gatherings across Pakistan. He condemned an incident in Turkiye and clarified that Pakistan had no issue with any church, but propaganda by the Qadiani community was causing problems.

Ashrafi called for proper enforcement of laws against those engaging in illegal activities, emphasising the need for justice and global recognition of the rights of Muslims in Palestine and the Kashmir issue. The conference, attended by over 500 scholars and religious leaders, concluded with a joint resolution to promote unity among different religious and sects in Pakistan.

Prominent speakers at the

conference included Bishop Asad Marshal, Father Imanuel Khokar, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Muhammad Khan Laghari, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Allama Tahirul Hassan, Maulana Ubaidullah Gurmani, Mufti Umar Farooq, Mufti Falaksher, Mufti Syed Naseemul Islam, Maulana Muhammad Ishfaq Patafi, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Qadri, Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Ibrahim Hanfi, Maulana Abdul Majid Haqqani, Maulana Abdul Ghafar Farooqi, Maulana Qari Mubashar Raheemi, Qari Faisal Ameen, Qari Sajjid, Maulana Nasir Haqqani, Maulana Zubair Khatana, Qari Kafayatullah, Maulana Abdul Jabbar, Mufti Rehmat Din, and many others.

Govt hikes LPG before decreasing petrol: Siraj

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan, Sirajul Haq has said that the government increased Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) by Rs20 per kilogram before announcing a meager decrease of Rs8 per litre in petrol prices.

Addressing a ceremony in Lahore on Sunday, he said that everyone was talking of worsening situation of the

country but no one was ready to admit the responsibility of the situation. Sirajul Haq said that there was disappointment, terror, devastation everywhere and countrymen were in incessant panic.

It was matter of grave concern that a single roti (flatbread) was being sold for Rs25 and single electricity unit was being charged Rs52, he added. He said that

assets of all who come into power grow and condition of common man worsens.

The JI chief said that currency of war-torn Afghanistan was three-time stronger than Pakistan.

Countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and India have developed but where on what venue we were heading, he questioned.



LAHORE: A person selecting local perfume (Itar) from vendor in a local market. —APP Photo

International workshop held on EDAR under one health

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The International Workshop on Environmental Dimension of Antimicrobial Resistance (EDAR) under One Health, was successfully held from 26th to 28th Sep, 2023. More than 40 scientists from over ten countries along the Belt and Road, including Poland, Slovenia, Pakistan, Thailand, Iran, Denmark, United Kingdom, Singapore, Switzerland, and Australia gathered at the Ningbo Academic Center to discuss the environmental effects, risk assessment, and other biosafety issues related to antibiotic resistance within the framework of One Health. Prof Dr Sardar Khan participated in the conference, delivered a talk and presented KUST soulier to Prof Yong-Guan Zhu academician UCAS.

The opening ceremony was attended by Jinghua Cao, the Executive Director of Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO), Wei Fang, the Secretary of Ningbo Association for Science and Technology, Shaohua Chen, Party Secretary of the Institute of Urban

Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Yong-guan Zhu, Academic Director of the Institute of Urban Environment and Director-General of the Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Environmental antibiotic resistance is one of the top ten global public health issues. To prevent the spread of resistant bacteria among humans, animals, and the environment, concerted action is needed from multiple sectors worldwide. During the symposium, scientists shared their latest research findings and technologies on the environmental effects of antibiotic resistance, emerging biosafety issues under the One Health framework, and new methods for monitoring and assessing environmental antibiotic resistance. They advocated for collaborative strategies in various fields such as human health, animal health, and agricultural production. The conference provided a platform for experts and scholars in the field of environmental biology to exchange ideas, promoted international

cooperation, and addressed the growing conflicts and problems between humans and environments from the perspective of One Health. The outcome will support the United Nations' sustainable development goals and improving human health and well-being.

During the workshop, the participants visit the Yangtze River Delta Health Research Institute and its modern agriculture facilities.

This workshop was organized by the Institute of Urban Environment, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and jointed organized by Xiamen Science and Technology Bureau, the International Project Office of "Urban Health and Wellbeing" Program, "Belt and Road" Urban Environment and Health Alliance, and Ningbo Observation and Research Station of the Institute of Urban Environment, Chinese Academy of Sciences. It was supported by the Key Collaborative Research Program of the Alliance of International Science Organizations (Investigating the transcontinental-scale distribution of antibiotic resistance along the Belt and Road initiative countries).



KARACHI: Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor KUST participated in International workshop on Environmental Dimension of Antimicrobial Resistance at China.



LAHORE: Chairman Muhammad Tahir Ashrafi addressing the Seerat Rahmatul-Lil-Alameen (SAW) Conference organized by Pakistan Ulema Council at Al Hamra Hall. —APP Photo

126 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The battle against dengue fever continues in Punjab, with 126 new cases reported on Sunday, according to the latest data from the Health Department.

This year, a total of 4,431 confirmed dengue cases have been reported across 36 districts in Punjab, raising concerns among health authorities. Lahore leads the unfortunate tally with a staggering 1,770 cases, closely followed by Rawalpindi with 1,176 cases, Multan with 532, Faisalabad with 211, and Gujranwala with 182 cases.

The situation remains critical, with an additional 34 new cases reported in Lahore, 60 in Rawalpindi, 13 in Multan, 7 in Faisalabad, and 5 in Gujranwala. Narowal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Chiniot, and Lodharan each confirmed one new dengue case.

Currently, 106 patients are receiving treatment in hospitals across Punjab, with 33 of them hospitalized in Lahore alone.

Punjab Health Secretary Ali Jaan Khan urged citizens to maintain clean and dry surroundings as a crucial preventive measure against dengue fever.

He emphasized the importance of cooperating with health department teams which are tirelessly working to combat the outbreak. For those seeking dengue treatment, information, or wishing to lodge complaints, a free helpline is available through the health department at 1033.

PMDC abolishes 20 extra marks

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab government revised its admission policy for public sector medical and dental colleges within the province. Notably, the extra 20 marks previously granted to Hafiz-e-Quran candidates will be removed from the merit calculation in the upcoming admission season.

As per the Punjab Health Department, this year, additional marks for Hafiz-e-Quran candidates have been eliminated based on PMDC's decision.

The body took it after a six-member bench gave a verdict in this regard. The modified policy, which excludes these extra 20 marks, will apply to this year's admissions.

Previously, 20 marks had been allocated in the FSC score for Hafiz-e-Quran candidates. It is to be noted that the Supreme Court of Pakistan in April disposed of a suo motu case about grant of additional 20 marks to a Hafiz-e-Quran student while admitting him/her to an MBBS/BDS degree programme.

A six-member bench, headed by Justice Ijazul Ahsan and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Mazhar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, issued the ruling minutes after a brief hearing in the case.

During the hearing, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council informed the bench that it was not awarding additional marks at the time when the suo motu notice was taken. Justice Akhtar remarked: "It means the suo motu case has become ineffective."

Gang involve in 328 unlawful kidney transplant arrested : CM Naqvi

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday apprised that Lahore Police apprehended the gang including its leader involved in doing 328 unlawful kidney operations. Addressing a press conference at CM's office, he announced that the team arresting the gang would be awarded Rs 500,000. He further informed that Doctor Fawad Mukhtar and all persons of his gang have been apprehended.

Doctor Fawad Mukhtar by unlawfully stealing, duping and grabbing money extracted 328 people's kidneys and performed transplant. The CM said the assistant of Dr Fawad gang doing operations was basically a motor mechanic and the same motor mechanic used to perform duties of administering anaesthesia to the people.

He added the gang was more active in Lahore, Taxila and Azad Kashmir and used to perform kidney operations at homes instead of operation theaters. Rs 3 million used to be extorted from Pakistani patients while Rs 10 million used to be extorted from the

patients coming from abroad.

Naqvi apprised that the accused has confessed to perform 328 operations and this number could exceed as well. Money was extorted from a patient in Jinnah Hospital and later by committing fraud his healthy kidney was extracted. When that patient went to another doctor then he came to know that his one kidney is missing.

The CM said the accused Doctor Fawad Mukhtar had been arrested five times and used to commit the same notorious crime every time after getting released. He said Chief Secretary and his team was working and the prosecution has been directed to submit a strong challan. The police team conniving the release of Doctor Fawad has been suspended.

To a query, Naqvi said that the Healthcare Commission would have to become fully proactive, adding "laws are in place and we do not have any scope of making change. We will make the rules more effective to the maximum possible extent".

There was a dire need of implementation in the pres-

ence of laws, he said.

The matter to hand over the case to the FIA would be reviewed, he said and added the police performed its duty diligently in this case and arrested the gang after making untiring efforts for one and a half month. The police and other allied institutions would have to expedite their crackdown against the gangs involved in playing with the lives of innocent people.

CM revealed that people had to face inconvenience in PHOTA (Punjab Human Organ Transplant Authority), adding that the proposal to make PHOTA one window would be reviewed. Naqvi informed that the death of three patients has been confirmed due to the accused operations. He said two main culprits of eye injection scandal had been arrested.

"We are waiting for the report and no injustice will be committed to anyone in haste" he said. CM apprised that few parts of cyber law have reached to us, adding that the police and relevant institutions have been activated so that people could be provided relief with regard to cyber crimes.

Crackdown against gas theft continued: SNGPL

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Another 178 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP and Islamabad; Rs.5.432 million fine imposed and 204 under billing cases processed.

During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 178 connections while imposing fine of Rs.5.432 million and 204 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected eight connections on illegal use of gas, another five connections on the use of compressor, and Rs.0.301M have been booked against gas theft. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected Six connections on use of compressor while another 5 against illegal use, 24 under billing cases processed and 2 FIR lodged against gas theft.

The company disconnected two connections on illegal use of gas, three connections on the use of compressor and Six under billing cases have been processed in Multan. The team also lodged 1 FIR against gas thieves. In Sheikhupura, 18 connections were disconnected by the region and 57 under billing cases processed, the team also booked Rs.3.430M against under billing cases.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 61 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections, the regional team also booked Rs.0.71M against gas theft. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected three gas connections and 10 under billing cases have been processed while imposing fine of Rs. 0.4 Million on under billing cases.

SNGPL's team in Mardan 14 disconnected connections on illegal use of gas, 100 domestic under billing cases have been processed while imposing

fine of Rs 0.061 million against gas theft and 0.355 million against under billing cases.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected four connections on use of compressor and five connections on illegal use of gas. In Sargodha, 02 connections disconnected on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Gujranwala, 04 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor while another four on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.175M on gas theft and under billing cases.

In Gujrat, five connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The company disconnected 18 connections on illegal use of gas and 07 under billing cases processed in Islamabad. In Sahiwal, four connections were disconnected on illegal use. The regional team in Faisalabad disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas and another 02 on the use of compressor.

Anti-polio drive targets 40m children

LAHORE (NNI): A countrywide anti-polio campaign is commencing from Monday in which over 40 million children will be administered polio vaccine along with the supplementary dose of vitamin A.

Talking about anti-polio campaign in the country, caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan urged parents to fully cooperate with the polio teams and ensure the administration of polio drops to their children.

"Eradication of polio from the country is responsibility of every citizen. Incidence of polio has been reduced to only a few areas of the country. The health minister said that the global certification requires that no polio case emerges for the three consecutive years. He urged the educated people to create awareness among masses about the crippling disease.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, SES, Faisal Ghee, NDC-1, H-11/4, I-10/2, New Exchange, Kidney Center, Dr. A.Q Khan, Islamic University, Bharia University, G-10/1, G-10/2, G-10/4, G-9/1, CWO, Dk. Najoo, Raja Sultan, Eid Gah Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Basharat Feeder and surrounding areas.

Toddler abducted from Karachi

KARACHI (INP): In a harrowing incident that has sent shockwaves through the community, a two-year-old child was abducted by an unknown motorcycle-riding man and a woman in Saeedabad area, police confirmed on Sunday.

According to media reports, the case has been registered on the complaint of the child's distraught father, Riyaz Ali, a resident of Mazhar Uloom Hamadiya Madrasah Sector 19/A.

The incident unfolded when the young victim, Tafil Sameer, was supposed to be dropped off at his grandmother's house by his 12-year-old cousin. Little did they know that this innocent journey would turn into a nightmare.

Saeedabad Police has registered a case of abduction under Section 364-A/34, as per Riyaz Ali's complaint.

In his gut-wrenching statement to the police, Riyaz Ali, who is a hard-working individual living on rent, recounted the dreadful events of September 30, 2023. He revealed that on that fateful day, his mother-in-law took his two-year-old son, Sameer, to the G-27 bus stop in Saeedabad, a routine she had followed countless times before.

As evening descended, Riyaz Ali's world was shattered when his brother-in-law arrived home with the devastating news.



KARACHI: People busy in selecting and purchasing old books from a stall at the premises of Frere Hall building. —APP Photo



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Prof. Dr. Riaz Anwar inquiring about an injured of Hangu blast at LRH.

Body formed for reusable of free books

PESHAWAR (APP): A committee has been formed to make the government free textbooks given to the students' reusable and prevent them from being wasted.

This was stated by an official of the Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while talking to APP here on Sunday. He said District Level Constituent Committee (DLCC) would consist of four members and the committee will be responsible for protecting the books from spoilage, making them reusable and giving them back to the students.

He said, millions of rupees are being spent on printing new books every year so such a step has been taken to not only misuse public money but also to make sure to make the books used once will be reused.

The official said that the notified committee would work on preservation, recollections, and re-distribution of the Textbooks in their respective districts. The district level committee would include DEO (male/female) Chairman with its members including DDDEO (male/female), ASDEO (male/female) and representative of DMO, he said.

The committee, he said, would also ensure to create awareness among teachers and students regarding presentation of the textbooks, to coordinate with principal/headmasters/head mistress, head teacher for presentation, recollection and redistribution of textbooks at the district level.

The committee would arrange monthly meetings with all stakeholders and carry on random inspection of the textbooks at any school besides submitting a monthly report to the provincial committee for evaluation, he added. He said the committee would also work on any other task assigned to them regarding the textbook.

Hamza Foundation conducts blood donation camp

PESHAWAR (APP): Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Hospital Peshawar organized a blood donation camp at Jamia Darul Uloom Haqqania Malakand in which 37 volunteer students of the madrasa donated blood to save the lives of thalassemia and hemophilia patients.

A total of 37 madrasa students is to serve the lives of the 1472 thalassemia patients. In the camp, Hamza Foundation RMO Abrarullah Jan informed the participants about thalassemia disease, its prevention and the importance of blood donation.

The participants were informed that it is the religious and moral duty of all the citizens to cooperate to save the lives of children affected by thalassemia. He emphasized that there is a need to create awareness among the people about this disease.

Free medical camp for orphan children held



PESHAWAR (APP): The Children of Zamong Kor were given free medical check-up and medicines under the Free Medical Camp initiative for destitute children living in the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Model Institute for State Children (Zamong Kor) organized by Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF) with the support of Zarmina Foundation.

Seven hundred children of the institution benefited from this camp. The team of doctors under the initiative have created individual medical files of each student which will be updated after every checkup activity.

The children were also trained regarding personal hygiene on how to wash their hands, to avoid diseases by keeping their body clean, the importance of

74.78 million children to be vaccinated against Polio

PESHAWAR (APP): All preparations have been completed for the national anti-polio campaign in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa starting from today (Monday) and during the two-phased five-day campaign, more than 74.78 million children across the province will be vaccinated against polio.

According to the Emergency Operation Center in the first phase of the anti-polio campaign in Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Hazara divisions, all children under five years of age will be administered polio drops.

In the second phase of the campaign, which will continue from October 9 to 13, all children up to five years of age in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan divisions will be vaccinated against Polio, an official of the EOC said.

During this anti-polio campaign, vitamin A will also be given to children to increase their immunity, the official disclosed.

In the first phase of the campaign, he said, 63,628.95 children will be vaccinated against polio in all districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Hazara divisions.

In the second phase of the campaign, he said, 11,1681 children in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan divisions will be vaccinated against polio, the official informed.

During the campaign, he said, polio drops would be given to all children up to the age of five living in all Afghan refugee camps in the province.

He said a total of 34,551 teams of trained polio workers have been formed for this Anti-Polio Campaign in which 31,151 mobile teams, 1,953 fixed teams and 1,447 transit teams have been formed. Apart from this, 7,077 area in-charges have also been appointed for effective supervision of these teams, he said.

Around 54,567 police personnel have also been deployed to ensure effective security of the polio teams during the campaign, the official said.

Health services to be provided, says Mayor

PESHAWAR (APP): Haji Zubair Ali Sunday said that people are very fond of providing health facilities and service because Allah is pleased with service to humanity and this service is his mission of being the public representative.

The serious problem of law and order in Rashid Garhi will be solved and there will be no street criminals, the people of Rashid Garhi will continue their activities without any fear while a team has been formed for stray dogs, Hajid Zubair Ali said.

He said SDO of the area would be contacted to take

action against the Kunda mafia as soon as possible.

On this occasion, the President of Etihad Ulema Rashid Garhi said that in our Etihad Ulama group, there are Imams of the schools of thought of Rashid Garhi in front of every masjid of Rashid Garhi.

This Ittehad Alaima has been formed with regard to peace and ensuring law and order situation in Rashid Garhi. He said steps have been taken to ensure law

and order situation by establishing peace in the area.

He also announced solarization in all the masjids in Rashid Garhi. He also announced the establishment of a public dispensary in Rashid Garhi, while medicines will also be provided free of charge.

Finally, Fatiha was recited for the martyrs of Mastung and Hangu blast victims and prayers were offered for the recovery of the injured.

Admissions in undergraduate program KMU conducts 2nd centralized test

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar organized the second Centralized Admission Test (KMU-CAT) on Sunday for admissions in various undergraduate disciplines like Pharm D, DPT, BS Nursing, and BS Allied Health Sciences in 9 centers of the province.

A total of 11,676 candidates participated in the said test.

The result of the test will be declared within two to three days which can be seen on the official website.

The said test was conducted for those candidates who could not appear in the first test for any reason.

In the recent test, 5138

students participated in two centers of Peshawar including Islamia Collegiate School and Government Higher Secondary School No. 1 Peshawar city, 683 in KMU-IHS Abbottabad, 2387 in Iqra University Swat, 1905 students participated in Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, 693 in KMU-IMS Kohat, 46 in Parachinar Kuram, 418 in Hayat Nursing College Dir Lower and 406 in Durrani Model School Bannu.

It is worth mentioning that the participation of 11,676 candidates in this second test is not only an expression of confidence in KMU, but it is also expected to further improve the merit and quality of Allied Health Sciences.

It is also a matter of fact that health is a comprehensive system in which doctors as well as various departments like pharmacy, physiotherapy, nursing, and allied health sciences are of primary role and importance.

It is expected that the holding of the second centralized admission test for admissions in allied health sciences will on one hand provide an opportunity for talented students to come forward in these fields and on the other hand, it will also improve the overall quality of the health care system in the province.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Nisar Ahmad Khan presiding over a review meeting regarding energy projects.

Acting chief vows to resolve issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) acting president Ayub Zakori vowed to utilize all resources and energy for timely resolution of industrialists' issues and all affairs at the association level will be carried forward on fast-track grounds.

He was chairing a meeting of the executive committee of the Industrialists Association Peshawar held here at Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) Conference Hall, said in a press release issued here on Sunday.

Executive members Adeel Rauf, Sherbaz Bilour, Zarak Khan, Mohsin Wadud, Sajjad Zaheer, Farhad Asfandyar, Shayan Imtiaz, Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan and members IAP Riaz Arshed, Haris Mufti, Junaid Altaf and Saad Zahid were present during the meeting.

Rescue 1122 retort 3,860 incidents

PESHAWAR (APP): Emergency service Rescue 1122 responded to over 3,860 different incidents, providing timely services in metropolis during month of September.

The operations, under the leadership of District Emergency Officer Engineer Naveed Akhtar, are ongoing, and the organization ensured prompt and excellent facilities for a wide range of incidents.

Rescue 1122 Peshawar extended medical assistance to 3573 patients and injured individuals out of the total incidents.

These included 372 traffic accidents, 44 fire incidents, 3166 medical emergencies, 73 various crimes, 30 rescue operations, and 2 incidents involving building collapses and drowning. Rescue 1122 facilitated the transfer of 169 patients from one hospital to another.

The personnel of Rescue

1122 provided initial medical aid to approximately 3573 injured and sick individuals and transported them to nearby hospitals when necessary.

Unfortunately, 30 individuals lost their lives during these incidents.

Remarkably, despite heavy traffic congestion, Rescue 1122 managed to provide assistance to the public within an average response time of 6.9 minutes.

District Emergency Officer Peshawar, Engineer Naveed Akhtar, highlighted that on a daily basis, the organization is committed to educating the citizens about basic life-saving skills, fire safety, and dengue prevention.

This educational outreach covers schools, colleges, universities, government and private institutions, police, hotels, markets, and various other establishments.

Gemstones: A valuable asset for revenue generation

PESHAWAR (APP): Busy like a honeybee in cutting and polishing of raw gemstones in his shop at Namak Mandi, Zahid Ahmad (38), a progressive gemstone exporter of Peshawar is often seen asking his brother Ali Akbar and fellow laborers to hurry up to meet the placed orders of domestic jewelers and foreign investors.

Enjoying the famous Pashto song 'larsha Pekh-awar tha qamees tor mala rawara,' (go to Peshawar and bring black shirt for me) playing on his cell phone while cutting and polishing precious gemstones with archaic machines at Namak Mandi, a hub of gemstones trade in Peshawar City, the motivated exporter Zahid Ahmad said the demands of KP's gemstones have been increased in domestic and international market due to its brilliance clarity and

glittering designs.

Inherited the painstaking business from his father 15 years ago, the Peshawar's born gemstone trader said "Pakistan's rare-earth mineral such as Ruby, Emerald, Sapphire, Topaz, Aquamarine, Quartz, Garnet, Lapis Lazuli, Opal, Agate, Moonstone, Feldspar, Kunzite and Zircon mostly found in abundance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Kashmir and southeast of Balochistan attract domestic and foreign investors.

Zahid said the demands of Swat's emerald, Mardan's topaz, Kohistan's peridot, tourmaline of Chitral and Azad Kashmir's ruby were increased in UAE, Gulf, SAARC, CARs, Europe and US. A visitor would be astonished to see plenty of shops of gemstones while passing through Namak Mandi bazaar where a gemstones

market was set up in 1970, providing direct and indirect jobs to around three lakh people.

Ali Akbar, who was assisting his elder brother in gemstones business, told APP that precious gemstones were being wasted due to un-mechanized mining, lack of technology and laboratories in the province, resulting in huge economic and financial losses to the government kitty.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said most of the stone cutters and polishers do stone faceting on conventional archaic machines and their precious time was wasted to bring inherent luster besides desired symmetry to gemstones.

The local residents and unprofessional hands mostly mine these jewels in a hazardous traditional way in the mountainous regions mostly bordering with Afghanistan that caused

irreparable damage to hidden treasure.

He said that a person with technical know-how can easily earn Rs15,000 per carat from Emerald and Sapphire and upto Rs 100,000/- profit from Ruby after making about Rs 6.0 million investment.

Mamoor Khan, pattern-in-chief, All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) told the news agency that Pakistan's economy could be improved by giving status of industry to the gemstones sector.

"Pakistan is a home to diverse and rare varieties of gemstones deposits with a potential to export 800,000 carats of Ruby, 87,000 carats of Emerald and 5 million carats peridot per year. During July 2021 to June 30, 2022, he said that 6.77 million experts had been made from gemstones while 193,132.85 USD

exports were made in August and 422,004.6 USD in July last year by APECA.

Gemstones could become a key mineral sector if it developed on modern line. Thus it can significantly help improve Pakistan's shabby economic situation, Mamoor said that USD 4 million gemstones exports were achieved by APECA in 2021-22.

Mamoor while citing a report of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan said that in 2018 gemstones and jewelry exports were USD 14.1 million that increased to USD 14.6 million in 2019, adding over 80pc revenue was collected from unprocessed gemstones of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the lack of technology and professional training besides heavy taxes were making negative effects on gems mining in KP.

Dr Zilakat Malik, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar said that despite huge economic potential, gemstones sector were completely overlooked by the past governments that resulted increase in inflation and unemployment.

"Unfortunately, the past government have diverted most of the financial resources to textile and agriculture sectors and ignored the gemstones sector with very limited allocations in budgets for its growth," he said.

He said Pakistan has the potential to increase its gemstones exports to USD 32 billion if government provides proper patronage on the pattern of textile and agriculture sector to it.

The establishment of modern gems labs were imperative in all major cities especially in Peshawar, Mansehra, Swat,

Muzaffarabad and Gilgit to avoid waste of the precious resource and provide necessary quality to compete internationally.

Besides formulation of an inclusive policy for provision of safe extraction techniques for betterment of the gemstones industry, Dr Malik also suggested provision of modern technical hardware to gems miners at subsidised rates.

Gems and Gemological Institute Peshawar (GGIP) spokesman told APP that since March this year, over 4500 students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and erstwhile Fata were trained by the master trainers in gemstones mining, cutting and polishing.

"A draft act for setting up of Gems and Jewelry Authority has been approved while gemstones were included in the list of priority sectors in the strategic trade policy

framework (2020-25)," said Director, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Sabaz Ali while talking to APP.

He said that gemstones and jewelry besides mines and mineral sectors would achieve more opportunities in terms of technology transfers with positive impact on the country's exports in the second phase of CPEC.

In Peshawar, a Gemstones City would be set up where all modern facilities including training to gemstones miners, certification, polishing and cutting would be provided.

Likewise, gemstones entrepreneurs would be provided marketing and packing training as per international standards while linkages between local and international gems companies would be strengthened to bolster gemstones exports.



In brief

Two killed in bus-bike collision

BUREWALA (INP): Two people were killed when an over speeding passenger bus hit a motorcycle here on Sunday, police and rescue sources said. According to details, a reckless driven bus knocked down a motorcycle carrying two people near village 431/EB at Chichawatni road in Burewala. As a result of accident, both motorcycle riders were killed on the spot. The bus driver fled the scene of accident. Police and rescue teams reached the scene of accident and shifted the bodies to THQ Hospital. The police impounded the bus and after registering a case against driver at large started raids for his arrest.

Deaf-mute child tortured

JHELMUM (INP): A deaf-mute child was brutally tortured by a rickshaw driver along with his accomplice, police said on Sunday. According to details, accused over dispute of getting into his rickshaw viciously tortured 13-year-old child near municipal committee in civil lines police station jurisdiction, Sargodha. The child went unconscious and culprits fled the scene leaving him by roadside. The police after registering a case against culprits started raids for their arrest.

FIA detains wanted accused

SIALKOT (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Gujranwala Immigration team raided and intercepted a wanted accused by the FIA's Anti-Terrorist Wing at Sialkot Airport on Sunday. The accused, identified as Wahab, was trying to flee to Qatar on a private airline when he was apprehended by the FIA team. According to an FIA spokesperson, Wahab was wanted in a terrorism case registered against him by the Anti-Terrorism Wing. His name was also included in the stop list, which is a list of individuals who are prohibited from leaving Pakistan. The FIA spokesperson said that Wahab has been referred to the Counter-Terrorism Wing, FIA for further investigation. The FIA's raid and interception of Wahab is a significant achievement in the fight against terrorism in Pakistan. It shows that the FIA is vigilant and committed to apprehending terrorists, even if they try to flee the country.

Bid to smuggle ghee thwarted

SHIKARPUR (INP): Police in Shikarpur, in collaboration with intelligence agencies, foiled a bid to smuggle sugar and ghee, on Sunday. Police said they had recovered 40 tonnes of sugar and 8,000 kilograms of ghee from two trucks on Shikarpur-Jacobabad road and took these two items into their possession. The Force further said that ghee and sugar were being smuggled from Ghotki to Afghanistan. Two days ago, on Friday, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, while chairing a high-level meeting, had directed the customs authorities and the law-enforcement agencies to strictly control the smuggling of sugar, petroleum products, urea, agricultural products and other items by launching a crackdown on the people involved in this offence. During the meeting, he was briefed about the situation with respect to smuggling of different items across the country, especially in the border areas, and also about the steps taken for stopping the menace.



LOWER DIR: Awami National Party central leader and former chief minister Ameer Haidar Khan Hoti addressing a party workers' convention at Chakdara.

National Immunization Day inaugurated in Swabi

F.P. Report

SWABI: National Immunization Day (NID) October 2023 was formally inaugurated at union council Bachai District Swabi to eradicate polio virus under the supervision of Union Council Polio Eradication Committee (UPEC) where Medical Officer Dr Asghar ali and Mr Inamullah khan and Community volunteer Aamir Hayat formally administered polio drops to children. The National Immunization Day (NID) campaign will start from 2nd to 6th October 2023.

On this occasion Polio Supervisor Dr Asghar Ali, MT Inamullah khan and community volunteer Aamir Hayat addressed the ceremony and requested the teams and UPEC to ensure full courage in the union



council. World Health Organization staff Taimur Khan and Farooq kamal were also present on the occasion.

It is worth mentioning here that in Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme has been committed to ending polio virus transmis-

sion in Pakistan since 1994. Mr Aamir Hayat Told that the foremost goal of this campaign is the complete eradication and containment of all wild, vaccine-related and Sabin polioviruses, so no child ever again suffers paralytic poliomyelitis.

Anti-polio campaign kicks off in Hafizabad

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Five-day national anti-polio campaign has been launched in the district Hafizabad, today. Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warriach inaugurated the drive to administer drops of vaccine of polio and dose of vitamins "A" to children of Gypsies family at Hafizabad.

Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathor, DHO Faiq Ali Tarar, representative of WHO Dr. Touqueer Ahmad, other officers and health workers were also present on this occasion. Talking to media, DC said that elimination of polio diseases from the country is not only responsibility of health department but it is obligation of every citizen to play their pivotal role to curb this fatal disease from the country as well as to save their new generation from this crippling disease.

He appealed the ulema, teachers, parents, lawyers, media and civil society to cooperate with special teams of health workers not only to get administer drops of anti-polio vaccine and

dose of vitamins "A" to their below five-year-old children but also to convince other people to get administer drops of vaccine and vitamins for saving their children from crippling disease of polio.

Giving briefing, CO Health said that 998 anti-polio teams have been constituted to give drops of polio vaccine and dose of vitamins "A" to more than two lakh and thirty four children below the age of five year in the district during five-day anti-polio campaign.

He told anti-polio teams would give vaccine of polio and dose of vitamins "A" to children to visit door to door in the district and this campaign would continue till 6, October. He further informed that polio teams have also been appointed at schools, bus stands, railway stations, markets and other public places for administering anti-polio vaccine and dose of vitamins A to children.

Meanwhile, the Regional Election Commissioner Gujranwala Division Zahid Subhani has said that survey teams of election commission com-

pleted survey regarding registration of and votes to visit door to door in the district Hafizabad and by the virtue of increase in population of the district, number of blocks have reached to 1600.

He said that in view of new census, survey teams constituted by the election commission were completed registration of votes satisfactory. He expressed these views while talking to journalists District Election Commissioner Office Hafizabad after visiting different areas to check performance of registration and survey teams in the district Hafizabad.

Replaying to question, Zahid Subhani said that Election Commission of Pakistan have issued notification of new demarcation of constituencies of assemblies initially while special facilitation centre and objection center have been setup at Election Commission Secretariat Islamabad. He said that objection could be file against demarcation of new constituencies till 27, October whereas maps of new constituencies were available according to law to deposit fee.

Four confirmed dengue cases surfaced in Lakki Marwat

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The fatal dengue disease could not raise its head in Lakki Marwat district as only four confirmed cases surfaced during the last eight months of the current year. It was disclosed during a meeting of the dengue control and prevention committee chaired by additional deputy commissioner Habibullah Wazir, said an official on Sunday.



MINGORA: PML-N leader Amir Muqam addressing party workers in Swat.

Concerne about water supply

Areeba Sikandar

Iam writing to express my concerns regarding the current state of our water supply system and to bring attention to some pressing issues that need to be addressed.

Firstly, there have been frequent disruptions in the water supply in our locality. The inconsistent availability of clean and safe drinking water is a matter of great concern for the residents. It not only hampers our daily activities but also poses a risk to our health and hygiene.

Secondly, the quality of the water supplied to our homes needs to be closely monitored. There have been instances where the water has had a strange odor or taste, raising doubts about its purity. It is essential to ensure that the water we consume meets the necessary quality standards to safeguard our well-being.

Furthermore, the aging infrastructure of the water supply system is in dire need of repair and maintenance. Frequent leaks, burst pipes, and low water pressure are common issues faced by residents. These not only lead to wastage of water but also inconvenience the community.

I would like to urge the concerned authorities to take immediate action to address these issues. It is crucial to invest in upgrading the infrastructure, conducting regular quality checks, and implementing measures to ensure uninterrupted water supply to all residents.

In conclusion, access to clean and reliable water is a basic necessity, and it is imperative that we work together to resolve the challenges faced by our water supply system. I hope that through your platform, we can raise awareness and prompt the necessary actions to improve the situation. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing positive changes in our water supply system.

No place for new political party: Rana

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader and former federal minister Rana Tanveer Hussain has said that the country was not in position to accommodate any more political party as there were already a lot of political parties in the country.

He expressed these views while talking to media persons in Sharqpur Sharif Sheikhupura on Sunday. Rana Tanveer Hussain claimed that the only political party which was making efforts to serve the country and masses was the PML-N. He further stated that Shahid Khaqan Abbasi should stay in his party which honored him and made him the prime minister.

He said that the PML-N workers and leaders would extend warm and historic welcome to party supremo Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif upon his return to home.

ANP to take control of higher education and gas, says Hoti

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Awami National Party central leader and former chief minister Ameer Haidar Khan Hoti has said that education will be his top priority if his party comes into power in the province again. He was addressing a party workers' convention at Chakdara here late on Saturday. He said that his party had come into power with the support of the people, not with the support of Generals and establishment. The convention was also addressed by the ANP central vice president Hussain Shah Yousafzai, district president Haji Bahadar Khan, party candidate for PK-16 Wasil Khan, tehsil president Allah Dad Khan and others. Several political activists on the occasion announced to join the ANP.

Hoti said the PTI chief ministers Pervaz Khattak and Mehmood Khan had the support of Generals and establishment but where they were now. The ANP leader alleged that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was being targeted again as terrorists were carrying out sabotage acts. He said the ANP would never allow the perpetrators to succeed in their nefarious designs.

The former chief minister claimed the province had witnessed a record of

development projects when he was the chief minister despite militancy being at its peak. He said the ANP had prioritized education in its tenure. "We established several universities", he said, adding that higher education and gas would be taken into provincial authority if the ANP came in power again.

Delimitation: Speaking at a news conference at the Chakdara press club here on Sunday, the JUI-F deputy general secretary Bakht Naseem, JUI-F Kotigram emir Qari Hazrat Habib, Maulana Rahatul Mulk, Maulana Khan Badshah and others complained that the Kotigram union council had been illogically included in PK-15 Khall. They said the people of Kotigram would never accept the election commission of Pakistan's delimitation. The JUI-F activists said that the Kotigram union council was earlier part of the PK-16 Adenzai as geographically and historically it had been its part. They demanded the ECP to include the Kotigram union council in PK-16 instead of PK-15.

A social activist Akbar Khan and workers of the Awami National Party also expressed reservation on delimitation of constituencies in Lower Dir. Talking to this reporter, they said that union council Mian

Kalay, a major UC of Munda tehsil had been included in PK-18 without locals' consent. They demanded the ECP to include the UC of Mian Kalay in PK-17.

However, the residents of Kambat, Darangal and Miskini union councils have expressed pleasure and satisfaction on its inclusion in PK-18 as earlier those UCs were part of PK-14 Lal Qila Maidan.

According to the preliminary delimitation, the number of provincial assembly seats in Lower Dir district remained the same as five in the previous term. However, some of the areas have been merged to new constituencies thus compelling locals to record their reservations. The PK-14 Lower Dir-I has the Lal Qila tehsil and three union councils of Balambat tehsil including Lajbok, Hayaserai and Balambat. Similarly PK-15 Lower Dir-II has the Khall tehsil, Balambat tehsil excluding its three UCs and Kotigram union council of Adenzai tehsil. The rest of Adenzai tehsil has been made PK-16 Lower Dir III, Timergara tehsil and Munda tehsil excluding UC Mian Kalay has been declared PK-17 Lower Dir IV while Samarbagh tehsil and UC Mian Kalay of Munda has been declared PK-18 Lower Dir V.

Workshop on SLO and E-Marking conducted

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A workshop organised on SLO (Student Learning Outcomes) and E-Marking at ANSI Degree College Mardan. The workshop was conducted by the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, with the aim of enhancing faculty's understanding of SLO and E-Marking procedures.

Dr. Tariq Mahmood, the esteemed Director of ORIC AWKUM, served as the resource person for the workshop. Leveraging his extensive knowledge and expertise, Dr. Mahmood delivered a comprehensive lecture to faculty members, shedding light on the sig-

nificance and implementation of SLO and E-Marking in educational institutions.

The workshop received praise for its commendable initiative in promoting quality education, which is the need of the hour. Dr. Tariq Mahmood showcased exceptional professionalism and dedication throughout the session, ensuring that faculty members comprehended the subject matter and actively participated.

Faculty members from ANSI, Mardan, appreciated the administrative efforts behind organizing such initiatives. They emphasized the importance of such activities in improving their teaching methods and expressed their interest in future workshops on related

topics.

In conclusion, Director Administration, Muhammad Nasir Afridi, expressed gratitude to Dr. Tariq Mahmood for his valuable collaboration during the workshop. He also commended the faculty for their cooperation and active participation, which played a significant role in the success of the event.

ANSI Degree College, Mardan, is a renowned educational institution committed to providing quality education and promoting academic excellence. With a focus on innovation and research, ANSI aims to equip its students with essential skills and knowledge for exemplary performance in their respective fields.



QUETTA: President of Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran Balochistan Raheem Agha addressing a press conference.

Engineers asked to work for people of Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) was held on Sunday. A large number of engineers from all over Pakistan participated the moot. A sizeable number of young engineers from every corner of Balochistan also showed up for the meeting.

The meeting presided over by Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council Engr Najeeb Haroon was graced by Balochistan Governor Malik Wali Khan Kakar, Minister for Education Qadir buzzard Minister information Jan Achakzai former mister Science and technology Changaiz Jamali and Senator Ruksana Zubari.

Engr Najeeb Haroon shared the performance of the Council during the last two years. He said over 2500 young engineers have

been inducted in the industry under the Graduate Internship Program launched by the council. He further said this program would continue in the future.

Engr. Haroon said the council is trying its level best to attract young people to engineers education as this trend is on decline because of other professions fields in the education. In order to do so the Council has started STEM education to engage school going students so that the engineering education could be encouraged.

Engr. Haroon also shared the detail of the efforts that PEC has taken to tackle the issue if cost escalation of development projects in the country. Talking about the issue of technologists, he said all three sections of engineering such as engineers, technologists and technicians have their sepa-

rate domains. They shall continue playing their part in the development of the country.

He informed the moot of the performance of the Committees of the Council working in various sector. Malik Wali Khan Kakar, Governor Balochistan said he was happy to see such a congregation of engineers in his province. We can make best use of engineers for Balochistan. We appreciate their expertise.

He said the engineers should play their part in renewable technologies and power as our province is facing very different situation in power sector. We are facing days of loadshedding in rural areas. He called upon engineers to work for the people of Balochistan. He touched the quality of works and referred to issues developed in the dams during recent floods in Balochistan.



Armenia grapples with multiple challenges after the fall of Nagorno-Karabakh

NAGORNO-KARBAAK (AP): Tens of thousands of now-homeless people have streamed into Armenia from the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, controlled by its emboldened adversary, Azerbaijan. Swarms of protesters are filling the streets of the Armenian capital of Yerevan, demanding the prime minister's ouster. Relations with Russia, an old ally and protector, have frayed amid mutual accusations.

Armenia now finds itself facing multiple challenges after being suddenly thrust into one of the worst political crises in its decades of independence following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. Developments unfolded with surprising speed after Azerbaijan waged a lightning military campaign in Nagorno-Karabakh, a majority ethnic Armenian region that has run its affairs for three decades without international recognition. Starved of supplies by an Azerbaijani blockade and outnumbered by a military bolstered by Turkey, the separatist forces capitulated in 24 hours and their political leaders said they would dissolve their government by the end of the year.

That triggered a massive exodus by the ethnic Armenians who feared living under Azerbaijani rule. Over 80% of the region's 120,000 residents hastily packed their belongings and trudged in a grueling and slow journey over the single mountain road into impoverished Armenia, which is struggling to accommodate them. Enraged and exasperated over the loss of their homeland, they will likely support almost daily protests against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who has been blamed by the opposition for failing to defend Nagorno-Karabakh.

"There's a tremendous amount of anger and frustration directed at Nikol Pashinyan," said Laurence



Broers, an expert on the region at Chatham House. Pashinyan's economically challenged government has to provide them quickly with housing, medical care and jobs. While the global Armenian diaspora has pledged to help, it poses major financial and logistical problems for the landlocked country. While many Armenians resent the country's former top officials who lead the opposition and also hold them responsible for the current woes, observers point to a history of bloodshed. In 1999, gunmen barged into the Armenian parliament during a question-and-answer session, killing Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, the parliament speaker and six other top officials and lawmakers. "There is a kind of tradition of political assassination in Armenian culture," said Thomas de Waal, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Europe think tank.

He and other observers note that one factor in Pashinyan's favor is that whatever simmering anger there is

against him, there is just as much directed toward Russia, Armenia's main ally. After a six-week war in 2020 that saw Azerbaijan reclaim part of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding territories, Russia sent about 2,000 peacekeeping troops to the region under a Kremlin-brokered truce. Pashinyan has accused the peacekeepers of failing to prevent the recent hostilities by Azerbaijan, which also could make new territorial threats against Armenia.

Russia has been distracted by its war in Ukraine, which has eroded its influence in the region and made the Kremlin reluctant to defy Azerbaijan and its main ally Turkey, a key economic partner for Moscow amid Western sanctions. "Clearly, this Azerbaijani military operation would not have been possible if the Russian peacekeepers had tried to keep the peace, but they just basically stood down," de Waal said. The Kremlin, in turn, has sought to shift the blame to Pashinyan, accusing him of precipi-

tating the fall of Nagorno-Karabakh by acknowledging Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the region and damaging Armenia's ties with Russia by embracing the West.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has long been suspicious of Pashinyan, a former journalist who came to power in 2018 after leading protests that ousted the previous government. Even before Azerbaijan's operation to reclaim control of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia had vented anger at Armenia for hosting US troops for joint military drills and moving to recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court after it had indicted Putin for war crimes connected to the deportation of children from Ukraine. The bad feelings escalated after the fall of Nagorno-Karabakh, with Moscow assailing Pashinyan in harsh language that hadn't been heard before.

The Russian Foreign Ministry blasted "the inconsistent stance of the Armenian leadership, which flip-flopped on policy and sought Western support over working closely with Russia and Azerbaijan." In what sounded like encouragement of demonstrations against Pashinyan, Russia declared that "the reckless approach by Nikol Pashinyan's team understandably fueled discontent among parts of Armenian society, which showed itself in popular protests," even as it denied that Moscow played any part in fueling the rallies. "The Armenian leadership is making a huge mistake by deliberately attempting to sever Armenia's multifaceted and centuries-old ties with Russia, making the country a hostage to Western geopolitical games," it said.

It remains unclear whether Pashinyan might take Armenia out of Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization, a group

of several former Soviet nations, and other Russia-led alliances. Armenia also hosts a Russian military base and Russian border guards help patrol Armenia's frontier with Turkey. Despite the worsening rift, Pashinyan has refrained from threats to rupture links with Moscow, but he emphasized the need to bolster security and other ties with the West. It could be challenging for the US and its allies to replace Moscow as Armenia's main sponsors. Russia is Armenia's top trading partner and it is home to an estimated 1 million Armenians, who would strongly resist any attempt by Pashinyan to break ties with Moscow.

"Economically speaking, strategically speaking, Russia is still very deeply embedded in the Armenian economy in terms of energy supply and ownership over key strategic assets," Broers said. "It's going to need a lot of creativity from other partners for Armenia to broaden out its foreign policy." The future of the Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh, which were supposed to stay through 2025, is unclear. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said their status needs to be negotiated with Azerbaijan. Broers said Azerbaijan could allow a small number of Russian peacekeepers to stay in Nagorno-Karabakh to help promote its program to "integrate" the region.

"This would be face-saving for Moscow," he said. "This would substantiate the integration agenda that is being promoted by Azerbaijan." Even though the peacekeepers didn't try to prevent Azerbaijan from reclaiming Nagorno-Karabakh, the Russian troops' presence in Armenia helps counter potential moves by Azerbaijan and Turkey to pressure Yerevan on some contested issues. Baku has long demanded that

Armenia offer a corridor to Azerbaijan's exclave of Nakhchivan, which is separated from the rest of the country by a 40-kilometer (25-mile) swath of Armenian territory. The region, which also borders Turkey and Iran, has a population of about 460,000.

The deal that ended the 2020 war envisaged reopening rail and road links to Nakhchivan that have been cut since the start of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but their restoration has stalled amid continuing tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has warned it could use force to secure the corridor if Armenia keeps stonewalling the issue, and there have been fears in Armenia that the corridor could infringe on its sovereignty. "I think there is extreme concern about this in Armenia, given the very dramatic military asymmetry between Armenia and Azerbaijan today and given the fact that Russia has ostensibly abdicated its role as a security guarantor for Armenia," Broers said.

De Waal noted that Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev hosted Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Nakhchivan on Monday and talked about southern Armenia as a historic Azerbaijani land "in a rather provocative way." Despite Western calls for Azerbaijan to respect Armenia's sovereignty as well as strong signals from Iran, which also has warned Azerbaijan not to use force against Armenia, tensions remain high, he noted. "The issue is to what extent Azerbaijan and Turkey, backed maybe quietly by Russia, push this issue," de Waal said. "Do they just sort of try and force Armenia at the negotiating table or do they actually start to use force to try and get what they want? This is the scenario everyone fears."

Mexico's slams US aid for Ukraine

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico's president slammed US aid for Ukraine and economic sanctions on Venezuela, Cuba and other nations as the first of two high-level US-Mexico meetings got underway in Washington.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador issued a broad criticism of US foreign policy, saying US economic sanctions were forcing people to emigrate from Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. The harsh comments came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and Trade Representative Katherine Tai met their Mexican counterparts at the State Department. None of the officials, including Mexican Foreign Secretary Alicia Bárcena and Secretary of Economy Raquel Buenrostro, addressed or were asked about López Obrador's comments.

Instead they concentrated on expanded trade and economic ties, hailing new cooperation on those fronts, and stressed their commitment to fight the surge of synthetic opioids like fentanyl into the US from Mexico. "By creating the right incentives and business environments and harnessing our two

nations' respective strengths, we have a tremendous opportunity to make North America the most competitive, the most productive, the most dynamic region in the world," Blinken said.

"We're continuing to strengthen, to expand, and diversify supply chains in emerging industries like electric vehicles and semiconductors," he said, noting that the US and Mexico are launching a new initiative to produce semiconductors. Although talks focused on commerce issues, Blinken will lead a US delegation to Mexico next week with Attorney General Merrick Garland and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas that will focus on border security and migration.

The State Department said in a statement that Blinken would be meeting López Obrador during the Oct. 4-5 trip. Experts say economic mismanagement and political repression are largely to blame for the tide of migrants leaving Venezuela and Cuba. López Obrador said the United States should spend some of the money sent to Ukraine on economic development in Latin America.

"They (the US) don't do

Ukraine lures Western weapons makers

KYIV (Reuters): President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he wants to turn Ukraine's defence industry into a "large military hub" by partnering with Western weapons manufacturers to increase arms supplies for Kyiv's counteroffensive against Russia. He was speaking at a forum his government convened with international producers to discuss how to jointly develop industrial capacity to build and repair weapons in Ukraine despite constant Russian bombardment.

"Ukraine is in such a phase of the defence marathon when it is very important, critical to go forward without retreating. Results from the frontline are needed daily," Zelenskyy told executives representing more than 250 Western weapons producers. "We are interested in localizing production of equipment needed for our defence and each of those advanced defence systems which are used by our soldiers, giving Ukraine the best results at the front today," he told the forum in Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said that air defence and de-mining were his immediate priorities. Ukraine also aims to boost domestic production of missiles, drones and artillery ammunition. Kyiv began its counteroffensive in early June to try to recapture territories seized by Russia, which still controls about 18% of the Ukrainian territory.

UN to vote on resolution to authorize one-year deployment of armed force to help Haiti fight gangs

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP): The UN Security Council is scheduling a vote Monday on a resolution that would authorize a one-year deployment of an international force to help Haiti quell a surge in gang violence and restore security so the troubled Caribbean nation can hold long-delayed elections.

The US-drafted resolution obtained by The Associated Press welcomes Kenya's offer to lead the multinational security force. It makes clear this would be a non-UN force funded by voluntary contributions. The resolution would authorize the force for one year, with a review after nine months. The force would be allowed to provide operational support to Haiti's National Police, which is underfunded and under resourced, with only some 10,000 active officers for a country of more than 11 million people.

The resolution says the force would help build capacity of local police "through the planning and conduct of joint security support operations as it works to counter gangs and improve security conditions in Haiti." The force would also help secure "critical infrastructure sites and transit locations such as the airport, ports, and key intersections." Powerful gangs have seized control of key roads leading from Haiti's capital to the country's northern and southern regions, disrupting the transportation of food and other goods.

Passage by the Security Council would authorize the force to "adopt urgent temporary measures on an exceptional basis" to prevent the

loss of life and help police maintain public safety. Leaders of the mission would be required to inform the council on the mission's goals, rules of engagement, financial needs and other matters before a full deployment.

A spokesman for Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry said he wasn't aware of the resolution or the upcoming vote and said the government did not immediately have comment.

The resolution condemns "the increasing violence, criminal activities, and human rights abuses and violations which undermine the peace, stability, and security of Haiti and the region, including kidnappings, sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, homicides, extrajudicial killings, as well as arms smuggling." If adopted, it would mark the first time a force has been deployed to Haiti since the UN approved a stabilization mission in June 2004 that was marred by a sexual abuse scandal and the introduction of cholera. That mission ended in October 2017.

Concerns also have surrounded the proposed Kenyan-led mission, with critics noting that police in the East Africa country have long been accused of using torture, deadly force and other abuses. The resolution stresses that all those participating in the proposed mission must take necessary action to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse as well as vet all personnel. It also demands swift investigations of any allegations of misconduct. In addition, the

resolution warns that those involved in the mission must adopt wastewater management and other environmental control to prevent the introduction and spread of water-borne diseases, such as cholera.

It wasn't immediately clear how big the force would be if approved, although Kenya's government has previously proposed sending 1,000 police officers. In addition, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Antigua and Barbuda have pledged to send personnel. Last month, the administration of US President Joe Biden promised to provide logistics and \$100 million to support a Kenyan-led force.

The resolution notes that the Security Council intends to impose additional sanctions on Jimmy Chérizier, known as "Barbecue," who heads Haiti's biggest gang alliance. Chérizier, a former police officer, recently warned that he would fight any armed force suspected of abuses. The proposed resolution comes nearly a year after Haiti's prime minister and other top government officials requested the immediate deployment of a foreign armed force as the government struggles to fight violent gangs estimated to control up to 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince.

From Jan. 1 to Aug. 15, more than 2,400 people in Haiti were reported killed, more than 950 kidnapped and 902 injured, according to the most recent UN statistics. More than 200,000 others have been displaced by violence, with many crammed in makeshift shelters after gangs pilaged their communities.

WhatsApp to war: How Cubans were recruited to fight for Russia

LA FEDERAL, Cuba (Reuters): Cuban seamstress Yamidely Cervantes has bought a new sewing machine for the first time in years, plus a refrigerator and a cellphone - all on Russia's dime.

She said her 49-year-old husband Enrique Gonzalez, a struggling bricklayer, left their home in the small town of La Federal on July 19 to fight for the Russian army in Ukraine. Days later, he wired her part of his signing-on bonus of about 200,000 roubles (\$2,040) which she received in Cuban pesos, Cervantes told Reuters. That represents a windfall on the economically stricken communist-run island. It's more than 100 times the average monthly state salary of 4,209 pesos (\$17), according to the national statistics office.

Few places feel the pinch more than La Federal, a community of about 800 people on the outskirts of Havana where one in four residents are unemployed, government data for 2022 shows. On the 100-meter dirt road where Cervantes lives, at least three men have left for Russia since June, and another had sold his home in anticipation of going, she said.

"You can count on one hand those who are left," the 42-year-old said as she surveyed the street from a small terrace where she'd repurposed two broken toilet bowls as flower pots. "Necessity is what is driving this." Reuters traced the stories of those four men, together with more than a dozen other Cubans recruited to go to

Russia from districts in and around the capital Havana, ranging from a builder and a shopkeeper to a refinery worker and phone company employee. Eleven of the men ended up flying to Russia while the other seven got cold feet at the last moment. Interviews with many of the men plus friends and relatives, together with a trove of WhatsApp messages, travel papers, photos and phone numbers they provided to corroborate their accounts, paint the most detailed picture yet of how Cubans are flocking to shore up Moscow's war machine.

The Kremlin and Russian defence ministry didn't respond to queries about Cubans being recruited for their military. The Cuban government also didn't respond to queries for this article. News of Cubans ending up in the Russian military hit headlines this month when the Havana government - a longstanding ally of Russia that says it is "not part of the war in Ukraine" - said it had arrested 17 people connected with a human-trafficking ring that lured Cubans to fight for Moscow. Reuters could not establish the identities of those involved in the alleged trafficking ring and when or whether they were arrested. The recruits identified by Reuters volunteered to go to Russia to work for the military following overtures on social media from a recruiter who identified herself as "Dayana". In La Federal, for example, all nine recruits identified by Reuters signed up to fight in the war. In Alamar, an eastern Havana

suburb, most of the five men signed up for non-fighting roles such as in construction, packaging of provisions and logistics.

Cervantes' husband Gonzalez, speaking via video call from a Russian military base outside the city of Tula, south of Moscow, told Reuters he was one of 119 Cubans training there. When he arrived in Russia, he said, he had signed a contract to work for the military, translated into Spanish. "Everyone here knew what they were coming for," he said, smiling in military garb as he gave Reuters a digital phone tour of the camp, ringed by pine trees. "They came for the war." Gonzalez said the 119 Cubans there were being trained to fight in the war, though still wasn't clear where they'd be sent. "I have several friends in Ukraine, and they are in places where bombs are falling but they haven't actually been in confrontations with Ukrainians," he added. "Everything is good here, but when we go there, we will be in a war zone." Reuters was unable to contact any of the other men who joined the military, though confirmed via WhatsApp messages and photos that they had flown to Russia and two are now in Crimea.

Contacted for comment on the recruitment of Cubans into the Russian military, Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman Oleg Nikolenko said: "I can confirm that the Ukrainian embassy in Havana has reached out to the Cuban authorities

on this matter." A US State Department spokesperson said the United States was monitoring the situation closely. "We are deeply concerned by reports alleging young Cubans have been deceived and recruited to fight for Russia," the spokesperson said.

The Cuban recruitment activity identified by Reuters began weeks after a May decree issued by President Vladimir Putin that allowed foreigners who enlisted with the military on year-long contracts to receive Russian citizenship via a fast-track process, along with their spouses, children and parents. In La Federal, word of the army work began to spread in June, according to the residents interviewed. Offers to join up, shared via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, became the talk of the town, with Dayana named as the contact. More than two dozen young men interviewed by Reuters in and around Havana spoke of the scale of the exodus. Cristian Hernandez, 24, broke into laughter when asked how many people had left the area around La Federal. "A ton of people," he said. "Almost all of our friends have gone over there." Yoan Viondi, 23, who lives a few-minute bike ride up the road from the main drag, said he knew about 100 men in Villa Maria, the district that includes La Federal, had been recruited for the Russian war effort since June.

He said a friend gave him the WhatsApp contact for Dayana, a

Cuban woman who he said bought plane tickets for recruits. Dayana was also mentioned as a key contact by most of the recruits and relatives Reuters spoke with. Viondi wasted no time. "Hi, good afternoon," Viondi said to her in a July 21 message, viewed by Reuters. "Please I need information." Dayana, who appears in her chat icon as a dark-haired woman in a camouflage cap, responded with contract terms almost instantaneously, according to time stamps. The first line of the message states: "This is a contract with the Russian military by which you receive citizenship." The contract was for one year and offered a signing bonus of 195,000 roubles followed by a monthly salary of 200,000 roubles, plus 15 days of vacation after the first six months of work. Those terms are in line with those relayed to Reuters by other recruits and their families.

"If you're in agreement, you should just send (a copy of) your passport," Dayana's message read. Within two minutes, Viondi had sent a digital copy of his passport. One hour later, Dayana responded in an audio message heard by Reuters: "Perfect, tomorrow I'll be able to tell you what day you will travel," she said. Reuters was unable to reach Dayana for comment on the number used by Viondi and others, or to confirm her full name.

In the end, despite his initial enthusiasm, Viondi became anxious about going to Russia and cut contact with

Dayana. He stressed that the people who signed up in La Federal knew they would be going to fight. "It's hard living here. Everyone said, 'If I choose this, I won't die of hunger in Cuba,'" he said. "But they knew where they were going. I knew perfectly well where I was going too." Viondi told Reuters neither Dayana, nor anyone else, had asked him to keep their interactions a secret.

He said he maintained contact with at least four friends who had signed contracts in Russia with the army and that, as far as he knew, "they were fine". Most, he said, were now in Ukraine. Cuba is mired in its worst economic crisis in decades, with long lines for even the basics like food, fuel and healthcare, spurring an exodus of Cubans to the US, Latin America and Europe last year. Alina Gonzalez, president of a neighborhood block committee in La Federal tasked with mobilizing support for the communist-run government, recalled the excitement stirred by the Russian military work. Many men jumped at the opportunity in her neighborhood, she said, including her nephew Danilo. "The one that lives over there? He went with his wife and two children. That one over there, with his wife. And the mother of another lives further down," she said. Roberto Sabori told Reuters that many of the men who left - including his 30-year-old son, Yasmani - had done so in a hurry, keeping their plans secret from even their families.

The Frontier Post

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New Delhi’s aegis of terrorism

INTERIOR Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has recently announced that the Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), was involved in the recent terror attacks in Balochistan. According to Bugti, those playing the role of a facilitator and perpetrators, all are being handled by the RAW and they must be ready to meet their dreadful end. Bugti vowed to pursue terrorists to their dens whether it is Daesh or TTP, BLA or BLF or anyone else committing violence under any banner and in any guise.

Pakistan has been a victim of foreign-sponsored violence and terrorism over the past decades, as the terrorists who enjoy safe havens and backing abroad weighed the bloodshed of innocent Pakistanis over the two decades that have been acknowledged worldwide and attracted remorse and condemnation from across the globe. The current revelation of New Delhi's involvement in exporting violence in neighbouring countries is not a new phenomenon as Pakistan and Pakistanis are well versed with the draconian face of India's Secularism, Chanakya's fascism and BJP Hindu ultra-nationalism, which has reduced space for religious minorities during the Modi's regime in Bharat. India has waged an undeclared secret war against its neighbours in pursuit of its quest for a mini power in South Asia whose influence ripples from the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan in the west to the Andaman Islands in the Far East.

Realistically, Pakistan had been the primary target of the Indian leadership for exporting terrorism and sponsoring Baloch and Sindhi separatist elements to implement the so-called nefarious theory of Maha-Bharat, because Islamabad had been the toughest hurdle in the implementation of New Delhi's agenda for regional supremacy in the South Asia. The government of Pakistan has time and again sensitized the world about India's involvement in terrorism in its country. Ranging from the arrest and conviction of Indian Naval officer, Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav by Pakistani security forces in Balochistan in March 2016 to eye-opening revelations of Brussels-based EU Disinfo Lab about New Delhi-sponsored network of online propaganda news outlets, fake think tanks that weighed a propaganda campaign against Islamabad. The Pakistan Foreign Office has specifically briefed the UN Security Council and diplomats of important nations along with providing dossiers to them containing irrefutable evidence of Indian state sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan on Nov 05, 2020. Islamabad repeated this practice multiple times after that but the so-called civilized world did not move an inch until the same charges were levelled by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Treadu against New Delhi when an Indian Diplomat blatantly abused his official stature and masterminded the killing of a Canadian Sikh leader in a busy street in British Columbia.

Interestingly, the information of the alleged Indian conspiracy for the assassination of a Sikh leader and proof of Involvement of Indian Diplomat was initially shared by the US Intelligence Community with their Canadian Counterpart and currently entire Western bloc has recognized New Delhi's anti-minorities and anti-neighbour agenda, however, Western leaders are unlikely to raise their voice against India neither they will support the freedom movements of Sikhs and Kashmiri Muslims which not only well aligned with UN charter but categorically acknowledged by the global forum in the past.

In fact, sponsorship of terrorism in neighbouring nations and the use of suppressive techniques/ atrocities as a state policy to suppress lawful political movements and the UN's conferred right to self-determination of people of Jammu and Kashmir is undoubtedly, an undemocratic and condemnable attitude of Indian leaders that must be resisted by the civilized nations in the world. As of now, this fire of hate and hegemonism has reached Western capitals, If Western leaders do not come to sense now they will feel regret for their policies throughout the future.

Need for a digital payment system

PAKISTAN is a developing economy, with limited resources, and the least government control and regulations, which not only disturbed the pace of development but strengthened cartelization in almost all sectors if our national life. The process of digitalization was first commenced in the country when the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was constituted in the late 90s and computerized National Identify Cards were issued to all citizens. After the digitalization of the populace, the numeration of businesses, banks and state institutions including FBR, LEAs, the ECP, Excise and Taxation, and others was a mere task of months that is still a bulkwork over more than two decades. Pakistan's backwardness and depletion could easily be assessed through the fact that multiple African countries including Ethiopia and Kynea had already achieved those economic milestones that our leaders are considering at this time.

This institutional slackness has cost a heavy price to the nation, as non-digitization of business led to tax evasion, lax regulatory regimes prompted cartelization and currency manipulation by the private banks, hoarding of fuels by the power companies and smuggling of currency by the forex dealers. Meanwhile, the absence of a national digital payment system restricted funds inflows/outflows from the country, seriously undermined online trade, crashed cryptocurrency trading and blocked a vast freelance market for Pakistani youth. Hence, the rulers' policy of adhocism and passing tenure in a calm and relaxed mood has brought the nation to this stage where each nook and corner of our national life demands reform, strict monitoring and supervision by the regulators which previously remained involved in money making and corruption only.

The caretaker government currently mulls over the prospects of launching a sovereign, secure and efficient national digital payment system, which contributes toward the digitization of the overall economy. In fact, our country has missed tremendous political, and economic opportunities in the past due to miscalculated and wrong priorities of our leaders. The current day realities not only merit the launch of a sovereign digital payment system but also demand the use and strict regulation of multi-billion market cryptocurrency that has been banned for the nation by purblind leaders in recent years. After all, the modern age demands competition with challenges as elusive policies proved to be disastrous for our nation.

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



Learning for a digital world

Shahbaz Khan

WE are currently living in an era of digital transformation and innovation, with the world being increasingly interconnected by digital technologies. The digital transformation in education systems has contributed significantly to enhancing equity and inclusion.

It has strengthened the quality of education at all levels, ensuring universal access to basic education and beyond. As presented in the 2015 Qingdao Declaration on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education, technology can expand the learning opportunities to reduce the long-existing divides among students, and is of critical importance to the outcome of education and skills development.

Acting as the lead agency for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), UNESCO is dedicated to the vision of guaranteeing quality education for a sustainable and shared future. UNESCO is committed to promoting policy dialogue, enhancing institutional capacity, promoting best practices, setting standards and supporting educational transformation to contribute to poverty alleviation.

As highlighted in the Education 2030: United Nations Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, "there is an urgent need for children, youth and adults to develop throughout life the flexible skills and competencies they need to live and work in a more secure, sustainable, interdependent, knowledge-based and technology-driven world". Education is pivotal to achieving some key objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative, especially skills development aligned with infrastructure development.

The United Nations Transforming Education Summit held in 2022 has five core action areas, among which digital learning, green skills and technical and vocational skills are aligned with the Belt and Road Initiative, digital economy, green economy and knowledge society. All Belt and Road countries have expressed their commitment to the United Nations Transforming Education Summit. Furthermore, UNESCO's global education agenda platform on skills development, higher education exchange and student mobility is closely aligned with the Belt and Road

Initiative.

UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-29 places gender equality and Africa as strategic priorities. UNESCO has joined hands with the Chinese government and institutions in China to implement common projects aimed at advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically SDG4 on quality education. The major education targets aligned with the Belt and Road Initiative are aimed at upgrading the skills of the workforce in the member states, to promote sustainable development by empowering local communities, to embrace global solidarity and partnership, and to bring shared prosperity for all. Before the establishment of the Belt and Road Initiative, UNESCO had already implemented education, culture and science programs in the Belt and Road countries with the support of the Chinese government under the various global education and cultural platforms. In particular, in 2012, the UNESCO-China-Funds-In-Trust (CFIT) project was launched among the Belt and Road countries. It focused on "Harnessing Technology for Quality Teacher Training in Africa". It enhanced quality teacher training, policy and ICT teacher competencies in African countries. The beneficiary countries were Ethiopia, Namibia and Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, DR Congo, Liberia, Tanzania and Uganda. The project is a perfect model for deepening South-South cooperation between China and African countries aligned with Belt and Road platforms.

In Belt and Road countries, UNESCO has promoted science, technology and innovation policies and enhanced institutional capacity. The UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED) based at Beijing Normal University has contributed under the Belt and Road Initiative toward enhancing capacity in Belt and Road countries in Africa by focusing on quality of rural education. UNESCO has also established the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) to strengthen the institutional capacity of African countries. Some of the capacity building activities of IICBA and conferences have been supported by Chinese insti-

tutions through UNESCO. IICBA organized a peer review meeting for the project entitled "Play and Resilience: A China-Africa Collaboration Project for Building a Peaceful and Sustainable Future" in 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main purpose of the workshop was to review some of the resource materials developed by the project teams and to create a venue to allow different countries to learn from each other and harvest good practices. The Belt and Road Initiative is strategically aligned with the UNESCO Global Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strategy and all member states are urged to prioritize and transform TVET systems to provide quality skills training for the youth. The enhanced institutional capacity of TVET Institutions in Belt and Road countries have provided the critical human resources required under the infrastructure projects implemented under the Belt and Road Initiative. Green skills, digitalization and automation require the curriculum system and programs of higher education institutions to be transformed to meet the labor market demands in the Belt and Road countries. The TVET Global Network of UNESCO affiliated TVET Institutions (UNEVOC Centers) has played a significant role in enhancing the capacity of TVET Institutions and assisted in skills development in the Belt and Road countries.

Under the theme of "Strengthening higher technical education in Africa for a technical and innovative workforce", the latest phase of the UNESCO-China-Funds-In-Trust (CFIT) project has been launched in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Universities and polytechnic institutes in Côte d'Ivoire have carried out campaigns to raise awareness of STEM education for girls, whilst also providing hands-on training and workshops about mechanical engineering, telecommunications and robotics. Digital skills and competencies can increase the prospects of employability, which highlights the importance of upgrading the TVET system in alignment with the changes brought by digital transformation, the digital economy and the green economy. Another

important element of inclusion in the ICT, which can promote digital competencies and ensure an equal access to information, is open educational resources. The sharing of online learning resources has also been part of the cooperation between China and Mongolia. Supported by the UN MPTF (Multi-Partner Trust Fund) joint project in Mongolia, education resources were mobilized and global dialogue facilitated between universities during COVID-19. Last year, the China-Mongolia Online Education Dialogue 2022 was hosted by the Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance, which intended to deepen the collaboration between the education institutions of both countries, and had digital transformation in higher education as the common ground. It is important for higher education institutions to jointly advance the road of digital transformation and delivery of quality education.

UNESCO and the Belt and Road Initiative programs are complementary and mutually reinforcing, as evidenced by the proactive engagement of various UNESCO institutions, knowledge networks and platforms. They promote exchange and cooperation on many platforms given the UNESCO member states are Belt and Road countries. Further opportunities can be explored to expand the scope of cooperation between UNESCO and China within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. As emphasized in the 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report on Technology in Education, the effective use of technology can address some of the challenges in education. But it is critical for education systems to deploy technologies in an appropriate manner that suits every student's learning needs. UNESCO is committed to supporting joint initiatives to share good practices in education and skills development, and build capacity and knowledge networks which can lead to the strengthening of education systems globally. Under the existing United Nations frameworks for education, UNESCO and China can further promote policy dialogue, enhance institutional capacities and share good practices to contribute toward building a sustainable future and shared prosperity for all leaving no one behind.

The China Daily

Cultural exchange programs open up worlds of artistic treasures

Sara Al-Mulla

THE interplay of diverse cultures coming together often produces a wondrous tableau of artistic brilliance that can enrich regional and global creative landscapes. On this note, cultural exchange initiatives are an ode to unleashed imaginations, where distinct artistic identities representing various cultures are celebrated on a grand scale across borders. Cultural touchpoints also accentuate the interwoven nature of global cultural heritage and are increasingly becoming an elemental part of many diplomacy efforts between nations to highlight the vibrancy of their creative industries.

Regional governments can leverage these exciting projects with leading culture capitals, cultural institutions, and world-class artists to bolster their cultural and creative industries in stellar ways, while catering to an ever-expanding local demand for the arts. A wide range of partnership avenues can be explored within this context, such as film screenings, collection loans, translation projects, artist residencies, traveling art exhibitions, culinary fusions, performing arts shows, or fashion collections blending different aesthetics and cultural influences. Local audiences unable to travel far can still savor the rich palette of global cultures in many ways, such as visiting a museum that is exhibiting historic collections on loan from renowned global cultural institutions, attending a themed art gallery show, or going to the opera to be enthralled by a live performance. In addition to such experiences proving to be potentially transformative, audiences can cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of these diverse artistic expressions, while broadening their perspectives on the interconnectivity of global cultures.

At the same time, aspiring local talents can access unique educational opportunities offered by renowned global experts in order to hone their competencies within the many creative and cultural disciplines, such as the preservation of local artworks and heritage artefacts. Moreover, such partnerships enable artists and culture professionals to intern vis-a-vis their global counterparts in foreign cultural institutions, gaining valuable knowledge and experience in their fields. As such, it is important to organize networking events and encourage fruitful joint projects that facilitate knowledge-sharing between professionals and lead to conceptualizing unique bespoke creations. Over the past several years, many Arab countries have signed a number of exciting cultural exchange projects with leading cultural capitals in order to accelerate their cultural agendas and gain recognition for local efforts.

To illustrate, the Royal Commission for AlUla signed a number of trailblazing agreements with France in 2018 to advance its culture and heritage agenda. Its recent project had its debut earlier this year, in partnership with Center Pompidou, to establish a landmark contemporary art museum in AlUla

that highlights regional and global artworks. The agreement will also entail rolling out training and education programs for talents in the field, in addition to exchanging museum collections, facilitating knowledge-transfer in the field of museum management, providing curatorial expertise, and developing arts audiences.

Already in its second edition, this year's European Film Festival, held in Riyadh in June 2023, brought together a selection of 16 films produced by several European countries. The festival was masterminded by the EU delegation to Saudi Arabia and the Saudi-based media and entertainment company Arabica Pictures. Entertainment to create a platform for local and global talents to intermingle, and also exchange expertise and collaborate on joint projects. The buzz surrounding the films demonstrated the universal power of storytelling in fortifying cross-cultural understanding and inspiring new narratives. For instance, the French film "Sugar and Stars" is based on the true story of Yazid Ichemrahen, who overcame a life of poverty and a broken home to realize his dream of becoming a pastry chef and win the World Champion of Frozen Desserts title in 2014. In 2021, the Kingdom and France further cemented their historical ties by signing a five-year agreement to enrich their cultural landscapes, via reforming regulations and formulating policies in the areas of architecture, audiovisual production, design, film, heritage, literature, performing arts, and visual arts. Saudi and French talents will be offered opportunities to experience residency exchange programs within leading cultural institutions in both countries.

The UAE has also launched a number of trailblazing cultural exchange projects and its cities offer a rich calendar of experiences curated by global artists. The Dubai Opera dazzles audiences throughout the year with its selection of live performances from leading global theaters and musicians. Abu Dhabi's Louvre Museum attracts arts aficionados with exhibitions based on new collection loans and acquisitions from its partners in Paris, such as the recent loans from the Musée d'Orsay featuring works by Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet. In another successful example, the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation hosted an exhibition in 2021 titled "From Cinderella to Sindbad: German and Arab Timeless Tales," exploring 4,000 years of cultural history through 100 objects representing the shared storytelling heritage in Arabic and German fairy tales. These included ancient Egyptian papyrus, works by the Arab poet Al-Mutanabbi and German playwright and novelist Goethe, the classic "Arabian Nights" tales, and contemporary pop-up books and comics. The role of cultural exchange remains paramount in today's world as a key driver of soft power, peaceful coexistence and inspiration. At the same time, it can open up worlds of artistic expression, educational opportunity and cultural experience for audiences across borders.

Aljazeera

The key to saving youth from violent paths? Inclusive higher education

Sonia Ben Jaafar

IN our pursuit of transforming the future of education, we must confront the stark reality of global youth unrest. Recent events in countries like France have highlighted the deep divisions and fragmentation faced by young adults. The unfortunately frequent instances of youth responding to violence with violence, mirror their profound frustration and yearning for change.

This surge of unrest is not exclusive to France - it is a global trend. The tragic deaths of individuals like Nahel in France, George Floyd in the United States and Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, to name just a few instances, have ignited worldwide reactions, sparking movements that demand justice and equality from those who feel unheard and unseen. In the face of these issues, higher education institutions - colleges and universities - have a unique and critical role to play. These places are not mere

centres of learning but potent catalysts for transformation. Education today must provide young adults with the necessary knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities to engage in constructive dialogue and tackle complex problems.

To effectively drive positive change, higher education must foster inclusive environments that value diversity and create spaces where all voices are heard and respected. Too many young adults feel overlooked and anxious about the future. These tragic events in different parts of the world have laid bare the systemic issues that afflict our societies. They have kindled a fire in the hearts of young people, inspiring them to seek solutions and demand change.

This is a generation that refuses to be silenced; a generation ready to challenge the status quo and fight for a brighter future. Leaders in all sectors must support them in finding their voice and the opportunities to fulfil their

purpose responsibly. As we process the news and share in the collective anger and pain, we know that violent responses are merely expressions of the frustration and anger felt by those who feel they have no other way to voice their grievances.

Yet any transformation will not stem from conference room conversations and auditorium speeches. It will need a recognition of the overlooked potential of education and employment, especially among the growing young population. It will come when we challenge the quiet acceptance of chronic obstacles in education and embrace greater diversity and inclusion among higher education institutions. Higher education institutions must up their game and focus on practical solutions if they are to serve as the foundation for the leaders of today and tomorrow to engage in resilient, inclusive and forward-thinking innovations

that cultivate peace, security, and sustainable development.

When these institutions foster an environment that not only educates but also empowers students to address societal issues, they cultivate leaders who make themselves and their communities resistant to recruitment tactics for radicalisation and violence. Higher education has always aimed to equip students with the tools to dissect and understand complex problems, foster critical thinking and facilitate open dialogue. The world's leading institutions empower students to become active contributors in their communities, promoting civic engagement and human rights.

This is most effective when there is a genuine, deep connection between the theoretical aspects of higher education and the realities of the non-academic setting - the world of work and

growth opportunities surrounding these eager young minds. The World Bank has highlighted youth unemployment in Arab states and its potential radicalisation implications. Universities and colleges can counteract this by prioritising practical skills aligned with job market demands, moving beyond purely academic teachings.

Discussions like those at the United Nations Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 are important but need to result in concrete actions. One such action is the work of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation, partnering with 24 universities as part of their outreach to provide 200,000 Arab youth with accessible professional learning for high-demand jobs.

As part of this effort, the foundation leverages participatory design methods to promote wider offerings of professional graduate diplomas that have employment

outcomes for these youth. One such approach is in artificial intelligence and data science from the American University of Beirut, which includes regionally relevant applications and the integration of ethics as a core component, with connections to real market opportunities. We must fervently engage with our youth, especially those who may feel sidelined or despondent, ensuring they feel embraced and empowered. Diversity is the key to understanding and connecting with the lived reality of those who were not born with privilege.

If we want to see real change, we must be willing to challenge existing norms within these institutions and break down some longstanding barriers to higher education. If we don't, we risk seeing further outbursts of anger and violence from a disappointed segment of society, ultimately causing harm to both themselves and the world around them.

Historical bond turned into modern partnership

Mahesh Pathak

IN the complex realm of international relations, diplomatic visits and collaborative projects often serve as markers of burgeoning partnerships. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in 2019 and the ongoing visit of Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and delegates to China bear testimony to the intertwined fate of the two countries connected by the splendor of their natural landscapes.

An important subject of the two countries' discussions has been the mutually beneficial prospect of a modern network of infrastructure and the Belt and Road Initiative. During his visit to Nepal in 2019, President Xi emphasized the age-old connection between the two nations, symbolized by their shared mountains and rivers. This sentiment reflects the deep cultural and historical ties that have shaped Sino-Nepalese relations. Acknowledging this shared heritage lays the foundation for closer cooperation in contemporary times.

While high-level meetings have taken place between the two sides, the progress of the Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal has been rather sluggish. Despite the grand promises of infrastructure development, there have been challenges in translating commitments into tangible outcomes. These challenges often stem from issues related to funding, bureaucratic hurdles and logistical complexities on the Nepalese side. Nevertheless, these setbacks should be seen as opportunities for recalibration rather than the end of the road. Nepal's enthusiasm for the Belt and Road Initiative is palpable, as the country expects to gain substantial benefits from improved infrastructure and connectivity. But the additional financial burden the Belt and

Road projects will create, given Nepal's limited resources, poses a big challenge to the sustainability of such collaborative projects.

The current discourse revolves around an ambitious proposal that encompasses various facets of cooperation between Nepal and China. Foremost among these is the intention to harness Nepal's abundant hydroelectricity potential, coupled with the establishment of a robust transmission line connecting Nepal to China. At its core, this proposition entails tapping into Nepal's vast hydroelectric potential to contribute to both countries' energy security and sustainability. By forging a high-capacity transmission line that extends to the Tibetan Plateau, Nepal can channel its surplus hydroelectricity to meet China's burgeoning energy demand, thereby fostering a symbiotic energy partnership.

In return for Nepal's hydroelectricity and resource sharing, the establishment of the railway link with Kathmandu with Shigatse crossing the China-Nepal border at Gyirong-Rasuwa stands as a pivotal agreement. This railway has the potential to significantly enhance regional connectivity, spurring the growth of trade and economic activities not only between Nepal and China but also across the broader South Asian landscape. One bright spot in the Sino-Nepalese partnership is the reliability of Chinese contractors completing projects on or before time in Nepal. This efficiency is crucial for fostering trust and mutual respect. The timely completion of projects not only demonstrates China's commitment to promoting common development but also will help Nepal reap the benefits of the improved infrastructure net-

work sooner rather than later.

Another promising area of collaboration is the proposal to open seamlessly the Kyirong and Zhangmu border crossings between the two countries. Hassle free operation of these entry-exit points could raise trade and people-to-people exchange to the pre-2015 earthquake period. Also, the proposal aligns with the broader regional integration efforts which would improve cross-border connectivity and economic cooperation. Infrastructure development, however, is not limited to ground-based projects. Improving Nepal's aviation sector, particularly the Pokhara International Airport built with China's aid and the Gautam Buddha Airport constructed by Chinese State-owned enterprises, can facilitate a seamless influx of tourists, raising the tourism revenue to pre-pandemic levels, and will not only boost Nepal's economy but also strengthen ties with China.

The bond between China and Nepal extends beyond the realms of infrastructure collaboration. In times of adversity, China's unwavering support for Nepal has fortified the ties between the two countries. A significant example of such support was witnessed in 2015 when a devastating earthquake hit Nepal: China promptly provided relief materials and medical aid for the quake survivors, and sent rescue teams to assist local rescue and relief teams, and experts to help restore and/or renovate historical monuments. This display of solidarity not only showcased China's commitment to its neighbors' well-being but also deepened mutual respect. Furthermore, during Nepal's economic blockade in the same year, China emerged as a vital partner. It

increased supplies to Nepal, helping alleviate the scarcity of essential goods. China's helping hand eased Nepal's economic difficulties, as well as underscored the importance of dependable regional partnerships during crises.

However, China's support for Nepal goes beyond crisis management. It transcends the diplomatic realm and extends to economic cooperation. In recent years, China has been instrumental in promoting Nepal's handmade products on the international stage. The endorsement of products like black cardamom, handicrafts, dog chews, statues, caterpillar fungus (cordyceps sinensis) and herbs have given Nepalese entrepreneurs access to a larger market. The discourse on railway development, electricity generation and supply infrastructure, and the Belt and Road Initiative underscores the shared aspirations for improved connectivity and progress between the two countries. President Xi Jinping met with Nepal's delegation on Saturday and vowed to help Nepal transform itself from a landlocked country to a land-linked nation by facilitating infrastructure connectivity and transit transportation cooperation under "Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network" and other "Belt and Road" projects.

As Nepal navigates the financial challenges of participating in these ambitious projects, strategic planning, innovative financing and a steadfast commitment to mutual benefit will play a key role in making a decision. By capitalizing on efficient project execution, cross-border integration, and the potential of the tourism sector, China and Nepal can transform their historical bond into a modern partnership, enriching both countries and their peoples.

Politicians should not exploit fear to win votes

Dalia Al-Aqidi

As the US approaches the end of 2023, familiar challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and its related restrictions are once again coming to the forefront of the American public discourse. The resurgence of these issues - with New Yorkers being told on Friday to consider wearing face masks in crowded areas due to the rapid spread of a new strain of the virus that causes COVID-19 - has understandably triggered a sense of apprehension among a significant portion of the American populace, giving rise to concerns about the potential implications for the nation's political landscape.

In light of recent events, many citizens are drawing parallels to the circumstances leading up to the 2020 general elections, prompting contemplation about the intentions and strategies of the Democratic Party.

The US, like much of the global community, has been navigating the intricate terrain of public health, socioeconomic stability and individual freedoms in its response to the disease. As the nation grapples with these challenges, it is natural that citizens are reminded of the pivotal role pandemic-related issues played in shaping public sentiment during the preceding election cycle. Amid these reflections, a palpable sense of uncertainty has emerged, particularly among those who harbor reservations about the handling of the 2020 elections. Voters have the right to express concerns that the Democratic Party might be considering a strategy reminiscent of that election year, evoking memories of the heightened reliance on mail-in ballots, adjustments to voting procedures and debates about the legitimacy of the electoral process. Isn't that how President Joe Biden managed to win from the basement of his house in 2020?

Such concerns are rooted in skepticism and reflect the deep-seated desire for transparency, fairness and the safeguarding of democratic principles. As we navigate these sensitive waters, it is essential to approach these concerns with a balanced perspective.

The Democratic Party, like any political entity, is driven by a multitude of motivations and objectives. At the same time, public apprehensions stemming from past experiences are a testament to the American people's commitment to upholding the integrity of their democratic

institutions. It is becoming apparent that a chapter in recent history is repeating itself. This observation prompts an examination of the manner in which the COVID-19 pandemic was handled from a political standpoint, specifically within the context of the Democratic Party's actions. It is imperative to explore how the pandemic was, at times, utilized for political ends, potentially contributing to widespread fear and a sense of confinement within the population.

During the pandemic's early phases, how certain narratives were presented to the public warrants careful scrutiny. The utilization of messaging to evoke fear and concern is a recognized tactic within political communication. However, when such messaging exacerbates anxieties to the extent of influencing social behaviors and mental states, it warrants ethical and moral contemplation. Reports of individuals passing away in solitude in hospital settings, isolated from loved ones, provide a stark representation of the deeply emotional toll that such an approach can engender. Amid this atmosphere, the pandemic seemed to unfold as a prolonged and distressing narrative, akin to a suspenseful horror movie. The imagery of individuals facing their final moments without the presence of loved ones, coupled with the overarching atmosphere of uncertainty, contributed to a collective sense of vulnerability and trepidation. This atmosphere was fueled, in part, by the political messaging that accompanied it. As we find ourselves in a situation where such dynamics could potentially recur, it is essential to reflect on the lessons learned from the past. It is worth acknowledging that political motivations can intertwine with crisis responses, raising questions about prioritizing public health and safety versus partisan gains.

I distinctly recall observing individuals driving alone in their vehicles while wearing masks, as well as witnessing people donning masks while spending time in their own backyards soaking up the sun. In moving forward, an informed and engaged citizenry plays an integral role in maintaining transparency and accountability within the political sphere. Rather than falling into polarizing narratives, fostering open dialogue and the critical analysis of political messaging can help mitigate the nega-

tive impacts of crisis politicization. This approach enables citizens to actively shape policies and responses that reflect their concerns and broader societal well-being.

The reason I have opted to address this subject at this moment is due to the growing recognition among Americans that there exists a juncture where questioning both the pandemic's implications and the government's stringent actions, such as the closures of schools, businesses and dining establishments, becomes increasingly challenging. A significant number of conservative doctors, writers and individuals found themselves subject to censorship by those aligned with the left solely for expressing reservations about the impact of COVID-19 vaccines. Their concerns, grounded in the vaccines' relatively short presence in the medical landscape, drew attention to the parallels drawn with the introduction of novel medicines. Adding to this complex landscape, the imperative of vaccination resulted in situations whereby individuals faced the potential loss of their job if they chose not to comply. This scenario was reminiscent of Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Back then, we were not allowed to think or question, let alone reject.

It is imperative for President Biden, his political party and his presidential campaign to acknowledge that a significant portion of the American populace has grown weary of adhering to progressive agendas and the trends associated with cancel culture. Convincing the public to resume mask-wearing, even amid a surge in COVID-19 cases, may prove to be a formidable challenge. The populace has reached a point where further vaccine mandates and closures will be met with strong resistance. It is crucial to recognize that, while such measures may be employed to win elections, the propagation of fear and apprehension by the liberal media should not be the preferred path to victory.

Instead, the focus should be on addressing the American people's concerns, desires and aspirations, fostering unity, and promoting policies that resonate with a broad cross-section of society. Only by truly understanding and addressing the collective sentiment can leaders chart a course that reflects the will and the well-being of the nation.

Food and water insecurity increasing due to climate change

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

ONE of the critical global issues that currently poses a threat to humanity is food and water insecurity, which has been rising in spite of many remarkable technological advances. When it comes to the food system, it is important to point out that the relationship between food production and climate change is bidirectional, as they are intertwined. The global food system contributes more than a third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, which is one of the main causes of global warming and climate change.

But how can the food system alone contribute more than a third of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions? This is largely related to the way that food is produced, processed, stored, packaged, distributed, consumed and even disposed of. Food production processes, including the use of fertilizers, are the leading contributor to "overall food-system emissions, or 39 percent of the total. Land use accounts for 38 percent and distribution contributes 29 percent, which is expected to continue growing. Methane from livestock raising and rice cultivation accounts for 35 percent of food system greenhouse gas emissions ... In industrialized countries, emissions from fluorinated greenhouse gases, used in refrigeration, for example, have had a 'turbocharged effect on global warming,'" according to the UN.

This is why we should pay attention to other interconnected issues, which are exacerbating

this problem. The first one is food waste. Nearly a third of total global food is wasted every year. This wasted food could feed nearly half of the world's population. China, India and the US are the three countries that have the highest amount of food waste, with their gross amount of food waste exceeding 91, 68 and 19 million tons, respectively. It has been reported that if food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest country in the world when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Other issues that contribute to climate change in the food production system include the unsustainable and inefficient techniques used in farming and the agriculture industry. As the population of the world has grown, food production has become a more and more profitable enterprise. As a result, some corporations have focused on producing more food at a lower price, even though that may have a long-term damaging impact on farmland, soil, animals, biodiversity, the ecosystem and, ultimately, the climate. On the other hand, as the food system contributes to climate change, the rapidly changing climate and global warming are, in return, having a negative impact on the agriculture industry, decimating forests and land, causing more droughts and making it more difficult to produce food. The world is now increasingly facing water stress or scarcity, with demand frequently being higher than supply in some

areas.

This cycle also has a ripple effect. When a certain industry or sector in society is negatively impacted by climate change, it also affects other areas, since the various sectors are interconnected and intertwined. For example, long periods of drought in some regions have a negative impact on food production and water supply, which will subsequently affect people's health. This will likely put more pressure and strain on the healthcare system. But climate change is not just linked to longer periods of drought - it also causes more frequent and disastrous floods, as warmer air temperatures lead to the melting of more glacier ice, warmer oceans and rising sea levels. Additionally, climate change causes harm to livestock, causes more wildfires, reduces biodiversity, increases the frequency and severity of heat waves, storms and tropical cyclones, and increases soil degradation, to name just a few of the problems.

As a result, at some point, we need to take action and halt or slow down this human-made crisis and the self-destructive processes because the damage can become irreversible. In the long term, if some of the damage, such as water scarcity and a lack of agricultural resources, continues to increase to the extent that freshwater resources are depleted in some countries, this will have an impact on national security and political stability. It is alarming

that the UN estimated in 2016 that half of the world's population could be living in areas facing water scarcity by 2025. This will also negatively impact the overall ecosystem. It should be noted that the Middle East and North Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions when it comes to climate change. This is due to the dry or semi-dry environment of the region. Temperatures in MENA are rising almost twice as quickly as in other parts of the world, according to a 2022 report by the Cyprus Institute's Climate and Atmosphere Research Center and the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry. Countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Iran have witnessed significant desertification. Water scarcity is another critical factor for the Middle East because of its rising population growth. The MENA region is already characterized as the most water-scarce in the world.

Tackling this crisis requires that all food and beverage companies, as well as governments, especially those in developed countries, take action in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water and adopt more sustainable strategies. In a nutshell, there is a direct relationship between climate change and the world's rising food and water insecurity. This human-made crisis can be resolved if we pursue and implement greener policies in order to reduce global warming; adopt efficient and more sustainable techniques when it comes to food production and distribution; and reduce or eliminate food waste.

Cleverly's humiliating China visit was the perfect symbol of isolated, ill-led 'global Britain'

Simon Tisdall

LIKE a proselytising lay minister naively intent on calming troubled waters, foreign secretary James Cleverly flew into Beijing this week on a whinge and a prayer. The whinge comprised a long list of British grievances, ranging from China's attitude to Ukraine and Hong Kong to its spying on UK officials and sanctions on MPs.

Cleverly's prayer was that his hosts would not realise that, when it comes to pursuing a coherent China policy based on deliberate, principled choices backed by political will and economic muscle, rudderless Britain is all at sea - but that Chinese leaders would kindly take notice of what he had to say anyway. If they did, they hid it well. Cleverly's core message - "It's better to talk than fight" - was not exactly gamechanging. After all, that's the definition of diplomacy. As the Chinese played it polite and cool, it was plain that Tory hawks and cold warriors back home, shooting arrows at his back, were the ones who needed to hear the message most.

China's emergence as a global leader is hugely challenging for all the western powers. But successive Tory governments have fumbled Britain's response, blowing hot and cold, constantly sending mixed signals. Post-imperial Tories simply can't agree what they want from a relationship in which they are not the dominant partner. Even as he stepped forward to meet China's vice-president, Han Zheng, and foreign minister, Wang Yi, Cleverly was being

accused of appeasement by hawkish colleagues. Meanwhile, parliament's Tory-controlled foreign affairs select committee published a report, supposedly coincidentally, demanding a tougher line on China's human rights abuses in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet, and a stronger commitment to defend Taiwan. In July, in a similar broadside, the intelligence and security committee said UK policy towards China had been characterised by short-termism and inconsistency. It's hard to argue. David Cameron hailed a "golden era" and took President Xi Jinping down the pub. Boris Johnson slapped on sanctions over Hong Kong and banned Huawei. Liz Truss declared China a threat and called for an Asian Nato.

Now Rishi Sunak, ambiguity personified, flaps around terminologically, skipping from challenger and competitor to rival and threat, always watching what the Americans say, visibly torn between the claims of security and commerce. The galling bottom line is that the government wants it both ways - to stand up for "British values" while trading profitably - and as a result fails to advance either objective. Cleverly's visit was less a fundamental relationship reset, more a change of battery in the remote. No surprise, then, when it fails to alter the bigger picture, or halt China's most egregious abuses. This is hardly all his fault. The UK once had a reputation for skilled diplomacy: prag-

matic, hard-headed, informed, clever, devious. But as its economic power and geopolitical leverage have diminished, along with the quality of decision-making, so too has traditional foreign policy realism. Now is the age of British foreign policy unrealism. Between fantasising post-Brexit Tories and the world as it truly is a huge, growing gap yawns.

The China conundrum perfectly illustrates this disconnect. It's true Beijing deliberately tore up the Hong Kong joint declaration when it imposed direct rule. It's equally true that ultimately UK lacked the will, as well as the physical means, either to stop or meaningfully punish it.

It's true China commits terrible abuses in Xinjiang and Tibet. But it's also true it knows the UK, huffing and puffing, will do next to nothing. Cleverly's undemanding, conciliatory visit will reinforce that impression. The foreign affairs committee can demand as loudly as it likes that the UK treat Taiwan as an independent state. Yet calls for Britain to build Asia-Pacific alliances with India, Japan and others seem weirdly far-fetched. The reality is that if China decides to seize Taiwan by force, there will be precious little that faraway Britain, with its under-resourced armed forces, can or - crucially - will do about it, with or without allies.

Cleverly stressed the need to engage with China on the climate crisis. Sure, but not at the expense

of other issues. Why believe a country that is the world's biggest carbon emitter, and that is approving the equivalent of two new coal-fired plants a week, will take the slightest notice of British pressure? If China wants to cut carbon, it will, for its own hard-nosed reasons - not because that nice Mr Cleverly dropped in for a chat. The foreign secretary's delayed Beijing trip comes some months after post-pandemic visits by Germany's Olaf Scholz, France's Emmanuel Macron, and the EU commission chief, Ursula von der Leyen. US secretary of state Antony Blinken was in Beijing recently, too. They all seek to influence a China whose behaviour appears ever more aggressive, authoritarian and threatening. It's not easy. But the difference is that they are following, roughly, an agreed plan: it's called "de-risking" the relationship. They work together, or at least try. Together they can apply leverage.

Not so, isolated, failing, ill-led "global Britain" which, vainly going it alone, up against a super-power, courts oblivion and oddball irrelevance. So there was Cleverly, all on his tod, under fire from hawks at home, lacking a joined-up strategy, spouting platitudes about dialogue, trying desperately to persuade the smirking Chinese to take him (and us) seriously. So sad. This politically illiterate, unilateralist international posturing is unreal. It's un-realist. It's humiliating for Britain, and it's bound to fail.

The Guardian

Will Biden address the Agent Orange legacy?

Chen Weihua

US President Joe Biden wrote on X (formerly Twitter) on Aug 26 that "after Vietnam, we learned how the harmful effects of exposure to Agent Orange took years to manifest in veterans, leaving too many unable to access care when they needed and deserved it".

"The PACT Act means today's veterans and their families won't suffer those painful denials," he said, referring to the law he signed a year ago to provide better healthcare and benefits for US veterans exposed to Agent Orange and other toxic substances during war. About 300,000 US veterans have died from exposure to Agent Orange, almost five times more than the 58,000 soldiers who died in combat during the Vietnam War.

Many veterans and their offspring are still suffering from the horrible effects of Agent Orange, which I learned after watching online a talk at the George Washington University four years ago by a group of activists sharing their stories and findings in the United States, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The US military sprayed 19.5 million gallons of Agent Orange during the course of the war in a bid to deny the Vietnamese people food supply and shelter in concealed environment of forests. In the areas where Agent Orange was sprayed, dioxin has contaminated water and soil, inflicting huge damage on people's health and the

local ecology. The Vietnam Red Cross has estimated that more than 3 million Vietnamese have been affected by Agent Orange and, as a result, are suffering from cancer and various physical and neurological problems. At least 150,000 Vietnamese children born after the war had serious birth defects caused by dioxin. While the US government has symbolically provided funds to help tackle the legacy issue, the funds are negligible given the actual amount of money required and a tiny fraction of the money allotted for US veterans.

As for Laos and Cambodia, two countries which remained neutral during the Vietnam War, the US government is in denial despite the US military spraying Agent Orange in both countries. The US bombed Laos and Cambodia with 475,000 and 40,900 gallons of Agent Orange respectively. Charles Dunst, a freelance writer based in New York, wrote in the Atlantic magazine in 2019 quoting a study by US scientists. He said this does not include the undocumented spray drift which could have occurred in Cambodia.

"In the Vietnam War, the US used a borderless weapon and yet has since used national borders to leave those exposed to dioxin to suffer without support," Dunst wrote. Against such a backdrop, Biden's bragging about the

PACT Act is a humiliation for the millions of victims in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

His tweet came 10 days before he embarks on a trip to Asia where, among other things, he is scheduled to attend the G20 Summit in New Delhi from Sept 9 to 10 and visit Vietnam on Sept 10. Biden, however, will skip the US-ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit in Jakarta, both of which will be attended by leaders from ASEAN member states including Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The White House said Biden will meet with Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, to discuss ways to further deepen cooperation between the two countries. But it did not mention anything about Biden addressing the legacy of Agent Orange.

On July 29, Biden claimed at a campaign reception in Freeport, Maine, that "I've gotten a call from the head of Vietnam, desperately wants to meet me when I go to the G20".

Western media outlets, such as CNN and Reuters, were quick to interpret Biden's trip as a bid to counter the influence of China and Russia in the Asia-Pacific region, but none of them bothered to remind him of the horrible legacy of the US' use of chemical weapons in the three countries, a legacy that still haunts many people even almost half a century after the war ended.



ICCI & RCCI for joint efforts to resolve issues

RAWALPINDI (INP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) and Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) have reiterated their firm stance for making collective efforts to resolve the issues of the businessmen.

A delegation of ICCI led by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari visited RCCI and congratulated President RCCI for assuming the post of Chairman Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) and presented bouquets.

The ICCI and RCCI have agreed to form a six-member committee including presidents, to promote relations and consult on important issues between the two business organizations. They will also to play a friendly cricket match.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that election of Saqib Rafiq as chairman of RWMC was proof of trust of government on the business community. It was honour for the community and we have to prove this choice hundred percent by showing performance, he added.

He said that now we have to prove by delivering

instead of just paperwork that as before we are contributing to the stability of the country's economy by paying the highest taxes. By carrying out the responsibility of this cleaning company in the true sense, we will take vigorous measures to reduce the problems of the citizens in terms of cleaning.

Chairman RWMC and President RCCI Saqib Rafiq thanked the ICCI delegation for coming and presenting flowers and congratulations on assuming office and said that it is a welcome thing for the businessmen of the two cities to meet. The chambers of the twin cities are also twin and their problems are also the same, for their solution, joint efforts are necessary to convey an effective voice to the government houses.

He said that following the decree of cleanliness, he has made clean Rawalpindi as his target and will not rest until this target is achieved. Wherever our cooperation is needed in Islamabad, like the cleaning of Rawalpindi, we will certainly provide it.

The delegations discussed the important issues regarding the development

of the business community and the twin cities and it was agreed that these chambers are also twin like the twin cities and the problems are common and should be solved together. The delegations also gave suggestions regarding the improvement of sanitation in both cities.

Chairman RWMC and President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said for disposal of green waste, will be mixed with PHA and composted by burying it in a designated area in the joint venture. He congratulated the President ICCI for getting one year extension and joining the Board of Directors of CDA while the Islamabad delegation congratulated the RCCI panel on their victory in the Gymkhana Club.

On the proposal of group leader RCCI Sohail Altaf, both delegations also agreed to form a six-member joint committee and on the proposal of ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari to play a friendly cricket match, decide the date of the match and Senior Vice President RCCI Hamza Sarosh was entrusted with the duties of making the arrangements.

The ICCI delegation

comprised President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Senior Vice President Fad Waheed Sheikh, Vice President Engineer Azharul Islam Zafar, Ex-President Zafar Bakhtawari, Ex-President Atif Ikram, Ex-President Khalid Javed, Ex-President Ijaz Abbasi, Ex-Senior Vice-President Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Naeem Chaudhry, Munizah Majeed, Parveen Khan and others were included, while the RCCI delegation included Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, Zahid Latif Khan, Raja Amir Iqbal. Dr. Shamail Daud Arain, Syed Asdam Shahdi, Najam Rehman, Usman Khalid Waheed, Chaudhry Naeem Rauf, Abdul Rauf, Waqas Bin Mehmood, Rafiq Khan, Khawaja Farooq Ali, Mudassar Maqbool, Chaudhry Jameel Ahmed, Shahid Qayyum, Kashif Rahim, Wasim Aslam, Martin Pervez, Mohammad Akram, Tariq Najeib Butt, Sadia Zia, Asad Aftab, Abu Bakr Siddique, Ikram-ur-Rahman Abbasi, Gul Zeba Jawad and others were included.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing fish from vendor at Sunday Bazaar.

Shahzad emphasizes adopting new approaches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik on Sunday emphasized that adopting new approaches to governance, business regulation, and trade has the potential to increase output by 4 percent within two years while also aiding in emissions reduction efforts.

Speaking at a discussion on "What Reforms badly needed for Pakistan" arranged by Mian Affan Elahi Arain Director Marvel Cables Limited, he said several emerging market and developing economies face threats to economic growth and limited policy space due to high inflation, rising debt, and balance of payments pressures, said a news release here.

These challenges mounted during the pandemic and were further intensified by Russia-Ukraine conflict.

He said slower growth and constrained capacity to support their most vulnerable people expose some of these countries to substantial social instability risks and the same time, these economies face the conundrum of participating in global efforts to reduce their carbon emissions and help combat climate change without sacrificing growth and jobs.

Amid such challenges, economy-wide reforms give policymakers the tools to foster growth and prepare for the green transition, he added.

Shahzad Ali said fresh an enduring IMF recommendation for spurring growth—can quickly materialize even under severe economic strains, provided reforms are properly prioritized and sequenced. "These reforms are key to facilitate the decarbonization of economies", he remarked.

He said significant structural impediments continue to hinder growth in emerging markets and developing economies. These stem from a range of issues, including weak governance, due to government ineffectiveness, political instability, and corruption.

He said reducing excessive regulation to make it easier for people to open and run a business is also one area with substantial room for improvement, particularly in low-income countries. Shahzad Ali Malik Sitara-I-Imtiaz success hinges on how reforms are prioritized, sequenced, and bundled.

LPG prices go up; notification issued

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) dropped a bombshell on the consumers by notifying an increase in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices, it emerged Sunday.

The revised prices came into effect today (October 1, 2023). The price of one kilo of LPG upped by Rs20 to increase from Rs240 per kilo to Rs260 per kilo.

Similarly, the price of domestic cylinder went up by Rs246 to jump from Rs2,833 to Rs3,079.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan has received the first batch of

100,000 metric tonnes of LPG from Russia, which entered the country via Iran's Sarakh's Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

Notably, this is for the third straight month the government has announced a significant hike in the LPG prices. The OGRA attributed this consistent increase to the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar and an increase in the prices of Propane and Butane.

The development came on the same day, the caretaker government notified decrease in the prices of petroleum products (POL)

for the next fortnight for the first time in two-and-a-half months. The petrol price came down by Rs8 per liter to reach Rs323.38 per liter while that of diesel by Rs11 per liter to reach Rs318.18 per liter.

The Ministry of Finance, in a statement, said the decision to bring down the price of petroleum products was taken after the Pakistani rupee gained value and POL rates dropped globally.

The government also slashed the rate of kerosene oil by Rs7.53 per liter and light diesel oil by Rs7.77 per liter.

Govt urged to privatize SOEs, citing annual losses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator Meher Kashif Younis urged the government to privatize state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in a foolproof and transparent manner incurring heavy losses of Rs 500 billion annually for decades, impacting the national kitty.

Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms. Maheen, he said that the manifestos of almost all the mainstream political parties throughout the country always advocated divestment of government stakes in SOEs to curtail losses and reduce government footprint in business but actual implementation has been delayed for

over half a century, said a news release here.

He said fresh official facts and figures revealed that due to mismanagement, the deficient SOEs inflicted overall huge losses of around Rs500 billion to the national exchequer during last year (2022).

He said however privatization of the banking industry was one of the biggest success stories in Pakistan which transformed from loss-making to profitable entity.

The overall performance of SOEs was not very healthy what is called "contrary to the expectations" adding that some of these were marred by gross bad

governance.

He said other targeted companies in the pipeline for sale in the next phase between 2023-24 must also be placed on top priority for transparent privatization.

He said it's an established fact worldwide that business activities are always carried out by the private sector not the public sector as the private sector employ the best possible ways to run in profit earning entities through good governance and timely decision on the spot also matter rather than lackluster attitudes in the public sector.

He emphasized the need to offer packages of incentives to buyers of loss-causing SOEs to run.

PHMA new body calls for enhancing exports

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA) has elected Nahid Abbas and Farrukh Iqbal unopposed as central chairman and zonal chairman of the north zone respectively for the year 2023-24. In the same way Amanullah Khan and Khawaja Musharaf Iqbal were elected unopposed as senior vice chairman and vice chairman of the Association's north zone for the next year.

According to a press release issued here, the PHMA executive committee, in its meeting held here on Sunday, also approved the results of the elections.

The new central chairman Nahid Abbas, addressing the meeting, called for giving a boost to the export sector by adopting diversified marketing techniques and extending practical support to the industry, and asked the knitwear and garment exporters to prepare themselves for meeting the global challenges so that exports could be enhanced by fully exploiting new opportunities.

The new senior vice chairman Amanullah Khan vowed that value-added textile industry was ready to work closely with the government with a view to enhance the exports and

revive the growth. He also stressed the need for adopting new technology so that Pakistan's exports may be able to cope with the emerging challenges in international arena.

Zonal Chairman Farrukh Iqbal urged the government to undertake thorough research and also brief the SMEs of the details of such challenges.

Vice chairman Khawaja Musharaf Iqbal hoped that the government would help boost country's exports especially of the value-added textile, while all the macro and micro issues of the trade and commerce would also be addressed.

PIAF terms ever-increasing cost of production real threat to businesses

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for businesses, as ever-increasing cost of production is the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

In a statement on Sunday, Chairman PIAF Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry. He asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. He condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment.

He observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses.

With a view to deal with fiscal challenges, Faheemur Rehman Saigol asked the economic managers to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where they should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector.

He said that as a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors, by extending facilities and providing all the requisite supports. In the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security and implementing effective and comprehensive

Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures holding accountable and taking to task all those who are involved in illegitimate activities, undermining both our economy and national interests.

The PIAF Chairman stated that the significant jump in electricity prices and hike in gas tariffs to meet the IMF condition will put additional burden of billions of rupee on consumers. He observed that it is unfortunate that the authorities in all governments continued to approve billions of rupees' additional burden on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters and farmers earlier. He said that the government liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around it's ability to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years.

It is to be noted that the authorities had pledged to stop any further rise in circular debt adding that around Rs 250 billion was added to the gas circular debt annually though the actual figures are available with Petroleum Division. However, if 11.5 percent price hike for SNGPL and 11 percent tariff for SSGC was not implemented then

the circular debt will rise to Rs 740 billion. At present, the gas tariff for residential consumers is Rs 450 per mmmbtu in the Sui Southern Gas Company system against the prescribed price of Rs 850 per mmmbtu and Rs 400 per mmmbtu in the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline system against the prescribed price of Rs 1,007 per mmmbtu, showing a significant gap between sale price and actual cost of gas.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the economic managers did not have any pragmatic plan to address this liability, apart from asking for more loans to repay existing debt. Likewise, the target for current financial year's exports is too low to meet the country's revenue.

The conventional approach of focusing solely on improving exports while pursuing a passive and imprudent foreign policy towards neighboring countries, poses a significant challenge in meeting export targets. Despite strained relations, the US remains the largest importer of Pakistani products. Still, there are no efforts to tap into the vast markets of neighboring countries or negotiate trade agreements with them.

Saudi Arabia projects 2024 budget deficit at 1.9% of GDP

RIYADH (APP): Saudi Arabia announced Saturday its preliminary budget statement for 2024 with an expected 1.9 percent deficit of the GDP.

The Saudi finance ministry projected total expenditures for fiscal 2024, which is identical to a calendar year in the kingdom, at 1,251 billion Saudi Riyals (about 333.5 billion US dollars), and 1,172 billion riyals in revenues.

The projection is based on the government's fiscal objectives to expand strategic spending at the sectoral and regional levels, broaden and diversify the economic base, as well as improve public services, among others, the ministry said in the pre-budget statement.

The kingdom is estimated to have a 2-percent deficit of its GDP, totaling 82 billion riyals, for 2023, according to the statement.

Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jadaan said that the government will continue implementing fiscal and economic structural reforms to help develop and diversify the Saudi economy, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

He also highlighted the important role of the Public Investment Fund and development funds and sustained structural reforms that

enhance the growth of non-oil GDP in the medium term, it reported. Saudi Arabia usually approves its budget in the fourth quarter of every year, said the ministry's statement.

Before that, the ministry releases a pre-budget report to inform Saudi citizens and analysts of key fiscal objectives and economic indicators to enhance transparency and sound fiscal planning for the coming year.

Incentives for industry must, as lack of growth, investment exacerbate economy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Businessmen Panel (BMP) has called for putting the economy on a sustainable growth, asking the government to provide incentives to the trade and industry, as the business confidence has taken a significant hit due to lack of investment and growth, exacerbating economic challenges further.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar asked the government to address the underlying structural vulnerabilities through smooth energy supply at competitive rates, as country's overall export proceeds continued to shrink, showing a pessimism about the conditions and prospects of

the businesses amidst various economic crises to worsen business insecurity.

Mian Anjum Nisar underscored the need for the government to take immediate steps to address the concerns of the business community, including implementing policies that support business growth, promoting employment and productivity through incentives, and addressing inflation and currency depreciation. Failure to do so will only exacerbate the country's economic challenges and hinder its ability to attract investment and create jobs.

The BMP Chairman said that the government has increased the gas and electricity tariffs and, at the same time, also the subsidy has been phased out, which will further increase the cost of production.

Month on month increases in consumer prices may be countered by a further mean reverting international commodity prices and some exchange rate stability due to decreased pace of depreciation.

He added that the current vicious uncertainty, which is aggravating each other's impact, is eroding business confidence, as the political tug of war and the inconsistent approach of the government is leading to a trust deficit between the business community and the government and between the international community and the government.

The Businessmen Panel chairman said that the export drop shows the government would find it difficult to achieve the industrial growth and export target, leading to more pressure on foreign exchange reserves

of the country.

Quoting the data, he pointed out that remittances witnessed significant drop during the first half of the current year, exports declined, foreign direct investment dipped by 654 million dollars, portfolio investment plummeted from negative 45.5 to negative 1032 million dollars, Public Sector Development Program decreased by 122 billion rupees and credit to private sector from 1043.1 to 703.6 million rupees.

He added that the government's policies that promote employment and productivity through incentives to businesses, including tax benefits, subsidies, and skill development, can help. He also highlighted that inflation is the most cited problem that businesses would like the government to solve.

Referring to the report of business confidence, he said 66% of businesses perceive themselves as facing bad or worse conditions, with a 7% increase in businesses reporting very bad business conditions.

Most business types reported the business being in a bad state, with a 50-50 split between good and bad conditions in the construction, cosmetics, and industrial machines and equipment sector.

Around 70% of businesses perceive bad conditions in Sindh and KPK, and 64% in Punjab. The report highlights that 61% of businesses in the first quarter of 2023 said future expectations are negative while the Net Future Business Confidence score has worsened by 11% since the previous quarter and is now at -22%.

He added that political chaos in the country is having a serious negative impact on business and the life of the general public. Due to the lack of political stability, investors and industrialists are facing an uncertain situation.

He says businesses in Pakistan are faced with multiple calamities, including decades-high inflation killing consumer purchasing power, an absolute lack of stability in the political system causing an environment of uncertainty and mistrust, and poor economic policies leading to a lack of investment and growth.

He emphasized the need for the government to take bold steps to improve the situation, including implementing policies that support business growth and addressing the concerns raised by the business community.

It is to be noted that remittances in August 2023 totalled \$2.09 billion. While this was a slight improvement from the previous month, it was a significant decline from August 2022 when remittances amounted to \$2.74 billion.

This decline, while concerning, was not unexpected. Remittances have been falling for some time: annual remittances were down for the first time in six years in FY23. And FY24 has not been off to a promising start.

Over the last decade, remittances have declined annually twice. The first time was in FY17 when they fell by a little over \$550 million. The second time was in FY23, but this time the fall was much larger — \$4.25 billion.

This figure is obviously worrisome. It is a 13.59 percent decline at a time the country needs every dollar it can get.

And it is more than half of the central bank's current reserves, which stand at \$7.78 billion as of September 1, 2023.

The downturn has bled into the current fiscal year, with remittances in the first two months amounting to \$4.12 billion, down 21.57 percent from July-August FY23 when they clocked in at \$5.26 billion.

According to the latest SBP data, remittances showed a slight improvement on a monthly basis in August, rising by 3.15 percent from July's figure of \$2.03 billion. However, they declined by 23.74 percent from August 2022 when remittances stood at \$2.74 billion.



In brief

Mickey joins Pakistan squad

HYDERABAD (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan national team director Mickey Arthur joins Pakistan squad in Hyderabad, India for ICC World Cup 2023. The Pakistani team spokesperson said, Mickey Arthur had been busy with his county cricket commitments in England and had previously been with the national team for some matches during the Asia Cup. He also confirmed that Mickey Arthur will now be with the Pakistan team in a full-time capacity. Pakistan's second warm-up match is scheduled against Australia on Oct 3 and the team will undergo training during the afternoon session today (Sunday). In the first warm-up match Pakistan played with New Zealand and lost by 5 wickets in Hyderabad, India, on Friday.

Injured Messi missing again

FORT LAUDERDALE (Agencies): Lionel Messi was ruled out by injury again on Saturday, not named in Inter Miami's squad for Saturday's Major League Soccer clash with New York City FC, as he missed his third straight game. Messi was substituted after 38 minutes of the team's win over Toronto FC on September 20 but missed the following league game at Orlando and Wednesday's US Open Cup defeat to Houston. Prior to the Toronto game, the World Cup winner had skipped the away trip to Atlanta having also sat out Argentina's World Cup qualifier in Bolivia. Saturday's game is a crucial one for Miami's hopes of making the playoffs and they will also be without Messi's former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba, who is out with a hamstring injury. NYCFC currently occupy the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, sitting in ninth place, five points ahead of Miami but the Florida side have two games in hand. Miami's Argentine head coach Gerardo Martino said his team, who are also without right-back DeAndre Yedlin, had been unfortunate with injuries. "Casualties are part of what can happen in a season but they hardly ever happen in the quantity and importance that we have, but we have to accept it," he said.

MU win at Villa with 2-1

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester United came from behind to defeat Aston Villa 2-1 in their opening game of the Women's Super League (WSL) season at Villa Park on Sunday, with substitute Rachel Williams scoring the late winner. With the game into the second minute of added time, a cross into the box from Nikita Parris found Williams, and her header back across the goal beat Villa keeper Daphne van Domselaar to snatch the winning goal. "It was a top match, we fought to the very end. We are very happy to score the two goals and come back from behind. It was hard work but we just kept going," United's other scorer Lucia Garcia said. Last season's WSL runners-up United fell behind in the 76th minute to a Rachel Daly goal. Daly, top scorer last season, controlled a pass from Adriana Leon before firing past keeper Mary Earps. Villa's goal came just two minutes after they had Kirsty Hanson sent off for a high tackle on Hayley Ladd, but their lead lasted just three minutes.

Shadab Khan aims to perform at ICC WC-2023 with a 'new mindset'

HYDERABAD (Monitoring Desk): All-rounder Shadab Khan has expressed hope to regain his form and perform with a 'new mindset' in the ICC World Cup 2023, scheduled to be played from October 5 to November 19.

Shadab Khan, during a press conference before Pakistan's practice session in Hyderabad, expressed his wish to give his best for Pakistan in the World Cup 2023 and put Asia Cup 2023 memories in the past. "I admit I haven't been in good form lately, and it drained me mentally as I was playing continuously but could not perform at my best," said Shadab Khan. "However, the past is in the past. The rest I got has made me feel better and I hope to perform at my best during the World Cup for my team with a new mindset."

Shadab Khan had a forgettable stint at the Asia Cup 2023 as he only managed to pick six wickets in five games at an average of 40.83, while with the bat,

he scored a meagre 13 runs from five outings.

Shadab Khan also backed teammate and opening batter Fakhar Zaman, who also struggled during the Asia Cup, scoring 65 runs in the four innings at an average of 16.25.

"Fakhar Zaman is a world-class player, although he is not been consistent this year, but he is an impact player. We have complete faith in his abilities and we believe that he will help Pakistan win matches in the World Cup," he added.

He also stressed the fact that fitness and bowling are key to winning the mega-event in India.

"World Cup 2023 is a long tournament and we have experienced a few injury scares during Asia Cup, that is why fitness will be key for all the teams during the tournament," he said.

"Considering the conditions, it will be a challenge to stop the flow of runs and take wickets here, so whoever bowls well will win

the World Cup," he added.

Pakistan team is scheduled to face Australia in their second warm-up match on October 3, at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad, before kicking off their ICC World Cup 2023 campaign with the match against Netherlands on October 6 at the same venue.

Pakistan lost their first warm-up match against New Zealand by five wickets as New Zealand batters chased down a mammoth 346 total with 38 balls to spare.

Pakistan squad for ICC World Cup 2023

Babar Azam (c), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, M Wasim Jnr, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha.

Travelling reserves: Mohammad Haris, Abrar Ahmed, Zaman Khan.

Jibran bag Tennis men singles title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jibran ul Haq clinched the men's singles title of the Shahid Hamid Memorial Tennis Tournament which concluded here on Sunday.

Jibran ul Haq beat Yawer Ali by 6-4, 3-6 (10-5) Super Tiebreak. Hassan Baig Vice President of the Islamabad Tennis Association who was the chief guest on the occasion distributed prizes among

the winners and runner-ups.

In Men Doubles final, Zalan Khan, Murtaza beat Daisuke Unemi, Yameen by 6-4, 4-6, (10-7).

In the Ladies' Singles final, Fatima Ali Raja beat Zainab Ali Raja by 8-2.

In the Boys U-18 final, Zain Ali beat Ibrahim bin Sohail by 6-3 7-6(4).

In the Girls Under 14 final, Ayesha Masood beat Wania Khalid 6-3.

In Boys Under 14 final, Hassan Usmani beat Orhan Sohail 8-2.

In the Boys Under 10 final, Behroze Memoon beat Amir Masood.

In the Boys Under 12 final, Moazam Baber beat Raja Mohammad Taha by 6-2.

In the Girls Under 10 final: Manha Amalia Aidrus beat Manha Khalid Raja by 6-1.

Kudermetova wins Pan Pacific Open



TOKYO (Agencies): Russia's Veronika Kudermetova won the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Sunday, upsetting tennis' world number four Jessica Pegula in straight sets.

The 19th-ranked Kudermetova overwhelmed the American 7-5, 6-1 in an hour and 24 minutes.

"I knew it would be a tough final... I need to fight for every ball and today it worked really well," she said.

"I'm really happy that I managed to win my second title," said the 26-year-old, who won her first WTA singles title in Charleston in

2021. She beat Pegula in three sets on the clay in Madrid this year.

"I played better today than in Madrid," Kudermetova said, adding that Pegula "always fights and plays solidly every match". "Today I followed my game and my plan" to play aggressively, she said.

Kudermetova had a tough semi-final, needing three hours and 25 minutes to defeat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. She stunned four-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek in the quarters.

Pegula was aiming for

her second title of the season following victory last month in Montreal. Kudermetova "put a lot of pressure on me at the beginning so it made it very tough", the American said.

"Luckily I was able to get back to the first set but I just don't think I was serving well enough... She was a better player today." The 29-year-old went into the US Open dreaming of a first ever Grand Slam title, but her campaign came to an abrupt halt as compatriot and close friend Madison Keys recorded a dominant win in just 61 minutes.



LAS VEGAS: Canelo pummeled Charlo along the ropes for much of the fight.

Alvarez retains undisputed title

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Saul "Canelo" Alvarez reaffirmed his super middleweight supremacy on Saturday with a devastating unanimous-decision victory over Jermell Charlo to retain his undisputed world title.

In a battle of undisputed champions, Mexico's Alvarez knocked down Charlo in the seventh round as he defended his WBO, WBC, WBA and IBF belts, becoming the first to defend all four for a third straight time.

Judges Max DeLuca and David Sutherland scored it 118-109 and Steve Weisfeld saw it 119-108 for Alvarez, who was the aggressor from the start.

He sent Charlo, the undisputed super welterweight world champion, to the canvas for just the second time in his career in the seventh, rocking him with a right to the temple then following up with an uppercut that had the American sagging to a knee.

"You know, I worked all the fight to go in the body," Alvarez said. "And then I changed the punch and that's what happened." Alvarez said he'd planned to attack Charlo's body, and he went after it early, digging in from the right and left.

"We worked for that, we worked to work in the body," Alvarez said. "We know he's a great fighter. He knows how to move in the ring and we worked that in the gym for three months."

"Three months in the mountains without my family, without everything. But I still love boxing," the 33-year-old star said. "Boxing made me the person I am today. Boxing is my life."

Charlo, fighting above the 154-pound limit for the first time, never found an attacking rhythm as Alvarez dictated the pace, effectively cut off the ring and consistently backed his opponent up.

Alvarez improved to 60-2-2 with 39 knockouts and backed up his claim that a high-altitude training camp in the California mountains had restored the fitness and strength that seemed to be lacking in two unimpressive victories over Gennady Golovkin and John Ryder since his failed foray at light heavyweight against Dmitry Bivol.

Faseeh's century hands Rawalpindi their first win

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): An unbeaten century from Abdul Faseeh led Rawalpindi to a seven-wicket win over Faisalabad in the fourth round match of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi on Sunday. This was Rawalpindi's first win in the tournament.

Sarfraz Ahmed struck an unbeaten double century in a drawn game between Karachi Whites and Lahore Whites at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Peshawar were led to their second win in the tournament after defeating Lahore Blues by three wickets at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium. Meanwhile, FATA played out a drawn game against Multan after being enforced a follow-on at the Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi.

Faisalabad v Rawalpindi, Pindi Cricket Stadium

Rawalpindi successfully chased down the 204-run target on the back of an unbeaten century by opening batter Abdul Faseeh (109 not out, 163b, 17x4s).

Resuming their second innings at the overnight score of 190 for two in 48 overs, it took 7.3 more overs for Rawalpindi to achieve the target, losing Ashfaq Ahmed's wicket in the process, who was dismissed by Mohammad Ali for 40 off 49 balls, hitting seven fours.

Lahore Blues v Peshawar at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad

Peshawar defeated Lahore Blues by three wickets to earn their second win of the tournament. Chasing a modest 190-run for victory, Peshawar lost seven wickets in process and achieved the target in the 63rd over. For the winning team, Kamran Ghulam top-scored with a 99-ball 50, hitting five boundaries. Israrullah was other notable run-getter, scoring 30 off 78 balls, which included three fours.

For the losing side, Kashif Bhatti and Waqas Ahmed bagged two wickets each.

Earlier, after resuming their second innings at the overnight score of 149 for seven, Lahore Blues were dismissed for 215 in 68.2 overs.

Karachi Whites v Lahore Whites at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

In a drawn game, Sarfraz Ahmed's unbeaten double century and 151 from Rameez Aziz allowed Karachi Whites to put a huge 784 runs on the scoreboard in reply to Lahore Whites' first innings score of 509 for nine declared in 137.2 overs.

Resuming their first innings at the overnight score of 432 for four in 125 overs, an unbroken 351-run partnership between Sarfraz and Rameez for the sixth wicket was the highlight of the day. Sarfraz scored unbeaten 200 off 236 balls, which included 24 fours and a six, while Rameez scored an undefeated 151 off 264 balls, hitting 15 fours and two sixes.

FATA v Multan at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

In another drawn game, FATA after being enforced a follow-on were 336 for nine in 128.3 overs when stumps were drawn. Mohammad Irfan Khan was the notable run-getter for the side, scoring 84 off 177 balls, hitting 10 fours and two sixes.

For Multan, Aamer Yamin, Hamayun Altaf and Zahid Mehmoond bagged two wickets each.

Earlier, FATA had resumed their second innings at the overnight score of 167 for three in 50 overs.

Scores in brief (Day four of four):

Rawalpindi beat Faisalabad by seven wickets at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

Faisalabad 112 all out, 39.3 overs (Ali Waqas 26; Mohammad Faizan 5-35, Mohammad Awaiz 3-29) and 234 all out, 74.4 overs (Mohammad Huraira 87, Abu Bakar Khan 67; Mohammad Faizan 4-84, Mohammad Awaiz 2-37, Kashif Ali 2-73)

Rawalpindi 144 all out,

56.3 overs (Zeeshan Malik 108; Faheem Ashraf 5-12, Khurram Shahzad 2-46, Mohammad Ali 2-56) and 204-3, 55.3 overs (Abdul Faseeh 109 not out, Ashfaq Ahmed)

Peshawar beat Lahore Blues by three wickets at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad

Lahore Blues 334 all out, 85.1 overs (Hussain Talat 87, Junaid Ali 82, Kashif Bhatti 69; Niaz Khan 3-73, Mohammad Ilyas 3-81, Sajid Khan 2-91) and 215 all out, 68.2 overs (Nisar Ahmed 48, Usman Salahuddin 44, Junaid Ali 39; Niaz Khan 3-52, Sajid Khan 2-18, Abbas Afridi 2-54, Mohammad Ilyas 2-74)

Peshawar Region 360 all out, 95.4 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 132, Kamran Ghulam 43, Sajid Khan 39, Maaz Sadaqat 38; Kashif Bhatti 4-59, Waqas Ahmed 3-87, Shadab Majeed 2-68) and 192-7, 62.2 overs (Kamran Ghulam 50, Israrullah 30)

Match drawn between FATA and Multan at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

Multan 529-5 (declare), 111.4 overs (Zain Abbas 292, Mohammad Basit 150; Sameen Gul 2-75)

FATA 348 all out, 90.2 overs (Rehan Afridi 164, Akif Javed 53 not out, Mohammad Sarwar 51; Zahid Mahmood 5-135, Aamir Yamin 2-52) and 336-9 (follow-on), 128.3 overs (Mohammad Irfan Khan 84, Salman Khan Jnr 76, Rehan Afridi 29; Hamayun Altaf 2-23, Aamer Yamin 2-29, Zahid Mehmoond 2-88)

Match drawn between Karachi Whites and Lahore Whites at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

Lahore Whites 509-9 (declare), 137.2 overs (Ali Zaryab 222, Fahad Munir 72, Ahmed Shehzad 65, Saad Nasim 61; Noman Ali 6-162)

Karachi Whites 784-5, 206.2 overs (Sarfraz Ahmed 200 not out, Rameez Aziz 151 not out, Asad Shafiq 113, Khurram Manzoor 110, Ahammad Alam 102, Fahad Iqbal 61; Saad Nasim 2-112).

South Africa 'can do something special': Miller

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Here we go again. South Africa at the Cricket World Cup. It's been one sorry story after another.

Dropped bats, rain drops, poor maths and teams that were less than the sum of their parts have all added up to a one of the most disappointing and baffling records in sport.

Yet hope once again springs forth. A 3-2 series triumph over Australia that saw the side win the final three games on the bounce has injected a feel-good energy into South African cricket.

History cautions against them getting carried away, but it's tantalising to imagine that this time, at long last, the Proteas can finally fulfil their destiny.

"We genuinely believe that we can do something special," says David Miller, the powerful middle-order batter who, at 34, is also a senior figure in the group. "The reality is we haven't won a World Cup so there's no point brushing that under the carpet."

"But personally I don't live with those things on my shoulders. The past is the past. It doesn't impact me at all. It's about what's in front of you...the next ball, your next moment."

"I know the other guys are in the

same mindset. We're looking at it as a chance to create history. What a brilliant opportunity this is. If we play well, we know we've got a helluva chance."

South Africa go into the tournament as the fourth-ranked side according to the ICC's metrics, but with five batters in the top 15.

No other side has more than three in this elite cluster and Miller, 15th on that list, is backing his batting team-mates to come good in India.

"We have performed consistently well over the past four years," adds Miller. Indeed they have. Since the last World Cup, only six batters have scored more than 1,000 runs at a strike-rate above 100. Three of them - Miller, Heinrich Klaassen and Aiden Markram - are South Africans.

In that time both Rassie van der Dussen and captain Temba Bavuma have averaged north of 50 and Quinton de Kock, who will retire from the format after the tournament, has done enough to retain his place in the top 10 of the ICC's rankings.

"I'm not personally a stats-driven guy," says Miller, who has averaged 60.7 with a strike-rate of 114.15 over the last World Cup cycle.

"But it's good to look at the numbers and know that the work we've been putting in has produced some positive contributions. "For me it's about making a situational impact. Can I take the game on? Can I see a chase home? That's where games are won and lost. I think we've proved some people wrong."

"Take Temba [Bavuma]. He's had so much flak from a lot of people and he's basically just shoved it right back in their faces. He's a terrific captain and a phenomenal player in this format. It's a strong line-up. We back ourselves to compete with the bat."

This should be a warning to their rivals, having been short of runs four years ago in England.

They were led by Faf du Plessis, who was also embroiled in a selection scandal involving AB de Villiers in the build-up as he was left out of the squad after an attempt to return following retirement. Their bowlers did what they could, but a disjointed and dispirited campaign ended in a seventh-placed finish in the 10-team league.

Now with in-form batters and a captain that has fostered a cohesive culture, their bowlers - despite the loss of Anrich Nortje - have all the tools to

deliver on their promise.

Spin will play a crucial role on turning tracks and the Proteas are uncharacteristically blessed with two elite tweakers.

Tabraiz Shamsi's left-arm wrist spin will occasionally haemorrhage runs, but it can equally rip through an aggressive batting side.

At the other end Keshav Maharaj has replicated his nous with a red ball to provide stability and control.

The 33-year-old took eight wickets in four games against Australia, including 4-33 in the final match in Johannesburg, while conceding a miserly 4.07 runs per over.

"We've been playing together since we were 11," Miller says of his Dolphins team-mate Maharaj.

"It's actually an inspiration watching his progress. He's 'Mr Consistency'. He's such an important player for us."

South Africa will be without the express pace of Nortje. Arguably the quickest bowler in the game, the 29-year-old couldn't shake off a persistent back problem and will miss out on his second consecutive World Cup.

Luckily the team's pace reserves are well-stocked and this tournament could

be the making of the 6ft 8in tall Marco Jansen, who delivers swinging balls from a lanky left arm.

He will also have to do a job with the bat at number seven given the lack of a high-quality all-rounder, but it's Jansen's knack of knocking over top-order batters that will be most needed.

This could also be a seminal tournament for Kagiso Rabada. Now 28, he's yet to marry his generational talent with a standout performance at a major white-ball event. If Rabada performs to his ability then South Africa have every chance of taking 10 wickets per game. "We know that things haven't been great in South African cricket all the time," adds Miller, referencing the disappointing fortunes of the Test side and the lingering aftertaste of the Social Justice and Nation-Building Hearings that unearthed systemic racism in the sport in 2021.

"But [new coach] Rob [Walter] has emphasised that we're representing a proud country and we have a chance to unite people through sport."

"We take that very seriously. The language and energy is really positive. We just can't wait to get stuck in and give it horns."



In brief

Charge of high fares continud

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Despite the reduction in fuel prices, the transporters in Rawalpindi are continuing to charge higher fares. The Rawalpindi district administration and the transport authority have failed to control the inflated fares in the area. As per details, the fare from Rawalpindi to Lahore is between Rs2,700 to 3,000. For Rawalpindi to Karachi, fare between Rs 6,700 to 7,000 is being charged. The fare from Rawalpindi to Multan is between Rs2,900 to 3,000. The masses have said the transporters used to jack up fares soon after the increase in fuel prices but now when the fuel prices have been lowered, they are unwilling to slash their fare rates. They have demanded that the authorities take action on the matter. On Saturday night, petrol price came down by Rs 8 per litre in Pakistan after a two-month hike and set at Rs 323.38 per litre. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, the rate of petrol was reduced to Rs 323.38 per litre with a decline of Rs 8 per litre. Meanwhile, the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) dropped by Rs11 per litre to Rs318.18 whereas Kerosene oil prices reduced by Rs 7.53 per litre to Rs 237.28.

Hareem Shah demanded

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Renowned TikTok sensation Hareem Shah has made a passionate plea to the captain of the national cricket team, Babar Azam, demanding victory in the upcoming ICC World Cup 2023. The call for success came after Captain Babar Azam, currently in India, shared a cheerful photograph of himself on X (formerly Twitter), where he was seen sitting in the lobby of his hotel, radiating positivity. Accompanying the image, Azam wrote, "Always be grateful, it helps a lot in life." While Babar Azam's fans responded to his tweet with words of encouragement and well-wishes for the national team's prospects in the ICC World Cup 2023, Hareem Shah seized the opportunity to make a fervent request to the captain. Addressing Babar Azam directly, Hareem Shah took to X and penned "Skipper! We want this World Cup in every case; the team must deliver their best performance." Her appeal, however, has sparked a diverse range of reactions from cricket enthusiasts and followers of the national team. Some interpreted Hareem Shah's demand as a form of pressure on the captain and the team, expressing concerns that such expectations might hinder the players' performance.

26 absconders arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police have arrested 26 absconders involved in heinous crime during the last week, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all seniors' police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes. Following these directions, the Islamabad Capital Police Aabpara, Margalla, Industrial Area, Koral, Sihala, Shalimar, Bhara Kahu and Ramna police stations teams have arrested 26 absconders involved in heinous crime during the last week. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the Islamabad Capital Police is taking all possible steps to eradicate the crime from the city and those involved in heinous crimes and illegal activities will be dealt with iron hands.

Pervez condemns attack outside Turkiye's parliament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Raja Pervez Ashraf on Sunday strongly condemned the attack outside the Turkish Parliament and expressed solidarity with Turkey's Parliament and its people.

"Pakistan's Parliament and citizens stand in solidarity with Turkiye's Parliament and its people during this difficult time", said Raja Pervez Ashraf in a statement.

The attack outside Turkiye's Parliament is essentially an assault on free-

dom and democracy, and Pakistan's Parliament strongly condemns it, he added. He said that Turkiye's Parliament and its people had shown resilience against these extremist elements.

He added that the attack outside Turkiye's Parliament was a heinous attempt to sabotage peace in the region. He said, Pakistan's citizens and security forces have been at the forefront in the fight against terrorism and their sacrifices in the battle

against terrorism are unforgettable.

He said Pakistan is one of the most affected countries in the region by terrorism and said Islam stands firmly against all forms of terrorism.

Raja Pervez Ashraf stressed the importance of adopting a collective approach to eradicate terrorism. He extended his prayers for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack outside Turkiye's Parliament.

Dolphin Squad ERU personnel briefed

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the SSP Safe City holds a briefing session for officers and personnel of Dolphin Squad (Emergency Response Unit), a public relations officer said.

He said that, during the briefing, the SSP Safe City emphasized the importance of responding promptly to calls made on the Pucar-15 helpline regarding any incidents and taking appropriate action as per the nature of the situation.

He said that strict

patrolling measures should be ensured in the city in order to protect the lives and property of the citizens. He asked the officials to behave politely with citizens and ensure prompt assistance to people in case of any emergency.

He directed the officers and officials to maintain a vigilant eye on suspicious individuals during the duty, ensuring thorough proper checking and taking strict action against criminal elements.

He further stressed the significance of maintaining a courteous attitude towards the public and

adopting a professional approach rather than a traditional one.

He also highlighted that combating crime and ensuring the safety of citizens are among the top priorities of Islamabad Capital Police.

No leniency will be allowed against any elements causing disturbances to public safety. While officers implement comprehensive strategies against criminal elements, they must ensure the effectiveness of their measures.

Any form of negligence in this regard will not be tolerated, he maintained.

Youth must play role for responsible tourism: MD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan is a country blessed with great tourism potential and it is the role of youth that can bring a sense of responsible tourism among the masses as young content creators must provide positive guidance about Pakistani tourist spots to the world.

Aftab Ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) said that during last few years, Pakistan witnessed an increase in number of both domestic and international tourists due to which the growing tourism industry is getting boost day by day while the private sector is also playing an important role in this regard besides the efforts of government.

Over one million international arrivals of tourists were recorded till June 2023 and it will reach by two million by the end of this year after a 3 years span

of crisis time in the tourism industry due to Covid-19 pandemic, MD PTDC said while talking to APP.

The number of overseas Pakistanis in Northern Areas has also witnessed an increase during this year which is creating a positive impact on the economic health of the country and shows the growth trend of the tourism industry in Pakistan encouraging private sector and investment opportunities.

He said that PTDC has recently launched the National Tourism Portal to guide the tourists about the tourist spots and support them from booking to travel information and facilities.

In recent years, the young vloggers and adventure lovers have recorded much about Pakistan's beauty, natural environment, sustainable tourism, eco tourism and adventure tourism which has increased the movement of domestic tourists for recre-

ational purposes but besides that the young generation in their tourist guide material must create sense of responsibility to save environment, discourage pollution and attract international audience to this piece of land, he suggested.

MD PTDC said, Pakistan is a country full of diverse inventory of tourism attractions, having world's tallest mountains on earth in the north and longest glaciers that provide great opportunity to promote various forms of adventure tourism. "We have hundreds of beautiful lakes with amazing landscapes and many of these lakes are only accessible through trekking routes.

The Makran coast also has wonderful landscapes as on one side you can see the Rocky Mountains and other side there are most beautiful sandy beaches that is reflective of ideal marine environment in Pakistan," he said.



ISLAMABAD: People busy in selecting and purchasing second hand shoes from vendors at weekly Sunday Bazaar, Peshawar Morr. — APP Photo



ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Law and Justice organized a 6-day Accredited Civil/Commercial Mediation Training Course. —APP Photo

IRSA releases 165,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 165,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 102,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1540.43 feet and was 142.43 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 54,500 cusecs and 90,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1225.65 feet, which was 175.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 12,100 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 98,100, 90,000, 98,900 and 47,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 16,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Ring Road project to be completed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Ring Road project would be completed during one year, said Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta.

He informed that the ring road would become harbinger of development in the region. He said that the construction work of 38.3 km long Rawalpindi Ring Road project had been started and all-out efforts would be made to complete the project within stipulated time frame.

Rawalpindi Ring Road would have total five interchanges at Banth, Chak Bali Khan, Adiala Road, Chakri Road and Thalian while industrial zones would be set up around the Ring Road.

The Ring Road is a very important public welfare project, the Commissioner said adding, the elements who were saying that Rawalpindi Ring Road project had been shelved would be disappointed now.

He said that the ring road project would provide market linkages to the economic zones and create alternate business opportunities to the business community. The Commissioner said that RDA has a key role in the implementation of the development projects for Rawalpindi and the rapid progress of these projects.

Special counters set up to deal with patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Dr Jamal Nasir on Sunday said that special counters should not be sent to OPD unnecessarily so that other patients can be safe", he added. Dr Jamal said that as a result of Punjab's government strategy to close schools during the Eid Milad un Nabi (SAWW)holidays, the

number of conjunctivitis-affected people had decreased significantly.

The health minister asked the BBH administration to not vacant beds and other resources available in dengue wards for no reason and to use these beds and resources for the treatment of other patients in case of fewer dengue patients. He also urged the residents to adopt precautionary measures to avoid cataracts.

"Conjunctivitis patients should not be sent to OPD unnecessarily so that other patients can be safe", he added. Dr Jamal said that as a result of Punjab's government strategy to close schools during the Eid Milad un Nabi (SAWW)holidays, the

number of conjunctivitis-affected people had decreased significantly.

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Grateful to Turkey for cooperation, says Khalid

RAWALPINDI (INP): Head of Knight Human Management (KHM), Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich has said that as part of efforts to facilitate access to higher level professional education for every youth, for the first time in the history of Pakistan "International Student Examination" was conducted under the auspices of Istanbul Medi Pol University Turkey and KHM Shalaan and GL.

Addressing the participating students, he said the organization of "International Students

Examination" in Pakistan for the first time is a milestone for the promotion of higher education and the people of Pakistan are grateful to the Turkish government, Turkish educational authorities and especially Medipol University Istanbul for their valuable contribution.

Khalid Nawaz Sadhraich said, "Students who pass the International Students Examination, which is called the YOS test in Turkish, become eligible for admission after having pass this test to any university in the world ranking."

He added that the students who could not get admission in Pakistan due to any reason need not worry as there are a number of Universities in the world which offer them not only admission but also extend scholarships to them. Khalid Nawaz said that in Universities abroad our students not only seek education but they too exchange experiences with international community of students.

He mentioned that those students who would get top positions in the YOS test would be offered scholarships up to 80 percent.

Commissioner warns against investment

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies and check their status on RDA's official website www.rda.gop.pk.

According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, on the directives of the Commissioner, Rawalpindi district administration had launched a grand operation against illegal housing societies and took action in accordance with the law against the rules violators.

He informed that chairing a meeting held at Chontra Police Station, the Commissioner reviewed progress of the ongoing grand operation and directed the authorities concerned to accelerate raids against illegal housing schemes. During the meeting, the Commissioner was informed that total 70 housing societies were approved by Rawalpindi

Development Authority. The Commissioner said that the entire land record in the region would be computerized during October.

The Housing Societies would only be allowed to hire security guards from registered companies, he said adding, the operation was being monitored by senior officers and no one would be allowed to violate the rules. Strict action was being taken against all such officials found involved in illegal activities and supporting the illegal housing schemes, he informed.

The Commissioner said that RDA official website was updated on daily basis and all the information about legal and illegal housing schemes was uploaded regularly on the website. The RPO said that strict action would be taken against the rules violators.

The DC on the occasion said that law and order situation was created by the illegal housing societies in

Chontra area. The CPO said that Rawalpindi District Police in collaboration with the District Administration were conducting operation against illegal housing schemes. Solid steps were taken particularly during last six months to control aerial firing and other illegal activities by illegal housing societies, the CPO added.

The officers briefed the commissioner that during operations strict action was taken against the rules violators while 345 FIRs were lodged against the land grabbers, illegal weapon holders and other violators. 274 accused for possessing illegal weapons were sent behind the bars. RDA spokesman informed that a special team constituted to launch operation against illegal housing societies took action in accordance with the law against three illegal housing societies namely Blue World City, Avalon City and Abdullah City.

Blood donations: A ray of hope for Thalassemia patients

ISLAMABAD (APP): Thalassemia is a genetic blood illness that affects millions of people around the world, resulting in a lack of hemoglobin production and chronic anemia. The need for regular blood transfusions is a painful reality for those suffering from the disease.

However, in the midst of this medical crisis, a group of unsung heroes emerges: blood donors. By donating the priceless gift of blood, these generous individuals provide a lifeline of hope to thalassemia patients.

Blood is a thalassemia patient's lifeline. Their bodies struggle to create enough healthy red blood cells, forcing patients to rely on blood transfusions on a regular basis in order to survive and lead a relatively normal life.

Without these transfusions,

thalassemia patients can endure significant weariness, weakness, and even fatal complications.

Ateeq Afridi, Founder of Act of kindness Pakistan, a non-profit NGO for the welfare of orphan kids, a blood donor who not only donate blood but also help Jamila sultana foundation in setting up blood donation camps country wide said that he had visited several educational institutes to educate students to donate blood if it is not possible for you that's ok but go through blood screening test at least to monitor overall health which is also helpful in diagnosing medical condition.

He had observed that all stakeholders should come forward and play their vital role to prevent thalassemia. The only treatment of this disease is bone marrow transplant which is very expensive. A poor can-

not afford the expenses of this treatment.

Thalassemia treatment should also be included in Sehat card to provide financial assistance to such patients.

Punjab Assembly had passed the legislation that before marriage thalassemia test is important because when two minor thalassemia prey opposite gender marries, their child will be born with major thalassemia.

The disease is spreading at large due to cousin marriages.

The disease is transferring through genetics. There is dire need to implement the legislation to curb the disease.

He said that there are more than thousand thalassemia children registered with Jamila founder who is working specifically for the welfare of such children. They are daily provided blood and medicines.

Mahnoor Qureshi, a well-

known anchor, Programming Manager at FM 100 and a health reporter said that blood donors are ray of hope for thalassemia patient because they survive through blood donors.

She said the disease is not only affecting the person who is suffering, it is also affecting his family, generation and community.

She urges people to go through this very important blood screen test before marriage for knowing their overall health. She said people shouldn't allow for marriage until they submit their positive medical report.

Aftab Hussain, Air Vice Marshal (R) and Director of Sundus Foundation Thalassemia center, Islamabad said the center was established in June 2018 in the capital. It is currently providing free treatment to more than 555 tha-

lassemic and 110 Hemophilia patients belonging to Islamabad Rawalpindi, KP, Swat, AJK and t Jhelum.

The treatment includes on the average 3 blood transfusions per month along with iron chelating therapy to keep the iron level within acceptable limits.

He said, "The purpose of establishing the center was to offer totally free of cost treatment to thalassemic patients who belonged to underprivileged families in Islamabad and suburbs with safe blood transfusions and uninterrupted medicines and testing."

Aftab Hussain said, "The foundation has also set the tradition of volunteer blood donations. Around 600-800 blood bags are transfused per month."

"The main source of donors is students of colleges and universities. This center also col-

lects blood donations from Pakistan Air Force bases, Punjab police, Islamabad police and many other community-based organizations," he informed.

Aftab Hussain said that before collecting blood from donor, a complete medical check is undertaken by qualified doctor after blood donation. The donor is awarded with blood donation certificate and feedback regarding some chronic diseases like HIV Hepatitis B and C Siphilus and Malaria."

"The media can play a major role in creating awareness about thalassemia disease and also to pass legislation for a compulsory thalassemia test before marriage for all," he urged.

The blood donors are the unsung heroes in the fight against thalassemia. Their selfless act of kindness provides patients the hope and vigor.

Dried tomatoes exported

KABUL (Agencies): State-owned corporation Spinzar has dispatched 150 tons of dried tomatoes in the first such consignment to Europe, officials announced Sunday. "This is a great achievement of the Islamic Emirate which exports vegetables from Afghanistan to European countries," Abdul Hamid Akhundzada, head of the company said as quoted in a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance. Spinzar company resumed operations around a year ago after decades of closure.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 15, 1445 — Monday, October 02, 2023

Zakir met Mahdavi

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Zakir, the Chief of Staff of the Office of Political Deputy Prime Minister, recently met with Dr. Jafar Mahdavi, a former member of the Wolesi Jirga from the previous administration. During this meeting, Dr. Mahdavi emphasized the necessity for citizens to have increased access to essential services. Dr. Mahdavi also praised the recent actions of the Islamic Emirate in implementing large-scale projects and other initiatives.

Australia provides \$5 million assistance

KABUL (Khaama Press): As poverty and unemployment worsen in Afghanistan, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has revealed that Australia is providing \$5 million in humanitarian aid to help.

Through a press release, this agency stated on Sunday that Australia has contributed more than USD 5.1 million to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.

It should be noted that the Australian government has provided USD 8 million to Afghanistan, equivalent to USD 5 million.

Furthermore, OCHA, the coordinating body for humanitarian aid of the United Nations, has clarified that this amount will be used in the relief and livelihood sectors.

This organization added that following the establishment of the Humanitarian Fund for Afghanistan, the Australian government sent about 69 million Australian dollars to the fund.

Previously, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated in its latest report that an urgent budget of USD 570.7 million is

required to provide essential winter necessities for people in need in Afghanistan. According to OCHA's statistics, 29.2 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian assistance, including 21.3 million people enrolled in relief programs.

Additionally, the organization has mentioned that USD 3.23 billion is required for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan this year. However, as of August, only approximately USD 1 billion has been provided, leaving a shortfall of USD 2.43 billion in the budget.

Nobel Peace Prize:

Mahboba nominated as finalist

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Peace Research Institute Oslo has announced that Mahboba Saraj, an Afghan women's rights activist, and Narges Mohammadi, an Iranian journalist and human rights activist, have been selected as finalists for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize.

Reuters, citing Henrik Urdal, the director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, reported on Friday that this year's most likely laureates for the prize are human rights activists.

According to reports, Mahboba Saraj, an advocate and activist for women's rights in Afghanistan and Narges Mohammadi, a journalist and women's rights activist in Iran.

Previously, Mahboba Saraj's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Peace Research Institute Oslo had sparked widespread reactions among women's rights activists.

Critics argue that she actively supported the Taliban regime, potentially compromising women's rights to education and work, and refrained from condemning the Taliban's oppressive policies against women in Afghanistan. This has raised concerns about her position on gender equality and Afghan women's rights, sparking ongoing debate and scrutiny.

Afghan women protesters and grassroots Afghan women's groups had previously stated in a statement in response to Saraj's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize that "Mahboba Saraj has made no fundamental effort to restore peace and freedom for Afghan women, and she has done nothing to help women participate in education, work, or public life."

The Nobel Peace Research Institute also added that Mahboba Saraj has been a champion in child health, education, combating corruption, and preventing domestic violence.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to individuals or organizations that have made efforts in peace and human rights advocacy.

Ministry to setup camp for returnees in Nangarhar



KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation is planning to establish a camp in Nangarhar province to provide basic services for Afghan refugees returning

from abroad.

This initiative comes in response to the increasing number of repatriates from Pakistan.

The establishment of this new camp was dis-

cussed in a meeting chaired by Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Rashid, the Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, and attended by representatives from relevant institutions.

It's also worth noting that a delegation of senior officials from the Islamic Emirate recently visited the Torkham port to assess the situation of the returnees.

Prince Mirwais Zahir buried in Kabul



KABUL (TOLONews): The body of Prince Mirwais Zahir, the son of the last King of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah, was buried in Kabul's Maranjani Hill.

Prince Mirwais, the youngest member of his family, passed away in Kabul on Friday, 7 Mezan, at the age of 66. The cause of his passing has not yet been made public.

His relatives described Mirwais as being patient, patriotic, and desiring to serve his nation.

"He was a very good and gentle person. He loved everyone. He loved his homeland and his people," said Mohammad Mustafa

Zahir, grandson of Zahir Shah.

Mirwais Zahir left Afghanistan after the Mohammad Daud Khan-coupled in 1973, and then in 2002 returned to the country with his father Mohammad Zahir Shah.

"After Daud Khan's 1973 coup, he went to Italy where he served his father. When Baba-i-Melat came back to Afghanistan in 2002, he was with him," said Nader Naem, a nephew.

Some of his friends and relatives shared descriptions of him.

"He was a kind person and had a very close relationship with the entire Afghan nation and Afghan

tribes," said Zain al-Abidin, Mirwais's friend.

The Political Commission of the Islamic Emirate expressed its condolences to Mirwais Zahir's family by publishing a message on X social network.

Hamid Karzai, the former president of the country, went to the Sardar Mohammad Dawood Khan hospital to participate in the funeral of Mirwais Zahir and offer prayers for his soul.

On social media, Karzai, and former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, expressed their condolences for the death of Mirwais Zahir.

Officials demand security on first anniversary of Kaj school attack

KABUL (Khaama Press): It has been a year since the suicide attack on Kaj School in western Kabul. School officials recently held a ceremony to remember the victims, attended by many students. They are asking for better security for the school.

According to school officials, in the suicide attack that took place a year ago, 56 students, mostly girls, were killed. However, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) described this incident as "brutal" and reported 54 deaths and 114 wounded.

Two suicide attackers shot at the school's guards and blew themselves up in



a classroom. This happened while students were in the middle of a practice university entrance exam.

Zahra Rezaei, one of the survivors of the Kaj School attack, likened the entrance of the attackers to scenes from horror movies and said that at that moment, they were busy solving

exam questions. She told Khaama Press News Agency, "Remembering that moment shakes me. I hid under the desks and had my books before my eyes."

On the other hand, Kaj School officials consider the attack inhuman and demand security for the school from the Taliban

administration.

Najibullah Najib, a teacher and official at the school, said in an interview with Khaama Press that they are still in shock from that attack, and security has not been fundamentally ensured.

It should be noted that the ISIS group claimed responsibility for this attack. However, Kaj School officials emphasize that the perpetrators of the suicide attack have not been brought to justice.

Although the Taliban administration has closed educational institutions to girls in recent years, the families of Kaj School victims demand that girls be allowed to receive education.

PAKTIA (TOLONews): The students at a school in Samkani district of Paktia province study next to a cemetery because their school does not have a building.

The students at the school said that several schools in the district do not have buildings and they study in open spaces full of environmental challenges, and their school is closed in the summer and on rainy days.

We are trained here, sometimes it rains and sometimes there is a storm, and we cannot continue our training," said Ahmad, a student.

"When it rains, our teachers leave. Our books and notebooks are getting wet. In summer we are in heat and in winter we try to sit in a place where the sun is shining," said Mohammadullah, a student.

Some of these students said that studying next to



the cemetery has had a negative effect on their psyche.

Local officials in the district said that out of 27 schools in the district, 10 schools do not have buildings.

There are also places

where students struggle to get an education completely because sometimes it is windy and sometimes it rains. These are the obstacles that make students not attend classes," said Abdul Rahman Sedighi, head of

the education of the district.

We request the authorities to help us in the area urgently and on time to solve these challenges," said Ezatullah Mukhlis, an official in the district.

6 killed, 11 wounded in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Interaction with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was stressed at the Moscow-Farmat meeting, with Russia calling increasing activities of non-regional actors in the region worrisome.

UNSC also expressed concern over continued restrictions on girls' education in Afghanistan. But IEA spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the UN Security Council discussions focused on only two 'small and domestic topics' (women's education and work) in Afghanistan.

Casualties

Last week, six people were killed and 11 more wounded in various incidents across the country.

Two people were killed and six others wounded as a result of a clash between two families in Nangarhar.

Another five individuals were injured in a similar incident in Nuristan.

According to reports, last week, one person was killed with an axe in Kapisa, a landmine claimed the lives to two people in Faryab and an 11-year-old boy lost his life in a blast in Jawzjan.

In the previous week, eight people had been killed and two others injured in different incidents across the country.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, security forces and insurgents would get killed and wounded in violent incidents every week.

Moscow-format talks

On Friday, the latest Moscow-format meeting was held in the Kazan city of Tatarstan.

Friday's session was the fifth gathering of the Moscow-format consultations on Afghanistan. The forum was created in 2017 for consultations among special representatives of Russia, Afghanistan, India, Iran, China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Its first meeting was held on April 14, 2017 with the participation of deputy ministers and special representatives of 11 countries, including the Afghan side.

In November last year, Moscow-format meeting was held without Afghanistan's representatives. But this time around, Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi was invited to attend the Kazan meeting.

Addressing the gathering, Muttaqi said the IEA gov-

ernment was ready for positive engagement based on legitimate mutual interest and hoped that all countries would use the opportunity in their own national interest.

He hoped the regional and international community should appreciate the ground realities and the prevailing situation.

According to Muttaqi, in the past 45 years, an undefined formula of inclusiveness and other foreign scripts have yielded no result in Afghanistan.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused Western countries of inflicting irreparable damage on the people of Afghanistan and called on them to bear the main burden of the country's post-conflict reconstruction.

The representative of Kyrgyzstan acknowledged

the caretaker Afghan government's many achievements, including the strengthening of the aghani, controlling inflation, fighting against corruption and progress in many other areas.

The Chinese representative said in the last two years, the government of Afghanistan had taken effective steps in areas of security, economic recovery and the social sector. The US should remove the sanctions imposed on Afghanistan, he demanded.

The representative of the UAE said they wanted a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and interact and cooperate with it.

UNSC meeting

Last week, UNSC hold a special session on Afghanistan. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) head Roza

Otunbayeva expressed concern about the restrictions on human rights in Afghanistan, especially the education of women and girls, at the meeting. She emphasised on interaction and dialogue with IEA.

But Zabihullah Mujahid said: "Discussions at the UN Security Council focused on only two 'small and domestic topics' (women's education and work) in Afghanistan."

Mujahid alleged security, a nationwide amnesty, peace, stability, economic development, the creation of security forces, preparation of the budget based on domestic revenue, the promotion of education and dozens of other developments were not discussed at all.

Uncleared official interaction

Afghanistan wants a

constructive interaction with the international community and neighbouring countries. Its unannounced interaction with some regional and other countries.

In addition, Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi said at the Moscow-format meeting that Afghanistan had witnessed the beginning of extensive political relations and interaction with many countries, especially regional states.

He said China had introduced a new ambassador to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in accordance with diplomatic formalities, with the Islamic Emirate hoping that other countries would also accept Afghan diplomats to lay the foundation of effective engagement.

Assistance

The US Agency for International Development donated 23 million dollars to some countries, including Afghanistan, whose people are at risk of tuberculosis. An amount of 8.5 million dollars of the aid was allocated to Afghanistan, Ukraine and Burma.

The World Health Organisation expressed concern about the budget shortage in Afghanistan, saying eight million Afghans could be deprived of health services.

Also, WFP said Afghanistan was the second country in the world after Sudan, where many (over 6 million) people were facing starvation. This UN agency has warned several times of a budget shortage, saying \$1 billion was needed to support 15 million poor Afghans in the upcoming winter.



QUETTA: Relatives visiting family members injured in the suicide bombing in Mastung, at hospital where they are receiving treatment.

US govt shutdown averted. What happens next?

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US Congress has passed a stopgap funding bill, averting for now a looming government shutdown that would have disrupted many services, squeezed federal employees and roiled politics. The House of Representatives voted 335-91 to fund the government temporarily, with 209 Democrats supporting the measure compared with 126 Republicans in a show of rare unity that ended the stalemate.

If no funding legislation was enacted, federal agencies would have stopped all non-essential work and would not send paychecks as long as the shutdown would last. US President Joe Biden signed the bill after it was cleared by the Democratic-controlled Senate. The Republicans narrowly control the US House of Representatives. Here are the main things you should know about what is ahead:

The fact that the bill will only liquidate the government for a further 45 days means that renewed intense discussions lie ahead in the two bodies of Congress, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, to avert another potential shutdown. Therefore, if an agreement cannot be reached by November 17, millions of federal workers will, once again, face delayed paychecks, including many of the roughly two million military personnel and more than two million civilian workers across the nation.

Before the last-minute deal, federal agencies had already drawn up detailed plans that spell out what services would continue, such as airport screening and border patrols, and what must shut down, including scientific research and nutrition aid to seven million poor mothers. US Congress has blocked new aid for Ukraine in the government spending deal despite calls from the White House and efforts by Democratic members of the Congress.

Biden has and will be being pressing Congress in the days ahead to provide an additional \$24bn for Ukraine and other international needs amid Russia's ongoing invasion. According to the US media, the Senate had proposed a bipartisan bill to send about \$6bn to Kyiv, but Democrats cautious of being accused of a government shutdown passed the House version of the bill with no aid. "We cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted," Biden said in a statement after the bill was passed.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked for more aid from the US in a visit in late September when he met with Biden as well as top military officials and addressed Congress. The Biden administration has given more than \$75bn in assistance to Ukraine since the war began in February 2022. The shutdown crisis was largely triggered by a small group of hardline Republicans who

had defied their own party leadership to scupper various temporary funding proposals as they pressed for deep spending cuts.

The group of 21 hardliners had threatened to remove Kevin McCarthy as speaker if a stopgap measure they opposed was passed with Democrat support, and many Washington watchers were expecting the speaker to have to fight for his job in the coming weeks. McCarthy sought to convey confidence both about his own future and the prospects for securing a final agreement by the new mid-November deadline.

"In 45 days, we should get our work all done," he said while seeming to offer a hand to the hardliners, saying, "I welcome those 21 back in." The government shutdown standoff comes just months after Congress brought the federal government to the brink of defaulting on its \$31.4 trillion debt. The drama has raised worries on Wall Street, where the rating agency Moody's has warned it could damage US creditworthiness. Moody's has an "Aaa" rating for the US government with a stable outlook – the highest creditworthiness it assigns to borrowers. It is the last major agency with such a rating after Fitch downgraded the US government Aaa rating by one notch in August to AA+ – the same rating assigned by S&P Global in 2011.

Nawaz to steer country out of crisis: Maryam

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-N's Chief Organiser and Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz claimed on Sunday Nawaz Sharif would restore Pakistan's economy and end terrorism after his return to the country.

She headed a meeting of the PML-N's youth volunteers and consultation regarding the reception of PML-N's supremo. She lauded the enthusiasm of the youth volunteers. "On October 21, the people will prove that the leader is only Nawaz Sharif who is coming to take Pakistan out of crises due to his vision and passion to serve the country," she highlighted.

"The reform of the system and the welfare of the

people is the goal of Nawaz Sharif and he will save the people from inflation with the PML-N to start a new era of employment, peace and development for the youth and workers," she maintained. On this occasion, the participants of the meeting said that they would warmly welcome their leader Nawaz Sharif on October 21, along with their children and families.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has kicked off a series of rallies in Lahore in connection with the preparations for the return of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz will address the participants in NA 123 Shahdara at 7 pm on Monday.

Rallies will also be held

in the constituencies of Khawaja Saad Rafiq and Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The power shows will be held NA-123, NA-124, NA-125, NA-127, NA-128, NA-128 and NA-136, say sources, adding that all rallies will be held between October 1-8. Earlier, former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday claimed that there was 'no change' in the return plan of his brother and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif as the latter is set to land in Pakistan on October 21.

Shehbaz Sharif rushed back to London merely hours after he returned to the country from the UK, a development that gave way to rumours regarding a possible change in travel plans of Nawaz Sharif.

Iran slams normalisation with Israel as 'reactionary'

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Sunday denounced any attempts by regional countries to normalise relations with its arch-enemy Israel as "reactionary and regressive".

The remarks came amid ongoing US-brokered negotiations between Israel and Saudi Arabia to establish formal ties, with the United States saying on Friday that the two countries are moving towards the outline of a deal. "Normalising relations with the Zionist regime is a reactionary and regressive move by any government in the Islamic world," Raisi said during an international Islamic conference held in Tehran.

An Israeli delegation is expected in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, days after the first official visit by an Israeli minister to the kingdom. Saudi Arabia also sent a delegation to the occupied West Bank on Wednesday for the first time in three decades in a bid to reassure the Palestinians ahead of the prospective deal. Raisi on Sunday further labelled any normalisation attempt as the "foreigners' desire", while stating that "surrender and compromise" regarding Israel were not on the table.

"The only option for all the fighters in the occupied land and the Islamic world is to resist and stand against the enemies," he said, reiterating Iran's position that Jerusalem must be "liberated". In 1967 Israel occupied and then annexed east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians see as the future capital of their proposed state. An agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia would follow the US-brokered Abraham Accords which saw Israel establish diplomatic relations in 2020 with three Arab countries. Last month, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Raisi said any "relationships between regional countries and the Zionist regime would be a stab in the back of the Palestinians."

ANP leader shot dead

SWABI (INP): A member of Awami National Party (ANP) provincial council was shot dead by two unidentified motorcyclists here. Javed Khan, 55, was the eldest son of Sher Hassan, a retired police officer and a member of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Caravan.

DSP Jawad Khan said that preliminary investigation made clear that the ANP leader was shot at from a very close range by the assailants. They moved close to him and opened firing on him, he added. Abbas Khan, a son of the deceased, told police that he was buying essential commodities for home in Swabi city when he received the bad news. He said that his father was lying dead near Swabi graveyard in Qasimkhel area.

He said that he was told by locals that two unidentified motorcyclists suddenly appeared and opening fire on him with a pistol, killing him on the spot. The attackers managed to escape. ANP district general secretary Nawabzada, when contacted, said that it was not clear whether it was an incident of terrorism or enmity.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH (Agencies): A United Nations mission arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh on Sunday, Azerbaijan said, after almost the entire ethnic-Armenian population fled since Baku recaptured the breakaway enclave.

An Azerbaijani presidency spokesman told AFP that a "UN mission arrived in Karabakh on Sunday morning" — mainly to assess humanitarian needs. It marks the first time in about 30 years that the international body has gained access to the region. Armenian separatists, who had controlled the region for three decades, agreed to disarm, dissolve their government and reintegrate with Baku following a one-day Azerbaijani offensive last week. France has lashed out at Azerbaijan for only allowing the UN mission in after most residents had already fled.

The end of Karabakh's separatist bid dealt a heavy blow to a centuries-old dream by Armenians of reuniting what they say are their ancestral lands, divided among regional powers since the Middle Ages. Nearly all of Karabakh's estimated 120,000 residents fled the territory over the following days, sparking a refugee crisis. An AFP journalist at a border crossing along the Lachin corridor that links Karabakh with Armenia, saw only one car arrive from the now deserted enclave.

Sergei Atsaryan, 40, said he was among the last Armenians to leave the region. "I have no idea of

where to go, maybe Europe," he told AFP, adding however that he hoped many of the refugees would return if Azerbaijan "gives guarantees, provides help." "I've talked to Azerbaijani police and they said there would be no problems if we want to return, that we can live in our homes."

Nazeli Baghdasaryan, spokeswoman of the Armenian prime minister, said "100,483 forcefully displaced persons arrived in Armenia" by Sunday morning. She said 45,516 refugees were now in temporary accommodation. On Sunday, Armenia observed a national day of prayer for the region. Bells tolled in churches across the country, and the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Karekin II, lead a service in the nation's main cathedral. Echmiadzin, close to the capital Yerevan.

Clergymen in ornate robes sang ancient chants at an open-air altar outside the imposing cathedral built in a pale pink limestone. "As our sacred land of Karabakh is deserted, we pray for our sisters and brother of Karabakh who are going through terrible suffering," said the pontiff. Hundreds attended the religious service in the church of Saint Sarkis, in Yerevan. "One of the most tragic pages of Armenian history is being written today,"

28-year-old Mariam Vartanyan told AFP, standing in the crowd of worshippers wrapped in the smoke of burning incense.

Indian father-son duo seek refuge in Pakistan

KARACHI (INP): An Indian Muslim and his son who fled their home country citing religious persecution and arrived in Pakistan earlier this month have appealed to the government not to deport them and allow them to stay under "any restrictions," wrote Arab News, an English-language daily newspaper published in Saudi Arabia.

Arab News covered in detail the journey of the father and his son. Here is what the newspaper wrote: "Journalist Mohammad Hasnain, 65, and his son Ishaq Amir, 31, a technician at an Indian company, hail from Jamshepur, an industrial city located in the state of Jharkhand bordering West Bengal. Their journey to Pakistan involved flying from New Delhi to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on September 5, where they got visas for Afghanistan and then flew onwards to Kabul and subsequently to Kandahar. Finally, they paid a driver a little over \$200 dollars to drive them across the border to Chaman in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, where they arrived on Sept. 14."

The two are now living at a shelter in Karachi, and say they left their country out of "helplessness" over repeated attacks by Hindu extremists. Rights groups allege mistreatment of Muslims, some 14 percent of India's

1.3 billion people, under

Narendra Modi, who became prime minister in 2014. In reports on human rights and religious freedom, the US State Department has also raised concerns over treatment of Muslims, Hindu Dalits, Christians and other religious minorities in India while also listing a crack-down on journalists.

Activists point to a 2019 citizenship law described as "fundamentally discriminatory" by the United Nations human rights office for excluding Muslim migrants, an anti-conversion legislation challenging the constitutionally protected right to freedom of belief, and the 2019 revoking of Muslim-majority Kashmir's special status. There has also been demolition of Muslim properties in the name of removing illegal construction and a ban on wearing the hijab in classrooms in Karnataka when Modi's BJP party was in power in that state. Attacks by cow vigilantes are also on the rise. "You can consider that India is like a prison for Muslims, you can eat, drink, and dress up but you don't have freedom of any kind, you are considered a second-class citizen," Hasnain told Arab News from the Karachi shelter where he is staying. "If some injustice happens to you, there is no one to listen to you, the police won't listen, the courts won't listen."

Hasnain, who was the editor of an Indian weekly publication 'The Media Profile,' was also targeted for his journalism. "It's common for journalists to provide commentary on government policies, every journalist does it," he said, holding up a copy of the publication he worked for. "Every journalist talks about the poor conditions in an area. I also used to write about the injustices faced by Muslims due to their religion. This used to rile them [Indian government] up."

Amir, the son, said he had been beaten up by right-wing Hindus three times, in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2021, he said both father and son were beaten up. "I filed formal complaints in the company, but there was no reaction, no action taken," Amir said of the attacks that took place at his workplace. "Instead, the reaction always seemed to be directed at me. I endured beatings, heard abusive slogans, and was even forced to chant derogatory slogans against Pakistan and Islam. If we answer them, we will get thrashed and if we don't, then we have to live with our heads down."

Once in Pakistan, the father and son met police officials who advised them to seek refuge at a shelter run by the Edhi Foundation, Pakistan's largest charity organization.

13 dead in Spanish nightclub fire

MADRID (Agencies): At least 13 people were killed in a fire in a Spanish nightclub on Sunday morning, authorities said, with fears the toll could still rise as rescue workers sift through the debris. The fire broke out in the two-storey "Teatre" nightclub, also called "Fonda Milagros", in the city of Murcia in southeastern Spain in early hours of the morning.

Emergency services said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, that firefighters were continuing to work at the scene and had not ruled out "the possibility of finding more victims." Jose Ballesta, mayor of Murcia, said the fire had broken out at around 6:00 am local time (0400 GMT) and was "extremely serious". Ballesta told press at the scene that "there are still bodies to be pulled out" from the rubble, which he said was a complicated task given the "risk of collapse".

Firefighters dispatched to the scene at 7am were able to extinguish the fire by 8am, he said. Photos released by the emergency services show water hoses from fire trucks spraying the blackened facade of the club. Thick smoke could be seen billowing from the roof of the building. Authorities said four people were injured, two women aged 22 and 25 years old and two men in their forties, all suffering with smoke inhalation.

A police spokesperson said that a birthday party was being held at the club on Saturday night. "According to initial information, the fire broke out on the first floor of the nightclub, which has a ground floor and a first floor," Diego Seral, the national police spokesman told radio Onda Regional de Murcia. Forensic and judicial police experts "have been deployed to the Murcia nightclub where the fire broke out this morning to investigate the cause," the national police service said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Video footage released by the city's firefighting brigade shows the firefighters holding a long hose approaching bright orange flames inside the venue, passing bar tables that still have drinks placed on top of them. More than 40 firefighters and 12 emergency vehicles were attending the scene, authorities said. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez voiced "solidarity with the victims and relatives of the tragic fire in a Murcia nightclub".

The city's town hall had earlier said it "deeply regrets" the accident and offered condolences to those affected. The mayor announced that three days of mourning would be held, and set up a reception base for the relatives of victims. Forty people were injured in 2017 in a packed nightclub on Spain's holiday island of Tenerife when a floor collapsed. The injured were from countries including France, Britain, Romania and Belgium. And in 1990, 43 people died in a fire at a nightclub in Spain's north-eastern city of Zaragoza.

Several energy projects in KP nearing completion

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Energy & Power KP Nisar Ahmad Khan has said that the timely completion of ongoing energy projects in province the first priority, however, prevailing economic issues in the country are proving to be a major obstacle in the completion of energy projects, for which an integrated strategy is indispensable.

KP power department's sub entity Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) is a profitable entity of province. Several projects of PEDO have entered in final stages of completion, that would be expected as Rs.10 billion rupees the source of income to the province. In order to solve few issues pertaining to federal institutions in energy projects, the provincial government has formulated a plan of action to take the matters seriously.

He expressed these views while presiding over a

review meeting on ongoing PEDO's energy projects at the government level in the province. In the meeting, Chief Executive PEDO Engr. Naeem Khan, while giving a briefing, said that under the supervision of PEDO, work is currently underway on 42 energy projects of electricity production including hydro, solar, transmission & distribution.

Moreover, PEDO has successfully completed 7 hydropower projects so far, with a total generation capacity of 161 megawatts that are getting income of 4 billion annually. While 9 projects including the largest Balakot Power Project of 300 MW Mansehra, 88 MW Gabral Kalam, 157 MW Madyen HPP, 84 MW Matiltan Swat, 69 MW Lawi Chitral, 40.8 MW Koto Dir, 11.8 MW Krora Shangla, 13.5 MW Chapri Charkhel Kuram and 6.9 MW. Work on Mujahideen HPP torgar are in progress of working, a total of 800 megawatts of electricity will be generated

and the province is expected to earn more than 47 billion rupees annually.

Most of these projects are in the final stages of completion. Similarly, 4,400 mosques, 8,000 schools, 187 BHUs of solarization are being implemented. The completed solar energy projects would save millions of rupees annually in terms of electricity bills. In the second phase, 291 mini-micro hydel stations are also being constructed in areas deprived of electricity, from which a total of 41 MW of cheap electricity will be generated.

Furthermore, several energy projects have also been successfully completed in the integrated tribal districts of the province, which has improved the electricity transmission system there. In some projects he added. Lastly, secretary power Nisar Khan hoped that in coming days issues with the federation will be resolved on a priority basis at high-level forums.