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Nawaz leaves for Islamabad
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has left for Islamabad from his residence in Jati Umra, Lahore Monday. The former premier left his residence under tight security. The PML-N workers also sacrificed goats on this occasion for the safety of their leader. The former premier will appear in Islamabad court today (Tuesday).

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May 9 vandalism SC strikes down mily trials of civilians

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a unanimous verdict, a five-member bench of the Supreme Court on Monday declared civilians' trials in military courts null and void as it admitted the petitions challenging the trial of civilians involved in the May 9 riots triggered by the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in a corruption case.

A five-member apex court bench — headed by Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik — issued the order on the petitions filed by the PTI chief and others. Four judges out of the five declared that Section 2(1)(d) of the Army Act and 59(4) (civil offences) are "ultra vires the Constitution and of no legal effect".

"Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the trials of civilians and accused persons, being around 103 persons [...] shall be tried by criminal courts of competent jurisdiction established under the ordinary and/or special law of the land in relation to such offences of which they may stand accused," the short order read. The top court said the verdict is applicable to all those accused arrested in connection with the riots of May 9 and 10.

The order further said that any action or proceedings under the Army Act in respect of the aforesaid persons or any other persons so similarly placed — including but not limited to trial by court-martial — are and would be of no legal effect. Although the bench concluded that Section 2(D)(1) was in contradiction with the Constitution, Justice Yahya Afridi reserved his decision.

The apex court had reserved the verdict earlier today after Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan completed his arguments, which centred around the domain and scope of the military courts to try the civilians under the Army Act. At the outset of the hearing on Monday, petitioner lawyer Salman Akram Raja told the bench that trials of civilians already commenced before the top court's verdict in the matter. Responding to this, Justice Ahsan said the method of conducting proceedings of the case would be settled after Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan completed his arguments.

Presenting his arguments, the AGP said he would explain to the court why a constitutional amendment was necessary to form military courts in

2015 to try the terrorists. Responding to Justice Ahsan's query, AGP Awan said the accused who were tried in military courts were local as well as foreign nationals. He said the accused would be tried under Section 2 (1) (D) of the Official Secrets Act and a trial under the Army Act would fulfill all the requirements of a criminal case.

"The trial of the May 9 accused will be held in line with the procedure of a criminal court," the AGP said. The AGP said the 21st Amendment was passed because the terrorists did not fall in the ambit of the Army Act. "Amendment was necessary for the trial of terrorists [then] why amendment not required for the civilians? At the time of the 21st constitutional amendment, did the accused attack the army or installations?" inquired Justice Ahsan.

AGP Awan replied that the 21st Amendment included a provision to try accused involved in attacking restricted areas. "How do civilians come under the ambit of the Army Act?" Justice Ahsan asked the AGP. Justice Malik asked AGP Awan to explain what Article 8 of the Constitution says. "According to Article 8, legislation against fundamental rights cannot be sustained," the AGP responded. Justice Malik observed that the Army Act was enacted to establish discipline in the forces. "How can the law of discipline in the armed forces be applied to civilians?" she inquired.

The AGP responded by saying that discipline of the forces is an internal matter while obstructing armed forces from discharging duties is a separate issue. He said any person facing the charges under the Army Act can be tried in military courts. "The laws you [AGP] are referring to are related to army discipline," Justice Ahsan said.

Justice Malik inquired whether the provision of fundamental rights be left to the will of Parliament. "The Constitution ensures the provision of fundamental rights at all costs," she added. If the court opened this door then even a traffic signal violator will be deprived of his fundamental rights, Justice Malik said. The AGP told the bench that court-martial is not an established court under Article 175 of the Constitution. At this, Justice Ahsan said court martials are not under Article 175 but are courts established under the Constitution and Law.

After hearing the arguments, the bench reserved the verdict on the petitions. A day earlier, the federal government informed the apex court that the military trials of civilians had already commenced. After concluding

the hearing, Justice Ahsan hinted at issuing a short order on the petitions. The government told the court about the development related to trials in the military court in a miscellaneous application following orders of the top court on August 3, highlighting that at least 102 people were taken into custody due to their involvement in the attacks on military installations and establishments.

The same day, expressing their "faith and confidence" in military authorities, nine of the May 9 suspects — who are currently in army's custody — moved the Supreme Court, seeking an order for their trial in the military court be proceeded and concluded expeditiously to "meet the ends of justice". Nine out of more than 100 suspects, who were in the army's custody, filed their petitions in the apex court via an advocate-on-record. The May 9 riots were triggered almost across the country after former prime minister Imran Khan's — who was removed from office via a vote of no confidence in April last year — arrest in the £190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations.

In response to the move by the then-government and military to try the May 9 protestors in military courts, PTI Chairman Imran, former chief justice Jawwad S. Khawaja, lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan, and five civil society members, including Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) Executive Director Karamat Ali, requested the apex court to declare the military trials "unconstitutional". The initial hearings were marred by objections on the bench formation and recusals by the judges. Eventually, the six-member bench heard the petitions.

However, in the last hearing on August 3, the then-chief justice Umar Ata Bandial said the apex court would stop the country's army from resorting to any unconstitutional moves while hearing the pleas challenging the trial of civilians in military courts. A six-member bench, led by the CJP and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik, heard the case. In the last hearing, the case was adjourned indefinitely after the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan assured the then CJP that the military trials would not proceed without informing the apex court.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing a press conference.

PTI chief, Qureshi indicted in cipher case F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A special court on Monday indicted former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher leaking case registered against them under the Official Secrets Act. Both Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi pleaded not guilty, with PTI chief declaring the case as "false, politically motivated, based on vengeance and a pack of lies. I will prove my innocence."

The lawyers of the PTI chairman and vice-chairman appeared in the court. Imran Khan's chief lawyer Salman Safdar did not attend the hearing while other members of the team including Usman Riaz, Gul Umair Niazi and Khalid Yousuf were present in the court. Taimur Malik and Raja Qamar Inayat represented Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulfikar heard the case at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. The judge summoned the witnesses to appear in the court on October 27 to testify in the case. Rejecting another application from Imran Khan to defer the charge-sheet, the judge remarked: "Today is the day for indictment."

In the new application, the PTI lawyers insisted that the indicted cannot take place as there was material to support it. "It would be a waste of time," they added. "The charges are just hearsay, and do not tantamount to indictment," they argued. The court set aside their arguments and issued notices to the prosecution's witnesses for October 27. Both the PTI leaders were indicted after their petition under CrPC 265-D to stop the indictment was rejected. The judge, while rejecting the petitions, stated that today's hearing was fixed for indictment.

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) prosecutor Shah Khawar said that Imran Khan has been charged with leaking classified documents. "He has been indicted today and the charge was openly read out," Shah Khawar told media men outside Adiala Jail. The PTI chief was jailed in August for three years over graft but when his sentence was later overturned, he was instead kept in custody on the far more serious charge of sharing state documents.

The case relates to a cable that Imran Khan had touted as proof that he was ousted as part of a US conspiracy backed by the establishment. The United States and the Pakistan military have denied the claim. Lawyers for Imran Khan say the case carries a maximum jail term of 14 years. During the last hearing on October 17, both the PTI leaders' indictment was deferred till today as the copies of challans submitted by the FIA were provided to the accused.

In August of this year, Imran and Qureshi were booked under the Official Secrets Act 1923 in the cipher case after the FIA invoked Section 5 of the said law. The diplomatic cable reportedly went missing from Imran's possession. According to the former ruling party, the cable contained a threat from the US to topple the PTI's government. Once the charges are framed, the evidence of the prosecution is recorded and the case trial begins. Subsequently, the testimonies and statements of the accused are recorded by the court.

FP raises HRs & two state issue at White House Kirby says Israel has right to defend itself

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON: The Frontier Post asked John Kirby, White House National Security Spokesperson during White House press briefing about the silence of President Biden administration about human rights violations committed by Israel against Palestine, to which John Kirby stated that since day one President Biden has spoken about the innocent lives with Israel and the American people.

John Kirby stated that "no sir I disagree with you, since day one President Biden has spoken about the rules of war and that the assistance of first trucks which just reached Gaza took place because of the efforts of President Biden" after he spoke to President Sissi of Egypt and Prime Minister Netanyahu of



Israel.

To another question by The Frontier Post that why President Biden does not work towards peace instead of saying that the United States can fight a war a two fronts meaning Ukraine and Israel, John Kirby said that "since day one this administration has been working towards prosperous and peaceful Middle East." He further said that October 7

attacks on Israel were horrific and Israel has the right and obligation to defend itself.

To another question by The Frontier Post that in the last couple of weeks the agenda of the two state solution to resolve the Israel and Palestine had been sabotaged, John Kirby replied by saying that "We still believe in the promise of a two state solution and that a key stepping in this regard is the normalization of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia."

John Kirby further added that "there is no change in our desire to see two states but "we are not blind to the reality that Israel has the right to defend itself." John Kirby also said that the president does want to stop the expansion of this war so talks can be held on a table.

Final date for voting to be announced soon: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that the Chinese investment expected under the newly signed 20 MoUs would prove to be a stimulant for Pakistan's economic growth.

Addressing a press conference about his recent visit to China, the prime minister said 20 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed and hoped that the upcoming government would ensure consistency of the policy. The prime minister, along with a high-level delegation visited China from October 16-20, mainly to attend the Belt and Road Forum where he also held bilateral meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

During the visit, the two sides signed 20 agreements and MoUs, covering cooperation on the BRI, infrastructure, mining, industry, green and low-carbon development, health, space cooperation, digital economy, development cooperation and export of agricultural products to China. "The signing of 20 MoUs was very encouraging. This is after a long time that the MoUs in such a huge number were signed with China..." He have brought along three guiding principles of coordination, cooperation and consultation with us," he remarked.

He said the MoUs were yet in the planning stage and the assessment of the potential, market needs and impact on exports would precede their execution. He said a designated cell at the Prime Minister's Office would carry out the follow-up of the bilateral and other engagements with China to pave the way for their implementation.

Mentioning his interaction with the

Chinese business leaders, he said under the second phase of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), the Chinese private business entities would invest in Pakistan's agriculture, mining and other sectors. He told the newsmen that Pakistani leadership's "constructive" engagement with Chinese counterparts was well received by the Chinese people, media and think tanks.

Emphasizing the consistency of relations with China, he expressed the hope that the upcoming government would carry forward the momentum as any deviation from the commitments might put the state's dignity at stake. He said the address by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Forum was in fact an answer to all the challenges confronting China, the region as well as the whole world. He said the land, sea and aerial connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative would not only bring the regions closer but also create opportunities for the people.

During the visit, the prime minister also met presidents of Russia, Sri Lanka and Kenya. In their meeting, the Kenyan president told him that a lot of investigation had been done into the killing of Pakistani news anchor Arshad Sharif and assured him of working in coordination with the Pakistani authorities. The prime minister pointed out the minimal linkage between the Pakistani and Chinese media, despite the fact that there existed immense opportunities for both private and state-run media for story-telling, documentaries and other content. Coming to the issue of Gaza, Prime Minister Kakar told the media that humanitarian aid had landed in Egypt for its onward dispersal to the suffering Palestinian people.

(Continued on Back Page)

Gaza martyrdoms top 5,087

GAZA (Reuters): Israeli forces continue to bombard the Gaza Strip with airstrikes while also engaging in ground skirmishes with Hamas, with over 436 people killed in Israeli aerial attacks.

Most of the casualties occurred in the densely populated southern region of Gaza, with the conflict expanding beyond Gaza, with Israeli aircraft conducting strikes in southern Lebanon. Additionally, Israeli troops clashed with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. The United Nations has expressed deep concern about the humanitarian situation, as civilians in Gaza are running out of food, water, and shelter. Although some aid reaches Gaza, it falls far short of the amount needed to address the crisis.

The death toll on the Palestinian side continues to rise, with over 5,087

Palestinians killed in two weeks of Israeli airstrikes, including 2,055 children, according to Gaza's health ministry. The current Israeli bombardment was triggered by a cross-border assault by Hamas militants on Israeli communities on October 7, resulting in casualties and hostage-taking. Both Israel and Hamas have reported clashes in Gaza.

Israel has indicated that its ground forces conducted limited raids to combat Palestinian gunmen, while airstrikes focused on sites where Hamas was believed to be preparing for potential attacks. Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari explained that these raids targeted groups of terrorists and collected information about hostages held by Hamas.

It is also not clear how such an invasion might unfold. Hamas has built up a powerful arsenal with Iran's

help, and Israeli forces would risk being drawn into fighting in a crowded urban setting against a group that has built a vast tunnel network referred to by Israeli troops as the "Gaza Metro". "During the night there were raids by (Israeli) tank and infantry forces," Hagari told a briefing.

Describing incursions that went "deep" into Gaza, he said: "These raids are raids that kill squads of terrorists who are preparing for the next stage in the war." Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry reported an Israeli airstrike in the Al-Saudi and Janina neighbourhoods of Rafah, near the southern border with Egypt. Izz el-Deen al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said in a statement on Sunday that its fighters had engaged with an Israeli armoured force east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

COAS greets NUST graduates F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir Monday felicitated the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) graduates on successfully accomplishing their goal and remarked that it was now incumbent upon them to figure out and analyse challenges facing the country and put their intellectual resourcefulness to find their solutions.

Chairman NUST Board of Governors, COAS, General Syed Asim Munir as chief guest at the inaugural "Master Convocation Ceremony" conferred medals upon distinction holders. The annual convocation week of the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) commenced here at the University's main campus, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students received degrees during the course of convocation week. Degrees are being awarded to over 3500 graduates from all NUST Schools at the main campus in the 7 core disciplines.

Addressing the graduates, the COAS extended his heartiest felicitations to graduates, their parents and faculty. He commended NUST for developing a conducive ecosystem for teaching and learning - one that nurtures brilliant minds, who are fully poised to serve the nation. The army chief emphasized that education was not an option but a necessity. He highlighted that today was the beginning of a new chapter in students' lives, which heralded a significant change that demanded greater responsibility.

SC issues notices to govt, ECP in timely election case F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: While hearing a set of petitions seeking elections in 90 days, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has issued notices to the Federal Government and Election Commission of Pakistan seeking their reply. The apex court has also accepted a plea by the petitioners beseeching the court not to form a larger bench to hear this case.

After issuing notices to the ECP and Federal Government, the court adjourned the case hearing till November 2. A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprised of Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Aminuddin Khan heard the petitions seeking timely elections in the country on Monday. Petitioner Abid Zuberi, who is also Supreme Court Bar Association President, PTI lawyer Ali Zafar and another petitioner Ibadur Rehman attended the court proceedings.

Abid Zuberi informed

the court that the Supreme Court Bar Association had challenged the August 5 decision of the Council of Common Interests (CCI). When asked by the CJP when he did he file the petition and why it hadn't been fixed till now, Ali Zuberi said they filed the petition in August. Justice Isa remarked, "We have been informed by the court staff that you did not request an early hearing." This should have been an urgent matter, the CJP said, asking when the census took place. Had the case been fixed on time, it would have been decided by now, the CJP further observed.

Zuberi said it had been requested that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) be ordered to ensure elections in 90 days and nullify the CCI order regarding publishing the census results. Justice Isa asked if a census was a constitutional requirement. Zuberi replied in affirmative. If the 2017 census is not finalized, there will be a difference in the data, CJP Isa

said. Justice Aminuddin Khan said, "If the current census is not accepted, the elections will be held on the basis of the 2017 census."

"If the current census is annulled, what will be your plea? Will you ask for a census again or ask for elections to be held on the previous one?" asked the CJP. "Caretaker governments are constitutional, you have written unconstitutional," the CJP questioned. Zuberi replied "We have demanded that the participation of two caretaker chief ministers in the Council of Common Interests meeting should be declared unconstitutional." Justice Minallah said that if the petitioners got into the current census, elections could face a further delay.

Zuberi said that the excuse of new delimitations due to the new census could not be used as a reason to delay the elections. However, Justice Isa remarked that if Zuberi's proposition was accepted, it would lead to further delay in elections.

Govt taken steps to overcome masses issues F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker government has taken multiple measures in order to benefit the general public from recent decline in the prices of petroleum products which have resulted in visible decrease in the prices of food items and transport fares in the province.

This was told in a high level meeting Held on

Monday with the caretaker prime minister Anwar Ul Haq Kakar in the chair. Besides caretaker Chief Ministers of other provinces, the caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan and other relevant authorities attended the meeting via video link.

Briefing the participants by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, it was told that after the recent decline in the

prices of petroleum products, transport fares in the province have been reduced up to 12% whereas significant decrease in the prices of daily food items have also been reported. According to the details: The prices of rice have decreased by seven to fifteen percent, masur 9%, red beans 13%, onion 10%, potato 9%, tomato 9% and 10% decrease in the price of motion have been reported.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali addressing a laptop distribution ceremony at IM Sciences Hayatabad.

730,000 Pakistanis waiting for their passports

ISLAMABAD (NNI): As many as 730,000 Pakistanis in the country and abroad have been waiting for the issuance of their passports for the past one and a half months.

The shortage of dollars in the country delayed the timely payment to the French company. The French company has now been given an order for 2 million more lamination papers. Lamination papers for 1 million passports were received by the passport office on Friday.

The printing of the pending 700,000 passports has been started today. Now, 22,000 to 30,000 passports will be prepared daily. The backlog of over 700,000 passports will be cleared over the next four weeks.

By the end of November, more than one million lamination papers for passports will reach Pakistan. Moreover, lamination papers for one million passports will reach Pakistan in December. Arrangements have been finalised to pay the French company for a further two million lamination papers. The authorities concerned said that the issue of passport printing would be resolved.

Police arrest 20 drug peddlers

LAHORE (PPI): In a crackdown against drug peddlers, Lahore Police successfully apprehended 20 suspects in multiple raids across the city on Monday.

According to the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) operations, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a total of 20 individuals – who were allegedly involved in selling drugs to the students and other citizens – were taken into custody in the last 24 hours.

He stated that, a total of 29 kg hashish and 205 liter of liquor has been confiscated from the possession of the arrested individuals.

Last week, Karachi police foiled an attempt to smuggle drugs of more than 120 kgs from Quetta and apprehended the main operative of an inter-provincial drug gang. According to the details, Mochko Police carried out a major operation at the Mochko check post and arrested Basir Ahmed, the main operative of the inter-provincial drug dealer group. In a statement, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Keamari – Arif Aslam Rao – claimed that the local police foiled the smuggling attempt of more than 120 kgs of hashish.

CM directs authorities to finalise design of cancer hospital

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday tasked the authorities concerned with turning Manawan Hospital, Lahore into a cancer hospital.

While chairing a meeting in the committee room of Manawan Hospital, the chief minister gave in principle the approval for building a cancer hospital and sought a plan in this regard. He also inspected the Manawan Hospital building and the proposed land for building the cancer hospital. He also inspected the building adjacent to the main building of Manawan Hospital.

“Punjab is a province of 140 million people, but not even a single state-of-the-art public cancer hospital is there,” Mohsin Naqvi said while chairing the meeting. “A state-of-the-art public cancer hospital is the need of the people of Punjab. It

is the responsibility of the government to provide state-of-the-art public hospitals,” he emphasised.

The chief minister directed the authorities concerned to finalise the design of the cancer hospital and other issues soon. “The purchase of machinery and other equipment should also be planned,” he added.

Lahore schools, markets to remain open on Wednesday: CM Naqvi

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has announced that Wednesday remains a regular working day based on a better air quality index (AQI).

This means that educational institutions, markets, and offices will remain open in Lahore on Wednesdays.

In a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Naqvi said that he held a crucial smog meeting with all cabinet members.

The cabinet meeting decided that Wednesday will not be declared a holiday based on the air quality index.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of cracking down on all sources of air pollution and ensuring the well-being of the residents. He stated, “The transport secretary, district administration, and police are on the ground to combat air pollution sources. We’re vigilant and taking proactive measures to keep the air quality index under control, he added.

With air quality becoming a grave concern, the Punjab government is taking a proactive stance to tackle the issue.

Earlier, it was decided to keep the schools, markets, banks, and private institutions closed every Wednesday aimed at reducing vehicular emissions and industrial activities to alleviate air pollution.

CS orders DCs to ensure new rates implementation

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman directed all deputy commissioners on Monday to ensure implementation of the new rate lists, issued following a reduction in the prices of petroleum products.

He issued this directive while presiding over a video-link meeting of the deputy commissioners at the Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting reviewed implementation of reduction in food prices and transport fares. The chief secretary ordered that fare reduction lists be displayed in passenger buses. He said the price magistrates concerned would be responsible in case of sale of commodities at higher than fixed rates.

He said that deputy commissioners themselves determine the prices of commodities in their districts, adding that it was also their responsibility to implement these rates.

The CS said that providing relief to people from inflation was a priority of the government. He said that the administrative officers should play their role in improving governance and service delivery. The chief secretary also issued instructions regarding continuing operations against encroachments.

The Industries secretary gave a detailed briefing at the meeting. He said that

144 important markets had been notified in the province for convenience of consumers and the district administration would deploy staff in these markets.

The Transport secretary said that after reduction in prices of petroleum products, the transport fares had been reduced by 5 to 10 per cent. He said heavy fines would be imposed on transporters for overcharging.

The administrative secretaries of industries, agriculture, transport, additional IG special branch and officers concerned attended the meeting, while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video-link.

PFA issues warning to 209 cereal units

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has served warning notices for improvement to 209 cereal production units and penalised 33 others with hefty fines over violations during the province-wide inspection drive.

The authority also stopped production of a unit besides discarding

more than 80kg of expired ingredients.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said in a statement on Monday that the food safety teams inspected 268 cereal units across Punjab including 126 in Lahore division, 13 in Faisalabad, 39 in Sahiwal, 25 in Gujranwala, 18 in Rawalpindi, 17 in

Sargodha, 21 in Dera Ghazi Khan, five in Bahawalpur and four in Multan. Raja Jahangir said the use of prohibited ingredients in food preparation could cause stomach and intestinal problems. He said that the authority would continue its indiscriminate action against counterfeiters and adulterators in the province.

CM Baqar orders inquiries against SRB, labour dept for failing to recover Rs16bn

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (retired) Maqbool Baqar has ordered two separate inquiries against the Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) and Labour Department for their failure to act against the non-compliants of Sindh Workers Welfare Fund and Sindh Workers Participation Fund and the failure, of DG Labour, to register Industrial Units respectively.

“If both the organizations- the SRB and the DG Labour, had taken timely action the recovery of Rs16.4 billion for workers fund could have been ensured.”

This he said while presiding over a joint meeting of SRB, SESSI and Workers Welfare Board attended by Minister Law Omar Soomro, Advocate General Hassan Akbar, PSCM Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Labour Shariq Ahmad, Chairman SRB Wasif Memon, Secretary Law Ali Ahmad Baloch, Commissioner SESSI Saleem Khuuro, Secretary Workers Welfare Board and others.

Chairman SRB Wasif Memon told the CM that the missing amount of the fund payers- Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) and Workers Participation Fund (WPF)- have been updated in the ledger of the Nazir of the Sindh High Court and now the Nazir ledger reflects that there were 39 cases who have deposited Rs19.29 billion against which Rs 6.75 billion and now the total amount has come to 26.03 billion.

The CM said that the 78 non-compliant litigant fund payers have been

issued 19 show-cause notices by raising demand of Rs 35.97 billion in which the Sindh component would come to Rs 7 billion.

He said that there were 54 industrial units that owed Rs 3.106 billion. At this, the CM questioned that no action had been taken against them. The SRB team said that they have now issued them show-cause notices.

The CM expressing his displeasure ordered a high-level inquiry against SRB to unearth the motives behind the lethargy. “These are the funds meant for workers but due to vested interest the industrial units are given favour at the cost of the welfare of the workers which is not acceptable at any cost,” the CM said.

The CM said that there were 127 defaulting units that owed Rs13.4 billion in the head of workers’ welfare and participation funds. To a question, he said that these 127 units were unregistered, adding he expressed his displeasure and said that what the Director General of Labour was doing. “The DG Labour is responsible for registering the industrial units but even then, they fail to do so,” he said and ordered the Secretary Labour and Secretary Finance to conduct an inquiry and fix the responsibility against the delinquent officers.

He said that in the Labour Square, Gulshan-e-Maymar there were 1000 flats. He directed the Workers Welfare Board to renovate them and allot those flats that were vacant.

In compliance with the CM orders out of 32 Blocks comprising 1000 flats, 15 Blocks of 480 flats have been rehabilitated and are ready to occupy. The remaining 17 Blocks of 520 flats would be rehabilitated by November 2023. Baqar directed the Workers Welfare Board to ensure the functioning of the Primary school, community centre, dispensary, shops, mosques, and industrial homes. He said he would personally visit the flats meet with the residents and assess the quality of the renovation works.

The CM said the Workers Welfare Board had paid an Rs 7.5 million electricity bill of the labour square but even then the electricity has not been restored. The CM during the meeting talked to the CEO KE and directed him to get the electricity restored by the evening.

He said that 128 Flats in Hyderabad and 100 Houses at Shaheed Benazirabad were under illegal occupation, in this regard, the CM issued necessary instructions for the removal of the encroachment. The district administration and the police have made necessary arrangements to evacuate these Flats/Houses Workers Welfare Board Sindh. The CM informed the process has been delayed due to the Polio Campaign and Fertilizer Survey work. The chief minister directed the concerned authorities to take necessary actions just after getting free from the anti-polio drive and survey.

Dengue cases surge in Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Punjab including Lahore, has witnessed a significant spike in dengue cases in the past 24 hours. A total of 176 new cases of dengue fever have been reported across the region. Specifically, Lahore has reported 104 new dengue cases, with the entire province confirming 176 new cases within the past day.

The Department of Health has provided these figures, highlighting that Lahore alone had 104 dengue cases reported just yesterday. Additional cases have emerged in other key cities within the province, with Rawalpindi recording 20 new cases, Multan with 22, Faisalabad with 9, and both Sargodha and Sialkot reporting 2 cases of dengue each.

According to the latest statistics from the Department of Health, the total number of dengue fever patients in Punjab now stands at 8003, representing a notable increase compared to the previous year.

CPWB rescues 8 beggar children

LAHORE (APP): The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) rescued eight beggar children and got registered two cases against the begging mafia during a crackdown carried out, here on Monday.

CPWP Chairperson Sarah Ahmed told the media that child rescue operations were being carried out in the provincial capital on a daily basis, due to which decrease in child beggary was observed in the city. The CPWB was also running a awareness campaign to sensitise people living in slums about education benefits, she added. She stressed the need for collective efforts of all stakeholders to end the menace of beggary in society. She said people could report child beggary on the helpline 1121 of the CPWB.

Four injured arrested after encounter

KARACHI (APP): Four alleged street criminals were arrested in injured condition after an encounter with police near Jamali Bridge on Monday.

According to police, an encounter took place between a team of SITE Police Highway police station and street criminals at Dildar Umrani Goth near Jamali Bridge. After an exchange of firing, the police arrested 4 accused in injured condition namely Ashiq Hussain, Saleem, Shehroz and Zohaib.

The police recovered four pistols with load magazines, two motorcycles and 6 mobile phones from their possession.

All were shifted to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and further investigations were underway.

Sardar honored to attend Indonesia Independence Day



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Adam M. Tugio, and Irina Tugio honored Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate to attend the reception held on the occa-

sion of 78th Anniversary of the Independence Day of Republic of Indonesia.

Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate, forwarded personal warm wishes and the brotherly feelings from the

people of Pakistan specially from Swat. Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate wished a prosperous and bright future for the brotherly country and people of Indonesia.

Sindh govt decides to refund deduction salaries of employees

KARACHI (PPI): The Sindh government has decided to refund the amount deducted from the salaries of the employees on account of contribution to the Sindh Flood Relief Fund (SFRF).

The government established the “Sindh Flood Relief Fund” to help out the affected persons in the province.

Scores of employees including doctors, judges, and teachers approached the Sindh High Court against deduction from

their salaries for SFRF. Eventually, the apex court ordered the government to return the deducted amount to the employees.

Now, the government decided to return all deducted money from the salaries of the employees in August 2022. The Sindh Finance Department sent a letter to the Accountant General Sindh and District Financial Officers with the instructions to execute the court decision in the letter and spirit.

LESCO recovers Rs 990m from 30,826 defaulters in 40 days

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered more than Rs 990 million from 30,826 dead/chronic defaulters in all five districts – Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara – during 40 days of its recovery campaign.

A spokesman told the media here Monday that during the 40 days, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 128.81 million from 4,165 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 227.16 million from 3,519 defaulters in

Eastern Circle respectively.

Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Ahsan and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 144.82 million from 3,937 defaulters in Central Circle and Rs 57.18 million from 1,717 defaulters in South Circle, while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar NankanaSahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 60.57 million from 2,635 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 138.74 million from 3,264 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager

E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 67.80 million from 4,766 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 165.31 million from 6,823 defaulters in Kasur Circle.

On the 40th day of the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery) recovered more than Rs 6.9 million from 275 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation. He elaborated that LESCO recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.84 million from 39 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 1.87 million from 60 defaulters in Eastern Circle; Rs 1.30 million from 40 defaulters

in Central Circle; Rs 0.04 million from 04 defaulters in South Circle, Rs 0.44 million from 26 defaulters in Nankana Circle; Rs 1.40 million from 35 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; Rs 0.60 million from 47 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 0.48 million from 21 defaulters in Kasur Circle.

For the recovery campaign started on September 13, the Lahore Division’s Commissioner had assigned additional charge of Tehsildar Recovery (from LESCO defaulters) to relevant Tehsildars, while LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haidar has also designated four senior officers to assist them in the dues recovery from defaulters.



KARACHI: A view of overloaded vehicle on the way in provincial capital. —INP Photo



23-10-23 Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan, via video link attending a meeting held under the chair of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Kakar

Chinese investment in SEZs:

Country's exports to be further improved: SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq termed CPEC as a guarantee for regional development and prosperity and emphasized the need for timely completion of Special Economic Zones under the CPEC.

Fuad Ishaq hoped the country's exports will be further enhanced by Chinese investment in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and strengthen the industrial capacity building.

He said CPEC projects will bring good investment prospects for the country.

Timely completion of special economic zones under CPEC would generate further economic activi-

ties and employment opportunities and lead the national economy and country toward stabilization, the SCCI chief asserted.

Fuad Ishaq made these remarks during his visit to China Window (Chinese Culture Centre) in Peshawar, according to a press release issued here on Monday.

Accompanied by the SCCI Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, the chamber president said China-Pakistan relations further strengthened with passage of time, and roots of this Sino-Pak friendship is in people of the both countries.

He said the Pakistani nation was highly proud of friendship with China and expressed full trust in it.

Fuad Ishaq witnessed

various galleries and signed on the friendship wall during visit to the China Window.

Later, the SCCI chief talking to media said Road and Belt Initiative (BRI) forum was not only provided opportunities to leaders of different countries to hold debate on benefits and fruits of this multi-billion dollar CPEC project but it has also opened a new chapter partnership for more than 140 countries and economic progress after announcement regarding BRI by Chinese president during the forum.

Fuad Ishaq said caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar put Pakistan's stance before the whole world in an efficient manner while speaking at the

forum.

He was of the view that signing on the ML-1 project will initiate a new process of economic progress through Pakistan Railways.

He continued to say CPEC project will bring economic development, especially, a new era of prosperity will begin in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said the project will help to further strengthen connectivity and promote overall progress.

The chamber president said CPEC has entered into a new phase of execution and construction that will promote industrialization, provision of employment opportunities, and progress in multiple sectors including mining, IT and agriculture.

Meeting of non-formal education policy held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting was held under the guidance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Caretaker Education Minister for Education, Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan regarding non-formal education policy in the province here on Monday.

During the meeting, essential decisions were taken to enhance access to non-formal education and streamline certification procedures.

Distinguished attendees included Education Secretary Syed Mohtasim Billah Shah, Special Secretary Sharif Hussain, Education Advisor Khalid Mehmood, Communication Specialist Sheikh Fakhar Alam, Director ALP Rafiq Khattak, Director Gohar Ali, and representatives from JICA and UNICEF.

The meeting also provided an insightful briefing to the provincial minister on the ongoing efforts to reintegrate out-of-school children into the education system.

Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan expressed gratitude to the Development Partners of the Education Department for their collaborative efforts in elevating the education system within the province.

The education secretary outlined a future course of action aimed at aligning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's non-formal education system with that of the federation and other provinces.

This effort will involve a high-level delegation tasked with conducting a comparative analysis and formulating recommendations, which will ultimately undergo approval by the provincial cabinet.

37 mobile phones recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): Chota Lahore Police in Swabi on Monday arrested a wanted interprovincial mobile snatcher criminal and seized 37 mobile phones recovered valued in millions of rupees.

The interprovincial offender was wanted to Punjab police for mobile snatching crimes in Faisalabad and other districts.

According to details, under the special directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi, Haroon Rashid Khan, the local police launched a comprehensive operation against thieves, dacoits, kidnappers, drug dealers, and other criminals.

In this series, the Swabi police under the leadership of DPO Haroon Rashid Khan and Inspector Liaqat Shah Khan from Lahore, with a police team, successfully arrested the highly wanted suspect, Zeeshan Zafer, son of Zafer Nadeem, a resident of Jang Road, Faisalabad. The suspect had been involved in snatching valuable mobile phones from citizens and supplying them to Afghanistan.

During the investigation, the police seized 37 mobile phones of different models. These phones had been snatched from citizens in various cities, and their collective worth amounted to millions of rupees.

The suspect, while confessing to his crimes, revealed that he was supplying the stolen mobile phones to Afghanistan. Further investigations are underway against him.

Afghan citizen held

PESHAWAR (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar on Monday arrested an Afghan national holding forged Pakistani identity card and passport.

According to The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the accused identified as Habibullah was arrested from University Road, adding that a border crossing token was also recovered from the suspect.

The initial investigation from the accused revealed that he came to Pakistan a few months back and after getting forged Pakistani CNIC and passport he was trying to go to Saudi Arabia.

Transporters involved in overcharging: Crackdown started in province

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government here Monday started crackdown against transporters involved in overcharging of passengers despite significant reduction of petroleum products prices.

Zafarullah Khan Umarzai, Special Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Transport and Housing has issued clear directives to transport officials in this regard.

He directed officials to visit passengers transport stands daily and take stern action against drivers who overcharge passengers, ensuring that the benefits of reduced petroleum prices are passed on to the general

population.

In alignment with the caretaker provincial government's special instructions and the guidance of the Special Assistant for Transport, the Provincial Transport and Regional Transport Authorities have launched an extensive operation in collaboration with the district administration.

The they have initiated visits to locations such as T-road and others, commencing legal proceedings against those found overcharging passengers.

Motor Vehicle Examiner in Peshawar, along with Traffic Inspection Staff (TIS), has been promptly addressing this issue by issuing challans to several

drivers who have been overcharging passengers.

Authorities are now instructed to perform daily inspections at transport bases and bus terminals, scrutinizing fare collection from passengers. Drivers engaged in overcharging will face route permit suspension, and vehicle owners will be subjected to fines.

Emphasizing the caretaker provincial government's commitment to extending the benefits of reduced fuel prices to the public, Zafarullah Khan Umarzai stressed that there should be no leniency in dealing with those who charge excessive fares and they must be met with strong measures.



PESHAWAR: Central spokesperson of PTI Moazam Butt Advocate addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Full scale fire emergency exercise tests organized

PESHAWAR (APP): Full Scale Fire Emergency Exercise Tests conducted at Bacha Khan International Airport under the auspices of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to train the staff and test fire vehicles and other equipments.

Caretaker KP Minister for Finance, Excise and Revenue Ahmad Rasool Bangash was Chief guest, Chief Operating Officer Zia Ahmad welcomed while Deputy Manager Airport Muhammad Tariq briefed the participants on this occasion. All departments concerned including Pakistan Army Aviation, Pakistan Air Force, Rescue-1122 and ambulances of hospitals including Edhi, Fauji Foundation, Alkhidmat, Civil Defence participated in the drill to test the level of preparedness for an emergency and to tackle untowards situation in the airport.

The exercise, held at different places brought together firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and local authorities to simulate a real-life fire emergency situation. Rescue-1122 promptly responded to call and reached the emergency site. Ambulances successfully and quickly shifted the injured and provided them first aid. Fire extinguishers also extinguished the fire. The exercise aimed to

evaluate the coordination and response capabilities of the participating agencies while adhering to safety protocols and minimizing actual risks. The exercise began with a distress call reporting a major structural fire, initiating a rapid response from the first responders.

Firefighters deployed hoses, ladder trucks, and rescue teams to the scene, working in close coordination with EMTs to provide immediate medical assistance to simulated victims.

This exercise allowed these professionals to practice communication, evacuation procedures, and fire containment tactics under controlled conditions.

The mock scenario was designed to push the responders to their limits, testing their ability to adapt to challenging and evolving circumstances. Throughout the exercise, evaluators closely monitored the participants' responses, noting areas of success and opportunities for improvement.

After the exercise concluded, a debriefing session was held to discuss the strengths and weaknesses observed, encouraging a collaborative approach to enhance emergency response protocols.

Minister Ahmad Rasool Bangash emphasized the importance of such exercises, stating, "Conducting full-scale emergency exer-

cises like this is crucial to ensure our first responders are well-prepared to handle any situation that may arise. We learn from each exercise, and it helps us identify areas where we can improve our response tactics and communication."

He said that these exercises are vital in maintaining the readiness of first responders and enhancing the safety of the community.

Local authorities and emergency service agencies will use the feedback gathered during this full-scale fire emergency exercise to refine their response strategies, ultimately making the city better prepared to handle real fire emergencies in the future, he added.

Robber, two narco dealers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The city police here Monday arrested most wanted robber and two narcotics dealers during different raids at various localities.

Police claimed to have recovered illegal arms and ammunition besides snatched mobile phones from the possession of outlaws.

Five kilogram hashish were also seized from the accused at Agha Tajmir Jani area.

PUTA blames Vice Chancellor attitude towards Seerat department

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: Peshawar University Teacher Association (PUTA) condemned Vice Chancellor (VC), Acting Registrar and Litigation Officer for an attempt to close Department of Seerat Studies and reappointment of the chairman on holiday, on Monday.

According to details, VC University of Peshawar Dr Muhammad Idress had transferred Dr. Zahir Shah from Department of Seerat Studies an attempt to close the facility on 20 October 2023 because he is alone faculty member as well as chairman of the department.

PUTA claimed that transfer and reappointment

of Dr. Zahir Shah will pave controversies in the degrees of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) scholars. The association claimed that VC had reappointed Dr. Zahir Shah as Chairman at the Department of Seerat Studies due to pleasure built by teaching staff and students.

PUTA claimed VC, Acting Registrar and

Litigation Officer had faced UOP with administrative, academic, financial and moral crises due to their attitude and incompetence.

PUTA argued Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and provincial government for actions against VC, Acting Registrar and Litigation Officer for placement of responsibilities against them in this regard.

DOWA holds condolence reference in memory of late Dr. Shamsul Haq



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dir Officers Welfare Association (DOWA) organized a condolence reference in the memory of late Dr. Shamsul Haq, founder head of Rescue 1122 at Peshawar, rich tributes were paid to the deceased for his meritorious national and public

services. Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan while speaking on this occasion said that officers with such dedication become immortal in the hearts of the people in addition to earning good name for the government and institutions. He said that such officials deserved every respect and considering national awards

at the official level.

Prof Dr. Mohibullah Khan, patron DOWA, President Dr. Syed Mohammad Ilyas, Dr. Nomanul Haq, the son of late Dr Shams and his close friends Dr. Karam Elahi, Prof Dr. Abbasin Yousafzai, Dr. Atiqur Rahman, Dr. Nasir Saeed and Dr. Sahibul Islam also addressed the ceremony

who highlighted his matchless public services and various aspects of his life as the head of various institutions including the Health and Relief departments and as a political and social leader.

A large number of civil officers, doctors and engineers besides social workers and media representatives also participated in the event. On this occasion, a documentary film depicting the life and public services of Dr. Shamsul Haq was also presented, while Dr. Karam Elahi recited Maulana Taqi Usmani's condolence poem "Kahan Dhondhon Tujhe A Dost" and paying poetic tribute to Dr. Shamsul Haq. Religious scholar Dr. Muhammad Ismail offered congregation Fatiha for the deceased while Dr. Naumanul Haq, son of the deceased, was also given a memorial souvenir for Dr. Shamsul Haq.

The President DOWA Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, on this occasion reiterated the commitment to continue the help of needy students and patients from the platform of this welfare organization while the mission of late Dr Shams will be continued with full enthusiasm, he concluded.

PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): PESCO on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 24th October from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Consequently, it said, consumers of 11 KV University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad, Taj Abad 2, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Ghrif Abad, Rahatabad 1, CMB and Abdara feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 24th October from 9 a.m.

to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of Civil Aviation, Tehkal, Babu Gari and Mall Road feeders will face inconvenience. The Power Supply will remain suspended from D.I.Khan Grid Station on 25th October from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of Muslim Bazar, Muryali 1,2, Cantt 1, Mandara, Commissionery Bazar and Tauseef Abad feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said power supply will remain suspended from Abbottabad Grid Station on 26th October from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of CMH and Kahel feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended

from Swat - Matta Transmission Line on 26th October from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of Matta, Khwaza Khela, Shingla Par, Madain and Darra Khawar grid connected feeder will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Haripur - Havelian Transmission Line on 26th October from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of Haripur and Havelian grid connected feeder will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Besham Grid Station on 24th and 26th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of Maira, Besham feeders and 33 KV

Pattan and Thakot grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Mingora Grid Station on 24th and 26th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of Malam Jaba, Express Saidu Hospital, Bandai, Mingora 1,2,3,4, Kabal, Nawa Kali, Saidu Sharif, Barikot 2, Odigram, Kabal 4, Matta 2, Faiza Ghat, Kabal 2, Gulda, Marghazar, Saidu Hospital, Kabal 3, Gogdara, Takhta Band, Qambar, Singar, MES, Haji Baba, Saidu Baba, Bara Bandai, Shah Dara, Hospital Express, Ajarang, Daryal feeders will face inconvenience.



We must join hands to defeat polio: Khushal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The international squash player Khushal Riaz Khan has said that the brave polio workers are the heroes of the nation, and we will defeat the pandemic of polio together with them.

He was addressing a polio vaccination ceremony organized by the non-governmental organization Human Oriented Productive Environment (HOPE) on the occasion of World Polio Day on Monday.

Hope Chief Executive Zubair Elahi and other speakers also addressed the event.

Khushal Riaz Khan said that Pakistan can achieve success in all sports, including squash, when our children are not crippled for life by the deadly disease of polio.

And this is possible when every child of ours is given two drops of polio vaccine. He said that it is not only the responsibility

of the government or the aid agencies, but it is the responsibility of every citizen and especially the parents to make children safe, because polio is currently being found only in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Khushal said that polio workers are our heroes and

benefactors of the nation who are making the future of children of Pakistan and the world safe by sacrificing their lives.

The entire nation must stand with the polio workers in fulfilling the sacred mission of complete eradication of polio.



In brief

Students hold protest in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: A large number of students from different areas of tehsil Gadezai Salarzai staged protest at Jowar Chowk while demanding starting B.S classes in Jowar degree college. The protestors led by IJT Buner Nazim Farhatullah Mujahid and Salarzai Nazim Abdullah Sultan were blocked the main road disrupting traffic between the Buner and Swat districts. The leaders addressed the protesting students expressed concern over end to the AD programme and yet to start B.S programme due to which students precious academic session is killing. The student's leaders demanded restoration the AD programme and launching B.S programme so as to make sure they students right of education. Otherwise they threatened prolonging the protest with further strength and the consequences to rest upon the concerned quarters. Following the SHO Police Station Jowar Altaf Khan convinced the students leaders for taking them to negotiation table with the principle of the college and assured bringing this issue into the notice of high ups including education department and the students after assurance ended the protest and peacefully dispersed.

'Substandard food items' F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Maximum food items sold in Landi Kotal Bazaar are substandard and harmful for the health, official of Halal Food Authority said. Assistant Director district Khyber, Halal Food Authority, Ghulam Abbas flanked by Additional Assistant Commissioner, Rameez Ali, administration and other officials visited various streets and markets of the Bazaar and examined food items. He checked the quality of the edible goods including ghee, spices, milk, chicken, beef mutton, fish, bakery items etc by conducting mobile lab tests and found that scores of food items sold in the local markets were unhealthy and were of poor quality. It was revealed that scores of bakeries were found utilizing unhealthy food color in addition with imperfect ghee and poor standard spices were sold in the market. He warned the shopkeepers for selling substandard food commodities and said in the next inspection visit those found guilty would be dealt with as per law. Speaking on the occasion, AD Ghulam Abbas said that they conducted the visit to Landi Kotal bazaar aimed to halt adulteration in food items besides to create awareness among the local traders and consumers. He added that categorization of the shops in the Bazaar would be carried out soon and no one would be left to play with the health masses by involving in selling adulterated and inferior food goods.

Teachers' for solution of issues

QUETTA (PPI): Government Teachers Association (Aaeni) has demanded of the authorities to address the problems of teachers, including addressing the issue of "missing posts" in the budget book, upgrading the posts of teachers, expediting promotion cases of teachers, revitalising "time scale" of Senior Science Teacher (SST), or else protest movement would be launched. These demands were made in the protest demonstration held on Monday outside Quetta Press Club under the aegis of Government Teachers Association (Aaeni).

Real state boosted country's economy, says Mayor

Anees Takar

MARDAN: City Mayor Advocate Himayat Ullah Mayar said that real estate has long been a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, with its multifaceted impact on the nation's financial health and societal well-being. It's an industry that weaves the threads of infrastructure, urbanization, and commerce into the fabric of the

employment opportunities. Kaleemullah Khan, CEO of Saf Group, expounded on the need to provide property business operators in Pakistan with an enabling environment that fosters growth and development. He acknowledged the company's active involvement in a multitude of projects across the country, with the firm commitment

years, it's not surprising that the industry has become a focal point for many investors. He said that increased urbanization, rising population, and economic development have all contributed to the buoyancy of the real estate market.

Kaleemullah said that like any investment avenue, real estate demands a well-informed and cautious approach. While the sector offers immense potential for financial gains, it also comes with its set of challenges and uncertainties. It's essential for investors to be equipped with practical wisdom and a readiness to navigate the terrain effectively.

Real estate encompasses much more than the construction of physical structures. It involves the development of communities, the creation of sustainable environments, and the facilitation of economic activities. For this reason, the role of real estate is intrinsically tied to the broader vision of a prosperous and thriving Pakistan.

In the coming years, the real estate sector in Pakistan, particularly in cities like Mardan, will play a pivotal role in shaping the urban landscape and contributing to the nation's socio-economic development. As advocates like Mayor Hamayatullah Mayar continue to champion its significance, it is expected that the industry will find innovative ways to adapt to the evolving needs of the country and continue to be the backbone of Pakistan's growth and prosperity. The Saf Group Expo serves as a testimony to the industry's dynamism and potential, reflecting the optimism that underlies the real estate landscape in the country. It's not just about buildings; it's about building a brighter future for Pakistan.

to contributing significantly to Pakistan's overall development. Real estate is not just about constructing buildings; it's about building a brighter future for a nation.

The Mayor's address resonated with attendees, not just as a reflection of his commitment to the city of Mardan but as an expression of the importance of real estate in the broader context of Pakistan's economic landscape. The Mayor's laudable remarks did not stop at the role of the real estate sector in the nation's economic progress but extended to its potential to transform Mardan's urban landscape.

He drew attention to the fact that an event like the Saf Group Expo was a testament to the dynamism and vibrancy of the real estate market. Such gatherings provide an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange ideas and build networks that can further fuel the growth of the sector.

Kaleemullah said further that in a country where real estate has experienced sustained growth in recent



country, and its significance cannot be overstated. Advocate Hamayatullah Mayar, who also serves as the Mayor of the city, emphasized the pivotal role that real estate plays during his address at the inaugural ceremony of the Saf Group Private Limited's Expo.

The event, held at a local hall in Mardan, served as a platform for industry leaders and enthusiasts to converge, sharing insights and experiences. In addition to Mayor Mayar, the stage witnessed speeches from Saf Group's CEO, Kaleemullah Khan, and Jannid Anwar, offering a multifaceted perspective on the real estate landscape of Pakistan.

Real estate has a profound impact on the economic landscape of Pakistan. The Mayor underscored the correlation between the construction of commercial towers and the growth of various industries, which, in turn, contribute to the overall economic progress. He highlighted the potential of such projects to invigorate economic activities, drive investments, and generate



HYDERABAD Workers of Sindh Tarraqi Passand Party holding a protest in favour of their demands.

Service's delivery in stipulated timeframe directed

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Hafizaband Sundas Irshad directed the officers of different departments to improve services delivery of their concerned departments so that fruits of people-friendly and relief-oriented measures of the Punjab government could reach to masses.

While addressing the meeting of heads of government departments, she said that all officers and officials were duty bound to adhere to office timing strictly whereas no any officer would be allowed to go on leave and leave the station without prior approval otherwise strict departmental action would be taken against absentees. She directed the officers to ensure cleanliness, keep office record in order and complete all necessary repair work without any delay.

DC also directed the offices to arrange separate washrooms for ladies and past boards inscribed with lady washroom as well as focus on tree plantation in premises of government entities. Later, she inspected offices of revenue including DC office, ADCR Office etc. and directed the Deputy Director Development and Executive Engineer Building Department to start necessary repair and renovation of offices.

Meanwhile, DC visited Trauma Centre and Hepatitis Center to review availability of treatment facilities being provided to patients, cleanliness standard and took feedback from patients regarding service delivery. During the inspection of Trauma Centre, DC checked emergency department, indoor, outdoor, medicine store, CT-Scanne section and other wards.

She directed the Medical Superintendent to improve hygienic condition and maintain record of medicines on daily basis. She also directed to complete construction work of washrooms of Trauma Centre at the earliest.

Admin crackdowns against air pollution causes: In order to contain spread of smog in the district Hafizabad, the crackdown against burning of residues of crops, smoke emitting clines and vehicles in the district and imposed Rs. 28 lakh fine, get register 3 cases, sealed 10 business centre and impounded 585 vehicles. This was informed the meeting of Anti-Smog Committee held at District Complex and Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad presided over the meeting.

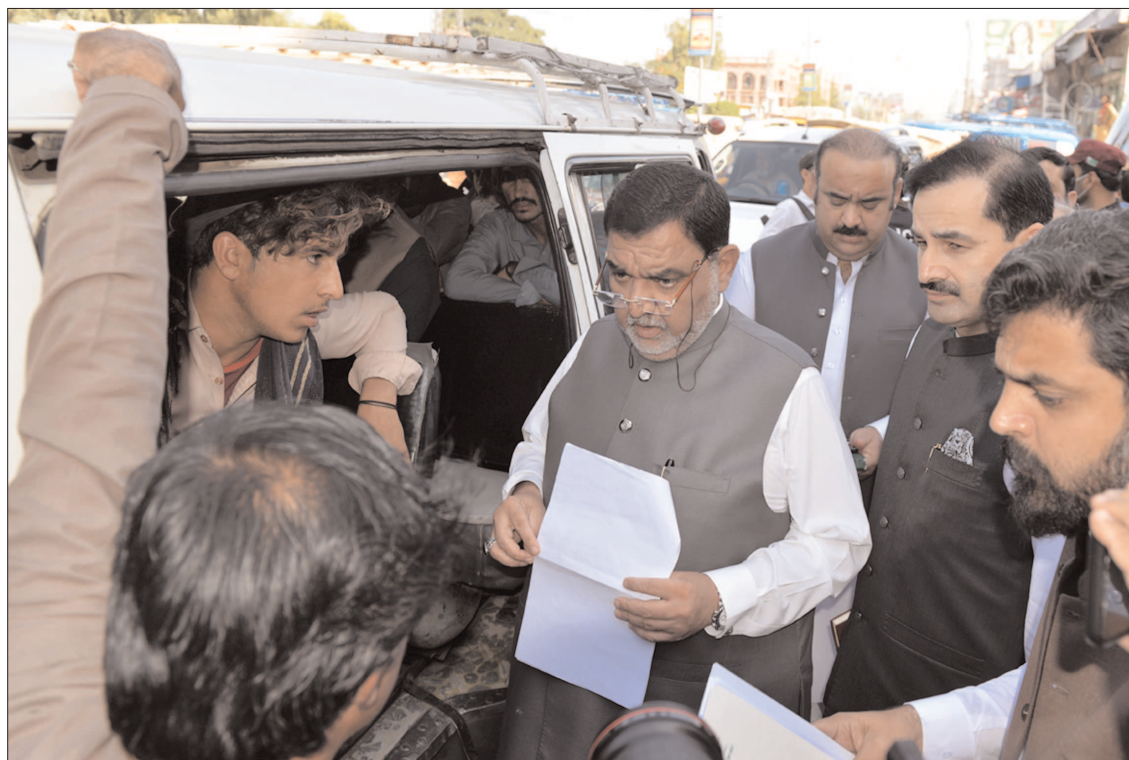
Assistant Director Environment Protection Naveed Ahmad, Deputy Director Agriculture Muhammad Yousaf, Secretary Regional Road

Transport Authority Muhammad Adil Sohail and other concerned officers attended the meeting. DC directed the officers to create awareness among farmers about hazards of burning of residues of crops for containing spread of smog.

Five-day 'Saihat Mela' launched: On the directions of the Chief Minister Punjab, five-day 'Saihat Mela' launched in the Punjab including district Hafizabad for providing free of cost different treatment facilities to the people, on Monday. Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad inaugurated the 'Saihat Mela' at District Headquarter Hospital.

DC said on this occasion that free of cost medicines, different diagnostic, screaming and treatment facilities including hepatitis, diabetes, mother and child healthcare will be provided to patients during 'Saihat Mela'. She said that 'Saihat Maly' were also arranged at Tehsil Headquarter hospital Pindi Bhattian and seven rural health centres including Sukheki Mandi in the district.

She said that with the establishment of 'Saihat Mely' and medical camps, the best medical facilities would be available to people and holding of 'Saihat Mela' was a revolutionary and people friendly steps of the Chief Minister Punjab.



NEWSHERA: KP Caretaker Minister for Information Barrister Feroze Jamal Kaka Khel checking public transport fares.

Court acquits two alleged culprits F.P. Report

KHYBER: Additional Session Judge (ASJ) Khyber Dr. Qazi Ataullah acquitted two culprits alleged owners of heroin factory and absolved their sureties in this regard.

The counsel for petitioner Muhammad Sadiq and Arshad Iqbal Khattak advocates argued that while submitting exemption application for Zakir from appearance. The counsel argued that prosecution had failed to establish ownership of alleged heroin factory with applicants Qari Samar Khan and Zakir as well as didn't produced independent witness in the case.

Investigation Officer Naseem Khan abandoned witnesses Yunus and Manzoor Shah being dead. He also abandoned the remaining witnesses in the light of letter issued by Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP).

The judgement stated that investigation officer disposed that both witnesses Yunus and Manzoor Shah have died in the suicide bomb blast of Takhta Baig Chowki. During cross examination, the witness has admitted that the accused have not been arrested on the spot and that he had not collected any evidence in respect to ownership/possession/tenancy of the alleged heroin factory.

Moreover, Investigation Officer has also admitted that, according to his investigation, no independent witness of the locality had been associated in the search proceedings. Similarly, no search warrant had been obtained by the complainant for the search proceedings. ASJ Khyber Dr. Qazi Ataullah acquitted Qari Samar Khan and Zakir from alleged of charges for operating heroin factory due to lack of evidences and witnesses.

SSP commits for accountability F.P. Report

LARKANA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana organized an open court program in Taluk Baqarani, where public complaints piled up. On receipt, SSP Larkana Syed Abdul Rahim Shirazi organized an open Kachhari program in which all the SHOs of the sub-division Baqarani, political and social areas of Taluk Baqarani, journalists and a large number of complainants.

DSP Baqarani Ghulam Mustafa Abro and SHO Sardar Ahmed Kolachi gifted Sindhi Ajkars and Sindhi caps to SSP Larkana Larkana Syed Abdul Rahim Shirazi, Press Club President Lala Barkat Baloch and Program Compr Sajid Masan. Apart from this, the political and social leaders of Taluk Baqarani, Larkana District Council Member Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, District Council Member Syed Naem Akhtar Shah Rashidi and others gave gifts of ajrak topi to SSP Larkana.

In this regard, the residents of Baqarani Taluk, Liaqat Brohi, Abdul Waheed Kharani, Rafiq Ahmad Bagheo and others protested in front of SSP Larkana and said that the law and order situation in Baqarani Taluk is very bad. It has been said that due to social evils everywhere, the residents have been surrounded by problems while four SHOs have been transferred in Baqarani within a month.

Girl students take to streets against admn

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Hundreds of girl students from a government higher secondary school in Timergara came on the road against the construction of a building in a pathway leading to their school. They were holding banners and placards inscribed with slogans like 'Give us way' and 'Blockade of way is unacceptable'.

The protesting students also chanted slogans against the district administration for leasing out the state land to land mafia. The students of government girls' centennial model higher secondary school Timergara also blocked the main road at the rest house Chowk. The rally was addressed by the Jamaat-i-Islami district secretary information Shuiab Ahmad, PPP's secretary information advocate Alam Zeb,

Usman Khan and others. They alleged the administration had created hurdles for hundreds of girl students and their teachers by leasing out a state land adjacent to the school building. They said that a market was being constructed on the leased land due to which the school pathway had been blocked. The speakers alleged that a land mafia had been active in the area which grabbed the state land one way or the other. They said that buildings had been built on some of the ancient graveyards. The activists said that they had met with the additional deputy commissioner to stop the construction on the state land but to no avail. The speakers demanded of the administration and high ups of the education department to take notice of the matter and resolve it soon.

Meanwhile the lease

owner Arshad Mayar rejected the allegations of blocking the school pathway and said that some vest interested elements were behind bringing the students on the roads. Talking to local journalists along with some elders, Arshad Mayar said that he had leased the land for 66 years under a proper agreement at Rs 1.4 million per year after the approval of the Revenue department. He said the deputy commissioner had convened a meeting of the concerned people at his office on Oct 27 and the matter would be discussed in the best public interest. The lease owner alleged that some political activists were exploiting the situation against the local norms and traditions by bringing female students on the roads. He said the administration should register cases against such people.

JI to hold moot on NCP vehicles' issue

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami provincial deputy chief and former parliamentary leader in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly Inayatullah Khan has said that his party will put strong resistance against the conditional registration and seizure of non-custom paid (NCP) vehicles in Malakand division and merged districts of the province. Speaking at a news conference at the Balambat Ahya ul Uloom here the other day, the former parliamentarian said that more than 400,000 NCP vehicles across the province with majority in Malakand division had been the sole source of income of the majority of families since 1993. He said that Malakand Division had been a tax-free zone that was why people kept NCP vehicles.

The JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, general secretary Hafiz Yaqub ur Rehman and secretary information Shuiab Ahmad were also present on the occasion. Inayat said the government should first take into account the customs and border security officials who allowed those vehicles to enter the province.

The former lawmaker said the previous parliament had extended the date of exemption from

Sales and Income Tax till June 2024 under which the tax-free zone of Malakand was enacted. Condemning the incumbent caretaker government the JI leader said that despite parliamentary provision it wanted to impose income tax in Malakand division and crack down against the NCP vehicle. He said the government and its excise and taxation department had launched a conditional registration of such vehicles which was unconstitutional and illegal.

He said the JI had no objection to collecting the data of NCP vehicles but a risky undertaking from the owners had spread panic and unrest in the area. "We will not be silent spectators on this issue and will announce our future course of actions after holding an all parties-conference in Malakand division", Inayatullah said, adding that politicians, transporters and other stakeholders would be invited to participate in the conference to be convened soon.

He asked the car owners to avoid the conditional registration of their vehicles as the region was tax-free and the caretaker government had no mandate to impose taxes here.

The registration of NCP vehicles in various districts of Malakand division has sparked wide-

spread criticism from political parties and civil society. However, the officials earlier have ruled out the possibility of seizing or confiscating NCP vehicles in near future. According to officials of the customs department the government had extended the date of tax act till June 2024 but it did not include custom duty.

Youth leadership convention: The JI Youth wing Lower Dir organized a youth leadership convention at Timergara which was addressed by the JI district chief Izazul Mulk, JI Youth wing central president Asal Khan Babar, provincial president Shuaib Kakakhel, district president Ateequr Rehman and others. They said that Pakistan was being governed by selected rulers for the last 50 years, that was why true leadership had no way to come into power.

The speakers said that 65 percent of the total population in the country was constituted by youth which were supposed to bring a real change but they had been misguided through mere slogans. They said that it was the JI that could provide the best opportunity to the youth force. They asked the participants to strengthen the JI and join hands with it for a bright future of the country and the nation.



FAISALABAD: Children enjoying swings at Muhammadabad area.



Ukraine fears drone shortages due to China restrictions

KYIV (BBC): Drones have had a profound effect on the war in Ukraine, used in great quantities by both sides. China's move to place restrictions on exports, however, has led to concerns that there could be a problem with supplies. Many of them are commercially made in China and bought off the shelf, and new supplies are vital because of the large numbers lost in the fighting.

But there are indications of a reduction in the number of Chinese drones and parts available to both Ukraine and Russia. According to the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi), a London-based think tank, Ukraine is losing about 10,000 drones a month. Numerous volunteer groups have been instrumental in using donated funds to help the Ukrainian army restock its supplies. Commercial drones are used alongside purpose-made military designs, such as Turkish Bayraktar drones used by Ukraine and Iranian Shaheds used by Russia. The latest restrictions imposed by the Chinese government came into force on 1 September. They apply to longer-range drones weighing more than 4kg, as well as drone-related equipment such as some cameras and radio modules. Chinese producers of such equipment are now required to apply for export licences and provide end-user certificates, and the government in Beijing - which has not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine - says commercial Chinese drones must not be used for military purposes. Ukrainian volunteers and soldiers say the latest Chinese restrictions have so far had minimal impact on the availability of drones, especially the ubiquitous lightweight Mavics made by the Chinese company DJI.

However, they say that the supply of parts has been affected, and they also fear that the situation may worsen in the future. "The only change for now is that we're more actively buying whatever stock is left in European warehouses," says Lyuba Shypovych, who heads Dignitas, one of the largest Ukrainian volunteer groups supplying the military with drones. "But what we'll be doing in the future is unclear." She is particularly worried about the availability of parts such as thermal imaging cameras. "Because days are getting shorter and nights longer, this is definitely having an impact on supplies for our military and on how warfare is conducted in general because we don't have as many thermal imaging drones. Our units are turning blind at night," she says. "This affects both off-the-shelf drones with thermal imaging cameras and parts." The availability of parts is particularly important for those who assemble their own drones or improve purchased models.

"The impact is being felt. The licences

required by China now have limited Ukraine's access to drone parts," says a senior drone operator from the Kastus Kalinouski regiment who uses the callsign Oddr. "But we're looking for alternatives to make sure our drones work as they did before." This is just the latest hurdle facing volunteers procuring drones for both the Russian and Ukrainian armies. The world's largest commercial drone-maker, DJI, halted direct sales to both countries two months after the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022. It also banned its distributors across the globe from selling DJI products to customers in Russia or Ukraine. According to Ms Shypovych, the number of Chinese drones made available to distributors in Europe fell sharply between August and September 2022. "It's unlikely that it happened by chance. European countries are where Ukrainians import drones from," she says. When contacted by the BBC, DJI could not confirm or deny any changes in the number of drones available to distributors in Europe. None of the 10 companies selling DJI products in the UK and approached by the BBC were available to comment on the issue either.

An investigation by The New York Times found that Chinese companies have in recent months cut back sales of drones and components to Ukrainians. But it is not just Ukraine that is affected.

Referring to the curbs that came into force on 1 September, Russian newspaper Kommersant, said: "The restrictions imposed by the Chinese authorities on drone exports have seriously complicated their supplies to Russia and led to a shortage of some parts, such as thermal imaging cameras." In the absence of direct supplies, buyers from Russia often shop for Chinese drones in countries like Kazakhstan, and, according to Kommersant, the Central Asian state has further complicated things for them by tightening its own drone import regulations. To minimise the impact of the Chinese restrictions, Ukrainian volunteers have been busy looking for alternatives made in other countries - both in the West and Ukraine itself. Anatoly Polkovnikov, who helps procure drones, says that a Ukrainian start-up is preparing to launch the production of drone motors.

He says he is optimistic about the future: "I don't think these Chinese restrictions will have any impact on the general situation. I have the feeling that long-term they will stimulate production in Ukraine." The war in Ukraine is the first armed conflict in which drones have been used so extensively and in such great numbers, and both of the warring sides are determined to keep it that way.

‘Coast guard ship and supply boat were rammed’

MANILA (AP): A Chinese coast guard ship and an accompanying vessel rammed a Philippine coast guard ship and a military-run supply boat Sunday off a contested shoal, Philippine officials said, in an encounter that heightened fears of an armed conflict in the disputed South China Sea.

A top Philippine security official told The Associated Press there were no injuries among the Filipino crew members and the damage to both vessels was being assessed. The official said that the two incidents near Second Thomas Shoal, where China has repeatedly tried to isolate a Philippine marine outpost, could have been worse if the vessels were not able to maneuver rapidly away from the Chinese ships. The official spoke on condition of anonymity due to a lack of authority to publicly discuss

the matter.

China's sweeping territorial claims in the South China Sea, including over islands closer to the Philippine shore, have raised tensions and brought the United States, a long-time treaty ally of the Philippines, into the fray. The US ambassador to Manila, MaryKay Carlson, wrote on the X social media platform that "the United States condemns the PRC's latest disruption of a legal Philippine resupply mission to Ayungin shoal, putting the lives of Filipino service members at risk." She used the initials for China's formal name, the People's Republic of China, and the name the Philippines uses for Second Thomas Shoal. She added that Washington was standing with its allies to help protect Philippine sovereignty and to support a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller also reaffirmed that the 1951 US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extended to attacks on Philippine forces and vessels in the South China Sea. The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine vessels "trespassed" into what it said were Chinese waters "without authorization" despite repeated radio warnings, prompting its ships to stop them. It blamed the Philippine vessels for causing the collisions. "The Philippine side's behavior seriously violates the international rules on avoiding collisions at sea and threatens the navigation safety of our vessels," the Chinese coast guard said in a statement posted on its website. The Chinese authorities said that they were stopping Philippines ships that carried "illegal construction" materials.

Why Nigeria's lax attitude to names is causing a fuss

ABUJA (BBC): There has been quite a hullabaloo in Nigeria recently over the fact that the three top candidates in February's presidential elections presented academic records showing different names to those by which they are now known. Allegations of forgery or impersonation have been made and vigorously denied, with various explanations for the discrepancies offered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi - or their spokespersons and supporters.

The courts of law will probably determine how the most serious of these allegations are eventually resolved, but it has led me to reflect on how a number of Nigerians utilise their many names. Most Nigerians have more than one name apart from their surname. Most people I know have as many as five or six. In a society where many cultures name a child based on the circumstances of their birth, their position in the family, or the parents' hopes for the child's future, one person can have different names that reflect each of these different considerations. For example, a Yoruba child could be named Taiwo Peter Tokunbo Olamide - Taiwo (meaning he is the firstborn of twins), Peter (Christian name), Tokunbo (meaning he was born abroad), and

Olamide (my wealth/success has arrived). The catalogue of carefully thought-out traditional names with deep meanings usually includes an English one, especially for Christians.

It can also include names given by grandparents - a privilege that some couples afford their parents after a new child is born. I have three names - two Igbo and one Christian. I could have added a second Christian name in my teenage years, when I was a member of the Roman Catholic church. While taking the sacrament of confirmation (in which you're asked to formally affirm your faith and beliefs), the priest at my boarding school in south-eastern Nigeria asked all confirmands to choose an additional Christian name to mark the occasion. However, I still presented "Tricia", which was the same name by which I had received the sacrament of baptism shortly after I was born. I just did not feel like having another name.

Some of my classmates, on the other hand, used the opportunity of their parents' absence at the school to take on funky names that the older generation might never have thought of, such as Madonna. Many Nigerians I know slide between their various names for different reasons or

Australian PM announces China visit

CANBERRA (AP): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he will visit China in early November to meet President Xi Jinping, making the announcement hours before he departed for the United States to meet with President Joe Biden. The Chinese visit dates were confirmed a day after Beijing agreed to review the crippling tariffs it levied on Australian wine that have effectively blocked trade with the winemakers' biggest export market since 2020.

Albanese will become the first Australian prime minister to visit China in seven years when he travels to Beijing and Shanghai on Nov. 4-7. "It's in Australia's interest to have good relations with China," Albanese told reporters at Australian Parliament House, adding that his focus in the coming days will be on the visit to the United States. "With Australia's closest partner, talking about the future of our alliance, the future which has been upgraded by the AUKUS arrangements, a future based upon our common values, our commitment to democracy, and our commitment to the international rule of law and stable order throughout the globe," Albanese added, using the acronym for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Under the trilateral pact, the US and Britain will cooperate to provide Australia with a fleet of submarines powered by US nuclear technology to counter a more assertive China.

Albanese said he will meet with Xi and Premier Li Qiang in Beijing and then attend the China International Import Expo in Shanghai. The visit to China and a potential breakthrough in the wine dispute mark a further repair in relations since Albanese's center-left Labor Party won elections last year after nine years of conservative government in Australia. China has agreed to review its tariffs on Australian wine over five months, Albanese's office said. In return, Australia has suspended its complaint against its free trade partner to the World Trade Organization. China confirmed that the two sides had reached a consensus on resolving the issues "appropriately" regarding Australian wine. "We are willing to work with Australia to continue to meet each other halfway through dialogue and consultation and jointly promote the stable and healthy development of bilateral economic and trade relations," the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said.

A similar dispute resolution plan led to China removing tariffs on Australian barley. Albanese said reopening the Chinese wine market would be worth more than 1 billion Australian dollars (\$631 million) to exporters. "We're very confident that this will result in once again Australian wine, a great product, being able to go to China free of the tariffs which have been imposed by China," Albanese said. "It is important that we stabilize our relationship with China."

It's just so difficult to read how the gears start turning again in the House," Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), an ally of Senate GOP leadership, told The Hill. "We just can't sit and wait." House Republicans are entering their third week without a Speaker at a crucial point in the year. There is less than a month before the next government shutdown deadline, with the House having effectively zapped three weeks of the stopgap bill that ultimately led to Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) losing the Speakership earlier this month. The Senate is also set to work up the White House's \$105 billion supplemental package that includes aid for Israel and Ukraine in their battles against Hamas and Russia, respectively. This leaves lawmakers with a time crunch, as they hope to get the work done before Thanksgiving without much help from across the Capitol complex, where funding legislation normally originates. President Biden's request to Congress included \$61 billion for Ukraine, \$14 billion for Israel, \$14 billion to beef up border operations, \$10 billion in humanitarian aid and \$2 billion for Indo-Pacific security assistance. The push for Ukraine aid comes after Congress was unable to include it in the 45-day continuing resolution lawmakers passed at the end of last month. Efforts on the Israel and



GAZA: Palestinians look for survivors in buildings destroyed in an Israeli air strike in Rafah.

China crackdown on cyber scams in Southeast Asia nets

BANGKOK (AP): Zhang Hongliang, a former restaurant manager in central China, took various gigs in and outside China to support his family after losing his job during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, a job offer to teach Chinese cooking at a restaurant led him into a cyber scam compound in Myanmar, where he was instead ordered to lure Chinese into giving up their savings for fake investment schemes via social media platforms.

Zhang is one of tens of thousands of people, mostly but not all Chinese, who have become ensnared in cyber scam networks run by powerful Chinese criminal syndicates in Southeast Asia. Regional and Chinese authorities have netted thousands of people in a crackdown, but experts say they are failing to root out the local elites and criminal networks that are bound to keep running the schemes. When scam operations are shut down in one place they often just resurface elsewhere. The problem is an embarrassment for Beijing and is discouraging ordinary Chinese from traveling to Southeast Asia out of fear they might be duped or kidnapped and caught up in a cyber scam operation. In recent years, media reports have uncovered instances of young people being lured to places in Cambodia or Myanmar for high-paying jobs, only to be forced to work as scammers. Rescue organizations say people are regularly beaten or face physical punishments such as being forced to run laps if they don't perform well. In August, China, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar agreed to set up a joint police operations center to tackle cyber scams in the region. On Oct. 10, China's Ministry of Public Security announced that its "Summer Operation" had successfully brought back 2,317 scam suspects from northern Myanmar to China. China calls such people suspects, though experts say most of them are victims who were forced to work for the criminals. They question how they will be treated once back in China.

The schemes based in countries like Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are run by Chinese bosses hand-in-hand with local elites. Many are based in places where China has financed big construction projects through leader Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative. Myanmar's border regions long have been a magnet for criminals - historically including drug

producers and traffickers - because of lax law enforcement. Such places are generally under the control of ethnic minority armed groups, either opposed to or allied with Myanmar's central government. Some also cooperate with organized crime gangs. "From the vantage point of the Chinese government, it's a source of extreme embarrassment that you have so many of these Chinese criminals operating all across Southeast Asia," said Jason Tower, an expert on transnational crime with the United States Institute of Peace. The syndicates also are known for "pig butchering" cons, where scammers entice individuals, often halfway across the world, to invest their money in bogus schemes after duping them into digital romances. The scammers divide their targets into two categories: Chinese and non-Chinese. They use scripts, images of models and influencers and translation software to trick the people they contact by phone or online into parting with their money. Victims can be anywhere in the world.

The criminals have "ridden on the shoulders of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Tower, who outlined links between the criminals and Chinese state enterprises, think tanks and government officials in a 2020 report written for the United States Institute of Peace. Zhang was working in Thailand and on a visa run to Laos when he met the man who lured him to the scam compound in Myanmar. Giving what he said was his last name, Gao, he claimed to be a broker and travel agent for Chinese living in Thailand. Zhang and his wife wanted extra money to pay for in vitro fertilization to have another child. Gao suggested he go work in Myawaddy, in eastern Myanmar's Kayin state, teaching a local chef how to cook Chinese dishes in Gao's new restaurant.

The pay would be double what Zhang made in China. Zhang was wary. Since a 2021 coup, military-controlled Myanmar has been embroiled in civil conflict. But Gao reassured him that he wouldn't be doing anything illegal and said the restaurant would have plenty of customers since many cyber scam businesses were operating in the area. That might have raised a red flag but it was only once he got to Myanmar that Zhang realized his predicament. He asked to go back home, saying there was a family emergency. His

family helped him scrape together some 40,000 yuan (\$5,472) to pay off the debt Gao claimed he owed him, and he slipped away one night, swimming across the Moei River into Thailand, where he turned himself in to Thai police, who contacted the Chinese Embassy.

Zhang showed the AP copies of his deportation notice from the Thai Immigration police and a temporary ID card. He returned to China in late June and was questioned by Chinese police but not detained. He has been sharing his story on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, to alert others to the risks and says people often contact him about relatives trapped in cyber scam compounds. "We all went out with this wonderful sense of hope, but then reality slammed us in the face," he said. In total, China has detained some 4,000 suspects and returned them back to China. The Ministry of Public Security has claimed "breakthrough results" through operations in coordination with Myanmar authorities. On Monday, they announced they had repatriated another 2,349 people. The ministry did not respond to a faxed request for comment. One 31-year old former chef who was smuggled into Myanmar's Wa State earlier this year said he saw his company hand over four people to Chinese police with little fanfare in September. Other companies did the same, said the man, who was smuggled into Myanmar and later rescued by a non-profit organization. He declined to be named out of fear of government retribution, and The Associated Press could not independently verify his account.

Overall, the enforcement actions don't seem very comprehensive, experts say. The groups now based in Myanmar originally were located in Cambodia. When Cambodia cracked down on online gambling rings and illegal casinos in 2019, many of the groups just moved to less well policed places in Myanmar. Some were taken over by rival gangs. China's efforts to repair its image have so far not made much headway, said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University. "You can crack down on these symptoms and the manifestations ... that you can see in the borderland areas," he said, "but they'll come back unless you really have a sustained effort."

House chaos forces Senate to take the wheel on spending

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The stalemate in the House is forcing the Senate to pick up the legislative slack and take the lead on spending. That includes keeping the government funded, as well as an emerging aid package that includes money to help Israel and Ukraine and to ease concerns at the US-Mexico border, a top issue for House Republicans they may have precious little say over.

"It's just so difficult to read how the gears start turning again in the House," Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), an ally of Senate GOP leadership, told The Hill. "We just can't sit and wait." House Republicans are entering their third week without a Speaker at a crucial point in the year. There is less than a month before the next government shutdown deadline, with the House having effectively zapped three weeks of the stopgap bill that ultimately led to Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) losing the Speakership earlier this month. The Senate is also set to work up the White House's \$105 billion supplemental package that includes aid for Israel and Ukraine in their battles against Hamas and Russia, respectively. This leaves lawmakers with a time crunch, as they hope to get the work done before Thanksgiving without much help from across the Capitol complex, where funding legislation normally originates. President Biden's request to Congress included \$61 billion for Ukraine, \$14 billion for Israel, \$14 billion to beef up border operations, \$10 billion in humanitarian aid and \$2 billion for Indo-Pacific security assistance. The push for Ukraine aid comes after Congress was unable to include it in the 45-day continuing resolution lawmakers passed at the end of last month. Efforts on the Israel and

Ukraine fronts in Congress are being shepherded by the two Senate leaders. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has been a leading proponent for the boost in funds, saying in a statement after Biden announced his plan that it "sends a clear message to America's friends and allies that we have your back."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) also appeared on a pair of Sunday talk shows last week to talk up the need for funds to help the two war-torn countries, having said Friday that the situation requires "decisive action" by the upper chamber. The move was a pointed one complete from McConnell - who is the most powerful Republican in Congress after McCarthy's ouster - as the last time the GOP leader appeared on a Sunday show was in April 2022 to talk up US support for Ukraine. Until the House gets back up and running, it's the upper chamber that will be leading those supplemental discussions. "This place needs to open. This chamber here needs to be active. We have the clock ticking on a continuing resolution," Rep. Steve Womack (R-Ark.) told reporters last week. "We need to be able to get back to our work. This place needs to be operational."

The border component of the supplemental request is top of mind. A group of leading Senate Republicans huddled in Sen. John Thune's (R-S.D.) office Thursday as they attempt to close the gap on the issue in order to win support from conservatives in the House while simultaneously mollifying the White House and Democrats. The inability to do something good enough for conservatives was the reason why no border items were included in the 45-day stopgap

bill. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.), who has been a lead figure in immigration negotiations over the past year, is taking an active role in talks, serving as a conduit between the White House and Senate Republicans in an effort to strike a deal that includes what they deem to be items that have real operational impact. Members who took part in the meeting told reporters they want policy provisions included on top of the \$14 billion that Biden requested in order to stem future flows of migrants. "It has to be strong. It has to be real," Sen. Katie Britt (R-Ala.) said shortly after the sit-down. Despite the complete dysfunction in the House, the Senate hasn't exactly been working as a well-oiled machine lately. The chamber took nearly four days last week to pass a resolution saying that it stands with Israel against terrorism.

The Senate also has struggled to restart its own government funding effort. The initial package of three spending bills - known as a "minibus" - struggled throughout last week to strike a deal on an amendment package to help move it along. Sen. Susan Collins (Maine), the top GOP on the Senate Appropriations Committee, told reporters that she is hopeful lawmakers will resume consideration of the first minibus next week. That struggle to move the Senate's spending bills along is creating concern that it could back Congress into a corner and force members to pass an omnibus before the end of the year. "We're running out of time ... I'm really worried," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), an appropriator and a former House member, adding that she is growing increasingly frustrated with the House's troubles as there is no end in sight.

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JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

Gas price hike, or a new Kleptomania

RECENTLY, the Petroleum Division has moved a summary to the Ministry of Finance suggesting about a 200% increase in the gas tariff. According to reports, the Power Division has proposed to increase the price of gas up to 172% for domestic consumers, and a gradual increase for other categories which ends up to 200% for commercial or industrial consumers across the country. It has been proposed to raise the fixed monthly charges from Rs10 to Rs400 for the protected customers, along with a phenomenal increase of varying degrees to all consumers. The petroleum division has suggested a Rs2,900 per MMBtu increase in the gas price for the cement sector; Rs950 per MMBtu hike for export industries; Rs1,400 per MMBtu hike for non-export industries; and Rs4,400 per MMBtu increase for the CNG sector. Currently, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) is the competent forum that will decide how much burden should be slapped on the masses which keeps them alive on their deathbeds.

Pakistan has been struck into the worst economic, security and administrative catastrophes which are the sole production of its leaders and institutions, while poor masses are easy prey to mete out the heavy burden of their incompetence and corruption. No other nation in Asia, Europe, Latin America or even Africa owes a dire situation like Pakistan that faces scarcity and skyrocketing inflation of each commodity of common use ranging from agri-products to oil, gas, and electricity, together with service charges, government taxes etc. In a nation, where the majority of the services are being provided by government entities, the public gets no relief as compared to the states where private giants provide utilities to the public and the government plays a mere regulatory role.

Earlier, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) increased the prices of LPG by Rs. 21 per KG for domestic and commercial consumers effective from October 1. Meanwhile, the OGRA proposed a 50% increase in the gas price of Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited prices and a 45 per cent price hike for Sui Southern Gas Company in June that was not implemented by the PDM government. What happened over the past few months, is that the cartel came up with almost four times higher rates after a three-month pause. The caretaker Minister for Energy told the newsmen that elevating gas rates before winter is essential to address the gas sector's circular debt that mounts at Rs. 2.7 trillion. Is it a justification for an inhumane treatment of the public/consumers? whether the government did not receive the gas bills from consumers which led to the bulk of circular debt of the gas sector. Whether the government did not receive Fuel Price Adjustment during the past months? if all those answers are negative. Then the government, the OGRA, the Finance Ministry, the Power Division and all others concerned must mull over their internal issues, lines losses, gas theft, over employment and corruption of staff, hefty payments and colossal emoluments of the bureaucrats serving in Gas distribution companies along with initiating an accountability drive within the departments to make them competitive. The poor masses must not be penalized for the sin of being Pakistanis and consumers of state-owned enterprises.

Historically, Pakistani businesses, industry, export sector and even agriculture have collapsed due to the cruel power management of WAPDA and KE, coupled with brutal price hikes and taxation of the government. If the country is dependent on foreign purchases from vegetables to oil, gas and electricity, then what is the use of massive setups like OGRA, NEPRA, Power Purchasing Council, Power Division and others? Apparently, the prudent bureaucrats have moved the case for 200% price hikes to get at least half of it. That will not only provide a higher edge to unelected leaders but also make ground for future burglary against this nation. As of now, the government has no grounds for an increase in gas prices as the rupee has gained ground against the US dollar in the past weeks and any increase in the global market can easily meet the previous rates in the country. Therefore, the interim rulers' must resist a fresh butcher' work with poor masses whose' backs' are already fractured due to the high cost of living in the country.

The dilemma of polling staff

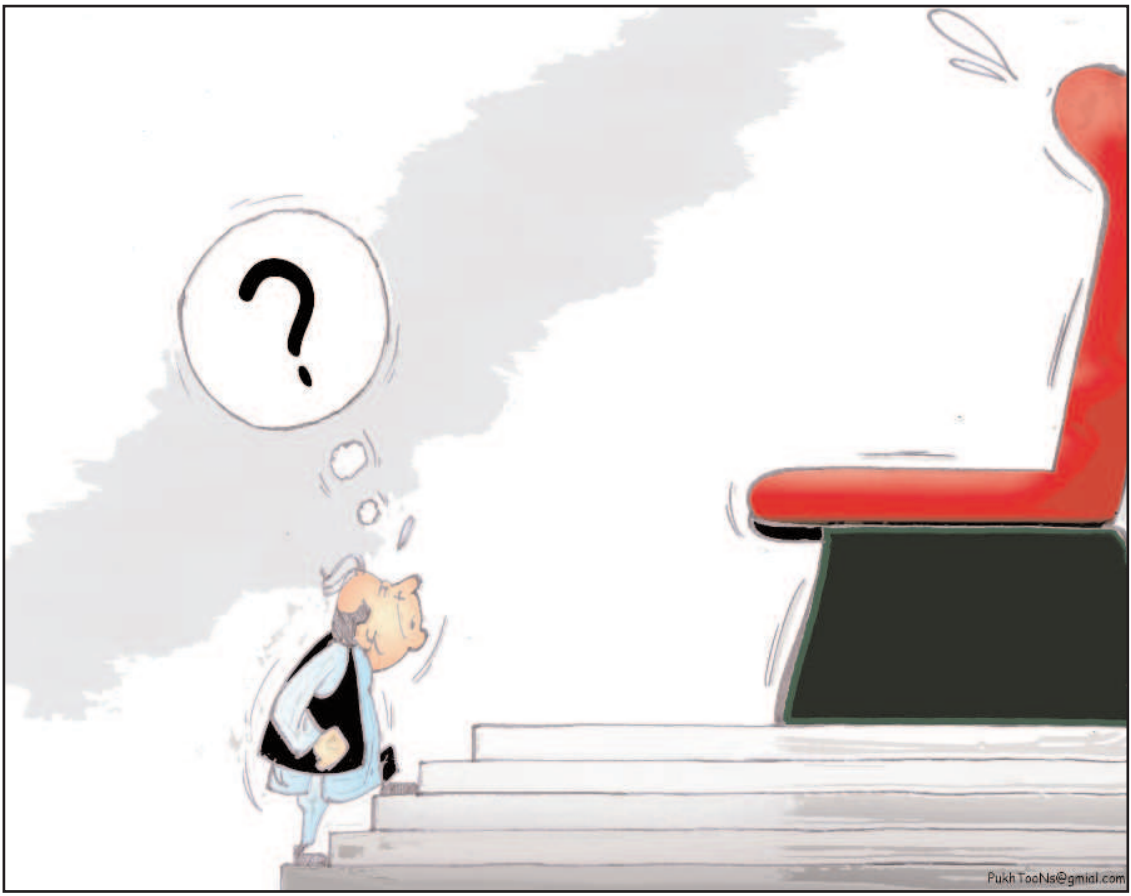
THE Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has kicked off its preparation for the upcoming general elections and plans to enlist nearly one million individuals to fill essential roles for the elections. According to preliminary estimates, there will be approximately 700,000 polling staff members, and the count may increase to around 1 million together with security personnel likely to be deputed on election duty inside the polling station.

The countrywide polls for the National Assembly and Provincial legislatures is a gigantic task during which over 8 crore voters cast votes to thousands of candidates across the nation usually on the same day, that makes this process more troublesome and laborious. The Election Commission had always felt handicapped before and during the electoral process while it faced massive criticism from the political groups as well as the common public for alleged incidents of poll rigging, belt box tempering, and poor polling and security arrangements on the poll-day. It is a recurrent phenomenon, this episode repeats each time and the losing candidates/groups blatantly accuse the ECP for misconduct without any proof/ evidence. As practice in vogue, the ECP takes assistance from the federal and provincial governments, Pakistan military, judiciary and several other departments to smoothly and safely steer through this crucial period. The ECP's staff is not more than a few hundreds people which usually occupies federal, provincial and district headquarters whereas the rest of the staff for polling duties including Presiding and Assistant Presiding officers are attached from the education department, judiciary, and local/ provincial governments. The Pakistan Army, Rangers and Police police provide security inside the polling stations and outside the avenue.

Hence, the borrowed polling staff from various organizations had always been the problem creator because no institutions took guarantee regarding their fair conduct, professionalism and sincerity toward their national duty. A large number of borrowed staff owes political affiliation with various parties and they practically play on behalf of their party's candidate while compromising their ego and self respect. Such behavior not only defames the ECP but disputes the entire electoral process. With due apology, the ECP is requested to frame strict regulations and timebound activities for the polling staff along with setting stern and immediate penalties to avoid chances of poll rigging. So, no incident of communication misinterpretation, bus breakdown, train delay or route detacking due to heavy fog ever happens in the future.

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Netanyahu and Biden offer terrorists all they ever dreamed of

Baria Alamuddin

EXTREMISTS of all varieties have exploited the Gaza violence to go on the offensive - from Daesh and Al-Qaeda to Hezbollah and the Quds Force, to violent racists around the world and radicalized Israeli settlers, threatening to unleash new epidemics of carnage even worse than the appalling bloodshed we've witnessed to date.

Last week's killing of two Swedish citizens in Brussels was the first Daesh attack on European soil in three years. Among the victims of assaults on Jews and Muslims in the West was a six-year-old Palestinian American boy in Chicago, who died after he and his mother were stabbed by their landlord as he yelled: "You Muslims must die!" Those who speak out conscientiously about the slaughter of civilians on both sides have faced a barrage of death threats and hate mail. Western intelligence agencies warn that far worse is to come.

Al-Qaeda jubilantly described Hamas's mass murder of Israeli pensioners, women and children on Oct. 7 as "the jewel of all Islamic battles of our modern history," implying that it was of greater significance than 9/11 in the jihadist pantheon. Contrary to Benjamin Netanyahu's insistence that "Hamas is Daesh," in fact Daesh hates Hamas, denounces them as "nationalist apostates" and commands its fighters to refrain from fighting alongside them.

Daesh and Al-Qaeda have nevertheless turned the taps of their propaganda channels on full, exploiting gruesome images of the mutilated corpses of Palestinian babies to attract angry misfits to their diabolic cause. Daesh's Al-Naba newspaper demanded the targeting of Jewish people and places of worship "all over the world," and attacks on Israeli and Western embassies. Alongside images of bereaved orphans and body-strewn Gaza ruins, shadowy Telegram channels provide QR codes for Bitcoin donations to the global jihadist cause.

World leaders such as Joe Biden, Rishi Sunak and Ursula von der Leyen are themselves producing word-perfect jihadist propaganda material. They

appear blissfully ignorant that every expression of love, devotion and unconditional support for Israel, and pledges of weapons and funds, are replayed back through jihadist social media channels to remind supporters that the West has never ceased waging "crusader wars" against the Muslim world, and browbeating them about their "obligation" to embark on jihad against citizens of these "infidel nations."

Such ruthless terrorist propaganda capitalizes on the justified frustration and disenchantment felt throughout the Arab world that the West's longstanding biased and racist attitudes toward this issue remain unaltered. The jarring failure of some Western leaders to balance their comments with acknowledge-

Tehran-backed militias have relocated to Israel-Syria-Lebanon border areas and are said to have established a transnational joint operations room overseen by Quds Force officers for coordinating with Hamas. Among senior Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi leaders sighted at the Lebanon border are Kata'ib Sayyid Al-Shuhada commander Abu Ala Al-Walai. With bitter memories of 2006, Hezbollah is clearly hesitant to throw Lebanon fully into this conflict. Consequently, pro-Tehran factions have exploited their posture in Syria's Golan region with the goal of widening out the northern front against Israel. But let's disabuse ourselves of the fantasy that Israel would miss the opportunity to exact massive revenge against

own bloody actions, shares responsibility for the horrendous situation facing Gaza.

Israel can endlessly dispossess, barricade and bombard the Palestinians, but it can't simply make them disappear - any more than Hamas can make Israel disappear. Over 25 years at the pinnacle of Israeli politics, Netanyahu disregarded warnings that if he blocked off all paths to Palestinian justice, peace and self-governance, Israel stood to reap the whirlwind of despair, in turn unleashing apocalyptic extremist atrocities upon the wider world.

All the while, a radicalized Zionist settler movement eager to resort to terrorist violence has year-on-year devoured thousands of hectares of Palestinian land. Settler vigilantes have embarked on a vengeance campaign since the Hamas attacks, killing nearly 100 Palestinians and displacing entire villages - and Israeli generals say they are just getting started.

At the height of the second Palestinian Intifada, Arab and Western leaders prioritized the goal of a just and mutually beneficial two-state solution as a necessary prerequisite to nationwide peace and defusing decades-old geopolitical tensions. That Netanyahu and his extremist ilk vigorously thwarted these objectives does not make them any less necessary and correct.

Just as violence breeds violence, justice and hope breed justice and hope. Israel's abandonment of the two-state solution made current and future rounds of bloodshed inevitable. As participants in the Cairo peace summit on Saturday vigorously argued, the route to ending these ongoing cycles of carnage is blindingly obvious: all parties grasping the path to a peace with both hands within the framework of the rejuvenated two-state-solution.

It meanwhile appears that the world must painfully relearn the lesson that Palestine isn't an inconsequential, far-off issue, but rather a gaping wound of soul-destroying injustice and inhumanity, with ramifications for fomenting boundless worldwide tensions and dragging Western capitals back into the crosshairs of terrorist groups.

With the US shooting down drones and cruise missiles fired from Yemen across the region, the Houthis clearly aren't acting on their own spontaneous initiative. Militant-aligned figures have alluded to threats to global energy security, perhaps in reference to Tehran's access to economic choke points such as Hormuz, through which 20 percent of the world's oil flows.

ment of the slaughter of Palestinians contrasts with more compassionate positions adopted by figures such as Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, who spoke out passionately about the "dire humanitarian situation in Gaza" and the need for "rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access."

Iranian proxies are also exploiting Gaza tensions to escalate attacks against Western targets in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere. With the US shooting down drones and cruise missiles fired from Yemen across the region, the Houthis clearly aren't acting on their own spontaneous initiative.

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Lebanon directly in the event of any significant incursions from the north.

Netanyahu's impossible objective of eradicating Hamas will only create embittered new generations implacably resolved to seek futile vengeance. As the Palestinian politician and scholar Hanan Ashrawi has articulately warned, the Gaza invasion primarily undermines moderate Palestinians who have long argued for dialogue and mutual understanding, while offering an immense boost to radicals everywhere.

Even if Israel critically weakens Hamas, the force that has been imposing some level of dysfunctional order throughout Gaza over the past 20 years, what manner of entities do they expect to replace it if not infinitely more radicalized factions? Nevertheless, it must be unflinchingly said that Hamas, through its

How Jordan and Syria can cooperate to improve relations

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

SEVERAL of the challenges that Jordan and Syria currently face could be addressed if the two countries invested political capital in cooperating in three critical areas. While the bilateral relationship between Jordan and Syria became strained following the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Amman and Damascus have been improving their ties in the last few years, particularly after Syrian President Bashar Assad called King Abdullah of Jordan in October 2021 to "discuss ways to enhance cooperation" between the two nations.

As a part of its broader plan for ensuring regional stability and security, Jordan has pushed for a peace plan that will end the conflict in Syria and allow Damascus' readmittance to the Arab League. One of Amman's plans, announced in April, was the formation of a joint Arab group that "would directly engage the Syrian government on a detailed plan to end the conflict. The detailed roadmap deals with all the key issues ... and solving the crisis so that Syria can restore its role in the region and rejoin the Arab League," an official told Reuters. Ultimately, the Arab League readmitted Syria in May, ending its decade-long suspension. Nevertheless, since the initial rapprochement between Jordan and Syria, their bilateral relationship does not seem to have advanced. Instead, it appears to have stagnated due to several obstacles that require close cooperation between the two nations.

The first issue is the smuggling of drugs from Syria into Jordan, which has not subsided since the rapprochement. Drug trafficking could destabilize trade between Jordan and Syria. One of the other problems of drug trafficking is that it undermines the social, economic and political stability of countries and subsequently leads to a rise in other crimes. This issue can become particularly threatening in a country such as Jordan, which has a large youth population. From Jordan's perspective, the reintegration of Syria into the regional scene could help address this issue, as Damascus has, unfortunately, become a hub for the production of illicit drugs. The civil war, lack of security, political vacuum, economic crisis and isolation of the country by the international community have created a ripe environment for criminal groups to engage in an illicit economy and produce and smuggle illegal drugs into other countries. This multibillion-dollar industry in Syria is reportedly worth nearly three times the combined trade of the Mexican cartels.

Jordan has intensified its efforts to put an end to the flow of illicit drugs from Syria. The Jordanian military has been successful in downing some drones flying into Jordan while carrying crystal meth from Syria. Several meetings have been held between Jordanian and Syrian officials in order to address the illicit drug trade, but the issue remains unresolved. Assad and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi met in Damascus in July and Safadi was said to have raised "the dangers posed by drug smuggling across the Syrian border into the kingdom, and the need for cooperation to confront it." To address this issue, several critical steps should be taken. First of all, Syria and Jordan ought to create several coordinated joint committees, both political and military, that focus on enhancing border security, combating drug trafficking in the entire region and preventing drug smuggling across Syria's border with Jordan. Amman can also seek the assistance of other Arab countries to persuade and pressure the Syrian government into cooperating with them in order to track down and dismantle the groups that are involved in the production and smuggling of illegal drugs. Incentives such as reinvigorating import and export opportunities and stronger economic ties generally can be offered to the Syrian government if it takes firmer action to put an end to this problem.

The second obstacle between the two nations is the refugee issue. In spite of the reengagement between Amman and Damascus, many Syrian refugees in Jordan have not yet returned to their homes, preferring instead to remain where they are. This is putting significant socioeconomic pressure on a country that has the second-largest number of refugees per capita in the world. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan hosts some "675,000 registered refugees from Syria, who began fleeing in 2011 when the crisis in their country brought unimaginable suffering on its citizens. Most Syrian refugees in Jordan live in its towns and villages, among local communities. Only 17 percent live in the two main refugee camps, Za'atari and Azraq."

To address this issue, peace, stability, economic growth and security in Syria are vital. These conditions are necessary to allow the sustainable return of Syrian refugees from Jordan. This means that, to enhance its ties with Amman, the Syrian government must adequately address the economic mismanagement of the country, the predominantly state-controlled economy and concentrate on the reconstruction of infrastructure. These could all play a key role in creating jobs and improving the economy. Syria could also attempt to attract investment from other countries. In a nutshell, in order for Jordan and Syria to further improve their bilateral ties, they must cooperate closely on three key platforms: border security, refugees and trade.

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Regional upheaval offers Assad regime a window to recalibrate

Zaid M. Belbagi

WHEN Arab streets erupted in protest more than a decade ago, the most vulnerable regime was that of Bashar Assad in Syria. Remarkably, as his more established counterparts were overthrown and even publicly lynched, the unassuming ophthalmologist has shown incredible grit, holding on to power at any cost. The reignited crisis in the Middle East not only risks exposing the fragilities of his regime, but it also provides an opportunity for Assad to reimpose his writ upon Syria.

Twelve years have elapsed since Syria was overcome by nationwide protests and rebellion. Following the displacement of 12 million Syrians, vicious internal conflict, the establishment of a terrorist proto-state and, most recently, a debilitating earthquake, the only enduring factor has been the

regime that Assad inherited from his father. Stepping out from the cold, he has carefully choreographed his regional political rehabilitation, with the reopening of Arab embassies and, significantly, Syria's readmittance to the Arab League.

However, the worst protests since 2011 threatened to undo this work when, last month, public outrage at the prevailing economic crisis and resentment with the regime gripped the country. Having worked to curtail the role of Iran and Russia in propping up his regime, the protests highlighted Assad's vulnerabilities. But concerns with the economic crisis and the fifth decade of Assad rule have shifted as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has reignited. The deployment of a great power naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean in recent days was in response to the perceived threat of Iran. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian

last week shuttled between Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad and Doha, underscoring his country's muscular influence across the region. His visits have stoked concerns that the further involvement of Iran or its proxies could tilt the conflict out of Israel's favor. Simultaneous Israeli airstrikes on Aleppo and Damascus airports were indicative of Tel Aviv's concern that Iran-backed militias could become involved in the conflict by way of Lebanon or Syria. Shellfire from Syria landing in north-eastern Israel has increased these concerns.

Having propped up the Damascus regime through the deployment of economic and military assistance, Iran's continued support has allowed Assad to retain control. It has, in turn, provided an important foothold for Iran to support its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas. Given that Hezbollah possesses an arsenal of some

150,000 rockets, it is little surprise that, with the conflict not going its way, Israel is concerned about the opening of another front. Syria, therefore, would seem to be teetering on the edge of becoming embroiled in the conflict, but in this complex scenario the Assad regime eyes an opportunity amid the chaos.

The immediate crisis in the region serves the Assad regime on multiple fronts. It has successfully diverted attention from the chronic internal issues in Syria, while simultaneously concerning both the US and Israel with the Iranian presence on Israel's northern borders. Though Iran's enduring presence weakens the ability of the Syrian regime to operate independently, it does allow the regime to portray itself as a supporter of both Hezbollah and Hamas, both of which are perceived as a useful tool in containing Israel.

The utility of this stance for Damascus was evident during its support for Hamas during operations like the Al-Aqsa Flood, allowing a regime that has aligned itself with Iran to paradoxically claim to be the last bastion of Arabism.

But Assad is in a bind, relying on Iran to stay on the front foot in the conflict, while also betting on the conflict to deliver a significant reduction in Tehran's appetite for hegemony. Though China, Russia and Iran have been integral to his durability, the rebuilding of the country and his regime's ultimate survival relies on Syria's wider international rehabilitation. Syria stands to gain from new supply chains connecting India with Europe through America's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which plans to draw in Israel alongside Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the UAE. However, should the Shiite axis emerge from

this conflict emboldened, Assad will neither be able to reinforce his regime nor rebuild Syria, increasing the prospect for further unrest.

There is no doubt that the aftermath of the Israeli-Palestinian conflagration will have a lasting impact on the region's geopolitical layout. Assad will either have an opportunity to break free from Iran's shackles or it will remain bound by them and unable to engage more broadly.

The Assad regime's survival therefore hangs in the balance. Though his strategic alliances and recent diplomatic forays are significant, they might not be enough. Repairing Arab relations, avoiding isolation and pursuing economic reforms are vital steps that, if not taken, could jeopardize his hold on power. The intricate interplay of regional politics, economic stability and international alliances will ultimately determine the fate of the Assad regime.

The American centre’s embrace of the far right fuels Israel’s war machine

Donald Earl Collins

ON October 18, US President Joe Biden travelled to Israel to show support for its war on the Palestinians in the Gaza strip. He was greeted at the airport by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who gave him a warm welcome and an embrace. In the statements to the press afterwards, the narrative both leaders adopted reflected an attempt to dehumanise the Palestinians and justify the ongoing genocidal violence against them.

"Just as the civilised world united to defeat the Nazis and united to defeat ISIS, the civilised world must unite to defeat Hamas," Netanyahu said. President Biden remarked in response that Hamas has "committed evils that and atrocities that make ISIS look somewhat more rational", and that "Israel has a value set like the United States does and other democracies, and - and they're looking to see what we're going to do".

Biden's visit to Israel and his rhetoric was consistent with a US foreign policy that is always on the side of those with the power to oppress. That is because there is a bipartisan consensus between the centre right and the far right on relations with detestable regimes around the world. Centrists in the US have a long history of supporting abhorrent policies of oppression against marginalised peoples at home and abroad, while usurping the rhetoric of human rights and democratic values.

Their support for Israel is hardly surprising given the US's own history of settler colonialism and genocide. Centre-right elites appear to be bothered little by Israel's apartheid, occupation, and clear end goal of ethnically cleansing the Palestinian population in order to take full control of historic Palestine under its ideological version of white supremacy, Zionism. Successive centre-right US governments have backed Israel's bloody "right to defend itself" with billions of dollars of military aid every year going back to 1971. There is no denying this history and reality. Not with more than 4,000 dead and over one million displaced in Gaza, the largest displacement of Palestinians since the 1948 Nakba. Not with a 75-year-long record of bloody Israeli attacks on the Palestinians in

the name of Israeli security. Not with Israel fighting for an Arab-free homeland while claiming every Arab around them is a "terrorist", a "militant", or an "anti-Semite". Every US president since Harry S Truman has recognised Israel "as the de facto authority" in Palestine. That is despite the fact that in the 1930s and 1940s, Zionist militias embraced violence - what the Americans identified as "terrorist activity" - to drive the British out of Palestine and terrorise the local Palestinian population.

Truman issued the US government's recognition of Israel on May 14, 1948, only 11 minutes after the British relinquished authority over Palestine. As both a US citizen and a former member of the Hebrew-Israelite community - Black Orthodox Jews who believe African diasporic people are the descendants of the 10 lost tribes of ancient Israel - it took me years to grasp this history. I practiced for three and a half years, during which time I sympathised with our white-skinned brethren and sistren who, I believed, had established a modern homeland in the Middle East. I hated wearing a yarmulke and kufi and eating raw horseradish at seders on Passover night, but I learned a few things - like the Hebrew character for life, chai, the blessing l'chaim ("to life") and the celebration that life ought to be.

By the time I went to college and began studying the injustices that were commonplace around the world, from the US to South Africa to the Middle East, I often thought hard about the contradictions between a firm belief in l'chaim and the denial of human rights to oppressed people, who struggled for freedom and justice. The nonviolent civil rights movement in the US in the 1950s and 1960s and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa with its mass protests and violent acts of sabotage between the 1950s and the 1980s both fought for an end to state-sanctioned apartheid and violent oppression. The same has been true for those leading the Palestinian struggle for freedom, whether it is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its acts of violence in the 1970s and 1980s or the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which was launched in

the 2000s. Those who have vilified their methods refuse to understand that oppressed people need l'chaim as much as anyone. I have seen that in others' reactions to my own support for a free Palestine, too. During Israel's continuous bombing of Gaza in July and August 2014, someone I had known since ninth grade all but accused me of being anti-Semitic. This was a Jewish man who believed in tolerance, and had shown me as much when I was a practicing Hebrew-Israelite.

But not this time. "Some of your arguments seem to suggest you too want Israel to 'completely disappear,'" he wrote in response to a blog post I had written about the hypocrisy of the US support for a two-state solution in which Israel holds all the suffocating power over Palestine's apartheid zones. In the past two weeks, I have seen similar reactions. My own congressperson, Representative Jamie Raskin (D-Maryland), sent out an email to me and his other constituents about "the brutal terrorist attacks in Israel". Raskin's office offered a compilation of "resources to assist US citizens in the region", most of which were meant to help those wishing to leave Israel, not Gaza. Sylvia Burwell, the president of American University, where I teach, initially issued a neutral statement calling for peace, which was followed by a university-wide email full of condemnation. It was all about "Hamas' brutal assault on Israel and its people", "atrocities committed by Hamas", and "terrorist attacks", adding, "many from our Jewish community and beyond have shared their hurt and sorrow".

In these communications - as with the majority of media coverage and official statements in the US - the context of occupation and violent apartheid in Palestine is erased. Israel's wholesale destruction of Gaza and the slaughter of Palestinians in orders of magnitude higher than anything Hamas has done is not even registered as "repugnant" at all. Apparently, Palestinian and Arab American communities do not need support for their "grief and sorrow" from their political representatives and local institutions. These responses reflect the dominance of the centre-right and far-right in American society, which is also confirmed in opin-

ion polls. A 2022 Gallup poll showed that although there had been an uptick in American sympathy for the Palestinians in the past decade (26 percent view Palestinians favourably), most Americans support Israel more (55 percent). A 2022 Pew Research Center survey showed similar trends, but reported the most positive views of Israel being among white evangelicals and Republican-affiliated voters, representing those in the US on the far right.

In the past week, an NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist University poll showed a majority of Americans supported Israel's efforts in bombing and shelling Gaza, but with some doubts about the disproportionality of the Israeli response and America's role in it. There are some in the US who want a ceasefire and an end to the Israeli assault on Gaza, but they are a minority. They are mostly a mix of centre-right and centre-left Americans whose activism is limited to stopping the immediate bloodshed. Even fewer are those who see Israel as an apartheid state with a deliberate policy of settler colonialism and genocide and who believe the US must help put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. The 2022 Pew Research Center survey showed that only five percent of those surveyed supported the BDS movement, an organised effort that stresses this more radical approach.

Dr King's grievances apply to all of America's moderates, or really, centre-right people, and not just on anti-Black racism. If being centrist or moderate politically is the furthest left most Americans lean, it means that most don't value l'chaim. The ceasefire many seek in Gaza today, though very much needed, is hardly enough to stop the bloodshed. If there is ever to be a real path to peace in Palestine and Israel, America's centrists would have to break with the far right and support a radical approach to end Israel's oppressive policies in Palestine. Just like with South Africa in the 1980s, they would have to join the small American left in pushing the West, and especially the US, to divest from the state of Israel and Israeli businesses and to impose embargoes, including on all arms shipments. Maybe then, Zionism would finally yield to l'chaim.

Aljazeera

Trump’s 2024 presidential run

Dean Obeidallah

political party wants that person listed.

In her ruling, Wallace wrote, "If the Party, without any oversight, can choose its preferred candidate, then it could theoretically nominate anyone regardless of their age, citizenship, residency." She added, "Such an interpretation is absurd; the Constitution and its requirements for eligibility are not suggestions, left to the political parties to determine at their sole discretion." And Wallace - to the likely chagrin of Trump - cited in support of this point a 2012 opinion from Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Trump appointee, when he was a federal appellate judge. In that case, Gorsuch wrote that states do have the legal authority to "exclude from the ballot candidates who are constitutionally prohibited from assuming office."

Wallace did not, however, conclude that "the Fourteenth Amendment can be used to exclude a presidential candidate from the primary ballot, or that the Secretary of State is empowered to evaluate such a question." Those issues - and others - are to be decided in the upcoming trial. But this suit - if successful - could be more of a threat to Trump's candidacy than his criminal cases. Why? Trump could be convicted in any of his criminal cases, yet there is no constitutional prohibition that bars him from running for president. In fact, Trump could be in prison and still run.

However, if Trump loses this case over the 14th Amendment - or any of the similar ones in states such as Michigan and Minnesota - his name would not appear on the ballot in those states since he would be deemed constitutionally disqualified to be a candidate for president. Trump still has a motion pending to throw out the Colorado lawsuit, and his campaign has criticized the Colorado judge's rulings. "She is going against the clear weight of legal authority. We are confident the rule of law will prevail, and this decision will be reversed - whether at the Colorado Supreme Court, or at the US Supreme Court," a Trump campaign spokesperson said. "To keep the leading candidate for President of the United States off the ballot is simply wrong and unconstitutional."

But regardless of the decision in Colorado, even legal scholars who have opined that Trump violated Section 3 of the 14th Amendment have acknowl-

edged that ultimately this issue must go to the US Supreme Court for a final decision. And that is the way it should be given the importance of this issue. But the Colorado case could be the one that makes it to our nation's highest court. To those who dismiss the prospect of Trump being disqualified from the ballot, check out the case of former New Mexico elected official Couy Griffin, who had been the head of a group called Cowboys for Trump.

A lawsuit was brought against Griffin alleging he violated Section 3 of the 14th Amendment over his actions in connection with the January 6 attack. After a trial was held, the judge concluded - based on expert testimony - that the January 6 event was an "insurrection" as contemplated by the 14th Amendment, which was ratified in 1868 after the Civil War. Section 3 of the 14th Amendment was intended to keep former Confederates from holding office after the war.

In 2022, Griffin was found guilty of a misdemeanor of trespassing on US Capitol grounds but was acquitted of a second misdemeanor charge of disorderly and disruptive conduct.

The judge deemed Griffin to have "engaged in" the insurrection by his conduct of being on the Capitol grounds. As the judge explained, "One need not personally commit acts of violence to 'engage[e]' in insurrection. ... Engagement thus can include non-violent overt acts or words in furtherance of the insurrection." Consequently, Griffin was removed from office as a commissioner in Otero County and barred from being on the ballot in the future in New Mexico. The September 2022 ruling marked the first time an elected official had been removed from office for participation or support of the Capitol riot. The state's Supreme Court rejected Griffin's final appeal to overturn the decision earlier this year.

To those who think it's undemocratic to ban officials from the ballot if they are found to have violated the 14th Amendment, I have two responses. First, it's far more undemocratic to "engage in" an insurrection designed to prevent the peaceful transfer of power. And second, we can't ignore the conditions clearly imposed on candidates set forth in the US Constitution. At least, not if we want to remain a democratic republic.

CNN

Erdogan untroubled by opposition’s local election preparations

Yasar Yakis

WHILE there are only a few months left before the local elections to be held on March 31 next year, political life in Turkey has not seen the usual momentum. The ruling Justice and Development Party, known as the AKP, is implementing its preparations without making much noise. The main opposition Republican People's Party, known as the CHP and led by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, continues to lose support. Kilicdaroglu's rival for the chairmanship of the party is Ozgur Ozel, a young and ambitious candidate, but one who is not combative. He put forward his candidacy for the party's chairmanship only after he received Kilicdaroglu's implicit consent.

The provincial congresses of the CHP in all provinces of Turkey are over. In Istanbul, Kilicdaroglu's supporters lost their majority within the party, but this does not mean that they will lose the elections in other provinces. The supporters of both Kilicdaroglu and Ozel claim that they are ahead. However, it looks as if this will be a tight election.

According to the CHP's regulations, in case a qualified majority cannot be obtained in the first two rounds, the party chairman will be elected by simple majority in the third round.

Some 1,367 delegates are enti-

tled to vote in the party's general congress, which will be held on Nov. 5. Ozel claims that, among the CHP's members of parliament, he is 45 to 55 votes ahead of Kilicdaroglu, which means that the party's lawmakers are in favor of a change in leadership. This division indicates that those who were designated by Kilicdaroglu as members of the CHP's administrative board constitute a majority of the appointed delegates. This reduces the number of elected delegates and increases the number of appointed ones.

As of the middle of last week, almost all delegates in 41 provinces were in favor of a change in the party structure. In 24 provinces out of 81, a majority of delegates were opposed to a change, while in 10 provinces the delegates were divided 50-50.

Kilicdaroglu last week said he would exclude from the CHP those who make statements against the party, while Ozel said that, on the contrary, he would open the doors to the "paternal house," meaning the CHP. Kilicdaroglu's attitude is in sharp contrast to the democratic rules within a political party.

It is clear that a majority of the party membership supports Ozel's side, but as the voting members at the party's congress are designated by Kilicdaroglu, the outcome may be in his favor. This is nothing but

a lack of democracy within the party. Kilicdaroglu's poor performance was demonstrated last week in a public statement he made in a party meeting. The CHP's central committee was assessing a motion that was to be submitted to parliament. It was about the renewal of the validity of a motion to send a contingent of the Turkish army to foreign countries and to receive foreign forces in Turkey in case of need. This is a routine practice that dates back to the time when the fight against Daesh was at its height. Therefore, the routine was maintained for the sake of formality. When the question was debated this time, Kilicdaroglu burst out and said: "I will stand against receiving foreign soldiers in Turkey. I will kick them out. I will not betray the historical heritage that our ancestors wrote with their blood (in the 1920s)." At the end of the debate, it was agreed that "the admission of foreign soldiers to Turkey" was to be deleted from the proposed text.

There are rumors in CHP quarters claiming that Kilicdaroglu's entourage might intimate to him that he should bring his political life to an end. In fact, Kilicdaroglu has lost all 10 of the elections he has participated in. The difference between those elections and the coming one is that Kilicdaroglu is this time running against a con-

tender. In the previous elections, there was no contender, but this is still an uneven competition because all the members of the party's administrative board were appointed by Kilicdaroglu. Before some previous elections, he gave the impression that he might bring an end to his political life after the vote. However, he always changed his mind and said he would continue to fight and bring the Turkish ship to a safe harbor. However, this safe harbor is never reached.

For his part, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan keeps circumspect and talks very little about what the main opposition party is doing. He has no complaints about the way the CHP is running its affairs. If the domestic political campaign continues to be run the way it currently is, the AKP is likely to win the local elections in many provinces. The coalition of six parties that tried to coordinate their efforts before the general election in May this year mostly played into the hands of splinter parties. They gained several seats in parliament thanks to this coalition.

The splinter parties that were left out of the six-party coalition may have drawn lessons from the May elections and could cooperate more easily in the forthcoming local elections. The dynamics of the local elections are different from the general election because local leaders have greater influence in these votes.

Words are all Russia has to fight US military space advantage

Boris Bondarev

RUSSIAN assertions that space infrastructure like satellites are legitimate military target are nothing new. Rather, they reflect Russia's long-running efforts to prevent weapons from being deployed in space. But more recently, this rhetoric has become an attempt to frighten Western countries away from continuing to support Ukraine.

Russia's desire to prevent space from becoming filled with weapons appears noble in its essence. However, it is dictated, like all other policies of the Russian leadership in the international security field, by Moscow's fear of Washington's plans to deploy a global missile defense system to neutralize Russia's nuclear potential. The system would include satellites to detect the launch of ballistic missiles, and interceptor missiles that can hit these weapons at any stage of their trajectory. According to paranoid Kremlin voices, this makes Russia easy prey for the US military. The belief among NATO countries that outer space could become a conflict zone adds more fuel to the fire.

Given the enormous economic,

scientific and industrial might of the United States, Moscow fears that such a missile defense system may be deployed in the foreseeable future. Therefore, Russia has been fighting against Washington's plans for the past 20 years, trying to discredit them. This was the motivation behind the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force Against Space Objects (PPWT) proposed by Russia and China in 2008. The draft treaty, whose momentum has since stalled, raises many questions about how to define "weapons in space," and how to verify that weapons have been put into orbit. In 2020, Britain proposed a compromise to establish voluntary rules and accepted norms for responsible behavior in space. It sought to do this with a regulatory framework to stop conflicts from developing in near-Earth space. This idea was immediately met with hostility by Russia, and Russian diplomats devoted themselves to disrupting it. In particular, the initiators proposed to include tests of anti-satellite weapons in the category of "irresponsible

behavior," which forced Russian diplomats to take a contradictory position.

While they accused the United States of conducting such tests, they also defended their own right, as well as that of China and India, to do the same. This rhetoric has escalated since the outbreak of the war with Ukraine, with Moscow issuing weakly camouflaged threats against Western satellites, whose services have been used by the Ukrainian armed force. Since Ukraine's intelligence cooperation with NATO is no secret, Moscow considers NATO to be directly supporting the Ukrainian military. This apparently egregious behavior would not be let go without a harsh rebuke from the Russian Foreign Ministry, which began to say that NATO satellites are a legitimate target. However, it is also worth considering what Russia omits from its statements about space warfare. Firstly, an attack on spacecraft (including satellites) will be unequivocally regarded as an act of aggression against the State-owner of these spacecraft. If an American satellite is taken offline or shot down, the United States would be

forced to respond. Such a hostile step against the US, a NATO member, would trigger the alliance's Article 5, compelling Washington's allies to come to its aid.

Moreover, it is physically impossible to shoot down all or at least most of the American spacecraft at once. As a result, Washington's ability to meet its needs in communications, navigation, and intelligence will not be seriously disrupted. Secondly, destroying a spacecraft using anti-satellite weapons, like surface-launched missiles, will create a cloud of debris that moves in orbit, with a high risk of hitting other spacecraft. Space debris, unlike Russian diplomats, are indiscriminate.

They are just as likely to damage not only the satellites of NATO countries, but also those of China and India. It is unlikely that these states will be understanding if this happens. All this confirms that the Russian Foreign Ministry has turned from being policymakers, who must carefully weigh their statements, into propagandists trying to appeal primarily to a domestic audience while squandering what little trust the international community has left.

The Moscow Times

MOST of the headlines this past week concerning former President Donald Trump's legal woes have focused on developments in two of his four criminal cases. Last Monday, in the federal 2020 election subversion case, US District Judge Tanya Chutkan imposed a narrow gag order to restrict Trump from making public statements attacking potential witnesses, prosecutors and court personnel. (On Friday, the judge put a temporary hold on this gag order to give the defense and prosecution more time to brief her on the issue after Trump appealed the order.)

Later in the week, there were potentially significant developments in Trump's criminal case in Fulton County, Georgia, where he's charged with 13 felonies over alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election in that state. Two of Trump's co-defendants in that case - Sidney Powell and Kenneth Chesebro - pleaded guilty to various charges and pledged to testify for the prosecution in future cases, which could include Trump's. (Trump has denied wrongdoing and pleaded not guilty to state and federal charges stemming from attempts to overturn the 2020 election.)

But the case that may pose the greatest threat to Trump's candidacy in 2024 is not one of his criminal cases. Rather, it's a lawsuit in Colorado that not only saw some bad news for Trump last week but also is scheduled to start trial this month. This case involves a lawsuit initiated by a liberal watchdog group on behalf of six Colorado voters to disqualify Trump from holding office by way of Section 3 of the 14th Amendment over his role in events leading to the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol.

It seeks to block him from the 2024 primary ballot in Colorado over the amendment's provision disqualifying from future office US officials who have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution if they have "engaged in insurrection" and/or "given aid or comfort" to insurrectionists. On Friday, Colorado District Judge Sarah Wallace rejected three arguments by Trump and the Colorado GOP to dismiss the case before the scheduled October 30 trial date. One of the most powerful points the judge made was rebuffing the argument that state officials have no discretion over who is placed on the ballot if a

Jonathan Gornall

resisted as an assault on personal freedom. Disturbingly, there is increasing evidence that governments faced with this type of opposition are sacrificing the greater good and rowing back on their internationally agreed commitments to remain in power. The most egregious example of this is currently unfolding in the UK. There, the Conservative party, which has been in power since 2010 and is struggling badly in the polls, has taken desperate inspiration from a minor by-election victory in London's suburbs.

Expected to be ousted, its candidate instead retained a slender majority thanks to opposition to an expansion of London's clear-air zone at the expense of motorists in the area. Now, grasping at the possibility of an election-winning wedge issue, just two years after the UK hosted COP26, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has begun to chuck green policies out of the basket in a bid to keep his balloon afloat. Among them, a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles has been pushed back five years, plans for tougher energy-efficiency ratings for privately rented homes have been shelved and a pledge to enforce the installation of only low-carbon new heating systems by 2035 has been abandoned.

The UK government is far from alone in exhibiting climate-change cowardice. This summer in Germany, which has pledged to be climate-neutral by 2045, the coalition government came close to collapsing over plans to ban the installation of new boilers running on less than 65 per cent renewable fuels by 2024. To save

its skin, the government has delayed the deadline to at least 2028. In France, plans for a carbon tax on cars introduced in 2018 triggered widespread demonstrations, leading to the scheme being dropped.

In Italy a study found that, regardless of previous voting patterns, owners of polluting vehicles banned in Milan were significantly more likely to vote for the populist right-wing party League, which opposed the ban. The reality now facing every elected government hoping to introduce green policies is that, no matter how committed people might be to recycling plastic, most will draw the line at imposed measures that hit them directly in their pocket. Even among voters who accept "something must be done," human nature means many will balk at making personal sacrifices. It takes a particularly selfless type of individual to trade immediate personal costs for intangible society-wide benefits in a distant future. This is, perhaps, down to a failure of communication - or a product of green fatigue, induced by endless warnings of impending doom.

Either way, this is the dangerous state of play that COP28 will have to address head-on next month if the world is to stand even half a chance of hitting its climate targets.

Politicians who are serious about confronting climate challenges, rather than simply hanging on to power, must deliver persuasive incentives and convincing answers to tough questions. It is no longer enough to talk about saving the planet. What governments need now is a better approach to selling environmental policies.

Gulf News



PSX stays bullish, gains 338 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 338.96 points, a positive change of 0.67 per cent, closing at 51,070.83 points against 50,731.87 points the previous day.

A total of 364,070,705 shares valuing Rs.15.930 billion were traded during the day as compared to 430,052,557 shares valuing Rs.14.611 billion the previous day.

As many as 352 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 171 of them recorded gains and 150 sustained losses, whereas the share price of

31 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Oil and Gas Dev.XD with 27,498,695 shares at Rs 102.45 per share, Pak PetroleumXD with 24,259,049 shares at Rs.85.22 per share and Fauji Foods Ltd with 19,278,577 shares at Rs6.73 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs107.50 per share price, closing at Rs 8,100.00, whereas the runner-up was Sanofi-Aventis with a Rs52.50 rise in its per share price to Rs752.50.

Philip Morris Pak wit-

nessed a maximum decrease of Rs.39.60 per share closing at Rs 531.40, followed by Faisal Spinning XD with a Rs26.62 decline to close at Rs328.38.

Rupee sheds 33 paise against Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed a 33-paise devaluation against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs 279.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.79.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.25 and Rs

283 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 82 paise to close at Rs296.06 against the last day's closing of Rs 295.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise to close at Rs 1.86, whereas an increase of Rs 1.93 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs339.81 as compared to the last closing of Rs337.88.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 09 and 08 paise to close at Rs 75.99 and Rs 74.40 respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for communications, Railways and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar discussing investment opportunities during a meeting with French Ambassador Nicolas Galey.

86 connections disconnected and Rs1.39m fine imposed

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 86 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 1.39 million and 165 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas, another 06 connections on the use of compressor. In Bahawalpur, the regional

team disconnected 06 connections on the use of compressor and 07 under billing cases processed. The team also booked Rs. 0.01 million against under billing cases. The company disconnected 13 connections on illegal use of gas and 37 under billing cases have been processed in Multan and amount of Rs 0.11 Million have been booked against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Sheikhpura, the regional team disconnected 19 connections on illegal

use of gas and 44 under billing cases processed. The team also booked Rs. 0.35 million against gas theft and under billing cases.

SNGPL's team in Mardan 20 under billing cases processed. In Peshawar, the Regional team disconnected 21 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The team also booked Rs. 0.42 million against gas theft.

The company disconnected 07 connections on illegal use of gas in

Islamabad.

The regional team in Gujranwala, 03 meter was disconnected on the use of compressor and 45 under billing cases processed. The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.50 million against under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, 03 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Faisalabad, the regional team processed 12 under billing cases. In Sialkot, the regional team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas.

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF SHAFQAT QADEER CIVIL JUDGE-XIV, BANNU, Suit No.291/1 institution 02.09.2023 Next date of hearing is 07.11.2023 Title: Case title: Sardar Zaman etc VS Jahangir etc TO: Defendant No.1. Jahangir Khan, defendant No.4. Jan Sher Khan Sons of Sahib Nawaz R/O Hakeem Khan Haved Tehsil Miryan District Bannu. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 07.11.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF INAM ULLAH CIVIL JUDGE -I, NORTH W A Z I R I S T A N AT, BANNU

Suit No.305/1 institution 02.09.2023 Next date of hearing is 27.10.2023. Title:

Case title: Muhammad Ajmal vs Shamghari Bibi etc. TO: Defendant No.11 Shafiq Ullah Son of Mir Kalam Khan R/O Haidar Khel Brnach Spogai Dawar Tehsil Mir Ali District North Waziristan presently U.A.E. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 27.10.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this court.

Court Notice

In the court of Fasih Rehman civil judge III/Allaqa Qazi kabal district Swat. case# 43/1. Institution 16/9/2021. Next Hearing date. 01/11/2023. Muhammad Rahim etc. VS Jan Badshah etc. Notice to defendant. 10 Mst. Naheed Akhtar d/o Muhammad sofi jan r/o bar kanju tehsil kabal. 15. Muhammad saleem shah s/o faheem Muhammad r/o koza bandai segram Road kabal district Swat (presently abroad). Whereas the above name cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 01/11/2023. at 8.30 am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Issue today on 7/10/2023. under my signature and seal of the court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 203/1 Institution, 3/7/2023. Date of hearing. 31/10/2023. Charhi Gul alias Charhi VS Ayub Khan etc. Notice. 1. Ayub Khan 2. Shaber Khan. 3. Mst Rabia. 4. Mst Sher Banu daughters of Ismail Khan residents of Balokhan at present in India. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 31/10/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

IMARAT launches new center of Islamabad



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad has a new city center and it's called IMARAT Downtown. A visionary \$500M venture by IMARAT, this megaproject is all set to herald a new age in Pakistan's urban development journey.

The enthusiasm surrounding IMARAT Downtown was at an all-time high until IMARAT, the leading real estate group of Pakistan revealed the megaproject in a grand launch ceremony yesterday. This grand evening was more than just an introduction; it gave a glimpse into the thriving and developed Islamabad of 2047.

More than just an infrastructure milestone, IMARAT Downtown aims to redefine the residential and commercial standards of the twin cities with a multiverse of its own. Nestled within this presti-

gious square kilometer are distinct projects that encompass all facets of life.

The Mall of IMARAT is all set to shine as Pakistan's biggest mall, offering an unparalleled shopping experience. The IMARAT Residences present a premium residential offering, set to become the most sought-after address in Pakistan. Other notable inclusions are the Grand Bazar, offering a unique market experience, the serene Urban Forest for recreation, the buzzing IMARAT Boulevard, the cutting-edge Harley Health & Wellness Centre, the advanced Cyber Tower, and the educational stalwart, Institute of Architecture, Urban Planning & Building Materials.

IMARAT also introduced its "IMARAT Executive Club", Islamabad's most premium membership tailored for the group's valued clients,

reflecting the company's commitment to offering more than just real estate - but a lifestyle. Every corner, every space, every amenity that is a part of IMARAT Lifestyle will speak of a story replete with luxury and personalized to the very last detail.

Mr. Shafiq Akbar, CEO of IMARAT, remarked, "This event was a snapshot of our Vision 2047 for Islamabad's future. Both IMARAT Downtown and the IMARAT Executive Club emphasize our dedication to our clients and the community, and a desire to see Islamabad thriving up to its full potential."

With a series of national and international events scheduled post-launch, Islamabad and investors wait in eager anticipation. Stay tuned as Islamabad prepares to welcome its new city center, an epicenter of luxury, innovation, and lifestyle.

Gold prices in Pakistan experience minor rise

ISLAMABAD (INP): The price for 24-karat gold per tola hit Rs209,000 on Monday. At the same time, people interested in 22-karat gold can secure it at Rs191,583 per tola.

Even for those looking to purchase less quantity, the rates remain quite catchy. Presently, 10 grams of 24-karat gold are priced at Rs179,184, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold can be acquired for Rs164,252.

This shift in gold prices can be attributed to a significant move in the value of the dollar, emphasizing the relation between currency values and the price of gold.

On the international stage, gold prices have experienced a downturn, with the current rate standing at \$1,972 per ounce.

Its important to remem-

ber that gold prices in Pakistan can fluctuate a lot throughout the day, depending on global market trends.

These rates are sourced from reliable outlets, main-

ly located in Karachi and Multan.

We suggest consulting your nearby gold merchants and jewellers for the most up-to-date and precise gold rates.

Cooperation to lead world towards peace and prosperity

Inam Ullah

Peace and prosperity are the core tenets of global progress. However, their existence depends on the coordinated efforts of individuals, societies and nations, for only when men work together do they achieve great goals. On the contrary, if there prevails perpetual conflict in society, not only new progress is hampered, but also stern damage is perpetrated upon infrastructure, human capital, and the economy.

The dependence of peace and prosperity on cooperation and its hindering due to competition could be understood from a famous fable, "United, we stand; divided, we fall". In the fable, a farmer teaches his sons a lesson that sticks tied together become unbreakable; the same sticks, when tested individually, do not stand a chance. Thus, according to the farmer, if his sons live together with love and harmony, no power will be able to break them; however, if they fight with each other, anyone could break

them apart.

To illustrate, history contains examples showing how collaboration and cooperation have brought about revolutions. It shows that men, when working together, become an imperishable force bound to get what it strives for. The Pakistan Movement is a vivid example of this fact. Men, women, children, students, and even scholars participated without discrimination in the fight for freedom. Scholars and Ulema played a significant role in uniting the Muslims of different sects and fields of life to play a productive role in the struggle, resulting in Pakistan's independence.

A common manifestation of this fact can also be observed in everyday life. When all household members work together, prosperity finds its way there. Eventually, such a society contributes significantly to a country's economy. For instance, gender parity is observed in China's work environment; there, men and women participate equally in all fields of labour. As a result, both genders generate enough

capital, resulting in China's ever-flourishing economy and giving it the power to stand against America - the global giant.

Likewise, sports teach a lesson of teamwork as well; no person working on his own can win a sports competition. Even if it is a solo race, a whole group is involved in training, counselling, and testing him before his big day. It has been aptly said by Michael Jordan, a former basketball player, "It takes a team to win a championship". It means big competitions and games cannot be won without combined effort.

If we take into the regional level, it is cooperation not competition that promotes regional and global peace and prosperity. When countries collaborate on developmental projects, the whole region progresses; differences are sorted out diplomatically, and an example is set for the world to follow. Several organizations are operating for this cause such as the EU, OIC and ASEAN. These organizations work in their respective regions to promote solidarity

among the member countries and improve their relations via collaborative projects. Thereby, the chances of wars and conflicts decline when countries become interdependent.

Extrapolating the idea of regional cooperation to the global scale, organizations that help countries come together also promote harmony. When nations agree to resolve conflicts through diplomacy, it leaves slight chance for the world falling into a World War. For this purpose, the United Nations Organization (UNO) was established after World War II and has since launched several peace-keeping and peacebuilding missions across the globe.

Where cooperation brings about continuous progress, conflict breeds crisis, be it humanitarian, social, political, environmental, or economic. In the field of politics, although disagreement is the beauty of democracy, problems begin only when people fail to agree on matters respectfully. Such is the case in Pakistan's politics; unhealthy competition between the ruling and opposition

parties leads to a prevailing chaotic state of affairs in the country.

In regional matters, conflict and fights hamper progress and prosperity. When countries in a region do not see eye to eye, all their efforts are directed towards pushing each other down. The most apparent evidence is Pakistan and India's constant strife since independence, which has led them to spend a massive budgetary share on defence. The two countries, hence, have made very little progress socially, politically, and economically compared to other countries.

Similarly, disputes on an international scale also paint a gloomy picture of disturbing world peace. Global powers having fights have a trickle-down effect on their regions and the neighbouring areas; international trade is disturbed, and the whole world experiences economic repercussions. For instance, the Sino-American trade war and the Russia-Ukraine war have disturbed world peace and prosperity. All the countries involved have global influ-

ence and, thus, have pushed the world to the brink of nuclear combat.

Since the commencement of the industrial revolution in the late 19th century, the world has seen ever-increasing competition between countries, which has caused severe climate repercussions. Each country is in a race to expand its industrial production and trade and, in this very race, ignores the pollution that comes with setting up industries. Putting together the impact of all nations, the industrial rivalry has unleashed the menace of global warming, evident in the 0.07 degrees' Celsius rise per decade in the earth's average temperature since the 1880s. Moreover, several natural disasters like floods, tsunamis and wildfires have come with global warming, levelling infrastructure and taking millions of lives.

Despite the mayhem inflicted by global wars, all is not lost. A lot could still be done to forestall the destruction already done and thwart such future events by focusing on realistic and holistic measures.





In brief

SA motivated by poor ODI record against BD

MUMBAI (Reuters): South Africa are motivated by the desire to prove themselves against Bangladesh, Aiden Markram said on Monday as he called on the team to build on their massive 229-run World Cup victory over England. Bangladesh have won three of their last four one-day international meetings with South Africa, including a 38-run win at the 2019 World Cup. "We haven't done particularly well against them in the past, so that's extra motivation for us to come out and replicate what was a good performance against England," Markram told reporters ahead of Tuesday's game in Mumbai. "From an intensity level and a standards level, that's something that we're going to try to focus on and trust that if we take care of those sorts of things, hopefully it's enough for us on the day." "They're a fantastic team. If you don't rock up on the day and if your skills let you down against a team like Bangladesh you will be put under a lot of pressure. That's probably where we've got it wrong in the past," Markram added that Heinrich Klaasen, who scored a blistering 109 from 67 balls in the win over England, was working hard to be back up to speed after looking spent while batting in hot and humid conditions in Mumbai. "He certainly was manned down. The conditions were pretty brutal. He did a lot of hard work for us out there and I think it took quite a lot out of him," Markram said. "He pulled up nicely after the game. The body was really sore and he was quite fatigued. But he's been trying to get treatment and rest yesterday and very much so the same today in order to get himself good."

Girls hockey championship

FAISALABAD (APP): The Inter-district girls hockey championship concluded at international hockey stadium, Gojra, on Monday. The sports event was part of the 16-talent hunt programme, which was played under the aegis of the district sports department. The team from Toba Tek Singh won the title by thrashing Faisalabadi girls by 5-1. The winning team was awarded with cash prizes and trophies.

Bishan Singh Bedi dies at 77

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indian cricket great Bishan Singh Bedi breathed his last at the age of 77 on Monday. Bishan Singh Bedi was a left-arm spinner who also captained the Indian team in 22 matches. Bedi was an active cricketer from 1967 to 1979, featuring for India in 67 Tests, taking 266 wickets at an average of 28.71 with 14 five-wicket hauls. Bedi also played for India in 10 ODIs, bagging a total of seven wickets. Widely considered as one of the finest spinners India have had, Bedi was among the architects of India's spin bowling revolution. He, along with Erapalli Prasanna, BS Chandrasekhar, and S. Venkataraghavan, played an important role in India's first-ever ODI victory. Bedi's figures of 12-8-6-1 held East Africa to 120 runs in 1975 World Cup. In domestic cricket, Bedi primarily played for the Delhi team. After retirement, he worked as a coach and mentor for several budding Indian cricketers. Away from the cricketing field, he also worked as a commentator and pundit in the Gentleman's Game.



CHENNAI: Ramiz Raja has a word with Babar Azam after Pakistan's loss to Afghanistan.

India's Kuldeep finds Warne inspiration at World Cup

NEW DELHI (AFP): India spinner Kuldeep Yadav said Monday that the late Shane Warne has been a big influence on his career and he still watches videos of the spin legend for inspiration. Kuldeep, a left-arm wrist spinner, has shone at the World Cup with eight wickets to be India's go-to slow bowler on turning pitches. He claimed two key wickets in India's latest victory over New Zealand on Sunday while a match-winning 2-35 against arch-rivals Pakistan earlier in the tournament also stood out. Starting out as a fast

bowler and a fan of former Pakistan left-arm quick Wasim Akram, Kuldeep turned to spin on the advice of his coach.

"If there is any doubt (with how I am bowling), I look at his old action," Kuldeep said in an International Cricket Council (ICC) column on Monday.

"I feel I am very lucky to have spent some time with him and to have been his good friend. I used to watch him on the television and observed how he used to dismiss the batters and his planning."

Kuldeep added: "He was quite strong mentally. When I played in Sydney (2019 Test), he helped me quite a bit. I learnt my bowling from him and he is the person I have followed forever."

Warne, who died in March, 2022, at the age of 52, is regarded as one of the greatest bowlers of all time, taking 708 wickets in Tests and 293 in ODIs.

Kuldeep, 28, overcame a serious knee injury to return to the international game last year. He has taken 160 wickets in 95 ODIs since his debut in 2017.

Kohat board wins Futsal C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kohat Board bagged All Pakistan Inter Board Futsal Championship here at the Pakistan Sports Complex.

In the final match of the championship Kohat Board downed Swat Board by 3-4 on penalty kicks. In the scheduled time, both teams were tied with 2-2 goals.

In the third position match, Quetta board defeated Islamabad board by 2-7 goals. Rana Tanveer Ahmed acted as match commissioner while Muhammad Anwar Khan, Arif Gul and Tawheed Gulzar performed the duties of the referees.

President of Pakistan Football Federation Hazrat Ali Khan and Secretary General Adnan Malik congratulated the tournament committee. A total of 11 teams from across the country participated in the championship, which were divided into two groups. Group A included teams from Mardan, Kohat, Karachi (BIE), Swat, Peshawar and Bannu while teams from Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Quetta and Karachi (SBTE) were placed in Group B.

Djokovic and Swiatek to begin 2024 season in Perth

SYDNEY (AFP): Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek will both open their 2024 campaigns in Perth, Australia, after Serbia and Poland were drawn in the city for the mixed teams United Cup on Monday.

Serbia will face the Czech Republic and China, while top seeds Poland meet Spain and a yet to be determined nation at the event from December 29-January 7 -- a key lead-up to the Australian Open.

Defending champions the United States, spearheaded by Taylor Fritz and Jessica Pegula, will also play in Perth, drawn alongside Australia and Britain.

Second seeds Greece, boasting Stefanos Tsitsipas and Maria Sakkari, will begin in Sydney against a Canada team featuring Felix Auger-Aliassime and Leylah Fernandez. Grand Slam champion Angelique Kerber will also be in Sydney to make her return from maternity leave, representing Germany alongside Alexander Zverev against France and Italy.

Borna Coric and Donna Vekic lead Croatia against the Netherlands and Casper Ruud's Norway. Each team -- with three men and three women -- will go through a round-robin format, with ties comprising one men's and women's singles and a mixed doubles clash. Group winners in each city advance to the quarter-finals, along with the best runner-up.

The semi-finals and final will be played in Sydney with US\$15 million in prize money and ATP and WTA rankings points at stake.

Draw for the United Cup: Perth Group A - Poland, Spain, TBC Group C - United States, Britain, Australia Group E - Czech Republic, China, Serbia Sydney Group B - Greece, Canada, TBC Group D - France, Italy, Germany Group F - Croatia, Netherlands, Norway.

Pakistan Women A v West Indies Women A series to begin tomorrow

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Women A are all set to take on West Indies Women A in the three-match one-day series, scheduled to take place at two venues in Lahore -- Gaddafi Stadium and Ghani Institute for Cricket -- from 24 to 29 October 2023. Following the one-day series, Pakistan Women A will partake in a T20 tri-series with West Indies Women A and Thailand's emerging team from 3 to 8 November. Pakistan Women A and Thailand emerging team will also feature in two T20s, scheduled for 10 and 11 November.

This will mark West Indies Women A's first tour to Pakistan. Toss for the one-day matches will take place at 8:30 am with the first ball to be bowled at 9:00 am. All games will be streamed live on PCB's YouTube channel.

Pakistan Women A's squad was announced after assessing performances of 28 players part of the probable camp held at the Lahore Country Club in Muridke.

Pakistan team will be led by off-spinner Rameen Shamim, who has repre-



mented Pakistan in three ODIs and four T20Is thus far. She previously captained Pakistan Women A on their successful tour of West Indies in 2021, where they whitewashed the home side in both the T20 and one-day series. Gull Feroza, Omaira Sohail, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Nawaz and Tuba Hassan are the other internationally capped players in the squad.

Additionally, Eyman Fatima and Anosha Nasir were part of Pakistan's squad for the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup, where the side won three out of their five games. Eyman and Anosha were the highest run-getter and highest wicket-taker for Pakistan in the tournament, respectively. Rameen Shamim, while

talking to PCB Digital, reflected on the side's preparation for the series: "We have prepared well for the series. Our coaches helped during the training camp, which was conducted in Muridke at the start of the month. We played practice matches and prepared keeping the conditions in mind... We know how the pitches act in Gaddafi [Stadium] and Ghani of [Institute Cricket] so we have prepared accordingly."

"It is a very big honour for me to captain Pakistan Women A, especially during a home series. Whenever we play a home series, it is always a lot more exciting. Of course, there is pressure as well, but playing at home is a different experience altogether."

Saudi gamer prince announces eSports WC

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia said on Monday it would organise an eSports World Cup starting next year, the latest boost to a sector Riyadh hopes will create tens of thousands of local jobs. "The eSports World Cup is the natural next step in Saudi Arabia's journey to become the premier global hub for gaming and eSports," the Gulf kingdom's de facto ruler, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, said in a statement.

Prince Mohammed is said to be an avid gamer partial to Call of Duty, and Saudi Arabia has invested heavily in the sector since the 38-year-old became first in line to the throne six years ago.

Last year, the crown prince announced a \$38 billion investment strategy for the kingdom's Savvy Games Group, owned by the deep-pocketed sovereign wealth fund.

The goal is to create 39,000 eSports-related jobs by 2030. Officials also want to make Saudi Arabia "an Eden for game developers" that can produce new titles "promoting Saudi and Arabic culture", according to the national

eSports strategy, targeting 30 globally competitive games produced in domestic studios by 2030.

The first edition of the eSports World Cup is expected next summer, taking the place of the eight-week Gamers8 festival of eSports tournaments which this year featured a prize pool totalling \$45 million.

Tourism falls off considerably during the summer in Saudi Arabia when temperatures in the capital Riyadh clear 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on a daily basis. But the eSports World Cup "will be complemented with a diversified set of activities and events that will draw visitors and tourists to the capital, transforming it into a gaming capital", Monday's statement said.

Officials have not specified which games will be included in the eSports World Cup, saying only that details will be made public early next year.

"The tournament will include the most popular games in the world across all genres and have the largest prize pool in eSports history," the statement said.

PCB rejects rumours about internal discord in team

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) refuted claims of an internal rift within the men's cricket team participating in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, saying these rumours were being circulated by a certain section of the media.

In a statement on Monday, the cricket board said: "Contrary to rumours circulated by a certain section of the media, the PCB unequivocally assures that the team is cohesive and there is no evidence to support these unsubstantiated claims."

The PCB expressed disappointment over the dissemination of this false news and emphasised the importance of upholding journalistic ethics before spreading such speculations. The Pakistan team is currently facing Afghanistan in a must-win game at the ICC World Cup 2023 in India.

Pakistan, who have two wins and as many defeats from four games, brought in Shadab Khan for fellow spinner Mohammad Nawaz who is ruled out with illness. Afghanistan, who have just one win from four matches, named left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad in place of fast bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Juventus sink 10-man Milan in Serie A

MILAN (Agencies): Juventus moved to within two points of Serie A leaders Inter Milan after Sunday's hard-fought 1-0 win at AC Milan who had to play over half the match with 10 men.

Massimiliano Allegri's side prevailed at a packed San Siro thanks to Milan youth product Manuel Locatelli's long-range strike 62 minutes into a largely drab encounter.

Juve, who like Milan were missing a clutch of first-choice players from their startings XI, stay third but are within touching distance of Inter and a point behind Milan who have surrendered top spot to their local rivals.

Locatelli was awarded the winning goal but his shot wouldn't have got past Milan's third-choice goalkeeper Antonio Mirante had it not been for a massive deflection off substitute Rade Krunic, making his return from injury.

Mirante, who was in goal in place of suspended Mike Maignan and the injured Marco Sportiello, hadn't had a single save to make up to that point, even after Malick Thiaw was sent off five minutes before the break.

The Germany defender rugby tackled Moise Kean

as he tried to latch onto Timothy Weah's through ball, and referee Maurizio Mariani was in no doubt that Thiaw had denied a clear goalscoring opportunity.

Kean then missed a golden opportunity to put Juve ahead on the stroke of half-time when he pushed Adrien Rabiot's deep cross wide from inches out.

Milan started the second half stronger but Locatelli's deflected goal deflated the hosts and led to the rest of the match being almost a non-event, as Juve were content to simply control the match rather than press home their advantage.

Mirante did make his presence felt late on, neatly tipping over substitute Dusan Vlahovic's drive with five minutes remaining and pulling off a brilliant double save from Andrea Cambiaso and Vlahovic. Stephan El Shaarawy shot Roma to within touching distance of the Champions League places with his late winner in a 1-0 success over 10-man Monza.

Italy international El Shaarawy lashed in a low finish in the final minute at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome, pushing Jose Mourinho's team up to sev-

enth with their third straight league win.

Roma, who also struck the woodwork late on through Romelu Lukaku and Sardar Azmoun, are three points behind Napoli and fourth-placed Fiorentina.

El Shaarawy's first goal of the season came at the end of a tough match against 11th-placed Monza who had to play the entire second half with 10 men following Danilo D'Ambrosio's harsh sending off for two bookable offences four minutes before half-time.

"When I saw Azmoun's shot, more than Lukaku's, hit the post I thought, 'Bah, if that doesn't go in... but Stephan has a feeling for goals and scoring late so he won the match for us," said Mourinho to Sky Sport.

Mourinho was sent off in stoppage time as tensions flared between the two dugouts after El Shaarawy struck, the Portuguese making a crying motion at the Monza staff. Defeat for Monza was harsh as the away side put up a brave fight despite being a man down for half the match. El Shaarawy's winner the first goal they have conceded from open play since being thumped by Atalanta at the start of September.

Bangladesh's Shakib 'still harbours' World Cup semi-final dream

MUMBAI (AFP): Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan said the Tigers "still harbour the dream" of a World Cup semi-final as they prepare to face in-form South Africa.

Bangladesh have lost three of their four World Cup games, including a seven-wicket defeat by India last time out, with the top four at the end of all-play-all phase involving the 10 competing teams going through to the knockout stages.

By contrast, South Africa go into Tuesday's match following a 229-run thrashing of England that got their campaign back on track after a shock loss to the Netherlands. Bangladesh, however, defeated the Proteas 2-1 in a one-day international series in South Africa last year.

But Shakib, aiming to be fit to face South Africa after missing the India match with a thigh injury, told a pre-match press conference on Monday: "We have to take it one game at a time."

"It doesn't matter if you win or lose your last game in a World Cup. What matters is who is performing

better on the day."

He added: "We saw South Africa flying high. We saw them lose to the Netherlands. They played brilliantly against England. We will try to play our best cricket and see where we are. "We still harbour the dream (of a semi-final). Other teams are helping us also, so if we can help ourselves, it can happen. We still have the chance on paper."

South Africa will return to the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai just days after piling up a mammoth 399-7 against England. "It is a high-scoring ground," said Shakib. "Still, we are planning to restrict them for a lower total. We are taking inspiration from how the Netherlands restricted them. We have been looking at their weaknesses."

As for his own fitness, the 36-year-old spin-bowling all-rounder, said: "If there's no problem with running, I can play tomorrow (Tuesday). I wasn't a hundred percent before the India game. "It was also important that I don't risk the rest of the World Cup. I

am in good shape now. I am pain free."

Bangladesh's Taskin Ahmed has, however, already been ruled out of the South Africa match, with the paceman still sidelined by a shoulder injury.

Shakib explained he was being spared from facing the Proteas to ensure his fitness for the remainder of the World Cup. "Taskin is not available for tomorrow's game. He will be available after tomorrow's game," said Shakib. "He has a shoulder issue that he has had for the last two games. "The doctor decided a bit of rest will get him fit for the last four games. We don't want to lose him for the tournament, as he is an important member of this side."

This is Shakib's fifth 50-over World Cup, with the Bangladesh star insisting his enthusiasm for the challenge was as strong as ever. "I think it is very exciting to play my fifth World Cup. I have the same interest, ambition and fight in me to perform for Bangladesh... Hopefully I can finish this World Cup on a good note."



In brief

IRSA releases 90,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 90,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 67,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.76 feet and was 130.76 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 33,100 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.55 feet, which was 158.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 49,900, 46,000, 36,400 and 10,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Five drug peddlers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up five accused on recovery of over nine kg charras. According to a police spokesman, Saddar Baroni Police held Umar Shahid for having 3600 grams charras while Gujjar Khan police rounded up Zarkar Ali with 1240 grams charras. Jatli police recovered 1600 grams charras from the possession of Rizwan, a drug peddler. He further informed that Sadiqabad police held Rohail for possessing 1600 grams charras while Rattaamral police netted Jan Muhammad and seized 1400 grams charras. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.

AC seals LPG cylinder outlet

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a crackdown against illegal LPG cylinder decanting and overpricing, Assistant Commissioner Rural Zuhur Fida Malik Monday sealed a shop and arrested the owner on directions of Deputy Commissioner, Irfan Nawaz Memon. The assistant commissioner inspected various areas of the Sub-Division and found the shop in violation of government rates and safety regulations. He issued a stern warning to other violators, urging them to comply with the law.

131 absconders arrested

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Police have arrested 31 absconders involved in serious crimes over the last week and further accelerated the efforts to curb activities of anti-social elements. The police said that this achievement was a result of the dedicated efforts of the police force and the special tasks assigned to senior officials to capture proclaimed offenders and absconders associated with major criminal activities. Under the directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, various police stations including Aabpara, Secretariat, Kohsar, Margalla, Karachi Company, Golra, Tamol, Sangiani, Shalimar, Ramna, Shahzad Town, Bani Gala, Koral, Kirpa, Sihala, and Lohi Bher were actively involved in the crackdown. Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan emphasized the commitment of the Islamabad Capital Police to eliminate crime within the city.

Police rewriting history with its blood: Bugti



Railways plans cross-border network to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar revealed on Monday that Pakistan Railways has strategic plans to develop a railway network connecting Kohat to Kharachi, promoting connectivity between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During a meeting with French Ambassador Nicolas Galey, the minister expressed that the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway M-6 also represents a compelling investment prospect for France. Pakistan National Shipping Corporation is

actively broadening its scope, providing further investment avenues.

The caretaker minister, Tatar, noted that the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) is undergoing expansion, offering extensive investment possibilities, including opportunities for French investors.

The French ambassador highlighted the longstanding history of relations and cooperation between France and Pakistan. He also mentioned the interest of French investors in Pakistani projects,

emphasizing the diverse investment possibilities available for French investors in Pakistan.

Tatar said Pakistan has maintained a democratic government since 2008, and its future holds great potential. Alstom, the French transport company, is solidifying its long-term presence in Pakistan, marking a significant move towards expanded investments.

Ambassador Nicolas Gillie conveyed his intent to boost French investments and inject substantial capital into Pakistan.

31 FIRs registered for violating dengue SOPs in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Health Authority (DHA) had lodged 31 FIRs and sealed four premises on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Monday said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to nine and imposed a fine of Rs 12,000 on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. Presently, the health officer informed that 92 patients were admitted to different district health facilities, of which 46 were confirmed cases while 2,096 were discharged after treatment.

Dr Sajjad added that with the arrival of eight more cases during the last 24 hours, the district's total tally had reached 2,143 confirmed cases. Among the new cases, he informed that three of each patient had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, and Municipal Corporation area while one each from Rawalpindi Cantonment and Taxila area.

AIU offering admissions

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) is currently offering admissions in Associate Degree in Arts (BA General), Associate Degree in Commerce (B.Com), Associate Degree in education, BS (ODL), B.Ed, BBA, and postgraduate diploma programs for semester autumn 2023.

The last date for enrolment of continuing students is tomorrow (Wednesday, October 25) while new students can take admission until November 7, 2023, without any late fee charges, said a press release on Monday.

Admission forms and prospectus of all the programs are available on the university website. Admission forms for the Associate Degree programs (BA, B.Com) and B.Ed program are also available at the University's Regional Offices and SWIFT Centers throughout the country.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfaraz Bugti said that police martyrs are rewriting the history of Pakistan, with their blood.

Addressing the 49th CTP passing out ceremony of ASPs at the National Police Academy on Monday in Islamabad, Bugti said that Pakistan is facing serious threats like terrorism and the citizens, police and law enforcement agencies have made countless sacrifices to stop this wave of terrorism.

"We must never forget that we have sacrificed thousands of lives to ensure the survival and bright future of Pakistan," said the minister.

Apart from IG Islamabad Police, Commandant National Police Academy, foreign diplomats and families of passing out police officers participated in the ceremony. The Minister while congratulating the cadets who performed outstandingly during the training said that he was very happy to come to the passing out ceremony of the Assistant Superintendents of Police of the 49th Special Training Program.

He said that the role and duties of law enforcement agencies are important for the stability and socio-economic development of our country. Police and law enforcement agencies are using modern technology to provide justice to victims and bring anti-social elements to justice, he added.

"I hope that the police and law enforcement agencies are increasing the capacity of the police and

law enforcement agencies as required over time to meet these challenges, improving their efficiency and professionalism in their prime responsibility," said the minister. He said, these passed out graduates, especially women, will play their key role to face the challenges faced by our society.

He hoped that the young officers who passed out would become torchbearers for the protection of the rights of the oppressed, irrespective of their colour, caste, religion and race.

Officers must realize that they can support society by mobilizing support and resources to ensure the rule of law and fundamental rights, he added. The minister stressed that the community policing, gender equality and children's rights should be the cornerstone of modern policing.

Addressing the passing out officers, he asked them to ensure the rule of law and as protectors of the rights of the citizens of Pakistan. "Use your options judiciously. You must exercise these powers as a sacred trust. I hope you live up to their expectations," said the minister.

Earlier, while delivering the welcome address, commandant National Police Academy Salahuddin said that the batch of ASPs passed out consists of 35 officers, including 8 female officers and one Pakistan Air Force officer.

It is a rigorous 18-month training process that includes extensive academic curriculum, police manage-

ment, criminal justice, law enforcement, community policing, crime control procedures, physical training, said Salahuddin.

He said that it has been the effort of the National Police Academy to include the latest research in its curriculum so that the officers are aware of the latest policing trends. Officers are also briefed on the topics of public transactions, police media relations and protection of vulnerable sections and the course also includes anti-terrorism training for Assistant Superintendents of Police, he said.

The commandant said that the mission of the National Police Foundation is to provide the best possible training not only to Assistant Superintendents of Police but to all law enforcement officers irrespective of whether they belong to the police or any law enforcement post. He said that National Police Foundation has developed capacity building courses for all law enforcement agencies including Frontier Constabulary, FIA, Intelligence Bureau, Punjab and Sindh Rangers etc.

He also appreciated the role of United States, British High Commission, ICRC, UNODC, NCA, International Criminal Investigation and Training Assistance Program in finalizing these courses. He said that the graduating officers have been selected by the Federal Public Service Commission on full merit and they are the best people for the assigned job.

Sanjrani to convene special session to discuss ongoing Palestine situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has decided to convene a session of the Senate during this week to address the pressing issue of the ongoing Palestine situation, following the barbaric bombings by the Zionist Israeli Army in Besieged Gaza Strip.

Leader of the House in Senate, Senator Ishaq Dar, and Parliamentary Leader

of the Balochistan Awami Party, Senator Manzoor Kakar had written letters to Chairman Senate, urging him to convene a session of the Upper House of Parliament to discuss and deliberate on the situation in Palestine.

This session aims to emphasize Pakistan's commitment to peace, justice, and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Leader of the opposi-

tion in Senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem and all other political parties in the Senate have also expressed their unanimous support for convening the Senate session.

The session will provide Senators with an opportunity to voice their opinions, share insights, and contribute to a comprehensive discussion regarding the ongoing situation in Palestine.

SC verdict firmly establishes 'law is above all': Aitzaz Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Renowned legal expert Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan has praised the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision of declaring military trials of civilians null and void, emphasising that it will reinforce the entire system, including the democratic framework and the constitution.

"The court judgment underscores the supremacy of the Constitution," Aitzaz affirmed while commenting on the landmark verdict during his interaction with media outside the Supreme Court.

In its short order, the court ordered that the 102

individuals detained in connection with the the May 9 riots under the Army Act should face trial in civilian courts, effectively deeming any military court trial of civilians as invalid.

Aitzaz Ahsan, who was joined by senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja, succinctly summarised the significance of the ruling by stating, "A ruler derives authority from the law", and concluded that this verdict firmly established that "the law is above all."

He labeled the day as "historic", and said the verdict would have long-lasting implications.

Aitzaz reiterated that

the court judgment underlined the supremacy of the Constitution and fortified the nation's democratic framework and its fundamental principles.

He also pointed out that the government's request to interpret the law and permit military trials of civilians had been rejected by the Supreme Court.

A five-member bench, composed of Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik, presided over the hearing of the petitions filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman and others.

Police initiate measures to ensure public benefits from reduced petrol prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police have launched a series of significant actions to ensure that the advantages of the recent reduction in petrol prices reach the general public.

These initiatives aim to alleviate the burden on commuters and passengers, ensuring that transportation costs remain affordable.

Under the directive of the Islamabad Police, a special campaign has been initiated, targeting vehicles that have been charging fares beyond the legally prescribed limit and accommodating more passengers than their designated capacity, specifically from certain locations in the city.

Recently, the Islamabad Police took legal action against 94 vehicles for fla-

grantly collecting fares that exceeded the prescribed limits. Additionally, they swiftly intervened and took necessary measures against 180 vehicles found guilty of carrying more passengers than the designated capacity from specific locations.

To further implement this policy, following the reduction in petrol prices, the authorities have granted a grace period of two days to the transporters and drivers to adjust their fares accordingly. The aim is to ensure that the cost savings resulting from the decreased petrol prices are passed on to the commuters in the form of reduced transportation fares.

In a statement released by the Islamabad Police, citizens have been strongly

encouraged to report any emergencies or irregularities through the dedicated Pucar-15 and ICT15 mobile applications.

This step is expected to facilitate a prompt and effective response to any unforeseen situations, further ensuring the safety and well-being of the residents. These recent measures by the Islamabad Police underline their commitment to promoting a fair and transparent transportation system, safeguarding the interests of the public and fostering a secure and efficient city transport network.

The authorities have assured that such initiatives will continue to be rigorously enforced to uphold the rights and interests of the commuters and residents in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: A labourer busy in welding the grills of newly installed pedestrian bridge at IJP Road.

Pressure mounts on refugees

KABUL (TOLOnews): As the November 1 deadline determined by the Pakistan for Afghan refugees to leave approaches, pressure is mounting on the Afghan nationals who are recognized as illegal migrants by Islamabad. Afghan refugees siad that they are being detained under various pretexts and forced to leave the country. They detain the Afghans who are without visas and legal documents and deport them to Afghanistan, said Faizullah Turk, an Afghan refugee.

Release of activists demanded

KABUL (Khaama Press): Several protesting women demanded the immediate release of Julia Parsi, Neda Parwani, Matiullah Wesa, and Rasoul Parsi, who are currently held captive by Taliban. The “Women’s Protest Movement for Freedom” considers women and civil activists imprisoned by the Taliban as part of their “repressive policies.” These protesting women gathered at a discreet location in Kabul and called on the international community not to recognize the Taliban officially.

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

SC: Over 40,000 cases tried in past 3 months

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate reports that in the past three months it has dealt with more than 40,000 different cases across the country. “In all the courts of the country, 44,496 different cases have been resolved in these three months, and these numbers show that the authorities have done enough work,” said Abdul Rahim Rashid, spokesman for the Supreme Court. Abdul Rahim Rashid said that the department has also distributed more than

44,000 different documents to citizens throughout the country during this period. “In the last three months, Saratan, Asad, and Sanbula months, 44,560 different documents have been executed, of which 11,731 of them were marriage certificates. Meanwhile, some citizens who have referred to the Supreme Court have some requests from the Islamic Emirate. “What we want from Afghanistan’s courts, whether it is primary or appellate courts, whether

there is a legal case or anything else, we want justice in it,” said Mahmullah, an applicant. “I had a file from the previous government and the file had many problems. Since this government came, things have become very easy,” said Sayedullah, an applicant. The Supreme Court continues to acknowledge the complaints regarding the slowness of providing services to citizens and pledged that these challenges will be addressed in a better way.

Over 8,000 criminal acts reported in 6 months



KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that over 8,000 cases of criminal activities have been recorded across the country within the first half of the current solar year. MoI’s spokesman, Abdul Matin Qani, said that the cases include murder, robbery, kidnapping, and weapons’ smuggling.

“Approximately 8,210 cases of criminal activities across the country have been recorded with the police,” he said. The MoI disclosed its report of activities of the first six months of the solar year. “Around 3,604 suspects have been detained in connection with smuggling and

producing narcotics and around 550 laboratories and 29 factories have been detected and eliminated,” Qani said. He said that within this period, the security forces have launched over 3,400 raids regarding counter-narcotics nationwide. According to him, more than 1,000 people have been killed and nearly 4,000 others sustained injuries in 2,200 traffic accidents across the country. He said that Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting Minister of Interior, visited many provinces of the country with the aim of calling for good treatment of the people by provincial authorities, and the implementation of the decrees of the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

Reconstruction of Kabul’s Jamhuriat Hospital begins

KABUL (TOLOnews): The project to rebuild Jamhuriat Hospital in Kabul, worth more than four billion Afghani, has begun. Qalandar Ebad, acting Minister of Public Health, said that they have undertaken the project in order to provide as many resources as possible in the health sector. “Four billion dollars have been allocated to the project, of which 317 million will be spent on the construction of the hospital, and approximately more than two billion will be used to purchase medical equipment for the hospital,” said the acting Minister of Public Health. Ebad said that they are trying to open such projects in other zones of the country. “God willing, soon the type of hospital will be opened at the level of the (national) zones,” said Ebad. Officials of the Jamhuriat Hospital welcomed the opening of the reconstruction work of the

hospital and they asked the Islamic Emirate to not delay. “Our request is that they complete the place for us before the time because the country needs it now for how to provide services,” said Aminullah Moeni, head of the hospital. We have staff in every department, unfortunately, its quality is such that it cannot cure the pain of the society,” said Najibullah Haqqani, acting minister of communication. Meanwhile, the officials of the National Development Corporation ensured transparency in the work of the project. “We assure all our citizens that we will carry out the first part of the project in a good way,” said Abdul Wali Adil, deputy of the National Development Corporation. At the same time, a charitable institution has activated an oxygen production machine and cafeteria at the Ibn Sina Hospital, projects worth more than one million Afghani, for the pur-

pose of providing facilities in the health sector.

More than 2,000 Afghan migrants return from Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations Affairs of Afghanistan has announced that the de facto administration has facilitated the return of over two thousand Afghan migrants from Iran to their homeland. The ministry stated on Sunday, on its official social media platform X that approximately 2,805 Afghan migrants had returned to Afghanistan from Iran till October 22, 2023. As per the Ministry’s report, these migrants have come back to Afghanistan from Iran through both involuntary and voluntary means. Nonetheless, the head of the border police in Islam Qala has noted that among them, 248 individuals have been identified as requiring assistance. The ministry has not provided specific details on how many of them were forcibly returned and how many returned voluntarily. It’s worth noting that some of the recently returned migrants have been referred to the International Organization for Migration for assistance. In recent times, there has been a noticeable increase in the detention of Afghan migrants in countries such as Pakistan and Iran due to their lack of valid residency documents. Tragically, many of these migrants face harsh treatment at the hands of the local authorities, including physical abuse such as beatings. These inhumane conditions often lead to their forcible repatriation to Afghanistan, compounding their already challenging situation.

Contract to process Qashqari oil signed

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) announced that the contract for the processing of 40,000 tons of Qashqari crude oil worth 20 million dollars has been awarded to a domestic company. Homayoun Afghan, a spokesperson of the MoMP, said that four hundred tons of oil are extracted from the Qashqari mine daily and they are trying to process the mines, especially oil, inside the country. “We sold one ton of crude oil at around 500 dollars, which was a high rate in the bidding process, and 40,000 tons were sold at a value of 20 million dollars. Some economists said that extracting mines in a transparent manner and processing them inside the country has a positive effect on economic progress. “Afghanistan is an untouched land, so the extraction and processing in the country can increase employment and, at the same time, create work and economic prosperity in the country,” said Abdul Zahur Mudabir, an economist. The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the country’s oil extraction cannot meet the needs of the market, and businessmen from Russia, Iran, and Central Asia import oil and gas into the country. “I think that the country’s needs are very high, and Afghanistan needs a lot of work and a well-equipped refinery so that we can meet the market’s needs,” said Mohammad Yonis Momand, deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment. According to information from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Afghanistan has five oil fields, and currently, oil is being extracted from the Amu Darya oil field, and efforts are being made to extract oil from other oil fields as well.

Minister meets with UN envoy for Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani met with the UN Secretary General’s special coordinator for Afghanistan, Feridun Sinirlioglu, and his delegation in Kabul on Monday, the ministry said in a statement. According to the ministry, Sinirlioglu said during meetings with officials from different countries, he has come to the conclusion that no country is a “war seeker” or supporter of war in Afghanistan. Discussions did include the removal of restrictions on the education of female students and the non-emergence of threats from the

territory of Afghanistan. He mentioned the implementation of basic projects in the field of law enforcement, reliable security, development of agricultural affairs and reconstruction in the country as clear examples of the achievements of the Islamic Emirate. “UNAMA is ready and willing to fully cooperate with the international community in strengthening Afghanistan’s relations, reconstruction, and the fight against narcotics,” said Sinirlioglu. Haqqani emphasized the need for problems to be resolved through dialogue. “It is the responsibility of the United Nations; neces-

sary steps should be taken with Afghans in this regard. The international community and organizations should emphasize understanding and diplomatic relations instead of unilateral decisions. Problems and obstacles should be resolved through dialogue,” Haqqani said. Haqqani also called Afghans responsible members of the international community and emphasized that they should not be ignored. “The conflicts between Afghans have ended. The phase of trust building continues, the level of trust in each other has increased and as an organized and

united country, reconstruction works are going on in every field. The current system was created as a result of the sacrifices of all Afghans,” Haqqani added. And with the cooperation of all, things will go forward, he further added. He also called the ongoing fight against drugs in the country a success and said the government has been successful so far, but since drugs are a big threat to all nations, the fight should be done by all. “Farmers should be assisted in alternative livelihoods and proper and real cooperation should be established in other areas as well,” said Haqqani.

China’s ambassador hands over \$50,000 for earthquake victims

KABUL (Agencies): The Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Kabul, Zhao Sheng, called on the Deputy Foreign Minister for political affairs, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai in Kabul on Monday and handed over \$50,000 in funds raised for this month’s earthquake victims. Zhao once again conveyed the condolences of the people of China to the deputy foreign minister over the recent earthquake in Herat province, the ministry said. Zhao also promised to dispatch more relief to the earthquake victims. Calling the relation of the two countries constructive and positive, Stanekzai thanked Beijing for its sym-



pathy and assistance to the victims of the earthquake. A string of deadly earthquakes shook Herat earlier this month, leaving at least

2,000 people dead and thousands more homeless. Twenty villages were completely destroyed, leaving the survivors with no shelter. International organizations have appealed for more aid, ahead of winter, in order to avoid an even bigger catastrophe.

Avoid marrying close relatives to prevent birth defects: Doctors

KABUL (Pajhwok): In order to prevent birth defects in children, doctors advise serious care and no use of arbitrary drugs during pregnancy and say marriage with close relatives should be avoided as well. Although the Ministry of Public Health does not provide accurate statistics on birth defects in the country, but information provided by one of the maternity hospitals in Kabul show that dozens of malformed babies are born in one year. What is malformed birth of babies? Dr Malalai Rahim Faizi, director of Malalai Maternity Hospital in Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News: “Changes in the baby during birth, which include all body parts, both internal and external, are called birth defects, some of which are visible, but others are internal, like congenital heart diseases and tumors inside the baby’s head.” Dr Faizi said diabetes, heart diseases, high blood pressure, genetic diseases, heredity and nutritional poverty were also among main factors behind birth defects. He added: “Folic acid deficiency also plays a role in birth defects, mothers should use folic acid medicines both before and after pregnancy.” She also said the age of

mother and father was also related to this problem, conception before the age of eighteen and above 35 years may also cause malformed births. “When a mother wants to get pregnant, she must be under the care of a gynecologist and obstetrician because all details are known from the point of view of age, blood type, health problems and other characteristics of the mother,” she explained. She considered the advice of doctor before pregnancy to be necessary and added: “In general, we do not have as many families who want to get pregnant to seek advice from doctor and complete some examinations so that the doctor can tell what a mother should do during pregnancy.” Dr Faizi has no information about the overall birth statistics of malformed babies in the country. Meanwhile, Dr. Najm al-Sama Shafajo, an obstetrician-gynecologist and head of the Afghan Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, told Pajhwok Afghan News that no research has been conducted in Afghanistan about the number of malformations and how many malformed babies are born every year. She added: “Marriage at a very young or old age, smoking cigarettes by one-

self or family members, arbitrary use of some drugs, intervention of some drugs such as blood drugs, and also family marriages cause birth defects.” Dr. Najm al-Sama emphasized: “There are many couples whose blood groups are the same, which is a congenital defect, or on the contrary, it is possible that they do not have a defect. I emphasize that only examining the blood does not allow us to know that it is suitable for family marriages.” She pointed out ultrasound examinations could detect birth defects, but it was not always possible to recognize it. According to her, diseases such as diabetes, high and uncontrollable blood pressure also cause birth defects. She added t iron deficiency was the main cause of birth defects: “Women with folic acid deficiency may have children such as cleft lip, cleft palate, and children whose legs are crooked, or children who have large tumors on their backs. Or give birth to children with watery heads, but if they take folic acid during pregnancy and before pregnancy, these problems can be prevented.” She advised that all women should use folic acid six months before

pregnancy, if they do not use it for six months, they should use folic acid three months before pregnancy and after that decide to get pregnant in order to prevent birth defects in children. Shafajo said that drugs recommended by doctors should be used regularly and pregnant women should avoid stress and X-rays. Vaccinations during pregnancy should be applied regularly. Mothers who gave birth to malformed children Halima, a resident of Qala Zaman Khan in Kabul and the mother of a four-year-old child who is deformed, told Pajhwok: “My daughter Sadia was born four years ago and since then she has not been normal. When I was giving birth, the doctors induced labor that affected my child’s head and he could not breathe properly.” According to her, his daughter, who is now four years old, does not have the ability to talk or walk. Also Nadera, another resident of Kabul, who gave birth to a malformed child, said: “My son was born seven years ago, he can’t walk, he can’t talk, everything we tried didn’t work.” She does not know the reason why she gave birth to a malformed child, but said her other two children were normal and healthy.

UNFPA says 7,500 pregnant women affected by earthquakes



HERAT (Agencies): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 7,500 pregnant women were affected by the recent string of earthquakes in Herat province. The UNFPA wrote on X, that the loss of loved ones has a very bad effect on pregnant women. This United Nations agency said that it has sent

psychotherapeutic counselors to the region to give advice in order to help them spiritually in reducing the grief caused by the death of their loved ones. On the other hand, the earthquake has severely damaged health centers and facilities. According to reports, at least 40 health centers or clinics have been destroyed

or damaged as a result of these earthquakes. According to the report of the World Health Organization, for this reason, there has been a disruption in health services for nearly 5.8 million people. Earlier, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that their aid organizations

have planned to provide assistance to 114,000 earthquake victims, and \$93.6 million are needed to implement this program. OCHA said the number of people affected by the Herat earthquakes is more than 154,000 and the number of houses destroyed in the earthquakes is 21,500. The Ministry of Public Health, however, says that there is no doubt that the earthquake has had a bad effect on the mental health of women. The office of the Norwegian Mission for Migrants in Afghanistan also says that 4,000 people in Herat need emergency assistance, and the situation of more than 100,000 people needs to be improved. According to a United Nations report, the series of earthquakes and aftershocks that shook Herat province left more than 1,480 people dead, and 90% of the victims of this incident are women and children.

Election delayed is election denied, says Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party and the former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the ‘50th anniversary celebration of Pakistan’s Constitution’ hosted by the Supreme Court Bar Association said that he is grateful and honoured to be the first political leader to be addressing this forum in the Supreme Court’s premises. We appreciate the role of the Bar in upholding the law, rule of law, constitutionalism and human rights in Pakistan.

We appreciate that the Bar has played this role regardless of the political inclinations of individual members of the Bar and the office bearers of the Bar Association. The nation values this bipartisan struggle against dictatorship waged by the legal fraternity. This indeed raises our hopes in democracy and fighting dictatorship. We salute your courage and determination in the relentless struggle for the rule of law in Pakistan.

This is the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of Pakistan that was given to the country by my grandfather, Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with the invaluable support of all political parties of the right, left and center, Chairman Bilawal said. Whether of democratic and secular inclinations, or religious persuasions, the unanimous Constitution given by the political parties and leaders of the time also have backing of all the federating units of our federation.

This consensus is no small achievement, let there be no doubt about it. Under the leadership of Quaid-e-Awam, the political leaders of the time rose above political partisanship, a value that has since been systematically eroded over the years. One opposition political leader of the time was asked as to why he had agreed to the Constitution when he opposed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto so vehemently at every turn. In reply, the political leader is reported to have said that the opposition to Bhutto was a political necessity but making the Constitution was a national necessity. Such was the spirit at the time which looks like a dream today.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Constitution, Chairman Bilawal said that he would like to pay tribute to all 24 members of the Constitutional Committee of 1972, the Legislative Assembly of 1973 which passed the Constitution and the then legal fraternity for achieving this milestone in our national history. They are our national heroes and we salute them.

Standing before the august gathering in the premises of the apex court of Pakistan, Chairman Bilawal expressed his wish to share his thoughts and perceptions about how we see the role played by the judiciary in defending and advancing democracy. He said that he is tempted to speak about it because is under threat once again and the people look up to the judiciary to

protect constitutionalism and democracy. He said that he does not wish to give a ‘textbook narrative’ or delve too deeply in the past.

The role played by the judiciary in the past is rather too well-known and bears no repetition. However, a brief peep into the past serves like a rear-view mirror while driving, it helps in course correction. The Constitution is the soul of the State and tearing it means tearing apart the State itself, ridiculing it means ridiculing the people of Pakistan. It is a sacred social contract between the State and the citizens on one hand and the glue that binds the federating units on the other. Abrogating the Constitution means dismembering the federation and alienating the citizens from the State.

When the dictators abrogated it in the past, the judiciary upheld this abrogation sometimes in the name of the ‘doctrine of successful revolution’ and sometimes in the name of the ‘doctrine of necessity’. One felt as if the soul of the State had been torn by those very luminaires who were supposed to protect and defend it. Chairman Bilawal said that he would not like to dwell more on it, as they say, ‘Forget the past, arrange for the present and face the future’.

Those who abrogated the Constitution and ridiculed it as merely a 15-page document and those who upheld the abrogation not only disgraced themselves but also heaped disgrace on the people and our nation. They are the traitors of the nation and history will always remember them with this title. This is why it is important to safeguard the Constitution and relentlessly pursue those who have subverted it.

Chairman Bilawal said that he has been a member of the Parliament for five years and has seen the role played by the judiciary from the perspective or the vantage point of the Parliament. The restoration of the judiciary is a result of orchestrated public demonstrations in March 2009, serving as a seminal incident in the judicial history of Pakistan that had a profound impact on the Judiciary-Parliament relations. In the words of a leading lawyer and member of the movement for the restoration of CJP Iftikhar Chaudhary, stated that the 2009 restoration as a result of public pressure had resulted in judges prone to arrogance and a Bar prone to violence.

We witnessed unprecedented judicial activism in the wake of its restoration in 2009. Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary declared that not the Parliament but the Constitution was supreme and the Constitution was what the judges said it was, not what it actually said, not what the founders said but what he said. In 2010 once again, consensus within the Parliament allowed for the passes of the 18th Amendment and the restoration of the 1973 Constitution, for which we are grateful to President Asif Ali Zardari, Senator Raza Rabbani and the entire drafting committee.

Ex-Dy speaker KP arrested from court’s premises

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Deputy Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mahmood Jan was taken into custody after the rejection of an interim bail plea in the murder and attempt to murder case by Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar, on Monday.

ATC Peshawar Judge Jahan Zeb Shinwari turn-down interim plea while police had arrested Mahmood Jan from the premises of court. According to prosecution, former Speaker Mahmood Jan had alleged killed Muhammad Ali while injuring one other over land dispute. First Information Report (FIR) has registered against Mahmood Jan at Regi police station in this regard.

Former Deputy Speaker

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mahmood Jan had approached ATC seeking interim bail but arrested from the court’s premises after rejection of plea. It is worthy to mention, police will produce former deputy speaker Mahmood Jan before court for obtaining physical remand to investigate him.

Meanwhile, ATC had adjourned hearing on plea bail of Kamran Bangash till 25th October in cases of opening firing on police and hiding former Federal Minister Murad Saeed in his Hujra while ordering respondents for submission of record. The counsel Syed Sikandar Hayat Shah and Ali Zaman Advocates argued that FIR registered against Kamran Bangash is baseless while adding that three persons are already

discharged from the allegation by honorable court.

ATC Peshawar Judge Muhammad Adil Khan ordered submission of records in this regard after initial arguments. Moreover, Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Peshawar Babar Ali Khan had grant bail to three former Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) in the illegal recruitment case and ordered their release.

According to prosecution, MPAs named Malak Liaqat, Azam Khan and Shafiullah had recruited 24 employees at education’s department illegally which caused a loss of Rs14.3 million to national exchequer. Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Peshawar Babar Ali Khan accepted bail pleas of former MPAs and ordered their release.

PIA suspends 27 more flights amid fuel crisis

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Monday canceled at least 27 flights amid fuel crisis. According to details, a total of 27 flights including international and domestic flights have been canceled due to fuel supply woes. Seven flights from Karachi to Lahore, Rahim Yar Khan and Peshawar have been suspended.

Six flights from Karachi to Multan, Dubai and Islamabad, while four flights from Islamabad to Dubai, Dammam, Medina and Jeddah have also been suspended. Meanwhile, the spokesperson said that PIA will operate 60 flights on Monday (today). Due to limited fuel supply from Pakistan State Oil, the PIA is focusing on the profitable routes, the spokesperson said.

It is to be noted that PSO resumed a limited supply of fuel to Pakistan International Airline (PIA) after assurance of Rs100 million in daily payment to clear the backlog of the pending dues. It is pertinent to mention that Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar directed authorities concerned to expedite the privatization process of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and other loss-making state-owned enterprises.

Sources told that the financial affairs the national airline will be handed over to Privatisation Commission as the latter would take measures to reduce its losses. Sources further claimed that the commission will link the national carrier’s financial affairs with the latest system. By improving PIA’s financial affairs, the commission will improve its balance sheet – which will help in carrier’s privatization.

Court acquits Dar in NAB’s assets reference

ISLAMABAD (PPI): An accountability court on Monday acquitted former finance minister Ishaq Dar in assets beyond means reference. Islamabad accountability court announced its judgment reserved earlier in the NAB reference. “No evidence of corruption found against Ishaq Dar”, the court said in its verdict.

NAB prosecutor Afzal Qureshi in previous hearing told the court that there was no evidence of corrupt practice against Ishaq Dar in the case. Judge Mohammad Bashir said the NAB Prosecutor General should submit its reply in writing. “Reply in writing if you have no objection over acquittal of Ishaq Dar and other accused”, judge said. “We have given our arguments on merit, court could announce its decision,” NAB lawyer said.

Ishaq Dar’s counsel Qazi Misbahul Hassan and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Prosecutor Afzal Qureshi had concluded their arguments in the case in previous hearing. The court had resumed hearing of the reference against Dar in the light of the Supreme Court’s decision against amendments in the NAB law. NAB had filed reference against Ishaq Dar, Saeed Ahmed, Naem Mahmood, and Mansoor Raza Rizvi in 2017.

‘Pak ready to work with ASEAN states’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interim Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, while terming a peaceful and stable Asia Pacific a priority, stated Monday Pakistan stands ready to work with the member states of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) for attaining the goals of confidence-building and conflict prevention.

Speaking at the inauguration of the ASEAN Corner at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), the minister highlighted Pakistan’s efforts in forging the future prospects of its relations with ASEAN. Jilani reaffirmed Pakistan’s support for an international order based on peaceful coexistence, amicable settlements of disputes, win-win cooperation and shared prosperity.

He mentioned that Pakistan was fully supportive of the principles of ASEAN and was collaborating in a number of areas, including conducting courses on finance and banking.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing a ‘Breast Cancer Awareness’ program, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Cricket World Cup Afghanistan shock Pakistan by 8 wickets

CHENNAI (AFP): Afghanistan put on a superb batting and bowling display to hand Pakistan a stunning eight-wicket defeat in the Cricket World Cup on Monday. Chasing a 283-run target, Afghanistan were lifted by Ibrahim Zadran (87), Rahmat Shah (77 not out) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (65) as they scored 286-2 in 49 overs.

Pakistan had made 282-7 in their 50 overs with 74 from skipper Babar Azam and 58 from opener Abdullah Shafique but the total did not prove tough enough for a clinical Afghanistan. Skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi, with a 45-ball 48 not out, hit the winning boundary as Afghanistan improved upon their highest ODI chase of 274 against the UAE in Dubai in 2014. The win is Afghanistan’s first-ever over Pakistan in eight ODIs and came eight days after their shock victory over defending champions England in Delhi.

“This win tastes nice,” said Shahidi. “The way we chased was very professional and the way we did that will help us going into our other games now. “We are playing quality cricket. We have always had belief and at the start of the tournament I told my team I wanted to make it a historic one for our country and our people.

We did that against England and now today against Pakistan.” The defeat leaves Pakistan’s World Cup campaign in disarray with three defeats

in five games and a formidable South Africa to face at the same venue on Friday.

In contrast, Afghanistan’s campaign is slightly revived with two wins in five matches and struggling Sri Lanka as their next opponents in Pune on Sunday. “That really hurt us. We got a good total. Our bowling is not up to the mark,” said Pakistan skipper Azam. The win was greeted with celebratory gunfire, cheers and fireworks across the Afghan capital Kabul for at least 15 minutes after the match concluded. The victory for Afghanistan comes at a time of tense political and diplomatic relations between the two neighbours.

Pakistan were sloppy in the field as they conceded easy boundaries with openers Zadran and Gurbaz taking their side to 100 in the 16th over. The pair put on 130 by the 22nd over and it was only a miscued shot from Gurbaz off Shaheen Shah Afridi that brought Pakistan their first wicket. Gurbaz hit nine boundaries and a six in his 53-ball knock while Zadran scored 10 boundaries off 113 deliveries before handing a catch behind off Hasan Ali with 93 still needed. Rahmat and Shahidi ensured Afghanistan did not collapse. Rahmat hit five fours and two sixes in his 84-ball stay at the crease. Earlier, Azam hit a stylish half-century to guide his team to a fighting total after he won the toss and batted first. Azam’s 92-

ball knock was complemented by Shafique’s 75-ball 58 while Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed scored a valuable 40 runs apiece.

On a spin-friendly Chidambaram Stadium pitch, Afghanistan fielded four slow bowlers with 18-year-old left-armner Noor Ahmad grabbing a career best 3-49 on his World Cup debut. Shadab added a rapid 73 runs with Iftikhar for the sixth wicket as Pakistan took 61 off the last five overs, with Shadab falling off the last delivery. Iftikhar cracked four sixes and two fours while Shadab’s innings featured a six and a four. Pakistan enjoyed a strong start with a 56-run stand before Azmatullah Omarzai dismissed Imam-ul-Haq for 17 in the 11th over. Ahmad struck his first blow when he trapped Shafique for 58 in the 23rd over. Shafique hit two sixes and five fours in his third half-century of the World Cup. Ahmad then dismissed Pakistan’s top scorer in the World Cup, Mohammad Rizwan, caught sweeping in his next over to leave Pakistan on 120-3.

Azam also fell to Ahmad when the Pakistan skipper played a tennis-like shot to a delivery that was seemingly out of his reach, ending up hitting it straight into the hands of Mohammad Nabi at extra cover. Azam added 43 with Saud Shakeel who made 25. Afghan spinner Rashid Khan went wicketless in his 10 overs but conceded 41 runs, while pacer Naveen-ul-Haq took 2-52.

Final date for voting

(Continued from Page 1)

However, the foremost priority was the cessation of hostilities for which Pakistan was making collaborative efforts as the country had also co-hosted an OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) ministerial meeting in Jeddah on the issue. To a question about the elections, he said the final date for voting would be announced soon and that the caretaker government was trying its utmost to facilitate the electoral process.

He said no major political party was out of the political process unless anyone was legally barred. About the return of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Kakar said that he was a political reality and his adversaries should face him in politics. About the economic situation, he said for the first time in the country’s history, the dollar rate had meaningfully reduced and that he would hold a follow-up meeting with provincial chief secretaries later in the day to ensure the trickle-down effect on the common man in form of commodities’ prices and transport fares.

To another query, the prime minister said the existing business model of print media was flawed and would collapse. The print media entities should realign their business approach to thrive the private business instead of relying on the state. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti, Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani,

Privatisation Minister Fawad Hassan Fawad, Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz and Planning Minister Sami Saeed accompanied the prime minister.

PM orders expediting PIA’s privatization process: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar directed the authorities concerned to expedite the process of privatization of the national flag carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Chairing a review meeting on the financial crisis of PIA, the prime minister stressed the finalization of the privatization process within stipulated time.

The prime minister sought regular compliance reports to be submitted to him in this regard. PM Kakar said the government would continue extending support to PIA till completion of its privatization. He said the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which were facing financial loss, would be privatized to save the national exchequer.

The prime minister was given a briefing on the financial situation of PIA. The meeting was attended by interim federal ministers including Shamshad Akhtar and Fawad Hussain Fawad, Adviser on Aviation Air Marshal (retd) Farhat Hussain, and officials concerned.

PM for accelerated steps to trickle down impacts of reduced oil prices to common man: Cartaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar directed the authorities concerned to accelerate steps for trickling down the impact of reduced prices of the petroleum products to the common man.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting to discuss the impact of oil prices’ reduction on commodities’ rates, instructed that the effect of reduction of petrol price by 12.38 percent and diesel by 4.7 percent should be trickled down to the common man at the earliest. He said Rs 41 billion had been saved due to the stability in dollar rate and reduction in petroleum prices, and the relief would be extended to the common man.

The meeting was apprised of the recent oil prices reduction and outcomes of operation against power theft and smuggling. It was told that due to the reduced petroleum prices, inflation had come down by 1.7 percent which was the highest during the last one year. The prime minister appreciated the administration for taking steps to reduce oil prices and dollar rate, curb smuggling and transmitting their impacts to the common man.

He instructed the relevant authorities to strictly deal with the hoarders and profiteers, and viewed that the operation against power theft and smuggling had benefited the consumers. He said 18 percent reduction of wheat price and sugar by 16 percent in Balochistan was welcoming. He said due to the administrative measures, the prices of 24 commodities had been reduced countrywide.

The meeting was told that remarkable reduction in the prices of agricultural production, electricity, transport fares and industrial production was being ensured.

ECP seeks int’l oversight for elections

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Omar Hamid Khan has directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to invite international observers for the upcoming elections, expediting the visa process within one week to ensure their swift arrival in Pakistan.

Omar Hamid Khan chaired an Inter-Ministerial meeting at the Election Commission Secretariat in Islamabad to assess arrangements for the forthcoming General Elections and the invitation of international observers.

The Election Commission Secretary said the commission has adopted an open-door policy, extending invitations to international observers from across the globe to oversee Pakistan’s elections.

The Secretary of the Election Commission issued directives to the Ministry of Interior and other relevant organizations to ensure the safety of international observers and to resolve all security-related matters within a two-week timeframe.

The Federal Board of Revenue was tasked with exempting international observers, including media representatives, from customs duties for their equipment and essentials while providing necessary support. To oversee these efforts, an Action Committee was formed, which will report on progress every 15 days.

Special Secretary Dr. Syed Asif Hussain, Zafar Iqbal Hussain and other senior officers participated in the meeting. Senior officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Federal Board of Revenue and other related institutions also participated in the meeting. Apart from this, the Joint Election Commissioners of the four provinces, who were appointed as focal persons regarding the observers, also participated in this meeting.

Kazakhstan bans hijab

ASTANA (INP): The Kazakhstan government has decided to ban the hijab headscarf for students and teachers in schools. They argue that this is necessary to maintain a secular state. However, this decision has caused strong reactions within the country. The ban on hijabs in schools has led to a debate in Kazakhstan.

The government argues that this rule is important to maintain a secular state. According to official statistics, nearly 70% of the population in Kazakhstan practices Islam. Supporters of the ban say that Kazakhstan should not favour any particular religion since it is a secular country. On the other hand, many people oppose this ban, claiming it infringes on freedom of conscience. Some have even taken extreme measures to protest.

For instance, in one region, around 150 girls have dropped out of school since September in response to the ban. In another area, two men attacked a school director because she didn’t allow girls wearing hijabs to attend classes. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev defended the ban while emphasizing that Kazakhstan is and will remain a secular state.