

3 women leaders quit PTI

LAHORE (INP): Three women politicians who were amongst the central Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders on Tuesday announced to leave their political party and joined Jahangir Tareen-led Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Three PTI women leaders including Andleeb Abbas, Sadia Sohail and Sumaira Bokhari announced to join IPP after holding a meeting with Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Tareen.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar distributes cheques among the families of polio workers martyred and polio workers who got injured in the line of duty.

PM reiterates resolve to ensure ‘polio free’ country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday, vowing to resist the individuals propagating against the polio vaccination, resolved to achieve the dream of a polio-free Pakistan by carrying forward the journey with unshakeable commitment.

"I can assure that we gonna have it. We will realise this dream. We will never step back, may be an inch, may be a foot or may be a mile. This will always be a forthcoming journey," the prime minister said addressing a ceremony to mark the World Polio Day. The event was organized by the Pakistan Polio Programme to pay homage to the resilience and dedication of frontline workers on the World Polio Day, which is commemorated on October 24 every year.

Federal Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan, Federal Health Secretary Iftekhar Ali Shallwani, representatives of polio partners Rotary, World Health Organisation and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and frontline workers and their families were in attendance. The prime minister said by opposing the polio vaccine, the anti-vaxxers, intentionally or unintentionally, were partnering with the forces of darkness. He emphasised the role of faith leaders and the society to make such people realise that they were actually partnering with the destroyer of the humans.

"This is unacceptable. We will resist this," he resolved. He expressed his gratitude to the global partners who continued to supporting Pakistan in its endeavour of polio eradication. Recognising the sacrifices of the polio workers and the security personnel guarding them, the prime minister said they had paid the highest price for the cause.

He said the frontline health workers were the heroes of Pakistan, who were working in challenging environments, facing social barriers and even threats to their safety without ever losing their dedication. The prime minister recognised the services of three police constables who were martyred while on polio duty and to two

vaccinators who were injured.

He also presented appreciation shields to the former coordinator of the Sindh Emergency Operation Cell (EOC) Fayyaz Abbasi and the family of Huma Ashraf, who was severely injured in a train accident while on polio duty in September. The prime minister also announced to recognise her services in the mission of a polio-free Pakistan.

"Today is the day to remember how far we have come and how crucial polio eradication efforts remain. Pakistan cannot be the reason to hold the world back. We must move forward to 2024 with the realisation that the weight of global eradication lies on our shoulders. We must leave no room for the virus to spread and reach every child with the vaccine before the virus has a chance to permanently change their lives," he remarked. Caretaker Health Minister Nadeem Jan, in his address, paid homage to the polio workers who were striving to accomplish the mission of a polio-free Pakistan while facing many odds and hardships.

He emphasised that the community health workers should be acknowledged and honoured as motivation would enhance their performance. He called for changing the narrative from "Pak Fights Polio" to "Pakistan Winning Over Polio". He expressed the hope that the World Polio Day next year would mark the complete eradication of polio from Pakistan.

PM directs to ensure timely, uninterrupted fertilizer supply for Rabi crop: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar directed the authorities concerned to ensure the timely and uninterrupted supply of fertilizer to the farmers for Rabi crop.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on the provision of Urea for Rabi crop, instructed for the timely arrangement of the fertilizer's buffer stock. He asked the respective district administrations to keep strict vigilance on the fertilizer prices. The meeting was also apprised of the current production of the fertilizer and the expected demand.

Training Launch of Ghauri Weapon System conducted

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan on Tuesday successfully conducted Training Launch of Ghauri Weapon System aimed at testing the operational and technical readiness of Army Strategic Forces Command.

The launch was witnessed by Commander Army Strategic Force Command (ASFC), senior officers from the strategic forces, scientists and engineers of strategic organization.

Commander ASFC appreciated the standard of training and operational preparedness of Army Strategic Forces, which was reflected by proficient handling of Weapon System in the field and achievement of operational and technical objectives. He also appreciated the scientists and engineers for their contributions towards enhancement of Pakistan's strategic capability.

The President, Prime Minister of Pakistan, CJCSC and Services Chiefs congratulated the participating troops, scientists and engineers on successful conduct of training launch.

Nawaz should hold Shehbaz responsible for inflation: Elahi

F.P. Report

GUJRANWALA: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi on Tuesday took a jibe at PML-N supreme Nawaz, who recently returned to the country after ending a four-year self-imposed exile in London, saying "Nelson Mandela" should first hold his brother Shehbaz Sharif responsible for skyrocketing inflation in the country.

During its 16-month tenure, PM Shehbaz Sharif-led Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government had failed to meet the promises made to the masses and left behind a massive fiscal deficit and high inflation.

During his interactions with journalists at Gujranwala and Islamabad courts, Elahi — while taking a jibe at Nawaz — said that the elder Sharif was trying to become "Nelson Mandela". Responding to a question, the PTI president said that the caretakers would have to hold elections, adding the PTI would prove its popularity in the polls.

Blasting the former PDM-led government, Elahi said that people were compelled to commit suicides due to high inflation. "Elections" date will be announced due to the Supreme Court," he remarked. The PTI president further said that Sharif would not be able to rig the upcoming elections, adding, "No one can even think of rigging in the [upcoming] elections."

Earlier on Tuesday, an anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi extended Elahi's judicial remand in the Judicial Complex attack case till November 21. ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hasan heard the case.

The Frontier Post



More than 700 killed in fresh Israeli attacks

Gazans start dying of diseases amid heaviest-ever Israeli bombing

GAZA: More than 700 Palestinians were killed in overnight Israeli air raids on Gaza, according to Palestinian officials, the highest 24-hour death toll since Israel began bombarding the the besieged territory earlier this month. The Israeli military said on Tuesday it hit more than 400 "Hamas targets" and killed dozens of Hamas fighters in the attacks, and warned that it would take time to achieve its aim of destroying the Palestinian group.

Israel launched an assault on Gaza after Hamas fighters killed at least 1,400 people in a surprise attack on southern Israel on October 7. The health ministry in Gaza, which is governed by Hamas, has said at least 5,791 Palestinians, including 2,360 children, have been killed in the Israeli assault. A total of 704 people were killed in the previous 24 hours alone, the ministry said on Tuesday.

Ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra said it was the highest 24-hour number of deaths in the two weeks of Israeli bombing. "Thousands of families have been instantly displaced; its just full of rubble and debris everywhere," said Al Jazeera's Youmna ElSayed, reporting from Gaza. "You can hear the sound of drones and Israeli jets in the sky. Everyone says, everyone feels that there is no safe place in the Strip to be in anymore".

The Israeli military said it killed three Hamas deputy commanders in the attacks. Witnesses and health officials said many of the air raids hit residential buildings, some of them in southern Gaza where Israel had told civilians to take shelter. One overnight attack levelled a four-storey residential building in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing at least 32 people and wounding dozens of others, survivors told The Associated Press news agency.

In Gaza City, at least 19 people were killed when an air raid hit the house of the Bahloul family, according to survivors, who said dozens

more people remained buried. Workers pulled at least two children out of the collapsed building. In addition to bombarding the territory, Israel has cut access to food, water, medicine and fuel in a "complete siege". More than 40 medical centres have stopped operations due to the shortages and the damage caused by the bombing, the health ministry spokesperson said.

Several aid trucks have crossed from Egypt to Gaza since Sunday, but the United Nations has warned of a "humanitarian catastrophe" if aid shipments were not ramped up significantly. Jeremy Laurence, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), said, "The aid which resumed from Egypt over the weekend is a mere drop in the ocean of what is needed." Fuel, which has been left out of the deliveries due to the agreement with Israel, was crucial, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said.

"Fuel is extremely urgent because, without fuel, the trucks themselves cannot move," UNRWA spokesperson Tamara Alrifai said. "Without fuel, the generators cannot produce electricity for hospitals, for bakeries and for the water desalination plant". UN humanitarian agencies said on Tuesday they were on their "knees" pleading for unimpeded aid to enter Gaza.

Meanwhile, physicians in the war-torn Gaza reported that alongside the war-wounded hundreds of patients are pouring into hospitals with symptoms of illnesses resulting from severe overcrowding and inadequate sanitation conditions in the shelters amid the heaviest-ever Israeli bombing.

This situation has arisen as a consequence of over 1.4 million individuals seeking refuge in temporary shelters due to the most intense bombardment ever witnessed in Israel.

Numerous humanitarian organisations have consistently raised concerns about a looming public health crisis in this densely populated

TFP's voice for bereaved Palestinians

Editorial on Page 5

Palestinian region.

Israel has told everybody living in the northern half of the 45km-long (28 mile) Gaza Strip to move south but its strikes have flattened districts throughout the enclave. With all hospitals running out of fuel to power their generators, doctors have warned that critical equipment, like incubators for newborns, risk stopping.

The Hamas-run Health Ministry said 40 medical centres had suspended operations at a time when the bombardment and displacement are putting increased stress on the system. It remains under an Israeli blockade that has led to a scarcity of electricity, potable water, and fuel, with only limited UN-supplied food and medical aid entering the area.

"The crowding of civilians and the fact that most schools used as shelters are housing lots of people, it's a prime breeding ground for disease to spread," said Nahed Abu Taama, a public health doctor at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. Despite the release of elderly hostages by Hamas on Monday night, the Gaza health ministry officials reported on Tuesday that at least 704 people were martyred in Israeli strikes in the besieged territory in the last 24 hours, with more than 140 lives lost overnight, as relentless bombing continued in Rafah and Khan Younis areas.

Palestinian death toll from Israel's attacks on Gaza has surpassed 5,791, including 2,360 children and 1,292 women, while 16,297 others were

(Continued on Back Page)

Ambassador of Palestine calls on COAS

F.P. Report



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan, Ahmad Jawad Rabe'i called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff, at General Headquarters.

Punjab govt suspends Nawaz's sentence

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The sentence of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme, Nawaz Sharif, in the Al-Azizia reference has been suspended by the interim Punjab cabinet, it emerged on Tuesday.

The decision by the provincial cabinet might raise concerns among other political parties in the country. Caretaker Information Minister Aamir Mir confirmed the Punjab cabinet's move, saying the decision was taken while exercising its constitutional powers under Section 401 of the Criminal Procedural Code (CPC), which also authorises it to pardon any offender.

The approval was given through a circulation summary. "The final decision of the case will be taken by the court itself," he added. The development comes on the day ahead of Nawaz's multiple hearings at an accountability court at the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC) and the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Nawaz Sharif's sentence was also suspended under the same law on medical grounds before he left for London in 2019 by the then PTI government. The PML-N supreme had requested for his sentence to be suspended by the Punjab cabinet, Mir said.

It should be noted that Nawaz was sentenced by an accountability court in both the Avenfield and Al-Azizia Steel Mills references. The sentence was then chal-

IHC extends Nawaz's protective bail till 26th

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday extended PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif's protective bail in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases — in which he had been convicted — till October 26, after the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) said it had "no objections" to the plea filed by the deposed prime minister.

An IHC division bench, comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, issued the order on Nawaz's petitions seeking protective bail in the cases and restoration of his appeals against his conviction. At the outset of the hearing, PML-N's Azam Nazir Tarar said the accountability court had suspended Nawaz's warrants in the Toshakhana case and approved his bail against surety bonds.

Here, Justice Farooq said there were two petitions in front of the high court, both of which were related to restoring appeals against Nawaz's conviction. "We have to issue notices on these applications," the judge added. Meanwhile, Justice Aurangzeb said that for the restoration of the appeals, the petitioner had to explain why he remained absent from the court.

lenged in the high court, which had suspended the accountability court's sentence. Appeal proceedings — for the petition challenging the sentence — were underway when the politician travelled to London, United Kingdom, for medical treatment and did not return to pursue the case.

The PML-N supreme — after he moved to Lahore High Court (LHC) instead of the IHC — was allowed to go abroad for four weeks after his brother and party president Shehbaz Sharif submitted an undertaking in the court assuring Nawaz's return once his health improves. The IHC — in Nawaz's absence — threw

out the appeals on account of non-prosecution. The court, while declaring him a proclaimed offender, noted that the appeals were rejected on technical grounds and not on the merits of the arguments.

The applicant can once again file an appeal against the sentence upon his return, the court had mentioned in its verdict. Commenting on the suspension of Nawaz's sentence by the interim cabinet, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said an application was submitted to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Usman Buzdar-led government back in the day. However, the Buzdar administration rejected it.

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) met the Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan, His Excellency Ahmad Jawad Rabe'i at General Headquarters on Tuesday.

COAS expressed condolences on the loss of Palestinian lives in the ongoing war in Gaza. COAS expressed grave concern over unabated violence and willful, indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians by the Israeli Defence Forces in the war. Incessant attacks on civilian population, schools, universities, aid workers, hospitals and the forced exodus of Palestinians from Gaza are manifest crimes against humanity.

COAS reiterated the call for immediate cessation of hostilities, opening of humanitarian corridor to Gaza, protection of civilians and adherence to the International Humanitarian Law. COAS also reiterated Pakistan's principled support for an independent, viable and contiguous state of Palestine established on the basis of pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

"Pakistan believes that the fresh spate of violence in Gaza is the result of unabated repression, continued human rights violations and state-sponsored sacrilege of Al Aqsa mosque. Conflating this war with terrorism would be naive; taking a narrow and self-serving view of the issue as an isolated attack, obscures brutal oppression spanning decades that has led to this outcome" COAS remarked.

COAS said "At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the international community mobilizes to put an early end to unfolding human tragedy due to disproportionate and unlawful use of force by Israeli Defence Forces and desist from encouraging them to continue perpetrating atrocities in manifest violation of all norms of civility and humane conduct".

Cipher case: IHC rejects Imran's intra-court appeal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's intra-court appeal against his jail trial in the cipher case. A two-member IHC division bench comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rafat presided over the hearing.

PTI chief's counsel Salman Akram Raja contended before the bench that the federal government did not have the authority to issue a notification for holding Khan's trial in prison. He said it was the domain of the Islamabad commissioner to issue jail trial notification which he said was an administrative matter.

Counsel Raja said a single bench of the IHC had declared that the federal government had the prerogative to appoint a judge of its choice. "They are judicial officers. The federal government does not have any authority to 'pick and choose' [judges]," he added.

Responding to this, Justice Aurangzeb said: "In this way, the executive will interfere in the judiciary's domain." The division bench said the IHC chief justice might form a new

Contempt case against PTI chief, ECP summons interior secretary

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday summoned the interior secretary over non-compliance of presenting PTI chief before it in case of contempt of the electoral body.

Shoaib Shaheen, the counsel of chairman PTI who appeared before the ECP informed it that his client could not be produced as the interior secretary had said his life was in danger. Advocate Shaheen said that it was an insult of the ECP. The commission had issued production orders for the PTI Chairman but it was not implemented, he added. Punjab Police AIG (Operations) told the ECP that there are threats to the life of chairman which he himself had expressed.

The head of the bench, Nisar Durrani, asked the police officer whether he believed what the PTI chief had said was true. The AIG said that Rawalpindi is densely populated and the journey of PTI chief to the ECP is not safe. He showed his inability to produce the PTI chief before the ECP and suggested that the commission must get a written apology from the accused by itself.

bench on the matter after a file referred to him after removing objections.

"[But] right now we cannot give you any interim relief," Justice Aurangzeb said adding that whether the petition is admissible or not will be decided later. Earlier this month, an IHC single bench found no apparent malice behind conducting Khan's jail trial in the cipher case, the court's verdict read and directed him to approach the trial court if reservations persist.

The court's decision, announced by IHC Chief

Justice Aamer Farooq, came in the wake of hearing Khan's plea challenging his jail trial in the cipher case for days with the judge finally wrapping it up today. The former premier, whose government was ousted following a no-confidence motion in April last year, wanted his trial in the aforementioned case to be conducted in an open court.

"The jail trial is in favour of the PTI chairman in view of his security," the court said, adding that Khan himself has repeatedly expressed his fears about his safety.

Health Minister announces anti-polio drive in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz said in view of the emergence of fresh polio case in the city, another week-long anti-polio drive will be launched in Karachi from October 30.

He appealed to the parents to get their children vaccinated against poliovirus during the upcoming drive which will be continued till November 05, 2023. Addressing a meeting to review anti polio campaign, the minister said Pakistan can be made a polio-free state only with the cooperation of parents with the polio teams.

Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz said that the resumption of the anti-polio campaign in Karachi is inevitable after the diagnosis of the confirmed polio case and the positive samples obtained from the sewage.

He told the parents who immunized their children during last campaign, should again vaccinate them during the fresh polio drive. Earlier, the minister was briefed about anti-polio campaigns and suggested that though the result of the recently held anti-polio drive was satisfactory but there was need of further vaccination in different areas.

LDA seals 40 illegal properties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Tuesday sealed more than 40 properties in an extensive effort to combat unlawful constructions and unauthorized commercial operations.

On directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG Lahore Development Authority (LDA), teams conducted operations in various areas, leading to the sealing of over 40 properties. A crackdown on non-payment of commercialization fees in Allama Iqbal Town resulted in the sealing of 20 properties.

The Director Town Planning oversaw the operations targeting encroachments in Allama Iqbal Town, action on Kacha Qaid-e-Azam Town. On Kacha Jail Road, illegal structures were demolished by LDA teams, while many properties were cleared of encroachments.

In Qaid-e-Azam Town, a total of 15 properties, including shops, wedding halls, private stores, and food outlets, were sealed due to non-payment of commercialization fees. The operations were carried out by Director Town Planning Ali Abbas.

Student's death in HEJ Boys Hostel was natural

KARACHI (APP): The cause of death for Mukhtiar Ali, an MPhil student at the H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi, in the HEJ Boys Hostel, was determined to be natural.

Resolution of Kashmir, Palestine issues crucial to world peace: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaz Ashraf on Tuesday said world peace was interlinked with the resolution of the Palestine and Kashmir issue in line with the aspirations of Kashmiri and Palestinian people.

The speaker, in his message on the day of the United Nations Organisation, said the prominent goal for the formation of the UNO was to maintain global peace.

He said that the nefarious and barbaric policies of India and Israel had been exposed with their atrocities on innocent children and women in Kashmir and Palestine. The right to self-determination of the people of Palestine and Kashmir could not be suppressed by cruelty and coercion, he added.

He also called upon the UN to play a proactive role to immediately halt the genocide of the oppressed Palestinian and

Kashmiri people by Israel and India.

The United Nations should take notice of the violations of basic human rights in Palestine and Kashmir, he stressed.

The speaker said the UN had emerged as a ray of hope for the whole world before Seventy-Eight years and Pakistan was an active member of the UNO since its establishment. He also underscored the role of Pakistani missions in peace operations around the world that reflected Pakistan's supportive stance for UN.

The speaker said the government and people of Pakistan stood with UN to eliminate terrorism. He said Pakistan had always condemned terrorism in any region of the world as Pakistan had played the role of a frontline state in the war against terrorism. He added, "the sacrifices rendered by Pakistani forces in the UN peace-keeping mission are unmatchable."

3-day Islamabad Literature Festival kicks off on November 3

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 9th Edition of the Islamabad Literature Festival (ILF) will commence on November 3 at the Gandhara Citizen Club here at Fatima Jinnah Park of the F-9 sector.

The dates for the three-day festival which will conclude on November 5 was announced by Oxford University Press (OUP) in a news release on Tuesday.

"With the overarching theme of 'People, Planet, Possibilities,' ILF promises an array of captivating keynotes, engaging conversations, book launches, exhibitions, and film screenings."

The inaugural event will be opened to the public, featuring thought-provoking speeches by OUP Managing Director Arshad Saeed Husain, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom Jane Marriott and others.

The event will also include keynotes by the notable British author, biographer, and historian, Victoria Schofield, and the eminent Urdu poet, Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz, and Presidential Pride of Performance, Iftikhar Arif. A beautiful performance on a literary piece will conclude the event.

Staying true to its tradition of celebrating Urdu poetry and its rendition, the event's program has a grand Mushaira presided over by Iftikhar Arif, and a Ghazal Night with the maestro Ustad Hamid Ali Khan on the second and third evenings, respectively.

All informative and literary discussions will be led by eminent experts, including Dr. Ishrat Husain, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Mohammad Aurangzeb,

Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Saquib Ahmad, Dr. Farzana Bari, Dr. Najeeba Arif, Nasir Abbas Nayyar, Kishwar Naheed, Nasira Zuberi, Omar Shahid Hamid, Muneeza Shamsie, Harris Khalique, Hamid Khan, Zahid Hussain, Nasim Zehra, Hamid Mir, Asma Shirazi, Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Asghar Nadeem Syed, Khaled Anam, Sarmad Khoosat, and Beo Zafar.

The diversity of their perspectives will enrich the sessions over the course of three days, exploring an array of captivating topics, from the evolving role of Artificial Intelligence, Evolution in Education, Contemporary Literature, Endangered Languages, Role of Women in Publishing, Changing Business Dynamics, and Foreign Policy, among others.

An introduction to the UK's leading Examination Board "OxfordAQA" is also part of the event.

OxfordAQA is well known worldwide for its reputation for academic excellence and alignment with the UK education system and will soon be available in Pakistan as the preferred option for examinations.

OUP Managing Director Arshad Saeed Husain shared his excitement at seeing literature festivals gaining such traction.

He stated, "ILF and KLF have both become a rich resource for restoring the ethical and cultural perspectives in our society, by broadening horizons and instilling deep faith in our own identity as an equal and formidable part of the global culture."

Experts for robust, financially independent & inclusive local governments

KARACHI (APP): The experts at a consultative session on Tuesday called for robust, financially independent and inclusive local governments to improve governance and service delivery at the grassroots level for a sustainable social system ensuring a public friendly system to contribute towards nation building.

This demand was made during the consultative session organized by the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives

(CPDI) and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) Pakistan to discuss implementation of the Sindh Local Government Act of 2013. Elected representatives, civil society members, media persons, academicians, local government experts, government officials, and representatives from local government training institutes reflected on the intricacies and challenges surrounding local governments in Pakistan, a news release said.

During an informative session, CPDI Project Manager Moazzam Ali Janjua provided an in-depth overview of how to institutionalize the climate agenda within the local governments. He highlighted the role that can be played by the local governments in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

He stressed for adequate climate financing to local governments to implement strategies and plans to face climate change challenges at the local level and adoption of Green Building Code of Pakistan, 2023 recently notified by the Pakistan Engineering Council. During the panel discussion, former Mayor Karachi Arshad Wohra underscored the pivotal role local bodies play in the democratic framework.

He called for a precise definition of Article 141 in Pakistan's Constitution to ensure an effective distribution of powers. Wohra emphasized the urgency of addressing local government election cases within the Supreme Court, alongside other pressing matters.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Primary and Secondary Health Nasir Jamal viewing photo exhibition relating to polio campaign during World Polio day organize by photojournalist Aamir Khan at Al-Hamra.

SPSC announced result of interview of qualified candidates

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) has recently announced the result of interview of qualified candidates for the post of Municipal Officer (BPS-17), Local Government Department vide its press release No. PSC/Exam (S.S.)/2023/500 dated 19-10-2023 after complying all required formalities as prescribed under its statutes.]

However, SPSC observes with deep regret the malicious campaign/allegations launched on social media by some undesirable elements for the reasons best known to them. Furthermore, said allegations are not supported by any evidence or substance. Merely posting pictures of few people with political figures doesn't substantiate any cause of action as every citizen of Pakistan has a right of free movement and freedom of speech provided it is evidence based and not contrary to the norms of civilized society and best practices.

It is clarified for the information

of the General public that 105,748 candidates had appeared in the written test of Municipal Officer (BPS-17) conducted by SPSC out of which 1,440 passed the written test (1.36%). Moreover, out of 1,440 candidates who were called for the interview only 418 meritorious candidates who secured maximum marks in the aggregate (Written as well as Interview) have been declared successful (29%). It would be pertinent to mention here that 46 vacancies have been left vacant, as suitable candidates were not found by the high-powered Interview Committee. This speaks volumes about that transparent and fair mechanism in place in SPSC.

SPSC takes pride in informing the general public that 82 candidates who have been recommended for the post of Municipal Officer have also passed the written test of Town Officer. Similarly, 72 successful candidates besides above-referred 82 candidates (who had qualified written tests of both Municipal Officer and Town Officer) had qualified the written test

of IBA, Sukkur for the posts of JEST/PST of School Education Department. The Sindh Public Service Commission also accentuates that approximately 5,000 candidates have been declared successful/recommended during last 12 months against various posts of Lecturers / Subject Specialists / Doctors / Surgeons / Range Forest Officers / Nursing Instructors / Staff Nurse / Assistant Account Officers etc., to the Government of Sindh after meticulously following its procedures and results based on prudence, fairness, transparency and meritocracy.

SPSC strongly condemns in all forms and manifestations baseless allegations leveled by some individuals / social media groups to malign a Constitutional Institution for their vested interests. SPSC further resolves that it would not concede to the negative baseless propaganda and would conduct written tests / interviews as per their mandate by ensuring fairness, transparency, meritocracy and above all without any fear or favor.

DRMF committed to make Pakistan resilient against climate change impacts

KARACHI (APP): The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) in a seminar on the Carbon market's potential Tuesday expressed its commitment to further enhance efforts of resilience building against natural disasters and long-term climate change adverse impacts by engaging effectively with the Private Sector and other relevant stakeholders.

The seminar, titled "Leveraging Carbon Markets to enable Private Investment," addressed critical topics such as the current state of climate change in Pakistan, the understanding of carbon markets, major challenges, Road map for future and the opportunities they present for the Private Sector, a news release said issued here. By identifying potential sectors for carbon trading and exploring the role of the Private Sector, the event aims to bridge the gap in understanding the challenges, barriers, and international collaborations in the realm of carbon markets.

The seminar invited participation from a diverse audience, including the Private Sector, Government officials, UN agencies, Project Developers, Industry leaders, Environmental organizations, Academics, and Climate change enthusiasts. Besides speeches, panel discussions were also organized on the topics of "Climate Change & Carbon Marketing" and "Carbon Market Potentials for Private Sector" in which representatives of national and international development sector organizations, Corporate

Sector Organizations and Business owners took part.

Bilal Anwar, CEO NDRMF, said "The overarching objective of the seminar is to build understanding within the Private Sector regarding Carbon Markets, exploring their potential role, and devising a roadmap for timely engagement ultimately leading towards protection against adverse impacts of climate change". Highlighting the outcomes of such events, Anwar said "Carbon Markets are globally recognized mechanism for carbon financing and meeting mitigation action in a cost efficient manner. Pakistan can benefit from tapping into Carbon Markets, such as voluntary emissions trading schemes, which will enable Pakistan to unlock private finance via carbon credits". Climate Change Specialist & NDRMF Board Director, Ali Tauqeer Sheikh applauded the role of NDRMF in conducting such events and said that for carbon markets to be successful, the issues must be addressed. Emission reductions and removals must be real and aligned with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions.

There must be transparency in the institutional and financial infrastructure for carbon market transactions, and there must be adequate social and environmental safeguards to mitigate against any adverse project impacts and to promote positive ones, he added. Varous organizations shared their initiatives and thoughts towards

reduction in carbon emissions and leveraging carbon markets. Representatives from Engro Foundation, Shell, Serena Hotels, Pakistan Business Council, K-electric, iTecknology, Daraz, National Insurance Company Ltd, Loreal Pakistan, Artistic Milliners, Baig group, Amreli Steels Ltd., Strategic Initiative, Control Union Pakistan, Pakistan Business Council and Utopia shared their initiatives and how are they leveraging Carbon Markets. Fawad Soomro, CEO Engro Foundation appreciated the role of NDRMF in providing such platform and stressed on the need of capacity building and research to effectively address the challenges in the carbon projects. He said we believed in Public Private Partnerships and had very keen interest in the environment.

Saad Ahmed, Country Lead Business development & New Ventures Shell highlighted the need of NGOs and development sector organizations to work on the issue.

He further said that Shell was the largest investor in nature based solutions and all sectors including government, development sector, academia etc should work together for capacity building in this regard. Nazish Shekha, Head of Initiative CERB, Pakistan Business Council highlighted how Pakistan can unlock private finance via carbon markets. She said this event marks a crucial step towards fostering collaboration and shaping the future of carbon markets in Pakistan.



CSO ASF BKIA PESHAWAR
PRE-QUALIFICATION
TENDER NOTICE

1. Tender No.01/CSO ASF BKIA/2023-2024/Store

2. ASF CSO BKIA Peshawar is seeking to update list of Pre-qualified contractor, Suppliers service providers, and General Order Suppliers that the ASF CSO BKIA Peshawar may require from time to time according to its needs.

3. Tender documents may be obtained during office hour's 0800 hrs to 1600 hrs from Store Office CSO ASF BKIA Peshawar.

Service/Work

4. General order suppliers may be asked to provide service like Repair & Maintenance work of Office Building, Residential Building, Machinery & Equipment Items (i.e Repair of Air Conditioners, Room Coolers, Water Filter Plant, Water Dispenser, Ceiling Fans, Exhaust Fans, Bracket Fans, Pedestal Fans, Electric Heater, Geezers, Oven Micro, Juicer, Electric items, Refrigerators, Deep Freezer, Electric Water Motors, Photocopier Machines, etc)/Furniture & Fixture items(i.e Chairs, Tables, Center Table, Almira / Cabinet, Sofa Sets, Dining Tables, Dining Chairs, Single/Double Decker Steel Beds & Repair works etc.) & Repair of Computer Hardware, Stationery, Medicines, Vehicles parts ect).

General Order Supplier

5. General Order Supplier Electric Items Appliances, Sanitary items, Miscellaneous Items. Expendable Items, Coloring Materials (i.e. Oil paint, Distemper, Red Oxide, Mixing Oil, Lime Stone, Different Brushes, Scarpers, ect.), Food Items, Ice, Coal , Computer Accessories, Stationery, Medicines and Vehicles parts ect).

6. Firms which are registered with FBR, Income Tax Department and KPK Board revenue having financial capability with adequate managerial competence may apply.

7. Tender inquiry form may be obtained from Store Office ASF BKIA Peshawar Airport at the cost of Rs. 500/- cash (Non-Refundable).

8. Following information/Copy of documents must be attached with application:-

a. Copy of CNIC of Firm Company owner.

b. Copy of letter showing firm's financial capability.

c. Copies of FBR and SRB Certificates will be (showing detail of work/services)/Attached with tender inquiry.

9. Last date of submission of application is 09th Nov, 2023 up to 1100 hours.

10.CSO ASF BKIA Peshawar reserves the rights to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason as per PPRA rules 2004.

Chief Security Officer
ASF BKIA Peshawar
Ph No.091-9212826

PID(K) 1240/23

PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Shamsad with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Saleem citizen number 1310189800787 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Sobia Saleem (Daughter) 2.Rubina Jameel (Daughter) 3.Uzma (Daughter)4.Komal Saleem (Daughter)5.Javeria Saleem (Daughter)6.Shamshad (Spouse) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA ABBOTABAD-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Faisal Mehmood with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Ms. Maroof Bibi citizen number 1330204513118 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Shagufta Bibi (Daughter) 2.Qaiser Mehmood (Son) 3.Faisal Mehmood (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Shamim with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Amer Pervaz citizen number 1720121957783 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Naseem (Sister)2.Sharmin (Sister) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Sajid Iqbal with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Shafa citizen number 1350358630491 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Farhat Naz (Daughter)2.Irum Naz (Daughter)3.Sajid Iqbal (Son)4.Aamir Shahzad (Son)5.Muhammad Aamir (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Shamsad with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Gul Zar citizen number 1560204016627 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Bano (Daughter)2.Fatarny Bibi (Daughter)3.Begum (Spouse)4.Khair Ul Bashrah (Son)5.Muhammad Iqbal (Son)6.Zafar Khan (Son)7.Rahman Ullah (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWAT-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Mir Afzal citizen number 1330201464591 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Razia Bibi (Daughter)2.Jan Wala (Spouse)3.Shahzada (Son)4.Hazrat Bilal (Son)5.Khyal Zada (Son)6.Ghaifur Ali (Son)7.Laiq Zada (Son)8.Muhammad Ali (Son)9.Abdullah Khan (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWAT-SFU</div>
PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Zakia Bibi with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Miraj Muhammad citizen number 1720121961771 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Zakia Bibi (Daughter) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Abdulah Jan with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Imran citizen number 1210345652955 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Parveen Bibi (Mother) 2.Abdullah Jan (Father) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Tasleem Bibi with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Ghulam Sarwar citizen number 1720138169921 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Sidra Adeel (Daughter)2.Nida Ambareen (Daughter)3.Shehnaz Akhtar (Daughter)4.Arnum Ambareen (Daughter)5.Tasleem Bibi (Spouse)6.Faqir Hussain (Son)7.Yasir Hussain (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Asim Qaisar with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Qaisar Shah citizen number 1720122008779 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Shandana Bibi (Daughter) 2.Shaheena (Spouse)3.Amir Shah (Son)4.Asim Qaisar (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Tahir Amin with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Mir Afzal citizen number 1610165702342 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Nageena Munir (Daughter) 2.Farkhanda (Daughter) 3.Haroon Un Nisa (Daughter) 4.Khalida Gohar (Daughter) 5.Nighat Nihar Ghani (Daughter) 6.Shaista Rahim (Daughter) 7.Azra Parveen (Daughter) 8.Tahir Amin (Son)9.Javed Amin (Son)10.Nasir Amin Khan (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MARDAN-SFU</div>	PUBLIC NOTICE <div>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Gul Bibi with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Mir Afzal citizen number 1330201464591 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Romaisa Gul (Daughter) 2.Nazia Gul (Daughter)3.Sana Gul (Daughter)4.Gul Bibi (Spouse)5.Mohsin Ali Khan (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</div> <div>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU</div>



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a gathering at Nishtar Hall in connection with World Polio Day.

Draft of KP Child Protection Policy: Stakeholders' consultation held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KP CP&WC), in collaboration with UNICEF, recently organized a third round of consultations concerning the draft KP Child Protection Policy. The consultation was chaired by Justice Retired Irshaq Qaiser, Caretaker Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment Department here on Tuesday. The Draft Policy, developed over two years with consistent support from UNICEF and consultants from Oxford Programme Management (OPM), reflects the commitment of KP CP&WC and the Ministry of Social Welfare to create a secure environ-

ment for children in the province. The Child Protection Policy outlines clear objectives for child protection, governance arrangements, and roles and responsibilities of relevant departments, organizations, and institutions. UNICEF's Sohail Ahmad highlighted the importance of this policy and its comprehensive framework for child protection. He stressed the need for consensus among stakeholders to establish a holistic child protection system, incorporating diverse perspectives. Participants, including government experts, civil society organizations, and children, provided feedback during the consultations. The commitment is to further improve the draft,

vet it with the Minister, and seek cabinet approval. The Minister of Social Welfare emphasized a 'whole government approach' to protecting children, urging collaboration and coordination for child protection services. Justice Retired Irshaq Qaiser highlighted the significance of protecting children from abuse and ensuring the cultural appropriateness of the policy in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The stakeholders involved a wide range of government departments, civil society organizations, and children. The aim is to thoroughly review and improve the policy before seeking government approval, followed by an action plan for implementation.

HED stops procurement of books for public libraries

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Higher Education Department (HED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had stopped procurement of books for Public Libraries across the province. In this regard HED had issued notification stated that purchase of the books initiated in all public libraries shall immediately be stopped if the process has not attained finality and delivery has not been made by the vendors. All procurement of books shall be made in consultation with the Director Higher Education and Directorate General of Commerce and Management Sciences in future. The decision is made in wake of policy regarding conversions of all public sector colleges to BS Colleges for offering marketable discipline. Moreover, library timings may please be extended beyond official hours, to ensure availability of reference material and library books to the students of public sector colleges.

PESCO employee tortured

PESHAWAR (APP): An aged employee of PESCO, Prang Sub Division, was beaten by a power pilferer after the later was found guilty of power pilferage during an operation in the area. According to the PESCO Spokesman, the accused named Hassam Bacha, son of Kamal Bacha was caught red-handed for stealing power directly from the main line. The accused, who was also a defaulter to the PESCO, got infuriated and started slapping and kicking the aged PESCO employee. However, on the complaint of PESCO Chief, police have arrested the accused, Hassam Bacha and registered an FIR against him at Prang police station.

Isolated rain predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Met Office on Tuesday predicted mainly partly cloudy weather over most districts of the province, while isolated rain with wind and thunderstorm and snowfall over high mountains in Chitral, Upper Dir, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan, Torgar, Battagram, Mansehra and Abbottabad districts during the next 24 hours. It said that the cold would prevail in upper districts during morning and night with the mercury level to drop to a considerable extent.

FIA, Pesco to work against defaulter, power pilferers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Pesco have decided to collectively work on ongoing operation aiming improvement of recovery and give impetus to campaign against power pilferers. The decision to this effect was taken in a meeting that was attended by Deputy Director Federal Investigation Agency, Saadullah Khan, Chief Executive Officer Pesco, Qazi Muhammad Tahir,

Chief Engineer O & M, Akhtar Hameed, Superintending Engineers of Peshawar and Khyber Circles and other concerned officials, said a press release issued here by Pesco. Deputy Director FIA said that Pesco would be provided assistance to end power pilferage and to recover outstanding amounts from defaulters. He said that action would be taken against consumers that are refusing to pay their dues while FIA

would compile a list of Pesco employees for necessary action that are providing help to defaulters and pilferers. CEO Pesco welcomed the collaboration and said that it would provide fruitful results adding that federal and provincial authorities are on the same page about power theft. He said that Mardan has been made load shedding free and very soon provincial metropolis would achieve the same status.

SBBWUP, CTP holds traffic awareness drive

PESHAWAR (APP): Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar's Media and Public Relations Office and City Traffic Police organized Traffic Awareness Campaign here on Tuesday. SP Traffic Headquarters and SP Education Shazia Shahid and others informed the students about traffic rules on the instructions of Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan. SP Education Shazia Shahid enlightened the students about the rules and the measures being taken up by the Traffic Police to provide smooth commutation routes for the people. She said that the process requires cooperation from the general public too and for that creating awareness is mandatory. She said that an effort is being made to create awareness from primary school level to the universities and Volunteer Task Forces are being made in educational institutions to help achieve the goal. The

students will educate the citizens about the traffic rules in different areas of the city. She also asked the female students to initiate this awareness in their homes as well. A number of girls students expressed their desire to join the volunteer task force of City Traffic Police Peshawar, as a result of which City Traffic Police Peshawar jackets were also provided to some of the students. During the interactive session, the students gave suggestions are discussed issues related to their areas which were noted by the team for taking measures. A mobile license unit was exclusively provided by the City Traffic Police Peshawar for the students and staff of the university, benefiting from which driving licenses were also issued to 65 students and staff. On this occasion, the Deputy Registrar Media and Public Relations, SBBWU, Sehrish Zafar

said that in today's society, women are empowered and are advancing in professional fields. As they are becoming independent, a large number of female drivers can be seen on the roads. In this scenario, the importance of awareness regarding traffic rules is increasing. While talking to the students, She emphasized that along with obeying the traffic rules, we should behave politely with the staff on traffic duty, and through the platform of this session she stressed upon the dire need to improve the health facilities and equipment for the traffic staff on duty. Moreover, a mutual agreement will be signed between Shaheed Benazir Women University and City Traffic Police in near future in which university students will be included formally in the Volunteer Task Force of traffic police to help them spread awareness about traffic rules and other mutual considerations that will help the society.



PESHAWAR: Workers busy in knitting traditional beds (charpai) at his work place in Dabgari area.

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education (IC&TE), Dr Aamir Abdullah has directed the concerned authorities to highlight the indigenous items of the province including agriculture products and locally famous edibles in the market. He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting regarding 'Business and Trade Strategy 2020' for promotion of the local and indigenous products of the province here in Civil Secretariat on Tuesday. Besides, Secretary IC&TC, Syed Zulfikar Ali

Eradication of Polio: Governor highlights role of women staff

— stress joint efforts against crippling disease

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Like other parts of the country, World Polio Day (WPD) was observed in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including provincial metropolis with renewed commitment and call for rigorous efforts at all levels to eradicate poliovirus from the remaining pockets of the country. The resolve for polio eradication was made in a ceremony titled "Recognition of services of frontline workers" held here Tuesday at Nishtar Hall Peshawar in connection with World Polio Day. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali was the chief guest on this occasion. Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication, Abdul Basit, Commissioner Peshawar, Muhammad Zubair, DG Health KP, Dr Shaukat Ali, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Afaq Wazir, Provincial Director EPI, Dr Arif, Provincial Heads of UNICEF, WHO, N -Stop, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Muhammad Imran Khan, representatives of health department as well as large number frontline

health workers were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali said that World Polio Day provides an opportunity to highlight global efforts toward a polio-free world and honor the sacrifices and tireless contributions of those on the frontlines in the fight to eradicate polio from every corner of the last endemic countries. Governor KP said that today on world polio day we renew our commitment and resolve for the disease eradication from this region by initiating reinvigorated efforts at all levels to give a final push to the virus and wipe out the menace for good. He paid rich tributes to the frontline health workers, termed the as the frontline soldiers in the fight against polio virus and highly appreciated the untiring efforts and sacrifices of the polio workers. He further said that the federal and provincial government are making all possible efforts for the eradication of this crippling disease to secure the future of our children. He appreciated the sup-

port of all segments of society including the law enforcement agencies, religious scholars, media and the civil society and hoped that the day is not far when we will be able to eradicate polio virus from the region. On this occasion, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa handed over financial assistance to the heirs of the martyred polio workers in recognition of their services. Addressing the event, Commissioner Peshawar Muhammad Zubair said that we are fully committed to eradicate polio virus from the region and in this regard we are implementing innovative strategies to interrupt the virus. Referring to the positive environmental samples in Peshawar, he said that since the virus is detected in Afghanistan, therefore the government is undertaking special initiatives such as all-age vaccination on Pak-Afghan border and mop up activities to vaccinate cross-border travelers. Earlier, Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication Abdul Basit welcomed Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other distinguished and paid glorious tributes to the

frontline workers saying that health workers are doing a wonderful job by vaccinating our children, braving all odds and challenges in the field. He said that all those on the frontlines of this battle against polio deserves commendation and recognition of services and it is in view of that we have organized this event today and gathered here to pay tributes to the polio martyrs who laid down their lives for the noble cause. Abdul Basit maintained that challenges are there as is indicated by positive environmental samples in the province, however, he added that soon with the support of our frontline workers these hurdles will be overcome, and the transmission of virus will be stopped. Later, certificates were distributed among the outstanding workers by the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with other distinguished participants. It is pertinent to mention here that World Polio Day was established by Rotary International over a decade ago to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis.

Stakeholders to play role for high voter turnout: Shamshad Khan



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: All stakeholders should play their role in increasing turnout in the upcoming elections and cooperate with the Election Commission in this special campaign, these views were expressed by the Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shamshad Khan at the first meeting of the Provincial Voters Education Committee on Tuesday. While addressing, the Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Elections) Javed Rahmat Khan welcomed the participants. Additional Secretary, Hi-

gher Education Department, Umra Khan, Deputy Secretary, Arshad Jan from Awaq, Abdul Basit from Elementary and Secondary Education, Daulat Khan from Tourism, Amil Rashid from Women Commission, Section Officer Ali Khan from Health Department and Information Officer Khushal from PID were present in the meeting. Shahid Khan from NADRA, Farid Gul from URDO, Shahid Waseem from SPO, Zubair Anbiya from AAC, Dr. Abrar from Peshawar University Department of Social Work, Deputy Registrar Mian Asim Iqbal from IM Sciences,

Zwar from Special Life Foundation, Noor, Ayesha Khursheed from Hawa Lor, Farwa Kazmi from Aurat Foundation, Anumbrin from IFES participated in the meeting. Various issues related to the election process were discussed and an awareness campaign is conducted among the public. It is determined to continue efforts to increase the inclusion of all marginalized sections, including women, he said, adding that joint voter registration campaigns with NADRA and civil society are being implemented to close the gender gap in voter lists. He said that apart from vote registration, voting is very important. So that a sustainable democratic system can be formed in the country in true and real sense. He added that the Election Commission is trying to ensure the participation of all sections of the society in the electoral process. We should all work together to increase the turnout especially of women. Before that, the spokesman of the Provincial Election Commissioner Khy-

ber Pakhtunkhwa gave a detailed briefing regarding the formation of the Provincial Voters Education Committee and its objectives, and the importance and objectives of the vote. On this occasion, the participants also expressed their views and offered suggestions. The Provincial Election Commissioner welcomed the suggestions from the participants and assured his cooperation.

One killed, 3 hurt in firing incident

PESHAWAR (APP): Unknown armed men on Tuesday fired at a vehicle near Bara Pull in Badaber area of Peshawar, killing a Qatar-based man and injuring four others. Police said four people from Parachinar including their relative who had just landed in Peshawar from Qatar were going to their homes in Parachinar when unknown armed men, riding a motorcycle fired at them near Bara Pull in Badaber, on the outskirts of the district. As a result, police said the man returned from Qatar identified as Arif Hussain, son of Ghulam Hussain was killed while three others namely Iqtidar Hussain, Arif, Muhammad Hussain and Ali Ghulam were injured. A passerby named Wahdat, resident of Bazidkhel, Badaber was also injured in the firing. Soon after the incident police reached the site and started investigations from various angles. The officials of Rescue 1122 shifted the dead and injured to Lady Reading Hospital.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Zafarullah Khan Umar Zai presiding over a review meeting.

Minister directs highlighting of indigenous products of KP

Shah, Director General (DG) Industries & Commerce and Manager, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BoIT) and other concerned authorities also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the provincial minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the concerned industrial and commerce strategy and informed about its different aspects. Various proposals for the development of the special indigenous products and culturally important goods for export purposes also came under discussion during the meeting. The Provincial Minister

for Industries Commerce and Technical Education also directed the completion of the process of resource mapping of the products produced at district level and furnishing a report to him regarding central, northern and southern districts in this regard. He on this occasion, also directed the activation of the one-window portal established in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade under the name of easy business for the promotion of local business opportunities. He further directed the inclusion of the remaining departments in the process

as soon as possible and assigned the task of contacting the concerned departments in this regard to the Secretary Industries and Commerce. The Caretaker Minister also directed organizing of trade and handicrafts fairs and festivals in the big cities of the province to promote the locally produced items. The provincial minister directed the Directorate of Industries and Commerce to initiate measures to register unregistered trade bodies and associations in various districts and in the first phase identify those deprived of registration and then formally register

them. On this occasion, he directed the concerned authorities to contact the federal government regarding the restoration of Peshawar-Landi Kot railway track and suggested that this project should be restored under public-private partnership, which play vital role in the promotion of trading activities at local level. The caretaker minister also directed to send a case to National Technical and Vocational Training Commission (NAVTTTC) to include important courses like data mining, olive processing and business intelligence in the curriculum.



In brief

Admn warns illegal Afghans F.P. Report

KHYBER: Officials of the local administration warned the Afghan families, unlawfully resided in Khyber, to leave Pakistan before Oct. 31, 2023. It is worth mentioning here that the government has set November 1 as the deadline for all illegal immigrants including Afghan refugees to depart to their native country. On Tuesday, Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad Mohmand flanked by tehsildar Temour Afridi and police officials visited different localities in the tehsil and asked the unlawful Afghan residents to repatriate to their country before expiring the deadline. After the expiration time, they will be forcibly deported to Afghanistan via the Torkham border, the official cautioned. He added that the government policy to repatriate all illegal immigrants would be implemented in word and spirit and no compromise would be made on it. It is to be stated here that approximately 300-350 illegal Afghan families reside in a number of villages including Ash Khel, Mukhtar Khel, Gagra, Piro Khel, Shiekhamal Khel, Khyber.

Modal school inspected F.P. Report

HAFAZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad inspected Government Modal Higher Secondary School Hafizabad and Government Muslim High School Hafizabad and she checked academic activities continue in the schools. Chief Executive Officer Education Sohail Azhar Khan and District Education Officer (SE) Talib Hussain Bajwa were also accompanied by her on this occasion. DC directed the Principal Muslim High School to make functional all computers in the computer lab, improve cleanliness condition particularly focus on washrooms and deputed a sanitary worker at washrooms permanently. She also directed the Principal to get repair windows, doors, lighting system as soon as possible. She visited classrooms and asked different questions from students about syllabus being thought to students. DC said that the Punjab government was declared 20 schools as model schools of the district and ideal arrangements of cleanliness, hundred percent attendances of staff would be ensured in the model schools. Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer Education Sohail Azhar Khan suspended physical teacher Javed Iqbal and class-IV employee Muhammad Aslam from service on the charges of poor performance.

Political activists hold protest F.P. Report

LARKANA: Various parties protested against the Israeli aggression and atrocities on the Palestinians. Protest rallies against those demonstrations were held on this occasion at Jinnah Bagh Chowk and other places by Pakistan People's Party Shaheed B-ahut, Sindh People's Student Federation Larkana, Samaji Ittehad, Islah al-Fuqra Organization, Jamaat-i-Ahlsunat leaders Liaquat Ali Inrani, Mazhar Ali Shah, Fayyaz Hussain. Others protested and said that Israel's atrocities and aggression against Palestinians have been happening for several days, due to which thousands of innocent Palestinians including their children have been martyred, while countless others have been injured.



LANDI KOTAL: People participating in awareness walk in connection with world polio day. — F.P. photo

Govt contractors elect office bearers in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Engineer Ikramullah Khan was elected as President and Imran Takur as General Secretary for the government contractors association Lower Dir. The annual election was held at Timergara here on Tuesday. A tough competition between the Phul group and Shaheen group was witnessed wherein all candidates of the Phul group bagged 112 votes each, while the candidates of Shaheen group got 109 votes.

Arbab Mohammad was elected as vice presidents, Nazimin Khan as joint secretary, Liaquat Ali Khan as secretary information, Engineer Samiullah as Secretary, Zubairullah as Secretary Finance, Engineer Mohsin Ali as District Coordinator, Engineer Shah Hussain as Deputy Co-ordinator, while Anwarullah Khan Khilji and Hazrat Shoaib as members executive council.

Tribute paid to VC secretary died in road mishap: The Assistant Directors Local Government and Rural Development Department Amir Nizam Durrani and Umar Rahman on Tuesday visited Maidan Bandai and offered Fateha at the grave of Azizullah Khan who lost

his life as a result of traffic accident while going to his office in Maidan Bandai here the other day.

The newly elected president of All Secretaries' Association (ASA) Lower Dir Muhammad Zeb, ASA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa vice president Salahuddin alias Chief of Munda, supervisors Zarbaz Khan, Dilshad Khan, progress officer (r) Shafiq Haq, ASA general secretary Ubaid Khurram, finance secretary Ghuffar bin Fazil, senior secretaries Bakht Musa Khan, Kalimullah, Shahaad Khan, Bihar Uddin Khan and a large number of Village secretaries from all over the district were also present on the occasion.

The officials laid floral wreaths on the grave of the deceased who laid his life in the line of his official duty. Speaking on the occasion Amir Nizam Durrani and Umar Rahman paid rich tribute to Azizullah Khan and said the deceased was an honest official who believed in the service of the public.

12 police officials get promotion: A total of 12 officials of the Lower Dir police were promoted as Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) on passing their departmental promotion examination. A simple function in this regard was

held at the DPO office Timergara here on Tuesday.

The district police officer Ziauddin Din, SP investigation Zahoor Ahmad, SP Counter Terrorism Ddepartment Amjad Khan, DSP Headquarters Syed Ahmad Khan, DSP Legal Rashid Khan and DSP Investigation Syed Zaman Shah were present on the occasion. The DPO fastened batches to the newly promoted officials under the fast track promotion policy of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission. The Assistant Sub Inspector officers included Zaman, Khan Imran, Sajid Hayat, Azeem Badshah, Hashmatullah, Islam Zaman, Muhammad Farooq, Shakeel Ahmed, Asif Ali, Abdul Qadir, Muhammad Ismail and Ikramullah.

Speaking on the occasion, DPO Ziauddin Ahmed said that departmental promotion was the right of dutiful employees, however, promotion increased the duties and responsibilities which guaranteed the next departmental promotion if performed with honesty and devotion. The DPO congratulated the newly promoted ASIs and hoped they would further improve their contribution to the force.

World Polio Day observed in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: In connection with "World Polio Day", a walk was conducted here in tehsil compound, Landi Kotal on Tuesday. Tehsil chairman Haji Shah Khalid, Additional Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Rameez Ali Shah, councilors, health officials and members of civil society were among the participants.

Carrying banners inscribed with the statement, World Polio Day took out a rally from the tehsil office till the exit point of the compound to mark the day. Speaking on the occasion the health and administration officials said that every year on October 24, polio day is observed to raise awareness of the importance of polio vaccination to protect every child from the crippling disease.

"It further remains for us to continue our efforts, persuade parents to vaccinate their children below five years in every vaccination drive and to make Pakistan free of polio," they added. In 2002, WHO European region was announced polio-free, since then on October 24, the World Polio Day is celebrated worldwide.

It is to be mentioned here that Pakistan and Afghanistan are the two countries where polio disease still exists and according to reports three polio cases have been reported in Pakistan while six cases have been filed in Afghanistan in 2023.

Chitral pays tribute to martyrs

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The "Shuhada-e-Chitral Football Premier League," a collaborative effort by the district administration and Frontier Corps North, celebrated its grand finale in a spectacular ceremony.

Inspector General Frontier Corps North, Major General Noor Wali Khan, graced the event as the chief guest, bringing honor to the occasion.

Nowshera sub-jail needs expansion: KP Info Minister

F.P. Report

NOWSHERA: Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Public Relations, Culture, and Tourism, undertook a comprehensive review of key facilities and services during his visit to Nowshera. The visit included an inspection of Sub Jail Nowshera, District Headquarters Hospital, and participation in a Khuli Kacheri organized by the Department of Public Health Engineering at Kakasahib.

During the visit of Sub Jail Nowshera, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel assessed the conditions of different sections within the jail, interacted with both prisoners and staff. The in-charge officer, Baitullah briefed the Minister about sub jail. He highlighted the issue of overcrowding, with 527 inmates in a facility designed for 171. To address this critical concern, the Caretaker

Minister revealed that a range of solutions, including jail expansion or construction of a new facility, will be considered. In response to immediate health needs, the Caretaker Minister instructed the District Health Officer Nowshera to arrange prompt treatment for inmates suffering from mental and other medical conditions.

Subsequently, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel visited the District Headquarters Hospital, Nowshera, where he met with hospital staff, doctors, and patients' attendants, inquiring about patient care and the quality of services offered. Dr. Shoaib Khan, the District Health Officer Nowshera, briefed him on the facilities. The Minister directed the hospital administration to prioritize addressing public complaints and ensuring the equitable supply of medicines and necessary treatment facilities.

In conjunction with his visit, Caretaker Information Minister Barrister Feroze

Jamal Shah Kakakhel participated in a Khuli Kacheri organized by the District Public Health Engineering Department in Kakasahib. This public forum enabled residents to voice concerns about clean water supply. The Minister was joined by Deputy Commissioner Nowshera Khalid Khattak, SDO Public Health Engineering Ziaur Rehman, and other relevant officials.

The primary issue discussed during the Khuli Kacheri was the inadequate clean water supply in Kakasahib. Minister Kakakhel pledged swift action by directing the public health authorities to address this matter urgently. He emphasized the importance of ensuring water supply to every neighborhood in line with their requirements and called for the appointment of operators at 11 designated tube wells. The Minister reiterated the need to prioritize and resolve public water-related issues promptly and asked a progress report from authorities within one week.

Election commission held awareness session

F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Election Commissioner (DEC) Mardan Organized a seminar at Women University Mardan (WUM) in connection with voter's awareness campaign, on Tuesday.

During the campaign, Regional Election Commissioner (REC) Mardan Rahmzada, District Election Commissioner Zia-ur-Rahim, Election Officer Shahnila and Focal Person of Women University Mardan Dr. Halima Ikram and more than 100 female students of University participated. The speakers informed the students in detail about the responsibilities of the Election Commission and the steps taken by the Election Commission to increase the number of youth in the electoral rolls and the voter turnout and told that 45 percent of the voters in Pakistan are young voters who involvement in the electoral process is very important.

The students were emphasized on the importance of voting, its usefulness and full participation in the election process. In the seminar, there was also a question and answer session regarding the election process, in which the students fully participated and at the end prizes were also given to the students. The efforts of the Commission of Pakistan were appreciated and thanked the Election Commission that such programs will highlight

the effectiveness of voting among the youth, especially female students.

Traders internal dispute emerged: The Provincial General Secretary of the Markaze Tanzeem-e-Tajiran and President of the Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Zahir Shah On Tuesday has said that the Central Organization of Traders (Zahir Shah Group) is a community and a great force, while the so-called merchant organizations in Mardan have adopted the name of the merchant community. They are using it for personal gain, now all the business community has woken up.

All traders have rejected the so-called trade organizations forever. In Mardan, the main trade organization (Zahir Shah Group) has won 7 candidates with a clean sweep and 50% in 2 out of the last total 9 elections. He was addressing the joining ceremony as a special guest at Haji Gul Plaza. On this occasion, Haji Gul Plaza President Farooq Ali Shah and General Secretary Adnan Khan formally announced the joining of the convoy of (Zahir Shah Group) along with colleagues. Zahir Shah administered the oath of office to the newly elected cabinet.

Haji Owais Khan, Waqar Bacha, Chairman Ghulam Sarwar Saraf Saheb zada, Faqir Muhammad Saraf and others also spoke on this occasion. Addressing the

event, Zahir Shah said that the Marlaze Tanzeem-e-Tajira (Zahir Shah Group) is the only group which is playing a leading role in the welfare of traders and solving their problems. The problems should be resolved on their consultation. Zahir Shah said that before 2014, the so-called business organizations used the name of the business community for their personal interest and there were no connections and respect in the institutions and the business community was suffering from many problems were Ever since we started the struggle for the rights of the business community by standing against the so-called business organizations.

This is the reason why all business community organizations are joining our group in droves. We believe we have served the business community and will continue to do so till the end. The real central organization of traders and the platform of Mardan Chamber of Commerce has sent the business community to China, Ukraine, Spain and other countries. Zahir Shah expressed the expectation that the newly elected Haji Gul Plaza President Farooq Ali Shah and General Secretary Adnan Khan and other cabinet members will continue to struggle day and night from the platform of Zahir Shah Group for the welfare of businessmen and to solve their problems.

AWKUM under scrutiny for alleged maladministration in recruitment

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) is currently under scrutiny due to allegations of maladministration and questionable appointments which have raised concerns about the institution's compliance with Higher Education Commission (HEC) regulations. The university has faced criticism for appointing individuals who do not meet the necessary qualifications for permanent faculty positions, disregarding the HEC's guidelines.

In 2017, the HEC took a significant step by formalizing new qualification requirements for assistant professors and lecturers. According to these regulations, assistant professors were required to hold a Ph.D., while lecturers needed an MS or MPhil degree. This policy was communicated through a notification in 2017, and universities were instructed to strictly adhere to these criteria for faculty appointments. The notification can still be found on the HEC website, underlining its importance.

However, recent developments in 2021 and 2022 have raised questions about AWKUM's adherence to these standards. During this period, the university hired several assistant professors without the necessary Ph.D. qualifications. The sources within the universi-

ty shared that these appointments were made in various departments, including HRM, Economics, Physical Education and Sports, and Political Science.

A professor within the university revealed that a "selection board" was formed for these appointments. Still, a member of the search committee for vice-chancellors emphasized that universities must rigorously follow the HEC rules while forming selection boards for appointments. Even during Dr. Attaur Rehman's tenure as HEC chairman, universities were urged to uphold the Ph.D. criterion for assistant professors, highlighting the significance of this qualification requirement.

Another significant concern raised by students is the delay in organizing convocations. Many students claim to have paid the "convocation fee" but have not had their convocations held. This has left them without a formal recognition of their academic achievements and, in some cases, has caused distress.

Tauseef Ali, a graduate from AWKUM in 2020, expressed his disappointment regarding the delay in conducting convocations. He stated that he and his fellow graduates had not experienced this essential ceremony, even after paying the required fees. A female student who achieved distinction in the 2019

session echoed this sentiment, highlighting the lack of recognition for her achievements due to the absence of a convocation.

This student described how she paid both convocation and degree fees, only to receive her degree in an ordinary office file without the customary formal cover file that signifies the importance of the accomplishment. The absence of a proper convocation has caused distress among the graduates who feel they lack the tangible proof of their academic success.

Abid Mehmood, from the university's public relations wing, acknowledged the delay in conducting convocations and explained that the university had encountered some issues in this regard. However, he assured that AWKUM intended to conduct a convocation within the next month or two. Regarding the degree cover files, he admitted that they had been unavailable for some time, resulting in degrees being given to students without them. He stated that recent efforts had been made to procure these covers for the graduates.

When questioned about the appointment of non-Ph.D. holders as assistant professors, Abid Mehmood suggested contacting the university registrar for further information. However, the university registrar, Saim Sohail, declined to comment on the

issue, claiming that he was not in his position during the days in question.

In response to these allegations, Governor Ghulam Ali, who also serves as the chancellor of public sector universities in KP, expressed his commitment to addressing the matter. He affirmed, "No one is permitted to violate rules and laws in the universities," underlining the importance of upholding the integrity of the education system.

The allegations against AWKUM raise concerns not only about the adherence to HEC regulations but also the impact on students' academic experiences. The delay in convocations and the appointment of faculty members who do not meet the required qualifications have left both the institution and its students in a state of uncertainty. These allegations warrant a thorough investigation to ensure that the university maintains the high educational standards expected of it.

Action against illegal housing societies: City Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar advocate has requested the Director General National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to take stern action against the owners of illegal housing societies and against those who have converted designated parking places into commercial shops in differ-

ent parts of Mardan city, it has been learnt.

In his written application to the DG national accountability bureau KPK, Himayatullah Mayar advocate stated that he was going to draw his attention to a serious matter, that like other areas of the country, Mardan was also facing growing establishment of housing societies, wherein, most of the housing societies were illegal and got no NOC from the local authorities and nearly all the housing societies had the mechanism to transfer the plots in their own record and not proper registry/ mutation was executed to transfer the ownership in revenue record.

"Furthermore, this acts also leading to a loss of revenue for the government in tax evasion, causing financial losses to the government," he said, adding that accurate revenue record and ensuring the payment of property taxes was essential for the government's financial stability and the provision of public services.

He urged the relevant authorities that it was requested to initiate a thorough investigation into that matter to ascertain the extent of tax evasion and any potential corrupt activities associated with the failure to transfer plots into revenue record and to bound all housing societies to carry out proper mutation / registry on purchase of plot as well

as only those plot owners might be allowed to construct their plots who approved the maps from TMA Mardan.

Besides, the city mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar also requested the quarters concerned that their attention was hereby invited to a pressing issue in Mardan city that several owners of plazas/ commercial buildings had converted designated parking places into commercial shops, violating both traffic regulations and the principles of public space usage and also got huge amounts as premium on these shops.

"Such actions not only inconvenience the general public but also raise concerns about potential corruption of misuse of public places. As your good self knows better that parking places are essential for ensuring smooth flow of traffic as well as facilitation of general public. In this connection, the local authorities i.e. TMA, Mardan also failed to regularize the same as per approved map and policy. This may cause collusion between the owners and local authorities, results in erode public trust in our local institutions," he said. Mayar also stressed that relevant officials to initiate an immediate action against violators to address the violation and corruption related to the conversion of parking spaces into shops or other business purposes please.



Ukraine war: Avdiivka civilians cling on amid Russian assault



KYIV (BBC): As Russian missiles shatter her town, Hanna is desperate to escape. But her elderly mother refuses to leave. "I can't leave her," Hanna tells us over the phone. "She said she wanted to sleep in her own bed. She's 71 and has problems with her legs. If she stays alone, she can't get water or wood for heating." Holed up precariously in a fifth floor flat, living under near constant bombardment and air strikes, they're among the last remaining residents of Avdiivka.

This strategically important and fiercely contested town lies right on the front line in eastern Ukraine. Most people have fled. There's been fighting here since 2014, but since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of last February, the population has shrunk from more than 30,000 to just over 1,000. Russia launched a major offensive on the town earlier this month and fighting has intensified in recent days. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky described the situation as "particularly tough". "Windows and doors are broken everywhere," says Hanna. "With attacks every day, it's difficult to fix them because they get broken again

every day." The town is sometimes described as the gateway to the city of Donetsk, which has been occupied by Russia and its proxy forces since 2014. Taking Avdiivka - which lies close by - would allow them to push the front line back, making it harder for the Ukrainian forces to retake the territory. To venture out to the last remaining shop in town, Hanna says, is to take life into your own hands. "There are no places where you can hide in case of an attack... if you hear a whistle, you don't have enough time to get to safety." That shop has since been destroyed. Avdiivka's residents now rely all the more on a facility known as a Point of Invincibility. You'll find these government-built help stations all over this country; designed to provide food, warmth, power and refuge. And, for some in Avdiivka, the Point of Invincibility is now home.

Maryna, a nurse in her 40s, volunteers at the facility and moved in after the doors and windows of her home were blown off in an attack. But even in the relative safety of the basement, she says, she doesn't get much sleep. "Missiles are flying every night.

Every day and every night. Too many of them. "Everyone feels fear." Maryna's grown-up son has fled Avdiivka. She hopes to follow soon.

Getting people out of the town is difficult and dangerous. A special police unit known as the White Angels leads the evacuations, though they sometimes find it hard to persuade people to leave. Hennadiy Yudin, a member of the crew, says they brought 50 people to safety in the last week. But the situation in the area has deteriorated significantly. "There are constant attacks on the town and nearby villages. Launched from either artillery, multiple rocket launchers or aviation - guided aerial bombs, missiles. They attack the town and villages, houses where people live." As Maryna prepares for evacuation, she recalls Avdiivka before war broke out. "There was a park, a boulevard. There were a lot of shops. We planted trees. It was very beautiful here. We had a cultural centre, a lot of festivals and celebrations." She hopes, one day, to return. But, sheltering in the devastation of her hometown, she fears there'll be nothing left to come back to. "There is no Avdiivka any more."

South Korea intercepts boat carrying NK defectors

SEOUL (Agencies): A group of North Koreans have defected to South Korea by crossing the sea border in a small wooden boat, South Korea's military said. The boat was intercepted by South Korean authorities on Tuesday near Sokcho, a city about 51km (32 miles) northeast of Seoul, after being spotted near the countries' maritime border, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. Four North Korean occupants expressed their wish to defect to South Korea, the government-funded Yonhap News Agency and Korean Broadcasting System said, citing unnamed government officials.

More than 33,000 North Koreans have fled their repressive homeland for the liberal democratic South, where they are entitled to citizenship and financial support after being vetted by the intelligence services.

Arrivals in the South have dropped sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic, when Pyongyang ramped up border controls. Defections by sea are rare, with most defectors fleeing the North through the porous border with China, where they face the risk of arrest and deportation. Seoul's Unification Ministry earlier this month said it had raised its concerns with China after Chinese authorities repatriated a "large number" of North Koreans living in the northeastern provinces of Jilin and Liaoning.

Beijing, which regards North Korean defectors as economic migrants, said there was "no such thing as so-called 'North Korean defectors' in China". In May, nine North Koreans defected after crossing the western sea boundary in a fishing boat. In 2019, South Korea's former President Moon Jae-in drew criticism from rights groups after his administration repatriated two North Korean fishermen suspected of murdering 16 shipmates while crossing the sea border.

A South Korean court in February indicted four top officials, including Moon's head of national intelligence, for allegedly abusing their authority in relation to the repatriations.

Germany's far-left star quits post Communists

BERLIN (Reuters): The star of Germany's left-most parliamentary party has quit to set up her own populist formation, based on scepticism on both green issues and on support for Ukraine, that polls suggest could capture up to 20% of the vote. Sahra Wagenknecht, who grew up in East Germany as the daughter of a German mother and an absent Iranian father, told reporters she would aim to win over disgruntled voters of left and right.

"Many no longer know who to vote for or vote for the right out of rage and despair," she said. "It can't go on like this. Otherwise we probably won't recognise our own country in ten years' time." With Germany's economy battered by high energy prices and inflation, low support for the parties of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's centre-left coalition is undermining the conservative Christian Democrats, creating opportunities for populists. "At a time of crisis... Left legislators should concentrate on doing their job," said Left party leader Janine Wissler. "And that is left-wing opposition and not the ego trip of founding a new party." That fragmentation has let the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party come second in several recent elections - drawing on a pool of voters the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance could also tap.

"I was described as close to Putin or pro-Russian for wanting a negotiated solution in Ukraine," she said. "It's your legitimate right not to like us or not share our positions. But ... don't take the cheap route of ascribing to us things we don't represent." Wagenknecht has called for tighter restrictions on immigration, and opposes sending arms to Ukraine and called for a negotiated solution to Russia's invasion of the country.

US renews warning it will defend Philippines

MANILA (AP): The United States renewed a warning that it would defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack under a 1951 treaty, after Chinese ships blocked and collided with two Filipino vessels off a contested shoal in the South China Sea.

Philippine diplomats summoned a Chinese Embassy official in Manila for a strongly worded protest following collisions off Second Thomas Shoal. No injuries were reported but the encounters damaged a Philippine coast guard ship and a wooden-hulled supply boat operated by navy personnel, officials said. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called an emergency meeting with the defense secretary and other top military and security officials to discuss the latest hostilities in the disputed waters. The Philippines and other neighbors of China have resisted Beijing's sweeping territorial claims over virtually the entire South China Sea, and some, like Manila, have sought US military support as incidents multiply.

After the meeting, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro blasted China in a news conference for resorting to "brute force" that he said endangered Filipino crew members and for twisting the facts to conceal its aggression. "The Philippine government views the latest aggression by China as a blatant violation of international law," Teodoro said. "China has no legal right or authority to conduct law enforcement operations in our territorial waters and in our exclusive economic zone."

Marcos ordered an investigation of the high-sea collisions, Teodoro said, but he refused to disclose what steps the Philippine government would take. "We are taking these incidents seriously at the highest levels of government," he said, adding that the government called for a news conference to provide accurate facts. "The Chinese government is deliberately obfuscating the truth," the defense chief said. The Philippines also plans to raise its alarm over the Chinese ships' dangerous maneuvers in talks between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on a proposed nonaggression pact - a "code of conduct" - to prevent a major armed conflict in the South China Sea. Beijing is hosting the three-day negotiations starting, two Philippine officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to publicly discuss details of the talks.

Teodoro said it was "very ironic" that China was hosting the talks that aim to prevent major conflicts at sea when they just committed "a blatant disregard of international law." The territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have long been regarded as a flashpoint in a delicate fault line in the US-China rivalry. About

five Chinese coast guard ships, eight accompanying vessels and two navy ships formed a blockade to prevent two Philippine coast guard ships and two boats from delivering food and other supplies to Filipino forces stationed at Second Thomas Shoal aboard a marooned navy ship, Philippine coast guard Commodore Jay Tarriela said.

During the standoff, one of the Philippine coast guard ships and a supply boat were separately hit by a Chinese coast guard ship and a vessel. Only one of the two Filipino boats managed to deliver supplies to Philippine forces, Tarriela said. The senior Chinese diplomat who was summoned by Philippine foreign officials repeated China's assertion that the Philippine vessels intruded into Chinese territory. "China once again urges the Philippines to take seriously China's grave concerns, honor its promise, stop making provocations at sea, stop making dangerous moves, stop groundlessly attacking and slandering China, and to tow away the illegally 'grounded' warship as soon as possible," Zhou Zhiyong was quoted as saying by the Chinese Embassy in Manila.

He was referring to the Sierra Madre, which serves as Manila's territorial outpost at the shoal after being deliberately aground in 1999. The Chinese coast guard blamed the Philippine vessels for causing the collisions and said the Filipinos were carrying construction materials to strengthen their outpost at the shoal. The US and other allies expressed alarm over the Chinese action. Washington renewed a warning that it's obligated to defend the Philippines under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack, including "those of its coast guard - anywhere in the South China Sea." "The United States stands with our Philippine allies in the face of the People's Republic of China coast guard and maritime militia's dangerous and unlawful actions obstructing an October 22 Philippine resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal," the US State Department said in a statement issued by its embassy in Manila. It blamed the dangerous maneuvers by China's ships for the collisions and added that they "violated international law by intentionally interfering with the Philippine vessels' exercise of high seas freedom of navigation."

The State Department also cited a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated China's expansive claims to the South China Sea on historical grounds, including in Second Thomas Shoal. Washington lays no claims to the disputed sea but has deployed forces to patrol the waters to promote freedom of navigation and overflight - moves that have angered Beijing, which has warned the US to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

Erdogan submits Sweden's NATO bid to parliament

ANKARA (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has submitted a protocol for Sweden's admission into NATO to Turkey's parliament for ratification, his office said, bringing the Nordic country a step closer to membership in the military alliance. Erdogan had been delaying ratification of Sweden's membership, accusing Stockholm of being too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups his country considers to be security threats. Turkey also was angered by a series of Quran-burning protests in Sweden.

All 31 NATO allies must endorse Sweden's membership. Turkey and Hungary are the only two allies that have yet to ratify it. A brief statement from the presidential communications directorate said Erdogan had signed the protocol on Sweden's NATO accession, which was then submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. It was not known when Sweden's membership would come to the floor.

Sweden welcomed the move. "Glad to hear that Turkish President Erdogan has now handed over the ratification documents to the Turkish Parliament," Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson wrote on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. "Now it remains for Parliament to deal with the issue. We look forward to becoming a member of NATO." Sweden and its neighbor Finland abandoned decades of military non-alignment and sought protection under NATO's security umbrella after President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to invade Ukraine in February 2022. Finland joined the military alliance in April after Turkey lifted its objections to its membership, saying Helsinki had taken steps to address Ankara's security concerns. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who had urged Turkey earlier this month to quickly ratify Sweden's membership, also hailed the moves.

"I look forward to a speedy vote to ratify, and to

welcoming Sweden as a full NATO ally very soon," he said in a statement sent to The Associated Press. "As I told President Erdogan when we spoke on the weekend, this will make the whole Alliance stronger and more secure." Erdogan had dropped his opposition to Sweden's membership at a NATO summit in Lithuania's capital in July, but still delayed sending the protocol to parliament for ratification. Turkey lifted its opposition after US President Joe Biden's administration signaled it would let Turkey buy 40 new F-16 fighter jets and modernization kits from the United States. Ankara also received assurances from Sweden that it would help revive Turkey's own quest to join the European Union. Under the deal, NATO as an organization agreed to address Turkey's concerns about terrorism. Stoltenberg said he had appointed an assistant secretary general to serve as his special coordinator for counter-terrorism.

Gunman who killed two Swedes had escaped Tunisian prison

TUNIS (BBC): A gunman who shot dead two Swedish football fans in Brussels had escaped from prison in Tunisia. Belgian prosecutors say Abdesaleh Lassoued had been sentenced to 26 years in prison in 2005, reportedly for crimes including attempted murder. He escaped in 2011, managed to board a small boat and arrived illegally on the Italian island of Lampedusa.

Lassoued eventually moved to Belgium, where he applied for asylum. When rejected, he fell off the radar. The Tunisian authorities had asked Belgium to return Lassoued home in August 2022. Belgian officials received the extradition request, but failed to process it. Belgium's Justice Minister

Vincent Van Quickenborne resigned on Friday over what he called a "monumental and unacceptable error with dramatic consequences". Lassoued, a 45-year-old man from Tunisia, started shooting at passers-by with an assault rifle in central Brussels.

He then chased people into the hallway of an apartment building, where he shot and killed two Swedish football fans, and injured a third. The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the attack. After a manhunt the gunman was tracked down at a cafe near his home in Schaerbeek, northern Brussels, on Tuesday morning. He was shot dead by police. "I sincerely want to apologise to the victims and their loved ones," Mr Van

Quickenborne said during his resignation speech. "I am not looking for any excuses." He said he wanted to take "political responsibility for this unacceptable mistake".

Brussels public prosecutor Tim De Wolf blamed understaffing in his office for the failure to act on the extradition request. He said the extradition file had been received in September last year and had probably been forgotten in a file cabinet. "None of the colleagues involved remember what became of this specific file a year ago. There is no trace of it being handled," he said. The prosecutor did not mention why Lassoued had been jailed, but Belgian media are reporting that he was imprisoned for two attempted murders.

World far off track on pledges to end deforestation by 2030

SAO PAULO (Reuters): The world is moving too slowly to meet pledges to end deforestation by 2030, with the destruction worsening in 2022, according to a report by a coalition of environmental organizations released. More than 140 countries - representing the vast majority of the world's woodlands - pledged at the 2021 United Nations climate summit in Glasgow to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation by the end of the decade.

Yet deforestation increased by 4% worldwide in 2022 compared with 2021, as some 66,000 square kilometers (25,000 square miles) were destroyed, the annual Forest Declaration Assessment report said. That means the world is 21% off track to end deforestation by 2030. "The world's forests are in crisis. The opportunity to make progress is passing us by," said Erin Matson, a senior consultant at environmental group Climate Focus. The report was conducted by a coalition of civil society

and research organizations who assess progress towards pledges to eliminate deforestation by 2030.

That includes the Glasgow pledge and the 2014 New York Declaration on Forests, which saw a shorter list of countries as well as dozens of the world's biggest companies make a similar commitment. Efforts to preserve old-growth tropical forests - prized for their dense carbon content and rich biodiversity - are 33% off track, with 4.1 million hectares lost in 2022, according to the study. In a news briefing, the researchers involved in the report stressed that the annual \$2.2 billion in public funds channeled to projects to protect forests every year is a fraction of the investment needed. The study also looked beyond deforestation to analyze forest degradation, with one researcher estimating the area of degraded forests to be much larger than the area of global deforestation. Drivers of forest degradation include logging activities, livestock grazing,

and road construction, according to Climate Focus.

But some parts of the world are making progress, said Franziska Haupt, a lead author and managing partner at consultancy Climate Focus. Haupt said that some 50 countries are on track to end forest loss, with Brazil, Indonesia, and Malaysia showing drastic reductions in deforestation. "Hope isn't lost," Haupt said. "These countries set clear examples that others must follow."

Brazil, which is responsible for around 30 percent of the world's deforestation, has seen a significant turnaround with a new government which is much more committed to fighting deforestation than the last, said a WWF Brazil representative during the news conference. "This showcases what could happen when countries with good laws and the books actually invest in enforcing them," said Darragh Conway, lead on rights & governance for the Forest Declaration Assessment.

Venezuela's opposition primary: Will Maduro finally be challenged?

CARACAS (Agencies): Venezuela's opposition parties held their first primary in 11 years to select a candidate to face current Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in the 2024 presidential election. Here is all we know about the Venezuelan opposition primary, and why it matters. Opposition politicians held the primary without state assistance after the National Electoral Council took months to respond to a request for logistical help. Venezuelans voted using paper ballots instead of electronic machines in voting centres at homes, churches, private schools and other facilities.

A poll earlier this month by the Venezuela-based research firm Delphos indicated more than half of people identified as likely to participate did not know where to vote. Last week, Venezuela's government and a faction of the opposition formally agreed to work together to reach a series of basic conditions for the next presidential election. The government and the opposition said in a joint agreement that each side can choose its candidate according to its own internal rules. The primary could be a chance for the opposition to rally support from voters in Venezuela, whose economy has been in deep crisis for years. Officials who are found guilty of corruption are banned from holding public office for up to 15 years.

Venezuela's opposition says the government uses bans unlawfully to prevent them from competing in elections. Two of the 13 originally registered candidates for the primary have dropped out because they were barred from holding public office. Maria Corina Machado is an opposition member of the Venezuelan National Assembly, a free-market advocate, and an adversary of Venezuela's leftist government. Despite being barred from holding public office, Machado, 56, has chosen to stay in the race. The industrial engineer and former lawmaker has been barred

‘Move from words to actions,’ Haiti transition chief tells UN

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Reuters): The head of Haiti's democratic transition council urged action on a plan to deploy foreign troops to the Caribbean island nation to help police restore security amid a worsening conflict as powerful gangs have forced around 200,000 people to flee their homes. "I very much hope the United Nations Security Council will move from words to actions," High Transition Council (HTC) leader Mirlande Manigat told the Security Council.

"Foreign troops to support national police is something many Haitians are awaiting, including those who have been victims," Manigat said, calling for the force to prioritize protection of the vulnerable and for more action against arms trafficking. A year ago, Haiti's unelected prime minister requested an international force to help police - out-gunned by powerful gangs armed with vast stocks of firearms which the UN says are mainly trafficked from the United States - to restore order. Prime Minister Ariel Henry has vowed to hold elections after security is reestablished. The HTC is part of efforts to prepare for elections, but it has faced setbacks including the kidnapping of its secretary general last week. "His kidnapping was certainly not by chance," Manigat said, without giving further information.

Gangs have continued to expand their territory and some 2 million people now live under their domain, according to estimates from the UN, which earlier this month ratified deploying an international force. But few countries have pledged troops. Diplomats at the Security Council urged countries that had committed to deliver documents required before deployment, including rules of engagement and exit strategies.

for 15 years since June. This is due to her support for United States sanctions on the Maduro government and her backing of former opposition leader Juan Guaido. While the final results are still pending, Machado is leading the polls, tallying 93 percent of the vote, with over 26 percent of ballot boxes counted. The count - delayed due to a server blockage - was expected to continue. It was unclear when the next results update would be given. Machado's nearest rival, former lawmaker and democratic action candidate Carlos Prosperi, had 4.75 percent of the vote. Machado has claimed victory, saying that she has a mandate to take on Maduro. The US eased sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector in response to the deal reached between the government

and opposition parties for the 2024 election. These sanctions were especially tightened back in 2019 under former US President Donald Trump. The US has insisted that Maduro's government lift the ban on opposition candidates contesting in the 2024 election. So far, Maduro has refused to budge. It is unclear what would happen if a barred candidate wins the primary.

However, Machado has said that if she wins the primary, she will be able to pressure the electoral council to let her register for the general election. Meanwhile, Reuters quoted an anonymous, senior US Department of State official threatening to reverse sanctions relief measures unless Maduro lifts bans on the electoral participation of opposition candidates.

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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

The saga of military courts

THE Supreme Court on Monday declared null and void the trial of civilians in military courts. The court announced its reserved ruling with a 4-1 majority after hearing the arguments. The apex court declared that the trials of civilians could not be conducted in military courts and that Section 2 (D) (I) was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court bench further issued orders to transfer all 103 cases of May 9 rioters to civil courts as those cases could only be tried in criminal courts. According to statistics, 13 petitions had been filed in the apex court calling annulment of those mechanisms while several May 9 rioters currently under trial in the military courts filed petitions urging the apex court for the continuation of their trials in the military courts as they deem the Army courts more transparent, and effective for the compensation of justice.

The saga of military courts has been resonating in all nooks and corners of the country over the past several months after the violent mobs attacked military installations and sabotaged martyrs' memorials during the heinous acts of violence on May 9. The hateful act of violence attracted nationwide condemnation causing serious rage and grievances in the ranks and files of the Pakistan military, who have always been ready to lay their lives in the defence of their motherland. The Pakistan military leadership intended to trail rioters under the Army Act as some clauses of the Pakistan Army Act and Pakistan Official Secret Act 1923 amended 1968 provide sufficient grounds to trial miscreants under those laws. Meanwhile, the PDM coalition government brought significant changes to both legal frameworks through the Pakistan Army Act Amendment Bill 2023 and the Pakistan Official Secret Act Amendment Bill 2023 to remove legal restrictions in the path of civilians' trials in the military courts. The trial of 103 May 9 rioters was kicked off in the military courts after President Dr Arif Alvi signed both legislation in mid-August. The controversial legislation and civilian trials in the military courts attracted massive criticism from the civil society and the victim political group, the PTI who reached the apex court to strike down those disputed laws through legal means.

Historically, the role and domain of military courts and military adjudicators are very limited and conditional, while the political nature of the case further complicated the situation and made their work more difficult and controversial. At the helm of prevailing confusion and ambiguity, the competing groups have been involved in satisfying their grudges against each other while the coalition government has tactfully used the May 9 events against its staunch adversary. Over the past months, the unceasing political wrangling between the PDM coalition government and the PTI-led opposition has seriously undermined the country's economy, national unity, and cohesion. The critics are of the view that the government must not drag the military into the political issues and rioters should be tried in the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATC) as they committed violence and terrorism against civilians as well as military targets/ installations. The lawyers' leaders and human rights activists termed the trials of civilians in the military courts unconstitutional and filed petitions in the apex court to revoke the government's decision. Realistically, the case of rioters' trials in the military courts is a complex issue, that needs an evaluation from several perspectives including the determination of its legality, the contradiction to fundamental citizenry rights, accused rights to appeal in the higher courts along with the judicial appreciation of the provisions of the Army Act in the light of May 9 events and overall scenario in the country. The senior judiciary also considers the military courts a risk to its independence and a serious hazard to civilian supremacy in the country. The bar and civil society have been urging the apex court to protect its domain and not to backtrack from its constitutional role as the trials of civilians in the military courts do not meet international standards, violate the people's right to a public hearing, fair trial, and judgment amid heightened confidentiality and an opaque trial of the accused. Finally, the apex court has announced a historic verdict by striking down the military courts and transferring the cases of May 9's rioters to criminal courts while upholding the constitution and civil liberties. In fact, the rule of the law is above each and everything that must be upheld in all cases, during emergencies, natural disasters and even war, because it is the only way forward to rise in the comity nations in this universe.

TFP's voice for bereaved Palestinians

THE Frontier Post (TFP) news hawk raised the issue of mass human rights violations and blatant Israeli aggression against innocent civilians in the West Bank and Gaza at the White House, the power hub that controls the US foreign Policy, directs US military interventions and propels support to its partners and allies including Israel along with advocating its legacies regarding civil liberties, democracy and fundamental human rights in all parts of the world. The Frontier Post Managing Director and Washington Bureau Chief, categorically spoke on behalf of bereaved Palestinians and asked about the silence of the Biden administration over human rights violations committed by the Israeli regime against Palestine. White House National Security Council Spokesman, John F. Kirby replied that President Biden has spoken about the innocent lives and rules of war with Israel and the American people since day one, the first trucks carrying humanitarian aid have just reached Gaza, only taking place because of President Biden's negotiation with the Egyptian President and Israel's Prime Minister a day ago. According to Kirby, October 7 attacks on Israel were horrific and Israel has the right and obligation to defend itself.

The humanitarian and security situation in Palestine has become dire after the Israeli military made a record of brutality killing around 3,000 people including women and children, through continuous bombardment and air strikes since October 7. Israel's blockade of Gaza, has caused a humanitarian crisis as the invading military has stopped the entry of food, water, fuel and life saving drugs into the occupied Palestinian territory. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has issued a face saving condemnation statement against violence and called for a ceasefire and peaceful solution of the dispute but on other hand it sent massive economic and military support alongside deployment of troops and dispatch of two aircraft carriers apparently in support of Israel. The panic caused by the American leadership, the huge political, economic, military and diplomatic assistance offered by Biden to Tel Aviv portrays that Washington was a party to the Israel-Palestine conflict instead of an ally and Hamas has practically invaded the US instead of occupying Jewish military.

In fact, the United States is a global power and its due role is mediation, and peace brokering which is totally absent in case of Palestine as well as Kashmir. Washington's unilateral support for Israel has badly tarnished the US's image as the world's super power and provided huge space to its adversaries to take advantage and fill the gap. Although, US policymakers claim high grounds, and huge successes yet, Taliban victory in Afghanistan and breakout of Hamas-Israel war are two major setbacks of US diplomacy in both regions. Hence, Mr. Kirby and other American Highups must think of the other side of the mirror which is much ugly than likeable.



It's Cold War II, and the enemies of freedom are lining up to forge a new world order

Daniel Hannan

THE visual contrast was brutal. In Beijing, autocrats swaggered through those vast marble halls that dictators love to build. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping were surrounded by sundry lesser despots - leaders from Egypt and Ethiopia, Myanmar and M o z a m b i q u e , Turkmenistan and the Taliban - united chiefly by their enthusiasm for the coming overthrow of the Western order. Equally worrying, the presence of democratically-elected Viktor Orbán of Hungary - a disaffected Nato and EU member - shaking hands and smiling for the cameras.

At almost exactly the same moment as China's global summit of its friends and partners, US President Joe Biden was taking querulously to the airwaves to warn his countrymen against retreat. "American leadership is what holds the world together," he intoned, with his customary expression of elderly bafflement. "American alliances are what keep us, America, safe." Strong words and true, but undermined by the way he kept blinking in confusion at the autocue, a dotard president seeming to symbolise a nation past its prime.

How vertiginously it has come upon us, this sense that we are losing. Only a month ago, Putin, who had recently been able to summon European leaders to his outsized Moscow table, was reduced to fawning over Kim Jong-un. But that was before the horrors in Israel and Gaza. Now, all of a sudden, it is not Russia scrabbling to put together a coalition, but Nato. Western leaders know that years of work with poorer countries have been undone. "We have definitely lost the battle in the Global South," declared a senior diplomat.

Previously well-disposed countries rage at what they see as Western hypocrisy. Despite the vastly different circumstances, when Israel felt compelled to cut electricity supplies to Gaza, commentators in the developing world circulated a speech

by Ursula von der Leyen in which the president of the European Commission described Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure as "acts of pure terror" and "war crimes". In the West, we regard both Israel and Ukraine as pluralist states under attack from fascist neighbours. "When we look at Putin's thugs in Advika, or jihadi thugs in Gaza, we are looking at different heads of the same hydra" says Boris Johnson. "Their objectives are really the same - to destroy liberal democracy". That, though, is not how it looks to leaders of the Global South, many of whom got a dose of Frantz Fanon's anti-colonialism in their youth. To them, there is nothing special about free societies. Liberal democracy spread, as they see it, not because it was more appealing, but because white men imposed it on distant lands. If Western countries are finally losing ground - economically, diplomatically, demographically - so much the better.

Hence the grotesque coalition that the Russians and Chinese are assembling. Its members have next to nothing in common. Some are Marxists, some Islamists, but all resent what they see as Western, liberal arrogance, and exult in the belief that a reckoning is nigh. Wars proliferate at precisely such times. When the dominant powers have their hands full, revanchists seize their chance. Think, for example, of how Italy joined two world wars (one on each side) because it spotted opportunities in the chaos.

Now think of all the groups across Asia and Africa which have so far been held in check by the awareness that there is a policeman on the beat. If Putin manages to hang on to conquered territory in Ukraine, it will be seen as a definitive defeat for the West, a Suez-level reversal, inciting not only a Chinese grab for Taiwan, but a series of unrelated conflicts.

Already, we can see what happens when the

policeman is distracted. Turkey, a Nato ally, is picking fights with Europe while flirting with autocratic neighbours. India, until last year the great hope of the democratic world, treats with amused contempt the accusation that it ordered the assassination of a Canadian citizen, while Canada's allies, desperate for Indian support against Putin, play the episode down.

The war in Gaza leaves the West further overstretched, to the giddy delight of Russian state media. One Moscow newspaper calls it "a gift from heaven", reporting that ammunition destined for Ukraine was being diverted to Israel. Another likens the Israeli response to the Nazi siege of Leningrad. For 18 months, Israeli politicians chose not to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Now they see how Putin repays them. Perhaps the most remarkable fact about the Hamas attack is that, according to British, American and Israeli intelligence sources, Iran was blindsided by it. On one level, that might not make much difference. Tsarist Russia was blindsided by Gavrilo Princip's assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914, but still felt it had to join the war. Nonetheless, it is a reminder that Iran's unpopular regime is aware of its limitations.

The West, after all, still enjoys a massive military advantage. The Nato allies, alongside Ukraine and Taiwan, Japan, Australia and South Korea, are collectively far stronger than the illiberal regimes gathering under the Sino-Russian aegis. Only three per cent of the enormous US defence budget is being spent on supporting Ukraine. Indeed, in purely martial terms, Russia's alienation of Israel, with its advanced drones and cyberwar capabilities, more than makes up for the Western alienation of some Arab states. (I stress "some": the Gulf monarchies are privately being more helpful than we might suppose from their rhetoric.) No, the real issue is one of self-belief. Suez marked the end of British prestige, even though our Armed Forces were vastly superior to Egypt's, because we lacked domestic will and international support.

Today we see precisely the same absence of confidence. We see it, on the one hand, in Donald Trump's petulant isolationism, which Putin believes to be his route to victory. And we see it, on the other, in the readiness of Leftists to make excuses for almost any movement that proclaims itself anti-Western. I have observed before that anti-colonial feeling is stronger today around the world than it was when colonialism was a recent memory. Its growth owes a great deal to the way identity politics has spread from the US to the rest of the world, encouraging others to reimagine history as a morality play in which white men are the baddies.

The tendency is not wholly new. Salman Rushdie, as a Left-wing writer, initially supported the 1979 Iranian revolution on anti-colonialist grounds. Of course, it counted for nothing in the eyes of the ayatollahs. Forty-five years on, this readiness to indulge anti-Western illiberalism has spilled out of campuses and become the default attitude of a generation.

Look at the youthful crowds who marched after Hamas's abominations. Secularists cheering theocrats, anti-racists backing anti-Semites, feminists overlooking the murders of mothers and babies, supporters of mass immigration to their own countries outraged that Jewish refugees had found a haven in Palestine. Victimhood has become the supreme virtue, the moral get-out clause that justifies every crime. Frame your struggle as resistance to Western imperialism and you can get away with all manner of atrocities. The tragedy is that Western Leftists are getting what they claim to want - namely the end of a unipolar world. Trust me, they won't like it when it happens.

The Telegraph

World must hold biggest polluters accountable

Dickens Kamugisha

AS a long-time advocate for human and environmental rights, I am terrified by the unprecedented frequency of extreme weather events. With each passing day, it becomes increasingly evident that we are in the midst of an escalating climate emergency. Disasters that past generations would have viewed as biblical or apocalyptic have become our new normal.

This includes the devastating floods and severe droughts that claimed hundreds of lives and displaced millions of people in Uganda and across the Horn of Africa over the last two years, as well as the recent floods that wiped out an entire city in Libya. These events were not mere acts of nature. We have known for more than half a century that burning fossil fuels increases the planet's temperature and that climate change will have catastrophic consequences. We persisted in burning them anyway.

But the striking image of a recent climate protest in southern France, in which climate activists painted a giant slogan condemning French oil giant TotalEnergies in the dry bed of the Agly River, is a stark reminder that some bear more responsibility for our current predicament than others - namely, the handful of rich countries that account for most of the world's global greenhouse gas emissions.

But the real culprits are the fossil fuel companies that have plundered Earth's resources and hooked our societies on their products. After all, oil companies have known about the environmental implications of their activities since the 1970s, but opted to conceal these findings and churn out disinformation about climate change. The record-breaking temperatures and unprecedented calamities we are seeing all over the world today are a consequence of those choices. To halt global warming, we must reduce and eventually eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels. As both the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency have stressed, the only way to do so is to end all fossil fuel exploration immediately and without exception.

Ultimately, it is clear that the longer we wait to reduce emissions, the greater our collective suffering will be. But fossil fuel companies have a different perspective. In a recent regulatory filing, ExxonMobil asserted that "it is highly unlikely that society would accept the degradation in global standard of living required" to achieve net-zero emissions. Despite being well-informed about the calamitous effects of their operations, these companies have ignored their own climate scientists to protect their vast profits - \$56 billion in 2022 for ExxonMobil, whose CEO pocketed \$36 million. TotalEnergies, whose Tilenga project in Uganda wreaked havoc on local communities and

flooded farmlands with contaminated water, recorded a profit of \$36 billion last year. This is why the phrase accompanying the French river painting - "If there is no water, let them drink oil" - is a powerful rallying cry. Oil companies' extravagant and reckless behavior over the past few decades evokes parallels with France's "Ancien Regime." Just as the aristocracy resisted change in the lead-up to the 1789 French Revolution, the fossil fuel industry is unwilling to relinquish its power and influence, regardless of how its actions affect everyone else.

Contrary to the industry's claims, the net-zero transition will not lead to a cascading decline in living standards. Crucially, no one is calling for an abrupt halt to all fossil fuel use. Climate models have shown that the best solution is to ban new exploration and shift to a more efficient system that uses only a fraction of the existing reserves while we build the infrastructure needed to maintain current living standards through clean energy.

The green transition is not a compromise; it is a promise. As numerous studies have shown, renewables and energy efficiency can power our homes, offices, cities and industries, including for the billions of people in developing countries. This shift will create millions of new jobs, improve the quality of our air and water and help mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Moreover, it will enable vulnerable countries and communities to adapt and build resilience against the growing threat of extreme weather events. To be sure, financing this energy transition is a daunting challenge that will require a combination of strategies and mechanisms. Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley's Bridgetown Initiative, for example, advocates urgent reform of the global financial architecture. Similarly, the recent Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi concluded with a joint call for a global carbon tax.

Another promising idea, promoted by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and several prominent economists and activists, is to cover the costs of climate-driven damages and the green transition by taxing fossil fuel companies' windfall profits. As world leaders prepare for November's UN Climate Change Conference in the UAE, this proposal merits serious consideration. Holding the world's biggest polluters accountable is both morally justifiable and economically sensible.

Amid today's myriad political and economic shocks, the climate protest in the Agly River understandably received very little attention. But I hope that this powerful image will resonate with others as it has with me. After all, this planet is our only home. Given the existential threat posed by climate change, we have no choice but to fight for its survival.

The China Daily

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Deviating from Paris

Michael P. Walsh

nurtured the development of the technology which is the key to solving the transportation challenge in both urban air pollution and global warming - new energy vehicles.

NEVs if fueled by green electricity produced by renewable energy are inherently clean; they emit no tailpipe emissions, thereby potentially solving the transportation contribution to both urban air pollution and climate change. (We will still need to address problems such as tire and brake wear which are not related to combustion.) China has also launched a series of policies to promote the sale of NEVs and has rapidly become the largest producer as well as the largest market in the world for these vehicles. The measures include purchase subsidies, tax exemptions, infrastructure construction, and privileges in vehicle registration from the lottery system that cities such as Beijing

have put in place to constrain the growth in the number of polluting vehicles.

In 2022, China's market for NEVs reached 26 percent of total new vehicle sales, leading big markets in the world. Fortunately, the rest of the world is trying to catch up. The EU is aiming to have 100 percent of light duty vehicle sales by 2035 to be zero emissions vehicles. Already in 2022, 22 percent of its car sales were ZEVs. California has also announced its intention to have 100 percent of new light duty vehicle sales be zero emissions by 2035; 17 other states in the US have signed up to follow California down this same path. The US EPA has recently proposed a rule that would likely result in 67 percent of all new cars and 46 percent of medium duty trucks being battery electric or fuel cells by 2032. Progress is also occurring with heavy duty vehicles and

engines in China.

China's Clean Diesel Action Plan requires the share of freight transportation volume by road transportation to be reduced. Further, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment has implemented the so-called environmental protection performance classification system, which assigns each company with an environmental protection performance grade (A, B, C, D). Grade A companies do not need to stop or reduce production during high pollution days while grade B, C and D companies will need to stop or reduce production to a certain extent during high pollution days.

Once again, however, both the EU and California

are planning more aggressive steps. The EU will require 100 percent zero emissions heavy duty vehicles by 2040 and California by 2036. What does all this mean for China going forward? Considering China's historical global leadership on new energy vehicles and the crisis the planet is facing regarding climate change, I recommend that China accelerate the pace of phasing out the sale of vehicles with internal combustion engines. As a planet, we are not on track to achieve the target agreed in Paris of limiting warming to 1.5 C and must accelerate our efforts. As noted in the latest report by the IPCC, "there is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all". The time for action is now.

UK’s support for Israel should not ignore Palestinians’ plight

Mohamed Chebaro

THE unprecedented Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on Israel not only caught the Israeli political establishment and military by surprise, but also the far-off countries and governments that have long been directly and indirectly implicated in the 70-plus years of conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Events in the Middle East have been dropping off the list of priorities of many Western governments for many years. This is particularly true in the UK, especially since the ruling Conservative Party decided to take a sharp right turn and adopt a populist stance. It adopted austerity measures nationally and reduced the size of its government and armed forces, likely as a reaction to years of less than successful British interventions in crises like Iraq and Afghanistan. But the crisis between Israel and Palestine has quickly revealed the contrast in Britain between the government and political class on the one hand and the feeling of the general public on the other.

During the debate on the violence in Gaza and Israel in the House of Commons this week, one could sense the limited power of the UK and its observer status, at best, as events have unfolded. But a change of tone appeared in the government line, unlike the first 10 days, with a more measured and statesmanlike position; one that expressed both horror and condemnation of the Hamas attack and also compassion for the victims on both sides. It begged for a humanitarian response, but this remains in the realm of prayers rather than reflect-

ing the ability of Britain to induce it. The events in Parliament offered an opportunity to redress what looked like the crisis being used as a tool by the struggling Conservative government of Rishi Sunak to prop up its sinking popularity in the face of a rising Labour opposition that is tipped to win the general election next year. Nowhere was this more evident than in how the prime minister personally rushed, in the early days of the crisis, to voice the UK’s “unequivocal” support for Israel. He promised to stand by the Israeli people and shunned any mention of the Palestinians. Sunak did not even allude to the need for restraint and calm on all sides, which is the least that is needed in the highly volatile region called the Middle East.

As more than 1 million Palestinians were ordered to take cover away from northern Gaza, the people of Britain stood divided, even more so as a result of Sunak’s shortsightedness and readiness to play politics with the last gasp of power he has. In his early statements, Sunak told the Israeli people and the Jewish community in the UK that they would have his government’s unstinting, unqualified support in the face of evil and that it would do everything in its power to address a surge in anti-semitism since the start October 7th. Many in Britain felt, therefore, that the country was willing to turn a blind eye to Israel’s retaliatory strikes on Palestinians in Gaza, which flouted basic international

law, particularly as fuel and water supplies were cut off and the seriously ill advised to leave hospitals in the north of the territory.

The nation has felt more divided than ever, as the fault lines have been exposed by this conflict. This was most apparent in the vigils, protests, marches and flag-waving events on the streets of major cities across the UK, some supporting the Palestinians and others expressing solidarity with Israel, increasing the tensions between communities. Some Jewish schools in London closed their doors, citing security fears. Sunak quickly paid one such school a visit in a bid to offer reassurance, while announcing that he had ordered a greater police presence and that the government was dedicating a few million pounds to help beef up the Jewish community’s security. The UK government is also now realizing that, in addition to the 10 dual British-Israeli nationals thought to be among the near-200 hostages taken by Hamas, there are hundreds if not thousands more British-Israelis and British-Palestinians who live in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and are currently in the eye of the storm.

It was clear from day one that Sunak’s government could not factor in the historic weight and role of Britain in the region. The UK continues to be seen by the Palestinians as the author of the Balfour Declaration, which was behind what some in the Arab and Muslim world have come to call the “forever war” between the

Israelis and the Palestinians. Leadership - or the absence of it - is usually noticed in times of crisis and, instead of playing power politics domestically, Britain, like the US, should assume its role and push for peace, even while underlining its support and pledges to defend Israel. Defeating Hamas, as Israel is pledging will not happen unless the Palestinians of Gaza are driven out of their homes, cannot happen as the result of a revenge military operation.

After its initial message of unparalleled support and sending of two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Mediterranean, even the US is now trying to restrain Israel’s military action in Gaza in the hope of preserving the dim path toward peace. It is inconceivable for maps to change at this juncture in the Middle East, just like in the case of Ukraine, where war is raging and the world is divided between the West and its allies on one side and Russia and its allies on the other.

For years, many people have tried to ignore the fact that settling the Palestinian question is one of the keys to stability in the Middle East and that peace in the region will be hard to come by without continued diplomatic efforts, regardless of how fruitless and uncreative they might seem at times. Israel never tires of pointing to Iran as being the sponsor of its two main rivals, Hamas and Hezbollah, but it has never held Tehran accountable. Instead, civilians in Palestine, Lebanon and elsewhere have been bearing the brunt of this real but forever shadow war.

Time for a shift in Western policy toward Balkans

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

TWENTY-EIGHT years have elapsed since the Dayton Accords were signed and the Western Balkans are now closer than ever to a resurgence of the political violence, ethnic cleansing and mass migration that afflicted the region in the aftermath of Yugoslavia’s dissolution. Policymakers in Brussels and Washington, who once had a crucial role in negotiating and enforcing peace agreements in the Balkans, have found themselves preoccupied with fresh and imminent crises, ranging from Ukraine to Taiwan.

In recent months, the Balkan nations have witnessed a troubling surge in tensions and violence. Incidents like the clashes in northern Kosovo, confrontations between Serb paramilitaries and Kosovan police, and the buildup of Serbian troops near Kosovo have rung alarm bells. These events should serve as flashing red indicators on the Western world’s policy dashboard. It is high time to reevaluate our approach to the Balkans. What these challenges have in common is a lack of engagement from the West, particularly the EU, the US and NATO. This lack of involvement has emboldened nationalist and hegemonic forces in the region, empowering those countries with more influence. This vacuum has also created opportunities for groups, including nationalists and the far right, which oppose liberal democracy.

The first component of this lack of engagement stems from the attitude of Antony Blinken’s US State Department. The Biden administration’s shift in emphasis, from assisting global democratic struggles to preserving the democratic credentials of sliding nations like India, has led to the belief that the Balkans are inherently tribal. The result is a fading memory of a superpower willing and able to promote ideals like reducing corruption and enhancing democracy. The second component of this disengagement is an EU whose influence has waned. The hope of EU participation and eventual membership of the bloc, which bolstered its influence in the 2000s and

2010s, has all but disappeared. This decision has fundamentally altered the incentives for local political elites, fueling authoritarian leaderships, stifling economic growth and inviting capital from authoritarian countries. It has also opened the door for external actors like Russia and China to exert influence.

This vacuum has been filled by Chinese investment and Russian misinformation. While Russia’s invasion of Ukraine may have shifted the dynamics, it is too early to assume that the loss of Russian influence will automatically translate into gains for the West. The Western liberal democracies have taken their eyes off the Balkan region for far too long, resulting in a host of negative consequences. So, what should be the focus of Western policy in the Balkans in the coming years?

First, we need to go back to basic principles. The West has been successful in the past when it provided a clear and attractive vision to the region and stood behind that vision. We must articulate a vision of freedom, justice, trade, progress and peace for the Balkans, making it crystal clear how it will benefit the nations in the region. Engagement must occur at the senior level, but it should also involve outreach to the local populations, including cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, we must confront the challenge of Russian information warfare. Western information operations should remind the Balkan nations that Russia cannot be trusted, including by highlighting its failure to assist countries like Armenia and its prior involvement in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission to Kosovo before abandoning it in 2003. Investing in free media in the Balkans, especially in areas vulnerable to Russian propaganda, is also essential.

Although certain parts of the region may not be receptive to Western democracy today, the groundwork should be laid for the future. NATO should consider deploying a deterrent force in the region, beginning in areas like Brcko, Bosnia and

Herzegovina. Serbia deserves special care. We cannot rely on outdated approaches and must consider the role of Serbian culture and society. Recent years have seen a surge in war crimes denials and historical revisionism. Western policy should address these underlying cultural causes of Serbia’s international orientation rather than just the symptoms. No doubt the region has faced challenges stemming from a history of political instability and conflict, but it does offer numerous opportunities for growth and development.

First, the Western Balkans boast a strategic geographic positioning at the crossroads of Europe. This location provides a gateway for trade, as well as access to the EU market, which is a key advantage for foreign investors. The region’s rich natural resources, including fertile land and mineral deposits, further contribute to its economic potential. Additionally, a young and educated workforce is available in the Western Balkans, offering a competitive advantage in sectors like information technology and services. Tourism, thanks to its stunning landscapes and cultural heritage, is another promising industry.

To fully realize the economic potential of the Western Balkans, investment in infrastructure and education and reforms to improve the business climate are essential. The EU’s commitment to assisting the region’s integration and economic growth through various programs and initiatives will also play a pivotal role in unlocking this potential. However, addressing lingering political challenges and fostering regional cooperation will be crucial for the sustainable development of the Western Balkans. In conclusion, the Balkans region is at a crossroads and renewed Western engagement is imperative. By setting out a clear and attractive vision, engaging with the region at all levels and countering external influence, we can help steer the Balkans toward a path of stability, democracy and progress. The time for action is now, and the stakes are high.

Teachers must be at heart of education reform

Maha Akeel

WHENEVER we talk about unemployment, we eventually talk about the education system, particularly the curriculum and the need to reform and update it in order to prepare students for the jobs market. However, we seem to forget that simply changing the curriculum will not fix the problem. Teachers are the most critical element in any transformation.

Our experiences with teachers throughout our schooling, either positive or negative, have most likely impacted our attitude toward learning, developing, career choices and our whole life. Next to parents, teachers have the greatest influence on a child’s personality, behavior and outlook, yet they remain undervalued and underappreciated. This year’s celebration of teachers by UNESCO on World Teachers’ Day was held under the theme, “The teachers we need for the education we want: The global imperative to reverse the teacher shortage.” It focused on the kind of teaching and teachers we need now in order to achieve the type of education and future we want, given the growing shortage in quantity and quality of teachers.

The education ecosystem is composed of the infrastructure, the curriculum and the teachers. Research has repeatedly found that teachers are the single most important school-level variable for improving student outcomes. Last year’s UN Transforming Education Summit reaffirmed the centrality of teachers to the future of education and renewed the focus on teachers, as the world currently faces a severe teacher shortage, especially in universal primary and secondary education. Not

surprisingly, rural, marginalized and forcibly displaced communities often face the most chronic shortages of qualified teachers.

A recent report in Arab News on education in Syria was painful to read. Because of rising poverty, parents have to choose between sending their children to school or to work. The phrase “lost generation” is an understatement when describing their current and future prospects. The same can be said about other countries suffering from conflicts. In a post-conflict or post-disaster area, schools can be rebuilt within a few months or years and schooling can continue in makeshift locations, but finding teachers remains a challenge and it takes decades to raise an educated society, which is key to development. However, the shortage in teachers is not only a reality in conflict zones; it is global. According to UNESCO, the fundamental cause of this global shortage is the diminishing attractiveness of the teaching profession, which undermines the recruitment of new teachers and produces high levels of attrition among those in service, especially within their first three to five years. In most countries around the world, teachers are paid less than other professionals with similar qualifications, especially in private schools, and they are overburdened with additional responsibilities and administrative tasks.

Teaching is not like any other job. It cannot be undertaken as simply a way to earn a living. It is a talent and a work of passion. For Saudis over recent decades, it was the aspiration of men and women alike to work as teachers in public schools and univer-

sities because it was a secure government job that paid well. We ended up with many who were not qualified or had no interest in teaching, but it was a “good job.” That affected the quality of output, which we are still suffering from, as young graduates have lacked not only the knowledge but also the skills and capacities needed for today’s competitive job market, such as critical and analytical thinking, innovation and creativity.

Education reform does not only mean investing in the curriculum, school buildings and technology. The most important thing is the teacher, because a good teacher can make a bad curriculum interesting, while a bad teacher can turn a good curriculum into a boring one full of regurgitated information. A teacher can also influence the mentality and views of students. More than a decade ago, a report by the World Bank noted that Middle East and North African countries had succeeded in creating an education system focused mainly on inputs, such as building schools, but had done little to change the incentives and behavior of educators. A more recent report by the same organization again noted that, despite spending millions on education reform, the region’s schools system is stuck with the same delivery mechanisms.

Teachers today are competing with digital devices not only for students’ attention, but also as a source of information and knowledge. The debate over distance learning raised questions about technology potentially replacing teachers and schools. However, what children learn at school is not only knowledge and technical skills, but also good behav-

ior and social and communication skills. Many studies point to the amount of learning lost during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The UNESCO 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report focused on technology as a tool in education. It pointed out that there is not yet enough good evidence on the impact of technology on education. In addition, most of the evidence comes from the richest Western countries and from companies trying to sell their tools. Although technology offers an education lifeline for millions, including learners with disabilities, adults and those in remote areas - and it certainly came to the rescue of education during the pandemic - it excludes many more who lack internet connectivity and equal access to technology.

In general, the report found that some education technology can improve certain types of learning depending on the context, but it can also have a detrimental impact if used inappropriately or in excess. Large-scale international assessment data suggests a negative link between excessive technology use and student performance. A few months ago, Sweden surprised the world by reversing its policy on digital education and going back to basics with books and handwriting. Furthermore, according to the UNESCO report, there is not enough regulation or quality control and diversity in online content. Not to mention the impact of regenerative artificial intelligence and ChatGPT. We need to change the way we see teachers and teaching. Teachers are key agents of change. Reforming and improving education is not only about content, but also who delivers the content and how.

Thank you, Poland, for showing faith in EU values under threat from authoritarian right

Will Hutton

A YEAR before Boris Johnson’s Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, a little-known rightwing populist party won power again in Poland - using all the tricks that would become so familiar. It accused its political opponents of being enemies of the people; it would make Poland great again by restoring traditional virtues; it would resist the EU even though it was a member; and it would be unremittently hostile to migrants and gays. At the time, it seemed a one-shot idiosyncrasy, but the Law and Justice party soon emerged as one of the leaders in Europe’s apparently irresistible drive to the right.

It won a second election in 2019 and began to menace Poland’s hardwon post-communist freedoms. A stooge was already president, but now more stooges took over public television, ran the central bank but, most important of all, followed up the 2017 purge of the supreme court to take even more control of the judiciary. The party was using presidential decree, backed by puppet judges, to run Poland, not only hugely restricting abortion rights - sidestepping parliament - but trying to blacklist political opponents from public office.

Street protests in Warsaw this June, followed by the EU launching infringement proceedings for violating its treaty commitments, forced it to back off the blacklisting proposal that was aimed squarely at Donald Tusk, leader of the opposition Civic Coalition. But in last Sunday’s Polish general election, its aim in a third term was to bring the proposal back. It would consolidate its authoritarian power and turn Poland into a de facto

one-party state run on traditional Catholic lines. The standoff with the EU, which had withheld 36bn of Covid recovery funding as part of its proceedings, would deepen. Law and Justice had no intention of complying with any EU founding principle it disliked.

But amazingly, despite unremitting propaganda from the state-run TV outdoing anything George Orwell could imagine, Poland’s people - especially its young and its women - roused themselves to say no. Law and Justice lost control of both houses of the Polish parliament.

It is a stirring moment for Poland and for Europe. The increasingly settled view of the new British right is that its route to power is a British-style version of Law and Justice. Thus, Britain should withdraw from the European court of human rights, continue its hostility to the EU, be poisonous to migrants, wage war on “lefty lawyers” and “woke” preoccupations with trans and LGBTQ+ rights, character-assassinate political opponents and offer tax cuts as bribes.

It is Suella Braverman, Nigel Farage and Lee Anderson who speak for the people, just as Law and Justice did in Poland. But actually they don’t. People understand that demonising political opponents is no way to run a democracy. They do care about being told the truth, and value their public service broadcaster that tries to do that. They don’t damn all lawyers as lefty but see them as essential to the rule of law. Independent judges are never the enemy of the people.

They may want to resist mass immigration, but equally they understand migrants are human beings. They also understand that standing by human rights and liberties entrenched by a liberal constitution are better than any alternative, especially one-party rule. A minority will always buy the Braverman line that wants to trash those principles, but the majority do not. What was stirring about last Sunday was that Poland, a nation that had lived under communist oppression, was not going to surrender to a rightwing version of the same.

Poles rallied to the opposition parties. In London, there were at least 40 polling stations, with more in all of Britain’s big cities: one Polish friend told me people waited up to two hours to vote. In Warsaw, some queues stretched for more than six hours, extending well beyond the closing time. The overall turnout was more than 74%, even higher than the turnout in the June 1989 general election that broke with communism. And while in London, despite Law and Justice decreeing that all votes cast outside Poland would be directed to constituencies in liberal Warsaw, where the votes for the opposition would pile up uselessly, it was still worthwhile voting.

Trouble lies ahead. The stooges still control the power centres outside parliament. Law and Justice is trying to detach MPs from the opposition bloc to support it, so that Poland’s tame president can reasonably ask it - still the largest minority party - to try to form a government. Even if Tusk does become prime minister, the

president, Andrzej Duda, can veto his laws. Trying to unravel the Law and Justice state and win the release of that crucial 36bn from the EU will be contested at every turn.

Yet a Rubicon has been crossed. Poland’s big cities and its prosperous west want to protect its democracy, are strongly pro-Ukraine and pro-EU as a guarantor of both liberty and prosperity. Importantly, a lot of Polish voters backed the pro-EU opposition, influenced by their desire not to repeat the disaster of Brexit, which has become an awesome warning across Europe. At least Brexit has served one good purpose. The Catholic church, which at first backed Law and Justice, is worried: attendance is collapsing. It is the pro-democracy Dominican churches, always more rooted with the people, that are building congregations even in the rural traditional Polish east. This is not unnoticed in the Vatican. Catholicism always loses when it becomes coterminous with reaction.

It is in Poland’s and Europe’s interest that Poland, one of Europe’s big six states, establishes itself as a bulwark of liberal democracy. It would be good not only in its own right, but as an example to other east European states of what they can be. The EU took flak from the brigade of Eurosceptics for the stand it struck on Poland, but it was right - now backed by the Polish majority. It was one more reminder that the EU is a force for good on our continent and those who oppose it a force for bad. But more importantly, it showed that people value their democracy and all that buttresses it. Thank you, Poland.

The Guardian

Nothing can save Putin’s Russia now

Richard Kemp

IT should come as no surprise to anyone that Putin is seeking to exploit the war between Israel and Hamas. This week alone he has been on the telephone to Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, and the leaders of Egypt, Syria and Iran, claiming he wants to negotiate a ceasefire. The man responsible for spilling vast quantities of blood around the world, and especially in Ukraine, now says: "What matters now is to stop the bloodshed".

If the Russian president thinks his intervention will make any difference, however, he is deluding himself. The idea that Moscow could any longer hold significant sway in the Middle East is farcical. Whatever reputation it had as a world power has been shattered in Ukraine. We’ve seen yet more reasons why this week. On Tuesday, Kyiv’s surprise ATACMS long-range missile strike against Russian airfields in occupied Berdyansk and Luhansk sent Russian forces reeling - some are calling it the most significant strike by the Ukrainians in months. The Russians reportedly suffered significant losses and will be forced to move aircraft further away from the front line - operationally damaging as well as publicly humiliating. In the area of Kupyansk, meanwhile, Ukrainian forces appear to have blunted a significant Russian offensive - a miniature blitzkrieg - that had been building for weeks.

Although Putin’s forces have adapted and expanded from their lowest point last autumn, it bears repeating that his army remains in dire straits 18 months on from the three-week campaign planned for February last year. Russia is still heavily constrained, both economically and militarily, and has limited freedom of action beyond its all-

consuming war. As such, Middle Eastern countries, once impressed by Russian prowess - or at least the illusion of it - have seen Moscow’s failure to subjugate a markedly less powerful state and its accompanying debasement on the battlefield as a sign that it is a declining power. In Syria, for example, where Putin once held great sway following his support of the monstrous dictator Bashar al-Assad, Russia is losing traction, not least because it has had to redeploy some of its forces to Ukraine.

The Wagner Group, the critical force that gave Moscow such a grip over the region, has been largely neutered following its late leader Yevgeny Prigozhin’s mutiny against the Kremlin. Growing Chinese influence has also helped to undermine Moscow’s relevance, and its close relationship with Iran has been met with suspicion in many Arab countries. Whatever Putin might wish, the idea that Russia can still shape the Middle East is finished. Nevertheless, it may be that Putin sees the events in Israel as a golden opportunity to clasp back victory from the jaws of defeat. Certainly, there is evidence that, in the short term, he will end up as a net beneficiary of Hamas’s bloody slaughter and the war that has exploded in its wake. American attention has shifted sharply from Ukraine to the Middle East - necessary, perhaps, in this combustible situation, but something that many believe will work to Russia’s advantage.

Added to that, Putin will relish another foreign policy dilemma for Joe Biden as election season wears on. If America seeks to restrain Israel as it fights what it perceives to be its toughest war since it was established in 1948 (I am currently there and can attest to this strength of feeling), it will be deeply unpopular among some sections of the American

electorate. At the same time, support for Israel will draw intense criticism from others. Much to Moscow’s delight, Biden’s dream of a deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia and his election-boosting place as a peacemaker also lies in ruins. But all this may seem like chicken feed if Hezbollah further intensifies its assaults against Israel from Lebanon and Syria, drawing the West into a lengthy, multi-front war, potentially including a direct confrontation with Iran. Then all bets are off.

While it is far from inconceivable that Putin foresaw an advantage in destabilising the region, perhaps encouraging his ally and weapons-supplier Iran into pressing its proxies - Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon - into violent aggression, what might sound like strategic genius looks as if it might end up as yet another geopolitical disaster for Russia. If Tehran and Moscow were coordinating their actions, especially in Syria and Iraq, as part of a joint effort to push Washington out of the region, this has seriously backfired. US carrier strike groups are now steaming across the Mediterranean, with America reluctantly set to engage again in the region after the Iran-compliant pivot away from the Middle East initiated under Obama that continued under Biden. If anything, at the present moment - as the West rallies around Israel - Russia is even more of an outsider than before.

Russia has long been a toxic influence in the Middle East, but - as with Ukraine - it has now got more than it bargained for. It can pretend all it wants to be a major player in what unfolds, but in reality it can have little influence over what is about to happen. If it sees this crisis as being the means to win the war in Ukraine, then it is a pipe dream: the kind only a desperate dictator could conjure.

The Telegraph



100-index of Stock Exchange loses 42 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 42.89 points on Tuesday, a nominal negative change of 0.08 per cent, closing at 51,027.94 points against 51,070.83 points the previous day.

A total of 321,403,857 shares valuing Rs 11.091 billion were traded during the day as compared to 364,070,705 shares valuing Rs 15.930 billion the previous day.

As many as 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 143 of them recorded gains and 171 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 28 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Refinery with 33,555,439 shares at Rs 18.64 per share, Fauji Foods Ltd with

29,104,963 shares at Rs.6.98 per share and Bankislami Pak with 15,533,332 shares at Rs19.19 per share.

Sanofi-Aventis witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 56.44 per share price, closing at Rs 808.94, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with a Rs 47.83 rise in its per share price to Rs 749.83.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 100.00 per share closing at Rs 8,000.00, followed by Philip Morris Pak with Rs 39.85 decline to close at Rs 491.55.

Rupee sheds 30 paise against Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed a 30-paise devaluation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.42 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.12.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.5 and Rs 283.1 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.37 paise to close at Rs 297.43 against the last day's closing of Rs 296.06, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.86, whereas an increase of Rs 2.71 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 342.52 as compared to the last closing of Rs 339.81.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 08 paise each to close at Rs 76.07 and Rs 74.48 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs.400 to Rs.209,200 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.400 and was sold at Rs.209,200 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.209,600 the previous day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.343 to Rs.179,355 from Rs.179,698 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.164,409 from Rs.164,723, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,550 and Rs.2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$6 to \$1,995 from \$2,001, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing fish from a vendor at H9 Bazar in Federal Capital.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): The movements of ships was reported at the port where fourships namely, Maersk Brooklyn, MSC Mumbai-VIII, Taydo Star and Aiki Force, Scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice and Coal,berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them an edible oil carrier 'Corona' left the port today morning, while three more ships, MSC Brooklyn, MSC Mumbai-VIII and Sea Power-I are expected to sail on today afternoon.

A cargo volume of 105,668 tonnes, comprising 76,972 tonnes import cargo and 28,696 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,230 Containers (1,752 TEUs Imports and 1,498 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them an edible oil carrier 'Ardmore Chippewa' & four more ships, Maersk Detroit, MSC Yukta-X, Leader and SinarMalahayati carrying Palm oil, Containers, Gas oil and LPG are expected to take berths at LCT, QICT, FOTCO and EVTL respectively on Tuesday.

GM Q3 profits top estimated

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): General Motors reported better-than-expected quarterly profits Tuesday behind strong US sales and a limited impact from a labor strike that began late in the quarter.

The big US automaker reported third-quarter profits of \$3.1 billion, down seven percent from the year-ago period but better than analyst estimates, as it withdrew its full-year forecast due to uncertainty over the strike, which is nearing its sixth week.

Revenues rose five percent to \$44.1 billion, the company said.

"Great vehicles are the foundation, and we have earned leadership in key segments like full-size pickups and full-size SUVs that have consistently strong pricing and margins," said Chief Executive Mary Barra in a letter to investors.

GM notched higher vehicle sales in the United States amid still-strong pricing trends for popular truck and sport utility vehicles, offsetting a drop in sales in China and some other overseas markets.

The United Auto Workers strike, which has also affected fellow Detroit automakers Ford and Stellantis, cost GM \$200 million during the quarter.

The stoppage, which was launched September 15 about two weeks before the end of the quarter, has also resulted in a \$600 million hit thus far in the fourth quarter, said Chief Financial Officer Paul Jacobson.

The strike has been gradually expanded as the UAW seeks to raise pressure on Detroit's "Big Three" in a push to win higher wages and better benefits for auto workers.

SNGPL cuts off 126 connections

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 126 connections while imposing fine of Rs.13.34 million and 171 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected five connections on illegal use of gas, another eight connections on the use of compressor, Rs.11.08M have been booked against gas theft and 1FIR lodged against gas thief.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected three connections on use of compressor while another 1 against illegal use of gas. The company disconnected

18 connections on illegal use of gas while another nine on the use of compressor and 13 under billing cases have been processed in Multan.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 22 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections, the regional team also booked Rs 0.70 against gas theft.

The team also lodged 1 FIRs against gas thieves. SNGPL's team in Mardan 20 under billing cases have been processed while imposing fine of Rs 0.16million against under billing cases.

The regional team in Sargodha 49 under billing have been processed and 0.03 million Rupees booked against under billing.

In Gujranwala, 02

meters were disconnected on the use of compressor while another one on illegal use of gas and 43 under billing cases processed. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.50 Million Rupees against under billing cases.

The company disconnected 51 connections on illegal use of gas and 33 under billing cases have been processed while imposing a fine of Rs 0.82 against Under billing cases in Rawalpindi.

In Sahiwal, five connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas.

The regional team in Faisalabad disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas and 13 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.05 million have been booked against pilferers.

SECP urged to simplify procedures for companies' registration

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) president Ayub Zakori has urged the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) to take pragmatic steps in simplifying procedures and process of companies' registration.

Furthermore, he suggested the organizing special awareness seminars and programs about SECP and corporate governance rules for the business community.

Zakori made these demands during a meeting with Securities and Exchange Commission of

Pakistan (SECP) Chairman Akif Saeed, SECP Headquarters in Islamabad, said in a press release here on Tuesday.

Senator Nauman Wazir also present during the meeting. The IAP chief made several proposals for facilitating the business community.

On the occasion, IAP president Ayub Zakori and Senator Nauman Wazir apprised the Chairman SECP Akif Saeed in detail about the problems of industrialists and urged the SECP to take reforms measures to simplify companies' registration process for promotion of businesses

and industrial growth.

The meeting said that SECP is focused on taking key steps for digitization of corporate law.

The participants emphasized that regular awareness sessions regarding SECP and corporate governance rules should be conducted by SECP in Peshawar.

These will be aimed towards education and facilitation of AOPs and sole proprietorships in moving all businesses towards corporatization. For this IAP and SECP would work in a close liaison, the meeting told.

The participants appreciated SECP for introducing

a simplified process on its website to facilitate corporatization of businesses.

Ayub Zakori suggested a revamped regime of initial public offering (IPO) to make the IPO process simple & cost effective for transforming private limited company to public limited company and has been brought to maximum 14 days for further listing of a company's shares in Pakistan Stock Exchange.

In this regard FF Steel has been certified as a public limited company (first in this region since 1992) whose shares will now be enlisted in PSX, the IAP chief informed.

Pakistan's location ideal for regional connectivity: Malik

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan's geo-strategic location ideal for connecting Central Asian countries via sea routes for better and effective regional economic integration besides boosting trilateral trade.

Former president of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik stated this while talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Muslim Khan Buner here Tuesday.

Malik said that Central

Asia states are landlocked and Pakistan can provide a hassle-free shorter sea access to these countries. He said Pakistan could also comfortably facilitate Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member countries in providing regional connectivity which would promote trade among member countries and even beyond.

He said transport corridors and logistics infrastructure could benefit all

member states leading to a win-win situation. He said the SCO is multi-dimensional organisation in terms of its scope and functioning and Pakistan can benefit from it.

He said the SCO comprising 21 members with a mandate of enhancing economic cooperation could usher in an era of prosperity, progress and development in every sphere of life in the region.

Malik stressed the need for harnessing the potential

of the SCO under the leadership of China for sustained regional economic growth.

He said Pakistan as a trans-shipment and trade hub for the SCO countries could play a constructive role to further strengthening the organisation. He said private sector of Pakistan was always ready to move forward the SCO's development agenda aimed at accelerating the economic activities in the region, he concluded.

FPCCI delegation visits Spain to explore trade opportunities

LAHORE (APP): A high-profile business delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) led by its Regional Chairman Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi visited Spain to explore opportunities for promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Spain.

Having representation of various sectors including agriculture, packaging, textile, construction, stainless steel, edible crude oil and auto parts, the delegation held meetings with

Spanish counterparts and explored various areas that offered good potential for business collaboration between the private sectors of both the countries, according to the FPCCI spokesman here Tuesday.

The delegation also visited the Pakistan Embassy in Madrid and met with Aftab Ahmed Khokhar, Ambassador of Pakistan to Spain. The Commercial Section of the Pakistan Embassy in Spain extended facilitation services to the delegates.

The ambassador of Pakistan to Spain briefed the delegates about the potential areas of bilateral trade and investment

opportunities between Pakistan and Spain.

The delegates also added that the FPCCI would work closely with the Pakistan Embassy in Madrid to explore all untapped areas of bilateral collaboration between Pakistan and Spain to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for both countries.

Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi successfully delivered, at relevant forums, information about investment opportunities in Pakistan and invited potential investors to avail of them.

He highlighted opportunities in agriculture, min-

ing, science and technology, food products, especially rice, fruits, textile made-ups and auto-parts sectors.

He urged the commercial attache to facilitate the business community of Pakistan by providing the latest market intelligence reports so that exports of Pakistan can be enhanced to the maximum level.

He mentioned that FPCCI delegations aim to highlight the country's soft image and potential.

The delegation visited the Spanish Chamber of Commerce and also had one-on-one business meetings with the potential Spanish counterparts.

Tokyo shares end higher on see-saw day

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended higher on an up-and-down Tuesday over concerns about the Middle East crisis and US bond yields.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.20 percent, or 62.80 points, to 31,062.35 after spending most of the day in negative territory, while the broader Topix index edged up 0.09 percent, or 1.92 points, to 2,240.73.

Investors began the day by buying, hoping to see a natural rebound after the Nikkei index had lost more than 1,000 in the past three sessions.

But the rise of the 10-year US bond yield and worries about the Middle

East quickly drove down the Tokyo market, analysts said.

However, players still had an appetite for good bargains and returned to buying once shares fell low enough, said Chihiro Ota of SMBC Nikko Securities. "The Middle East is tense and remains a concern, but it is neither improving dramatically nor worsening," he said.

After seeing sharp falls in the morning, "the market started seeing bargains and energy returned for buyers," he added.

The dollar stood at 149.60 yen, nearly unchanged from 149.67 yen seen in New York.

Among major shares,

Nintendo reversed earlier losses and added 0.23 percent to 6,081 yen.

SoftBank Group rose 1.68 percent to 6,233 yen while semiconductor test maker Advantest rose 0.63 percent to 4,158 yen.

Sony Group gained 0.96 percent to 12,560 yen. Uniqlo-operator Fast Retailing added 1.74 percent to 33,890 yen.

Motor producer Nidec plunged 10.52 percent to 5,995 yen after it released a robust quarterly earnings report but maintained its annual outlook.

Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group lost 0.65 percent to 1,215.5 yen. Toyota fell 0.48 percent to 2,597 yen.

Court Notice

In the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No. 31/13. Institution 23/2/2023. Date of hearing. 13/11/2023. Ghani Shah VS Akram Shah etc. Notice to No 9. Naqebulah s/o Mohamad Ayaz. 10. Said Faren s/o Alizar. 11. Usman Zada. Mohamad Aziz Khan. 12. Sahubzar. 13. Yousafzars sons of Sanubar daughters of Rega tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot 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 8.30 am dated 13/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

SCCI delegation meets SBP's Chief Manager

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Senior Vice President (SVP) Wahub Jahangir led a delegation of the chamber to a meeting with State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Chief Manager Ms. Fozia Aslam and her team. The meeting was arranged by the SBP chief manager and a diverse spectrum of issues pertaining to the facilitation of export sectors were discussed. Wahub Jahangir and Ms. Fozia Aslam resolved to work closely in the best interest of members of the Sialkot chamber. A joint effort for awareness of members in terms of various SME financing options was also agreed upon.



In brief

National Basketball C'ship final today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The final of the Inter-Division National Basketball Championship Grade A would be played here at the Liaquat Gymnasium Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday. In the matches played, Peshawar defeated Faisalabad by 58-41 goals; Gujranwala beat Karachi 64-58 goals in the second match; Rawalpindi downed Hazara by 88-42 goals and in the fourth match, Lahore defeated Islamabad by 78-50 goals. Teams of eight divisions participating in the event are divided into two groups. Group A: Peshawar, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Karachi. Group B: Lahore, Islamabad, Hazara and Rawalpindi. The third position would also be played before the final match on October 25.

Marco Silva signs new deal

LONDON (BBC): Manager Marco Silva has signed a new deal with Fulham that will keep him at the club until the end of the 2025-26 season. Silva was appointed head coach in July 2021 and his existing contract would have run out at the end of the season. The 46-year-old Portuguese guided Fulham to 10th place last season on their return to the Premier League - their first top-half finish since 2012. The west London club sit 13th in the Premier League after nine games. "I'm really pleased to sign a new contract as it was something we had been discussing for some time," said Silva, who was courted by Saudi Arabian clubs in the summer. "It's always a good sign when both parties are happy and want to continue working together. I feel the business is not done yet, we've had two great seasons, and the goal is clearly there to sustain this club in the Premier League. "It is important to feel the trust and have the support of our owners. My relationship with them has been really important in this decision. Let's continue together on this long journey."

Court's final verdict on breakaway competition

BARCELONA (BBC): The European Court of Justice will deliver its final verdict on the validity of the European Super League on 21 December. It had been claimed by the ESL and its backers, A22, that Uefa and Fifa were breaking competition law by threatening to sanction clubs and players who joined the breakaway league. But in a report released last December the ECJ said the rules of football's European and world governing bodies were "compatible with EU competition law". A final outcome was expected from the ECJ's 15-strong Grand Chamber in the spring but this did not materialise. The ruling in December will be a binding interpretation of European Union law, and once handed down, the case will then be referred back to the Madrid commercial court that will apply it to the facts of the Super League case. Plans for the ESL caused a fallout across the football world when they were announced in April 2021. The six Premier League sides that signed up to the project - Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Chelsea, Tottenham and Arsenal - quickly withdrew their support after a backlash from fans, football governing bodies and even government. However, the plans have not been scrapped completely, with Real Madrid and Barcelona still pursuing the idea.

De Kock, Heinrich lead South Africa's demolition of Bangladesh

WANKHEDE (Agencies): South Africa continue to bludgeon all before their path when they bat first, and it doesn't seem to matter who's in the way.

This time, it was Bangladesh who were the unfortunate victims, with South Africa putting them to the sword in a 149-run demolition. It was led by an enormous contribution from Quinton de Kock, whose 140-ball 174 powered South Africa to 382. At the death, to help him along, he had Heinrich Klaasen, who smashed 90 off 49 balls as South Africa racked up 144 in the final 10 overs. Bangladesh were never in the chase in response and, as with every other game of South Africa in this tournament, all five bowlers chipped in with wickets.

South Africa opted to bat first and to begin things weren't as straightforward as the final scorecard might suggest. Bangladesh kept a lid on de Kock and Reeza Hendricks initially, and drew early blood when Shoriful Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraz got rid of Hendricks and Rassie van der Dussen cheaply. By the end of the eighth over, South Africa were wobbling mildly at 36 for 2, and there was little sign this pitch would be conducive to the runfest that followed.

But Aiden Markram and de Kock are arguably the two most in-form batters this tournament and, together, they began to

gradually shut Bangladesh out of the contest. The spinners were milked down the ground as Bangladesh's ability - and appetite - for wicket-taking receded. The holding pattern benefitted South Africa, given their power lower down the order, and soon enough, the boundaries began to flow. The hundred came up in the 21th over, the 100-partnership in the 26th. By now de Kock was closing in on his own hundred, while Markram had brought up a half-century.

Even the wicket of Markram - he eventually fell when he mistimed an inside-out aerial drive off Shakib - seemed to benefit South Africa. Klaasen came on at the perfect time - with 20 overs to go, he enough time to bed in before the planned carnage at the death - and a good enough platform in place. A pulled six off Shakib off his fourth ball made his intentions plain, before de Kock brought up his third hundred this World Cup.

South Africa were getting as many runs as they wanted by this stage, with the game played entirely on their terms. But the trademark brutality they demonstrated against England wasn't yet in evidence; and by the end of the 37st over, they had only just brought up the 200. What followed after that, though, was a repeat dose of what England had suffered at this venue three days earlier.

A powered six and a four

from Klaasen off Hasan Mahmud signalled South Africa's gear shift into sport mode, before de Kock cranked it up to 11 in an onslaught against the Bangladesh captain. Smashing two fours and two sixes in that Shakib over that went for 22, de Kock brought up his 150, and a further 17 from the following saw South Africa speed to 300. De Kock would be denied his own double-hundred though, holing out for 174 to deep backward point, but in Miller, they had the perfect man coming in yet again.

As Bangladesh were blown away by the flurry of fours and sixes they found themselves being peppered for, they swiftly ran out of ideas, seemingly going through the motions and looking to bring the innings to an end. The last five overs had 73 runs scored, and though Klaasen was denied another brilliant hundred, he had ensured the target was well beyond Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's chase never really got going. The intent up top wasn't evocative of a side that needed to hunt down such a huge total, and the quality of South Africa's fast bowling straitjacketed them anyway. A couple of boundaries off Lizaad Williams in the sixth over was the first sign of acceleration, but it was put down swiftly by back-to-back wickets for Marco Jansen in the next, with Tanzid Hassan and Najmal Shanto both squeezed down leg to the wicketkeeper.



WANKHEDE: Quinton de Kock and Heinrich Klaasen smashed 142 off 87 balls for the fourth wicket.

Rayan upset 8th seeded Mustansir in National Jr Tennis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Unseeded Rayan Khan upset eighth seeded Mustansir Ali Khan in the National Junior Tennis Championships -2023 kicked off here at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Tuesday.

In the boys 18 & Under Singles match unseeded Rayan Khan upset 8 Seeded Mustansir Ali Khan in a straight sets by 6-2, 7-5.

Large number of junior boys and girls were participating in the championships from all over the country. Saeed Ahmed Khan senior vice president PTF was the chief guest at the opening ceremony, Ms Zarameen Rahim-Chief Organizer,

Co. Gul Rehman (R) Secretary-General-PTF, Arif Qureshi Secretary-ITA, Khalil Chughtai-Treasurer-PTF, Rashid Ali

Tournament Coordinator were also present on the occasion.

President PTF Salim Saifullah Khan, conveyed his best wishes to all participants and advised them to continue working with zeal and passion to be a source of pride for Pakistan.

In Boys 18 & Under Singles: Abdullah khan beat Abdullah Pirzada 6-3,6-1; Saifullah Khan beat Sameer Kiyani 6-3,6-4; Amir Mazari beat Muhammad Yahya 6-0,6-3; Ali Zain beat Muhammad

haider 6-2,6-4; Inam Qadir beat Nabeel Ali Qayum 4-6,7-6(2),7-5; Rayan Khan beat Mustansir Ali Khan 6-2,7-5; Fawaz Ganjeera beat Basil Rizwan 6-3,6-1; Soohan Noor beat Hamza Khan 6-0,6-2. In Boys 14 & Under Singles: Saqib Ali beat Saifullah Azhar 5-4(3), 2-4,4-1;Razik Sultan beat Sameer Masood 4-1,4-0; Orhan Sohail beat Basil Rizwan 4-0,4-1; M. Junaid Khan beat Aliyyan Aizaz 4-1,4-0; Ammar Masood beat Ahmed Ayan ul Haq 4-1,4-0; Muhammad Yahya beat Raja Muhammad Taha 4-0,4-1.

In Boys 12 & Under Singles: Zain Roman beat Ehsan Bari 4-0,4-0.

Ben Stokes: England Test captain committed despite rejecting three-year deal: Rob Key

LONDON (BBC): Test captain Ben Stokes remains committed to England long-term despite turning down a three-year contract, says managing director Rob Key. Stokes, 32, has signed a one-year central contract extension instead. Key said Stokes did so because he feels he can negotiate a better deal next year when a new cycle of broadcast rights starts.

"By no means is it Ben Stokes saying, 'I don't want to play for England'," Key told BBC Sport.

"All he talks about is being completely committed to playing for England and also captaining that Test team - planning for India, planning for the Ashes, planning for West Indies and Sri Lanka next summer.

"I don't think it has crossed his mind not playing for England for the next four, five, six years."

England announced their first multi-year contracts on Tuesday, deals which are seen as a way to ward off interest in players from franchise leagues. Joe Root, Harry Brook and Mark Wood are the only players to sign three-year deals, while 41-year-old bowler James Anderson has, like Stokes, signed for one year.

It was reported earlier this year Wood was set to sign a lucrative deal to play in the ILT20 in the United Arab Emirates and as a result miss some of England's Test tour to India, starting in January.

Key said fast bowler Wood will now be available for the India tour, fitness permitting.

Fast bowler Jofra Archer, despite his ongoing injury issues, and Jos Buttler were both offered three-year deals but have signed for two. Spinner Adil Rashid, 35, has also signed a two-year extension.

No player rejected a deal outright. The format of England's central

contracts is tied to the broadcast deal, meaning more money may be available and players' worth might be calculated differently next year.

Players that agree to their deals now will stay on those terms.

"Ben, quite rightly, feels when the next memorandum of understanding starts and the contract cycle changes he will be in a stronger position," added managing director of England men's cricket Key.

"Other players have gone for that security," He added: "I'm surprised in a way - I thought more people might not have taken the multi-year element. "That's a credit to the players that they are prepared to commit to English cricket, when for the first time ever they have so many more opportunities." All-rounder Stokes, who has led the Test side since April 2022, came out of one-day international retirement for the ongoing 50-over World Cup, but is only playing as a batter because of a long-standing knee injury.

In total, the England and Wales Cricket Board has given out 18 multi-year deals, in addition to eight lasting one year and three development contracts. Spinner Rehan Ahmed, pace bowlers Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue and batter Ben Duckett have signed their first England contracts - all on two-year deals.

Also on two-year deals are Jonny Bairstow, Test opener Zak Crawley, batter Ollie Pope, plus all-rounders Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone and Chris Woakes.

Wicketkeeper Ben Foakes, who was dropped for the Ashes series in the summer, all-rounder Moeen Ali, spinner Jack Leach, batter Dawid Malan and bowlers Ollie Robinson

and Reece Topley join Stokes and Anderson on one-year contracts.

Saqib Mahmood, currently out with a second back stress fracture in two years, Hampshire seamer John Turner and Yorkshire quick Matthew Fisher have been given development contracts. The deals are backdated to start from 1 October 2023.

Key said England will have control over their multi-year players when there are clashes in the schedule, although it will not mean they do not play any franchise cricket.

"What the multi-year deals have done is get players to commit to England for the foreseeable future - that is a fantastic thing," he added.

Jason Roy, who was dropped from England's 50-over World Cup squad for Brook, does not have a contract after he ended his deal in May to play in the American T20 Major League Cricket. Left-arm David Willey, currently part of England's World Cup squad, has lost his deal, as have pace bowlers Craig Overton, Jamie Overton and Olly Stone, who all had development deals last year.

Stuart Broad is the other player no longer contracted from 2022-23 following his retirement after the final Ashes Test.

Three-year contracts: Harry Brook, Joe Root, Mark Wood

Two-year contracts: Rehan Ahmed, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler, Brydon Carse, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Liam Livingstone, Ollie Pope, Matthew Potts, Adil Rashid, Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes

One-year contracts: Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Ben Foakes, Jack Leach, Dawid Malan, Ollie Robinson, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley

Development contract: Matthew Fisher, Saqib Mahmood, John Turner

Rangers stun Astros to reach World Series, Arizona-Phillies level

PHILADELPHIA (AFP/APP): The Texas Rangers booked their place in the World Series with a stunning 11-4 thrashing of the defending champion Houston Astros in Major League Baseball's playoffs on Monday.

Adolis Garcia blasted two home runs, with Corey Seager and Nathaniel Lowe also grabbing homers as Texas romped to a victory that completed its 4-3 American League Championship Series win.

The result means Texas will advance to the World Series for the first time since losing back-to-back appearances in the Fall Classic in 2010 and 2011.

The Rangers are one of six MLB teams never to win the World Series - but are now set to believe anything is possible after demolishing the Astros in ruthless fashion.

Houston had looked poised to return to the World Series for the fifth time since 2017 after overturning a 2-0 series deficit to lead 3-2 after game five last week. But Texas squared the series with a 9-

2 victory on Sunday and then cut loose once more on Monday at Houston's Minute Maid Park, leaving home fans stunned.

Rangers star Seager said Texas had never doubted their ability to win the final two games of the series in Houston to advance.

"This team's tough," Seager said. "We were never out of it. We knew what we had in front of us and we took the opportunity." Texas will face either the Philadelphia Phillies or the Arizona Diamondbacks in game one of the World Series on Friday. Arizona kept their National League Championship Series against Philadelphia alive earlier Monday after pitcher Merrill Kelly delivered a gem in a 5-1 victory to force a winner-take-all game seven.

Arizona right-hander Kelly struck out eight batters for just one run from a Phillies line-up that had not lost at home all postseason before Monday's defeat at Citizens Bank Park.

Arizona will head into Tuesday's decider in a confident mood after producing a disciplined perform-

ance to frustrate the Phillies' attempt to wrap up the NLCS. "It's going to be fun," Kelly said of Tuesday's game seven.

"The fact that we're here -- I don't think anybody thought we would even take it to game six. I don't think anybody even thought we would make it to game one... We're going to enjoy it and take it all in, but we're definitely coming out competitive and trying to win." The tone was set early with Arizona cutting loose in the top of the second inning after Tommy Pham and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. crunched back-to-back home runs off Aaron Nola to give the Diamondbacks a 2-0 lead before Evan Longoria's sharp line drive allowed Alek Thomas to score to make it 3-0.

There were signs of a Phillies rally in the bottom of the inning when Brandon Marsh doubled for J.T. Realmuto to score to make it 3-1. But Kelly then extricated himself from the jam, striking out Trea Turner with two runners stranded on base to end the inning.

Our focus on finishing World Cup in right way: Richard Wigglesworth

LONDON (Agencies): Attack coach Richard Wigglesworth has said England will not let investigations into an alleged on-pitch slur distract them from Friday's Rugby World Cup third-place play-off against Argentina.

World Rugby are reviewing comments that flanker Tom Curry claims were made to him by South Africa hooker Bongli Mbonambi in Saturday's semi-final defeat.

"It's noise that isn't about Friday - our prep and our desire to finish in the right way," said Wigglesworth.

"We're really motivated to show our progress, to finish in the right way. That is with a win and a feeling that we deserve."

England beat Argentina in their tournament opener, despite losing Curry to a third-minute red card in Marseille.

The 25-year-old finds himself at the centre of controversy once again after the referee's microphone picked up his complaint about an alleged racial slur by Mbonambi.

It has been suggested on social media that Mbonambi may have been making a tactical call in Afrikaans which sounds like an offensive phrase

in English.

"I'm not sure you can ever put yourself in those shoes and know how it feels, but what I do know is that Tom's an impressive young man who if selected on Friday, he'll pour everything into that England shirt," added Wigglesworth.

"World Rugby have been pretty vocal in following up things in the past and they need to do the same again." The rematch with the Pumas could be the final Test in several England players' careers. Courtney Lawes will retire from international rugby at the end of the tournament, while wing Jonny May says it is "more than likely" he will also call time on England duty after Friday's game. Asked whether it is hard for the team to pick themselves up mentally after suffering the late defeat by the Springboks, number eight Ben Earl cited the motivation to pay tribute to Lawes, May and potentially others with a victory.

"It is hard - very hard," he said.

"We have got to lean on each other and give those boys, for who it might be their last game for England, the send-off they deserve.

"For Courtney to be playing some of his best rugby last weekend, in what could have been one of his last games for England, is testament to the type of player he is.

"It says a lot about him. It is probably one of the most selfless decisions you can make, pulling your own plug on your international career."

Earl has been one of the breakout stars of England's campaign. The 24-year-old made his first international start in August in a World Cup warm-up win over Wales, but has made more runs and tackles than any other England player in a string of all-action performances at France 2023.

"I'm really pleased with what I've put out in this campaign," he added. "I'm just glad I could contribute with a rose on my chest. There's a few of us now that have a bit of individual responsibility, a small group of us that have now got to think what's next for this England team.

"There's no secret there's going to be a little bit of a transition. The really experienced guys maybe not being involved any more. It's up to us now to take that mantle on and see where we can take the team."



In brief

IRSA releases 83,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 83,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.61 feet and 130.61 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 31,500 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.05 feet, which was 158.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,500 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 50,800, 44,700, 37,900 and 10,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Metro-bus goes out of control

ISLAMABAD (APP): Several passengers received minor injuries as the driver of Metro-bus had lost control and drove the bus over the boundary wall near Faiz Ahmed Faiz metro bus station here on Tuesday. According to details, eye-witnessed said that the metro bus moving towards Rawalpindi to Islamabad when accident occurred, in result several persons being injured, a private news channel reported. Sources said that the authorities have decided to register a case and initiate legal proceedings against the driver for what is being considered 'criminal negligence of driver'. The bus windshield, body and bumper were also partially damaged in that incident.

'CTP ensure transparency'

RAWALPINDI (APP): The officers of City Traffic Police (CTP), Licensing Branch have been directed to ensure merit and transparency said Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan. He said that the CTP was issuing computerized driving licenses under a transparent procedure. He informed that in order to provide a driving license facility to the residents at tehsil level, CTP had taken solid steps. The CTO informed that the centers at tehsil level were catering to the needs of local residents and surrounding areas and the citizens were getting all licensing services under one roof at the Kidmat centres. He said the CTP Licensing Branch was providing all services under one roof at One Window Operation of CTP headquarters. Tamoor Khan said that the citizens should directly contact the licensing branch of the traffic police and get all the required information in this regard so that they could not face any difficulty regarding the issuance of driving license. In case of any difficulty, the citizens could also contact CTP's helpline 1915 and 051-9272616. The CTO informed that the driving license branch is corruption-free and working in a transparent way.

Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered nine stolen motorcycles from their possession, said a police spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, New Town Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Adnan and Naeem Ullah and recovered nine stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif chairing meeting on National Space Policy.

Pakistan continues efforts to defeat polio virus: Shahzad Baig

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication Dr Shahzad Asif Baig on Tuesday said that Pakistan will continue its efforts to defeat the polio virus.

He urged all political leaders, religious leaders, doctors, teachers, and artists to play an important role in strengthening the national polio campaign.

Talking to the PTV news channel on 'World Polio Day' he called upon the international community to look towards Pakistan and provide all possible cooperation in

this regard so that the country works to eradicate polio.

He also acknowledged Pakistan's efforts to eradicate polio and reiterated his foundation's continued support to Pakistan for ensuring that no child was at risk of paralysis due to the poliovirus.

"People are still sceptical about the poliovirus vaccine and continuous migration, along with the porous border with Afghanistan, are becoming major causes behind the resurgence of the virus," he added. The majority of cases that have been found are saturated in the region

that lies along the border, he added.

He also expressed the hope that Pakistan would soon be removed from the list of polio-affected countries by achieving the target of not reporting any new cases for a year.

He also maintained that the media should convince the public to vaccinate their children positively.

World Polio Day also provides an opportunity to highlight global efforts toward a polio-free world and honour the tireless contributions of those on the front lines in the fight to eradicate this disease, he added.

23 New dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 23 new dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,163.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, said that, among the new cases, 13 patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, six from Municipal Corporation area and two of each from Chaklala Cantonment, and Potohar rural. He said 83 patients were admitted to the city's allied hospitals, out of which 59 were confirmed cases while 2,103 were discharged after treatment.

Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered ten FIRs, issued tickets to 10, sealed three premises, and a fine of Rs 194,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

He added that dengue fever cases have registered a sharp decrease in the city during the last two days with changing weather condition as eight patients had been reported to the district health facilities on Sunday and 23 today while during the last month the number of daily patients were between 40 to 60.

The health officer expressed hope that dengue cases would decrease further in the coming days, however he urged the residents to be careful during wee hours and in the evening as it is the suitable time for mosquito bite.

42nd meeting of HEC held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The governing body of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) here on Tuesday held its 42nd meeting to discuss the commission's policies and operations for betterment of the higher education sector.

Presiding the meeting, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed welcomed the newly appointed members of the commission and briefed them about HEC's objectives, functions, achievements, and the challenges. The meeting emphasized upon prioritizing and realigning strategic direction of the higher education sector to the national needs and impact for the socio-economic development of the country. The commission also deliberated upon the provision of Recurring Grant to new universities/HEIs and approved the HEC Recurring & Development Allocations for the current financial year 2023-24 and revised estimates for 2022-23.

The meeting was attended by DSP Security, SDPOs, SHOs, In-charge Dolphin, District Security Officer and other officials. The CPO gave instructions for a special crack-down against aerial firing, fireworks and illegal weapons.

He said that strict action must be taken against culprits involved in such crimes. The citizens cooperation is very important in the campaign against deadly crime like aerial firing.

He appealed Citizens to report against aerial firing,

Health minister pays tribute to polio workers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan Tuesday paid tribute to all the polio workers for performing their duties with honesty during the anti-polio drives and reaffirmed his government's commitment to end all forms of polio in Pakistan.

Talking to the PTV news channel, on the eve of World Polio Day, he appreciated the polio workers and law enforcement agencies for carrying out their responsibilities with full dedication during polio campaigns. He urged parents living in far-flung areas of the country to cooperate with the polio teams, and "save your children from this fatal disease."

Minister for health praised Pakistan had

making great strides in the fight against poliovirus, adding that the efforts and sacrifices of the field vaccination teams, who face difficult field conditions and dangerous challenges, greatly contribute to the success of the campaigns and reducing the spread of polio-virus.

He also thanked the international community, donors, and global polio eradication partners for their support in the fight against polio as well as parents and caregivers for recognizing the importance of protecting their children from the virus.

Replying to a question, he said behind the administration of every polio drop there is a lot of effort at a national and international level.

US Water Resources Expert calls on Chairman WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): US Water Resources expert Ms. Alexandra Campbell Ferrari Tuesday called on Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Engr Lt Gen (Retd) Sajjad Ghani.

The matters relating to overall water scenario, change in climatic pattern and its impacts on water resources of Pakistan were discussed at length during the meeting, said a press release. Speaking on the occasion, the chairman said that concerted efforts were needed globally to tackle the adverse impact of climatic change on water resources.

He said WAPDA was pursuing green strategies in view of climatic change by

developing water and hydropower projects for sustained economic growth in Pakistan.

Acknowledging the US support for WAPDA in harnessing water and hydropower resources, the chairman expressed the hope that the visit of the US water resources expert would help explore opportunities for strengthening bilateral partnership on water management, environment and climate action.

Later, Ms. Alexandra Campbell Ferrari attended a briefing about water and hydropower resources of Pakistan and the challenges and prospects in the wake of climate change.

Member Finance, Member Water and

Member Power were also present on the occasion.

Briefing her about WAPDA's charter, the GM (Coordination and Monitoring) Water said that WAPDA's functions were aligned with a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

She was also informed about development portfolio of WAPDA projects.

She was apprised that WAPDA would add about 10 Million Acre Feet to the water storage and 10,000 Mega Watt to the installed generation capacity of clean, green and low-cost hydel electricity in Pakistan with completion of its under construction projects by 2029 in a phased manner.

CUI awards degrees to 938 students at convocation

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 938 students of COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Wah Campus at undergraduate and graduate levels received degrees at a convocation ceremony held here on Tuesday.

The graduating students were awarded with degrees in the discipline of Management Sciences, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics.

A total of 36 graduates were awarded with gold, silver, and bronze medals at the Institute and Campus level on account of their excellent academic performance. While 20 graduates were awarded with the PhD degrees in the disciplines of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science, and

Management Sciences, Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad was chief guest.

On the occasion, the Director, COMSATS University Islamabad, Wah Campus, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abid presented a Campus report in which he highlighted the achievements and future plans including the ongoing construction of Academic Block-I. He congratulated the graduates and their parents for the successful completion of their educational journey and advised them to continue hard work and dedication in the coming years of life. Director Campus also highlighted the University Ranking, Campus facilities, scholarship opportunities, laboratories, and highly qualified faculty available at the Campus.

Dr. Mukhtar, in his

remarks, congratulated all graduating students and their parents on attaining degrees and advised them to work hard, and contribute to the development of the country and nation.

He also congratulated the teaching faculty of the university who stand behind the success of these graduates as equally as their parents.

He stressed that the research of faculty should focus on the impact on the community. The Rector CUI, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar advised graduating students to be ready and learn rapid technological advancement in the world for future challenging opportunities and to contribute to the economic development of the country. He acknowledged the contributions of the faculty and staff for the success of this Convocation and CUI.

Crime review meeting held

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani here on Tuesday held a meeting at Police Lines Headquarters to review crime situation.

The meeting was attended by DSP Security, SDPOs, SHOs, In-charge Dolphin, District Security Officer and other officials. The CPO gave instructions for a special crack-down against aerial firing, fireworks and illegal weapons.

He said that strict action must be taken against culprits involved in such crimes. The citizens cooperation is very important in the campaign against deadly crime like aerial firing.

He appealed Citizens to report against aerial firing,

illegal weapons and fireworks on 15 helpline, so that legal action could be taken against them, he added. He made it clear that it is prime duty of police to protect the lives and properties of people.

The CPO pointed out that strict action would be taken against officials found negligent in performing their duties.

Railways to lay fibre optics cable along railway tracks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has been planning to lay fibre optics cables along the railway tracks across the country, in a joint venture with private sector investors to generate revenue for the department. "Pakistan Railways has around 7,791 kilometres railway network across the country which will not only help the department to improve its financial condition but also attract investors to invest," the official sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said the matter also came under discussion during a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), in which the Ministry of Railways pointed out that the department was offering an excellent opportunity for laying fibre optics cables along its track for digital connectivity across the country.

During the meeting, they said Pakistan Railways informed that it has a network of 7,791 km, which passes through high-density population areas and connects major cities in the four provinces.

They said with the average assets and

hefty pension bills, Pakistan Railways contended, but its financial health was deteriorating, and unless new revenue sources were identified, the reliance on government subsidy would keep on growing. The sources said that Pakistan Railways was of the view that right-of-way charges on fibre optics cables would offer the department a decent source of earnings.

They said that the Ministry of Railways had already sent a summary to the concerned quarter for adoption of the business model of laying fibre optics cables in a joint venture with private-sector investors on railway land due to poor financial health and limited earning sources.

Then, the sources said that the concerned quarter, while agreeing to the proposal, directed the Ministry of Railways to prepare a new draft policy in consultation with all stakeholders, which would have a positive impact on developing the digital economy, and place the matter before the ECC for review.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing clothes from a vendor at H9 Bazar in the Federal Capital.

ARCS to provide medical care

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has continued its efforts to provide medical care to ill children by referring 20 minors with heart diseases to two hospitals in Kabul. According to a statement released by ARCS, the treatment costs for these children are covered by the humanitarian organization. In the past 15 months, ARCS has referred a total of 1,972 children, many of whom had heart problems, to various hospitals for treatment.

Deputy PM hails victory

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Kabir congratulated the Afghanistan National Cricket Team for their remarkable performance in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023. In a message, Deputy Prime Minister praised the cricket players for their significant achievement and said that Afghan youths are capable in every field and can win. He wished them more success in the future.

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

Progress in Afghan security improving: Sinirlioglu

KABUL (Agencies): Feridun Sinirlioglu, the special coordinator of the United Nations for Afghanistan affairs and his accompanying delegation, in a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi said that, good progress has been made in Afghanistan, especially in the field of security and stability has been established.

In this meeting Feridun Sinirlioglu gave information about his evaluation of Afghanistan and said that we are trying to resolve the misunderstanding between the international community and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

He added that Afghanistan has a long history and we want to have good relations with the Islamic Emirate and we wish Afghanistan to live in peace with its neighbors and the world and be an active member of the international community.

He said that work should be done on technical and development assistance for Afghanistan, because the people of Afghanistan need such assistance.

At the same time, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs

Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi, while welcoming them, said: "The Islamic Emirate seeks positive interaction with the world in an atmosphere of mutual respect and interaction, and such meetings between the officials of the Islamic Emirate and the United Nations are aimed at resolving misunderstandings. It is good and issues should be resolved through dialogue and discussion."

Referring to the positive developments after the rule of the Islamic Emirate, Mr. Hanafi said that complete security has been ensured in Afghanistan, the cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotics has been banned, administrative corruption has been prevented, amnesty has been declared and remains in force. A thousand addicts have been collected and treated, the press operates within the framework of Islamic principles and national interests, and the rights of all citizens of the country are regulated according to Islamic principles.

"We want to settle Afghanistan and heal the wounds of the past four decades, and the Islamic Emirate will not allow anyone to use Afghanistan's soil against the security of



others," Hanafi added.

Mr. Hanafi also said: "We hope that the misunderstandings between the Islamic Emirate and the international community will be resolved with your mission."

TOLOnews adds: The UN's Special Coordinator on Afghanistan, Feridun H. Sinirlioglu, on his visit to Afghanistan, met with several officials of the Islamic Emirate and influential political leaders.

In April this year, The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Sinirlioglu, who is from Türkiye, to lead an independent assessment to pro-

vide recommendations for addressing challenges faced by Afghanistan.

As "Special Coordinator," Sinirlioglu will lead the assessment with a view to providing "recommendations for an integrated and coherent approach," the statement of Guterres' spokesman said.

Former president Hamid Karzai, in his meeting with Sinirlioglu, reiterated that "national understanding" is the only way to establish lasting peace and stability in the country.

The former president wrote on X that he praised Sinirlioglu's efforts to improve the economic situ-

ation and ensure stability in the country and called for girls' education and women's return to work as vital to Afghanistan's development.

Abdullah Abdullah, former chairperson of the High Council for National Reconciliation, also wrote on X about his meeting with Sinirlioglu and expressed his appreciation for the UN's role and humanitarian support for the people of Afghanistan.

Abdullah thanked him for his diligent efforts in assessing the UN's role in Afghanistan and wished him success.

He also held a meeting



with the acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, where Haqqani stressed that it is the responsibility of the United Nations to ensure international peace and resolve issues through dialogue and neutrality in Afghanistan as well as that necessary steps should be taken with the Afghans in this regard.

Haqqani also further said that the UN is ready to cooperate with Afghanistan in the fields of strengthening international relations, reconstruction, and combating narcotics in a complete way.

"In this meeting, issues relevant to the current chal-

lenges and improving relations of the Islamic Emirate with the international community were discussed," said Abdul Matin Qani, a spokesman for the MoI.

The political analysts suggested that the Islamic Emirate should observe international conventions in a bid to resolve the existing challenges in the country "Mr Sinirlioglu is a good diplomat. But his faded (weak) actions will cause the challenges and problems of Afghanistan to be forgotten by the world," said Tareq Farhadi, a political analyst.

"The recognition of the country needs the satisfac-

tion of people at national levels and preserving international convention, so the Islamic Emirate should pay attention to this," said Mohammad Omar Nuhzat, head of the Hezb-e-Ama.

The Islamic Emirate regained power in Afghanistan in August 2021, but it has yet to be recognized by any world country.

The restrictive policies of the interim government of women and human rights including a ban on female education and the lack of an inclusive government are said to be the main obstacles for recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

UN organizations concerned by lack of funds for victims

KABUL (TOLOnews): Organizations of the United Nations, including the World Food Program, the International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations Children's Fund, have announced that the victims of the Herat earthquake need immediate humanitarian aid.

These organizations have said that they are facing a lack of funds.

"We are quickly running out of funds, and the affected communities need more than the emergency assistance to rebuild their lives," the WFP said.

"People affected by the Herat earthquakes need immediate help. We're on the ground to provide support, together with our partners," said IOM.

"The lack of necessary coordination and joint cooperation between domestic organizations and foreign organizations in the field of aid has caused a series of declines in the level of need for aid, but it appears from the situation that the level of need for aid will increase with the arrival of the winter season," said Shaker Yaqub, an economist.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan wrote in a report that "more than 21,500 homes have been completely destroyed (8,429) – mostly in Herat, Injil and Zindajan districts – and severely damaged (17,088) in the earthquakes."

The Ministry of Economy considers the assistance of the United Nations organizations to be a serious need for the victims of the Herat earthquake.

"Aid from the international community and the United Nations can help in the reconstruction of earthquake-affected areas and in the development and employment projects for many people," said Habib Rahman Habibi, spokesman for the Ministry of Economy.

Meanwhile, an institution in Qatar has launched a campaign to collect food and medical equipment for the survivors of the Herat earthquake.

"Qatar Charity began distributing food baskets to those affected by the earth-

quake that struck Afghanistan recently, and this came in conjunction with the launch of its "Help Afghanistan" campaign to show solidarity with the Afghan people and help those affected by the earthquake."

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the aid of 50,000 dollars from China for the earthquake victims of Herat.

In the earthquakes nearly two weeks ago in Herat, dozens of villages in the Zindajan, Injil, and Kashk Rabat Sangi districts of the province were completely destroyed.

In these earthquakes, hundreds of houses were seriously damaged in other parts of Herat.

18 uplift projects completed

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development announced the completion of 18 development projects.

The Ministry's press office released the news today, stating that 18 development projects in different parts of the Koot district in Nangarhar have been successfully completed. These projects, valued at 3.5 million Afghani, were completed with financial support from UN Development Fund and technical collaboration from the DACAR Institution, under the supervision of the Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

With the completion of these projects, some of the transportation and irrigation issues for the residents of the mentioned district have been resolved.

Construction of new dam to begin in Warsaj district

TAKHAR (Agencies): Acting Minister of Energy and Water Abdul Latif Mansoor said this week during a trip to Takhar province, where he visited Tangi in Warsaj district, that construction of a hydroelectric dam will soon start in the province once all assessments have been

carried out. Mansoor said once complete, the dam will not only store an abundant amount of water but it will irrigate 365,000 acres of land, and produce 80 megawatts of electricity, which will cover Takhar, Kunduz and Badakhshan provinces.

Takhar's local officials

said that there are three locations for the construction of hydroelectric dams in this province, and thousands of acres of agricultural land will be irrigated.

Takhar residents have welcomed the move and said little attention was paid to them in the past by the former government.

‘Connecting Afghanistan to BRI discussed’



KABUL (TOLOnews): Sediqullah Abid, Deputy of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, said that during his trip to China there was a discussion about increasing flights, making it easier to get visas, and connecting Afghanistan to the "Belt and Road Initiative" project.

After his trip to China, Abid emphasized that the problems in obtaining a Chinese visa will be resolved.

"Travel and flight visas have been discussed, problem-solving and increasing flights between Kabul and China have been discussed," said Sediqullah Abid.

Abid has said that currently the groundwork for the implementation of large projects in Afghanistan has been provided, and during the visit to China, he also called for the connection of Afghanistan to the "Belt and Road Initiative" project. "The current situation of Afghanistan, the Islamic system is ruling, and the security is all over, and the ground has been provided for the implementation of the project," said Sediqullah Abid.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that in order to increase trade between Afghanistan and China, it is necessary for the Islamic Emirate to provide more facilities.

"I hope that the trip will have good results, both in terms of flights and cargo. We import all raw materials from China

and we need to have good communication with China," said Mohammad Yonis Momand, deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

"As much as the economic relations between the two countries improve and the challenges are removed, the development of trade and investment will definitely be effective for both countries," said Sakhi Ahmad Payman, deputy of the Chamber of Industry and Mines. Earlier, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that China and Afghanistan are interested in connecting through the Wakhan Corridor.

Women's rights activist Manijeh held

KABUL (Khaama Press): Sources report that Manijeh Seddiqi, a women's rights activist and one of the protesting women, was arrested by the de facto administration 15 days ago.

On Monday afternoon, Leila Basim, a member of the leadership of the grassroots women's protest movement in Afghanistan, announced in a message to Khaama Press News Agency that the Taliban forces had detained Manijeh Seddiqi from the Kart-e-Naw area of Kabul last month.

According to Ms Basim, "Manijeh Seddiqi's family tried to keep her detention a secret for these 15 days to resolve the matter through tribal elders, but their efforts have been unsuccessful."

The reason for Ms Seddiqi's detention is unclear, and the Taliban government has not provided any information.

Manijeh Seddiqi is the third grassroots women's protest member to be held in custody for some time. Previously, the Taliban administration detained Neda Parwani, her child, husband, and Julia Parsi in the capital, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Women's protest movements and civil society activists in Afghanistan have launched a campaign on social media in response to the news of Manijeh Seddiqi's detention, calling on the current Taliban regime to release the detained activists.

Restrictions on women endanger Herat victims



HERAT (Khaama Press): Based on information from United Nations officials, international media have stated that the restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities have created challenging conditions and left the Herat tragedy victims in a dangerous and vulnerable situation.

According to a United Nations official, as reported by the Associated Press on Sunday, it has been highlighted that women without Identity Card ("tazkira") and unaccompanied by a male "mahram" cannot access humanitarian assistance.

However, sources have informed Khaama Press News Agency that women affected by the earthquake in several villages were initially denied treatment by male doctors.

The UN Women's Division also stated in its recent report that women have faced various challenges following the devastating earthquake in Herat,

which claimed over a thousand lives, making it difficult for them to access humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hamida Azimi, one of the physicians at Herat Provincial Hospital who went to the earthquake-stricken areas, told Khaama Press that all of the people's belongings, including their documents like identity cards, are buried under the rubble. She added, "When everything, including people, is buried under the debris, where can they get their tazkira? This is not fair. On top of that, some are taking advantage and receiving aid when they are not even affected."

According to the statistics provided by UN relief agencies in Afghanistan, 90% of the earthquake victims are women and children. Some civil activists in Herat believe that the earthquake occurred when most women and children were inside their homes while

men were engaged in outdoor activities.

On the other hand, a source reports that in Taliban-controlled areas, women were initially denied treatment by male doctors. According to the source, after realizing the need for medical assistance, women were sent to the hospital in Herat on the governor's orders.

The United Nations identifies another challenge earthquake-affected women face: the shortage of female staff in relief agencies, which has hindered timely aid delivery.

It is worth mentioning that the most significant upcoming challenge for the earthquake survivors in Herat is the lack of shelter during the approaching winter. According to relief agencies, the Herat earthquake, which destroyed dozens of villages, has resulted in 1,482 casualties, while the Taliban authorities claim a death toll of 2,000.

Bayat Foundation continues its earthquake relief campaign in Herat

HERAT (Agencies): Bayat Foundation continued to distribute relief packages to dozens of earthquake affected families – this time in Gozrah district of Herat province.

The aid packages include winter clothing and necessary home appliances including gas cookers.

Survivors of the string of deadly earthquakes have welcomed the aid, many of whom have lost everything, including their homes and livelihood.

"We have lost work and livelihood. A world of thanks to you for helping us. It will provide some welfare to people," Nisar Ahmad Azimi, a resident of Herat, said.

"Currently, people are living in tents and gardens with problems. The weather is too cold. If a blanket, rug or dish is distributed, we would greatly appreciate it. May any organization that has provided this aid be rewarded," Abdul Ahmad Ahmadi, another Herat resident said.

These survivors have raised their concerns about winter that is fast approaching. Without basic necessities, and only having tents for shelter, the earthquake victims are becoming increasingly worried about conditions over the next few months.

They have said however that every piece of aid received is much appreciated, especially as temperatures drop considerably at night.

"I pull the blanket over me. I turn on the gas cylinder and cook something. I throw the carpet under me," Khyal Bibi, one quake victim said. Outreach was in continuation of Bayat Foundation's ongoing campaign to help as many victims as possible each day.

Foundation officials distributed packages including blankets, carpets, gas burners and warm clothing to dozens of earthquake-affected families in Shorabak and Faizabad villages in Injil district.

At least three deadly 6.3 magnitude quakes rocked the province earlier this month completely destroying 20 villages. Over 2,000 people were killed and thousands more left homeless.

Foreign aid has been sent into the area but officials continue to appeal for more assistance especially ahead of winter and amid dropping temperatures.

Red Cross pledges expanded aid to earthquake victims

KABUL (Agencies): John Patrick Naughton, the regional representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), met with Maulana Nour Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, to discuss expanding aid to victims of a recent earthquake in the region.

The ICRC representative assured that they would collaborate with the Afghan Red Crescent to provide aid to the affected areas and expressed readiness to cooperate with local authorities in Herat.

Governor Islam Jar expressed gratitude for the Red Cross's efforts and emphasized the importance of prompt delivery of humanitarian aid.

He also urged all organizations and institutions to coordinate with local administration in assisting the victims of the earthquake.

The recent earthquake in Herat resulted in significant loss and damage, claiming over a thousand lives, injuring nearly two thousand others, and leaving around three thousand families homeless.



ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif leaving after his hearing at High Court.

Russia claims destruction of three Ukrainian boats

MOSCOW: Russia's Ministry of Defence says its naval forces have destroyed three unmanned Ukrainian boats in the northern part of the Black Sea off the Crimean Peninsula, the latest in a series of attacks around the contested waterway that is crucial to Russia's offensive against Kyiv.

"Anti-sabotage missiles and bombs hit the area where the unmanned boats were detected," the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app on Tuesday. It added that an anti-mining and an "anti-sabotage" operation was being conducted off the port of Sevastopol in the Black Sea, where Russia's Black Sea Fleet is based. Moscow has used that fleet, comprised of some 30 warships, to try to blockade Ukraine's coastline and fire missiles at Ukrainian cities.

It was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties from the latest Black Sea attack — and Kyiv issued no immediate comment. Ukraine has in recent months stepped up attacks on Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, helping it win back limited control of the Black Sea and, at times, push Russian warships further east.

In September, Kyiv claimed it had hit two naval vessels and struck Sevastopol's port infrastructure, inflicting what appeared to be the most severe damage to that area in the war. "Ukraine's actions have wrestled control of Ukraine's western territorial waters back from Russia and prevented the Black Sea Fleet from threatening Odessa with amphibious assault or providing tactical fires and logistical support to

Russian forces in Kherson," retired US Army Major-General Gordon Skip Davis Jr told Al Jazeera in early October.

Ukraine's engagement in the Black Sea has helped it establish a new "humanitarian corridor" in the waterway to get out its exports after Moscow deserted a deal to guarantee Kyiv's shipments in July. Since the opening of the corridor, which cuts through the waters of NATO members Bulgaria and Romania to deter Russia, Ukraine has exported some 700,000 tonnes of grain, helping it preserve a key component of its economy.

"We see a trend towards an increase in the number of ships leaving our ports. We hope it will continue," senior Ukrainian agricultural official Mykola Solsky said on Monday. — Aljazeera

Solangi backs effective border management

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said peace was linked with Pakistan and Afghanistan and effective border management and security was in the interest of the peoples of both countries.

In a meeting with Afghan media delegation, problems of Afghan journalists, visa issues and other important issues were discussed. He said it was the responsibility of the media to identify the enemies of peace so that the state could defeat them. Murtaza Solangi held out the assurance that the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be contacted on the visa issues of Afghan journalists.

As a responsible state, Pakistan will ensure that all foreigners enter the country through legal channels, he added. The delegation of Afghan journalists thanked the Federal Minister of Information for the assurance to redress their issues.

AML chief hospitalized

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former federal minister interior minister Sheikh Rasheed was shifted to the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC) due to chest pain, says in media reports.

According to details, AML chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed's condition suddenly fell ill, after which he was shifted to a hospital. Sources further claim that Sheik Rasheed underwent a preliminary medical examination in the emergency department of the hospital and an ECG was done, after which he was admitted to the hospital due to a heart problem. It should be noted that the former Interior Minister, Sheikh Rasheed, came to the public after remaining in hiding for several days. In this regard, the AML chief, while talking to a private TV channel, said that he had gone to Chilla, no one had harmed him, the news keeps appearing, and God has given me a chance to do Chilla, which passed happily.

Afghan artists challenge forced repatriation at PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: As many as three Afghan artists including Hasmat Ullah residing in different refugee camps across Pakistan had approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) against their forced repatriation to Afghanistan.

The writ filed by Mumtaz Khan advocate stated that the petitioners are artists and musicians residing in different refugee camps with their families after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan on 15th August 2021.

The writ pleaded that Taliban authorities ordered actions against artists and musicians publicly which led to closure of their businesses as well as livelihood. The petition argued that forced repatriation had caused a serious messy among Afghans regarding their future.

The petitioners had obtained registration from United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) as well as number had also granted to them, the writ added. In 1993 Government of Pakistan with UNHCR had granted refugee status to Afghans under International Law.

Both Pakistan and UNHCR had agreed that Afghans refugee will be repatriate slowly and gradually after sustainable peace in Afghanistan and no one will harass them, the writ pleaded. The petition added that Pakistan is a signatory of Beijing Declaration 1995 on Civil and Political Rights which bars the member states from forced repatriation of

refugees.

The counsel Mumtaz Khan advocate pleaded that Article 2 and 25 of Constitution of Pakistan provides security to petitioners because they are facing life threats in Afghanistan as artists are slaughtering on daily basis. The petition pleaded to dealt applicants under constitutional securities and rights as Supreme Court of Pakistan had granted a judgement in this regard recently.

The writ further requested to stop repatriation of artists as well as other refugees possessing registration number because law and order situation of Afghanistan isn't satisfactory.

The petition argued PHC to stop the government and concerned departments from arrest and repatriation of petitioners because refugee with registration number can stay as refugee under International conventions as can't be deported forcibly.

Ministry of Interior, Federal Investigation Agency, Director General Passport and Immigration, Cabinet Division, Additional Chief Secretary and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been respondents in the case.

Meanwhile, a divisional comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered Additional Chief Secretary Home along with police authorities for submission of reply regarding failure in elimination of encroachment at Shoba bazaar Peshawar.

The counsel Zia-ur-Rehman Tajik advocate argued that traffic jam at

Shoba bazaar is fact of the day due to encroachment in the premises which had impacted business community as well as clients of lawyers visiting their offices for consultation. The counsel added that competent authorities are approached multiple times in this regard but to no veil and filed writ petition before PHC for redressal of grievances.

However, Cantonment Board's lawyer informed that the petitioner had made the board is respondent but the locality laying in the jurisdiction of provincial government. He added that provincial government would act in this regard as Cantonment Board didn't have the jurisdiction in this regard. PHC's divisional issued notices to additional chief secretary home and police authorities for submission of reply in this regard while adjourned further hearing.

Moreover, PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad issued Contempt of Court notice to chairman National Commission for Human Development for didn't paying Rs4.6 million as fee to senior lawyer and adjourned hearing till 7th November.

The counsel argued that Atif Ali Khan had served the commission as legal advisor and his collective salary stand at Rs4.6 million but the concerned authorities denied the payment. PHC issued Contempt of Court Notice to Chairman National Commission for Human Development for 7th November and adjourned further hearing.

SIFC proposes policy measures

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee for Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) here on Tuesday recommended certain policy measures to further improve the investment ecosystem in various key sectors of the economy.

The two-day 6th meeting of SIFC had begun on October, 23 and was chaired by Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed, according to a press statement issued here. Among others, the meeting was attended by National Coordinator for SIFC, Dr Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan, SAPM (Governance Effectiveness), concerned Federal and Provincial Ministers and high-level government officials.

Key suspect arrested

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Sindh police on Tuesday arrested the key suspect in famed qawwal Amjad Sabri's murder case after a span of seven years in Karachi.

The main suspect — who allegedly belonged to a banned terrorist outfit and had Sabri killed by two gunmen, Asim and Ishaq — was apprehended from the city's Patel Para area by the CTD police following a tip-off, the law enforcement authorities said. The renowned qawwali artiste was gunned down in the port city in June 2016.

According to CTD personnel, the alleged terrorist also confessed to shooting dead four Rangers personnel and two Pakistan Army soldiers near the Parking Plaza in Saddar.

NZ opens inquest into Christchurch mosque attacks

WELLINGTON: New Zealand has opened an inquest into the murder of 51 people by a self-proclaimed white supremacist at two Christchurch mosques in 2019. "I ask simply that we keep each of the 51 people whose lives have been lost, and that common goal at the centre of this hearing," Deputy Chief Coroner Brigitte Windley said as she opened proceedings on Tuesday.

Windley said the inquiry, which is scheduled to last six weeks, would "seek to shine a light" on what happened and would consider making recommendations to reduce the chances of a similar event happening again. The March 15, 2019 attacks in the southern city were the worst mass shooting in New Zealand's history, and shocked the country. The gunman, Australian Brenton Tarrant, is now serving a whole-life sentence in prison after being convicted on 51 charges of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one charge of committing a terrorist act.

Family and friends packed the court for the emotionally charged opening session, which included a traditional Maori welcome, a reading from the

Quran and a moving video tribute to each of the victims. The inquiry will examine 10 issues including the response by emergency services and hospital staff, whether the gunman had direct assistance from any other person and the cause of death for each of the deceased.

Windley is not expected to release her findings until some time in 2024. Observers were shown a harrowing video depicting the gunman's movements around Christchurch on the day of the attack, including footage he had filmed using a GoPro camera.

Armed with semiautomatic weapons, Tarrant first attacked Friday worshippers at Christchurch's Al Noor Mosque before driving to the nearby Linwood Islamic Centre, livestreaming the killings. His victims were all Muslim and included children, women and the elderly. Two people died from their injuries in hospital. The inquest will examine the response times of police and emergency services, the medical response at each of the mosques, whether Tarrant was helped in planning the attack, and whether any lives could have been saved.

"This pursuit of truth is crucial for healing and closure," said Maha Galal, spokesperson for the 15 March Whanau Trust representing some of the victims' relatives. The families of the victims "are united in their pursuit of understanding, seeking clarity on whether their loved ones could have survived", Galal added.

Then-prime minister Jacinda Ardern moved quickly to tighten gun laws in the aftermath of the attacks and put pressure on social media giants to curb online extremism. A Royal Commission of Inquiry into the shootings found that intelligence services had been distracted from far-right threats because they were too focused on the "threat of Islamist extremist" activity. But the 800-page report concluded that while mistakes had been made, the attacks could not have been prevented.

Following its release, Ardern apologised for the government's shortcomings, and acknowledged its failings. "Ultimately, this roughly 800-page report can be distilled into one simple premise: Muslim New Zealanders should be safe," she said. — Aljazeera

More than 700 killed in fresh Israeli attacks

injured, according to the Health Ministry. According to Al Jazeera's Hani Abu Isheba, "This has put hospitals here on the brink of collapse. Hospitals here have never seen this level of injuries before."

More than 60% of Gaza residents needed food aid even before the latest Israeli bombing campaign started on October 7 in the wake of deadly Hamas attacks inside Israel. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that a third of Gaza hospitals were not operating. "We are on our knees asking for that sustained, scaled up, protected humanitarian operation," said WHO regional emergencies head Rick Brennan.

The private Indonesian Hospital, the biggest in north Gaza, said on Tuesday it had switched off everything except the last vital departments such as the Intensive Care Unit. The only other hospital that had still been serving patients in northern Gaza, Beit Hanoun Hospital, stopped operations because of the intense bombardment of the town, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

"If the hospital doesn't get fuel, this is going to be a death sentence against the patients in northern Gaza," said Atef al-Kahlout, the hospital's director. Israel said on Tuesday dozens of Hamas fighters were left dead overnight in strikes on Gaza and that it

had no intention of easing its bombardment of the besieged Palestinian enclave.

The US has urged Israel to provide more aid to Gaza, which is facing a humanitarian crisis due to intense Israeli attacks. However, there is no immediate prospect of a ceasefire in the bloodiest episode of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades. Israeli troops are awaiting orders for a ground invasion, complicated by hostage concerns.

The Israeli military said it had hit more than 400 targets in Gaza overnight and killed dozens of Hamas fighters, including three deputy battalion commanders. Among the targets hit was a tunnel that allowed Hamas to infiltrate Israel from the sea and Hamas command centres in mosques, it said. Reuters could not immediately verify the report. Wide areas of Gaza have been flattened by Israeli bombs, forcing more than one million residents to seek shelter elsewhere in the territory.

With food, clean water, medicine and fuel fast running out, the United Nations and aid agencies have warned of a humanitarian catastrophe and pleaded for supplies to be allowed in. Earlier, Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi suggested Israel had no intention of curb-

ing its strikes. "We want to bring Hamas to a state of full dismantling," Halevi said in a statement.

"We are well prepared for the ground operations in the south," he added. "Troops who have more time are better prepared, and that is what we are doing now." Medical officials in Gaza said dozens of Palestinians were martyred or wounded overnight across the enclave, mostly in southern Gaza, due to the Israeli bombing. At least 15 houses were destroyed. As Israel Defence Forces (IDF) prepare for a ground invasion of Gaza, US Marine Corps Lt Gen James Glynn, ex-commander of Marine Forces Special Operations Command, is set to counsel the Israeli forces on their current operations, according to a US official familiar with the matter.

The US official, who broke the news, revealed that Glynn, the deputy commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, can offer advice on the "big picture" surrounding the Gaza conflict. With decades of experience, including commanding Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MAR-SOC) and combat experience in Iraq.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby would not confirm Glynn's position when asked whether Glynn would be advising the

Israelis. Instead, Kirby told reporters Monday that the Biden administration had sent to Israel "a few relevant military officers" who had "the kind of experience that we believe is appropriate to the sorts of operations that Israel is conducting and may conduct in the future." Israel's military said it was preparing for "unrelenting attacks" to dismantle Hamas while former US president Barack Obama warned that "any Israeli military strategy that ignores the human costs could ultimately backfire."

In a rare commentary on a foreign policy dilemma, Obama, a former US president, cautioned Israel not to alienate generations of Palestinians by causing so many civilian losses in retaliation against Hamas. "Any Israeli military strategy that ignores the human costs could ultimately backfire. Already, thousands of Palestinians have been killed in the bombing of Gaza, many of them children. Hundreds of thousands have been forced from their homes," Obama said in a statement posted on social media.

It was not immediately clear whether Obama coordinated his statement with Biden, who was his vice president. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "The Israeli government's

decision to cut off food, water and electricity to a captive civilian population threatens not only to worsen a growing humanitarian crisis," he added. "It could further harden Palestinian attitudes for generations, erode global support for Israel, play into the hands of Israel's enemies, and undermine long-term efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region," he wrote in the statement published in Medium also condemned Hamas' attack and reiterated his support for Israel's right to defend itself.

Hamas on Monday freed two Israeli women among the more than 200 hostages taken during its October 7 attack. They were the third and fourth hostages to be released. According to Reuters, Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi issued a statement suggesting that Israel had no intention of curbing its strikes on the densely populated Gaza Strip and hinting that it was well prepared for a ground assault.

"We want to bring Hamas to a state of full dismantling," Halevi said late Monday. "The path is a path of unrelenting attacks, damaging Hamas everywhere and in every way. We are well prepared for the ground operations in the south," he added, referring to southern Israel, which abuts Gaza.

"Troops who have more time are better prepared, and that is what we are doing now." In public, the US has stressed Israel's right to defend itself but two sources familiar with the matter said the White House, Pentagon and State Department have stepped up private appeals for caution in conversations with the Israelis. A US priority is to gain time for negotiations to free other hostages, said the sources, who spoke before the hostage releases were announced on Monday.

Asked about the possibility of a ceasefire, US President Joe Biden said: "We should have those hostages released and then we can talk." The war between Israel and Hamas could deal a "serious" blow to global economic development, the president of the World Bank told an investor conference in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. "What just happened recently in Israel and Gaza — at the end of the day you put all this together, I think the impact on economic development is even more serious," Ajay Banga said, adding: "I think we're at a very dangerous juncture."

Banga was speaking at the annual Future Investment Initiative, often referred to as "Davos in the Desert". More than 6,000 delegates are registered for the three-day event that will feature appearances by global banking chiefs and the presidents of South Korea, Kenya and Rwanda, organisers say. — Aljazeera & Reuters



ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Shehbaz Sharif arriving for his hearing at High Court.

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