

BISHKEK (INP): Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have expressed a mutual desire to build stronger economic, political, and educational relations. Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani called on President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov in Bishkek. The Kyrgyz President said Kyrgyzstan is interested in developing cooperation in bilateral and multilateral formats. He emphasized great opportunities for increasing the volume of mutual trade.

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Pakistan visa policy for foreigners Residents in Balochistan continue protest at border

QUETTA: Residents of Pakistan's southwestern Chaman city located on the Afghanistan border continued their sit-in protest for the sixth consecutive day on Thursday, demanding the government reverse a new passport and visa policy which is due to be implemented from Nov. 1 at the border crossing.

The protest, which kicked off on Saturday at the Chaman border, took place in the wake of the Pakistani government's move to tighten its travel policy for citizens of all neighboring countries, following deadly attacks in the country's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and southwestern Balochistan provinces earlier this year.

Pakistan shares a 2,600-kilometer porous border with Afghanistan which lies through KP and Balochistan. The Chaman border crossing is one of the key border crossings between the two countries. Since Pakistan's independence from British India, Islamabad has been practicing a relaxed travel policy for residents living in border towns on either side. But the Pakistani government has lately announced a strict policy that allows only the residents of Chaman and Kandahar province in Afghanistan to cross the border by showing their proof of residence.

The rest of the citizens from both countries are required to show passports and visas to travel across the border. After Nov. 1, travel across the border crossing would only be allowed on valid passports and visas, even for residents of Chaman and Kandahar. "Thousands regularly travel to business markets in Afghanistan's Spin Boldak town situated in Kandahar



for business purposes and return to Chaman in the evening with a meager amount for their families," Shahzada Qasim, a local businessman, told Arab News at the protest.

Qasim, 39, has been taking part in the sit-in protest from day one at the protest camp set up on one of the key highways leading to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The protest attracted huge numbers on Thursday with the participation of local businesspersons, tribal elders and members of political parties.

Qasim feared the government's new passport and visa policy decision would force thousands in Chaman to migrate to other cities. Balochistan Information Minister Jan Achakzai traveled to Chaman on Wednesday to hold a dialogue with protesters. However, talks between the two sides ended inconclusively as protesters remained adamant on demanding the new policy be reversed.

"We have completed three rounds of negotiations with protesters but the talks were not fruitful," Achakzai told Arab News. "The government is ready to accept their feasible demands but the one-document regime policy will not be compromised at any cost after the given deadline." He said a large Jirga [tribal council] meeting was held today, Thursday, which was also attended

by the country's senior civil and military leadership.

"The government is ready to facilitate Chaman's local residents with economic opportunities and facilities at the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and passport centers," Achakzai said. Meanwhile, Chaman's businessmen closed their shops in protest against the proposed visa policy and marched toward the deputy commissioner's office.

"A strict bio-metric system is already in place between Kandahar and Quetta, everyone who crosses through the border gets scanned in the government's data management system," Hajji Sadiq Achakzai, president of the Chaman Traders Union, told Arab News over the phone. "The Pakistani government should have taken into confidence the local residents of Chaman before announcing this decision."

He warned that if the government did not reverse its decision, protesters would march on to the Friendship Gate located at the Chaman border and erect a "new" protest camp there. Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti has clarified that the government would not target Afghans after the Nov. 1 deadline, but all undocumented immigrants in the country would be forcibly repatriated. — Arab News

No possibility of vote postponement, says ECP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has emphatically denied any potential delay in the election, emphasizing that the Commission has already stated its position on this issue.

In a statement on Thursday, an ECP spokesperson clarified that the impression of election postponement had been sparked by comments made by the President during an interview on a private channel last Wednesday, which hinted at the possibility of delaying the election. The spokesman stated that, as per the election action plan, all the necessary preparations by the Election Commission have been concluded, and the election schedule will be revealed after the Constituencies are formally published.

There is no uncertainty in this regard. The initial phase of delimitation has concluded, and the second phase involving objection submissions will finish by Friday, October 27, 2023. Furthermore, the Election Commission will commence the review of objections related to preliminary constituencies on October 30/31 and by November 30, 2023, the final list of constituencies will be officially released.

ECP directs PM to issue notice to ministers influencing general elections: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday has directed the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar to issue a notice to federal ministers those who allegedly influencing the forthcoming general elections.

A five-member bench of the ECP, headed by the Chief Election Commissioner, heard the case related to the influence of federal ministers on the general elections. The Additional Advocate General appeared before the bench and said that the ECP had not given notice to the relevant parties. The ECP adjourned the next hearing of the case till Tuesday and directed the Caretaker Prime Minister to issue a notice to all federal ministers on the matter.

The ECP's directive comes after several reports of federal ministers using their official positions to influence the general elections. In recent weeks, there have been reports of federal ministers inaugurating development projects, announcing new schemes, and transferring government officials in their constituencies in the lead-up to the elections. The ECP has warned that it will take strict action against any federal minister found to be influencing the general elections. The commission has also directed the Caretaker Prime Minister to ensure that all federal ministers comply with the ECP's code of conduct for elections.

PTI top brass meets JUI-F chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a twist of events, a delegation comprising Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) top leadership met Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday, with the approval of party chairman Imran Khan.

For years now, Imran has targeted Fazl — and vice versa — and both are considered arch-foes. Fazl's party was also part of the coalition government and helped remove Imran from power last year.

Talking to journalists after the meeting in Islamabad, PTI's senior leader Asad Qaiser said: "Everyone, including the PTI chairman, had approved of this meeting." "Today, we came to offer our condolences [over the demise of Fazl's mother-in-law], this is our culture. We did not discuss politics in the meeting," said Qaiser who is a staunch supporter of Imran and a former speaker of the National Assembly. From PTI's side, Qaiser, Ali Muhammad Khan, Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif, and Junair Akbar partook in the meeting.

Gaza death toll from Israeli bombardment crosses 7,000

Gaza ministry warns of 'health catastrophe'; calls on Egypt to open Rafah crossing

GAZA: The Palestinian health ministry in Gaza has warned of a "health catastrophe" in the besieged enclave and said Israeli forces are "deliberately" maintaining the collapse of hospitals across the enclave. "We warn of a health catastrophe as a result of hospitals turning into shelter centres, housing tens of thousands of displaced people in unsanitary conditions that have caused the spread of epidemics and infectious diseases," the ministry said in a statement, Al Jazeera reports.

The Palestinian health ministry has said that at least 7,028 people have been killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes since Oct 7, AFP reports. Some 2,913 children and 1,709 women are among the dead — marking the highest number of war fatalities in Gaza since 2005.

It called on "all parties" to adopt immediate measures to salvage what is left of the healthcare system, and urged neighbouring Egypt to open the Rafah border crossing for medical aid and fuel. Palestinian writer Mariam Barghouti has described the situation in Gaza as "madness".

"There are children with worms growing out of their wounds because nothing is operational. All of it bombed and depleted of life. No water. No electricity. No fuel," she said in a post on X. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has warned that if Israel's retaliation against Hamas in the Gaza Strip doesn't end then the United States will "not be spared from this fire." "I say



Silence of international community over Gaza 'embarrassing': Erdogan

ANKARA (Reuters): Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan has told Pope Francis in a phone call that Israel's attacks on Gaza amounted to a massacre and that the international community's ensuing silence was "embarrassing," the presidency said. In the call, Erdogan said that all countries must raise their voice against the humanitarian crisis in the region, according to a statement by the Turkish presidency. The call took place in the morning, following a request made by Erdogan, a Vatican spokesman said in a note. "The Pope expressed his pain for what is happening and reiterated the position of the Holy See, hoping that the two-state solution can be reached as well as recognising a special status for the city of Jerusalem," the spokesman added. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said that "Western countries are not adhering to international law in Gaza because the 'blood spilled is Muslims' blood," adding that Israeli attacks on Gaza are "barbaric," Reuters reports.

(Continued on Back Page)

Bloome meets PM, discuss Afghans repatriation

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday to discuss the "safe and efficient" processing of Afghans eligible for resettlement to the US, a statement from the US Mission's spokesperson in Pakistan said.

The development takes place as Pakistan's Nov. 1 deadline for illegal immigrants in the country to leave or face deportation looms closer. Islamabad announced the decision earlier this month following a spike in militant attacks predominantly attributed to Afghan nationals.

Among the Afghan nationals in Pakistan facing deportation are some who have been declared eligible by Washington to be resettled in the US. These Afghans collaborated with the US and its allies prior to 2021.

"US Ambassador Donald Blome met today with Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq



Kakar to discuss a broad range of critical bilateral issues," a statement by the US Mission Spokesperson Jonathan Lalley said. "Including the safe and efficient processing of Afghan citizens eligible for resettlement to the United States, upcoming national elections, and regional issues."

Once close allies, Islamabad's and Washington's ties deteriorated steadily over the years mostly due to US concerns about Pakistan's alleged support of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Islamabad vehemently denied sheltering the

Taliban in sanctuaries, something Washington always regarded with suspicion. Ties between the two countries strained further when former prime minister Imran Khan accused Washington of colluding with Pakistan's former army chief and his political rivals to oust him from office in what he called was a "foreign conspiracy." The allegations were denied by Khan's political rivals, the army and Washington. During former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif's government, Pakistan made efforts to warm up to the US. — Arab News

IHC restores Nawaz's pleas

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday restored Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif's pleas against accountability courts' conviction verdicts in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases. Nawaz, who has been in self-imposed exile since 2019, left for London in the middle of his seven-year jail term on medical grounds. The elder Sharif returned to Pakistan on October 21.

IHC Chief Justice Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Gul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the verdict on Nawaz Sharif's pleas against his conviction in Al-Azizia and Avenfield cases. The former prime minister reached the Islamabad High Court in strict security. PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif,



Khawaja Asif, Ishaq Dar, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Parvez Rasheed, Mariyum Aurangzeb and others are accompanying the former prime minister in the courtroom. In his arguments before the IHC, the NAB Prosecutor said appeals were filed against the verdict of the accountability court in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases.

The pleas once filed cannot be withdrawn and a decision on them has to be made on merit, the NAB prosecutor said. "As per law the appeals have to be decided on merit," the

NAB prosecutor said and added the graft-buster body has no objection if the appeals are accepted. After being asked by the court NAB prosecutor said he would give arguments on pleas if they are restored. Advocate Amjad Parvez in his arguments before the IHC two-member bench said the court in its verdict of acquitting Maryam Nawaz from the Avenfield case, remarked that NAB failed to establish any link of Avenfield with Nawaz Sharif.

The IHC after hearing arguments from both sides has reserved a verdict on the pleas of the former prime minister. The former three-time prime minister is currently on protective bail in Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases. Nawaz Sharif was convicted by accountability courts in Avenfield and Al-Azizia references.

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD)

INF(P) 2645/23

UVAS convocation to be held on 23rd

LAHORE (APP): The 14th convocation of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore has been scheduled to be held on November 23 at the City Campus here.

Chancellor/Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman will preside over the convocation.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmad chaired a meeting of the conveners and secretaries of sub-committees and reviewed preparations for the convocation. The conveners of sub-committees briefed the meeting on the working of their respective committees. A full dress rehearsal for the convocation will be arranged at City Campus on November 22.

5 dead, 1,208 injured in road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least five persons were killed and 1,208 others injured in road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 600 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 608 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed those 584 drivers, 37 underage drivers, 161 pedestrians, and 468 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. The statistics show that 252 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 281 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 90 in Faisalabad with 89 victims, and at third Multan with 81 accidents and 75 victims.

According to the data, 990 motorbikes, 82 autorickshaws, 111 motorcars, 15 vans, 11 passenger buses, 24 trucks and 100 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in these road accidents.

SMIU organizes Pink Ribbon Youth Awareness Programme

KARACHI (APP): Health experts have said that millions of cases of breast cancer are reported in the media annually, but there is a lack of awareness about this disease in Pakistani society. They stressed on the importance of regular checkups for the early diagnosis of breast cancer.

These views were expressed at the "Pink Ribbon Youth Awareness Program" organized by the Directorate of Students Affairs of Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) on Thursday in collaboration with the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), Women and Sports Commission, Colgate Palmolive Pakistan, and Syed Foundation.

General and Breast Surgeon at SUIT Dr. Usha Pervaiz said that breast cancer can be prevented if diagnosed in the early stage. She emphasized the need for regular checkups for early diagnosis of this dangerous disease and urged male members of the family to support their female members in their regular checkups. She also shed light on various examination methods for the detection of breast cancer and highlighted present treatment methods.

Name Correction

My correct name is Romaisa Jan while mistakenly written in my educational documents as Romaisha please make the required correction in it as Romaisha Jan D/o Lal Jan

CM inspects Ghora Chowk flyover project

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited the Ghora Chowk Defence Morr flyover project early in the morning, accompanied by Information Minister Amir Mir and IG Police Dr Usman Anwar.

During the inspection, the Chief Minister expressed his appreciation for the workers, shaking hands with those who had been laboring since dawn. He congratulated them and encouraged them to persist with diligence and enthusiasm. He inspected the ongoing tasks, focusing on the progress of the

flyover pillars. He observed the finishing touches being applied. Expressing his satisfaction, the Chief Minister commented on the continuous efforts invested in the project, noting that work was consistently progressing from night until the early hours of the morning.

Highlighting the significance of expediting the project, CM Naqvi emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of work. He directed to aim for the prompt completion of this infrastructural initiative, underscoring the importance of timely progress in this key project.

IG Punjab reviews performance of Tahaffuz Markaz

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar chaired a meeting to review the performance of the Tahaffuz Markaz at the Central Police Office here on Thursday.

DSP Saddam Jhelum Mian Abdul Jabbar, in-charge protection center and victim support officers informed the IGP about the performance of Tahaffuz Markaz.

The IG Punjab met the staff of Police Tahaffuz Markaz Jhelum, the citizens, children and transgenders who got assistance and cooperation from the Markaz. Children and citizens thanked IG Punjab for the special initiative of cooperation.

The in-charge Tahaffuz Markaz Jhelum while giving a briefing to IG Punjab said that Tahaffuz Markaz has provided relief to 1096 citizens by solving their problems since its inception. Tahaffuz Markaz helped 48 transgenders, 07 special persons with mental and physical disabilities, rehabilitated 32 drug addicts and reunited 12 missing children with their parents. Tahaffuz Markaz signed MOUs with 8 different NGOs, sheltered 48 homeless people in Old Persons's Home, provided free legal aid to several citizens from District Bar Jhelum, and shifted women suffering from various problems to Darul Aman. Thirteen transgenders and women were registered in the Benazir Income Support Program, referred 47 people to different police stations and solved crime related problems, 316 vulnerable persons were registered, 5 transgenders were assisted in getting driving licenses. Tahaffuz Markaz has established help desks in all police stations of Jhelum district to assist transgenders, he added.

The IG Punjab appreciated the performance of Tahaffuz Markaz Jhelum and directed to further increase the scope of service delivery.

He said that Tahaffuz Markaz should

make networking with other public and private institutions more effective and provide social security to more citizens through its platform.

Punjab Police arrest two POs from airport: On the directions of Inspector General Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, police teams are conducting a crackdown to arrest dangerous proclaimed offenders inside and outside the country.

In continuation of which two dangerous proclaimed offenders who were trying to escape abroad after the murders have been arrested from the airport with the effective coordination of Punjab Police with FIA.

As per details, Ahsan Ishaq, the proclaimed offender, had killed a citizen in the limits of Cantt Gujranwala police station on September 29 last month. Another proclaimed offender, Amir Shahzad, attacked and killed a citizen in Alipur Chatta area of Gujranwala on 16th May 2023. The Punjab Police had included the details of both proclaimed offenders in the Provisional Identification List and continued the follow-ups for arrest. Both proclaimed offenders were arrested at the airport while trying to escape abroad. The accused are being handed over to the police of the respective district.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar congratulated the team of Special Operation Cell Gujranwala for the arrest of A category dangerous proclaimed offenders. He said that the proclaimed offenders should be severely punished by completing the legal procedures soon. He directed that the crackdown against dangerous proclaimed offenders involved in murder, robbery and kidnapping should be intensified and regular information sharing with FIA, Interpol and other departments should be ensured to arrest more proclaimed offenders.

Governor Punjab felicitates on 31st Republic Day of Kazakhstan

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has extended heartfelt felicitations to the brotherly people of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the occasion of 31st Republic Day of the country. Speaking at a ceremony to mark 31st Republic Day of Kazakhstan at the Al Hamra Hall here on Thursday, he said Kazakhstan is a resilient and independent nation, adding that transformation of Kazakhstan as dynamic economic and regional power is recognised throughout the region and beyond.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said people of the two countries share com-

mon historical, cultural and religious ties. He hailed the role of Kazakh Ambassador in fostering the brotherly ties between the two countries.

He further said that due to the efforts of the Kazakh Ambassador to Pakistan, Pakistan and Kazakhstan are now operating direct flights through the operations of SCAT Airlines, which will increase our trade and increase relations between the people.

He said that Kazakhstan is blessed with the largest oil reserves in the Central Asian region and can serve as an energy hub. He said that it is gratifying to share that Kazakhstan is our largest trading partner in Central



LAHORE: A motorcyclist purchasing safety helmet from roadside vendor in Provincial Capital.

7th Edition of PPC Media Cricket League to begin today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 7th edition of Media Cricket League will begin today (Friday). The league is a regular feature of Peshawar Press Club's sports activities and is organized annually with the support of Rehman Medical Institute.

On Thursday, kits for all 16 teams were unveiled during a ceremony at Peshawar Press Club in which RMI Media Manager Shabbir Shah, PPC President Arshad Aziz Malik, General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai Press Club Ex-President M Riaz, Senior Journalist Amjad Aziz Malik, Bilal Afridi, Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



who are performing their duties in tough conditions.

Addressing the event, Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik, General Secretary Irfan Musazai and senior journalist Amjad Aziz Malik said that organizing a cricket league for journalists on a regular basis is need of the hour. Arshad Aziz Malik thanked the RMI administration and said that RMI has fully supported Peshawar Press Club in every sports event. Later kits were distributed among the captains of the teams.

Total of 16 teams are divided into four groups. Top two teams from each group will enter the next round after which top four teams will enter the semi-finals.

President Asim Shiraz, Chairman of the Sports Committee Zafar Iqbal, members of the Organizing Committee and senior journalists including captains and players of the teams participating in the tournament participated.

On this occasion, RMI Media Manager Shabir Shah and Bilal Afridi while addressing the event said that it is very important to organize such healthy activities for the journalists

PHA utilizing all available resources to uplift city parks

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG), Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Ahmad Hassan Ranjha here on Thursday said that the authority was utilizing all available resources to make the city clean and green and uplift the parks.

Talking to APP he informed that the authorities concerned had been directed to complete ongoing renovation and beautification work of all the parks within the shortest possible time frame.

The DG said that efforts were also being made to repair faulty lights, swings and walking tracks besides improving the security of the parks.

The PHA officers had also been instructed to utilize all available resources to ensure the provision of the best recreational facilities to the public in all the parks of the town, he added.

Polish envoy stresses technology sharing to fight climate change

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Pakistan Maciej Pisarski said on Thursday it was time to move beyond traditional areas of cooperation between Pakistan and Poland and enhance collaboration in technological solutions for fighting common challenges like the climate change.

Talking to the APP on the sidelines of the International Conference on 'The Future of Sustainability: Water-Food-Environment & Energy Nexus' at the Expo Centre here, he said the world today faces multiple challenges and these challenges relate to climate change, growing strain on water and limiting access to good quality water, adding that these technological advances, offered by the Polish firms during the conference, could make huge difference in the lives of individuals and, similarly,

might enhance bilateral collaboration.

The conference was part of the three-day 'International Pakistan Exhibition on Water and Energy', during which a large number of international and local organisations displayed their technologically innovative equipment for water and sanitation solutions. Chief Executive Officer Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority Syed Zahid Aziz visited a number of stalls as a guest of honour.

"Poland and Pakistan celebrate 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year and it is high time that we move beyond our traditional areas of cooperation. Yes, we cherish our achievements in the past, but we need to move beyond for the common good," the envoy stressed.

In his message to the Pakistani friends, Ambassador Maciej Pisarski said Poland is a friend of yours, adding that peoples in both countries cherish their traditions, family values, history and freedom, and both countries might offer each other great support and cooperation.

Earlier, the Polish envoy conducted a conference on the future of sustainability during which the representatives from various technology firms from Poland like Symbionia, Nanoseen and Meliorex connected with the Pakistani businesses, engineers, academics and technocrats online and introduced their technologies, which could help Pakistan fight water scarcity, frequent natural disasters, glacial impacts, lack of access to clean drinking water, and agricultural impacts of climate change. The firms also offered cheapest eco-friendly desalination technology while the nano-technologists claimed solving many of the challenges facing humanity and the planet.

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

TENDER NOTICE

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT BACHA KHAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PESHAWAR

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

CONCESSION NAME	RESERVE PRICE (P.M.)	LICENSE PERIOD	TIMINGS & CONTACT PERSON DETAILS	LAST DATE OF PURCHASE OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	TENDER FEE (NON-REFUNDABLE)	DATE, TIME & VENUE OF SUBMISSION	DATE, TIME & VENUE OF OPENING
Placement of 10 Branding Cut Outs inside Conveyor Belt area at International and Domestic Arrival Lounges	Rs. 236,000/-	Three (03) years	0900 to 1700 hours on working days Dy. Director Commercial CAA BKIA, Peshawar Tel: 091-9211517	13th November, 2023	Rs 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only)	14th November, 2023 at 1100 hrs C.O.O. / APM Office BKIA, Peshawar	14th November, 2023 at 1130 hrs C.O.O. / APM Office BKIA, Peshawar

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

DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL & ESTATES

Headquarters, Civil Aviation Authority, Terminal – 1, Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, Pakistan

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www.caapakistan.com.pk

PID(K)#1267/23

DIRECTORATE OF PROCUREMENT (NAVY)

OPEN TENDER

DP (NAVY) NEAR SNID CENTER, CDA MARKET, AT NAVAL RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX, E - 8, ISLAMABAD

SEALED TENDERS ARE INVITED BY DP (NAVY) FOR PURCHASE OF FOLLOWING ITEMS:

S.#	IT.NO	DESCRIPTION	CLOSING DATE & TIME	OPENING DATE & TIME
1.	2324050/R-2310/340046	Lub Oil Shell Tellus Oil S2 MX 32 High Premium Hydraulic Oil Qty (2090 Ltrs)	22-11-2023 10:30 AM	22-11-2023 11:00 AM

Corrigendum:

S.#	IT.NO	DESCRIPTION	OPENING DATE	REMARKS	PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED
1.	2305013/R-2309/340028	Tin Ingot 99. 85 % Purity (Min) Specs : BS EN 610/1996 Qty (800 kgs)	01-11-2023	Tender specifications has been changed	Nil
2.	2279554/R-2310/320039	Propeller 28 x 12	14-11-2023	Tender has been cancelled on PPRA webdite	Nil

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

1. Complete details and specifications of the tender can be downloaded from PPRA website.

2. Only registered supplier on Active Taxpayers List (ATL) of FBR are eligible to participate in the Tender and submit quote.

PID(I) 2532/23

RESERVE SUPPLY DEPOT PESHAWAR CANTONMENT

TENDER NOTICE

1. Reserve Supply Depot Army Service Corps, Peshawar Cantonment invites sealed quotations from all government contractors for provision of materials for development/ upgradation of this depot out of budget allotment for FY 2023/2024.

2. Quotations will be deposited in envelopes named as "CORSD RSD Peshawar Cantt"

3. All quotations / bids will be submitted latest by **13 Nov 2023 at 1200 hours** and will be opened in the presence of all bidders on **13 Nov 2023 at 1230 hours** in Commanding Officer, RSD Peshawar office.

4. The Commanding Officer, Reserve Supply Depot Peshawar Cantonment, reserves the right to reject any or all quotations/bids at any time by assigning plausible reasons to the bidders.

5. List of goods and other related information may be obtained from Reserve Supply Depot, Peshawar Cantonment during working hours.

Admin Officer RSD Peshawar Cantt

Cell No: 0345-4888423 / 0333529685

In the Court of Special Judge (CNS-II), Karachi

Special Case No. 265/2016

FIR# DEC-10/2016-JIAP

P.S.CUSTOMS, KARACHI

The State.....Versus.....Raees Khan S/o Abdul Sattar

PROCLAMATION REQUIRED THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON UNDER SECTION 87 Cr. P.C.

Whereas, YOU Raees Khan S/o Abdul Sattar, R/o. Managi, Post Office Managi, Tehsil Razar, District Swabi (KPK), has committed an offence of smuggling of contraband narcotics in violation of Section 6, 7, 8 of CNS Act, 1997 punishable in terms of Section 9C of CNS Act, 1997. It had been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused persons cannot be found and whereas it had been shown to my satisfaction that the above mentioned accused persons absconded to avoid the service of the said warrant.

2. Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused is required to appear on 31.10.2023 at 09:00 am before this Hon'ble Court to answer the said complaint

Given under my hand and seal of the Court this 18.10.2023

—sd—

PID(K) 1257/23

Special Judge

Special Court (CNS-II), Karachi



PESHAWAR: Caretaker KP Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan chairing special meeting of provincial cabinet.

A dark day in Kashmir's history: October 27, 1947

Abdullah Malik

IN the annals of Kashmir's turbulent history, October 27, 1947, stands as a somber and fateful day. It marks the moment when India deployed its troops to seize control of Kashmir, sparking a chain of events with deep and enduring consequences. This delves into the historical context, the ongoing struggle for freedom in Occupied Kashmir, the evolving landscape, and the intricate international dynamics that envelop this protracted conflict.

The roots of the Kashmir conflict stretch back to the period leading up to India's independence in August 1947. During this pivotal time, the Maharaja of Kashmir entered into an agreement with the Government of Pakistan, pledging that the same arrangements existing under British rule would continue with Pakistan. Regrettably, these promises were broken, setting the stage for enduring disputes. The pursuit of Kashmiri freedom has endured for over seven decades.

Despite facing decades of Indian oppression, the resilient people of Kashmir have never relinquished their aspiration for self-determination. However, as time has passed, the situation has grown increasingly

intricate. The year 2019 marked a turning point when India unilaterally altered the constitutional status of the disputed region to fortify its illegal occupation of the valley. Following this move, India issued 5.41 lakh domicile certificates, primarily to Hindus, raising concerns about demographic shifts in the region.

The human rights situation in Kashmir remains dire. The presence of 900,000 Indian soldiers in the region since 1991 has led to widespread violence and repression. Recent estimates reveal a stark reality: 96,000 Kashmiris have fallen victim to extrajudicial killings, 162,000 individuals have been unlawfully detained, over 25,000 have been wounded by pellet guns, and thousands of women have been widowed, leaving children orphaned. The Indian government's strategy includes stifling information and communication. Since 2017, major social media platforms have banned content related to the Kashmiri freedom movement.

India is a global leader in internet shutdowns, leading to significant hardships for the local population. The Kashmir conflict often receives limited international attention due to several factors. Geopolitical tensions between major powers, especially the United States and China, play a piv-

otal role. The U.S. views India as a crucial ally in countering China's ascent, resulting in diplomatic and political support for India. In the complex landscape of international relations, interests often take precedence. The Western world regards India as both an economic market and a strategic partner in countering China's growing influence.

This selective approach shapes responses to issues involving India, even when they pertain to human rights. In conclusion, the quest for Kashmiri freedom is a protracted narrative marked by hardships, sacrifices, and unwavering resolve. While October 27, 1947, stands as a dark and enduring day in Kashmiri history, the hope for a brighter future endures.

This hope is nurtured by the unyielding determination of the Kashmiri people in their ongoing struggle for self-determination and peace. As the world grapples with shifting power dynamics, the fate of Kashmir continues to hang in the balance, transcending borders and resonating with all who champion justice and human rights. The enduring struggle for Kashmiri freedom serves as a stark reminder of the enduring yearning for self-determination and justice in an ever-evolving global landscape.

Hamza Foundation hold awareness session F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hamza Foundation arranged awareness session regarding thalassemia at Iqra National University (INU) while 87 students donated blood for the patients, on Thursday.

The session focused on causes of the diseases as well as hurdles facing by thalassemia patients and their parents regularly. The participants including of students, faculty members and administrative while appreciated role of Hamza Foundation for the Thalassemia patients.

INU Dean and Director Civil Work Dr. Adil Adnan, Hamza foundation founder Ijaz Ali Khan, Medical Director Dr. Tariq Khan, Dr. Shafiq Sahar and others addressed the ceremony. Hamza Foundation Founder Ijaz Ali Khan paid thanks to INU's administration and students for donating blood.

AD&SJ acquits alleged murderer F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Syed Badshah acquitted alleged murderer Bacha Zada over lack of evidence.

According to prosecution, Bacha Zada had killed Sartaj in the premises of Tehkhal police over old rivalry and added that the deceased had nominated the culprit along with his friendly after being injured in the firing.

The counsel Malak Shabbaz advocate argued that the deceased statement is contradictory because he has nominated a dead person at the offense. The statements of witnesses are also self-contradictory and they weren't present at the offense and requested for the acquittal of Bacha Zada from murder charges. AD&SJ Peshawar Syed Badshah acquitted alleged murderer from charges after conclusion of arguments.

Dr. Majid completed Post-Doc F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Associate Prof. Dr. Majid Suhail Hashmi, Department of Food Science and Technology, The University of Agriculture Peshawar has completed his post-doctorate from the renowned educational institution, Cornell University in the United States.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan provided funds for this post-doctorate. Dr. Majid Suhail conducted research to enhance the storage life of apples and pears. Furthermore, Dr. Majid Sahil Hashmi and his team have obtained a patent for their latest research work on pears, aimed at extending storage life. Government of Pakistan has grant them a patent.

Vice-Chancellor of The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht, Dean, Faculty of Nutrition Sciences, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayub, and Chairman of the Department of Food Science and Technology, Prof. Dr. Said Wahab, have extended their felicitation to Dr. Majid Sahil Hashmi for his achievements.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht said that Dr. Majid's patent is a matter of pride and honor for Pakistan and especially the University of Agriculture Peshawar. Thanks to this revolutionary innovation, the scientists of the Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Agriculture, Peshawar have made their name and that of the university famous at the national level.

He said that the young faculty have more enthusiasm to move forward and the ability to work, the young faculty should work harder, pay attention to education and research, adopt collective and constructive thinking and play their full role in the development of the country. He said that the research of Majid Sahil Hashmi will benefit the country, the province and the people.

FATA merger in KP made tribals join national mainstream

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries, Technical Education and Merged Districts Affairs Dr Aamir Abdullah has said that the status of tribal people has been changed from subjects to respectable citizens after merger of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. "Now they have become equal citizens and joined the national mainstream of development", he added. However, he maintained, the provincial government is fully implementing the ten-year development action plan of the merged districts.

Although the federal government is also helping us in the mission of reconstruction and development, however the promise of providing one trillion rupees per year has not been fulfilled, which the Center has to fulfill as a replacement of providing 3 percent of the resources in the NFC award under the action plan, he recalled.

He expressed these views in reply to various questions of the host Dr. Abasin Yousafzai in Pakhtunkhwa Radio's program

Pakhtunkhwa Online at Peshawar. Station Director Ghulam Hussain Ghazi was also present on the occasion.

Dr. Amir Abdullah admitted that before the merger, the people of erstwhile FATA were treated very discriminately and cruelly under the FCR and other fringe laws wherein people were deprived of many basic rights. However he said now in all the 25 tehsils of the seven tribal districts, the process of balanced development has been ushered. He said that new schools and hospitals are being built and security and administrative matters are being improved in merged districts.

To a question the Minister urged the youth to be attracted towards modern technical education in which the real development of the nations lies whereas the provincial government has made adequate provision for it, he assured. He said that a large number of the people is associated with the auto industry and vehicles maintenance in KP, in which the mechanics of automobiles and workshops are at the top, so they should also learn the skills of electric vehicles industry and repair because, he said,

the future also belongs to them. He said that for the promotion of large industries in the province, it has been decided to establish new industrial estates at the district level, in which priority will be given to industries based on local raw materials.

Under this policy, he revealed that nine new industrial zones and two special economic zones are also being established in the remaining districts, while a large industrial park under the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) is also being established on the Indus Highway in Peshawar for the development of small and cottage industries. Similarly, he said that a separate cell of research and innovation has been established in the University of Technology located in Nowshera under the Industries department, in which all modern trends in the field of technology are being thoroughly studied and analyzed. Dr. Aamir Abdullah while appreciating the broadcasts of Pakhtunkhwa Radio, called it the proud infotainment media channel of the provincial government and assured it of full support on behalf of his ministry.

KTH admn visit newly constructed ICU complex

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The administration of Khyber Medical College and Khyber Teaching Hospital arranged an internal hospital visit with an insightful gathering where we saw the participation of key figures including Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Dean of Khyber Medical College, Dr. Muhammad Zafar Afridi, Hospital Director, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Medical Director, Professors of Medicine Department, Prof. Dr. Hashim-ud-Din, Prof. Dr. Wazir Muhammad, Prof. Dr. Jamal Uddin and Chairman Medicine Department Dr. Awais Naeem, From ICU complex Dr. Haroon, Dr. Imran, and managerial staff.

In the light of the personal interest of the Board of Governors, Khyber Teaching Hospital has been moving towards historic developments for the past three years, which included a complex of 20 modular operation theatres, newly constructed OPD, new wards, cath lab, including establishment and procurement of machinery and the first 1.5 tesla MRI machine which is first and unique one machine in the public sector hospitals in Pakistan.

Management, faculty, and staff combined visited the newly established ICU complex and two renovated medical wards, an ICU complex that has surgical, medical, and pediatric ICUs under one roof. Dr. Haroon and Dr. Imran, in charge of the ICU, informed the participants about the entire process. They added that it has become an ICU complex of international standard with modern & latest machinery, experienced staff, and a clean environment.

Chairman Medicine Department Dr. Awais Naeem informed the participants about the newly renovated two medical wards. He said that bringing the wards of 1976 to meet modern requirements is a

very good move. He said that the renovation work of two medical wards was completed in the year 2021, and two more wards were renovated this year. Before each ward had 44 beds capacity, and now it has increased to 66 beds. He further said that in the year 2023, about 62488 patients have been seen in medicine wards in which about 10656 patients have been treated after admission.

Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb congratulated Dr. Muhammad Zafar Afridi and Medical Director Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan of Khyber Teaching Hospital on the newly constructed ICU complex and renovated wards and thanked them for their keen interest in the construction and shifting of wards and ICUs. He further said that I am also very grateful to the managerial staff whose hard work made Khyber Teaching Hospital progressing, and we all have to work together to bring this institution to serve the people.



PESHAWAR: Activists of All Pakistan CNG Association holding a protest for acceptance of their demands in front of provincial assembly. — F.P. photo

PIDE to host second Economy Festival - EconFest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in partnership with the Research for Social Transformation & Advancement (RASTA) program and the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), is proud to announce the second Economy Festival - EconFest, scheduled to take place tomorrow on October 28th and 29th, 2023 at the Pak - China Friendship Centre in Islamabad.

Following the tremendous success of the inaugural event, held in Lahore this past March, PIDE is once again set to bring together leading economists, public policy experts, practitioners, professionals, academicians, and influential figures from various fields to address Pakistan's pressing economic challenges. The inaugural EconFest in Lahore was celebrated as a resounding success, and tomorrow's event in Islamabad promises to build on this achievement.

According to the Press Release issued from the PIDE office here on Thursday, EconFest will have no registration fee, and there is no requirement for registration; it is open to all. The Institute, with its rich tradition of convening experts to tackle the intricate challenges faced by our nation, offers a unique opportunity for the broader public to engage directly with the genuine issues impacting our country. It serves as a platform for concerned citizens to engage in meaningful dialogues with experts from

diverse backgrounds. PIDE promises an amazing experience with 33 esteemed partners, 27 enriching sessions, over 200 experts sharing their insights, a vibrant cultural show, a cutting-edge tech exhibition, an inclusive academic exhibition, a literary journey at the book exhibition, excitements at the fun zone, and delectable delights at the food court. By working together, we can attain the festival's aims of fostering meaningful dialogues and generating insights into the economic challenges facing Pakistan, stated Vice Chancellor, PIDE, Dr Nadeem ul Haque. Econfest anticipates a significant turnout of participants from various walks of life, making this event an ideal opportunity for visibility, networking, and collaboration.

RMI hosts breast cancer awareness seminar F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) hosted a vital breast cancer awareness seminar on Thursday, highlighting the critical need for increased awareness and early detection in the fight against breast cancer.

The seminar featured prominent healthcare professionals and experts dedicated to addressing the prevalence of breast cancer in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Safoora Shahid, a distinguished guest of honor, along with several notable participants, including CEO RMI Shafique Ur Rahman, Director RMI Zeba Rahman, Dean RMI Dr. Shahzad Bukhtiar, Professor Dr. Abdul Wahid, Dr. Jamshed Ali, Roohi Zahir Shah, Dr. Anjad Ali, Prof. Dr. Mah Munir Khan, and Dr. Anam Khan.

Their collective expertise and dedication highlighted the significance of the issue at hand. During their presentations, experts underscored the alarming lack of awareness as the primary driving force behind the increasing incidence of breast cancer.

They shed light on the absence of a screening system in the underprivileged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasizing that this absence has contributed to the continuous rise in the number of breast cancer cases. Experts also stressed the utmost importance of timely screening as a vital tool in the battle against breast cancer. They emphasized that breast cancer remains the leading cause of death among women, but it is treatable, particularly if detected in its first and second stages. They urged the urgent need for extensive public awareness campaigns and the establishment of screening systems to gain control over this life-threatening disease.

FIA arrests illegal money exchangers F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday arrested three illegal money exchangers and recovered local and foreign currencies from their possession.

Three accused of Hawala Hundi identified as Umar, Shiraz and Jalal Ahmad were arrested from Swat and Abbottabad during a grand operation.

Parties in KP to uphold edu reforms in manifestos

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a show of solidarity, political parties from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa together at a consultative workshop organized by Blue Veins and Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE), committed to uphold girls' education reform agenda in light of the upcoming general elections in Pakistan.

The workshop, held in Peshawar, brought representatives from Awami National Party ANP, Pakistan Peoples Party PPP, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (P), Jamaat-e-Islami, and Mazdur Kisan Party into one room to discuss the future of education, particularly girls' education, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and beyond.

The event was well-attended by senior civil society representatives and media personnel, contributing their expert opinions on the issue and education reform, the status of education in KP, and the role of political parties in improving state of girls' education. The discussion underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive educational framework that prioritizes accessibility, especially for girls, and addresses the systemic challenges within the existing infrastructure.

Professor Ibrahim, Ex-Senator, and Naib Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami emphasized the transformative power of education: "Our future stands on the brink of change, and it is education that will push us toward prosperity. We must revamp our commitment, especially towards our girls, our policies will reflect this understanding as we seek to bridge disparities."

Asif Iqbal Dawoodzai, former Minister of Information from JUI (F), reiterated this sentiment, stating, "The time has come to move beyond token gestures. Our party understands the urgent need to assimilate modern standards and inclusivity in our educational manifesto, ensuring that each child has a fair chance at a promising future."

Shazia Tehmas, Ex-MPA and an active member of the Pakistan Peoples Party highlighted, "Education is the cornerstone of social, economic, and political development. As we approach the elections, our party is deeply invested in not just universal education access, but also in the quality of that education. Our girls need to walk through school doors knowing they are receiving the best we can offer."

Adding a crucial perspective to the discussion, Zehra Arshad, a renowned education rights activist, leading SAQE, "Today's gathering of political minds offers a beacon of hope. However, promises must materialize into policy. We are watching, and we will hold our leaders accountable for ensuring our education system embodies equity, innovation, and progress for every child in Pakistan, regardless of gender."

A Charter of Demand was also presented to political parties which underscores pressing educational issues, spotlighting essential areas requiring immediate intervention and commitment from the upcoming political leadership. The Charter crystallizes

several key demands, emphasizing a paradigm shift in policy-making and implementation. These focus on urgent measures, including the increase in public spending on education, ensuring equitable access, especially for girls and marginalized communities, improving the quality of education and learning outcomes, ensuring safe and secure educational environments, and strengthening accountability and reform mechanisms in the educational governance structure.

Illegal immigrants: KP govt seeks public help F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has sought help from citizens to identify foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan. A toll-free number, 1700, has been issued for informants.

According to media reports, officials have urged the public to do their duty to identify illegal aliens, with a voluntary evacuation deadline set for October 31, 2023. In a separate development, the Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that the Afghan Interim Government has taken the decision to return illegal immigrants in accordance with the law.

Baloch said that Pakistan is in full communication with the Afghan authorities and that the decision was taken for the sake of Pakistan's security and economy.



PESHAWAR: Activists of All Government Grnd Alliance holding a protest in favour of their demands. — F.P. photo



In brief

Bara police arrest 3 robbers F.P. Report

BARA: In a significant achievement, the Bara police in Khyber district have arrested three members of a robber gang and recovered a looted amount of Rs 6.8 million from their possession. DPO Khyber told media persons at Bara police station that on 15th October a man named Zabib was bringing a cash amount of Rs 7.4 million to Bara in a taxi car. The taxi, when reached D Tour point, six robbers riding on three motorcycles intercepted it and snatched the amount at gunpoint before fleeing the area. He said the Bara police in a prompt action arrested three members of the gang including its ring leader and recovered an amount of Rs 6.8 million from their possession. The arrested robbers were identified as Rahim Gul, Masood and Turab, residents of Shalobar, Bara. A motorcycle and pistol used during the robbery were also recovered from the gang members. The DPO Khyber further informed that soon after the incident, SHO Bara, Pardam Gul and his team investigated suspected people. He said investigation on scientific lines and intelligence-based information led to the arrest of three main accused. The DPO said that other members of the gang have also been identified and police were working on their arrest. He said the arrest of the robber gang in Bara was not less than a challenge for the police; however, the police did its job with professional capabilities and arrested the robbers. It was a great achievement for Bara police, he added.

AGEGA hold protests F.P. Report

SHANGLA: All Government Employees Grand Association (AGEGA) hold protest rally against proposed pension reforms and declared the policy as International Monetary Fund (IMF) direction, on Thursday. The protesting civil servants chanted slogans against caretaker government and claimed that the proposed pension reforms would deprive elderly people from livelihood and treatments. The protestors claimed that they will arrange sit-in at Peshawar if their demands wouldn't fulfilled. AGEGA chairman Muhammad Islam, Hazar Hayat, Rehbar Ali, Fazal Hadi, Sultan Sikanadar, Fazal Ghafoor, Haji Nawab and Akhtar Munir addressed the protestors while claimed that pension is economic murderer of retired civil servant who served the nation. The speakers rejected 25% cut on pension and added that high inflation had already compelled majority of white collar people for starvation.

Sabi Harnai section restored

QUETTA (INP): The Sabi Harnai section of Pakistan Railways (PR) has been restored after almost 17 years. Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, Chairman and Secretary of the Railway Department, announced the news on social media on Thursday. He said that the restoration of the railway section was a major achievement and would benefit the people of the region immensely. Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Balochistan John Achakzai also congratulated the people and authorities on the restoration of the Sabi Harnai rail service. He said that the resumption of train service would provide facilities to the public and that it was heartening to see the enthusiastic response of the locals at the railway station.



SHANGLA: Government employees holding a protest in favour of their demands. — F.P. photo

14,000 illegal immigrants voluntarily leave Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Caretaker provincial Interior Minister Mir Zubair Ahmad Jamali has announced that a comprehensive plan has been put in place to deal with illegal immigrants in Balochistan, with action to be taken against those who remain in the country illegally from November 1. Jamali, who was speaking at a press conference in Quetta on Thursday, said that illegal immigrants from all countries should leave Pakistan before November 1, and that the government would provide them with all possible assistance to do so. He added that the government would be working with NADRA to track down and deport illegal immigrants, and that geo-fencing would also be used to monitor their movements.

Jamali said that 14,000 illegal immigrants had

already voluntarily returned to their home countries from Balochistan. He also said that improving the peace and order situation in Balochistan was the government's top priority, and that foolproof security had been provided for BNP Mangal's long march from Wadh.

UNICEF holds awareness session on public health issues: "A two-day training session was organized by the Lady Health Worker (LHW) program with the support of UNICEF, focusing on public health awareness messages and counseling cards under the name 'Sehat ki Dastak'.

Participants from across the province attended the session. A detailed session will be delivered to master trainers, including doctors, Lady Health Supervisors (LHSSs), Assistant District

Coordinators (ADCs), and provincial staff of the LHW program.

Dr. Samiullah Kakar, the Provincial Head of the LHW program, expressed gratitude to UNICEF and the Federal ministry for their assistance in arranging this training for master trainers on the latest developments. He encouraged the trainers to absorb the training carefully and then replicate it in their respective districts for LHWs.

These key messages cover various public health issues, such as the misuse of antibiotics by the community, updated family planning methods, and awareness of non-communicable diseases like hypertension and diabetes. The Director-General of Health Services urged the participants to take the training seriously and convey these important key messages to the community.

PML-N to overcome economic crises: Saira F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Former Federal Minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Saira Afzal Tarar has said that arrival of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is message of progress and prosperity for the nation and only Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif capable to overcome crisis of inflation, loadshedding, unemployment and lawlessness prevailed in the country.

She expressed these views while talking to different delegations at district secretariat of the PML-N. She said that public meeting of PML-N at Minare-e-Pakistan was eye opener for rivals political parties and this public meeting was demonstrator popularity of the Mian Nawaz Sharif among people.

She said that many people of Hafizabad participated in the Public meeting, which reflected that district Hafizabad was fort of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and heart of the people were beating with Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

Former Federal Minister further said that Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was completed unmatched development projects for upgrading living standard of the masses during his three tenures but unlikely she was not given opportunity to complete his constitutional tenures for completing people friendly agenda. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif laid network of motorways which is backbone of economic activities, she added.

Govt committed for education & health facilities: The Punjab government is committed to provide better healthcare and educational facilities to the people at their doorsteps and billions of rupees are being spent execute different development schemes in the district Hafizabad. This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad while visiting ongoing development projects including building of District Headquarter Hospital and University of the Hafizabad. Deputy Director Development Hafizabad Tassawar Abbas, CEO Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathor, Director Colleges Azhar Janjua and other concerned officers were also accompanied.

During the visit of under construction DHQ Hospital, DC said that with the completion of this mega project, the best treatment facilities would be available to the people of the district at local level and they would get rid of traveling to big cities for treatment.

Youth's body found F.P. Report

JEHANGIRA: The body of a sixteen-year-old youth, with his pistol in hands, was recovered from fields in Jahangira area of district Swabi on Thursday. The police said the youth was identified as Mukarram Shah and was killed in the jurisdiction of Tor Dher police station.

In the initial report, father of the deceased said, his son went to the mosque for Isha (night) prayer and did not return.

resolved many disputes including the old territorial disputes.

Meanwhile, civil servants of Dir Payin district have come out on the streets against pension reforms and deduction of salaries. Civil servants announced a protest sit-in outside the Chief Minister House Peshawar on November 6 to get their rights. In this regard, the All Government Employees Association organized a protest in Shaheed Chowk and the Peshawar Chitral highway was closed for all kinds of traffic.

On this occasion, the government offices went on a complete strike and the teachers boycotted the classes and shouted slogans against the government. Provincial Chairman Muhammad Saleem, Agiga Chairman Akhunda Ubaidullah Aptaka District President Qazi Habibullah, Agiga General Secretary Muslim Khan, Teachers' Organization Ziauddin Etihad Teachers Haroon Rasheed, APICA District President Sehat Jan, Wazir Muhammad Provincial President of Young Teachers, Attaur Rehman, Principal of SAO, Salahuddin, Aftab Alam Khan and others while speaking said that the government is exploiting government employees economically by privatizing government schools, which is not acceptable.

Therefore, they are increasing the benefits, but on the other hand, in the

name of reforming the pensions of government employees, they are cutting their salaries. He said that the constitution of Pakistan has given the right to pension to government employees, the caretaker government does not have the authority to terminate pension, termination of pension is equivalent to economic murder of government employees, the decision is not acceptable in any case.

Agiga leaders said that the government is trying to wall civil servants and is bent on privatization of national institutions but will not allow this organized conspiracy to succeed, they warned that if the government does not withdraw its decision. So on November 6, the Chief Minister will hold a protest sit-in outside Peshawar.

BISP stands as an ememplary social safety program



F.P. Report

GUJRANWALA: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has said that BISP is an exemplary social safety program serving nearly 1 crore needy families across Pakistan. He said that BISP is tirelessly caring for its needy beneficiaries with limited resources, embodying the essence of a welfare state. He expressed these thoughts during his visit to Jamia Masjid Mian Umar Din in Gujranwala today, where he addressed a gathering of dedicated BISP staff representing divisions of Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, and Sialkot.

Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized the significance of the cash assistance provided by BISP to the needy families. This financial aid plays a pivotal role in enabling them to meet essential domestic expenses, invest in their children's education, and secure their next meal, he said.

Chairperson BISP said that Benazir Taleemi Wazaif initiative, which educates the children of needy families, and the provision of Benazir Scholarships, are two vital pillars of BISP's commitment to empowering the marginalized sections of society. BISP is now placing a strong focus on imparting technical skills to these children, thereby equipping them with the means to earn a livelihood and become productive members of society, he added.

Addressing the BISP employees, Dr. Amjad Saqib urged them to consider their roles not merely as jobs but as acts of worship. He stressed the importance of treating women with kindness, love, and dignity and said that considering any dignified families as beggars is nothing than a big

sin. He underscored that the needy families are often illiterate and encouraged BISP employees to guide and facilitate them in the best possible manner.

Dr. Amjad Saqib quoted that, "If a person saves the life of another, it means he saved the whole of humanity." He expressed his vision for making BISP an exemplary organization, where beneficiaries are welcomed with open hearts and respect. Dr. Saqib asserted that it is both a religious and moral duty to treat women with the utmost respect and dignity.

During his visit, Dr. Saqib emphasized the importance of maintaining a clean environment within BISP offices, providing clean drinking water, and ensuring proper shelter and fans for women who often wait in long queues for services.

He also sought input from BISP employees on ways to enhance the program's operations and services, fostering a collaborative approach to its ongoing development.

Furthermore, Dr. Saqib illuminated the potential of utilizing mosques as centers for the disbursement of stipends to BISP families, further strengthening the bond between the program and local communities. He also offered prayers with BISP employees, cementing the spirit of unity and purpose. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib's visit to Gujranwala exemplified his dedication to the values and mission of BISP, demonstrating a commitment to improving the lives of countless individuals across Pakistan. Earlier in the morning, he was invited as Chief Guest in Rashid Latif University Lahore where he addressed more than 500 students, faculty and senior management and shared stories of BISP with them.

Citizen tied and beaten for alleged theft from garden

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A citizen named Muhammad Shafiq found himself at the mercy of an orchard owner after being accused of stealing five kilograms of lemons in the Rustam area of Mardan. This shocking act of vigilantism made headlines when the orchard owner, known as Bagh Malik, captured the ordeal on video and shared it on social media.

According to Muhammad Shafiq's police report, he was apprehended by the orchard owner after allegedly pilfering lemons. In a troubling turn of events, he was tied up and subjected to severe physical abuse in a warehouse. This brutal treatment left visible injuries on various parts of his body, causing him significant distress.

In response to the citizen's report, the police have taken swift action. They've not only registered a case against the individuals involved but have also apprehended two suspects, including the owner of the lemon garden. This incident serves as a stark reminder that the law applies to all citizens equally, and justice must be served through legal means.

The police have issued a stern warning to the public, emphasizing the importance of upholding the law and respecting due process. When crimes are committed, it is vital to trust the legal system and hand over

the accused to the authorities rather than resorting to vigilante actions. Those who take the law into their own hands will face severe consequences.

This incident highlights the significance of allowing the legal system to handle accusations of theft or any other crime. Vigilante justice can lead to dire consequences and undermines the principles of a just and fair society. By entrusting the police and the legal system to investigate and address such issues, we ensure that justice is served while safeguarding the rights and well-being of all individuals, regardless of their circumstances.

The swift response by the Mardan police in this case underscores their commitment to ensuring that justice prevails. It sends a clear message that no one is above the law, and acts of violence and vigilantism will not be tolerated in society. This incident serves as a call for citizens to have faith in the legal system and to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to address criminal activities. By doing so, we uphold the principles of justice and protect the rights of both victims and the accused. In a just society, the law, not individuals, should be the arbiter of justice.

Black day to be observed: Like all over the country Black Day is going to be observed in Mardan on Friday (today) against the Indian occupation of

Kashmir. On the occasion of Black Day, rallies are scheduled to be held to express solidarity with Kashmiri Muslims and against the Indian occupation. Relevant officials told the main ceremony in this regard is going to be held at Pakhtunkhwa House. In the event, school students will present speeches and tableaux regarding the freedom struggle of Kashmir.

While the world will be informed about the ongoing Indian atrocities on Kashmiris. Besides, they said, that such Programs would also be organized in various universities, colleges and schools on the occasion of Black Day. They pointed out that on 27 October 1947 was a black day in human history being observed around the world to strongly condemn the brutality and violence inflicted on the Kashmiri people and to reiterate the commitment to continue supporting their right to self-determination at the moral, political and diplomatic levels.

AWKUM achieves milestone: Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AWKUM), has achieved an unprecedented milestone in the recently released Times Higher Education Ranking 2024. The officials concerned here Thursday told that notably, AWKUM's Computer Science department has secured a remarkable ranking, within the range of 401 to 500.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani: A life dedicated to Kashmir and its people

Shehnaz Nawaz

SYED Ali Shah Geelani was symbol of Kashmir resistance, Geelani spear-headed Kashmir's movement for right to self-determination and was a staunch proponent of merging Indian occupied Kashmir with Pakistan.

As soon as news of his death began to make the rounds in the disputed Himalayan region, authorities blocked the internet and deployed hundreds of troops in the main city of Srinagar to prevent a mass funeral procession or protests against the Indian rule. India had reasons to be apprehensive obviously. For decades, Geelani was the sym-

bol of popular resistance for the Kashmiris who either want to carve an independent country out of the Himalayan territory or merge with neighboring Pakistan.

Geelani headed the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), an umbrella group of various Kashmiri political and religious groups formed in 1993 to spearhead a movement for the region's right to self-determination.

One of the core principles of Syed Ali Shah Geelani's political ideology was the right to self-determination for the people of Kashmir. He firmly believed that the Kashmiri people should have the right to decide their own des-

tiny through a free and fair plebiscite. Geelani's advocacy for self-determination aligned with international norms and the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, which call for a plebiscite to determine the future of the region. Throughout his life, Syed Ali Shah Geelani has been an ardent critic of Indian rule in Kashmir.

He has consistently opposed what he viewed as the Indian government's oppressive policies and military presence in the region. His unwavering stance had made him a symbol of resistance against what he and many Kashmiris saw as an occupation. Geelani had been a vocal advocate for human rights

in Kashmir. He had brought attention to the alleged human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture, carried out by Indian security forces in the region. His efforts to shed light on these issues earned him respect from human rights organizations and activists worldwide.

Despite his staunch opposition to Indian rule, Syed Ali Shah Geelani had in his life consistently advocated for non-violence and peaceful resistance. He believed in the power of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the Kashmir issue. Throughout his career, he had called for meaningful

between India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri leadership to find a peaceful and just solution to the conflict.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani's dedication to the Kashmiri cause had not gone unnoticed on the global stage. He received international recognition for his efforts to highlight the plight of the Kashmiri people. His speeches and writings have resonated with audiences worldwide, garnering support for the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination.

Geelani's path had been fraught with challenges and personal sacrifices. He faced numerous periods of house arrest and detention by the Indian authorities. Despite these

hardships, he remained steadfast in his commitment to the Kashmiri people's cause, inspiring many with his resilience.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani's life and struggle had been defined by his unwavering commitment to the rights and self-determination of the Kashmiri people. His advocacy for non-violence, human rights, and peaceful resistance earned him respect both within Kashmir and on the global stage. As the world continues to grapple with the complex Kashmir issue, Syed Ali Shah Geelani remains a symbol of hope and determination for the Kashmiri people and their quest for self-determination.



Russia disregards losses, presses on in Ukraine's Avdiivka

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian forces are disregarding heavy losses and pressing on with a drive to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, Ukrainian officials said. Russia has focused on the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk since failing in its initial drive on the capital Kyiv after mounting its invasion in February 2022.

Over the past two weeks, Russia has concentrated on Avdiivka in Donetsk, a town known in peacetime for its big coking plant and now seen as a bulwark of Ukrainian resistance. "The enemy is trying to move forward and then we beat them back," Oleksandr Shtupun, a spokesperson for Ukraine's southern groups of forces, said on national TV. "So by no means can you speak of a fixed situation of some sort. Heavy fighting is continuing, though activity has subsided somewhat. The enemy is going through some kind of regrouping."

Russian forces were relying on infantry, using small assault groups of 30 to 40 men, Shtupun said, giving Russia's losses in the last six days as 2,500 dead and wounded in the area. "This is quite significant even for Russia, bearing in mind that they do not look after their own men," Shtupun said. Vitaliy Barabash, head of Avdiivka's military administration, said Russia was applying pressure from the north but was unable to get past a rail line under Ukrainian control. He also dismissed reports that Russian troops had secured control of



one of the large slag heaps dominating the town's industrial landscape.

"They put up flags there and tried to make some kind of spectacle," Barabash said. Valeriy Prozapas, a Ukrainian captain, told Espresso TV that the Russians were acting to exploit the fact that Avdiivka was "de facto half surrounded". "The second issue is political. They have little to be proud of and have to sell to their population some sort of victory, even if it is only an interim one." Prozapas said. Ukraine's counteroffensive, launched in June, has resulted in the capture of devastated villages in the east and some settlements in the southern sector, but the pace is far

slower than last year's advance through the northeast.

Russian accounts of the latest fighting made no mention of Avdiivka, but said Russian troops had repelled 15 Ukrainian attacks near Kupiansk, farther north. Ukrainian officials also acknowledged heavy fighting near Kupiansk, a town initially seized by troops but taken back by Ukraine in last year's rapid advance through the northeast. Authorities in Kharkiv region said they were imposing a mandatory evacuation of families from 10 localities in the area. Reuters could not independently confirm the battle reports from either side.

Armenia sees no advantage in keeping Russian military bases

MOSCOW (Reuters): Armenia sees no advantage in continuing to host Russian military bases on its territory after Azerbaijan retook the contested region of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian prime minister told the Wall Street Journal in an interview published. Azerbaijan seized Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally viewed as Azeri territory but had been run by ethnic Armenians since the breakup of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, in a lightning military operation on Sept. 20.

"These events have essentially brought us to a decision that we need to diversify our relationships in the security sphere, and we are trying to do that now," Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told the WSJ. Russia's military presence in Armenia includes garrisons in two locations and an airbase. Moscow has long seen itself as the guarantor of Armenia's security in the volatile South Caucasus, a region crisscrossed with oil and gas pipelines. Later, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russian authorities were unaware of Pashinyan's comments. "We don't yet know if he said those words, and if he did, where, in what context. We don't have such information," Peskov was quoted as saying by Interfax news agency.

California Governor meets with Xi

BEIJING (AP): California Gov. Gavin Newsom had a surprise meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing after being warmly welcomed by other senior leaders in a display of friendliness that stands in sharp contrast to the dialogue between the United States and China in recent years. The governor is on a weeklong tour of China, where he plans to push for climate cooperation. Newsom's trip as governor, once considered routine, is drawing attention as it comes after years of heightening tensions between the US and China.

"I'm here in expectation, as you suggest, of turning the page, of renewing our friendship and reengaging (on) foundational and fundamental issues that will determine our collective faith in the future," Newsom said in brief opening remarks ahead of his meeting with Wang Yi, China's top diplomat, earlier in the day. Though Newsom was in China to promote cooperation in curbing climate change, Chinese officials took the opportunity in welcome speeches ahead of the closed-door meetings to talk about US-China relations. Wang is preparing to visit the US on Thursday. Newsom and Xi discussed ways to "accelerate our progress on climate in meaningful and substantive ways," the California governor said at a news conference, but did not mention more specifics. They also talked about fentanyl, a synthetic drug and leading killer of young people in the US, and China's role in combating the transnational shipping of precursor chemicals, Newsom said.

According to China's state broadcaster CCTV, Xi told Newsom: "I hope your visit will enhance mutual understanding between the two sides and play a positive role in expanding cooperation between China and California and promoting the healthy and stable development of Sino-US relations." Xi may attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco next month and meet with US President Joe Biden, although China has not formally confirmed his attendance. Newsom is visiting Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and the provinces of Guangdong and Jiangsu. At a speech at Hong Kong University, he promised to continue to cooperate on climate change regardless of the outcome of the next US presidential election. He said he raised human rights issues with Wang and the two also discussed Taiwan, a red-line issue for Beijing. China claims the self-ruled island as part of its own territory.

China chases US and Russia guided-missile submarine capabilities

HONG KONG (Reuters): China has launched its first nuclear-powered guided missile submarines, according to the Pentagon's latest report on China's military - giving it land and sea attack options once the sole province of US and Russian vessels. The Pentagon report, published Oct. 20, marks the first apparent confirmation that modified submarines seen in Chinese shipyards over the last 18 months are Type 093B guided missile submarines.

Reuters revealed in May 2022 that satellite images from Huludao shipyard in northeast China showed a new or upgraded class of submarine, possibly with vertical tubes for launching cruise missiles. The Pentagon report says that in the short term, the Chinese navy "will have the ability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets from its submarine and surface combatants using land-attack cruise missiles, notably enhancing (China's) power projection capability". Known as SSGNs, conventionally armed missile submarines were developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War in part to target US aircraft carriers, while the US Navy developed its own version by converting ballistic missile boats to carry large numbers of land-attack Tomahawk cruise missiles. Cruise missiles are typically long-range, precision weapons that, unlike ballistic

weapons, fly at low altitudes or skim the surface of the sea.

The submarine USS Florida fired 93 Tomahawks against Libyan air defences in 2011 - the first combat strikes from a US SSGN and an event that regional military attaches say was closely studied by Chinese strategists. Some analysts say the PLA navy will be eager to deploy the vessels as an extra weapon against aircraft carriers as well as a land-attack platform, allowing strikes from a far greater range than its fleets of smaller attack submarines. The report notes that three of the new SSGNs could be operational by next year, as part of a wider expansion of its submarine fleet - both nuclear and diesel powered - which could number 65 vessels in 2025.

The Chinese defence ministry did not respond to questions from Reuters. The confirmation comes amid an as China constructs a new generation of nuclear-armed boats as part of its evolving deterrent force. The effort to track China's submarines at sea is one of the core drivers of increased deployments and contingency planning by the US Navy and other militaries across the Indo-Pacific region. Singapore-based security scholar Collin Koh said the SSGNs were an important new capability for the Chinese navy. With an expected core armament of cruise missiles, "this potentially allows them to carry out

saturated land and anti-ship attacks at standoff range", he said, which would complicate strategic calculations by China's rivals. "I would also expect the Chinese have learned from the Russian experience in using them to threaten US aircraft carriers - with an SSGN, you can launch strikes at standoff range, unlike a typical attack submarine that could have more limited weapon options, and that is a real advantage," said Koh, of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

Research discussed at the US Naval War College in May noted that the PLA was close to breakthroughs in making its nuclear-powered submarines far quieter and more difficult for the US and its allies to track. Some diplomats and analysts said, however, that it was unclear whether those breakthroughs had been incorporated into the recently launched SSGNs. The upgrades are expected in nuclear-powered boats launched before the end of the decade. "Unless they are certain of improvements, we can expect the PLA navy to be cautious in how they initially deploy them," said an Asian military attache who is tracking China's submarine force. The attache declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter. "But we know the submarine force is a priority for Xi Jinping, and this is one more sign they are getting there."

Shoigu says Moscow exhausting Kyiv army

MOSCOW (AFP): Russia claimed it was exhausting Ukraine's army, 20 months into a conflict in which neither side has made recent significant gains. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu made the comments during a visit to east Ukraine, the defence ministry said. "The situation today suggests the enemy has fewer and fewer opportunities. And they will continue to be reduced, thanks exclusively to your combat work," Shoigu told Russian soldiers.

He was also filmed smiling and laughing when a Russian soldier told him Ukrainian troops were "in a panic". It has been months since either Russia or Ukraine made a significant territorial gain in the 20-month conflict, as losses

continue to mount. Analysts say the conflict is approaching a winter stalemate. The defence ministry did not say when Shoigu's visit to Russia's "Vostok"--or East--command post took place. In a rare admission, it also quoted soldiers telling Shoigu that heavy Ukrainian artillery fire was having an effect. "The enemy's artillery is causing a lot of problems. We are taking measures," the soldiers were quoted as saying. The defence minister has faced criticism inside Russia for Moscow's failure to make more significant gains during its assault on Ukraine.

Russian forces have recently stepped up their attacks on the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, but have failed to make any significant advances. It has

suffered a string of manpower and equipment losses in its attempt to seize the city - which has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance - according to Kyiv and independent military analysts. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his troops were facing "heavy, tough battles" around Avdiivka, but were "holding their positions". News of Shoigu's visit comes a day after Zelensky said Kyiv had managed to disrupt Russian attacks from the Black Sea and the annexed peninsula of Crimea. "The Russian fleet is no longer capable of operating in the western part of the Black Sea and is gradually fleeing Crimea. This is a historic achievement," Zelensky told a diplomatic summit.

Police hunt for man linked to major mass shootings in Lewiston

MAINE (Reuters): Hundreds of police searched the city of Lewiston and surrounding areas of Maine state for a man sought in connection with mass shootings at a bar and a bowling alley, as news outlets reported a death toll ranging from 16 to 22, with dozens more wounded. Officials said there were multiple casualties but declined to provide figures.

State and local police identified Robert R. Card, 40, as a person of interest in the case after previously posting on Facebook photographs of a man wielding what appeared to be a semi-automatic rifle. The pictures from one of crime scenes showed a bearded man in a brown hoodie and jeans, holding the weapon in the firing position. "We have literally hundreds of police officers working around the state of Maine to investigate this case to locate Mr. Barr, who is a person of interest," Maine Public Safety

Commissioner Mike Sauschuck told a news conference. Several media reported that a Maine law enforcement bulletin identified Card as a trained firearms instructor and member of the US Army reserve who recently reported that he had mental health issues, including hearing voices. It also said he threatened to shoot up a National Guard base. "Card was also reported to have been committed to mental health facility for two weeks during summer 2023 and subsequently released," said the notice from the Maine Information & Analysis Center.

Reuters could not authenticate the bulletin. The Associated Press reported it was circulated to law enforcement officials. The bar and the bowling alley are about four miles (6.5 km) apart in Lewiston, a former textile hub and town of 38,000 people in Androscoggin County about 35 miles (56 km) north of

Maine's largest city, Portland. Media reports picked up by Reuters earlier said there was a third shooting site at a Walmart distribution center, but Walmart later issued a statement to local media saying no shooting occurred on their property. The Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston issued a statement saying it was "reacting to a mass casualty, mass shooter event" and coordinating with area hospitals to take patients. President Joe Biden has been briefed and will continue to receive updates, a US official said in Washington. The president spoke by phone individually to Maine Governor Janet Mills, Senators Angus King and Susan Collins, and Congressman Jared Golden about the shooting in Lewiston and offered full federal support in the wake of the attack, the White House said. If the death toll of 22 is confirmed, the massacre would be the deadliest in the United States since at

least August 2019, when a gunman opened fire on shoppers at an El Paso Walmart with an AK-47 rifle, killing 23 in a shooting that prosecutors branded an anti-Hispanic hate crime, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

The 22 fatalities would also be on par with the number of homicides that normally occur in Maine in any given year. The number of annual homicides in the state has fluctuated between 16 and 29 since 2012, according to Maine State Police. The number of US shootings in which four or more people were shot has surged since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, with 647 occurring in 2022 and 679 projected to occur in 2023, based on trends as of July, according to data from the archive. The deadliest US mass shooting on record is the massacre of 58 people by a gunman firing on a Las Vegas country music festival from a high-rise hotel perch in 2017.

Republicans seen gaining three US House seats with new North Carolina voting map

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The House of Representatives passed the new map along party lines, after the Senate did the same. The map creates 10 safely Republican districts, three Democratic districts and one highly competitive seat, centered in the eastern part of the state. Democrats would have to flip five seats in the 435-seat US House next year to regain control of that chamber. "There's no doubt the congressional map that's before you today has a lean toward Republicans," said Representative Destin Hall, a Republican, who added that the process had abided by the state constitution and

was a natural result of the political makeup of the chamber. Activists opposing the redistricting gathered at the state Capitol to criticize the maps, saying they were designed to weaken the political voice of communities of color. "These proposed maps further destroy the guardrails of democracy," said Karen Zeigler, lead organizer for Democracy Out Loud.

The opportunity to enact a map more favorable to Republicans was delivered by the state Supreme Court, after voters elected more conservatives to the court in last year's elections. The previous Democratic-major-

ity court had thrown out an earlier Republican-drawn map, ruling that extreme political gerrymandering - the process by which lawmakers manipulate district lines to marginalize voters of one party - violated the state constitution. As a result, the 2022 congressional elections took place under a court-drawn map, yielding an even split of the state's 14 districts between Republicans and Democrats. After the election, however, the court's new conservative majority reversed that decision and ruled that gerrymandering is not constitutionally prohibited.

Sri Lanka approves free tourist visa for 7 countries

COLOMBO (Reuters): Sri Lanka's cabinet approved issuing free tourist visas to visitors from seven countries including China, India and Russia, a statement issued by the media ministry said, to boost tourism and help revive its crisis-hit economy. Tourists from China, India, Russia, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia will be issued free visas till March 31, 2024 under a pilot programme, the statement detailing cabinet decisions said.

The scheme is part of attempts by Sri Lanka to boost tourism recovery and hit a target of five million arrivals by 2026, the statement added. The country of 22 million people, famed for its beaches, ancient temples and aromatic tea, saw its tourism industry pummeled first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then by a severe financial crisis last year that saw mass scale protests and shortages of essentials such as fuel. But the tourism industry is seeing a turnaround in 2023 with Sri Lanka

clocking a million arrivals by September, for the first time since 2019. The island is expecting to close the year at 1.5 million arrivals. India is the largest source of tourists with 200,310 arrivals, followed by Russia with 132,300, latest data from the Sri Lanka Development Authority showed. Sri Lanka earned \$1.3 billion from tourism in the first eight months of 2023, up from \$833 million dollars during the same period last year, according to the central bank.

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Pakistan's pro-Palestine lobbying

PAKISTAN has recently urged the UN Security Council to fully and forcefully implement its resolutions on the Middle East conflict that gives the right of self-determination to the Palestinian people. Addressing a meeting of the 15-member UNSC, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, strongly condemned the recent large-scale Israeli military operations in Jenin in the Occupied West Bank, and days-long brutal bombardment in Gaza and called for holding Israel accountable for its grave human rights violations and crimes in Occupied Palestine. The envoy regretted that the Security Council had not been able to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in Occupied Palestine, while, it is incumbent on all states to ensure that any impediment to the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Pales-tinian people is immediately removed. The Pakistani envoy categorically told the powerful arm of the United Nations that the rule of law can be upheld only if it is applied universally and consistently, without exceptions or double standards.

The humanitarian and security situation in Occupied Palestinian territories including the West Bank and Gaza is altogether heart-wrenching and dire. The criminal silence of the international community continues as the Jewish army has declared the whole of Gaza City a military target and its indiscriminate assault against innocent unarmed Palestinians killed over 5000 thousand people including women and children. Israel's military has screwed up its blockade on Gaza, together with restricting the entry of food, water and fuel and bombarding the area with air strikes and artillery shelling, displacing hundreds of thousands of others and resulting in severe shortages of food, water and medical supplies. The Israeli military has recently dropped leaflets in the Gaza Strip ordering residents to evacuate the city on an immediate basis while the Israeli Prime Minister has announced that the Jewish troops are ready to enter Gaza to target Hamas positions by using tanks and airstrikes. On the other side, Palestinian authorities have urged the Gazans not to leave their homes and stick to their land as they fear a permanent occupation of Southern Gaza by the Israeli regime. The Palestinian resistance groups have prepared their war strategy against the Israeli war machine yet Palestinians face a scarcity of weapons while an absence of foreign aid is a great setback for them at this point. Currently, 1.1 million Gazans face serious risks to their survival as Israel's indiscriminate shelling and air strikes continue on civil targets leaving no safe passage for unarmed innocent civilians.

The Security Council failed to uphold its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in Occupied Palestine. Recently, three special rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Council had stated that Israeli attacks against the Jenin refugee camp may constitute a war crime and had no justification under international law. The UN Special Rapporteurs had also called for Israel to be held accountable under international law. Realistically, the impunity that Israel has enjoyed for its acts of violence over decades, and the failure of the UN executive arm to uphold its primary responsibility has only fueled and intensified the recurring cycle of violence in Palestine and the broader Middle East region. Currently, the Hamas attack has provided Israel with an excuse to implement its longtime agenda for the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the expulsion/evictions of Palestinians from their properties, which is not only illegal and grave violations of Security Council's resolutions but contradicts international law, and humanitarian law. Currently, the lone and sick nuclear power of the Islamic world is unable to use its muscles against the aggressor due to its persistent economic and political weakness. Thus, diplomatic, political and moral support are the available options with Islamabad. Although Pakistan's permanent envoy has raised its voice against Israeli warcrimes against unarmed Palestinians but only verbal statements are not sufficient to fulfil the needs of the Palestine cause. Pakistan must actively lobby in support of Palestine by moving a resolution at the relevant forums including the UNSC, the UNGA, the UH Human Rights Council as well as International Criminal Court (ICC). So, the rogue Israeli regime could be penalized for its crimes against civilians, ruthless jingoism and inhumane atrocities against poor Palestinians. Although, we could offer material assistance to our Palestinian brethren yet kinetic diplomacy is of the utmost importance during this hour of need.

What next in Russia-Ukraine war

RUSSIA'S Doma has recently completed the passage of a law aimed at withdrawing ratification of the global treaty banning nuclear weapons tests, which illustrates the deep chill in relations between the two superpowers and world resolute competitors. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has already declared that Russia was not prepared to resume discussion on nuclear issues with the US side unless Washington dropped its hostile policy toward Moscow. The bill to de-ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was approved by 156 votes to zero in the upper house after the lower house also cleared it unanimously. Seemingly, the bill would be translated into law after Russian Strongman President Vladimir Putin thumped his stamp on it while the Kremlin will ultimately withdraw its ratification of the important multilateral accord in the coming weeks that would be surely a blow to the global efforts for denuclearization and nuclear nonproliferation at this crucial moment.

The global geopolitical landscape has all together changed after Russia unilaterally launched its special military operation against Kiev in early 2022. The months-long war has exhausted the Russian war machine along with levelling unprecedented economic losses due to strict trade and economic sanctions imposed by the west to obstruct provision of finances essential to fuel Kremlin brutal hostility against its neighbour. Historically, the United States signed the CTBT in 1996 but never ratified it, while Russian not only signed it but duly ratified to make its abidance compulsory for itself. Currently, the dialogue on strategic stability, including the topic of strategic offensive arms and other issues between the two competitors are at halt, while Moscow also pulled itself from CTBT, which is indicative of emergence of a new arms race and reinitiation of another cold war. The situation has been dire as the Russian troops are facing a continued setback in their war on Ukrainian fronts. There had been a series of Moscow's backtrack and heavy losses from Black Sea to the Bukhmut region. Russia has recently advertised its latest supersonic long range missile system and is now preparing to renew its nuclear activities, atomic research and experiences to make its nuclear arsenal more lethal and destructive. Apparently, Putin is preparing for a decisive and final round during which he could not defeat his enemies except the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Hence, the world must not ignore/ forget the reaction of a fox when it surrounds and faces death risk from a herd of wolves.

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UN Security Council again fails to act in a time of crisis

Dr. Amal Mudallali

THE UN Security Council, which the UN Charter entrusted with the "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security," has been unable to take action on the ongoing situation in the Middle East. The council last week failed to adopt a Brazilian resolution that called for "humanitarian pause" in the Israel-Hamas conflict. The US used its veto to block the resolution, which was supported by 12 UNSC members, including two permanent members, China and France. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the council needed to let the hard work of diplomacy undertaken by the US "play out" because of President Joe Biden's trip to Israel.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, president of the Security Council this month, noted during the open debate on the Middle East, including the Palestine question, that, "since 2016, the council has not been able to pass a resolution on the situation in the region."

And, with Russia blocking any action on Ukraine, the UNSC is now completely paralyzed during two dangerous conflicts that threaten international peace and security. This bodes ill for multilateral cooperation and the prevention of larger wars.

The veto and its use by the five permanent members has been one of the biggest obstacles to the work of the UNSC since its early days. In the early years of the UN during the Cold War, Moscow used its veto frequently (it totaled 152 vetoes as of February), because the US was the dominant power in the council and was getting its way. The US has now used its veto power 88 times. Its last veto before this crisis was in 2020. The majority of the American vetoes are related to Israel and the situation in the Middle East.

China used to be more cautious about using its veto power, but it has been using it more frequently recently. It has used it 19 times (a very small number compared to Russia and the US), but 16 of these have been since 1997. France and the UK have not used their veto power since

1989. This great power blockage in the UNSC is not new. Throughout its history, when tensions rise between the big powers, the council becomes paralyzed and ceases to play its role in terms of managing conflicts and international crises. The most productive cooperative work in the history of the council was during the post-Cold War era, when the great power competition was at its lowest. But now, as tensions rise between the US, China and Russia, it is hard to imagine how the UNSC and the UN

aggression, the use of armed force when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security."

If the UNGA is not in session, the resolution says it "shall therefore meet in emergency special session within 24 hours of the request." An emergency special session can be convened by a request from nine members of the UNSC or by a majority of the UNGA. This process has been used 11 times since its adoption, with more than half of them relating to the

the country that used the veto has to explain why it did so. The resolution stipulates that the UNGA should not hold a debate under the veto initiative if it is meeting for an emergency special session. This prevented the veto initiative sponsors from going ahead with a plan to request an UNGA debate on the US' veto of last week, since the emergency special session request by the Arab Group and the OIC overrides their request.

The frustration with the blocked UNSC was apparent during the open debate on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, in the presence of a large number of foreign ministers. The debate gave the different parties an opportunity to express their disappointment with the deadlocked council. Vieira said: "Much of the reputation of the United Nations depends on its approach to the ongoing crisis." He complained about the "obstructive strategies" that have been impeding the council from taking decisions, adding that "this council must live up to the challenge before us. We will likely be tried - and found guilty - by future generations for our inaction and complacency. We must find ways to unlock multilateral action."

Even Russia and the US, the two parties blocking action on Ukraine and the Middle East, respectively, spoke about the role of the UNSC. Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia bemoaned the inability of the council to uphold its responsibility, while Secretary of State Antony Blinken saw the UNSC playing a "crucial role ... in addressing this crisis." While Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Al-Malki criticized the "continued failure at this council," calling it "inexcusable," his Israeli counterpart directed his anger at UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The UN Charter talks about "sovereign equality," with all members of the organization enjoying the same rights. But when it comes to the UNSC, some are more equal than the rest of the world. The veto is the most glaring manifestation of this inequality, with repercussions for worldwide peace and security.

Arab News

An UNGA resolution, adopted by consensus on April 26, 2022, aims to hold the five permanent members of the UNSC accountable for their use of the veto. The resolution states that, every time a permanent member uses the veto, the UNGA president shall convene a formal meeting within 10 days and the country that used the veto has to explain why it did so.

generally will be able to play a role in preserving international peace and security and managing conflicts around the world.

The UN General Assembly and its member states have been trying to deal with this problem since the establishment of the current international order. Two serious initiatives have tried to unblock the gridlock in the UNSC. The first, known as the Uniting for Peace initiative, was born when the UNGA adopted Resolution 377, on Nov. 3, 1950, to offer a way out when the UNSC was blocked and prevented from taking action. The resolution states: "If the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to members for collective measures, including in the case of a breach of the peace or act of

Middle East. The last request for an emergency special session was sent to the UNGA president on Monday. Dennis Francis announced that he had received a letter from the representatives of the Arab Group and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation requesting, under the Uniting For Peace resolution, the "resumption of the 10th emergency special session of the General Assembly as rapidly as possible." Another group of 12 countries, including Russia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Syria, made the same request. Francis said he would convene an emergency special session of the UNGA on Thursday.

The second scheme, known as the veto initiative, came after the UNSC was blocked by Russia on Ukraine, which led to growing criticism of the inaction of the council. An UNGA resolution, adopted by consensus on April 26, 2022, aims to hold the five permanent members of the UNSC accountable for their use of the veto. The resolution states that, every time a permanent member uses the veto, the UNGA president shall convene a formal meeting within 10 days and

Is Middle East undermining US' pivot to Asia?

Kerry Boyd Anderson

THE last three US presidents have all attempted to deprioritize the Middle East and focus foreign policy resources on East Asia. However, each one has struggled to shift away from the Middle East and the Hamas attack on Israel has once again demonstrated the challenges to US efforts to "pivot" to Asia.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the George W. Bush administration spent its two terms in office focused heavily on the Middle East. By the time Barack Obama became president in 2009, public support for the war in Iraq had declined. Obama criticized Bush for focusing on the war in Iraq at the expense of the war in Afghanistan and other US interests. Obama's foreign policy team developed a strategy known as the "pivot to Asia." Obama emphasized that "the United States is a Pacific power." His administration understood that America was also a global power that still had substantial interests in the Middle East. The pivot to Asia was about rebalancing the focus of foreign policy to prioritize interests and concerns in Asia, not abandoning all interests in the Middle East. For example, the administration actively pursued sanctions against Iran and then used that leverage to negotiate limits on Iran's nuclear program. Nonetheless, it was clear that the Obama administration hoped to reduce Washington's focus on the Middle East.

Several major shifts in the region complicated Obama's efforts to focus elsewhere. The so-called Arab Spring, the revolution in Libya, the civil war in Syria and the rise of Daesh all grabbed the foreign policy spotlight. Obama's carefully crafted global and regional strategy was forced to adapt to realities on the ground. Donald Trump's administration also emphasized a focus on East Asia, especially rivalry with China. Trump criticized the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and sought ways to reduce US military involvement in the region, including the controversial decision to withdraw troops from Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Syria. Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal with Iran and tried to delegate more responsibility to regional partners while reducing direct US involvement.

The Trump administration's most proactive moves in the region were to pursue normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab countries, as well as a heavily pro-Israeli approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While Trump tried to focus on China and reduce the US footprint in the Middle East, regional developments and domestic political interests still directed foreign policy attention to the region. When Joe Biden took office in 2021, he followed Obama and Trump's efforts to prioritize East Asia, especially given increasing tensions between Washington and Beijing. His administration deprioritized the Middle East, especially

after attempted talks with Iran floundered. Biden administration officials were clear that they would not devote many resources to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Biden expressed strong support for Israel, restored aid to the Palestinians and sought to expand the Abraham Accords, but otherwise largely hoped to avoid extensive involvement in the region.

Then, Hamas launched its historic attack against Israel, igniting a new war in Gaza and increased violence in the West Bank. Just as previous administrations felt forced to react to the Arab Spring, the rise of Daesh and other regional developments, now Biden feels that it is necessary for the US to actively respond in a big way. The latest pull on Washington to pay attention to the Middle East highlights that US presidents can develop grand strategies with their preferred regional priorities, but there will always be events that undermine their ability to pursue their goals. Just as Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to shifts in Biden's foreign policy and a significant reallocation of resources, so the latest war in the Middle East disrupts efforts to pivot to Asia.

There is a sense among many in the US foreign policy community that events in the Middle East keep dragging Washington back to the region. Those who want a pivot to Asia find this frustrating. Those whose work focuses on the Middle East like to say, "I told you so." Yet, it is reasonable to ask to what extent the US is forced to pay attention to the Middle East versus to what extent it chooses to do so. As a global power, America has strong strategic interests in the Middle East, given the region's geostrategic position, the importance of oil and gas to the global economy, and concerns about nuclear weapons and terrorism that could threaten Americans. Furthermore, as China's influence in the region grows, countering Beijing might require US action in the Middle East.

Other US priorities stem more from policy-makers' preferences and choices than from core national interests. In these cases, it is hardly fair to blame the Middle East for distracting the US from its interests in East Asia. America chose to invade Iraq in 2003 and then became entangled in the many consequences of that decision. The US chooses a strong alliance with Israel - and the many consequences - as much or more due to domestic political interests than pragmatic strategic concerns. It is difficult to distinguish between when the US must devote attention to the region and when it chooses to do so at a cost to other priorities. The Biden administration must now decide to what extent it should shift resources from other priorities to the Middle East in response to the latest war. Biden's approach will say a lot to the world about his priorities and how he defines US interests.

Israel's war of self-deceit

Marwan Bishara

wartime leader has gone on to wage a sadistic war with no clear strategy or endgame. In his genocidal offensive, Netanyahu has been aided and abetted by his former Western detractors, who until recently were expressing "concern" about his plans to undermine Israel's judiciary, through his coalition of fanatics and fascists, in order to stay out of jail.

First and foremost among them is US President Joe Biden, who went from snubbing Netanyahu for much of the year to embracing and shielding him from the wrath of Israelis and Arabs alike. Biden has committed America to Netanyahu's genocidal war on Gaza, offering American arms, tactical assistance in urban warfare, and diplomatic leverage. He has ordered the deployment of two aircraft carriers in the Eastern

Mediterranean to protect Israel and deter the likes of Iran from intervening in the conflict.

Likewise, European leaders, who had also given Netanyahu the cold shoulder for much of the year, are now clamouring to show their support for his government and his war on Gaza. They have refused to call for a ceasefire and continue to justify the mounting Israeli war crimes as an exercise of "the right to self-defence". Israel's Western stooges love to evoke international law in all the wrong ways. Israel, indeed, has the right to self-defence, but not to defend its decades-long brutal military occupation, long enabled by Western powers. It is rather the occupied and victimised Palestinian people living under the Israeli racist system of apartheid that have the right to resist their tormentor under inter-

national law.

The ongoing genocidal war - spearheaded by a failed prime minister and supported by his morally suspect Western allies - is not one of self-defence; rather, it is a war of self-deceit. Israel falsely believes that it could attain security by the sword. But when has killing more Palestinians ever resulted in better security for Israeli society? It never has; it never will. Imposing a hermetic blockade on Gaza and unleashing a bombing rampage to pave the way for a land invasion, Israel will face dangerous regional blowbacks. In its genocidal drive, it may, as some fear, drag the US into World War III.

Sensationally and falsely comparing Hamas's attacks on Israel with those carried by al-Qaeda on the United States in 2001 will not help. The "war on terror" the US unleashed on the world killed even more Americans than the 9/11 attacks did,

along with hundreds of thousands of mostly Muslim victims. It sowed chaos that more war and more troops could not stop for the past two decades. If anything, the "war on terror" proves that war crimes, collective punishment and other violations of international law do not mitigate extremism; they perpetuate it as they fuel the cycles of violence - something UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism Fionnuala Ni Aolain emphasised during a recent news conference focusing on the Israeli war on Gaza. As the Israeli army commits more war crimes against the Palestinians of Gaza, Israelis need to have a good look at where colonialism and occupation have gotten them. Perpetual Israeli oppression, racism and killings of the Palestinians have created the conditions for greater instability, extremism and violence in Palestine and the region. A genocidal war on Gaza will not bring peace and quiet to the Israeli society, nor to those in the West abetting it.

Why Israel’s goal of destroying Hamas for good is unrealistic

SUDDENLY, the Israel-Gaza war is center stage again. But what has changed? We all know that this war has been simmering for decades, exploding intermittently, as is the case in Gaza today and in the West Bank over the past few months. In the wider context, there are also the intermittent skirmishes with Hezbollah in Lebanon and the periodic Israeli attacks on Iranian and pro-Iranian groups stationed in the broken, post-revolution Syria. Not to forget the so-called shadow wars fought between Iran and Israel everywhere in the world, including on Iranian soil in the form of deniable assassinations or sabotage-related operations targeting Iran's nuclear program, or on the high seas, where Israeli and Iranian maritime assets become entangled in tit-for-tat attacks - often deniable of course.

So, when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that Hamas militants may have committed their biggest mistake, I am not sure what he meant. Maybe he forgot that his country has occupied Palestinian lands, fragmented their territories, built illegal settlements and given carte blanche to ultrareligious Jews, allowing them to harass Palestinians and desecrate their religious sites.

Hamas' resistance is not new, nor are its motives, and many say that Netanyahu has long been an enabler of the group, letting it rule Gaza to encourage further Palestinian division and to give the impression that the Palestinians lacked the leadership and unity to strike a peace deal with Israel. Hamas has been involved in killing and maiming Israelis through a string of suicide bombing campaigns since the mid-1990s. And Netanyahu's successive Likud governments have led military reprisals that inflicted equally painful damage, if often

disproportionately against the Palestinians. However, all that sucked the oxygen out of the peace process, which neither Netanyahu nor Hamas never believed in anyway.

Deploying ruthless force and setting aims like denying Hamas a future base in Gaza are driven by rage and anger. They reflect the desperation on the part of Israel to "win," or to "do or die," in a conflict that has dotted the last 75 years with insecurity, wars and suffering for all parties. Many in the Middle East have come to call it the "forever war."

The outpouring of support by Western leaders and their vows to stand by Israel in its "darkest hour" after losing more than 1,400 of its citizens in a daring Hamas incursion, along with the capture of some 200 civilian and military hostages, was understandable. But this should not justify stating the necessity of Tel Aviv "winning," as expressed by the UK prime minister and others. The "Israel must win" slogan, repeated by many in the past two weeks, clearly demonstrates a poor grasp of the problem at hand. A failure to contain the Israeli revenge drive - or, as they say, to reset their army's strategic supremacy - could engulf the region in several fires of asymmetric warfare that will lead to the further loss of life and harm to civilians not only in Palestine, but across the volatile Middle East. It is no secret that US President Joe Biden, during his visit to Israel last week, sought to contain the conflict, although he did that while pledging total support to Israel and the urgent dispatch to the region of two naval battle groups. Washington has tried to dissuade the Israelis from pursuing a scorched-earth policy against Hamas in Gaza, with Biden's intensified diplomatic efforts with Arab leaders, such as those in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi

Arabia, a clear example of that.

Fearing a humanitarian catastrophe, the US has managed to pressure Israel to allow some aid in through Egypt and it has been working around the clock diplomatically to prevent a further fanning of the fire beyond the Occupied Territories to neighboring Lebanon, where Iranian proxy Hezbollah has been exchanging fire across the border with Israel, and further afield. For example, the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen have launched several missiles and drones in Israel's direction, only for them to be intercepted by US ships in the Red Sea. Biden's cautiousness should not go unheeded by Israel. Nor should his remarks that, while Israelis might feel rage, they should not be consumed by it, as that could lead to them making mistakes. He alluded to the US' own mistakes in the wake of 9/11. I could also say that "win" is a term that should not be used in a region where conflicts are interminable, complex, multilayered, laced with state and nonstate actors, and made more intricate by a weaponized religious zeal that often renders reason redundant. Also, it is important to know that the fight between Israel and Hamas does not resemble the war on terror against Al-Qaeda two decades ago, nor is it similar to the international coalition to fight Daesh in Iraq and Syria from 2014. In both these instances, the militants were a kind of franchised foreign fighter, waging international campaigns of terror despite having no connection to the local population or a cause similar to the Palestinians' fight for a state. Hamas militants, like it or hate it, are part of the social fabric of Gaza and are fighting for a cause that is shared by many Palestinians.

In the past, it was possible to prevail over Al-Qaeda and pursue and kill its leaders after weeding

them out from Afghanistan. In the case of Daesh, that was possible too. Even Israel's invasion to dislodge the Palestine Liberation Organization from Lebanon in 1982 could not have yielded fruit if it were not for the Syrian regime continuing the job of the Israelis for its own geostrategic interests. It suffocated what was left of the PLO on Lebanese soil, only for Hezbollah, a client of Iran and Syria, to emerge as a key militant nonstate actor that continued its cross-border posturing long after the Israeli troops' withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000. This is why efforts should be focused on de-escalation and giving civilians access to basic humanitarian supplies not as a charity but as a right. Meanwhile, mediators and foreign powers must use all the influence they possess to try to secure the release of the civilian hostages. This is the first step toward trying to prevent an all-out, hasty and surely costly invasion, in terms of both civilian and military casualties on both sides.

The notion of winning by destroying Hamas for good is very unrealistic. Its advocates have not grasped what the history of similar conflicts has taught us. It is very dangerous to aspire to remove an organization that is so deeply entrenched in the social fabric and which receives help from a strong state actor like Iran. Tehran has long used asymmetric warfare to achieve its goals and has projected its power by meddling in the affairs of various countries, from Iraq to Lebanon and from Palestine to Yemen and Syria, weakening their central state organs to the benefit of militant groups. The world after the Russian invasion of Ukraine is divided and the war in Gaza, if it stretches beyond the borders of Israel and Palestine, could increase the splintering, potentially destroying what is left of multilateralism and the key tenets of peace and stability.

Democracy in Africa is not a Western imposition

ON September 19, Rwanda's President Paul Kagame confirmed that he would stand for re-election in his country's August 2024 presidential election, and attempt to win an unprecedented fourth term in office. "I am pleased with the confidence that Rwandans have placed in me. I will always serve them, as long as I can," the 66-year-old was quoted as saying in an interview with Jeune Afrique, a French-language news magazine.

It is not surprising that Kagame is gearing up for another presidential contest. After all, it appears that, over the years, Rwanda's president has developed an effective blueprint not only for winning elections, but also for doing so with seemingly universal public approval. Indeed, the former army general, who has led Rwanda since June 2000, won the 2010 and 2017 presidential elections with 93 percent and 98.6 percent of the votes respectively. And before that, in his first presidential election in 2003, he had gained the support of 95.05 percent of Rwandan voters.

According to constitutional amendments approved via a referendum in December 2015, Kagame can seek a third seven-year term next year, and has the right to run for further two five-year terms thereafter, meaning he can theoretically remain in power till 2034. On the face of it, seeking another term in office seems to be a reasonable way forward for an incredibly popular and successful head of state.

Rwanda has certainly made significant socioeconomic strides since the 1994 genocide that killed at least 800,000 mainly ethnic Tutsi and moderate Hutu civilians, with many observers describing the country as an African success story. However, this commendable progress does not erase the fact that Kagame is a ruthless despot and a major obstacle to true democratic progress.

Indeed, elections in Rwanda have been marred by extensive government crackdowns on free speech, independent media, and political opposition since the very beginning. And it is highly suspect whether Kagame would have been able to secure the support of almost all Rwandan voters repeatedly over the years if he had faced his rivals in truly free and fair elections. The Rwandan government, under Kagame's guidance, has long engaged in reprehensible warfare to eliminate those who have sought to challenge Kagame at the polls. Authorities thwarted attempts by presidential hopefuls Victoire Ingabire Umuhoya and Diane Rwigara to stand against Kagame in 2010 and 2017 respectively, for example. Kigali has also reportedly abducted and assassinated dissidents and opposition leaders, both at home and

Tafi Mhaka

abroad. Suspected state agents allegedly murdered Patrick Karegeya, the former external intelligence chief and co-founder of the Rwandan National Congress, in South Africa in January 2014.

So, as proven time and again, Kagame is not a true democrat. Thus, it's impossible to determine with any degree of certainty whether a significant percentage of Rwandans really have "confidence" in his leadership and want to see him run for office once again next year. Rwanda, after all, is not really a democracy. Sure, it has all the elementary structures of a democracy and it seems to be able to hold elections on a regular basis. Under this democratic facade, however, Kagame is actually ruling Rwanda like his personal fiefdom. His is an undisputedly authoritarian, anti-democratic regime - and one that many other despots in the region look up to.

In April, for example, while hosting Kagame for a two-day visit in Conakry, Guinea's military ruler, Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya - who overthrew former president Alpha Conde in a September 2021 military coup - expressed great admiration for Kagame's de facto dictatorship and even said he "draws inspiration from the Rwandan model" describing it in a presidential statement as an "African reference". Fast-forward to September 21, it wasn't surprising to hear Doumbouya criticise democratic governance as a Western imposition at the 78th United Nations General Assembly. "Africa is suffering from a governance model that has been imposed on it ... a model that is good and effective for the West but is difficult to adapt to our realities, our customs and environment," he told world leaders gathered in New York. This is an old trope that Kagame himself has long been using to deflect attention away from his atrocious human rights record.

At his inauguration ceremony in September 2010, for instance, he slammed "the self-proclaimed critics of Rwanda," and claimed that the "lack of democracy" was not "Africa's biggest problem". More than a decade later, Kagame is still in power, and is still arguing that Africa does not really have a democracy problem. This, despite unelected military governments being in power in Sudan, Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. And supposedly "democratic leaders" like Kagame himself, who remain in power on the back of bogus elections, presiding over many others. Sure, it is the right and duty of any African leader to condemn and resist any colonial and neo-colonial transgression. This continent has suffered more than enough from

Western impositions. But democracy is no longer an exclusively Western model or aspiration. And it is not a Western imposition - in fact, these days Western powers seem to prefer dealing with friendly dictators rather than independently minded and democratically elected African leaders. Today, the West is not imposing democracy on unwilling African nations. It is Africans themselves, who long for true democracy on the continent.

A study published by Afrobarometer in January 2023 revealed that most Africans - including 77 percent of Guineans - support democracy and would like to see stronger democratic institutions in their countries. In the same study, 74 percent said they reject military governments and 82 percent voiced their dislike for the type of strongman rule with a democratic facade that Kagame has established in Rwanda. This is the unspoken truth: Africans love democracy and want to see it work. Of course, democracy is not a perfect governance model - no system is. That being said, it's the ideal vehicle for peaceful socioeconomic development, and Africans know this. The large-scale adoption of democracy across Africa in the 20th century was essentially a homegrown response to the social injustices inflicted on Africans by colonial and settler regimes. It wasn't, as Doumbouya sought to underhandedly suggest at the UN, predicated on Western impositions alone.

Look at South Africa's 1995 Freedom Charter - it advocated for a multi-racial democracy as a remedy to apartheid rule. African democracies are laden with locally agreed standards that are also universally acclaimed values (PDF). They include principles that Kagame, Doumbouya and many other leaders have routinely chosen to disregard: the unhindered participation of citizens, equality, accountability, the rule of law, political tolerance, free and fair elections, and human rights. Most Africans - myself included - have simply never experienced the true and expansive fabric of democracy, as African leaders have mostly refused to fully embrace or implement it.

In this sense, Kagame's Rwanda is not an "African success story", or the "African reference" for successful governance as Doumbouya hypocritically claimed, but a guidebook for newly empowered despots across the continent on how to create an illusion of democracy. Africans, and Rwandans, deserve and demand better. Kagame should reconsider his ill-advised decision to run for office again. Rwanda can become a real African success story - a genuine reference for other African nations - but only if Kagame allows democracy to prosper.

Saudi Arabia and the UK’s enduring defense partnership

OUR world is changing, becoming ever more contested and volatile by the day. In the UK, change is occurring across our nation's defense as we modernize and adapt. And, here in Saudi Arabia, an awe-inspiring transformation is happening as the Kingdom seeks to deliver a compelling and aspirational vision for its future.

In a world of change, certain fixed constants are needed, and our two kingdoms' enduring defense partnership is one of those. That is why, this week, I have made my first visit to the region as defense secretary to meet Prince Khalid bin Salman. Top of our agenda was the violence in Israel and Gaza and how we can protect civilians.

As for the UK coalition, we unequivocally condemn Hamas terrorists. They do not represent the Palestinian people and the UK supports Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas in a proportionate and responsible way. Any civilian suffering is a tragedy, which is why the UK has been direct with Israel that international law must be upheld at all times.

During this crisis, the UK and Saudi Arabia share pressing strategic priorities. Namely, calming the conflict, deterring escalation and preventing a breakdown in regional security, which would only inflict more suffering. But even as I write this, malign actors are seek-

ing to fan the flames. That is why the UK has activated an intense and urgent diplomatic mission to maintain stability and ease tensions across the region - with officials and ministers working closely with more than 40 nations. And it is why we have deployed additional military assets to the Eastern Mediterranean to deter against an escalation in violence. Saudi Arabia and our other Gulf partners, with their unique understanding of the interconnected forces that shape security and prosperity in this region, have a key role to play as interlocutors, mediators and leaders.

It is clear it will take the combined efforts of our countries to prevent this conflict from spreading, with devastating results. That is why I am in Riyadh just days after our prime minister to coordinate our work with Saudi Arabia. Because the tragic reality of this conflict is that civilian lives are being lost on both sides. So, we must work together to ensure both adherence to international humanitarian law and the safety and security of all people. It is critical that we secure immediate, unimpeded and safe access for lifesaving aid to reach civilians - especially food, water, fuel and medical supplies. The recent agreement to allow trucks of aid into Gaza through

Grant Shapps

Rafah is an important first step that will provide a lifeline for some. But it must not be temporary. Sustained and safe access to adequate volumes of humanitarian aid is vital for the needs of the people of Gaza to be met. That is why, alongside the Gulf Cooperation Council, we have committed tens of millions more in aid to help those suffering most. And it is why I authorized our Royal Air Force to airlift vital aid to the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, so it can get to those in need as soon as possible. De-escalation was top on the agenda, but I was also pleased to discuss with Prince Khalid what else we can do to strengthen our collective security in these changing times. Our nations have a well-established, decades-long defense partnership. We have a particularly strong relationship in combat air, and a large footprint of UK military personnel in the Kingdom committed to Saudi programs. In December 2022, we signed a Defense Cooperation Plan to enhance our defense partnership further still and we have seen collaboration significantly accelerate over the past 12 months.

We continue to support the Saudi Ministry of Defense's transformation efforts and deepen cooperation between our land forces. But I am also keen to do

more - to strengthen and deepen our partnership as the world changes around us. Building on our strong history of industrial collaboration, supporting Saudi Arabia to develop an indigenous defense industrial base and developing mutually beneficial capability programs to support regional security. But while there is much our nations can do on defense, ultimately, I believe there is also an endless opportunity for us to seize. As a frequent visitor to the Gulf, I know that this is a region buzzing with activity. Cutting-edge technology. Sustainable solutions. Economic opportunity. It is a region in the midst of a remarkable transformation. A region whose rapidly expanding population is accelerating growth. A region in a hurry. And Saudi Arabia is spearheading the charge toward a brighter future. Whether by hosting the first ever Esports World Cup next year or undertaking the world's largest commercial green hydrogen project. Our prospects for this brighter future and those opportunities depend on long-term security and stability. And this, in its turn, will require a peaceful resolution for both Israelis and Palestinians. It will require imaginative and hopeful leadership that can lift the veil of despair, protect civilians from harm and deter those who only seek to escalate conflicts.

‘Why would we want to be part of UK?’

THE DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, expressed his confidence this week that there won't be a united Ireland in his lifetime. But as support for unionism wanes among Northern Ireland's young people, could the so-called peace babies have a different future in mind?

A recent Lucid Talk/Sunday Times survey showed that 57% of 18 to 24-year-olds in Northern Ireland would vote "yes" to reunifying Ireland if a border poll were held today, despite there being no official campaign or unity plan in place. More than 600,000 people have been born in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday agreement, and they have grown up during a sustained period of peace that has given rise to a new set of priorities. This is a generation that wants more rights, more progressive change - and to confine the division of the past to the dustbin of history.

Polls and surveys have consistently demonstrated that the Good Friday generation are more likely to vote for a united Ireland, more likely to identify as Irish or Northern Irish, and that the vast majority do not align themselves with unionist ideology - all of which suggests pro-union parties are likely to face an uphill battle in convincing them that Northern Ireland's place is in the UK. Last month, I asked young people at Belfast's One Young World summit whether the picture painted by polling rings true. "With the British government's blatant disregard for Northern Ireland - most recently demonstrated by the Troubles 'legacy' bill and disastrous

consequences of Brexit - it's perfectly legitimate and understandable for young people to aspire to a constitutional arrangement that better protects the rights and identities of people in Northern Ireland and minoritised communities," said one activist I spoke to, 25-year-old Tara Grace Connolly. "Why would we want to stay part of a union that fails to show basic respect to its own citizens?"

For 19-year-old student Ellie-Jo Taylor, Brexit fundamentally changed the pull of a united Ireland among younger generations. "We are campaigning for our future, for a return to the European Union within a united Ireland," she told me. "We have an opportunity to create an entirely new country." Since the Brexit vote in 2016, conversations around reunification have become mainstream. Universities across Ireland and the UK are undertaking new research on constitutional change; Ireland's upper chamber, Seanad Éireann, is examining Ireland's constitutional future; and grassroots campaign groups have been established to prepare for a referendum. On the pro-union side, there are groups such as former first minister Arlene Foster's Together UK. On the pro-reunification side, Ireland's Future has published several papers and organised large-scale conferences to discuss what a united Ireland could look like. Someone's position on whether Ireland should be unified used to be solely about whether they cleaved to one of two ideological positions; but there are now

Emma DeSouza

clear economic arguments, and the possibility of remaining inside the EU, that are proving persuasive. Donaldson insists that "the people of Northern Ireland will continue to vote to remain part of the sixth largest economy in the world". But his party has created a rod for its own back. The DUP has enabled a stasis in which Northern Ireland's devolved assembly has been non-operational for 70% of the past six and a half years, and repeatedly blocked attempts for more devolved government. This has forced many younger people to advocate for constitutional change as it feels like the only route to a functional political system. While politics is still stuck in the mire, Northern Ireland's peace babies have their focus trained on climate crisis, human rights, education and mental health. Unburdened by the historically entrenched concepts of identity that came to define prior generations, most 18 to 24-year-olds state they do not identify as unionist or nationalist, according to the 2022 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

And who can blame them? In no other region of the United Kingdom are people defined by whether they support the union or if they're a nationalist. And so the binary, black-and-white worldview threaded throughout the fabric of Northern Ireland's history feels increasingly out of step with a generation that has a variety of political ideologies such as environmentalism, feminism or liberalism to take inspiration from. For Emma

Murphy, a 24-year-old graduate, identity is still important - but it just "manifests in a different way". "Young people might identify more with being a person of colour, or with being from an LGBTQ+ community," she says. The gap between generations is growing. Forty-five percent of respondents to the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey aged 18 to 24 identified as more Irish than British, in stark contrast with the 15% of 18 to 24-year-olds who identified as unionist. It is of little surprise that 41% of respondents over 65 years old identified as more British than Irish, with this age cohort also leaning predominantly unionist (43%). The stark difference is due to a tectonic shift in societal consciousness and a growing appetite for progressive politics.

This appetite is fundamentally incompatible with the regressive unionist ideology rooted in cultural dominance and conservatism. The pulls for a united Ireland are many. A functioning government, better human rights protections, a return to the EU - to name only a few. In contrast, Northern Ireland's political system is a dysfunctional basket case, and increasingly unattractive to today's young people. We have no government, no anti-poverty strategy and public services are buckling. Even if the zombie corpse of Stormont is revived it won't last, and neither will the nation of Northern Ireland. It's only a matter of time before the people of Ireland are given the opportunity to envisage the landscape they want to see take shape on the horizon.

The Guardian

New govt in Maldives faces policy challenges

MOHAMED Muizzu, the mayor of Male, won the Maldives' presidency recently. He defeated the incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, securing 54 per cent of the popular vote in the second-round runoff. The transition will formally occur on November 17.

The election results highlight a society that is increasingly polarised between the pro-Western Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) of Solih and Muizzu's People's National Congress (PNC), which is sceptical of the West. Within these groups, there is another, arguably more relevant, divide between what pundits describe as the pro-India and pro-China factions. Maldives, a strategically important atoll of 1,000 islands, mostly uninhabited, lies at the crossroads of shipping routes in the Indian Ocean and has become a battleground for China-India competition. Both countries vie for influence over the country's policies, which lie at the fault lines of Maldives' domestic politics.

Muizzu's PNC, under its previous leader Abdulla Yameen adopted China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), securing more than \$1 billion in assistance for infrastructure development. However, Yameen lost the 2018 elections to Mohammad Solih, who brought the Maldives back into India's orbit. New Delhi responded by investing millions of dollars in

Sajjad Ashraf

infrastructure development in the Maldives. By the end of 2021, the Maldives had racked up an equal amount of debt, 26 per cent of GDP each, to China and India. However, Solih is also accused of establishing systems of patronage over the years.

Muizzu's election could have a significant impact on the Maldives' foreign policy posture. He also took aim at the unbalanced trade relations between India and the Maldives, which he has promised to rectify. In 2021, India's exports to the Maldives amounted to \$416 million, while it imported \$49 million in goods from the Maldives. Meanwhile, China exported goods worth \$395 million to the Maldives, and its imports were valued at a mere \$3.9 million.

The Indian government is likely to continue funding the Greater Male Connectivity Projects, a 6.7km (4-mile) road project currently under construction that aims to link the capital, Male, with the island of Villingili. India has also provided the Maldives with a \$100 million grant and a \$400 million line of credit for the infrastructure initiative. Characterising the previous administrations as pro or anti a major power may be simpler than the reality on the ground.

The incumbents did not declare themselves anti-China or anti-India. The

previous presidents only tapped into available economic assistance opportunities. China's BRI and deeper pockets make it a more attractive option for much of the world. Candidacy also compels adopting a degree of emotional rhetoric, while the burden of incumbency tempers it off, and moderation in policymaking takes over. The experience of presidential behaviour once they are in power is also a pointer to the rational approach the previous officeholders have adopted.

With its bold rescue effort in Sri Lanka after the country defaulted, India has demonstrated the capacity to commit resources needed to maintain its influence, regardless of which political party is in power in the Maldives. A sharper turn towards China, which is likely to draw a backlash, is also not in its long-term interests. Chinese leadership, with its long-term view of history, will be quite mindful of such a possibility and will refrain from overtly pushing to occupy space in the Maldives. Once formally in power, Muizzu will also need to demonstrate, beyond rhetoric, that the Maldives, because of its location and vulnerabilities, will not be a pawn in a big power game and will follow a policy of balance between the two Asian giants. This will be good for the Maldives and also for long-term stability in the region.

Gulf News



Proposed increase in gas tariff not to affect 57% consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali on Thursday said the proposed increase in gas tariff would not affect 57 percent of consumers across the country rather it would help control and end the ever-increasing circular debt of the petroleum sector.

"It will be a big achievement," the minister said in a media briefing on the gas prices' revision along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi. The Energy Minister said the increase in gas prices had been approved by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and now would be presented before the federal cabinet for the final nod.

Out of around 10 million gas consumers, he said the commodity price for 5.7 million had not been increased. "After the proposed increase, there will be no surge in the circular debt of the energy sector, which currently stood at Rs2.1 trillion in the recent past." The minister said the fixed rate (line rent) for the 5.7 million gas consumers had been increased from

Rs10 to Rs400, adding the new tariff would marginally affect the protected gas consumers.

He was of the view that most of the people living in rural areas had no access to gas and were using Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and wood as sources of fuel. "Approximately 30% of the country's population has access to gas facility while this commodity is not available for 70% of the population and they are using LPG and wood as fuel," he added.

Ali further explained that in terms of consumption, 57% of households primarily use 31% of the total gas and account for 11% of payments.

He said that the upper class, which constituted 3% of gas connections, used 17% of the gas, leading to a 39% billing rate. He said the gas rate had not been increased for "Tandoor" across the country to facilitate the masses.

The minister said gas prices for the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and commercial connections had also been increased. However, he said gas price

for the fertilizer and power sectors had not been increased as the hike in the price for this sector directly affected the farmers of the country. He said the gas price for the export-oriented industries had been brought to the level of regional countries, adding a uniformed gas tariff had been put in place for the old and new industrial gas connections. "The gas tariff difference between the North and South regions for industrial sector has also been narrowed" he added. However, he said, that the gas rate had been increased for non-export industries.

Responding to a question, he said there was no plan to lift ban new gas connections due to non-availability of the gas. "Sooner or later we will have to shift on LPG due to non-availability of the natural gas in the country [as existing reserves are depleting at the rate of around 9% annually]," he added.

He said around the world natural gas was being provided to power sector for the generation of cheaper electricity. To another question, he said following the

increase in gas tariff, there were bright chances of international companies to invest in oil and gas exploration activities in Pakistan.

He further it was unfortunate from the last many years; no exploration policy framework had been made. "We are working on exploration policy framework" he added. Responding to a question with regard to control LPG price, the minister said, the government was working with Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on this issue.

To a query about gas supply situation during the peak winter season (November-February), he said gas supply for domestic consumers would be available for eight hours like the previous year.

The Energy Minister said due to circular debts and revolving loans, the payments were not being made to many companies which made them to windup their business from the country. He brushed aside the impression that the new gas tariff would primarily benefit the wealthy segments of the society, emphasizing the broader impact on various sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs recently convened a productive meeting with the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

PSX gains 8.15 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 8.15 points, a nominal change of 0.02 percent, closing at 51,185.28 points against 51,177.13 points the previous day. A total of 364,039,493 shares valuing Rs 10.928 billion were traded during the day as compared to

427,393,948 shares valuing Rs 15.509 billion the previous day. As many as 355 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 139 of them recorded gains and 196 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were

WorldCall Telecom with 57,470,968 shares at Rs.1.36 per share, Bank of Punjab with 46,166,578 shares at Rs.4.83 per share and K-Electric Ltd with 20,802,432 shares at Rs.3.23 per share.

Service Ind. Ltd witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.28.74 per share price, closing at

Rs.412.00, whereas the runner-up was Al-Ghazi Tractors with a Rs.23.56 rise in its per share price to Rs 337.74.

Sapphire Fiber XD witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 88.44 per share closing at Rs 1090.75, followed by Faisal Spinning XD with a Rs.20.00 decline to close at Rs.330.00.

Gold rates up by Rs.2,900 to Rs.211,350 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.2,900 and was sold at Rs.211,350 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs.208,450 the previous

day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.2,486 to Rs.181,198 from Rs.178,712 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat

gold went up to Rs.166,098 from Rs.163,820, 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 increased by \$20 to \$2010 from \$1,990, the Association reported.

OGDCL donates nine ambulances to District Ghotki



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to community well-being, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) marked a significant milestone by distributing a new fleet of nine ambulances in District Ghotki, with a total value of PKR 18.00 million. This remarkable event was

held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Ghotki.

As the foremost contributor to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives within Pakistan's corporate sector, OGDCL has embarked on a transformative journey to bolster healthcare infrastructure by donating a total of 100 ambulances to communities across the nation.

The event was graced

by the presence of notable dignitaries, including Chief Minister Sindh Retd. Justice Maqbool Baqir, who served as the Chief Guest.

The Minister of Home Affairs and the Inspector General of Sindh also attended the occasion.

These newly donated ambulances, set to be immediately deployed, are expected to significantly enhance the emergency healthcare

system.

These ambulances will play a crucial role in reinforcing the referral system, a key component of achieving comprehensive health coverage.

This is especially significant for individuals residing in remote or hard-to-reach areas, as well as those who cannot afford transportation.

Chief Minister Sindh, in recognition of OGDCL's outstanding efforts, expressed his appreciation and later officially handed over the 9 ambulances to the Deputy Commissioner and District Health Officer of Ghotki for distribution among the already nominated Rural Health Centers (RHC) and Basic Health Units (BHU) within the district.

OGDCL's contribution in enhancing healthcare infrastructure demonstrates its unwavering commitment to the well-being of communities, emphasizing the significance of CSR in creating a positive and lasting impact on society.

HBL and P@SHA forge strategic partnership

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif has said that no doubt about the potential in Pakistan's IT sector, the industry is playing a significant role in the stability of the country's economy, the government is taking vigorous steps to provide all possible facilities to the IT industry. There is a need to be Brand Pakistan and marketed globally in the desired manner. He said this while addressing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony for strategic partnership between HBL and Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) here in Karachi on Thursday.

Dr. Umar Saif further said, "I am delighted to be part of the event and hope that this collaboration will play a vital role and fostering the growth and development of the IT sector domestically and internationally." Mentioning the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the IT Minister said that all required facilities are being provided to boost the IT & Telecom sector.

Dr. Saif highlighted the SIFC's recent decision that IT companies have now been allowed to retain 50% of their revenue in US dollar accounts. These companies will also be provided with corporate debit cards



by the banks, which can be freely used to make international payments. This step has been taken on the recommendation of the IT industry (P@SHA) aimed to encourage the Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled Services (ITES) to boost export earnings and bring additional foreign exchange into the country.

Regarding MoU, it is worth mentioning here that HBL, Pakistan's Best Bank, has entered a multi-year partnership with the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), the country's only IT industry association, to support them in launching a series of impactful engagements locally and

globally. Through this collaboration, HBL aims to support P@SHA in positioning Pakistan as a growing tech destination in the global market.

The Bank's extensive collaboration with stakeholders has given it a deep understanding of the industry's needs, enabling it to offer tailored financial solutions.

Commenting on the initiative, Muhammad Aurangzeb, President & CEO - HBL, said, "We believe that the IT industry has the potential to be a major driver of economic growth and job creation in Pakistan. This collaboration is a testament to our commitment to becoming a 'Technology Company' with a Banking License."

It will provide an opportunity for HBL to engage with key stakeholders in the IT, freelancer, software, and gaming industry and showcase its innovative financial solutions and services that can meet the specific needs of the IT sector."

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman - P@SHA, said: "With HBL by our side, P@SHA is ready to embark on a transformative journey for Pakistan's tech landscape. This strategic partnership will propel us toward realizing our vision of making Pakistan a hub for technology excellence. Together, we will open new doors of opportunity, innovation, and global recognition for our IT industry."

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Descon Engineering Limited (DEL) and Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited (EPCL) are proud to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further enhance their more than three decade-long partnership. This significant milestone, marks a renewed commitment to mutual collaboration in the field of plant maintenance, shutdowns, reliability, and asset performance management to ensure sustainable operations.

The MoU was officially signed by the Chief Executive Officer of Descon Engineering, Mr. Taimur Saeed, and the Chief Executive Officer of Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited, Mr. Jahangir Piracha, solidifying the intent of both organizations to work together for the long-term benefit of their valued clients.

Mr. Taimur Saeed stated: "This Memorandum of Understanding is a testament to the enduring partnership between Descon Engineering Limited and Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited. We are

committed to bring our overseas experience in our collaboration with Engro Polymer to provide top-notch services and unmatched value to our clients. Together, we will continue to raise the bar in the industry."

Speaking at the Occasion Mr. Jahangir Piracha CEO Engro Polymer & Chemicals

Limited said "Our commitment to delivering excellence in plant maintenance and asset management has been unwavering. This MoU reinforces our dedication to sustainable and reliable operations. Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited is excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring to the industry and our clients."



Irish delegation keen to explore investment prospects in Pakistan's Dairy Sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the dairy sector of Ireland Thursday visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and showed interest to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's dairy sector. The representatives of the Board of Investment of Pakistan also accompanied the delegation.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that Pakistan's dairy sector played an important role in the national economy as its value was more than the combined value of major wheat and cotton cash-crops. He said that Pakistan was the 5th top milk producer in the world as it produced

over 65 million tonnes of milk every year.

However, due to lack of modern technology and best practices, over 95 percent of milk remained unprocessed due to which the country was losing huge economic value of this product, he added.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Irish investors should bring modern technology and expertise to Pakistan and invest in the dairy sector, which would enable them to export value-added milk products around the world. He said that investment of Irish investors in Pakistan's dairy sector would bring about a revolution in the lives of millions of people whose livelihood were directly linked to this sector

and bring prosperity to rural Pakistan. He was of the view that increasing the processing of milk up to 15-20 percent from the current level of less than 5 percent would help Pakistan overcome its economic challenges and emerge as a growing economy. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate in connecting them with right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the members of delegation said that Pakistan had huge potential in the dairy sector.

They said that Ireland had advanced technology and expertise in the dairy sector as it exports over 5 billion of dairy products every year, which were known for their quality and standards. They

said that they were keen to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's dairy sector as the cost of shipping dairy products from Ireland to this part of the world was quite huge. They said that they could educate Pakistani farmers in herd management, quality milk production and value addition of milk products. The dairy industry is a key component of the Ireland's economy providing 16 billion of economic value and around 85,000 jobs, with much needed employment focused in rural areas. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the average milk yield of a cow was less than 14 litres per day in Pakistan as against the global standards of 30 litres.

Turkish furniture manufacturers delegation to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Thursday said a high level Turkish furniture manufacturers delegation would visit Pakistan to further explore the possibilities of collaboration for joint ventures and investment.

Talking to a delegation of furniture manufacturers led by Araib Arain here, he said series of fruitful meetings with Turkish furniture

manufacturers through zoom had been arranged to invite them to Pakistan.

He said both the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries were significant players in the global market. The chief executive said collaboration between the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries could lead to exciting opportunities for the two countries.

It could involve sharing expertise, technology, and design ideas, resulting in

the production of unique and high-quality furniture products he added.

This partnership might also facilitate access to each other's markets, potentially increasing trade and economic benefits for both nations, he added.

He said their visit would be an exciting opportunity for both Turkish and Pakistani businesses to strengthen ties and explore potential investment and joint ven-

tures in the furniture industry. It could lead to beneficial collaborations and economic growth for both the countries, he added.

Mian Kashif said the Turkish furniture industry had been known for its craftsmanship, innovation, and the use of high-quality materials. He said Turkey's strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East could help Pakistan a hub for furniture exports.



In brief

Haider wins gold medal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Haider Ali qualified for Paris 2024 Paralympics as he claimed the gold medal in the discus throw competition at the ongoing Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China, on Thursday. Haider finished at the top with a throw of 51.23m in his fourth attempt, according to information received here. Japan's Yamato Shimbo earned the silver medal with a throw of 49.70m, while China's Zhang Xuelong won bronze medal with a throw of 48.26m. The minimum entry requirements for Paralympics is 39m. Haider's all six throws were above that mark. Haider had also won a gold medal in the discus throw at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics Games with a throw of 55.26m, becoming the first Pakistani to do so.

PCB urges support Pakistan Team

LAHORE (PPI): The PCB acknowledges the emotions and sentiments of cricket fans following the three consecutive defeats faced by the national team in the ICC World Cup 2023. In this challenging environment, the board administration hopes that the cricketing fraternity and fans will continue to support captain Babar Azam and the entire Pakistan cricket team. The national team still has four crucial matches remaining in the round-robin stage, and the PCB is optimistic that the team will regroup, overcome the setbacks and perform positively and effectively in the upcoming fixtures. Addressing the media scrutiny directed at captain Babar Azam and the team management, the board's stance, echoing that of former cricketers, is that successes and defeats are part of the game. Captain Babar Azam and Chief Selector Inzamam-ul-Haq were given freedom and support in forming the squad for the ICC World Cup 2023. Looking ahead, the board will make decisions in the best interest of Pakistan cricket based on the team's performances in the World Cup. At present, the PCB encourages fans, former players and stakeholders to rally behind the team as they strive to make a triumphant comeback in the mega-event.

Shoaib, Misbah urge PCB to invest in Saim

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Pakistan captains, Shoaib Malik and Misbah-ul-Haq, praised the skills of stylish left-handed batsman Saim Ayub and urged the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) authorities to invest in him. Misbah-ul-Haq anticipated that the talented left-handed batsman – currently playing in Karachi Whites as an opening batsman – has a very bright future, as he played very fine innings in a long format, which is right now the requirement for the national team. Shoaib Malik suggested to the PCB that they have to take Saim Ayub on international tours [he specifically mentioned Australia] to give the young talent exposure. He believes Saim possesses immense talent and has the ability to win matches for Pakistan in the future. While replying to a question during A-Sports show 'The Pavilion', Musbah stated, "I think a chance should be given to fast bowlers as Mir Hamza and Shah Nawaz Dahani are performing in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and taking wickets, the current bowlers in the national team don't have the experience of test matches as they only played One Day Internationals (ODIs) and T20 matches."



BENGALURU: Sri Lankan players celebrate the wicket of England's Mark Wood with his teammates during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between England and Sri Lanka.

Pakistan eyeing winning streak for semifinal qualification

ISLAMABAD (APP): With their backs against the wall, Pakistan are eager to roar back into the competition when they play South Africa in their sixth match of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 here on Friday.

The team had a terrific start to their campaign with wins over the Netherlands and Sri Lanka in Hyderabad, but since have faced three consecutive defeats.

Resilience and the ability to turn the most adverse situations in their favour are the traits that define this Pakistan side. They pulled off an epic turnaround in Australia last year to play the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and scripted a fairy-tale by winning the ICC Champions Trophy 2017 in England despite starting the campaign on

the wrong foot.

Mickey Arthur, the team director, is hopeful that Pakistan's campaign will take another such turn on Friday. "We said in the change room the other night that we have got six matches to win the World Cup," Arthur told PCB Digital.

"We have to get on a streak and win six in a row. We know that as a unit, we know that as a team, we have to make sure we get our strategy 100%. We have to make sure that we get our execution 100% and if we do that, there is no reason why we cannot win the World Cup," he said.

Pakistan faced a shock defeat to Afghanistan on Monday at MA Chidambaram Stadium. This loss followed defeats to India and Australia in Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, respectively. There have

been, however, some glimpses of brilliance and to make sure that Pakistan consolidate their qualification chances to the semifinal, Arthur believes that they will have to click in all three facets of the game.

"I don't think our skills have been where they've needed to be in those last three games, but these players have got the skills. It is up to us as coaches to make sure that we get them firing come Friday by giving them the confidence and the belief that they can turn this around," Arthur said.

"We have not put a game together yet. We have not played the complete game. It is up to us to delve, to dig, to give advice, to give information and to give the belief that we can put that perfect game together because we know our perfect game is

good enough. Our perfect game is good enough to beat anybody.

"We have to find it because there is a massive ambition within the playing group. The boys are trying out hard in the practice and I cannot fault their effort. I cannot fault my attitude. What I can fault is the execution of skills under pressure, and that's something that we continually work on at practice."

South Africa are in good form entering the competition with four solid wins in five matches. Can Pakistan surmount the South Africa challenge? "They are a very good cricket team and they're full of confidence because they have played well. I know though that if we do our basics and disciplines right, our skills will come out and we can beat anybody."

England facing early exit after sorry Sri Lanka loss

BENGALURU (Agencies): England's World Cup is all but over after a shambolic eight-wicket defeat by Sri Lanka in Bengaluru.

The defending champions are not mathematically out but now must win all of their remaining games, including against unbeaten hosts India on Sunday, and hope an unlikely set of results go their way.

Attempting to respond to a record defeat by South Africa, England's campaign slumped into complete disarray as they were bowled out for 156.

They reached 45-0 before the wicket of Dawid Malan, caught behind off 36-year-old Angelo Mathews for 28, began a miserable slide. Joe Root ran himself out for a nervy three, Jonny Bairstow swiped to mid-on for 30 and captain Jos Buttler was caught behind for eight playing a flashing drive.

Ben Stokes dug in but holed out for 43 from 73 balls as wickets tumbled around him. England's innings subsided in 33.2 overs. David Willey dismissed Kusal Perera and Kusal Mendis to reduce Sri Lanka to 23-2 inside six overs, but they still eased to victory with 24.2 to spare - Pathum Nissanka ending 77 not out and Sadeera Samarawickrama unbeaten on 65. Sri Lanka, whose only previous win in this year's tournament came against the Netherlands, jump to fifth in the standings while England are ninth, with only net run-rate keeping them off the bottom of the table.

England approaching the end of the road

England were famously stunned by Ireland on this ground in the 2011 World Cup. That was a World Cup shock for the ages, fuelled by a stunning Kevin O'Brien onslaught. This was one of England's worst performances in the history of this tournament, saved for a match they had billed as must-win.

The performance was summed up by the comical dismissal of Adil Rashid, who was run out at the non-striker's end, having carelessly wandered out of his crease after watching a wide bowled to partner Willey. The result is an era of dominance in white-ball cricket - one in which England have become 50 and 20-over world champions - facing a sorry end after four defeats in five matches to start the title defence.

Even if England can somehow beat all-conquering India in Lucknow, matches against Australia and Pakistan follow, either side of a meeting with the Netherlands which does not look straightforward on this form. The maths may not say it yet, but England's spell as champions of the world is over.

Another dismal batting day

This marked the first time England have been bowled out in consecutive World Cup matches, although against South Africa they at least had the excuse of having to chase 400. As they had against the Proteas, England made three changes - Chris Woakes, Moeen Ali and Liam Livingstone all recalled - but it had little impact.

Bairstow would have been out to the first ball of the match had Sri Lanka reviewed an lbw shout following an inswinger from left-armers Dilshan Madushanka. Failure to do so only delayed England's misery.

Mathews was the first to strike with his trundling medium pace - Malan out caught behind on review to hand the veteran his first ODI wicket since 2020 two balls into his spell. The all-rounder was only called into the Sri Lanka squad as an injury replacement and it was his throw that also ran out Root to end an edgy 10-ball knock.

That put England's slide in full swing as Bairstow played an ugly shot and Livingstone was pinned in front by Kumara for one.

Moeen then tamely cut to backward point on 15 to hand Mathews another wicket, before Woakes was judged to have been caught in the same position off seamer Kasun Rajitha after lengthy checks by the TV umpire to see if the ball carried. Stokes was dropped on 12 and had to overturn an lbw decision on 13 but was just starting to open his arms when he was caught at deep mid-wicket to give Kumara a third scalp.

After that the final two departed within three overs, leaving the bowlers no hope of defending such a low total. Willey gave England fans something to cheer with his new-ball spell before Nissanka, who put on a classy unbeaten partnership of 137 with Samarawickrama, sealed the win with a towering six over long-on.

Mbappe helps PSG go top, Haaland back among the goals

PARIS (Agencies): Kylian Mbappe helped Paris Saint-Germain move top of Champions League Group F with a 3-0 victory over AC Milan on Wednesday, while Newcastle slumped to a first defeat, 1-0 against Borussia Dortmund.

Erling Haaland was back on the scoresheet as Manchester City won 3-1 away to Young Boys, and fellow British side Celtic drew 2-2 in Glasgow against Atletico Madrid. Goals from Mbappe, Randal Kolo Muani and Kang-in Lee in Paris against Milan sent PSG top of the closely-contested Group F with six points.

The deadlock was broken just after the half-hour mark when Mbappe received the ball from Warren Zaire-Emery, unbalanced Fikayo Tomori and then wrong-footed compatriot Mike Maignan with a smart, low finish.

Ousmane Dembele thought he had doubled the hosts' advantage on 50 minutes only for a VAR check to disallow it for a foul in the build-up.

Kolo Muani, the third member of PSG's French front three, then did double the lead three minutes later with a close-range tap-in before Lee struck.

"We are very proud of our performance," Kolo Muani said to Canal Plus. "Winning these games gives everyone confidence." Newcastle came back to earth with a home defeat by Borussia Dortmund, which saw the Germans move above them into second place on head-to-head.

It was a tight encounter with Dortmund edging it thanks to a first-half goal from Felix Nmecha.

Nmecha gave Borussia a deserved lead on the stroke of half-time with a well-controlled finish following excellent defensive and then creative work by Nico Schlotterbeck. Newcastle nearly claimed a point in the closing stages of the match when Callum Wilson's header struck the crossbar, before a later Anthony Gordon chance was deflected on to the woodwork. Dortmund coach Edin Terzic told TNT: "With the first half we deserved to win and the second half we protected the win."

Haaland breaks duck

Manchester City made it three from three to top Group G, with Manuel Akanji's goal and a Haaland brace seeing off Young Boys in Switzerland. Man City endured a frustrating first period on a plastic pitch in Bern, with Young Boys goalkeeper Anthony Racioppi producing several fine saves. Immediately after half-time a stunning save from the Swiss 'keeper saw the ball rebound off the crossbar and fall straight to Akanji.

The hosts stunned the Champions League holders on 52 minutes when Meschack Elia broke clear of the defence and lobbed a finish over the advancing Ederson.

However, hopes of an upset were extinguished when Haaland broke his five-game goal drought in the competition with a penalty in the 67th minute. After a Julian Alvarez goal was disallowed, the Norwegian striker produced a fine finish to round off a 3-1 win.

"I am sorry, but this guy will score goals all his life, with the chances he is an incredible threat," said City coach Pep Guardiola of Haaland.

Topsy-turvy in Paradise

The points were shared between Celtic and Atletico in a lively draw, which saw the hosts pick up their first point of the campaign.



Karachi Whites beat Faisalabad to win Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Karachi Whites clinched their fifth Quaid-e-Azam Trophy title after defeating Faisalabad at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore by 456 runs on the last day of the five-day final. Faisalabad captain Faheem Ashraf was the last batter to be dismissed off the bowling of Ghulam Mudassar, sparking off celebrations for the Sarfaraz Ahmed-led side that pocketed a cash prize of PKR 10 million.

Karachi Whites' last Quaid-e-Azam Trophy title win came in the 2001-02 season, when they beat Peshawar in the final by eight wickets. Before that, they completed a hat-trick of titles in 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Faisalabad resumed from their overnight score of 129-6 with Faheem leading a counterattack, delaying the inevitable. They lost two wickets in the first session with Ali Asfand and Khurram Shahzad the batters dismissed as Faisalabad reached lunch at the score of 230-8.

Faheem then completed his fourth first-class century off 119 balls, and added 57 runs for the ninth wicket with Arshad Iqbal and 51 runs for the last wicket with Mohammad Ali. Faheem was eventually dismissed for 147 off 181 deliveries, his career-best score including 23 fours and two sixes.

For Karachi Whites, Ghulam Mudassar registered figures of 3-



62 while Shah Nawaz Dahani took 2-119. Mir Hamza, Noman Ali and Asad Shafiq bagged one wicket apiece.

At the conclusion of the round-robin stage of the tournament, Faisalabad had topped the points table with Karachi Whites second on the standings. Peshawar's Sahibzada Farhan topped the batting charts with 847 runs in 10 innings and was awarded best batter of the tournament. For his 203 in the first innings and 109 in the second innings, Karachi Whites' Saim Ayub was named player of the final. The victorious team's captain Sarfaraz Ahmed (697 runs and 28 dismissals) was declared

player of the tournament. Faisalabad duo Khurram Shahzad (36 wickets in eight matches) and Ali Shan (28 catches and one stumping) were named best bowler and best wicket-keeper of the tournament respectively.

Scores in brief:

Karachi Whites beat Faisalabad by 456 runs

Karachi Whites 543 all out, 120.2 overs (Saim Ayub 203, Shan Masood 180; Mohammad Ali 3-63, Arshad Iqbal 3-94, Khurram Shahzad 3-120) and 370-7 dec, 98.1 overs (Asad Shafiq 113, Saim Ayub 109, Sarfaraz Ahmed 73; Khurram Shahzad 2-49, Arshad Iqbal 1-41)

Faisalabad 124 all out, 35.5

overs (Muhammad Irfan Khan 32, Ali Waqas 27; Mir Hamza 5-44, Shah Nawaz Dahani 4-50) and 333 all out, 88 overs (Faheem Ashraf 147, Ali Waqas 48, Taimoor Sultan 31; Ghulam Mudassar 3-62, Shah Nawaz Dahani 2-119, Asad Shafiq 1-15, Noman Ali 1-37)

Player of the tournament – Sarfaraz Ahmed (697 runs & 28 dismissals) (Karachi Region Whites)

Best Batter – Sahibzada Farhan (847 runs) (Peshawar Region)

Best Bowler – Khurram Shahzad (36 wickets) (Faisalabad Region)

Best Wicket-keeper – Ali Shan (29 dismissals) (Faisalabad Region)

Player of the final – Saim Ayub (Karachi Region Whites).

Lahore clinches Inter Division National Basketball C'ship Title

ISLAMABAD (INP): Lahore division clinches Inter Division National Basketball Championship title by defeating Islamabad with 100-59 points here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad.

Eight top divisions Karachi, Faisalabad, Peshawar, Hazara, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Islamabad were participated in the five days championship which organized by the Federal Basketball Association.

Military Attaché of Embassy of Russia in Pakistan Col Surgey A Tyurin was the chief guest of closing ceremony while Joint Secretary Ministry of IPC Fayyaz ul Haq, President Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Brig. (r) Iftikhar Mansoor, PBBF Secretary

General Khalid Bashir, Federal Basketball Association (FBBA) President Ejaz Butt, FBBA Secretary General Ouj E Zahoor, Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board Saeed Akhtar and other dignities were also attending closing ceremony.

In the decisive final Lahore dominate throughout the match and never allowed their opponent to fight back for championship trophy. Lahore took lead of 20 points till the half time of decisive final by 52-32 points.

Lahore ace players Safiullah and Taimur Mehdi played vital role for the championship title as they scored 21 and 14 points while from Islamabad side Ashraf Bakhtawar scored 25 and 7 points respectively.

In third position match

Faisalabad outclassed Peshawar by 55-43 points. Faheem Sattar scoring 18 points and Hanan Tariq scored 17 points for winning side.

During concluding ceremony a heartfelt tribute given to those who have dedicated their lives to the sport of basketball. Din Muhammad, Maj (r) Asad Pervaiz, Prof. Siraj ul Haq Qureshi, Riaz Malik, Moudood Jafri and Muhammad Yaqoob were honored with lifetime achievement awards.

These esteemed individuals have tirelessly served the basketball community and their contributions have left an indelible mark on the sport. Their exceptional commitment and passion for basketball were celebrated and recognized, symbolizing the enduring spirit of the sport in Pakistan.

Pakistan capable of posing 'serious threat' to South Africa, says Proteas skipper

CHENNAI (Agencies): South Africa cricket team captain Temba Bavuma has said that Pakistan can still pose a serious threat to the Proteas in the upcoming World Cup match despite the former's poor run-scoring in the tournament.

The two sides are set to clash in the 26th match of ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 tomorrow (Friday) at Chennai's Chidambaram Stadium, where the Men in Green suffered a humiliating record defeat against Afghanistan.

The Babar Azam-led side have been witnessing consecutive losses against Afghanistan, Australia and India in the last three matches so the under-pressure side knows well that tomorrow's game would be "do or die" for them.

However, despite South Africa's excellent standing in the tournament, Bavuma isn't complacent as far as the match against Pakistan is concerned. "We've planned for the game as we've done for all our matches. We've analysed the Pakistan team, their strengths, weaknesses, and threats. Our approach is to exploit their weaknesses and nullify their strengths. Pakistan is a dangerous team, and we're aware that they can perform exceptionally well on any given day," the Proteas skipper said.

"We know that they haven't played close to their best, but tomorrow could be that. Make sure we are ready for that," he added. Bavuma acknowledged the quality that Pakistan pose as an opponent by saying that he had Pakistan as one of the top four teams in this tournament from the start. The South African added that his side respect Pakistan as a team and is aware of their unpredictability.



In brief

Search operation conducted in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a search and combing operation at Noon police station jurisdiction and arrested three suspects. Police said that search and combing operations were being conducted in different areas of the city to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. A search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Noon police station jurisdiction by CTD, FC and local police team under the supervision of SP CTD. During the operation, 10 houses, five vehicles and 15 motorcycles were thoroughly checked. Three pistols were recovered and five suspects and one bike were shifted to the police station for further verification purposes. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the purpose of the search and combing operations was to heighten the security in the Federal Capital.

Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Police in their ongoing operations against car and bike lifter gangs managed to bust a gang and rounded up its five members besides recovering five motorcycles, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Airport police conducted a raid and rounded up two members of a bike lifter gang namely Bilal and Imran. Police also recovered five stolen motorcycles from their possession. The arrested accused are record holder criminals and have been shifted to jail for an identification parade. Superintendent of Police Potohar, Muhammad Waqas Khan while appreciating the performance of the police team directed to continue operation against the car, bike lifters and other lawbreakers.

27 more dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 27 more dengue cases were reported in the district during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,217. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Thursday said that, among the new cases, 13 cases had arrived from Potohar town urban, seven from Municipal Corporation, five from Rawalpindi Cantonment and two from Chaklala Cantonment area. He added that 93 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 64 were confirmed cases while 2,152 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 14 FIRs, issued tickets to nine, sealed four premises, and fined Rs 93,000 against the violations of dengue SOPs.

Police arrest 18 lawbreakers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district Police arrested 18 lawbreakers including eight gamblers, eight for possessing liquor, weapons and recovered Rs 8,800 stake money, eight mobile phones, 21 bottles of liquor, 22 liters liquor, four 30 bore pistols and other items, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Naseerabad police conducted a raid and arrested eight gamblers namely Imran, Thaimoor, Shah Zaib, Ghulam Murtaza, Jamshaid, Rizwan, Toseef and Shehbaz, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Race Course police in another raid arrested two street criminals and recovered Rs 12000 cash, weapons and other items.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick and All Parties Hurriyat Conference Leadership addressing a press conference.

166 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP and Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 166 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 8.973 million and 212 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 17 connections on illegal use of gas and another 1 on use of compressor, 4 Under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 6.07 booked against gas thieves and under billing cases.

The team also lodged one FIR against gas thieves. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected five connections on use of compressor. The company disconnected 15 connections on illegal use of gas while another three on use

of compressor, 130 Under billing cases have been processed and fine of Rs 0.28 Million imposed against gas pilferers in Multan. In Sheikhupura, 17 on illegal use of gas while one on use of compressor were disconnected by the region and 30 Under billing cases have been processed, amount of Rs 0.3 booked against gas thieves and Under billing cases.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 60 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also lodged 4 FIRs against gas thieves. The team also imposed fine of Rs 1.79 against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected 25 gas connections and 13 Under billing cases have been processed. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas thieves. In Mardan Five connections were disconnected against illegal use of gas

while imposing fine of Rs 0.12 million. In Sialkot, the team imposed fine of Rs 0.093 against gas pilferers. The regional team in Gujranwala 17 under billing cases processed and 3 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor and 1 on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.21 million on gas theft and under billing cases.

The company disconnected 08 connections on illegal use of gas in Islamabad. In Sahiwal, three connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Faisalabad 18 under billing cases processed and 1 disconnected on illegal use of gas. Fine of Rs. 0.11 million was also imposed against gas pilferers and also lodged One FIR against gas thieves. The Regional team in Abbottabad also disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas.

Secretary education for providing educational support to dyslexia students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Waseem Ajmal on Thursday said that every child irrespective of their learning differences, shall receive the support and resources they need to succeed in their educational journey. He was speaking as Chief Guest at a launching ceremony for the Dyslexia Bill, hosted by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

Secretary of Education underscored the significance of the Dyslexia Bill, stating, "This legislation marks a pivotal moment in our commitment to inclusive education."

Dyslexia should not be a barrier to learning. With the

implementation of this bill, we aim to ensure that every child, regardless of their learning differences, receives the support and resources they need to succeed in their educational journey." Waseem Ajmal also highlighted the collaborative efforts between the government, educators, and the renowned organization IDEAS. This collaborative effort resulted in a groundbreaking pilot study.

The study, conducted with precision and dedication, produced valuable insights into the unique needs of students with dyslexia. Secretary Education was briefed on the occasion that the Education Ministry is collaborating with FPSC to adapt the assessment mechanism according to the needs of dyslexic candidates. Similarly, FDE will also adopt a tailor-made assessment system for all of the dyslexic students in the public schools and colleges in the Federal Territory. Moreover, National Book Foundation has developed a special curriculum for dyslexic students between 1-5 grades.

Secretary of Education was told that the Education Ministry after conducting a pilot project, the ministry would enhance the scope of its support to all the dyslexic students in the capital territory. The Dyslexia Bill 2022, which was passed in 2022, has taken a monumental step closer to realization, due to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training's steadfast commitment.

Railways restore long-awaited Sibi-Harnai track for traffic

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has finally restored the long-awaited Sibi-Harnai railway track for traffic after the completion of reconstruction and renovation work of the project with the support of the National Logistics Cell (NLC).

"The railway's track was made dysfunctional after a series of bomb blasts which damaged 22 steel bridges in the highly rugged and inaccessible area," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said the reconstruction and renovation work on the strategic Sibi-Harnai railway was completed with the assistance of the NLC. "The restoration of the railway between the twin historical cities of Sibi and Harnai will have a positive impact on the economy and agriculture of the entire region," the official added.

With the rehabilitation of the railway track, he said not only the students of district Harnai and Ziarat will also get opportunities to acquire higher education but also boost the economic and commercial activities in the region.

"Pakistan Railways restored the Sibi-Harnai section, with the support of Pakistan Army, connecting people and business in the remote areas of the country," Secretary Railways Syed Mazhar Ali said in a tweet. The official said the department had shown a keen interest in the completion of the reconstruction and renovation work of the project.

In March 2016, he said that a contract for rehabilitation and restoration of the Sibi-

Harnai railway track along with the upgradation of railway stations was awarded to the NLC as no other construction firm agreed to undertake the project due to the prevalent security situation and enormity of the task. During the initial survey of the track, the official said it was found that 22 steel bridges of different sizes were destroyed and required replacement for the restoration of the train operation.

He said in addition, massive river protection work was to be undertaken to save the infrastructure. The quantum of work, non-availability of road access, and requisite resources made the project a formidable challenge, he added. The official said undertaking the project with the sincerity of purpose and utmost sense of duty, the NLC officers, engineers, and construction workers braved harsh weather conditions and a hostile security environment and subsequently completed the rehabilitation works in record time.

Terming the fabrication of steel bridges as a major task, he said that the steel bridges were fabricated in Karachi and were transported to the project site after being painstakingly assembled by NLC engineers in a befitting manner. He said a total of nine railway stations along with tracks had been upgraded by NLC engineers including the reconstruction of Harnai Railway Station and a complete renovation of Sibi Railways Station, which could be regarded as the finest railway station in Balochistan.

Industrial-Area police arrest 1900 accused during last six months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad capital police Industrial-Area zone police teams arrested 1900 outlaws including 163 absconders during the last six months involved in a series of heinous crimes and criminal activities.

Islamabad police spokesperson said that crackdown has been intensified against the criminal elements to eliminate the crime from the city.

He said that Industrial-Area Zone police teams conducted a massive crackdown against the criminal elements involved in a series of criminal activities and succeeded in apprehending 1900 outlaws including 163 absconders during the last six months.

Police teams also recovered 29 stolen vehicles, 59 stolen motorbikes, 94.33 kilogram hashish, 7.71 kilogram heroin, 177 pistols and four rifles with ammunition from their possession. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has directed all senior officials for an effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis. No laxity will be tolerated in official duties, he maintained.

ANF seizes 46 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover over 46 kg of drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 20.4 kg hashish and 3.6 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Maweshi Mandi Rawalpindi. During the operation, an accused, a resident of Mardan, was arrested.

In another operation at a courier office in Rawalpindi, ANF recovered 44 grams of weed from a parcel sent from America.

In the third operation, 2 kg heroin and 2 kg Ice drug were recovered from the possession of two women resident of Karachi, netted from Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan.

India hiding Israel-like war crimes in Kashmir through media gag: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick said on Thursday that India was committing Israel-like war crimes in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) but it had imposed military siege of the region by blocking communication and imposed gag on the media.

Addressing a press conference along with senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders here, she said that horrible videos of Israeli bombing in Palestine were available on the social media, but India had hidden its war crimes in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir which could be termed world's largest prison. "India has been using chemical weapons, lethal pellet guns in Kashmir and targeting hospitals and ambulances and medical staff", she added.

She said during Covid-19 pandemic, when the world's attention was diverted towards that crisis, India unleashed a fresh reign of terror in IIOJK to crush Kashmiris' just freedom struggle.

Mushaal Mullick said that both Israel and India were committing genocide of Palestinians and Kashmiris with complete impunity. She lamented the human rights champions in the world had done nothing practical to pressurise Israel and India to stop genocide of the hapless people of Palestine and Kashmir.

The special assistant to the PM said that the hapless Kashmiri nation was bravely facing the Indian atrocities for the past over seven decades.

She said that October 27, 1947 was the

blackest day in the history of

Kashmir as on this day India illegally occupied the state against the aspirations of the Kashmiri masses. She said that in the age of nuclear weapons and biological warfare a small war could result in disturbing world order. She opined that if the Kashmir dispute was not resolved as per aspirations of the Kashmiris, it could lead to a great catastrophe in the region.

Mushaal said that now the RSS lobby was targeting Sikhs and Kashmiris even outside India and the families of Kashmiris living abroad were being threatened eviction from their houses if their relatives living abroad took part in anti-India processions. She expressed the apprehension that fascist Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi would multiply atrocities on Kashmiris to appease hardline Hindus to win 2024 Indian elections. She said that if the United Nations could not pay attention on Kashmir, genocide of occupied areas would become a new normal.

Mushaal said with every passing day, the situation in IIOJK was going from bad to worse and thousands of non-Kashmiris from Indian states were being issued Kashmiri domiciles to change the demography of the region. She said that India had been following the Israeli model of annexation of Palestinian areas and creation of Jewish colonies there. She said that top leadership of pro-freedom APHC including Yaseen Malik, Shabbir Shah, Aasia Andrabi, Musarrat Alam had been languishing in various Indian jails for many years and New Delhi was hell-bent to punish them in concocted cases.

Minister visits NAVTTC, reviews its ongoing projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Tourism, Wasi Shah here on Thursday visited the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) to review the ongoing project of the commission.

During the visit, Director General NAVTTC Dr. Khalid Mehmood briefed the minister about the Youth Skill Development Program (YSDP) and expressed their

commitment to jointly working for the betterment of the organization, said a news release.

Wasi Shah was also briefed regarding the achievements of NAVTTC and its programmes to make the youth skilled empower.

The minister appreciated the efforts and programmes launched by the NAVTTC in empowering youth and make them able to compete in the world.

He committed in helping NAVTTC for media strategy to encourage youth to join skill development opportunities. He further said that NAVTTC had made a major contribution to Pakistan's national human resource development and creates numerous employment opportunities for the skilled youth both overseas and in the country that benefiting the individuals and boosting national economy.

Health authority urges preventive measures to avoid smog

RAWALPINDI (APP): To create awareness about the hazards of smog, the District Health Authority, Rawalpindi distributed pamphlets and masks in various areas of the city here on Thursday.

On the occasion, District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Aamir Sheikh said that the objective of the activity was to reach out to a maximum number of people and to educate the general public about the precautionary measures to avoid smog.

He asked the residents to ensure the

spraying of water to prevent dust and to use masks and glasses.

The DHO advised the people to avoid bringing smoke emitting vehicles on roads which was harmful to the environment and human health.

He said that the promotion of tree plantation was vital for avoiding smog and checking environmental pollution.

Dr Aamir appealed to the people to not burn waste and chemicals in the open as they were the major cause of smog, adding burning garbage was a legal offence.

Breast cancer awareness session held at Islamabad Int'l airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) medical section and Maroof International Hospital on Thursday organized a breast cancer awareness session at Islamabad International Airport (IIAP).

This informative cancer and mental health awareness session was held in connection with the breast cancer awareness month of October. There was healthy participation by female officers and staff members from various departments of IIAP. The session started

with an address delivered by CAA female doctors followed by a comprehensive presentation by Dr. Saira Mehmood, an Associate Professor and a specialist in Breast Cancer.

She stressed on the significance of early screening, detection and disease management and exploration of risk factors associated with breast cancer.

Dr. Zubia Zubair, a renowned psychologist, highlighted the social stigmas and psychological challenges faced by both cancer patients and their families.

The knowledge-sharing session was followed by an engaging Q&A segment, during which female participants actively discussed their inquiries and concerns.

Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Airport Manager in his concluding note underscored the significance of maintaining a healthy workforce and the aviation industry's vital role in raising awareness about this critical health issue.

CAA souvenirs and shields were presented to the esteemed guest speakers at the end of the event.



ISLAMABAD: WAPDA staffers busy in installing new electric wires on electric poles at Taramri Chowk.

Matiullah Wesa released

KABUL (TOLONews): PenPath Foundation said on X that Matiullah Wesa, founder of the PenPath and advocate for girls' education, was released from Islamic Emirate custody. Wesa, who advocated education for boys and girls, was arrested on March 27, 2023, while he was returning from evening prayers at a mosque. The UN special rapporteur for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, on X welcomed the release of Matiullah Wesa and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all Afghan human rights defenders.

The Frontier Post

RABI-US-SANNI 12, 1445 — Friday, October 27, 2023

ARCS strives to attract more aid

KABUL (BNA): The president of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, Mawlawi Mutiul Haq Khalis, in a meeting with Jamal Noori, the head of the Union of Charity Organizations of Kuwait, talked about providing more aid to victims of the Herat earthquake. The Afghan Red Crescent Society in a statement said on Wednesday that the damage caused by the recent earthquakes in Herat and assistance to the victims were discussed in this meeting.

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

UNSC members condemn ‘exclusion of women, girls in Afghanistan’



KABUL (TOLONews): Some members of the UN Security Council condemned the what they called the “flagrant human rights abuses and discrimination against and segregation and exclusion of women and girls in Afghanistan.”

In a statement, the UNSC members said that “when we ensure conditions for women to fully participate in all decision-making processes we help advance international peace and security.”

“We condemn in the strongest terms the flagrant

human rights abuses and systemic discrimination against, and segregation and exclusion of women and girls in Afghanistan, which may amount to gender persecution. We recall Afghanistan’s obligation to implement the provisions of instruments to which Afghanistan is a state party and by which it is bound,” the statement reads.

The Security Council signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments for the principles of Women, Peace and Security, Albania, Brazil, Ecuador,

France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in all conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts and to ensuring that a gender perspective is consistently applied to country situation and thematic issues – true to the spirit of Resolution 1325.

The Islamic Emirate rejected claims of human rights violations in

Afghanistan and said that the rights of all citizens of the country are protected within the framework of Islamic Sharia.

“This misconception that there is discrimination against women; what we see in Afghanistan, is Sharia laws and it is free of discrimination, and we don’t believe in discrimination at all, whatever problems that our women and sisters have, we are trying to find solutions for them,” said Zabihullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate Spokesman.

“The Islamic Emirate should open universities and schools for our sisters as soon as possible, and facilitate work opportunities for our sisters in the framework of Islam and Sharia,” said Zakiullah Mohammadi, a university lecturer. Earlier, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, at the UNGA78 session, criticized what he considers to be the deterioration of the human rights situation in Afghanistan. Speaking at the session, Bennett said that in addition to the demands of the world to reopen schools and universities, female students are still deprived of education in Afghanistan.

Afghan migrants in Pakistan say situation getting worse



KABUL (TOLONews): Afghan refugees in Pakistan have criticized the lack of attention by international institutions for the situation of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.

The Afghan Refugee Council in Pakistan has said that Pakistan’s mistreatment of migrants is increasing with each passing day. The council added that Afghan refugees are being detained and deported from their homes and shops. It is now four days before the deportation of illegal Afghan migrants from Pakistan.

“The migrants were returned from their homes and shops where they had businesses and closed their

shops. There is no one to give sanctuary for them. “The government of Pakistan is doing this very seriously,” said Siyal Mohammad Wesal, a member of Afghan Refugees Council in Pakistan.

“The Pakistani police have mistreated Afghan refugees, and the government has ordered shops to be evacuated and even ordered that homes should not be provided to Afghan migrants,” said Hadisa, an Afghan migrant in Pakistan.

The head of the council of the Islamic Emirate in Pakistan criticized the detaining of those Afghans who have legal documents.

Abdul Jabar Takhari asked the government of Pakistan to give more time for Afghan migrants.

“We want the Pakistani government to show leniency. The amount of time Pakistan has given to Afghans is short. Afghans cannot leave Pakistan in such a short time,” said Abdul Jabar Takhari.

“There have been meetings with Pakistani officials and these problems have been shared, but so far we have not reached a positive conclusion. We hope that the Pakistani authorities will reconsider this,” said Abdul Mutalib Haqqani, the spokesman for the Ministry of Refugees and

Repatriation.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti said Afghan migrants could not withdraw dollars from the country and could only bring less than 50,000 Afs out of the country.

“It’s impossible for anyone to take the dollar out of here. No smuggling will be allowed. As I told you, they can only make less than 50,000 Afghanis out of the country,” said Sarfraz Bugti. The chargé d’affaires of Afghanistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations said in his speech to the UN General Assembly that Afghan migrants are faced with various challenges.

Local councils’ capacity building program underway in Samangan

AIBAK (Pajhwok): The Afghan Development and Welfare Organization has launched a capacity building training program titled “human rights Improvement and protection of internally displaced people (IDPs)” in northern Samangan province. In this program, short-term capacity building training is provided to men, women and other members of local councils.

Provincial in-charge of Afghan Development and Welfare Organization Ahmad Fawad Omari told Pajhwok Afghan News the NGO was implementing a project from June 1, 2023 until February 2024 in Samangan province to improve human rights and protect IDPs.

According to Omari, women, men and youth are being trained about women’s right to inheritance, their human rights enshrined in slam and social awareness.

He added members of the local councils, especially the members of dispute resolution committees, will also be provided training



about solving disputes among people.

The training on solving internal disputes was attended by 40 members of the local councils, youth and tribal influential figures of Samangan and the attendees expressed their pleasure to receive the training.

A member of a local council Ziauddin Sarbaghi called the program useful and said:

“We learned topics about peace, social partnership, stability and these topics are very important for us,” Sarbaghi said: “Now we are capable to solve family disputes, the disputes between villages and other challenging differences.”

Another participant of the training program, Mohammad Anwar Sadiqi asked for continuation of the program by the same organization and said: “Our capacity will be further improved through this program and we will be able even to train residents of other villages as well.”

The Afghan Development and Welfare Organization has implemented similar training projects about the rights of women in the past as well.

Women in Kabul Hold Gathering in Support of Palestinians

KABUL (TOLONews): In reaction to Israel’s airstrikes on Gaza, a group of women in Kabul in support of the Palestinians, urged the Islamic nations to take action against Israel.

They urged international institutions to take action to safeguard women and children in

Palestine, saying the ongoing Israeli bombardment on Gaza is a breach of international law and human rights.

“Where is the UN when it comes to discussing humanity and human rights? Why doesn’t anybody try to help the Palestinian people, or the

mothers and sisters whose children are killed unfairly? Why doesn’t anyone speak out for them?” said Somaia Mohammadi, a protester.

“The UN must defend the rights of women, in every Islamic or non-Muslim countries. There are many Islamic coun-

tries, how come today our Palestine is bearing the brunt of this bloody war?” asked Anjama, a protester.

“Don’t those children have the right to life and have freedom? Aren’t they human that someone should help them?” said Hasiba Rasooli, another protester.

Over 30,000 tonnes of fruits, vegetables exported in six-month: MoCI

KABUL (Pajhwok): Nearly one and half times more fruits and vegetables have been exported during the first six months of the ongoing solar year comparing to the same period last year, an official said.

Farmers, however, demanded the construction of cold stores to further strengthen and consolidated the production of fruits and vegetables.



Afghanistan is an agricultural country where 70 percent of its people are associated with agriculture.

Due to the past four decades of conflict basic development work could not be done in different sectors,

including the construction of standard cold stores for agricultural products. Farmers lost a large amount of their products are wasted due to the non-availability of agricultural products because proper attention had been not paid to build cold stores.

Surge in fruits, vegetables export

Abdul Salaam Jawad Akhundzada, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI), said 18,097 tonnes of fresh fruits exported during the first six months of ongoing year while 7,528 tonnes of fresh fruits exported last year during the same period.

He said 12,092 tonnes of vegetables mostly onion and Mash are exported during the first six months of ongoing year to India, Pakistan and Kazakhstan. He did not had information regarding the vegetable export during the same period last year.

Farmers’ complaints

Abdul Jameel, a farmer from the central Bamyan province, said his yield declined this year compared to the past year.

He said: “This year potatoes yield was lesser, we have water secrecy issue, last year seven kilograms of

fruits was also against the interest of orchard owners.

Khaliq Dad, other farmers in Kandahar province, said he collected decent yield this year but considering the value of agriculture yield the export volume had declined and Afghanistan’s pomegranates only exported to Pakistan.

He said: “Currently, the Pakistan route is also closed and when the gateway is closed then what could we do and when the businessmen suffer losses common people also suffer losses.” Akhtar Mohammad Ahmadi, head of the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Businessmen Union, said due to the none-availability of proper market and absence of cold stores agriculture products are sold on the road at a low price.

Referring to the importance of cold stores, he said: “When our season is off then different types of vegetable and fruits are imported an sold at a high rate, few cold stores are available but all did not have access to them, government should take steps for the creation of cold stores.” He added some private cold stores are available but businessmen select the fee themselves.

Ministry’s response

Commerce ministry’s spokesperson said many efforts had been made to promote the export of agricultural products, including fruits and vegetables.

He said: “In terms of export some facilities had been created such as cherries are exported to India from Panjsher province in a refrigerator trucks.”

He said this year fresh fruits, dried fruits, vegetables and salads are exported to Arab countries, Turkey, Russia, China and India.

Akhundzada said after 30 years the ministry signed pometrants export contract with Russia and efforts were underway to explore better markets for Afghan products.

Referring to the construction of up to the slandered cold stores, he said 14 standard cold stores existed in the country and work on the creation of hundreds of cold stores was underway. He added: “Office of the PM order that the number of cold storages existed during the republic and were either non-functional or semi-functional should be without any delay reconstructed so that they can be used by traders and farmers.”

Four decades old enmity comes to an end in Kunduz



KUNDUZ CITY (Pajhwok): A 40-year-old feud between two families in the Khanabad district of northern Kunduz province has come to an end — thanks to efforts by the Dispute Resolution Commission.

The enmity between the two families began 40 years ago following the killing of three individuals.

Hamidullah Ahmadi, head of the tribal jirga of

the borders and tribal affairs department, said both sides announced burying the hatchet at a gathering on Wednesday.

He recalled three people had been killed and five others wounded in this enmity, which fortunately turned into friendship.

Sharafuddin Ahmadzai, whose two sons were killed, said: “Both sides, having lost relatives, had not seen each other over the

last 40 years. From now on, we will have friendship and live like members of the same family.” Abdullah, a member of one of the two families, said they were thrilled over getting rid of the long-running enmity.

Maulvi Abdul Ghafoor Shahidzoi, chief of staff to the governor, said: “The directive of the central government is to put an end to enmities between brothers and those who have prob-

lems with each other should sit together, talk out their problems and live peacefully.” Aghamir Naseri, a tribal elder, said anyone who violated the jirga decision will have to pay a fine of five million Afghanis.

The Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs says after the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, hundreds of ethnic groups and tribes have reconciled in different parts of the country.

Army vows to ensure ‘safety, security of every Pakistani

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Participants of National Security Workshop - 25 visited GHQ on Thursday. The Participants were briefed about regional and internal security dynamics and national security environment. Later the participants had an interactive session with General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

While addressing the participants, COAS said that, "Armed Forces of Pakistan and its security and intelligence setups have fought the menace of terrorism in an exemplary manner despite sustained and varied support of inimical forces. Success will be ours InshAllah with the continued support of the people of Pakistan".

COAS emphasised that intelligentsia and civil society has greater responsibility to ensure that our people, especially youth stay aware and steadfast against hostile propaganda onslaught being launched through soft offensive against the state institutions of Pakistan.

Forum was also apprised regarding host of measures being taken to curb activities of illegal spectrum to include smuggling, power theft, nar-



cotics prevalence, border control measures, and repatriation of illegal foreigners from Pakistan. On the subject of repatriation and deportation of illegal foreigners, COAS expressed "Safety and security of each Pakistani is of paramount importance which cannot be allowed to be compromised at any cost." COAS also highlighted the economic positivity generated by multiple proactive steps especially SIFC.

COAS concluded, "Army is fully engaged in enabling National and Provincial responses in different

domains in step with other institutions of the state for the collective good of the people of Pakistan. We are a resilient nation that has endured the tests of time on its path to achieving peace and stability". National Security Workshop is an annual event at the National Defence University participated by representatives from all segments of society. National Security Workshop - 25 is being attended by 98 participants including Parliamentarians, Senior Civil and Armed Forces Officers and Representatives of the Civil Society.

FO: UNGA session to help bring about truce in Gaza

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has hoped that the upcoming special emergency session of the UN General Assembly will play its role in bringing about an urgent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and condemn the plans for ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad today, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch regretted that despite rising death toll of Palestinians and flagrant violations of international humanitarian laws, the UN Security Council failed to even call for a ceasefire and put an end to the carnage in Gaza.

Reiterating Pakistan's full and unequivocal support for the Palestinian brothers and sisters, the spokesperson urged the backers of Israel to play their role in bringing an end to the atrocities against Palestinians and take effective steps to lift the siege of Gaza.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the international community must also ensure that Israeli violence and bombing campaign does not spread and engulf the entire Middle East. The spokesperson said Pakistan believes that durable peace in the Middle East will emerge from a two state solution and the creation of a secure, viable and contiguous state of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

When asked about the imposition of sanctions by the US on three Chinese companies for providing missile related items to Pakistan, the spokesperson said that in the past also we have seen entities added to the entity list on suspicion.

She said we do not see any new thing in the latest order. She, however, said that such designations contradict the US policy of export control waivers granting access to India to advance military technologies which is undermining the strategic sta-

bility in South Asia. To a question, the spokesperson said Pakistan has always called for peace and dialogue including on the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

She said the current situation demands that New Delhi ensures that the people of Indian illegally Jammu and Kashmir are able to live in peace without intimidation. She said the people of IIOJK will never accept and have never accepted the illegally occupation of their land. She said Pakistan will continue to extend political, moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiri people until the realization of their inherent right to self-determination as per the UN Security Council resolutions. When asked about the repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, she said this decision has been taken as per our national laws to ensure the safety and security of Pakistan. She said we have also informed the Afghan authorities that this policy is not Afghan specific.

Bilawal visits Palestinian ambassador

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on the Palestinian diplomat Ahmad Jawad Rabei at the Palestinian Embassy on Wednesday and expressed solidarity with the Palestinians.

The Pakistan People's Party chairperson felt strong concerns for the victims of Israeli aggression in Gaza, saying "Pakistan stands with the people of Palestine in this trying and difficult time.

He added the leadership of PPP together with the Palestinian leadership fought for the cause of Palestine in the world. The ex-FM said the martyrdom of hundreds of Palestinian children in Israeli attacks is a stigma on humanity. "Bombardment on the hospitals in Gaza, Israel has proved that its existence is a security risk for the region." The international community should play its role to stop the Israeli aggression. Bilawal Bhutto also recorded his comments in the guest book of the embassy. Senator Sherry Rehman and former Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah accompanied the PPP chairman.

All set to observe Kashmir Black Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Like other provinces and both sides of Line of Control (LoC), the Kashmiris living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were all set to observe Kashmir black day on Friday to condemn the illegal annexation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir by India on October 27, 1947.

From Chitral to Khyber and Waziristan to Kohistan, Kashmiris settled in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would stage big protest demonstration, walks and rallies to strongly condemn the illegal landing of Indian troops at Srinagar 76 years ago against Indo-Pakistan patrician plan.

Besides rallies and seminars, photo exhibitions highlighting Indian forces' war crimes and human rights abuses would be highlighted. Similarly, debate competitions on different aspects of the lingering issue of Kashmir and significance of UN Security Council's resolutions on Kashmir would be held in schools and colleges of Khyber P a k t h u n k h w a . Transporters and Rickshaw unions also planned rallies in front of press club in connection with the day. Manzoorul Haq, former ambassador said that India went against Indo-Pakistan's partition plan after illegally landing its troops in Srinagar on October 27, 1947 that was widely condemned by the international community.

He said Kashmiris stood up against India's illegal occupation and launched the freedom movement that led to independence of Azad Kashmir. On August 5, 2019, he said India had made a deep-rooted conspiracy to rob Kashmiris of their history, language and ethno-cultural identity after abolishing special status of IIOJK.

Repatriation program finalizes for illegal immigrants: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The caretaker chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has said that repatriation program of foreign nationals illegally living in the province has been finalized adding that all such foreigners can go back to their homelands voluntarily till the 1st of next month; and the government will extend every possible support to them for this purpose. He said that so far, around 60,000 such foreign nationals have gone back to their homeland via Torkham boarder.

In his statement issued here on Thursday, Muhammad Azam Khan said that action against foreigners illegally living in the province would be initiated from 1st of November under which repatriation of such persons would be carried out from the designated points in the province. "concerned administration will arrange temporary points where food would be provided; and women, children and old people would be accorded special treatment as per the traditions of the land", he said and added that currently, three temporary centers/spots are being arranged at Peshawar, Haripur and Landi Kotal. Under this temporary arrangement, doctors, medicines and other health facilities would also be extended.

The caretaker Chief Minister fur-

ther said that a program has also been chalked out for the easy repatriation of those foreign nationals coming from other provinces. The government is hopeful that the entire repatriation process of all such foreigners will be completed amicably; and action would be taken against those creating hurdles in the repatriation process. He appealed to the citizens not to provide shelters to foreigners living here without legal cover.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has said that the provincial government will always welcome foreign investment for the development of the province and wellbeing of its people.

He said Govt will extend all possible support to foreign investors willing to invest here. He has said that since the province has suffered a lot due to regional issues prevailing for the last so many decades, and as such it needs more and more investment specially in the field of Science & Technology and Information Technology; and there is a lot of scope for foreign investment in these sectors in the province.

He said that the overall environment for foreign investment is also conducive in the province. He was talking to a delegation of US-based private investor firms who called on him here on Wednesday and discussed with him matters related to

investment in various sectors in the province. Caretaker Provincial Minister for ST & IT, Dr. Najeebullah and other relevant authorities were also present on the occasion.

It was informed on the occasion that TRAM- a US-based investment firm has agreed to invest in a fund worth 100 million US dollar for the development and growth of startups and growing companies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and an MoU to this effect has already been signed between the department of ST & IT and TRAM.

It was further told that the investment will be deployed across a range of sectors including Information Technology, Fin-Tech, Bio-Tech and Artificial Intelligence. Similarly, the department of ST&IT has inked an MoU with another US- based company-TINGO with the aim of rolling out its proven business model in the region, and accelerate digital transformation. It was further told that through the MoU, both the parties are committed to collaborating on various initiatives that will enhance digital infrastructure, foster entrepreneurship, and promote technology-driven solutions. The Chief Minister thanked the delegates for their investment in the province, and assured them all out support of his government to make the initiative successful and beneficial to both the parties.

Commander of Air Force UAE visits Air Headquarters



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation, led by Major General Staff Pilot Ibrahim Nasser Mohamed Al-Alawi, Commander of the Air Force & Air Defence of the United Arab Emirates, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad today. The meeting covered a wide array of matters pertaining to geo-strategic environment, regional security and the aspect of exploring new avenues to enhance bilateral defence cooperation.

On his arrival at Air Headquarters, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented guard of honour to Major General Staff Pilot Ibrahim Nasser Mohamed Al-Alawi. He was also introduced to the Principal Staff Officers of Pakistan Air Force.

Later, the visiting dignitary called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization drive aimed at augmenting current operational capability in the domains of Cyber, Space, Artificial Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Niche technologies. He also highlighted various ongoing projects of Pakistan Air Force's operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare. Appreciating the participation of UAE Air Force contingent in PAF's multi-national Exercise Indus Shield, the Air Chief highlighted that both the countries enjoy unprecedented brotherly relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties in military to military cooperation, joint exercises and training

domains.

The Commander of the Air Force & Air Defence of the United Arab Emirates conveyed his deep appreciation for the remarkable advancements achieved by Pakistan Air Force in the realm of indigenous capabilities and commended the professionalism of PAF personnel. Both sides concurred to further optimize the existing military ties between the two countries with a specific focus on advanced tactical training, emerging technologies and strengthening operational competencies. The dignitaries also discussed the potential for joint military exercises and exchange programs with an aim to facilitate the exchange of expertise, enhancing interoperability and fostering closer ties between Air Forces of both the brotherly countries. Commander of the Air Force & Air Defence of the United Arab Emirates also visited different installations and technological infrastructure established at Air Headquarters, Islamabad, including National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre and PAF's Cyber Command. He also visited National Aerospace Science and Technology Park and expressed his deep admiration for the project. He appreciated the dynamic leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force which enabled the realization of this mega project in a record time frame.

The meeting between the Chief of the Air Staff and the Commander of the Air Force & Air Defence of the United Arab Emirates signifies the commitment between the Armed Forces of both the countries in working together to address common challenges and the willingness to further strengthen their bilateral ties in the realms of defence and military cooperation.

Gaza death toll

(Continued from Page 1)

frankly to the American statesmen, who are now managing the genocide in Palestine, that we do not welcome (an) expansion of the war in the region. But if the genocide in Gaza continues, they will not be spared from this fire," he told the United Nations General Assembly.

The UN agency for Palestinian Refugees has said 39 of its workers have been killed in Israeli bombardment on Gaza while 42 installations have been damaged. In a report, UNRWA said 629,000 displaced persons were living in 150 installations currently. It further said that fuel was immediately needed to continue life-saving operations in the Palestinian enclave. Unicef has warned that the death toll in Gaza will increase "exponentially" if hospitals in the Palestinian enclave are not provided electricity and if children continue to drink unsafe water.

Hamas has said that "almost 50" Israeli hostages held in the Gaza Strip since the October 7 offensive have been killed in Israeli bombing raids on the Palestinian enclave, AFP reports. "(Ezzedine) Al-Qassam Brigades estimates that the number of Zionist prisoners who were killed in the Gaza Strip as a result of Zionist strikes and massacres has reached almost 50," the group said in a statement issued on its Telegram channel.

The UN agency providing aid to Palestinian civilians in besieged Gaza warned it may have to shut down operations shortly if no fuel reaches the enclave, amid an increasingly desperate need for shelter, water, food and medical services. The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said it urgently needed fuel to maintain

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life-saving humanitarian operations in Gaza that has been under Israeli bombardment for almost three weeks.

The foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt and Morocco have condemned targeting of civilians and violations of international law in Gaza which has been under Israeli bombardment, according to Reuters. Their joint statement mentioned that the right to self-defence does not justify breaking law and neglecting Palestinians' rights. The Arab foreign ministers also condemned forced displacement and collective punishment in Gaza, it added.

Israel is waging a "war of revenge" on Gaza aimed at its total destruction, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said, as Israeli troops bombard the Palestinian enclave in response to the Oct 7 attack by Hamas, according to Reuters. "So many wars have taken place (in Gaza), this is different. This time it's a war of revenge," al-Maliki told reporters in The Hague. "This war has no real objective, rather than the total destruction of every livable place in Gaza. — Aljazeera

Govt committed to press freedom, says Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the government was committed to the freedom of media and the well-being of media workers.

The minister expressed the caretaker government's commitment during his meeting with representatives of the National Press Club, Parliamentary Reporters Association, and Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ). The representatives of the media bodies also held a meeting separately with the Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting and Principal Information Officer, and briefed them about the role of media in national progress.

Productive proposals for development of media came under discussion during the meetings in which all the stakeholders agreed to work together for evolving a practical framework based on the national development agenda and the government's priorities. During his meeting with the media representatives, the minister highlighted the role played by the people associated with the newspaper industry in safeguarding the public's right to information.

As regards the discussions held a few days ago concerning the problems faced by the newspaper industry, he said unbiased opinions were shared in that regard. He reiterated that the government firmly believed in the freedom of media and the well-being of media workers. The minister said journalists had the right to visit all the places in search of news. While upholding the rights to freedom of expression and information, the government had no intention of imposing any restrictions on a journalist's movements, he added.

Medical Varsities asked to rise graduate numbers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday asked the medical universities to increase graduate numbers to fulfill the requirement of a large number of doctors and nurses in the country.

"To enhance accessibility to healthcare facilities for the general public, there is a need to increase the number of trained individuals in health sector", the president said while presiding over the 6th session of the Senate of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad. He also stressed for taking special measures to maintain the services of female doctors in the field of health adding that creating a friendly and harassment-free environment for women at their workplaces was very important.

KP Cabinet authorizes Rs529.118b expenditure for next four months

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance, Ahmad Rasool Bangash here Thursday said that Rs529.118 billion expenditure has been authorized by the provincial cabinet with Chief Minister in chair for second four months i.e (1st November to 29th February 2024), showing 14pc increase as compared to Rs462.939 billion of the first four months (July to October 2023).

Addressing a press conference here, the Minister said that total expenditure authorized for eight months are Rs992.055 billion for

financial year 2023-24, showing 12pc increase as compared to Rs888 billion of the first eight months of the previous year budget. He said Rs417billion for current and Rs112.118 billion for development expenditures of the second four months ie November to February 2024 that showed 19pc increase as compare to the first four months ie Rs350.041 billion current expenditure, was authorized.

The total current expenditure authorized for eight months is Rs767.040 billion in current fiscal as compared to Rs609.200 billion of the eight month of last financial year. He said

Rs366.298 billion current expenditure has been authorized for second four months (Nov to Feb 2024) that indicated 26pc increase compared of the first four month (July to October 2023) ie Rs309.498billion for settled areas. The total authorized current expenditure for eight months are Rs675.796 billion compare to Rs526.533 billion of eight months of the last fiscal for settled areas.

For merged areas, he said total current expenditure for second four months are Rs50.702 billion against Rs40.543billion of the first four months, showing 10pc increase.