

Police must produce Rashid

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench has directed police to produce former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed in a week. Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan of the LHC heard the petition filed against the imprisonment of Ahmed. Rawalpindi Regional Police Officer Syed Khurram Ali appeared before the court. The judge asked the RPO that where were former minister and two other persons who were with him.

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Maneka's hearing puts off

OKARA (INP): A court in Okara on Monday adjourned the hearing of Khawar Farid Maneka's petition against his eight-day physical remand in a corruption case until October 4. Hearing of the case, which was due to be held on September 30, had to be adjourned until Monday on account of the absence of Additional and Sessions Judge Naeem Shaukat.

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Focus on to eradicate polio, says PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday called upon every section of society to play a role in the complete eradication of polio virus from the country. He said everyone would have to participate in this sacred task to ensure safe and healthy future of children of the country.

Chairing a meeting of the National Task Force for eradication of polio, the prime minister directed the authorities concerned to engage religious scholars, teachers, parents and all stakeholders to become part of the polio awareness campaign in the country. He also directed to ensure the security of polio workers during anti-polio campaign.

Expressing satisfaction over the significant drop of polio cases in the country, the prime minister vowed to continue efforts till the complete uprooting of this crippling disease from the country. The nation would celebrate the day when every child of the country would be fully safe from this disease, the prime minister said, adding it was a fact that all the religious scholars, including Imam-e-Kaaba, had declared the polio vaccine absolutely safe and imperative for the future of children, to be without disabilities.

PM Kakar, expressing concern over reports of polio virus in the three districts of the country, directed to run a special anti-polio campaign in areas where the polio virus had been reported. "We are grateful to the international partners for their active participation and key support in Pakistan's National Polio Programme," he added.

The meeting was informed that compared to

PM stresses provision of skills to manpower according to contemporary requirements

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday stressed the need to work on a war footing for the provision of skills to the country's manpower according to contemporary requirements. He said the professional education and vocational training programs should be prepared at par with the needs of the international market. Chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet here, the prime minister said steps should be taken to increase employment opportunities of skilled people abroad.

On recommendation of federal ministry of education and professional training, the federal cabinet also approved the service level amended agreement between National Vocational and Technical Training Commission and Saudi agency Takamol. The prime minister directed that all existing centers of technical education and vocational training should be activated. On the recommendation of the ministry of education and professional training, the Cabinet also approved the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Area Studies Center, University of Peshawar and Central Asia Research Center of Corvinus University of Hungary. The cabinet also approved the appointment of Lt. Gen. Munir Afsar as Chairman of National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) out of the three names proposed by the Ministry of Interior.

The cabinet was informed that the selection committee had shortlisted the names of the three best candidates for the post of Chairman NADRA. After detailed consideration, the cabinet approved the appointment of Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar as the new Chairman of NADRA. The Cabinet also extended approval to the name of Summit Bank Limited as Bank Mukarramah Limited on the recommendation of the finance ministry. On the recommendation of the interior ministry, the Cabinet approved the agreement between the governments of Pakistan and Ecuador, under which diplomatic, officials and special passport holders of both countries would be mutually exempted from visa. The Cabinet also gave assent to the decisions taken in the meetings of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on September 6 and September 19, 2023.

the 20 cases reported in the country in 2022, only two cases had been reported this year, which was mainly due to the continuation of anti-polio campaigns at the national level. The prime minister appreciated the Ministry of Health, National Task Force, provincial

governments and administration, and law enforcement agencies for their tireless efforts in eradicating polio virus from the country.

All provincial chief ministers and chief secretaries informed the meeting about

(Continued on Back Page)

No place for terrorists, facilitators: Solangi, Bugti

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that it was responsibility of the government to ensure peace in the country and assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in conducting free, transparent and impartial elections.

This, he said, during a meeting with Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti who called on him here. On his arrival at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi welcomed Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti. The two ministers discussed matters of mutual interest

including law and order situation in the country.

In the meeting, both Murtaza Solangi and Sarfraz Bugti expressed their profound regret over the loss of precious lives in the recent bomb blasts in the country. Both the federal ministers reiterated that there was no place in Pakistan for terrorists and their facilitators.

In the meeting, the support of the caretaker government to the Election Commission regarding the elections was also discussed. The ministers said that the caretaker government will provide all possible assistance to the ECP in fulfilling its constitutional responsibility of conducting general elections in the country.

Meanwhile, talking to media after attending book launching ceremony of Dr Farooq Adil's book 'Humme Jo Bhula Diya: Tareekh Ke Gumshuda Awraq', Murtaza Solangi said Maulana Fazlur Rahman was leader of a large political party. He said that Maulana's statement about elections in winter must have been seen by the ECP top hierarchy and they will respond to it.

To a question, he said that Nawaz Sharif's return had nothing to do with caretaker government. Replying to a question about his recent visit to China, the minister said Pakistan enjoyed ever-green relations with Beijing and future of these ties was very bright.

Imran's bail pleas accepted by IHC

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday approved bail pleas of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan in cases related to the May 9 violence.

A two-member bench of Islamabad High Court comprising CJ Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri took up the 9 b ail request of the PTI chairman. The court while accepting pleas of the PTI chairman overturned the decision to dismiss the application for non-compliance in the trial court?

The IHC restored the bail pleas of the former prime minister and directed police not to arrest him before a decision on the pleas in the trial court. It may be noted that the bail pleas of the PTI chairman were turned down over non-compliance as he is currently in Adiala jail in a cipher case.

IHC reserves verdict on FIA request: Islamabad High Court (IHC) has reserved its decision on FIA's request for conducting an in-camera hearing on the bail plea of former premier and PTI Chairman Imran Khan in the cipher case. At the outset of the court proceedings on Monday, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that it had to be decided whether the hearing would be in-camera or in open court. He said that the court would fix a date for rehearing the case.

At this juncture, lawyer Salman Safdar requested the court to fix the next hearing in a couple of days, on which the Chief Justice said that the office would schedule the case for hearing. FIA Prosecutor Shah Khawar Advocate appeared in the court and said that the trial could not be made public under the Official Secrets Act. He said today we were going to file an application in the trial court. The Chief Justice raised the question that the matter of the trial was different, could the bail hearing be held in-camera. Speaking to the lawyers, the CJ said that he did not know about this. He asked the lawyers to see to it. He said the statement was to be made in the trial court, it was the trial court's jurisdiction whether it allowed an in-camera hearing or the open court. Shah Khawar Advocate said that the cipher was a secret document and who would decode this document.

The court inquired whether there was any code of conduct or SOP related to the cipher. The special prosecutor said that during the hearing of the bail application, some important documents and statements were to be kept before the court, the statements of some countries were also to be brought on record, if this process was public, relations with some countries might be affected. The code of conduct relating to the cipher was read out in the court. Manwar Dagal advocate said that the coded message is different for each country.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar launching national polio eradication campaign by administering polio drops to a child.

Govt decides to expel illegal Afghan immigrants

ISLAMABAD (APP): The caretaker government has decided to evict 11 lacs foreigners living illegally in Pakistan because of their involvement in funding, facilitating terrorists and other illegal activities.

In the first phase, illegal residents, in the second phase, those with Afghan citizenship and in the third phase, those with proof of residence cards will be expelled. "Illegally resident foreigners pose a serious threat to the security of Pakistan" said a source privy to the development and added that the plan for

eviction of illegally residing Afghan citizens has also been approved as this lot is involved in funding, facilitating and smuggling terrorists whereas 7 lacs Afghans have not renewed their proof of residence in Pakistan.

It has been informed that in the first phase, illegal residents will be deported along with those who do not renew their visas. In the second phase, those with Afghan citizenship will be deported, in the third phase, those with proof of residence cards will be deported.

The Ministry of Interior has prepared a plan in consultation with the stakeholders and the Afghan government. In the meantime, the ministry has also issued directives to the concerned to compile a record of Afghans living without permits and prepare a transportation plan to bring them to the Afghan border.

Apart from checking the records of all the Afghans residing in the country the concerned officials were directed to quickly deal with the applications filed regarding the registration of Afghans.

PPP wants timely elections, says Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Taking a dig at his allies in the erstwhile Pakistan Democratic Movement-led ruling coalition, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday claimed the PPP was the "only" political party in the country that wanted timely elections.

"PPP is the country's only party that wants elections to take place," he said in a press conference in Karachi, lamenting how "so-called" political leaders were coming up with excuses to delay polls. "You must have seen that sometimes a so-called leader comes on screen and says: 'Delimitation has to happen and until then [elections can be delayed]'. Okay let's accept delimitation [needs to be done] but that process has been completed so now there should be no issue in giving the date [for polls]."

"The PPP will continue its politics and would not rest before securing the notification for an election date," he asserted. Bilawal further said that the PPP

was ready to present its ideology and manifesto before the public as a part of its preparations for the upcoming elections.

In a media talk earlier on Monday, PPP's Yousuf Raza Gilani echoed Bilawal's remarks. "I have read Fazlur Rehman's statement ... apart from him, no one has raised any objections to elections in January," he said. The ex-prime minister also stated that any party that had reservations about delimitation should raise the issue with the ECP.

Meanwhile, PPP veteran leader Farhatullah Babar has said the "vibes say no elections" and warned of the consequences of "denying people free choice", which he stated could invite disaster. "Hold free, fair elections. Don't play with fire. Federation at brink, don't push it into pit," he warned in a social media post on X (formerly Twitter).

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SC to hear pleas against inflated power bills on 16th

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court on Monday announced to hear 1,090 petitions against fuel price adjust adjustment on Oct 16 and decide the case.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faiz Isa heard the case. "The court will hear arguments and decide the matter on October 16", the court announced. "No video link facility will be available on Oct 16, all sides have to arrive in Islamabad to present their arguments," the court added.

Earlier, CJP Qazi Faez Isa turned down a request for time from the Attorney General. "Attorney General should prepare for case in half hour," the bench said. "The AG has not been put on notice in this case, he himself wants to present arguments," AAG Aamir Rehman said while seeking time for the AG.

"It is okay, if you, yourself in writing say that Aamir Rehman is ineligible to present arguments. We could not become such rude," CJP said. "I see Aamir Rehman an eligible lawyer able to present arguments in case before the court himself," Justice Isa remarked. "There is a pile of cases against power prices," the CJP observed. Justice Faez Isa ordered the AAG to prepare arguments in the case within half hour while announcing to hear the case after 11:30am.

Inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests from Karachi to Khyber recently which turned violent in some parts of the country. In Karachi, the people protested against exorbitant bills sent by K-Electric, the city's sole power supplier.

SC (Practice and Procedure) Act: Full court to resume hearing today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A full court bench — headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising all 15 judges of the Supreme Court — will resume hearing petitions challenging the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act today (Tuesday).

The state television is all set to live broadcast the hearing of the closely followed case as PTV has installed its cameras inside Court-room No.1. The hearing will begin at 9:30am. The full court bench is headed by CJP Isa and includes Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed and Justice Musarrat Hilali.

At the last hearing, the apex court's full court had sought replies from all parties by September 25. However, the federal government submitted its written submission on September 28 as Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan was out of the country in connection with a

case.

In its written reply to the apex court, the Centre stated that the judiciary's freedom was ensured by the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023. In response to the question if the impugned law is sustained, what will be the fate of the cases heard by benches constituted by the chief justice after the enactment of the impugned Act? the Centre stated: "For the purposes of addressing the query it is important to draw a distinction between benches which were constituted and have rendered judgments and those benches which are still hearing petitions and have not rendered final judgments. In the event the impugned act is sustained, the former stands to be saved under past and closed transactions and the latter will merit for the benches to be reconstituted under Sections 2 and 3 of the impugned act and the proceedings in such cases be held afresh."

It further said that the right of appeal has been accorded under Section 5 of the Impugned Act against judgments arising out of the exercise of jurisdiction under Article 184(3) of the Constitution. "The original jurisdiction of this Court under Article 184(3) is sui generis in nature, and cannot in the traditional sense be bifurcated into criminal or civil," it

added.

To another query, the government said: "We believe that there could not be any other view except that the Constitution favours enlargement of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and conferment of supplemental powers." Under the scheme of the Constitution, the top court is empowered to deal with the matters falling within various types of the jurisdiction conferred upon it, i.e., original, appellate, advisory and review, read the statement.

"Parliament has also enlarged the territorial jurisdiction of the SC and included within its jurisdiction the territories of Provincially Administered Tribal Areas of Chitral, Dir, Kalam, Swat and Malakand Protected Area, through the Supreme Court and High Court (Extension of Jurisdiction A certain Tribal areas) Act, 1973."

In its concise statement, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) pleaded with the top court to dismiss the petitions challenging the law clipping CJP's powers. On behalf of the PML-N, its counsel Salahuddin Ahmed submitted a written reply to the top court regarding to the matter. "The PML-N contends the SC Act 2023 is intra vires the Constitution and is good law. As such, all the instant petitions challenging the same

may be dismissed and the interim order passed by this court on April 4, 2023, may be vacated," read the statement.

It further said that the interim order passed by the Supreme Court to the effect that "the Act that comes into being shall not have, take or b given effect nor be acted upon in any manner" is unprecedented and contrary to the jurisprudence of the apex court.

At the previous hearing, CJP Isa observed that parliament's SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 was not an attempt to clip the top judge's rights by devolving the suo motu powers to a three-member committee. The hearing was seen as historic because, for the first time in the country's judicial history, the Supreme Court allowed live telecast of proceedings on the petitions challenging the contentious law seeking to regulate suo motu powers of the country's top judge.

During the hearing, the CJP remarked: "This court runs on the taxes of the people." If this law is struck down, the chief justice will benefit, the CJP said. However, he added: "A judge takes an oath to abide by the Constitution and the law." He further observed that as the top judge of the country, he did not want absolute authority. "\$6.5 billion were

lost due to the court's decision in the Reko Diq case. As chief justice, I do not want such authority," the CJP remarked. "I have not sworn to obey the judgments of the Supreme Court. I have taken oath to uphold the law and the Constitution," he said.

After a brief hiatus, AGP Mansoor Awan appeared before the court and argued that the petitions were inadmissible. He said that the law dealt with the powers of one office, not the entire judiciary, and aimed to bring "democratic transparency" to the institution. He further contended that the law, au contraire to the claims of the petitioners, actually served in the public interest. The AGP further argued that since no external check or institution was involved or imposed by the Act, it did not, in fact, curtail the power of the institution as a whole.

During the course of proceedings, CJP Isa observed that there was also a public opinion that Article 184(3) was misused. The three-member bench nullified the Reko Diq agreement causing a loss of \$6.5 billion to the country. It was the opinion of the judges and it was not corrected, he added. The top judge admitted that they made mistakes. "Mistake was made in the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's case."

"We have a huge ego. We endorsed martial law," the CJP remarked, adding that the judges should admit that they also made omissions. CJP Isa continued, "We take suo motu notices over every matter then why can't on legislation about ourselves."

In Bhutto's case, the review petition was also heard by the same judges who handed him the death penalty, the top judge stated. "Our ego should not be so huge that we do not admit our mistake." At this, Justice Minallah asked if the masses filed petitions after the endorsement of martial law and said, "We should also be held accountable."

On April 13, an eight-member bench of the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the law, which deals with the powers of the top judge in matters of public interest and seeks to limit the suo motu powers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan. During the previous hearing in June, the similarities between the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 — which relates to the right of appeal in suo motu cases — and the SC Practice and Procedure Act were discussed with Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan saying that parliament could look into "harmonising" the two laws.



PESHAWAR: Governor Ghulam Ali inaugurated the recently completion of work under Uplift program in Jinnah College for Women Peshawar.

CM orders inclusion of poverty-stricken mothers in social protection program

KARACHI (PPI): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar has directed the Social Protection Dept to develop and efficiently implement an overarching need-driven and rights-based cross-sectoral social protection strategy for the poverty-stricken districts, including katchiabadies and slum areas of Karachi.

"The poverty ratio in the katchi-abadies, slum areas, and rural areas of Karachi is equally higher as of the rural areas of the province, therefore Karachi must be included in the social protection program," according to a statement issued from CH House on Monday.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting of the Social Protection Dept to review its progress at the CM House. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhr Alam, Vice Chairman Social Protection Board Haris Gazdar, Chairman P&D Shakeel Manijo, PSCM Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatui, Haris Gazdar, CEO Social Protection, Samiullah Shaikh.

Vice Chairman Haris Gazdar and CEO Samiullah Shaikh briefed the caretaker chief minister about the department and its program launched

by the government.

The CM was told that under the Sindh Social Protection Strategy an effective Management Information System (MIS) for the social registry has been developed. Under the program two feasibility studies - Food Security - Bhok Mitao- program and the Benazir Women Agriculture Workers program have been conducted.

Mother & Child Support: Mother and Child Support Program (MCSP) and Nutrition conditional cash transfer has been launched. The program in being implemented as a pilot MCSP in two districts- Tharparkar and Umerkot to enable uptake of maternal and child health services by vulnerable rural women.

The Pilot program was initiated in May 2021 in four UCs and was scaled up to cover the entire districts of Tharparkar and Umerkot in May 2022. The CM was told that MIS has been established where 62,000 pregnant women have been enrolled and Rs165 million have been disbursed.

The meeting was told that a Rs48,300 million project for the Social Protection Delivery System has been launched with the assistance of the World Bank. The health partners including PPHI and the health

department have started the services.

The Strengthening Social Protection Delivery System has two components. Under the first Component, the task is to establish an appropriate institutional framework to improve formulation, functional consolidation and coordination, policy planning, delivery, and monitoring of social protection interventions while also strengthening administrative capacities.

The second component is the 'Mother and Child Support Program' (MCSP) includes the strengthening and increasing scale of the Mother and Child Support Program via conditional cash transfer to pregnant women and mothers of under 2-year-old children encouraging them to utilize maternal, newborn, and child healthcare (MNCH) services throughout the continuum of care for 1,000 days from conception.

It is a 60-month (January 2023 to Dec 2027) program, predominantly rural districts of the province, prioritizing those with the highest MPI Scores (poorest), the CM was told. The CM said that he would chair the board meeting of Social Protection next week to further strengthen the social protection prioritize program.

CM Naqvi deplores pathetic condition of govt school

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid a surprise visit to Government Pilot School for Boys on Wahdat Road, Lahore and was shocked to see that not a single teacher was available to teach class 11 and class 12 for the last seven years.

The chief minister also took notice of the water filtration plant which had not been cleaned for months, and convened the meeting of Provincial Minister for Education Mansoor Qadir, Secretary Schools Education Ahsan Waheed and other concerned officials to discuss the issue.

He said it was a matter of grave concern that students were being made to drink toxic water. He was also greatly perturbed to learn that of total 60 schoolteach-

ers, 35 were on election duty and only 12 were available to teach 1,650 students as 13 others were absent.

CM Naqvi made it clear that such state of affairs would not be tolerated at any cost. "If we are to teach our children in this manner, it is better that we shut down our gov't schools," he said angrily. He went on to say that such issues would not be resolved merely by giving directions from air-conditioned rooms. "Pupils have told me that the teachers either remain busy with their cell-phones or simply keep sleeping," he regretted.

Later, in a tweet, the chief minister said that this morning he had gone to the school to assess the situation with respect to pink eye disease among the students.

But, he added, he was stunned to see the pathetic situation at the institution as most of the teachers were not on duty and the water filtration plant was not in good shape either.

CM inspects underpass project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected the Khalid Butt Chowk underpass project here on Monday. During the visit, he issued directives to ensure efficient traffic management throughout the construction process and underscored the imperative of completing the project on schedule.

He emphasized the need for a concerted effort to meet the objectives. Highlighting the anticipat-

ed benefits, the CM mentioned that the construction of the Center Point to Defence Mor signal-free corridor would greatly enhance convenience for commuters by improving traffic flow. Additionally, the chief minister pointed out that the project would encompass the repair of roads associated with it.

Residents of Gulberg, Kalma Chowk, CBD, Cavalry Ground, DHA and Walton Road areas are expected to enjoy the advantages brought about by this project. The chief minister expressed a strong commitment to upholding the highest standards in the execution of the project and promised that it would be completed soon. Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir was also present.

Lt Gen Munir Afsar appointed Nadra chairman

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The interim federal government on Monday appointed Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar as National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) Chairman.

The federal interim cabinet approved the appointment of Lt. Gen. Munir Afsar as NADRA Chairman out of the three names proposed by the Ministry of Interior.

Before his appointment as NADRA chairman, Lt Gen Munir was serving as Inspector General Communication & Information Technology (IG C&IT). He belongs to 16 Punjab Regiment and 81 PMA Long Course. Lt Gen Afsar, who is

also recipient of Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), was promoted to the three-star rank, in October 2022.

Earlier, Asad Rehman had assumed the role of acting chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) following the resignation of Tariq Malik on June 13.

Malik was first appointed Nadra chief in July 2013.

However, he resigned in January 2014. He was once again appointed to lead the authority in June 2021.

Chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet, interim PM Kakar said professional education and vocational training pro-

grammes should be compatible with the international job market.

Terming human capital as an asset of the country, the prime minister directed to ensure imparting vocational training as per needs of the modern time on war footing basis.

He said all centers of technical and professional training should be revived.

The cabinet also approved an amended service level agreement between TAKAMOL and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission.

The cabinet approved renaming of Summit Bank Limited as Bank Makramah Limited.

LDA to auction shops, plots

LAHORE (APP): Under the auspices of Lahore Development Authority (LDA), all shops on the first floor of Liberty Park and Ride Plaza will be auctioned on Wednesday.

Shops will be auctioned for a 5-year lease and for the convenience of businesspeople and a grace period of 3 months will also be given. LDA will lease all shops to a major business group or party.

Parking sites in Jubilee Town, Marquee Site, and Gulshan-e-Ravi will also be available for lease in the auction. Residential and commercial plots of LDA societies, including Jubilee Town, Avenue One, Tajpura, Mustafa Town, Quaid-e-Azam Town, Sabzazar, and New Garden Town, will also be included in the auction.

Police foils smuggling bid

KARACHI (APP): The district West Police on Monday foiled smuggling bid of betel nut used in hazardous gutka/ mawa.

The Manghopir police station of district West arrested three suspects involved in the smuggling during two different operations.

Arrested were identified as Azmatullah, Yasir and Muhammad Shahzad. The accused were arrested from near Northern Bypass Hamdard Chowk during snap checking.

More than 200 kg of betel nut in 20 sacks loaded were found in two cars of the arrested. Cases against arrested had been registered and further investigations were underway.

88 gas pilferers caught

LAHORE (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), during its ongoing crackdown, disconnected another 88 connections over violations in Punjab, KP and Islamabad, imposing a fine of Rs 4.982 million to gas pilferers.

According to a spokesman for the SNGPL, teams continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 88 connections and 82 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected six connections on illegal use of gas while another six connections on the use of compressor. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected five connections on the use of compressor while another one against illegal use, 16 under billing cases processed.

The company disconnected two connections on illegal use of gas, five connections on the use of compressor and four under billing cases have been processed in Multan. The team also lodged one FIR against gas thieves.

In Sheikhupura, 15 connections were disconnected by the region and 62 under billing cases processed, the team also booked Rs 3.432M against under billing cases. In Peshawar, the company disconnected 26 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections, the regional team also booked Rs 1.55M against gas theft. In Sialkot, the company disconnected one connection on use of compressor.

Baldia Town Cottage Industries land is citizen's asset

KARACHI (PPI): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the land of Baldia Town Cottage Industries is the asset of the citizens, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had announced to establish Cottage Industries here in 1993-94 for the citizens of Karachi.

There are clear orders of the court to give possession of the plots to the allottees and KMC is ready for it.

He said this while presiding over a high-level meeting regarding Cottage Industries Baldia Town in his office on Monday. On this occasion Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi, Parliamentary Leader in City Council Najmi Alam, Mayor Karachi Representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, heads of relevant departments of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and other officers were also present.

Mayor Karachi Barrister

Murtaza Wahab said that Cottage Industries Baldia Town has an area of 348 acres in which 3946 plots were allotted to the citizens, 128 of them were allotted to the allottees through balloting as commercial plots.

The acquired land will be returned to them so that they can start their business, the possession of sectors A, B and C will be given to the allottees immediately while the sectors of cottage industries which are illegally occupied by some people will be vacated.

Mayor Karachi said that the purpose under which the cottage industry was established in Baldia Town should be fulfilled, even after a long time, small industries could not be established there due to the non-occupation of the allottees.

Now we want that these factories are established as soon as possible and employment opportunities

available to people.

During the meeting, the relevant officers of the Department of Land, Anti-Encroachment and Orangi Town Project of the KMC gave a briefing to Mayor Karachi regarding the cottage industry and informed about the measures taken in this regard in different periods, upon which Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab directed that there is no room for further delay in this work, work and it has to be done at a fast pace to improve the city, it has to be seen that the project which was started by kmc in the larger interest of the city has reached at what stage and why it has not been completed.

He said that aottees of Baldia Town Cottage Industry has the right to get their plot and this right will be given to them. There is an urgent need to promote industrial and commercial activities in the city.

PBSA commissioner meet with S. Arabia, UK delegates

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Boys Scouts Association (PBSA) National Commissioner Sardar Waqar Shahzad has met with Afzal Khan, United Kingdom (UK) Shadow Minister for Exports.

PBSA Commissioner congratulated Afzal Khan on new portfolios of Business and Trade. Sardar Waqar also met honorable Wail Alsayyari Deputy Ambassador of Saudi Arabia.

Sardar Waqar invited Afzal Khan to visit Swat, and discussed opportunities to increase trade between two countries.

Sardar Waqar men-



tioned the historic relationships between UK and Pakistan, and emphasized

on increasing the trade volume among the two nations, and diversifying

the trade that may include products from remote northern areas like Swat.

LESCO detects 11,578 power pilferers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 11,578 connections from where customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts- Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara- during 25 days of a grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Monday that the company has so far submitted FIR applications against 11,478 electricity thieves, out of which 10,505 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 3,484 accused have been arrested.

The spokesman said that all electricity thieves have been charged so far with 24,250,725 detection units amounting to Rs 1,096,413,102.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising the operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

On the 25th consecutive day (October 02) of the campaign, the spokesman added, LESCO found 588 connections involved in electricity theft in all its circles and also submitted FIR applications against 585 electricity thieves in the respective police stations, out of which 258 FIRs have been registered while 122 accused have been arrested.

During the operation, he said, large agricultural and commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged detection units. Among the connections, 17 were commercial, one agricultural and 570 domestic, and all these connections were cut off and charged a total of 877,396 units as detection bills amounting to Rs 46,754,908.

UNESCO, PJN partner for strengthening access to Information online

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As part of UNESCO's International Day for Universal Access to Information, civil society - Peace and Justice Network with partners including the Pakistan Information Commission and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands held a conference in Islamabad.

Taking this year's global agenda "the importance of online space for Access to Information" forward, the national conference mapped priorities to address challenges faced by marginalized in accessing information online. It is crucial for persons with disabilities, transgender and religious minorities, etc., to have equal access to information to promote inclusivity. The information and its access if effectively utilized can become a means for empowerment, justice, and equal participation in society.

Keeping the United Nations' shared value of "leaving no one behind" at the core, it is imperative to ensure that these groups leverage online spaces. The online space(s) have become an indispensable resource for many communities, including marginalized groups. They are not only offering a space to engage in public discourse but is an earning source. Marginalized communities already stigmatized can leverage these spaces to uplift

themselves socially and economically. Therefore, it is necessary to realize that online spaces and by extension internet needs to be integrated with rights perspective. An approach developed by UNESCO that safeguards rights, is open and accessible for all and consists of represents pluralism.

Senator Farhatullah Babar highlighted the need for government institutions to enhance access to information to strengthen democratic values in the country. On strengthening the role of information commissions, Chief Information Commissioner, Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui stressed on the need for more proactive disclosure to promote a culture of accountability and transparency.

Deputy Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Hajo Provo Kluitrecognized the importance of access to information for marginalized groups in ensuring stronger institutions.

During the session 'Connecting the Disconnected' moderated by Farieha Aziz, Co-founder Bolobhi, experts Mukhtar Ahmed Ali, Mary James Gill, Usama Khilji and Barrister Yasser Latif Hamdani presented the challenges citizens face when the government shutdown or restrict people's Internet access, as this severely restrict their ability to exercise their rights, including the right to access information, and engage in democratic

processes. They all highlighted the need for a strong policy framework to address internet disruptions, ensuring access to information and protecting fundamental rights.

To sensitize key stakeholders about access to information online specifically for marginalized groups, a session moderated by Ms. Nayyab Ali, Gender Advisor PJN, and Syed Raza Ali CEO PJN. After extensive deliberations by the representatives from marginalized communities, key experts from diverse backgrounds Moon Ali, Abia Akram, Mary James Gill, Jayaa Jaggi and Syed Raza Ali prepared recommendations and presented their plans to duty bearers including the Ministry of Human Rights, Information Commission, and Information and Broadcasting. They highlighted the need to address the digital divide and steps for safe digital space for marginalized communities.

The event helped in building the understanding of marginalized communities for effectively utilizing their right to access information, especially in online space and also provided consultative opportunities to the representatives of minorities, persons with disabilities, youth, and the transgender community to develop and present action plans to policymakers to address barriers to access to information for empowerment, justice, and their equal participation in the

socio-political fabric of a country.

As custodians of access to information and fundamental rights, the Information Commissioners Farah Hamid Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Information Commissioner, Dr. Jawaid Ali Shah, Chief Information Commissioner, and Shaukat Ali, Punjab Provincial Information Commissioner, as well as Chairpersons, Peace & Justice Network Nasruminalah Mian, provided their inputs to the policy recommendations during the session 'Information Access Enablers - Public Institutions custodian of ensuring access to information' moderated by Chaudhry Shafique, Executive Director Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights. These policy recommendations will be further shared with the Pakistan Information Commission.

The caretaker minister for Human Rights, Khalil George concluded the proceedings with a resolve to protect fundamental rights of marginalized groups.

The 74th UN General Assembly proclaimed 28 September as the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI). UNESCO as the custodian agency strives for progress on SDG indicator 16.10.2: to support member states to adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information.



Court superior or Admin, CJ PHC observed

— PHC orders DC Peshawar to appear today

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan ordered Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar to appear before court today (Tuesday) for arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president Irfan Saleem after bail in Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) on Monday. The court had stopped arrest of PTI Peshawar president Irfan Saleem till

10th October, Chief Justice observed.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed and counsel for petitioner Ali Zaman along with Shah Faisal Ottomankhel advocates appeared before court.

The counsel argued that PTI leader Irfan Saleem was arrested by police despite he had obtained bail 27th September from Anti-Terrorism Court in Radio Pakistan burning case and added that petitioner had already obtained bails in all

cases related to 9th & 10th May accidents.

They further added that now Irfan Saleem is transferred to Dir jail and argued that informing court is mandatory for arresting of accused on bail.

In the meantime, Chief Justice PHC observed that judiciary is superior or administration while inquiring from Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Why COC proceeding wouldn't initiate against DC Peshawar? Chief Justice

Muhammad Ibrahim Khan further added that court has issued that clear ordered that no one would be arrested after obtaining bails. He remarked that it is decided that courts would be informed regarding arrest of accused on bail.

Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan issued show-case notice to DC Peshawar to appear before court in person today (Tuesday).

‘Providing education facilities govts duty’

PESHAWAR (INP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that provision of best education facilities to its people was the primary duty of the government.

He stated this while addressing an event held in the Jinnah College for Women in Peshawar on Monday.

Haji Ghulam Ali stressed on the students to work hard with honesty to fulfill their dreams as it is the only key to success in life.

The Governor encouraged the students to believe in themselves and never give up on their ambitions.

2 notorious target killers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): In a coordinated and strategic action, the Shah Qabool police in supervision of SP City, Tayyeb Jan on Monday arrested two notorious target killers from the jurisdiction of Shah Qabool police station.

SP City, Tayyeb Jan told media persons that the target killers identified as Asad Ullah and Sameer were present in Dabgari Garden area in armed position with a plan to kill the X-ray machine engineer, Murtaza Ali Bangash.

Tayyeb said the target killer Asadullah belonged to the Ghalgo area of Orakzai district while Sameer belonged to the Ali Masjid area of Khyber district.

He said in an intine intelligence-based operation, both the target killers were arrested before they could achieve their target. During initial interrogation, he said both have confessed planning to kill engineer Murtaza Ali Bangash for sectarian motives.

SP City said the target killers earlier in the month of February had shot and injured Murtaza Ali Bangash in the vicinity of Chamkani police station and as case had been registered against them at the police station.

During the action, he said an unregistered Honda motorcycle, two pistols and scores of cartridges were recovered from the target killers.

He further said that a case has been registered against the target killers and hoped that further revelations were expected from the accused during investigation.

Expo-2023 set to open in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperative Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is gearing up to host a two-day International Livestock, Agriculture, and Fisheries Expo on October 4th and 5th, 2023.

This marks a significant milestone as it's the first-ever international agriculture, livestock, and fisheries expo to grace the region, said officials on Monday. The Paramount Club, located on the Northern Bypass in Peshawar, will be the vibrant hub for this event.

This exposition is poised to meet the long-standing demand of manufacturers for a professionally managed B2B and B2C exhibition, facilitating interactions and transactions between domestic and international attendees and leading global agricultural and livestock technology companies.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan via video link attending a meeting of National Task Force on Polio Eradication held under chair of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar.

‘Drive against adulteration in food, milk planned’

PESHAWAR (APP): The Food Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has planned a comprehensive drive against adulteration in edible commodities especially in milk.

Zariful Maani, Secretary Food said that a comprehensive drive was planned utilizing geo-tagging to ensure the quality of milk and other food items.

After a series of consultative meetings involving stakeholders and officials, Zarif-ul-Maani, the Secretary of Food, has issued directives to priori-

tize food especially milk.

The Secretary, along with the Director General and all officers, will actively engage in the field to ensure transparent quality checks.

Altaf Hussain, Director of Operations, along with mobile lab testing experts, provided a briefing to the Secretary and conducted real-time tests on milk and water, covering fresh milk (chemical and composition checks) and processed milk (composition check), as well as water tests. An overall

briefing on the mobile test laboratory was also conducted.

The Secretary Food gave on-the-spot instructions to the mobile test laboratory, including displaying a standard chart showcasing the composition of milk, water, and other food items for public awareness, conducting daily visits to markets, and making efforts to halt adulteration while taking strict actions against violators.

The Secretary emphasized the importance of not discriminating and main-

taining a polite and professional demeanor during field activities to avoid discouraging businesses.

Additionally, he proposed introducing a “ranking” system where businessmen will be ranked based on quality, and those with a good image will be publicized to encourage clean business practices.

He sternly warned against any unwarranted victimization of vendors or businesses, stressing that prompt and strict actions will be taken against officials involved.

Secretary conducts visit to assess polio, dengue campaigns in City

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Aslam Wazir on Monday conducted surprise visit to various areas of Peshawar to inspect the ongoing efforts in combating polio and dengue within the province.

Accompanied by the District Health Officer of Peshawar and Dengue Focal Person Dr Ikram Ullah Khan, Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir

visited medical centres established within Union Council Khalisa 1 and Khalisa 2 of Peshawar.

During the visit, Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir interacted with the polio vaccination teams and assessed the arrangements in place to combat the looming threat of dengue.

In addition to these inspections, Secretary Health and a team of epidemiologists engaged with the local community to amplify awareness about

the critical importance of preventing the spread of dengue, with a special emphasis on mosquito control measures.

This outreach initiative involved evaluating tire shops and standing water in various areas, with Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir personally educating residents about how stagnant water can become breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Underlining the govern-

ment's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio from the region, Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir officially launched the polio vaccination campaign by personally administering polio drops to a child.

The polio vaccination campaign commenced on October 2, with coordinated efforts spanning five divisions, including Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand, and Hazara.

Advocate Marina Asif appointed Legal Advisor of EK consultants

PESHAWAR (APP): The Senior Advocate of Peshawar High Court Marina Asif has been appointed Legal Advisor of EK Consultants, a trusted organization in the field of international immigration that had provided thousands of Pakistani women and men with higher education and excellent employment opportunities in the UK and other European, said a notification issued here on Monday.

Advocate Marina Asif was a well-known advocate who had been serving as a Senior Advocate in Peshawar High Court for

the past 10 years and defended hundreds of women's rights cases and provided free legal support to the victim females.

She was also an excellent social worker who was actively fighting for the rights of the oppressed women of the society.

Marina Asif Advocate had completed her LLB degree from University of Peshawar with distinction.

Talking to media here She expressed her resolve to keep advocating the interests of the oppressed segment of the society. She expressed gratitude



to the head of EK Consultants Pvt. Ltd. Asif Khan Marjan for endorsing trust in her abilities and appointing her as the legal advisor of his organization.

China cultural center launches online activities on Mid-autumn festival

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: China Cultural Center in Pakistan launched a series of online activities to celebrate the 2023 Mid-Autumn Festival: ‘A Moon Moment to Remember’ in Pakistan and for people around the world. The “My Mid-Autumn Festival in China” video series and other colorful events are part of this year's Mid-Autumn

Festival celebration in Pakistan, which is being organized by the China Cultural Center in Pakistan.

Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival or the Mooncake Festival, falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, when the moon is at its fullest. The festival this year begins on Sept 29 and will continue till

October combined with the Chinese National Day's Celebrations on October 1st.

In Chinese culture, the Mid-Autumn festival celebration always symbolizes reunion. Having great feast in round-shape tables and admiring the full moon are the hallmark traditions of this festival because a round shape symbolizes completeness and reunion. Activities such as theme

videos, performances, and other content showcasing Chinese Nation's celebration for this year's Mid-Autumn Festival will be displayed and published on Cultural Counsellor and Director China Cultural Centre in Pakistan H.E. Zhang Heping's twitter, Cultural Center's Official WeChat Channel, as well as Official Facebook Page of China Cultural Centre in Pakistan.

Social media corruption allegation against Governor, Mayor unfounded

PESHAWAR (APP): Personal Assistant (PA) to the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maaz Fida on Monday while terming the corruption allegation on social media against the Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali as baseless, said that opponents, despite utilizing all their channels would fail to prove corruption of even a penny against both the personalities.

Responding to some social media allegations,

the PA to Governor said the Governor and Mayor Peshawar have offered unmatched services for their people and news circulated against them on social media were totally unfounded.

He said the Governor and Mayor Peshawar deserved appreciation for their selfless job and people-friendly attitude.

The opponents were attempting to malign the position of the Governor and Mayor however, they answered the propaganda

with their tireless services and positive behavior.

The Governor, he said, remains available for the people every time at his office and anyone who has some doubt could meet him at his office without any hesitation.

Personal Assistant (PA) to the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maaz Fida said scores of uplift works were going on as street lights were being installed, needy women were being given sewing machines, faulty electricity trans-

formers were being replaced, promotion of sports activities and encouragement of youth through cash prizes and sport kits were underway in the province. The Governor has pledged to do his best for the betterment of the province and its people.

The Governor and Mayor Peshawar spent most of their time in resolving the issues of the people, for which both deserved appreciation, the PA added.

ICS teaching staff honor outgoing president



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) Teaching Staff Association honored outgoing president Dr. Inayat Rahman with a shield in recognition of his services, on Monday.

A farewell ceremony for the faculty of the Islamia

Collegiate School was held. On this occasion, Dr. Gul Majid Khan, Vice-Chancellor of Islamia College Peshawar, was the chief guest. School Principal Sikander Khan and President Kafeel Ahmad Khalil presented Dr. Inayat Rahman with a token of appreciation and

celebrated his services.

Lastly, Chief guest Dr. Gul Majid Khan presented a shield on behalf of all the faculty members. Dr. Inayat Rahman has served as the President of the Cabinet continuously, and he is also the Vice President of the joint Action Council of Islamia College Peshawar.

Authorities directed to speed up system

PESHAWAR (APP): The caretaker minister was given details about the departmental services of the offices of Chief Engineer North, Chief Engineer South, Chief Engineer Newly Merged Districts and Director Small Dams.

The provincial minister said that the irrigation department has a key role in the development and stability of the province, therefore all the officials of the department should realize their duties and they should play an active role for the development of this province by using their technical skills.

In the meeting, the caretaker minister was informed about the ongoing major projects related to irrigation in the province, while he was briefed about the efforts of the department to protect the system of canals and other sources of irrigation and precautionary measures regarding floods protection.

Similarly, they provided details regarding the progress on major irrigation projects across the province.

On this occasion, the caretaker minister said that he will make every possible effort to further improve the irrigation system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that Allah Almighty has given immense natural resources to our province in the form of water. These resources are being used for irrigation and cultivation of agricultural land through the canal system and other sources, but the department should intensify its efforts to make this system more efficient and beneficial.

He said that he will encourage the officers of the department for their best performance and they will be provided with a better environment to perform their duties without any interference so that they can perform their responsibilities in an efficient manner.

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World Habitat Day observed



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: United Nation (UN) World Habitat Day observed globally. The 2023 has been a particularly challenging year for urban economies. The crisis multiplied by climate change with pandemics worsening the economic situation of our economic

hubs in the cities.

The contribution of the cities to the national economy. The future of many countries will be determined by the productivity of its urban areas. Cities are the engines creating the values that boost economic recovery.

This was claimed by Haider Raza Director

North/NBS WWF-Pakistan, Muhammad Niazi Director Peshawar zoo KAP wildlife department, Dr. Habib Jan Deputy Director Environment EPA, Javed Khan Deputy Director PDA, Dr. Adil Zareef Convenor Sarhad conservation Network and Muhammad Waseem head Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.



In brief

Four of a family killed in mishap

CHILAS (PPI): Four members of a family lost their lives as their jeep met an accident in Chilas on Monday. Four people also sustained critical injuries in the tragic accident. According to the Assistant Commissioner, the horrible accident took place near Raikot area of Chilas and four people were killed on the spot. The rescue officials said that all four injured were women from the same family. One injured was shifted to the Jaglot while three injured women were shifted to the Chilas hospital. The ill-fated family was moving to the plain areas as the winter season was approaching, said the local administration.

Mother, daughter killed in accident F.P. Report

MINGORA: Two including mother and daughter were killed after hit by a passenger coach in Cheno Baba area of tehsil Kabal, district Swat on Monday. Police said that a Karachi bound passenger coach ran over mother and daughter while crossing road. As a result of accident, woman and her five-year-old daughter were killed on the spot. The bodies were shifted to Kabal hospital for post-mortem. The police arrested the coach driver and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

2 youth killed, two injured

WAZIRABAD (INP): Two youth were killed and two others injured in collision between two over speeding motorcycles in Alipur Chattha on Monday. According to details, two motorcycles collided near Lower Chenab canal due to over speeding. As a result of collision, Muhammad Haseeb 13, and Muhammad Musa 14, were killed on the spot while two others sustained serious injuries. The bodies and injured were moved to hospital where the wounded youth were referred to Gujranwala hospital due to critical condition. Muhammad Musa was the only brother of four sisters. The police registered a case into the incident and started an investigation.

Gangster killed in encounter

PANO AQIL (INP): An inter-provincial gangster was killed in exchange of fire with police in Jamu Bhatto Bagh, Pano Aqil on Monday. SSP Sukkur Irfan Ali Samu said that during a raid, five robbers of Chottu Mazari gang traded fire with police. In fire exchange one robber identified as Sanwal alias Sawan Sakhani, involved in martyrdom of 11 police personnel in Sindh and Punjab was killed while his four accomplices managed to escape. Arms were recovered from possession of the killed robber wanted by police in various cases of Highway robberies, murders, attempt murder and attacking public properties.

Fire engulfs grid station

JARANWALA (INP): Several feeders and transformers worth millions of rupees have gutted in a fire that engulfed the NDC Jaranwala grid station. As the grid station has caught fire, the supply of electricity to all the feeders has suspended depriving the entire FESCO region of the availability of power. Everything in the grid station was reduced to ashes including a 40-MVA transformer. The rampant fire caused a loss of millions of rupees to the national kitty. The worth of the burnt transformer was around Rs80 million.

Mother seeks help for release of his jailed son in Oman

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A 60-year old mother of a jailed Pakistani in Oman has appealed to philanthropists to help her release her jailed son. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club here on Monday, the mother of Imran, 40, a resident of Shingrai Timergara, said that his son had been



imprisoned for life in a murder case in Muscat, Oman for the last 14 years.

She said the victim's family had agreed to forgive him on payment of Rs 1.5 million as 'diya' (blood money). She said that she had nothing with her to pay the compensation amount to the victim's family. She said that her old husband was suffering from a cardiac disease and she found it difficult to run her house.

She said that her son could be released if she paid the blood money to the victim's family. She asked the well-to-do and philanthropists to help her release the imprisoned Pakistani from an Omani jail.

Aman jirga formed: Prominent businessman Haji Ameer Naushad was nominated as patron-in-chief, Muqarab Khan as president, advocate Gul Muhammad as

Amn Jirga was representing people of the 28 villages and it would work collectively for resolution of issues related to public health, education and environment and property disputes. The elders said the jirga opposed none in the area and it would take others into confidence.

Youth killed: A youth identified as Fawad, a resident of Maidan was killed while his colleague Shahab was injured when a motorcycle and a car collided on the Chakdara bypass road head on Monday, residents said. They said both the youth were taken to the THQ hospital Chakdara where Fawad succumbed to injuries. The Chakdara police registered a case and started further investigations.

Meanwhile a motorcyclist was deprived of his vehicle at Timergara here on Monday. The victim Inamul Haq, a resident of Makhai village told local police that he had parked his motorcycle near the Timergara Tableeghi Markaz. He said that his motorcycle was missing when he returned from a nearby bank. He said that he had bought the vehicle from a showroom at Rs 157,000 and he wanted police to recover his stolen motorcycle soon. The police registered a case and started a search for the stolen vehicle.

ANP commits joint effort to develop Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: A delegation of Awami National Party (ANP) held a press conference chaired by general secretary Yasin Wazir at press club Wana and said that the party's general body meeting about the current situation was held. A press release is being issued at the event.

On this occasion, Tehsil Wana President Abid Wazir, Nimat wazir Birmal, Taj Muhammad wazir, Noor Zaman Wazir and Humayun said that the present difficult situation, lawlessness,

and peace were discussed. It was decided in the meeting that after the merger of FATA in 2018, the status of FATA has ended and now we have become a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Now, black law (FCR) does not apply to us.

Therefore, all the district offices of South Waziristan Lower should be transferred to the respective district of Lower Waziristan and now the constitution of Pakistan should be fully implemented in the district of Lower Waziristan and prevention of all illegal, unconstitutional and inhuman actions is the responsibility of the provincial government and district administration.

In South Waziristan Wana, we do not accept any illegal, unethical, inhumane actions and coercive laws. In the meeting, it was decided that, if God willing, in the coming days, all the political parties of lower Waziristan would hold a meeting with lawyers, public and private, according to the schedule; and all would struggle together to have the law implemented in letter and spirit.

Settlement of boundary dispute demanded

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The Koki Khel tribe urged provincial government to resolve boundary dispute among Regi Model Town and the tribe with mutual consultation and condemned the town operation and claimed that the scheme had been established on the private property of the tribe.

Addressing on the occasion of grand jirga in front of police station-2 Regi town, tribal elder Malik Naseer Ahmad Koki Khel, Abdul Manan, Haji

Barakat, Tehsil Chairman Said Nawab, Malik Salahuddin, head of Tanzeem-e-Nojawan, Jamrud Abdul Jalil and others criticized the concerned officials for carrying out joint operation of security agencies last day in their locality and detention of their co-tribesmen in it. They added that after consultation they would move to court against the operation, launched in the area.

We have official and legal documents of ownership of the Regi land but the officials have forcibly set up

township that is injustice to them, they opined. The speakers threatened that if such operation was initiated again, they would come to the roads for protest.

Police station-2, Regi town should be handed over to Khyber police because it had been unlawfully founded on the Koki Khel property in Regi, Peshawar, they remarked. They demanded the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to address the issue and decide the matter of limitation with approval of the parties.

Two tankers filled with Iranian diesel seized

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Customs has foiled a bid to smuggle Iranian diesel, worth Rs40.4 million in Gwadar, Balochistan on Monday. Customs Intelligence during an action in Gwadar, seized two oil tankers filled with 80,000 Iranian diesel worth Rs40.4 million.

DG Customs Faiz Ahmed said the two tankers filled with Iranian diesel were being smuggled to parts of Balochistan when the action

was taken. Receipts of a private fuel station were also confiscated from the seized oil tankers, which proved 'fake' upon investigation, he added.

Earlier, Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar directed the customs authorities and law enforcement agencies to strictly curb the smuggling of sugar, petroleum products, urea, agricultural products and other items. The caretaker premier issued the

directives while chairing a high-level meeting regarding smuggling control in border areas.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Trade Gohar Ejaz, Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Minister for Petroleum Muhammad Ali, Advisor to the PM Ahmed Cheema, federal secretaries, Federal Board of Revenue chairman and high level officers of law enforcement agencies attended the meeting.

Construction on Girls cadet college continued

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Work on the under-construction Girls Cadet College (GCC) is progressing rapidly. Despite the difficulties and other problems faced by the construction firms, the construction project was successfully laid during the previous provincial government.

But due to the non-supply of funds, the project could not be completed within the stipulated period, however, the companies that took the construction contract, Zain-ul-Abedin and Sons and Tahir Siddique Construction, continued the work despite the financial difficulties and showed their professional dedication and com-

pleted the structure and building work showing sincerity.

Which is admirable and admirable. The government should solve the problems and problems of the construction companies engaged in the construction work, who have made the project four moons with their efforts day and night.



HYDERABAD: A health worker administering anti-polio vaccine to a child during Polio Free Pakistan campaign.

ANP worker convention held F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Awami National Party (ANP) is only representative political forum struggling for uplift of Pakhtuns and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to compete with the challenges of global demands. This was claimed by ANP provincial general secretary Sadar Hussain Babak while addressing workers convention at Takhtbhai. He claimed that ANP had spread chain of developmental projects across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during their government.

Moreover, ANP Central leader Farooq Khan, district president Imran Mandori, PK-61 candidate Jamal Nasir Khan, tehsil president Haji Sajjad Khan, Asif Pakhtoon and Sajjad Hoti addressed the workers. They claimed that ANP will secure maximum seat in upcoming general election because during last decade Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was used as a launching pad for politics of one man.

Two kids burnt to death

KHAIRPUR (INP): Two children were burnt to death when a house in Mir Muhammad Jagirani village near Khewari, Khairpur caught fire on Monday. The deceased kids were identified as five-year-old Masoom Hussain Gull and two-year-old girl Shehmeeran.

On the other hand, Kashmir police, in three separate operations, arrested three alleged offenders, including Raheem Dashti, SSP Kashmir Mir Rohail Khoso said that Dashti, who had become a symbol of terror in the area on account of his gruesome crimes, was also a mastermind of Sagar Kumar's kidnapping, which was a high-profile case. The other two, he added, were Ijaz Ahmad, a proclaimed offender, and Islah Bangwar, who was wanted in 11 cases of kidnappings for ransom, robberies and other crimes of heinous nature. The SSP went on to say that the police were going ahead with their operation against the dacoits of katcha area. He informed that weapons were also recovered from the possession of those taken into custody while the police were questioning the outlaws.

PML-N suspends GB MP membership

GILGIT (PPI): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Gilgit-Baltistan chapter on Monday issued notification of the suspension of basic party membership of GB Assembly member Engineer Anwar.

According to the notification, Engineer Anwar has also been removed from the office of PML-N Diamer's chief organizer. On the recommendations of the PML-N disciplinary committee, party senior leader Hafeezur Rehman on September 29 suspended the membership of Engineer Anwar on the alleged violation of the party code by him. The party served a show-cause notice on him, asking him to submit a reply within a week. Besides Anwar, the membership of another party leader Jafferullah was also suspended.

3000 Deodar sapling planted at Chiral park

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Chitral Goal 1 National Park having international importance. Pakistan's national animal Kashmir Markhor lives here in large numbers, besides national tree Deodar, national flower Chanbeli and national bird Chakor also live in Chitral Gol National Park. According to Mohammad Altaf Ali Shah Shah, Divisional Forest Officer, Wildlife, Chitral Gol National Park, the core zone of this park covers an area of 7,750 hectares, while the buffer zone, which was added later, covers an area of 50,000 hectares.

According to him, apart from Markhor, Himalayan lynx, snow leopard, wolf, jackal, marmot etc. are the habitat of wildlife in this park. According to him, 2278 Markhors live here. There were some places in this park which looked very bad and there was a danger for the wildlife because the denser the forest, wildlife considers itself safe and they also get food, fodder from these trees, especially in winter when there is heavy snowfall, the oak trees, which are evergreen,

and Markhor survive live by eating their leaves.

Conservator Shaukat Fayaz of Malakand Forest Division was also present to supervise the plantation drive. According to him, the Forest guards of the forest department and the volunteers of Al-Khidmat Foundation are also participating in this campaign. Talking to this scribe, Conservator Forest Shaukat Fayaz said that the tree works with us from born to death, so we should plant as many trees as possible.

In response to a question, he said that there is a lot of burden on the forests of Chitral, especially in winter season, most of the people burn oak forest as fire wood to protect themselves from the cold, due to which the rate of forests is decreasing. The only solution is to save forest is to provide cheap electricity or gas to the people of Chitral so that they can use electric or gas heaters instead for cooking and heating purposes instead of burning firewood.

Divisional Forest Officer Asif Ali Shah, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Chitral Yusuf Farhad, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Drosh Umarir Nawaz,

Divisional Forest Officer Wildlife Chitral Goal National Park Mohammad Altaf Ali Shah, Block Officer Aziz Wali and other officials also participated in the plantation campaign. While supervising the plantation, the Naghiban (caretakers) were also trained to properly plant the saplings.

In this campaign, 3,000 Deodar saplings were planted at the scenic place of Chitral goal National park. It is hoped that when these saplings grow up and become trees, a dense forest will be seen here, at present this was look a bad seen like a desert. The beauty of the forest will increase while the greatest benefit will be to the wildlife because the denser the forest, make happier the wildlife is. On this occasion, the officers of the forest department also urged the nation to actively participate with them in this good cause and every Pakistani must plant at least one tree so that the shortage of forests in the country can be controlled. According to experts, the higher rate of afforestation will have a positive impact on climate change and also protect us from more damages in the form of natural disasters.

WCCI President visits overseas business forum

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Aqeela Sumbal, the President of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, recently embarked on a special journey alongside prominent businessman Fazal Rahman Hashmi and other associates to visit the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

During this occasion, President Aqeela Sumbal warmly welcomed all the incoming guests to the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, extending her gratitude for their presence. Fazal Rahman Hashmi, a well-known figure in the Overseas Business Forum Australia, distributed financial aid to the underprivileged members of the Women Chamber.

On this occasion, Aqeela Sumbal shed light on the goals and objectives of the

Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while also raising awareness about the challenges faced by the chamber. She emphasized the need for exploring new opportunities for businesswomen in Mardan, the second-largest city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Mardan's talented women possess skills in various domestic crafts, including embroidery, sewing, handicrafts, pickles, sauces, jams, beverages, and innovative clothing designs. They are actively engaged in trade and business activities, playing a significant role in the economic development and prosperity of the nation.

Aqeela Sumbal believes that empowering women in the business sector is crucial not only for economic growth but also for addressing the issues of poverty, unemployment, and rising

inflation in Pakistan. She appealed to the present government to provide interest-free loans to female entrepreneurs from low-income backgrounds so they can start their businesses with dignity, support their families, and contribute to the nation's prosperity.

Furthermore, Fazal Rahman Hashmi, from the Overseas Business Forum Australia, expressed his commitment to collaborating and providing valuable assistance to the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Aqeela Sumbal's visit, along with the support of Fazal Rahman Hashmi, signifies a positive step towards enhancing economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Mardan. By empowering women economically, Pakistan can move forward on the path of progress and development.

DC directed to inspect restaurants, edibles

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand Division, Saqib Raza Aslam has directed Deputy Commissioner (DC) Swat for formation of a committee comprising of concerned agencies and traders' associations to evolve a strategy for joint inspection of hygienic conditions of the restaurants in the district.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting of the officers of district administrations and others regarding official fixation of the prices of edibles and inspection of restaurants, hotels and other facilities in bazaars at Saidu Sharif on Monday.

Besides, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Swat,

Dr Qasim Ali Khan, Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO), Babuzai, Nisar Khan, Assistant Food Controller, Mohsin Nisar, officials of food authority, industries department while traders were represented by the President, Swat Traders Federation, Abdul Rahim, Hotel Association, Zahid Khan and officials of other concerned organizations attended the meeting.

During the meeting, different traders' associations raised objections over the ongoing inspection carried by various provincial government organizations in Mingora and its adjoining localities and called for issuance directives to all concerned organizations for conducting inspections

within a legal framework.

In response to the observations of the traders' associations, the Commissioner Malakand, Saqib Raza Aslam said that district administrations and public sector agencies are performing their responsibilities in public welfare and ensuring of hygienic quality and inspect bazaars, restaurants and industrial units and take action against the sale of poor quality edibles.

The Commissioner further assured of taking all possible measures to address the complaints of traders' associations and formation of a committee consisting of all stakeholders on board to evolve strategy for joint inspections of bazaars and restaurants.



Slovakia’s poll winner defies European consensus on Ukraine

BRATISLAVA (Reuters): Slovakia's pro-Russian and anti-liberal election winner Robert Fico was poised to begin coalition talks to form a government likely to join Hungary in opposing the European Union's military aid for Ukraine. The 59-year-old former prime minister's SMER-SSD party scored nearly 23% of parliamentary poll, earning the president's nod to start talks to replace a technocrat government that has been backing Kyiv against Russia's invasion.

"We are not changing that we are prepared to help Ukraine in a humanitarian way," said Fico, whom analysts consider to be inspired by Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban who has frequently clashed with the EU. "We are prepared to help with the reconstruction of the state but you know our opinion on arming Ukraine," he added at a news conference. Fico's campaign call of "Not a single round" for neighbouring Ukraine resonated in the nation of 5.5 million. Slovakia is a member of the NATO military alliance, which is backing Ukraine against Russian President Vladimir Putin, but many of its people are sympathetic to Moscow's line that the West wants to annihilate it. Fico said Slovakia has bigger problems than the Ukraine issue, including energy prices and living costs, but his party would do everything possible to start peace talks. Sloviakia's liberal Progresivne Slovensko (Progressive Slovakia, PS) party came second in vote with almost 18% of votes and wants to stay the course on backing Ukraine. So Fico may well look to the moderate leftist HLAS (Voice) party, which came third with nearly 15% of votes, as a partner along with the nationalist, pro-Russian Slovak National Party.

He said coalition talks could take two weeks. HLAS leader Peter Pellegrini has said ammunition supplies to Ukraine are good for Slovakia's defence industry and the party has backed the EU stance against the invasion. Fico's record of pragmatism may mean he tones down his rhetoric going forward, analysts and diplomats say, especially in a coalition

with HLAS. Slovakia has already donated to Ukraine most of what it could from state reserves - including fighter jets - and Fico has not clarified whether his party would seek to end commercial supplies from the defence industry. A Fico-led government would signal a further shift in central Europe against political liberalism, which would be reinforced if the ruling conservative Law and Justice (PiS) wins an election in Poland later this month.

Hungary's Orban congratulated Fico with a post on X social media platform saying: "Guess who's back!" "Always good to work together with a patriot," he added. Fico, who campaigned strongly against illegal migration in the run-up to election and criticised a caretaker government for not doing more, said re-starting border controls with Hungary would represent a top priority. "One of the first decisions of the government must be an order renewing border controls with Hungary," Fico told a news conference. "It will not be a pretty picture," he said, adding force would be needed on the 655 km (400 miles) border. The migrants, predominantly young men from the Middle East and Afghanistan, mostly come via the so-called Balkan route, entering Hungary from Serbia despite a steel fence that Orban had built after the 2015 refugee crisis that rocked Europe. Slovakia's PS party, which is liberal on green policies, LGBT rights, deeper European integration and human rights, also plans to court HLAS.

"We believe that this is very bad news for Slovakia," PS leader Michal Simecka told a news conference of SMER-SSD's victory. "And it would be even worse news if Robert Fico succeeds in forming a government." Born to a working-class family, Fico graduated with a law degree in 1986 and joined the then ruling Communist party. After the 1989 fall of Communist rule, he worked as a government lawyer, won a seat in parliament under the renamed Communist party, and represented Slovakia at the European Court for Human Rights.

Nigeria increase wages as national strike looms

ABUJA (BBC): Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu has announced a six-month increase to the minimum wage as workers are set to start an indefinite strike. Unions want the monthly wage to be raised to \$255 (£210) to help deal with the sharp rise in the cost of living since Mr Tinubu took office in May.

The president's \$32 increase only brings a monthly minimum salary to \$70. He also pledged to speed up the rollout of cheap gas-powered buses to help with the recent tripling of fuel prices. This was prompted by Mr Tinubu's removal of a fuel subsidy that had kept the price of petrol low for decades in Africa's largest economy. In June, the country also abandoned its currency peg allowing it to trade freely, leading to one of the

biggest falls in the naira's history. This has made life difficult for struggling Nigerians as already high inflation has soared due to an increase in the cost of imports. In a televised national address to mark the country's 63rd year of independence from the UK, the president outlined measures he said would cushion people from the current economic hardship. "There is no joy in seeing the people of this nation shoulder burdens that should have been shed years ago," Mr Tinubu said. "I wish today's difficulties did not exist. But we must endure if we are to reach the good side of our future." The 71-year-old reiterated that while reform would be painful, it would be worth it as the government could now plough the billions saved from the fuel

Jailed Maldives' ex-president transferred to house arrest

MALE, (AP): Jailed former Maldives President Abdulla Yameen was transferred from prison to house arrest, fulfilling the campaign promise of his party candidate who won the presidential election runoff. Yameen is serving a prison term for bribery and money laundering during his presidency from 2013 to 2018. His transfer has been ordered by outgoing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at the request of President-Elect Mohamed Muiz.

Muiz will be taking oath on Nov. 17. The elections commission released the formal results of runoff, which showed 54.04% of the vote for Muiz with Solih receiving 45.96%. The first round took place earlier in September with none of the eight candidates securing more than 50%. The election was perceived a virtual referendum on which regional power - China or India - would have the biggest influence on the Indian Ocean archipelago state located strategically along a key East-West shipping route. Muiz, considered pro-China, promised he would remove Indian troops from the Maldives and balance the country's trade relations, which he said were heavily in India's favor. India, which is hosting many Maldivians, considers the country to be located in its area of influence while China had included the Maldives as a part of its Belt and Road initiative when Yameen was president. The project is meant to built railroads, ports and highways to expand trade - and China's influence - across Asia, Africa and Europe. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Muiz on his election victory.

"India remains committed to strengthening the time-tested India-Maldives bilateral relationship and enhancing our overall co-operation in the Indian Ocean region," he said on X, formerly known as Twitter. The United States also congratulated Muiz, saying the two countries have a strong relationship based on mutual respect and shared interests.

2 women killed in shooting

HOUSTON (AP): A woman and her daughter-in-law were killed and two men hospitalized with gunshot wounds in a shooting authorities believe stemmed from a romantic dispute, a Houston-area sheriff said. A small child escaped the gunfire unharmed. Deputies were called to a home in northwest Houston and arrived to find multiple gunshot victims, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said at a news conference.

Gonzalez said a 65-year-old woman and her 28-year-old daughter-in-law, who both lived at the home where the shooting occurred, were confirmed dead on the scene. Two men were taken to a hospital, where they were in serious but stable condition, the sheriff said. A 2-year-old was inside the house at the time of the shooting, but a relative carried the toddler to safety, he said. Investigators were still trying to piece together what happened in the dispute, which involved as many as three shooters and seven people total, the sheriff said.

Mourners hail dead Russian mercenary Prigozhin as hero

MOSCOW (Reuters): At memorials to Yevgeny Prigozhin, who was killed in an unexplained plane crash exactly 40 days ago, dozens of mourners hailed the mutinous mercenary chief as a patriotic hero of Russia who had spoken truth to power.

The private Embraer jet on which Prigozhin was travelling to St Petersburg crashed north of Moscow killing all 10 people on board on Aug. 23, including two other top Wagner figures, Prigozhin's four bodyguards and a crew of three. It is still unclear what caused the plane to crash two months to the day since Prigozhin's failed mutiny. The Kremlin said on Aug. 30 that investigators were considering the possibility that the plane was downed on purpose.

At his grave in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg, his mother, Violetta, and his son, Pavel, laid flowers. Supporters waved the black flags of Wagner which sport a skull and the motto "Blood, Honour, Motherland, Courage". In eastern Orthodoxy, it is believed that the soul makes its final journey to either heaven or hell on the 40th day after death.

At memorials in Moscow and other Russian cities dozens of Wagner fighters and ordinary Russians paid their respects, though there was no mass outpouring of grief. Russian state television was silent. "He can be criticized for certain events, but he was a patriot who defended the motherland's interests on different continents," Wagner's recruitment arm said in a statement on Telegram. "He was charismatic and importantly he was close to the fighters and to the people. And that's why he became popular both in Russia and abroad," it said.

Prigozhin's mutiny posed the



biggest challenge to President Vladimir Putin's rule since the former KGB spy rose to power in 1999. Western diplomats say it exposed the strains on Russia of the war in Ukraine. After months of insulting Putin's top brass with a variety of crude expletives and prison slang over their perceived failure to fight the Ukraine war properly, Prigozhin took control of the southern city of Rostov in late June. His fighters shot down a number of Russian aircraft, killing their pilots, and advanced towards Moscow before turning back 200 km (125 miles) from the capital. Putin initially cast Prigozhin as a traitor whose mutiny could have tipped Russia into civil war, though he later did a deal with him to defuse the crisis.

Mourners spoke of respect for Prigozhin. "He was a real authority, a leader," Mikhail, a serviceman in Russia's armed forces who refused to

give his second name, told Reuters. Moscow resident Marta, who also refused to give her surname, said the people believed in Prigozhin but that Wagner had been "decapitated" by the deaths of him and co-founder Dmitry Utkin. "Hope for justice died with him," she said. "People believed in him." Pro-Wagner groups posted a video of Prigozhin flying to Mali where, after a thunder storm, he met a senior commander known by his call sign "Lotus" - Anton Yelizarov - who is now reported to be leading the group. Opponents such as the United States cast Wagner as a brutal crime group which plundered African states and meted out sledgehammer deaths to those who challenged it. Putin was shown meeting one of the most senior former commanders of the Wagner mercenary group and discussing how best to use "volunteer units" in the Ukraine war.

Mali crisis: Fierce fighting erupts after Tuareg rebels kill 80 soldiers

MALI (BBC): Fierce fighting has broken out in northern Mali with Tuareg rebels saying they have taken control of the town of Bamba from the army. It comes after the separatist fighters said they had killed more than 80 soldiers in the centre of the country.

The government confirmed an army base in the Mopti region had been targeted, but gave no details. The upsurge in violence comes as UN peacekeepers, deployed to Mali in 2013, withdraw on the orders of the junta. Raid on the town of Dioura is the most southerly one since Tuareg rebels renewed hostilities in August after the collapse of a 2015 peace deal. This has coincided with growing violence from Islamist militant groups, despite the deployment in December 2021 of Russian Wagner Group mercenaries. The army had

already been targeted in Bamba earlier in September by al-Qaeda-linked jihadists. In a social media post, the military said the clashes in Bamba had begun at 06:00, describing them as "intense". It did not name the fighters involved, only describing them as "terrorists". An alliance of Tuareg groups, including the Co-ordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), said in a statement that it had now taken control of the area around Bamba, a town on the left bank of the River Niger between the cities of Timbuktu and Gao. The Tuareg rebels, who want independence for northern Mali, are opposed to the army taking control of bases vacated by the thousands of departing UN troops. The rebels had once been allied to the Islamist militant groups who took over northern Mali in 2012 - a move

which prompted France and then the UN to intervene to stop them advancing south to the capital, Bamako.

The Tuareg groups went on to sign the Algiers peace agreement in 2015 with the government - but the jihadists persisted with attacks from their desert bases. This continuing insurgency was the main reason Mali's military seized power in 2020, accusing the civilian government of failing to provide security. It pledged to end the militant attacks asking France to withdraw its forces and bringing in Wagner fighters. Yet violence targeting civilians has increased by 38% in Mali this year, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (Acled) in a recent statement. It said one al-Qaeda-linked group was responsible for 33% of attacks but it

EU’s top diplomat urges US to reconsider dropping Ukrainian aid

LONDON (AP): The European Union's foreign policy chief called on US lawmakers to reconsider their decision to omit financial support for Ukraine from a stop-gap budget bill Congress passed to halt a federal government shutdown. The legislation approved to keep the federal government running until Nov. 17 dropped provisions on providing additional aid to Ukraine, a White House priority opposed by a growing number of Republican lawmakers.

Speaking in Kyiv after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said European officials were surprised by the last-minute agreement in Washington and pledged the 27-nation bloc would carry on helping the invaded country defeat

Russia. "I have hope that this will not be a definitive decision and Ukraine will continue having the support of the US", Borrell said. "We are facing an existential threat. Ukrainians are fighting with all their courage and capacities, and if we want them to be successful, then you have to provide them with better arms, and quicker," the Spanish diplomat added. Ukrainian officials stressed that US backing for Ukraine would continue despite the stop-gap legislation.

Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, said America's relationship with Ukraine had not changed and that Ukrainian officials meet regularly with representatives from both the Democratic and Republican parties. "All of Ukraine's key partners are determined to support our

country until its victory in this war," he wrote on Telegram. However, the omission of additional Ukrainian aid from the package has raised concerns in Kyiv, which relies heavily on Western financial aid and military equipment in its fight against Russia's ongoing invasion. A little more than a week ago, lawmakers met in the Capitol with Zelenskyy, who sought to assure them his military was winning the war but stressed that additional aid would be crucial for continuing the fight. Yet recent voting in the House has pointed to increased US isolationism and a growing resistance to providing further aid as the war, now in its 20th month, grinds on. Writing on Telegram, Ukrainian parliament member Oleksiy Goncharenko said that Kyiv needed to adopt new measures to ensure the continued support of both American officials and the general public. Without it, Goncharenko said, Ukrainians have "practically no chance" of defending themselves. He set forward a list of proposals that included permanently posting Ukrainian delegates in Washington.

"We need to speak the language of money with the US: How will the United States benefit from Ukraine's victory? What will the US get? What will American taxpayers get?" Goncharenko wrote. "We need to change strategy. We need to act differently. Let's fix this situation. We cannot lose." Over the weekend, Russian shelling hit 11 regions of Ukraine over 24 hours, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry reported.

Anger and despair as Indonesian families mark year since football disaster

JAKARTA (Agencies): The Indonesian families of those who died in the Kanjuruhan Stadium disaster in Malang a year ago have marked the anniversary of the tragedy along with hundreds of fans and survivors at a candlelit vigil at the stadium amid renewed calls for justice. About 300 people travelled by convoy from the centre of Malang to Kanjuruhan Stadium, with some venturing inside for the first time since last year's disaster when 135 people were killed, including children as young as three years old.

More than 400 people were injured. Rini Hanifa, however, could not bring herself to enter the place where her 20-year-old son, Agus Rian Syah Pratama Putra, had died. "Some of the victim's families, including me, couldn't stand it and some people fainted. I felt as if I couldn't breathe," she told Al Jazeera. The prayer vigil started at 12pm and carried on late into the night. The

sense of injustice was palpable as parts of the stadium - now in the process of being rebuilt to FIFA specifications - were set alight and flames blazed across the pitch. For Hanifa, however, the experience of being at Kanjuruhan was overwhelming. She went home early. "I just stood outside gate 13 and thought about how my child must have felt as he struggled to breathe, and couldn't because of the tear gas," she said.

"We were all just imagining how our children died in there, screaming for help because their lungs were burning." The tragedy occurred when Indonesian police fired tear gas into the stands and onto the pitch after a game between local rivals Arema FC and Persebaya Surabaya. Police thought there had been a pitch invasion by Arema fans, some of whom had climbed down onto the field after their team lost to Persebaya for the first time in 23 years. Persebaya fans

had not been allowed to attend the game because of the intense rivalry between the two sides and fears of violence. According to an official report by Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), police fired some 45 rounds of tear gas inside the stadium leading to the deaths of supporters in the stands and in a crush at the exits as fans desperately tried to escape. Under FIFA, the international soccer federation, rules, the use of tear gas is prohibited inside stadiums. Usman Hamid, the head of Amnesty International's Indonesia office, told Al Jazeera that even now, the Indonesian police appeared not to have reassessed the use of tear gas against civilians. "What is unfortunate is that, since the Kanjuruhan tragedy, cases of tear gas shooting by police officers at civilians have continued to occur, as happened on Rempang Island on September 7," he said, referring to protests last month against a

China-led development project. "We urge the authorities that the use of force and tactics by security forces must always be within the legal framework and in accordance with human rights standards. We also urge the authorities to increase transparency, accountability, and the changes needed to protect civil society from excessive and potentially dangerous use of force, including tear gas." Following the Kanjuruhan tragedy, two civilians, security officer Suko Sutrisno and match organising committee chairman Abdul Haris, were sentenced to one year and 18 months in prison respectively for negligence, including failing to carry out a proper risk assessment of the stadium. Wahyu Setyo Pranoto, the chief of operations of the Malang Regency Police and Bambang Sidik Achmadi, the head of the Prevention Unit of the Malang Regency Police, meanwhile, were sentenced to two and two and a half years in prison respec-

tively on appeal. The two men were originally acquitted.

Hasdarmawan, the commander of the Third Mobile Brigade Company of the East Java Police, was sentenced to one and a half years in prison for his role in the incident. However, many of the families and human rights groups feel justice remains elusive not only because of the comparatively light sentences, but also the failure to prosecute other police officers and match officials further up the chain of command. Daniel Siagian, the head of the Legal Aid Institute in Malang, told Al Jazeera that the Kanjuruhan Stadium tragedy was a "black mark against human rights and football in Indonesia". "This tragedy confirms that the state is ignoring responsibility to resolve this case fairly and with dignity. This incident clearly demonstrated excessive use of force and acts of brutality displayed by the security forces," he said. He added that the

incident showed Indonesia's National Police had yet to fully understand and respect fundamental human rights principles.

Devi Athok, whose daughters, 16-year-old Natasya Debi Ramadhani and 13-year-old Naila Debi Anggraini, died last October, went to the stadium and strung a banner with their faces on it between the goalposts to demand further accountability for their deaths. He also sat in the spot where their bodies were found in the 13th tribune. "I felt like I was sitting with them. I cried because I felt how they must have been tormented by the gas after the police fired it," he said. He added that he briefly lost consciousness after becoming overwhelmed with grief and the stress of visiting the stadium. "I sat in the tribune where they had sat for the last time and I apologised to my two girls," he said. "I told them: 'Please forgive me, Daddy couldn't save you'."

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National campaign against polio

PAKISTAN is all set for its second nationwide polio campaign from October 2, during which almost 43 million children will be administered with Polio vaccine along with Vitamin D to boost their immune systems against deadly diseases. The health authorities have urged parents, teachers, civil society, religious scholars and tribal leaders to play their role in sensitizing the public about grave risks associated with the no-inhalation of vaccine dose which results in death or lifelong disability of young children and infants.

Polio is a highly infectious viral disease that mainly affects children. It has not only killed millions of infants and kids so far but also caused permanent disability in the shape of organ paralyzation, impaired vision, and obstruction in movement, while it caused joint or muscle pain or fatigue in rare mild cases. Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of the two countries along with Afghanistan that failed to control the deadly infection of the Polio virus in its nation despite continuous efforts, massive government and foreign funding over the past few decades. Pakistan launched its first-ever polio eradication program in early 1994 to help end the crippling poliovirus in the country. The nation has achieved tremendous success in reducing the number of polio cases from 20,000 to a few dozen annually, but the deadly virus still persists in certain parts of the country, particularly in KP and tribal regions adjoining the Pak-Afghan border. Pakistan Polio Laboratory at the NIH recorded 19 polio infections in the year 2022 and all patients diagnosed with polio infection were from KP's districts including North Waziristan, South Waziristan and Lakki Marwat. So far polio infections are recurrently occurring in various parts of the country and the nation has a long way to go to achieve the goal of polio-free Pakistan.

Presently, Pakistan's failure to control this epidemic has become a stigma for the entire nation, because the South Asian nation failed to achieve its goal despite massive global support, availability of resources, technical and medical expertise and skilled manpower, largely due to non-cooperation from the public in certain areas. There have been multiple conspiracy theories and self-coined religious biases linked to the anti-polio endeavours of the government which prompted opposition and refusal of parents to administer polio vaccines to their kids, while the fake polio vaccine campaign by the CIA to confirm Osama Bin Laden's presence in Kohistan Havelly Abbottabad further caused doubts among the masses. Presently, the Pakistani government, and its global partners including UNICEF, the Rotary Club, the Bill & Melinda Gate Foundation, and other charitable organizations are vigorously pursuing this agenda and hopeful to achieve their target through concerted efforts, public awareness, and imposition of regressive anti-polio measures across the nation.

Meanwhile, the continuous failure to achieve the goal of polio-free Pakistan is causing great embarrassment for the government at the international level as backward African nations had achieved this target many years back, while Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan are still embattled with poliovirus in their countries. The government has been using multiple measures to motivate parents to immunize their kids including the use of religious clerics, tribal notables, and awareness campaigns in the media but those efforts could not produce the required results. The deadly viral epidemic still exists in the country and continuously swallows precious lives and causes lifelong disabilities in children.

The government of Pakistan and Health authorities have been considering multiple administrative and legal measures against the parents refusing polio immunization to their kids while the Sindh government has recently tabled a legislation to imprison parents for up to one month if they fail to get their kids immunized against polio and eight other infectious diseases. Although such actions are awkward and rare, the people who endanger the lives of their children and cause serious health risks for the common public in contradiction to government policies are surely prosecutable due to their failure to fulfilment of their national obligations. In fact, the Immunization of children is a national and parental duty and every citizen must play his role in the accomplishment of this collective task, so Pakistan can proudly join the club of polio-free nations as early as possible.

Armenia's price for global tussle

THOUSANDS of homeless people streamed into Armenia from the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, controlled by its emboldened adversary, Azerbaijan, while locals came to streets holding arms, sticks and placards in their hands demanding resignation from the Armenian Prime Minister for his poor governance, failed policies and wickedness.

The Armenian government currently finds itself in hot water facing multiple challenges after being suddenly thrust into one of the worst political crises since its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Developments unfolded after Azerbaijan waged a military campaign in Nagorno-Karabakh, and rebel forces joined hands with Azri troops which prompted a mass exodus of the pro-Armenia population from a semi-autonomous region that multiplied the problems for Yerevan.

Historically, the Russian Federation had been staunch supporter of Armenia during its previous military clash with neighbouring Azerbaijan, which was resolutely backed by Erdogan's Turkey during Armenia-Azerbaijan clash in 2020. Moscow played the role of a peace broker and peace deal guarantor between Yerevan and Bako and over 5000 Russian troops had been deployed for peacekeeping purposes in the area. However, with the outbreak of the Russia Ukraine war, Moscow could not contribute to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, while exchange of allegations entirely scratched the Russia-Armenia ties in the past months. Meanwhile, the United States took advantage of the situation and strengthened its bonds with Armenia. After providing economic and security assistance to Yerevan, Americans easily camped out in Russia's backyard in the garb of military exercise and security cooperation.

The US-Armenia wedding caused great concerns in Moscow, whose troops were performing a peace keeper role in the disputed region along with regulating movement in the famous Nagorno-Karabakh Corridor that was only access to the Armenian controlled region. Interestingly, Armenia Azerbaijan hostility remained ignited throughout past years. Turkey provided massive political and military support to Bako but Russia abandoned its friendship with Armenia and left Yerevan to its western allies. Thus; amid hopes of crucial military support and in wait for the arrival of U.S. special forces through air or any interdiction by the US Navy in the black sea remained a dream for the Armenian government and Yerevan lost its flank. Armenian leaders will certainly mull over the scenarios that led their natio to this day, while the case of Nagorno-Karabakh also has a great lesson for those who always keep desire to learn.

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Negotiators get their turn as Nagorno-Karabakh's demise approaches

PRESIDENT Samvel Shahramanian on Thursday signed a decree to dissolve all state institutions of the self-declared Republic of Artsakh - aka Nagorno-Karabakh - as of Jan. 1, 2024. Against the backdrop of this news, the number of arrivals in Armenia from the region reached 65,000, which is more than half of the population. Their departure followed a short military flare-up that took place two weeks ago, when Armenian forces intensified their placement of land mines in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally recognized as being part of Azerbaijan.

Other complicated international transactions took place in the meantime. The US authorities agreed to the release of 7.5 billion (\$7.9 billion) of Iran's blocked assets. In exchange for this gesture, Iran issued a statement saying that, "if Armenia is attacked, we will become part of the conflict." It seems that something is brewing between Iran and Armenia at America's behest. This was preceded by a joint military exercise between the US and Armenia. Washington is probably planning to use Armenia as a tool to put additional pressure on Russia in the Ukrainian war.

Whether it is unrelated or not, Armenian militants had intensified their military activities in the border area between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan proper. The Azeri authorities warned several times that such activities would not be allowed in a territory that is part of Azerbaijan. Russian President Vladimir Putin may have sensed the US move and issued a message saying that "Karabakh is an Azerbaijani territory."

Hopefully, the ultimate aim of the US will not be to push Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh into a multilateral dispute. Foreseeing such an eventuality, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week proposed convening a quadrilateral meeting that would include himself, Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. When the Azerbaijani forces launched a successful anti-terrorist action two weeks ago, the military clashes took only one day. The next day, Karabakh Armenians held a meeting early in the morning and signaled that they agreed to the cessation of hostilities. They also agreed to be integrated into

Demonstrators have also attacked the Russian Embassy in Yerevan. Pashinyan said he had received threats both from inside and outside the country. A former politician from Nagorno-Karabakh, Artak Beglaryan, wrote on social media: "Azerbaijan army blocked our defense in less than one day. A number of the strategically important positions fell in the hands of the Azerbaijani army. Most important was that the Armenians lost control of the key positions on the roads to Stepanakert. Therefore, trying to resist would have caused more casualties. What is important now is for the Armenian fighters is to draw lessons from what happened and secure the lives of the Karabakh Armenians."

Azerbaijan. The negotiations will probably start soon. In fact, as they are Azerbaijani citizens, there will be no problem integrating them into the Azerbaijani population. They will benefit from the advantages of a prosperous Azerbaijan.

Demonstrators gathered in front of the government office in the Armenian capital Yerevan shouted slogans accusing the government of not being able to defend the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and called for Pashinyan's resignation. Demonstrators have also attacked the Russian Embassy in Yerevan. Pashinyan said he had received threats both from inside and outside the country. A former politician from Nagorno-Karabakh,

Artak Beglaryan, wrote on social media: "Azerbaijan army blocked our defense in less than one day. A number of the strategically important positions fell in the hands of the Azerbaijani army. Most important was that the Armenians lost control of the key positions on the roads to Stepanakert. Therefore, trying to resist would have caused more

casualties. What is important now is for the Armenian fighters is to draw lessons from what happened and secure the lives of the Karabakh Armenians."

During the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020, the Azerbaijani army drew a circle around the seven provinces it liberated. In April this year, the Azerbaijani army took under its control the Lachin Corridor that used to link Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh. It was evident that weapons and ammunition were smuggled into the region under the noses of the Russian peacekeeping forces. Independent observers believe that, when Azerbaijan's recent anti-terror operation started, Armenian militiamen

had stocks of food and ammunition that would only last for 10 days. In other words, the resistance of the Karabakh Armenians was always going to collapse sooner rather than later. After the military clashes came to an end, the Karabakh Armenians proposed a ceasefire agreement composed of four articles. Firstly, all Armenian soldiers who stayed in the region after the 2020 war would be withdrawn. No Armenian soldier would be left in the region under the Russian peacekeeping force. Secondly, all weapons in the hands of the Nagorno-Karabakh administration would be collected and the military forces disbanded. Thirdly, all heavy weapons would be collected, taken out of the region and destroyed. And, finally, negotiations between the Nagorno-Karabakh administration and the Azerbaijani government would begin on Sept. 21 and the integration of the Karabakh people into Azerbaijan would be initiated. There were about 130,000 Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh at the time. The Azerbaijani authorities reportedly plan to give full citizenship status to every Armenian who lived in the region before 1992. Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan admitted the reality and added that the ethnic Armenian population may well continue their existence in Nagorno-Karabakh under the Azerbaijani administration.

The Russian Defense Ministry issued a statement pointing out that a comprehensive ceasefire had been secured in the area under its command and it would be implemented under the surveillance of its peacekeeping force. This may have been part of a Russian plan to dissolve the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The centuries-old hostility between Azerbaijanis and Armenians may not fade away overnight but, with goodwill on both sides, their strained relations may become smoother as time goes by. One thing that is for certain is that it is now the turn of negotiators, not guns.

Arab News

Europe's internal ruptures need urgent repair

Dr. Theodore Karasik

EUROPE'S unity is an important question, especially in the face of today's regional and global challenges. Never before has the continent faced such a myriad of threats and problems. While a wall of weapons will now be built from Finland to the Balkans to halt Russia, how the politics of the continent works in the near future becomes salient.

There is no "United Europe," really, and the situation needs to be repaired by the stakeholders. Across a spectrum of interests, the European continent is facing not only a long-term threat from Russia and its campaign in Ukraine, but also beyond to the political, economic and social pressures that affect each state. Ongoing processes and long-term consequences need to be thought about.

Currently, European unity is strong at the security level, and rightfully so, but the European states must remain united in the face of the ongoing confrontation with Russia. Thanks to NATO, the ability of the continent to pull together the force structure that helps to empower Ukrainian operations against the Russian occupation of its lands is a net positive, for now. The process of arming Ukraine has been lengthy, with much haggling over European contributions to Kyiv, including how quickly and from whom. Türkiye has shown how important it is to the new construct. The negotiations have been frustrating for Kyiv, which sees European unity and the continent generally as its savior. But there are problems within Europe itself that will test the continent's unity on the security front, with energy, climate change and social grievances falling under this mantle. The continent's scholars and policymakers arguing their narratives about what they call "a broken security paradigm" is leading to a major intellectual error in how Europe approaches Russia. Moscow is expanding everywhere right now, including partnering with North Korea. It is as if they are unaware of how history works on the continent, where two world wars have already been fought. The necessity to use a security prism across many domains is key right now.

It is vital to recognize the importance of security's superior place in keeping European states focused on the key issues of today: war with Russia until at least 2024, climate change and energy evolution. These are important for their near-term stability. France and Germany are two European countries that stand out as being subject to internal debates over policy, while pro-Russian states such as Hungary and Serbia face European pressures but continue to challenge the continent's unity. Kosovo is a hot button issue that could erupt. Moreover, to Europe's south, North Africa continues to destabilize, especially in the wake of the devastating earthquake in Morocco and flood disaster in Libya. Then there is the island of Britain, no longer part of the EU, which has risen to be a major driver in keeping its European neighbors on the same page regarding helping Kyiv. Brexit-affected Russian calculations regarding Ukraine continue to have consequences and

now a Eurocentric view of what is happening on the battlefield is prominent, ignoring the viewpoints of other major countries, such as the increasingly global Gulf powers. European narratives pollute the media space and create opportunities for hostile actors.

Issues outside Europe can affect its internal political landscape. Canada's honoring of a former German SS official in its parliament last week shocked Europeans. The Canadian parliament is supposed to represent liberal democracy and the German ambassador standing up and applauding an actual member of the SS was not just some embarrassing or exceptional incident, but a sign of political degeneration and perhaps worse to come. The apologies from the speaker, the prime minister and others ring hollow, as they do not in any way actually acknowledge the significance of paying tribute to a member of the Waffen-SS as a war hero in a country that fought on the allied side during the Second World War. This type of stunt is costly for Ukraine's efforts in the European political context and shows how Canada is woven into the European fight to stop Russia. This Canadian event came after Polish-Ukrainian fighting over food security issues between the two countries - a dispute that made Moscow salivate at their divisions. Russia wants European fragmentation at all costs and, in the current milieu, there are ample disputes that Moscow can use to push its agenda in areas outside of Ukraine, such as key countries in Africa.

European exceptionalism during this period of geostrategic change is a double-edged sword: it is beneficial to fill gaps, yet mistaken if suffering from a superiority complex. The EU and other continental organizations are putting forward opportunities for potential positive change. When attitudes of dominance in policy enter the picture because of certain agendas, then useful policy actions become less likely. This factor plays out in negotiations over climate change, economic policy, sanctions actions and new logistical lines for a changing world. The EU needs to conduct necessary land and farm reforms before it can invite Ukraine into the organization. Fighting over this agricultural aspect is a major food security issue, in which endless debate delays necessary European action. There are also divergences on policy on China. Germany and France disagree on their China policies and what to do with Beijing's interests in Europe. China has stakes in more than 20 ports on the continent, showing Europeans that they have not paid attention to Beijing's business prowess relating to logistics requirements.

Europe needs to wake up to its weaknesses. America is facing an election next year and is undergoing stresses and strains that reverberate across the Atlantic. Importantly, Europe has pulled itself together on the security front for the current and future challenges concerning Russia, but it remains divided on what comes next and how each state on the continent maintains their social welfare during the coming economic and climate change challenges.

Israel has no place in US Visa Waiver Program

Osama Abu Irshaid

AT 81, my father still recounts stories about our village, Nuris, and his place of birth, Bisan (Beit She'an), with a heavy heart. As children, my siblings and I would often stand with our father on the western border of Jordan, where our family has lived as refugees for more than 75 years, and look over to our homeland, Palestine. He would point out to us, with tears in his eyes, the location where his family home in Bisan once stood.

Our village, Nuris, was depopulated in 1948. Now, an Israeli settlement called Nurit stands on its ruins. Nuris is just 20 miles (32km) away from that border spot we used to visit. However, the distance always felt much greater. We always felt as if there were oceans and continents between us. Sure, we knew the village was nearby, but we had no way of getting there. This is because Israel does not recognise the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland. Even visiting for short periods of time is complicated and out of reach for many of us. Consequently, for my father, returning to Nuris remains an unfulfilled dream to this day. Last month, I finally managed to visit Nuris. I was the first person in our family to be able to do so for many decades. I sent my father photographs and videos of his ancestral village and old neighbourhood. The images made him very emotional, and talking about them helped us reconnect to this beautiful land our family had called home for generations. My journey to Palestine was not a mere touristist visit; it was an emotional odyssey, a pilgrimage back to the land my family was forced to leave in 1948. As an American citizen, visiting my homeland should theoretically be a straightforward process. After all, US nationals are not required to obtain a visa to enter Israel. Yet it took me many decades to make it to Nuris, because of Israeli policies aimed at preventing Palestinian Americans, and especially

activists like myself, from entering the country. For many years, my advocacy for Palestine had made me persona non grata in Israel, meaning I had no way of entering the country. Many of my Palestinian American friends and colleagues have also suffered the same fate, and some even received permanent bans.

I was finally allowed entry into my indigenous homeland last month, but this was not due to Israel seeing the error of its ways, and deciding to end its discriminatory policies against Palestinian Americans. It was nothing but a temporary stunt to smooth Israel's path into the US Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which gives citizens of a select few countries the right to travel to the US, and stay there for 90 days, without a visa. The fundamental requirement for a country to be admitted into the VWP is reciprocity - a country's citizens can only get visa-free

travel to the US, if their country gives that same right to all American citizens. For decades, Israeli authorities have routinely and arbitrarily denied American citizens of Palestinian descent, and especially those of us residing in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, entry into the country. This contradicts with the VWP's principle of reciprocity and disqualifies Israel from being admitted into this highly coveted programme.

In the past few months, the Israeli authorities started to allow Palestinian Americans like myself into the country in an obvious effort to convince their critics that once admitted into the VWP, Israel would not discriminate against Americans of any ethnicity. For now, they seem to have been successful. In a statement on Wednesday, the US Department of Homeland Security said Israel has been designated for the VWP and that Israeli nationals will be

able to travel to the US without a visa by November 30. It added that Israel "made updates to its entry policies to meet the VWP requirement to extend reciprocal privileges to all US citizens without regard to national origin, religion, or ethnicity".

There is, of course, no reason to believe Israel would hold its promise and allow Palestinian Americans into the country without any added hurdles and obstacles. As the date for Israel's entry into the programme nears, there are still countless Palestinian Americans who are being denied entry into their ancestral lands without a meaningful explanation or legal standing. The only issue with Israel's entry into the VWP programme is not a lack of full reciprocity either. How can a country that systematically abuses human rights - including the rights of American citizens - be admitted into a programme that is designed for American allies who share a commitment to human rights, democracy,

and the rule of law?

Even if Israel was to meet all the technical requirements of entering the programme - which it currently does not - it stands in direct contradiction to the stated human rights policies of the United States. Israel's admission into the VWP would signal to the world that the US is supporting its highly discriminatory border policies and myriad human rights abuses. Furthermore, it would send a clear message to American citizens of Palestinian origin that their lives, safety, and history mean nothing to those ruling their country. Thanks to Israel's ambition to be admitted into VWP, I was finally able to visit my homeland. But not all Palestinians, and not even all Palestinian Americans are as fortunate. Justice and equality are still far from reach for many Palestinians, both in the diaspora and in our homeland. Until Israel adheres to the principles of human rights and equality, including for Palestinian Americans, it should have no place in the Visa Waiver Program.

Abbas and Netanyahu left UN with no hopes of peace anytime soon

Yossi Mekelberg

MANY question the purpose of the annual pilgrimage to the UN General Assembly every autumn, as leaders descend on the landmark building on Manhattan's 1st Ave. to deliver a 15-minute speech which, contrary to the organization's charter, hardly leads to any improvement in the state of international affairs or the human condition.

One of the issues that has occupied much of the UN's attention over the past 75 years has been the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but the organization has had very little success in terms of resolving it. For the better part of the past two decades, it has been Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who speaks on Israel's behalf and President Mahmoud Abbas who represents the Palestinians, two leaders who are long past the zenith of their power and competence.

This year, as in many previous years, Netanyahu's speech was characterized by an arrogance sprinkled with considerable delusional elements, while Abbas came across in his address as desperate and powerless. Each blamed the other for the current impasse between them, with no self-reflection on their own considerable contributions to this sorry state of affairs; although it might be naive to expect either leader to have honed this important human skill. What is staggering on such occasions is that the speakers, and not only Abbas and Netanyahu, act as if the world is completely oblivious to what is happening in their own political backyard. In the case of these two, they preside, loosely speaking, over societies that are enduring a deep sociopolitical crisis which, to a large extent, derives not only from the long history of the conflict between their peoples but also from their own

failed leadership over many years.

And there is another element that characterizes both of these leaders: They are in denial about the indisputable fact that they are in the twilight of their political careers and have little credibility or legitimacy, among their own people or abroad. Furthermore, they completely fail to recognize that they are a major cause of the problems faced by their respective nations and so can hardly be part of the solution. Between the two of them, it was rather obvious that it is the Israeli leader who most cherishes this occasion on the world stage, even if he spoke to a nearly empty chamber. Meanwhile his Palestinian counterpart stood before the world's leaders with little faith that deliverance from his people's predicament of living under occupation, siege and exile would come from this forum.

It is no secret that when it comes to sympathy and empathy, the Palestinians are receiving a great deal from large sections of the global community, but it is doing hardly anything to change the situation. Despite a plea by Abbas to the UN membership to follow the organization's own resolutions - there are many hundreds of them, and international law is utterly logical - he knows that given the current international conditions, the vast majority of UN members who would like to see an end to the Israeli occupation, and with it the daily violations of basic human rights of millions of Palestinians, fall into one of two groups. Either they believe it is no longer possible to bring about a two-state solution, do not think it is worth investing in and are playing a waiting game for radical changes, in both Israel and Palestine, in terms of leadership and approach to resolving their conflict before they are prepared to

actively return to this toxic environment; or they have simply become apathetic and desensitized to the Palestinians' predicament at a time when there are other, more pressing international issues to attend to.

There is hardly disagreement about the ills of the occupation and the fact that consecutive Israeli administrations have done their utmost to destroy the prospect of a two-state solution by entrenching the occupation though the illegal building and expansion of settlements, packing them with hundreds of thousands of Israelis, and establishing an apartheid regime in the West Bank. However, people also know that Abbas has already exceeded by 16 years the term in office he was elected for, and hardly enjoys legitimacy even among his own people. It could be argued that his greatest contribution to the Palestinian cause would have been to announce to the General Assembly that not only was he now resigning, but in the process would be dismantling the Palestinian Authority and handing back responsibility for the security and welfare of the Palestinian people to the international community and the occupying force.

While for Abbas, relations with Israel are naturally the be-all and end-all, Netanyahu has always had the luxury, at least in his own mind, of marginalizing and being dismissive of the issue. Instead, he loves to play-act a charade of being the visionary world leader, discussing a range of issues, from global security to artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, his credibility dwindles as he faces protests wherever he goes and leads a government that is abhorred internationally. In one passage of his speech, he revealed what he is scheming at when it comes to the Palestinians. His

path to settling the conflict with them is to first normalize relations with the rest of the Arab world and as a result, according to him, the Palestinians will "finally embrace a path of genuine peace."

In Netanyahu's mind, this scenario will allow Israel to dictate the conditions of any future peace agreement, which will fall considerably short of creating a fully-fledged independent Palestinian state with a contiguous territory. At best it will be a state the survival of which depends on the mercy and good will of Israel. While Washington and Riyadh remain cautious about the possibility of normalized relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, Netanyahu is overplaying this card as if it were a done deal.

In his precarious political situation in Israel - where protests against the government have been taking place continuously for 38 weeks now, and his far-right partners in the coalition government are not smart enough to understand the strategic value of normalizing relations with Saudi Arabia for the long-term security and well-being of the Jewish state, or too zealous to accept any concessions to the Palestinians to achieve this goal - Netanyahu's attempt to act as statesman before the UN General Assembly was less than convincing. As the speeches by Abbas and Netanyahu only underlined, this is an asymmetric conflict and that is a major factor that is preventing a fair and just resolution, as one side holds most, if not all, of the cards. It is therefore for the international community to correct this imbalance. Until the world's leaders are ready to do so, by embarking on a concerted effort to bring the sides together to negotiate peace in earnest, which after all is why the UN was established in the first place, the prospects for a peaceful resolution will remain as remote as ever.

Fault lines are fast re-emerging in Europe's fragile monetary union

Jeremy Warner

EUROPE is once again heading for trouble - both as an economy, and, from migration to net zero, much else besides. Isn't it always, goes the obvious riposte to this statement. And cannot that also be said about the UK, US and China?

To which the answer is yes; they are all falling victim to the growing realisation that the last two years of rising interest rates are not just some temporary aberration. Rates are going to remain higher for longer, massively increasing the debt servicing costs of already fiscally challenged governments. Interest rates may have peaked, but over the past two weeks, central bankers have made it abundantly clear that they will not be falling significantly for some time. That came as a shock to markets, where cuts to interest rates from early next year onwards had been taken for granted. It's been a rude awakening, with bond yields rising anew.

Only in Europe, it's potentially rather more serious, because it still has the straitjacket of the euro to contend with. That binds together 20 fiscally sovereign countries in what more than two decades after its formation remains an only half formed and therefore fundamentally flawed monetary union. That doesn't mean the single currency is again heading for collapse, as perhaps was the case at the height of the eurozone sovereign debt crisis back in 2009/10. Anglo-Saxon commentators constantly underestimate the degree of political will that exists in Europe to make it work, whatever the costs.

But with much higher interest rates, the fault lines are nevertheless fast re-emerging. And this time around, the European Central Bank will struggle to provide the "whatever it takes" support of limitless bond buying that saved the single currency from ruin when it was last teetering on the brink. Under no-bailout rules designed to protect more solvent eurozone members such as Germany from less creditworthy ones, fiscal deficits are meant to be limited to just 3pc of national income. Stability and Growth Pact rules also require national debt to be reduced to 60pc of GDP over time.

Scarcely anyone has been consistently compliant, and that includes Germany and France, whose various breaches of budget deficit limits have inexplicably gone unpunished and unfixed. The

massive European Central Bank bond buying programme initiated by Mario Draghi in the summer of 2012 to save the euro from oblivion seemed in any case to make the no-bailout clauses of the Maastricht Treaty largely irrelevant, since it amounted to monetisation and therefore mutualisation of government debt mountains.

All the same, the pretence of fiscal discipline persisted - until the pandemic, that is, when the Stability and Growth Pact rules were suspended to allow nation states to spend at will to support lockdown. Plans to reimpose the pact at the end of last year were then derailed by war in Ukraine, and the huge energy price subsidies that governments across Europe put in place to protect citizens from its inflationary consequences. So the deadline was again extended, to the end of this year. Fat chance.

As was always likely to be the case, once the floodgates had been opened, they are now proving very hard to close. In budget plans announced last week, both Italy and France have made it more than clear that they have no intention of making the spending cuts needed to bring deficits into line with the demands of the Maastricht criteria.

In outright defiance, Italy's finance minister, Giancarlo Giorgetti, said last week: "We believe we have done the right things. We don't respect the 3pc limit." Indeed they do not. Determination to proceed with election pledges to cut taxes will see the 2023 deficit surge to 5.3pc of GDP, compared with previous estimates of 4.5pc. For 2024, the deficit improves only marginally to 4.3pc. It's as if Italy's firebrand prime minister, Georgia Meloni, has transmogrified into Liz Truss. To hell with the constraints of fiscal rules; she's going for growth, and appears determined to resist the recessionary forces of imposed fiscal contraction.

Similarly France, which has backed away from the sort of spending cuts needed to get the deficit under control. They are not the only ones. It is estimated that at least a half of eurozone members won't meet the 3pc limit next year. Yields have leapt, and spreads widened, in the case of Italy back to the level that ruled in the wake of America's mini-banking crisis earlier this year. All

of a sudden credit risk is back on the table.

Despite slightly higher growth than much of the rest of Europe, Britain is scarcely immune either. Higher interest rates have sent the Government's debt servicing costs, now running at their highest level since the immediate aftermath of the Second World War both as a share of GDP and government revenue, through the roof. Yet the UK does at least have its own currency to act as a natural adjustment mechanism. Some of the squeeze from "higher for longer" can be absorbed through a lower exchange rate. There is no such relief available in the eurozone, where powerful recessionary forces are closing in on all sides, especially in the industrial heartlands of Germany.

The curiosity here is that unlike Italy and France, Germany has got more than enough fiscal space to counter a shrinking economy with tax cuts and spending increases. As has been well documented, Germany desperately needs to address an increasingly decrepit backbone infrastructure, and yet still it skimps on investment spending. Germany's ruling coalition government shows little or no inclination to break with the political consensus around "black zero", or running balanced budgets. Indeed, as things stand, fiscal policy is set to tighten further straight into the teeth of a contracting economy.

As for higher interest rates, bring them on. That seems to be the almost masochistic attitude of Berlin's high command. Low interest rates are for sissies, Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, seemed to say at a recent rally. Back in the 1970s, we built loads of housing with interest rates at 9.5pc, he boasted. "Money was saved back then. Interest rates are not the problem". Only they sort of are, because although ultra easy monetary policy helped save the euro from destruction more than a decade ago, rising inflation has closed off those options this time around, and now there is only the debt fueled fiscal incontinence of Germany's neighbours to keep the recessionary wolf from the door. It remains to be seen just how tolerant Germans are prepared to be. Judging by the progress Alternative for Germany is making in the polls, not very may well be the answer. In any case, higher-for-longer is once again threatening to reignite Europe's centrifugal forces.

Malawi's populist crackdown on refugees betrays its legacy

Ashley Simango

HISTORICALLY, Malawi is one of Africa's friendliest host nations for refugees fleeing strife in its neighbourhood. It is a proud legacy Malawi has rightly earned since independence in 1966. However, recently, Malawi's reputation for welcoming refugees is unravelling - and that's dangerous.

The Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi is one of one of Africa's largest. Thousands of vulnerable women, children and men have found home inside after having to escape violence in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Outside the camp, the refugees have established relations and businesses in towns, villages and cities. However, under President Lazarus Chakwera, Malawi has ordered all refugees who have settled in out-of-camp communities to herd back to the overcrowded Dzaleka camp. Reports say military force has been used to coerce refugees back into the camp.

The forced relocations will have disastrous consequences on many refugees' lives in terms of providing basic necessities of healthcare, food and protection, the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, has warned Malawi's government. Refugees are dynamic people with business, schooling or social aspirations, which is why they have established small businesses in Malawi's host communities. Force-marching

them into one holding camp destroys the income and livelihood from businesses owned by refugees.

That includes the incomes of the local Malawians they employ. This is particularly cruel at a time when there is a serious global shortage of financial pledges for refugees. As Cyr Modeste Kouame, the UNHCR's representative in Malawi told me when I wrote to him recently: "The relocation means that children will have to leave their schools, and for breadwinners to abandon their employment or small businesses and return to a camp where they will be dependent on humanitarian assistance."

Malawi's order for refugees to abandon their homes in Malawi's cities and villages will squeeze them into a camp that has not expanded in keeping with the growing pressure on its resources. The Dzaleka camp, originally built to host 12,000 inhabitants, presently accommodates nearly 50,000 people. In an era when we have all become accustomed to social distancing because of public health concerns, such a crush of people is not only morally improper but also medically concerning. The alleged manner of relocating refugees - taking some of them to a prison en route to the Dzaleka camp - is condemnable. Globally, refugees consist of groups of people who have often faced imprisonment in countries they have fled. Jailing them - however briefly as

Malawi's authorities allegedly did - is plainly retraumatizing.

Perhaps the most striking threat to refugees' rights is Malawi's recent drive to take back passports from refugees whom it accuses of fraudulently acquiring Malawian passports and IDs. Chillingly, it plans to repatriate back hundreds of refugees whom it accuses of being 'criminals' running from justice in countries like Rwanda. This is illegal. The rights of refugees against being forcibly returned to countries where they could face persecution - are a key cornerstone of the UN 1954 Refugee Convention. Refoulement, as such forced repatriation is known, breaches international law. Malawi will be crossing this Rubicon if it summarily deports refugees back to their countries of persecution without adequate open and transparent judicial oversight. There are too many ghastly examples of refugees being deported to their home countries across Africa and facing dire reception. For example, the high-profile rendition of Hotel Rwanda icon, Paul Rusesabagina, back to Rwanda where he allegedly faced torture and imprisonment - is unconscionable. Another example - very near Malawi - in 2011, involved South African state security agents who blatantly and illegally deported a group of immigrants to Zimbabwe, where they reportedly faced harsh treatment.

Malawi doesn't want to veer into this territory which could bring dire outcomes for deported refugees.

Malawi's newfound hostility to refugees is populist. Chakwera is struggling politically under huge corruption scandals in Malawi, a stressed economy, rising discontent and an inability to fulfil election promises. Malawi's next election is coming up soon in 2025, and he could face defeat. Cracking down on refugees wins him favour with disillusioned domestic audiences who are tempted to look away at his governance shortcomings. Such political populism, wagered on cracking down on refugees, is a growing phenomenon. In nearby countries like South Africa, threats to kick out refugees have won dubious characters power in cities and parliament. Africans themselves are constantly victims of such policies employed by European nations. Across the Indian Ocean, India routinely targets Rohingya refugees who have escaped genocide in Myanmar. Malawi, with its fine historical tradition of hosting thousands fleeing violence, must not join this bandwagon. Refugees' lives in Malawi are not just about refugees - this is also about Malawian citizens who have married and birthed children with asylum seekers and refugees. Taking away refugees from society and forcing them back into an overfilled camp is essentially ripping away new Malawians from Malawians.

Why Kadyrov's health does not matter

Harold Chambers

ON September 15, Andrii Yusov, a spokesman for the Ukrainian military intelligence, told journalists that Ramzan Kadyrov, the governor of Chechnya, was in a coma. This statement sparked a flurry of sensationalised speculation about the Chechen leader's condition. Some suggested he was in a hospital in Moscow, receiving treatment for kidney problems, others that he was suffering from the negative effects of drug addiction, and a minority even declared his death.

It was not the first time that rumours about Kadyrov's health deteriorating have surfaced. Such speculation has been circulating for a few years now. The difference this time was that it attracted much more international attention, perhaps due to the key role the self-described "foot soldier" of President Vladimir Putin has played in the war in Ukraine, especially on the propaganda front. There seem to be hopes in some quarters that in the event of Kadyrov's debilitating illness or death, Chechnya, and by extension Russia, would be destabilised, which would help Ukraine win the war. But such a development is rather unlikely. In fact, the health condition of Chechnya's leader does not matter much. That is because the regime in the Chechen Republic currently maintains a high level of resilience, both internally and in its relationship with Moscow.

Kadyrov's power hinges on two pillars: the lack of political rivals who can challenge his rule and his close ties to Putin. After taking over the reins of power from his father, Akhmat, who was assassinated in 2004, Kadyrov has systematically sought to eliminate anyone who could pose a threat to his position. Critics and rivals have been assassinated or have had to flee abroad, where they live in fear of being targeted. Kadyrov has also secured his post by developing a personal con-

nection with Putin. Commonly labelled as familial, nearly paternal, their relationship is closer than any other the Russian president has had with a regional leader.

In exchange for displaying blind loyalty to Putin, Kadyrov receives significant funds from the federal budget. Indeed, Chechnya is one of the most subsidised regions in Russia: by its leader's own admission, it would not survive a month without funding from Moscow. His illness or death, however, would not stem the flow of these funds, as the Kremlin perceives them as a way to buy stability and peace in the republic, which suffered through two wars in the 1990s.

Kadyrov is also not irreplaceable. While there is indeed a lot of personalisation of power in Chechnya, he alone does not represent the entirety of the regime. He sits atop the regime hierarchy, but he is not solely responsible for its function; there are a number of powerful men who manage various aspects of governance. Chechnya's Speaker of Parliament Magomed Daudov and Deputy Prime Minister Abuzaid Vismuradov handle internal affairs, particularly in relation to repressing the public and maintaining stability. Both men have reputations for extreme violence and have been connected to cases of torture. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the pair have also overseen deployments of Chechen fighters to the battlefield.

Prime Minister Muslim Khuchiev manages conventional governance operations. He is a traditional bureaucrat, having occupied a variety of government positions. Khuchiev has also served as the acting head of Chechnya, standing in for Kadyrov on multiple occasions, including earlier this year, when he took leave. Adam Delimkhanov, Kadyrov's most trusted lieutenant and a member of

the Russian Duma, controls the regime's informal, frequently criminal, operations outside Chechnya. He has been responsible for stamping out opposition to Kadyrov among the Chechen diaspora and has been accused of organising several assassinations. He has also played a prominent public role in Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, deploying into occupied territories with Chechen forces.

If Kadyrov were to be incapacitated or die, these powerful figures would be able to continue his regime's operations, likely with one of them serving as the acting regional head. Kadyrov is also grooming his eldest son, Akhmat, as his successor, although he remains roughly seven years away from meeting the legal age requirement to be a governor. In March, on the eve of his wedding, the younger Kadyrov met Putin in Moscow. This meeting was the clearest indicator of Akhmat's standing and marked the beginning of a months-long flurry of official duties for the eldest Kadyrov son.

The Kremlin is likely to accept Akhmat as Ramzan's successor not just because his father desires it, but because it maintains the current structure of relations. This keeps Chechnya as a political constant, rather than an unpredictable vassal region. Whether Akhmat takes over from his father or there is a transitional figure that rules temporarily, like Daudov or Delimkhanov, the regime in Chechnya is poised to stay intact if Kadyrov is to leave the position of governor early.

In the event of leadership change, stability in the North Caucasian republic is also guaranteed by its massive repressive apparatus, which swiftly roots out any form of opposition when it appears. As of late, Kadyrov's regime has demonstrated an increasingly lower

threshold for deploying force. For example, in September last year, after Moscow announced partial mobilisation, Chechen women went out in Grozny to demonstrate against the decision. The protesters were taken to the Grozny mayor's office by the security services and beaten, while their male relatives were forcibly deployed to the front in Ukraine.

In December, a fight between two security officials in the Chechen city of Urus-Martan was followed by a large-scale security campaign to detain residents who witnessed and recorded the incident on their phones. The authorities in Grozny were reportedly irritated that the locals were entertained by the altercation. The regime's heavy-handedness can be interpreted as a sign of its fundamental weakness, of its lack of popular legitimacy. Nevertheless, it is effective in wiping out protest and maintaining control and its ability to do so would not deteriorate if something were to happen to Kadyrov.

Kadyrov is also taking measures to prevent a new rebellion. He reduced the number of Chechen troops fighting in Ukraine within the first few months of the war and last summer ordered the security services to get better prepared for underground fighting. He, of course, can also rely on military backing from Moscow were there to be internal strife. A debilitating illness or even death in the Chechen leadership would not diminish the regime's capacity to stomp out any dissent or armed resistance. Kadyrov may have a unique relationship with Putin, but he is not irreplaceable. Whether his son becomes his successor or one of his trusted men steps in, the regime would continue to function with strong backing from Moscow and keep Chechen aspirations for freedom and independence at bay.

Aljazeera

Putin is opening up a new front against the West

Ivana Stradner

IN the face of mounting tensions, Vladimir Putin's overarching strategic objective is now clear: to dismantle Nato and expose the alliance's vulnerabilities. With Russia experiencing setbacks in Ukraine, the immediate threat to Nato members like Poland and the Baltic States may be somewhat mitigated. However, it is in the Balkans where Nato's weakest flank lies, presenting an opportune target for Russia's ambitions.

This week, in one of the worst confrontations since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, dozens of heavily armed ethnic Serbs attacked police in northern Kosovo and barricaded themselves in an Orthodox church; an incident leaving one police officer and three of the attackers dead. Kosovo's leaders, understandably, labelled it a terrorist attack. The Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić, denied any involvement, complaining to Russia's Ambassador to Serbia that Kosovo's Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, was carrying out "brutal ethnic cleansing" with support of the West. This escalation is a dream come true for Moscow. Serbia and Russia have been preparing the Serbs for escalations in Kosovo for months, inflaming tensions in the Balkans to distract the West from its war in Ukraine. They have flooded the information

space with propaganda repeating the old claim that Kosovo belongs to Serbia - one propaganda item argued that the UK is preparing a war there. As any student of Balkan history knows, such rhetoric has ignited ethnic violence in the region before.

Russia was quick to capitalise on the incident: a Russian spokesperson declared "additional Western pressure" was bringing "the entire Balkan region to a dangerous brink." Putin knows he does not need to send military forces to the Balkans - he can use hybrid warfare to destabilise the region and reestablish Russia as the only reliable conflict negotiator there. This plan accomplishes three goals: distract the West from Ukraine, strengthen Moscow's regional standing, and give Putin leverage over Western powers if they want to keep conflict in the region from escalating. Serbia also benefits. Vučić has been escalating and then de-escalating in Kosovo by positioning himself as the pillar of stability and using it as a bargaining chip with the West. Vučić's ultimate goal is to retain power and the Kosovo crisis helps him divert attention from his own domestic political issues and to boost support for the upcoming elections.

On Friday the White House took the unprecedented step of warning pub-

licly of a "large Serbian military deployment along the border with Kosovo." As dangerous as this is, Vučić knows he does not need to send in the army. Instead, he can use Putin's playbook and send "little green men" soldiers without insignia to undermine Kosovo and create plausible deniability. Perhaps that is precisely what has already happened. Nato has announced it is beefing up its troop presence in Kosovo - with the UK Ministry of Defense transferring command of an army battalion to Nato to provide assistance - but it must do more, and quickly, to quell the violence and warn off Russia and Serbia. More urgently, it needs to step up its information operations at home and abroad. Another Kosovo crisis could easily spill over into North Macedonia, a Nato member state, and would have major implications for European defence at a time when the US is distracted by its upcoming election. This is a dangerous moment, yet few are talking about it.

Three decades after the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions in the Balkans have never gone away. Despite Nato's overall military superiority, it has a weak hand in the Balkans, and Russia continues to outmanoeuvre it there. It is time that Nato strengthened its presence in the region and put Russia on the defensive.

The Telegraph



SCCI chief commits to traders' problems

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq reaffirmed his commitment toward resolution of business community issues. Formally taking charge of his office on Monday, Fuad Ishaq said selfless service to traders' community is his prime goal and mission.

No stone will remain unturned to work for betterment and resolution of problems that were being faced by the business community, he vowed.

Portraying a bleak picture of the state of the national economy, Fuad Ishaq said a war-battered economy can revive only

by boosting economic and trade activities.

He promised the SCCI will frame policies by establishing a close coordination with trade bodies and associations.

The SCCI chief firmly showed his full commitment to resolve community issues by taking them up with relevant government authorities in an appropriate manner.

Electing Fuad Ishaq as president of SCCI widely hailed by the business community as a large number of business leaders thronged to the chamber house today and felicitated the newly elected president Fuad Ishaq after taking charge of office. The business community expressed full sup-

port and best wishes to Fuad Ishaq and hoped the newly elected president will serve the community in an efficient way.

Fuad Ishaq said SCCI believes in selfless service to the traders, businessmen and industrialists. He added being the third prime chamber of the country, the forum has always played an important role in resolution of business community issues.

I am fully aware about the problems that were being faced by the business community under the prevailing circumstances, Fuad Ishaq said.

He continued to say that the door of the chamber will always remain open for the business community.

Fuad Ishaq said a syner-

gy between the business community and government relevant departments will be established to resolve all issues of the community.

The SCCI chief urged the government to adopt business-friendly policies to put the crippling economy on the path to sustainable growth. He also reiterated that dignity and image of the chamber will be further enhanced by taking pragmatic steps.

The chamber president requested trade bodies and associations to present proposals in written form to the chamber so as to resolve the issues in light of these recommendations through relevant authorities.



LAHORE: Labourers carrying baskets of bananas on their head during auctions as shopkeepers participating in bidding of fruit (Banana) at Fruit Market.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 394 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 394.49 points, showing positive change of 0.85 per cent, closing at 46,627.08 points against 46,232.59 points the previous day.

A total of 202,598,801 shares valuing Rs.7.404 billion were traded during the day as compared to 177,617,061 shares valuing Rs.6.932 billion the previous day.

As many as 330 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 166 of them recorded gains and 144 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 44,891,724 shares at Rs.1.24 per share,

Cnergyico Pk with 17,096,921 shares at Rs.3.13 per share and Oil and Gas Dev. With 17,023,821 shares at Rs.99.36 per share.

Ismail Industries witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.48.75 per share price, closing at Rs.698.75, whereas the runner-up was Pak Hotels with a Rs.19.28 rise in its per share price to Rs.276.32. Al-Abbas Sugar witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.33.84 per share closing at Rs.510.11, followed by Abbott Lab with a Rs.9.49 decline to close at Rs.336.01.

Rupee gains 97 paise against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed the 19th consecutive recovery session as it gained 97 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs286.76 against the previous day's closing

of Rs287.73.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs283.7 and Rs286.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased 46 paise to close at Rs302.90 against the last day's closing of Rs302.44, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise to close at Rs1.91, whereas a decrease of 36 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs349.50 as compared to the last closing of Rs349.86.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 26 paise each to close at Rs78.07 and Rs76.45 respectively.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where fourships namely, Mumbasa Express, MSC Shahar, Dignity and Doha carrying Containers, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Elengy Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Amali and Kana scheduled to load/offload Cement and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on same day.

A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Maersk Nyassa, MSC Shahar, Richmond Park and Al-Deeballeft the port on today morning, while another containers ship, Mumbasa Express is expected to sail on same day afternoon. Cargo throughput of 131,125 tonnes, comprising 100,355 tonnes imports cargo and 30,770 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,157 Containers (347 TEUs Imports and 1,810 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are nine ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a gas carrier Spottail & three more ships, MSC Tokyo, Onyx-I and Lisa carrying Gas oil and Containers are expected to take berths at Oil Terminal and Containers Terminal respectively on Monday, 2nd October, while two more container ships, Maersk Kinloss and MSC Elaine are due to arrive at Port Qasim on 3rd October.

Asian markets mixed after US avoids govt shutdown

HONG KONG (AFP/ APP): Asian markets were mixed Monday after the US Congress passed a last-minute deal at the weekend to avoid a costly government shutdown.

With that distraction out of the way, temporarily at least, investor attention is now likely to turn back to the outlook for US rates, with Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell due to give a speech later Monday and key jobs data out later in the week.

US stocks ended Friday mostly lower as a government shutdown appeared likely after headline Republicans had tanked an earlier plan to keep the lights on, with the Dow and S&P 500 down 0.5 percent and 0.3 percent, respectively, while the Nasdaq managed a small gain.

In Asian trade Monday, Tokyo led the gainers, jumping 1.4 percent after the Bank of Japan's Tankan survey showed increasing optimism among the country's largest manufacturers as business confidence improved for a second-straight quarter in September.

Taipei, Jakarta, Bangkok and Singapore also advanced while Hong Kong, South Korea and India were closed for holidays. Markets in mainland China were closed for a week-long holiday. Sydney, Wellington, Kuala Lumpur and Manila were in the red.

"Financial markets were bracing for a shutdown, so there's an element of relief, but it's only a temporary lifting of one of the clouds hanging over the markets now," Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment officer at BMO Wealth Management, told Bloomberg.

"Interest rates and Fed hawkishness remain the name of the game and the main driver of the markets over the next few weeks." With a US government shutdown averted, eyes will be back on Fed Chair Powell -- who joins Philadelphia Fed President Patrick Harker on Monday for a round-table discussion with workers and small-business owners -- for any hints on rates and with key jobs data later in the week.

"With one of the potholes in Q4 economic growth seemingly filled temporarily, investors initially responded with a sense of relief during Monday's Asian market opening," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

"However, there's a question looming about whether the market will interpret this good news for the economy as bad news for stocks."

With focus shifting back to the "hawkish" Fed, "Friday's jobs report could provide valuable insights into the future direction of US yields and stocks, assuming that interest rates remain a key focus for investors, as the report will significantly influence the Fed's response," said Innes. On Friday, New York Fed President John Williams said rates could be held at their current peak levels for some time. On forex markets, the yen was weakening towards the psychological 150 to the dollar level.

The yen's weakness is fuelling speculation that the government may step in to prop up the currency, which has been hammered by the Bank of Japan's refusal to move away from its ultra-loose monetary policy even as the Federal Reserve considers lifting interest rates further.

WEXNET-2023:

US Consul General visits SMEDA pavilion

LAHORE (APP): US Consul General Ms. Kristin K. Hawkin visited a pavilion set by Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) at the Women Entrepreneurs' Exhibition "WEXNET-23 to examine the handicrafts prepared by the small women-entrepreneurs of Balochistan, KP and Punjab.

According to the SMEDA spokesman here Monday, Deputy General Manager (Women Entrepreneurship Development Cell of SMEDA) Ms. Tania Buttar briefed the guests that SMEDA had sponsored a full-fledged pavilion comprising 10 stalls which offered business-

women from remote areas of Pakistan to display their products. The display facility, she said, has been provided to about 18 women free just to encourage them and pro-

mote the regional handicrafts of Pakistan. Over 18 women from D.I. Khan, Peshawar, Haripur, Quetta, Rawalpindi, DG Khan and Sargodha have been provided with stalls in the SMEDA pavilion, she said, adding that one of the stalls was also furnished as the information desk of SMEDA bearing information materials, publications, and SMEs facilitation services.

US Consul General Ms. Kristin appreciated the products displayed by women enterprises at the SMEDA pavilion and observed that the products had the potential to be sold in international market with a little effort.

It is notable that the SMEDA pavilion remained the center of attention of foreign and local visitors during the three-day exhibition WEXNET-23 because of the cultural heritage of

the remote areas of Pakistan displayed in a single pavilion.

Ms. Aysha Ali Naqvi, Deputy Head & Mission UAE. Mr. Mubasher Alshehri Commercial Counsellor, Saudi Arabia, and Mr. Behram Yusuf, Commercial Counsellor Uzbekistan, also visited the pavilion and appreciated the products displayed there, said the spokesman.

The participating women-entrepreneurs thanked SMEDA management for offering them a unique opportunity of marketing their products at the largest ever women-exhibition of Pakistan. They acknowledged that SMEDA had helped them build the capacity as well as learn modern ways of product-display and marketing that have enabled them participate in the world trade fairs and exhibitions.

Extraordinary General Meeting of SNGPL held



F.P. Report

LAHORE: An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) was held in Lahore for electing twelve (12) Directors under Section 159 of the Companies Act, 2017, for the next triennial commencing from October 01, 2023.

Sixteen (16) individuals as against twelve (12) positions of directors filed their consent to contest the election for Directors under defined categories of directors i.e. female, independent and other Directors, categories.

However, one (1) candidate i.e. Nasir Gulzar, out of Seven (7) candidates under the independent directors' category withdrew his name before the

election of Directors.

Since, the persons who offered themselves to be elected were not more than the number of directors fixed by the Board under Section 159(1) of the Companies Act, 2017 under the Female and Independent category of Director(s), the contesting female and six contestants under the category of Independent Directors were elected unopposed. However, election of directors was conducted only for the category of Other Directors, wherein 8 contestants participated.

After elections, following twelve Directors have been elected for the next triennial commencing from October 01, 2023 including one female director, six independent directors and five directors

under the category of other directors:

Ms. Faaria Rehman Salahuddin elected unopposed as Director under the Category of Female Directors.

Director elected unopposed under Category of Independent Directors are Muhammad Ismail Qureshi, Arif Saeed, Saadat Ali Khan, Ahmad Atteeq Anwer, Osman Saifullah Khan and Tariq Iqbal Khan.

Director elected under Category of Other Directors are Abrar Ahmed Mirza, Ali Tahir, Shahbaz Tahir Nadeem, Muhammad Sualah Ahmed Faruqi and Ahmed Chinoy.

Large number of shareholders of the Company attended the EGM of the Company and cast their votes.

PSX marks WIW 2023 with gong ceremony

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) along with numerous other exchanges and organisations across the world marked World Investor Week (WIW) 2023 through a gong ceremony held at PSX. The World Federation of Exchanges (WFE), of which PSX is an Affiliate Exchange, spearheads the WIW, the WIW is being held from October 2-8, 2023. PSX is holding this event and organising the WIW for the third consecutive year, said a press release issued here Monday.

Present at the gong ceremony were representatives from the SECP, leading academic institutions, professional bodies, and securities brokers, amongst others.

The week-long activities

in World Investor Week are planned to promote the importance of financial literacy and to raise awareness about investor education and protection.

The objective is to encourage financial inclusion and foster learning opportunities for investors.

The gong was struck by the Chief Guests, Abdul Rehman Warraich, Commissioner, Securities Market Division, Supervision Division, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC), along with the PSX Board member(s) and MD and CEO PSX Farrukh H. Khan.

The gong was struck amidst the presence of sen-

ior management of PSX and heads of leading brokerage houses, to officially mark the beginning of the week-long World Investor Week and to open the trading day.

Welcoming the guests at the occasion, the MD PSX stated, "The PSX welcomes you all in marking the World Investor Week. It is a matter of great satisfaction that all the SROs and stakeholders have also come forward to participate and play their role in World Investor Week 2023. I want to thank the SECP for their leadership enabling us all to augment our efforts to promote financial literacy and investor awareness."

He further stated, "As the capital market of Pakistan, PSX is fully

focused and determined on disseminating financial education through consistent and constant efforts in the form of in-person sessions, webinars, courses, and workshops. Pakistan Stock Exchange also effectively utilizes digital platforms through its investor education portal, virtual trading web-based application, financial glossary available on the PSX website and social media through its media channels to disseminate financial education and awareness. The 20-year return of KSE 100 is well above 15 percent per annum in dollar terms. Very few asset classes in the world give such a return. This is true of equities globally. So to learn and understand investing

like SECP can adopt for achieving the objectives of financial inclusion, investor protection and investor confidence. SECP intends to set up a Fund with regular contributions from variance regulated and self-regulatory institutions. The Fund will spend these resources primarily on promoting investor education and awareness through print, electronic and social media, and educational and training programs by strengthening institutions like IFMP."

Speaking at the occasion, chief guest, Abdul Rehman Warraich, Commissioner, Securities Market Division, Supervision Division, SECP, stated, "Investor education and awareness are among the most effective and least controversial approaches that a financial regulator

like SECP can adopt for achieving the objectives of financial inclusion, investor protection and investor confidence. SECP intends to set up a Fund with regular contributions from variance regulated and self-regulatory institutions. The Fund will spend these resources primarily on promoting investor education and awareness through print, electronic and social media, and educational and training programs by strengthening institutions like IFMP."

He added, "Transparency and good governance in the corporate sector are necessary to complement the education and awareness campaign to foster investor confidence over the medium to long term.

Financial institutions must invest the public money wisely and exercise their proxy voting rights responsibly. They must stand up for the issues involving transparency, good governance and investor protection. The need for enhancing insurance penetration can't be emphasized enough. It is critical to manage the financial risks confronting the bulk of Pakistan's population which comprises of middle and lower middle classes.

The stakeholders in the financial markets need to communicate on regular basis and learn from one another while making coordinated efforts towards the objectives that they all share." Chief Guest, Shoaib Javed Hussain,

CEO State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, added, "Securing a financially sound and secure future relies on prioritizing long-term savings and investments.

CHANGE IN FATHER'S NAME
I, Shoaib Javed Hussain, son of Syed Shafat Maiti Banu, Resident of Mohallah Garhi Banoozan Kohat City do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:- 1. That I was registered with USL of SSC Level under Registration No.: 114420167 and passed the SSC Annual Supplementary Examination 2011 under Roll No. 123972. 2. That I have decided to partially change my father's name from Syed Shafat Maiti to Syed Shafat Maiti Banu which name was written as Syed Shafat Maiti in Board's document/record. Hence the name may be changed. 3. The Statement given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing material has been concealed or withheld.



In brief

Shaheens to take on Hong Kong

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Shaheens will take on Hong Kong in the quarterfinal of Asian Games at Zhejiang University of Technology Cricket Field, Hangzhou on Tuesday. Pakistan Shaheens have directly advanced to the quarter-finals for being one of the top four ICC ranked sides in the continent. According to the fixtures of the quarter draw issued by Asian Cricket Council, if Pakistan win the match, they will meet the winner of the match between Afghanistan and Sri Lanka in the semifinal. The Shaheens, who underwent a five-day camp at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, on Monday also took part in training session in Hangzhou. Squad: Qasim Akram (captain), Omair Bin Yusuf (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Arafat Minhas, Arshad Iqbal, Asif Ali, Haider Ali, Khushdil Shah, Mirza Tahir Baig, Mubasir Khan, Muhammad Akhlaq (wk), Rohail Nazir (wk), Shah Nawaz Dahani, Sufiyan Mueem and Usman Qadir Player Support Personnel: Shahid Aslam (head coach-cum-manager), Umar Rasheed (bowling coach), Hanif Malik (batting and fielding coach) and Hafiz Naeem ul Rasool (physiotherapist).

Liverpool to appeal against Jones red card

LONDON (Agencies): Liverpool are to appeal against the red card given to Curtis Jones during their controversial 2-1 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday. Jones was sent off for fouling Yves Bissouma on 26 minutes after a video assistant referee (VAR) intervention. Referee Simon Hooper initially gave Jones a yellow card for the challenge, but changed his decision after going to the pitchside monitor. Midfielder Jones, 22, faces a three-game ban if the card is not overturned. If the dismissal is upheld, he would miss Liverpool's Premier League games against Brighton and Nottingham Forest. On Sunday, the Reds issued a statement after VAR failed to overturn an incorrect decision to disallow a Luis Diaz goal for offside, with the match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium goalless. The club said "sporting integrity has been undermined" after the governing body for referees PGMOI said the decision to rule out the goal was "a significant human error".

ICC picks Zainab Abbas as presenter

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Zainab Abbas, a renowned Pakistani cricket presenter, is all set to take the stage at ICC Men's World Cup 2023, starting on October 5 in India. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has picked the Pakistani sports reporter as presenter for the upcoming mega event. The 35-year-old also shared her feelings after she was selected for the position. Taking to social media platform X, she wrote: "There was always intrigue on what lies on the other side, more cultural similarities than differences, rivals on the field but camaraderie off the field, the same language & love for art & a country with a billion people, here to represent, to create content & bring in expertise from the best in the business". "Humbled to be presenting in India at the Cricket WC2023 for the @ICC again, a journey away from home of 6 weeks starts now," she concludes.

Pakistan's Sirbaz, Naila summit world's 6th highest mountain

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani mountaineers Sirbaz Khan and Naila Kiani on Monday summited the sixth highest mountain in the world, Cho Oyu, the non-governmental sports organization Alpine Club of Pakistan confirmed in a statement.

Standing at an imposing height of 8,188 meters or 26,906 feet high, Cho Oyu is located on the Nepalese-Tibetan (Chinese) border about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northwest of Mount Everest. According to Karrar Haidri, secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, it took both mountaineers 28 hours to summit the treacherous mountain amid challenging conditions.

"Sirbaz has accomplished an amazing accomplishment by ascending Cho Oyu, 8,188 meters high and the sixth highest



peak in the world, in over 28 hours via a marathon alpine style climb," Haidri told Arab News over the phone, adding that Khan is the first Pakistani climber to summit Cho Oyu. "He achieved this feat without the need for additional oxygen, which makes it even more amazing."

Khan's latest feat makes him the only Pakistani climber who has summited 13 out of a total of 14 mountains that stand above 8,000 meters high, which

are also known as "eight-thousanders." These mountains are all located in the Himalayan and Karakoram mountain ranges – across Nepal, Tibet (China) and Pakistan. "There is still one summit left on my trek, this being the thirteenth successful one," Haidri said.

Haidri praised Kiani for becoming the first Pakistani woman to summit Cho Oyu, saying that she was able to achieve the feat in "incredibly challenging conditions with

very poor visibility and hostile weather."

"We all hope and pray for Naila's safe return from this extraordinary adventure," Haidri said, adding that with the latest feat, Naila successfully climbed her 10th eight thousander.

Kiani's X account updated her followers with her achievement, saying that she became the first Pakistani with Khan to summit Cho Oyu.

"First Pakistani woman to summit 10 8,000er, only Pakistani to summit 7 8,000er in six months," Kiani's account wrote.

Kiani, Khan and mountaineer Shehroze Kashif summited Mount Manaslu in Nepal last month, which is the eighth-highest mountain in the world. Mount Manaslu stands at an imposing height of 8,163 meters above sea level.

Sri Lanka U19 to tour Pakistan from 12 October

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Sri Lanka U19 will travel to Pakistan on 12 October to feature in one four-day and five one-day matches against Pakistan U19. All six matches will be played in Karachi's National Bank Stadium from 15 to 31 October.

The tour will begin with the four-day game from 15 October which will start at 1000 PKT. The five one-day matches will be played between 22 to 31 October, where the first ball will be bowled at 0930 PKT.

As per the ICC's eligibility criteria for the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2024, players born on or after 1 September 2004 will be eligible to get selected.

This will be Pakistan U19 second bilateral series in this year. In April, Pakistan U19 toured Bangladesh and featured in a series consisted of one four-day, five one-dayers and one T20. Pakistan U19 won all the three-format series, which included winning five-match one-day series by 4-1. Last year in November, Bangladesh U19 toured Pakistan and played one four-day, three one-dayers and two T20 match series in Multan.

Usman Wahla, PCB Director – International Cricket: "We are delighted to welcome the Sri Lanka U19 team to Pakistan for this exciting bilateral series. The series will provide an excellent platform for young talent to showcase their skills and gain an invaluable experience ahead of next year's ICC U19 World Cup.

"Our U19 team has played some exceptional game of cricket recently and the series at home showcases the board's vision of nurturing young talent and providing opportunities to future stars of Pakistan cricket.

"I wish luck to both young teams, and may the matches be played in a spirit of camaraderie." The squad and training schedule of Pakistan U19 team will be announced in due course.

Schedule:
12 October – Sri Lanka U19 team arrival
15-18 October – Four-day match
22 October – First One-Day
24 October – Second One-Day
27 October – Third One-Day
29 October – Fourth One-Day
31 October – Fifth One-Day
1 November – Sri Lanka U19 team departs.

Asian Games 2023

Pakistan lost to Japan, crashed out of medal race

HANGZHOU (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan men's hockey team crashed out of the Asian Games 2023 medal race following a 3-2 defeat against Japan on Monday.

Japan needed to win the all-important clash to book their place in the semi-final of the Asian Games 2023 Hockey event while the Green Shirts only needed to avoid a defeat.

However, the result came out in Japan's favour as they edged Pakistan 3-2 and made it to the final four.

Pakistan got off to a flying start as they opened their account just five minutes into the game through Arshad Liaquat only for Japan to hit two goals in response in the sixth and 17th minutes via Tanaka Kaito and Fukuda Kentaro, respectively and took the lead.

Fujishima Raiki then enhanced Japan's lead to 3-1 in the 28th minute but

Pakistan cut their lead soon after through Arbaz Ahmad.

Both sides threatened to score more goals in the final quarter of the seasaw contest but the scoreboard remained intact at 3-2 till the final whistle in Japan's favour.

A narrow defeat against Japan meant Pakistan have now crashed out of the Asian Games 2023 medal race and will compete against a third-placed side from Pool B for the fifth and sixth position on October 6. Earlier in the tournament, Pakistan hockey team suffered a 10-2 thrashing at the hands of arch-rivals India on Saturday.

India had a flying start to the match as they took a dominant 2-0 lead over Pakistan in the first quarter, courtesy of Harmanpreet Singh and Mandeep Singh, who scored one each.

The men in blue then

doubled their lead in the second quarter and attained the complete command of the highly-anticipated match.

Pakistan finally showed some resistance in the third quarter as they managed to pull two back but it was insufficient as India still managed to further extend their lead by scoring three.

India then enjoyed another dominant quarter as they scored three more in the fourth to finish the match with a scoreline of 10-2, one of their largest victories against Pakistan.

Harmanpreet Singh was the star for India, scoring four, followed by Varun Kumar, who scored two while Mandeep Singh, Sumit, Shamsheer Singh and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay scored one each.

For Pakistan, Mohammad Sufyan Khan and Waheed Rana Ashraf could score one apiece.

Pakistan crush West Indies to win inaugural Over 40s Global Cup

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Hosts Pakistan emerged as world champions by overpowering West Indies by 152 runs in the final of the inaugural Over 40s Cricket Global Cup at National Bank Stadium on Monday.

Skipper Misbah-ul-Haq's fluent century enabled Pakistan to post an imposing total of 328/4 in the allotted 45 overs before bowling out their opponents for a meagre 176 in 38.5 overs with spinner Abdul Qadir picking up six wickets for 35 runs.

Misbah chose to bat first after beating rival skipper Narsingh Deonarine in the spin of the coin. The West Indians did a fabulous job by containing the Pakistani openers, Abdul Razzaq and Amjad Ali, who had massacred the Australian

bowlers in the semifinal at the same venue.

Pakistan, in fact, was in a spot of bother when both Razzaq (38 off 58 balls) and Amjad (28 off 28 balls) perished in quick succession after a quiet start.

The stage was set for the captain to lead by example and Misbah did exactly that by adding 173 for the third wicket with Hassan Raza, who made 68 off 64 balls. Misbah departed after scoring 106 off 93 balls with the help of seven sixes and six fours.

The cameo from Tasawwar Abbas, who finished unbeaten on 58 off only 21 balls allowed the home side to score nearly 100 runs from the last seven overs which lifted the total. Former Test leg-spinner Mahendra Nagamootoo (2-50) was the pick of the

West Indian bowlers.

West Indies began the chase of 329 in a bid to lift the inaugural Over 40s Global Cup title in a confident manner with openers Randy Thomas (37 off 51 balls) and Devindra Maharaj (17 off 34 balls) seeing off new ball operators, Muhammad Sami and Imran Ali, during their 57-run partnership.

The introduction of spin, as expected, brought about their downfall and the sensational spell of Abdul Qadir, yielding six wickets, sealed the fate of the match.

Lawrence Famum (41 off 54 balls) and Sanjeev Gooljar (28 off 37 balls) delayed the inevitable for a while by adding 65 for the eighth wicket but Hassan Raza took the last three wickets in quick succession to seal the deal for Pakistan.

Medvedev books China Open semi-final with Zverev

BEIJING (Reuters): Second seed Daniil Medvedev overcame a mid-match wobble to beat Ugo Humbert 6-4 3-6 6-1 on Monday and move into the China Open semi-finals, where he will face Alexander Zverev in their fifth meeting this season.

Medvedev has been a model of consistency on hardcourts this year with titles in Rotterdam, Doha, Dubai and Miami and though the Russian world number three was not at his dominant best he battled past Humbert for his 41st win of 2023 on the surface.

"I'm happy that I managed to raise my level in important moments, except a game in the second set," Medvedev said. "It's great that I managed to still find in this tough match these moments of consistency, which is enough to win."

"That's what you have to do. I'm happy to be in the semi-finals. When you come to the tournament, you always want to go as far as possible. Happy to still be here tomorrow." "The further we go, the tougher the matches, the tougher the opponents. That's normal."

Chengdu champion Zverev, who is rediscovering his best form after a serious ankle injury last year, extended his winning run to seven matches with a 6-1 6-7(5) 6-3 win over Chile's Nicolas Jarry.

The 10th-ranked German has lost three times to Medvedev this year but flipped the script in their last meeting in Cincinnati.

"It seems like we have to play each other every tournament this year. It's the fifth time we're going to play each other," Zverev said. "Every time we play, it's a battle."

"I'm looking forward to what's to come. He's playing great tennis. I hope I can bring my A game."

Top seed Carlos Alcaraz takes on Casper Ruud while Grigor Dimitrov meets Jannik Sinner in the other two quarter-finals.

SWIATEK AND GAUFF SOAR

In the women's tournament, world number two Iga Swiatek powered into the second round on her Beijing debut with a 6-4 6-3 victory over Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo.

The Pole was particularly effective at the net, win-

ning 15 out of 17 points, and next meets Frenchwoman Varvara Gracheva.

"Today I felt really confident and comfortable because I've been practising that a lot," Swiatek said. "I'm pretty proud of my performance at the net because, technically, I feel like my volley has changed. I'm really happy with that."

"I think against some players it's necessary to go to the net and today that was that kind of a match."

U.S. Open winner Coco Gauff roared to victory in her first match as a Grand Slam champion, as the American downed Ekaterina Alexandrova 7-5 6-3.

Fresh from her triumph in Ningbo last week, world number seven Ons Jabeur eased past 19-year-old Osaka champion Ashlyn Krueger 6-3 6-4.

"It was a great match," said Jabeur. "I played the next generation. She's a really good player. She's going to be one of the top players in the future."

The Tunisian, who is looking to qualify for the season-ending WTA Finals, plays Marta Kostyuk in the second round.



HYDERABAD: Skipper Babar Azam plays a shot during a practice session ahead of the Pakistan cricket team's second warm-up match against Australia.

North Korean breaks world record as weightlifting dominance continues

HANGZHOU (AFP): A third women's weightlifting world record was broken on Monday as North Korea continued to dominate at the Asian Games in Hangzhou on Monday on their return to international competition after four years away.

Kim Il Gyeong, who appears to have last competed internationally as a 14-year-old junior in 2018, set a new snatch record of 111kg on her way to gold in the women's 59kg class.

The 20-year-old then hoisted 135kg in the clean and jerk to finish on a 246kg total and condemn China's Luo Shifang to silver with former snatch world record-holder Kuo Hsing-chun of Taiwan in third.

"Like athletes from other NOCs we train in great venues. We are devoted and very committed to our preparation," said Kim when asked how lifters from her country were able to shatter so many world records.

Later Rim Un Sim comfortably won a second Asian Games gold medal, adding the women's 64kg title to the 69kg gold she won in Jakarta

five years ago, though she failed with a snatch world record attempt at 118kg. On Saturday Ri Song Gum broke two world records in the women's 49kg, the first weightlifting event of the Hangzhou Games.

Kang Hyong Yong, a 24-year-old with no international pedigree, followed up in staggering fashion with a hat-trick of world records in the snatch, clean and jerk, and combined on her way to gold in the women's 55kg class.

Kim, who is still technically a junior, also broke the junior world records on Monday for all three categories. She finished 1kg short of Kuo's senior world record total of 247kg.

Hidilyn Diaz, the Olympic world champion in the 55kg division, was fourth, Diaz, who is the only athlete from the Philippines to ever win an Olympic gold, is building towards the Paris Games.

"Pushing to the limit"

There she will lift in the higher weight category as the 55kg division will not be part of the Olympics in 2024.

Diaz won the Asian Games gold five years ago in Jakarta in the now-defunct 53kg class. "I'm pushing myself to the limit for this," said the 32-year-old Diaz, who will be competing in her fifth Olympics next year.

"I'm confident of winning gold in Paris, but I'll need to lift 107kg and 135kg to do that." Rim destroyed a quality field in the 64kg class, her 251kg total putting her 17kg clear of China's Pei Xinyi who took the silver. Elreen Ando of the Philippines won the bronze on 222kg. North Korean weightlifters have not taken part in international competition since 2019 after the country's borders were sealed because of the pandemic.

When they were scheduled to return to action at a meeting in Cuba in June, rival lifters strongly objected, saying the North Koreans have not been dope-tested since 2019. The World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) sanctioned North Korea after declaring its national anti-doping body "non-compliant" in 2021.

F.P. Report

SHIGAR DISTRICT: The fifth edition of Sarfaranga Cold Desert Rally will be held in District Shigar starting from the 6th until the 8th of October 2023.

In this regard, press conference was organized in Serena Hotel Islamabad today, in order to brief the national and international media about this event.

Around 100 national racers under different categories will participate in the Sarfaranga Cold



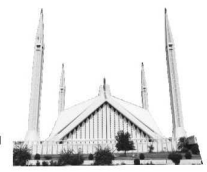
Desert Rally.

The event is being organized by Tourism

Department GB in partnership with Pak Wheels.

The event will also have

Polo and Zakh competitions and other cultural and sports events and much more.



In brief

IRSA releases 161,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 161,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 96,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1539.13 feet and was 141.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 49,100 cusecs and 85,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1224.85 feet, which was 174.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,300 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 90,600, 90,000, 94,100 and 47,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 16,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Six drug dealers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested six drug dealers and recovered more than 07 kg of drugs from their possession during a crackdown here on Monday. According to the police spokesman, Gujjar Khan police seized more than 02 kg of drugs from Zia ur Rahman. Similarly, Rata Amral police held Mahfooz Khan and recovered 1.6 kg of drugs from his possession. While Dharmyal police recovered 1.3 kg of drugs from Zaheer. Following the operation, Saddar Wah police recovered 900 grams of charas from Taimur and 540 grams of charas from Qamar Abbas. Waris Khan police nabbed Allah Rakha and recovered 580 grams of charas from his custody. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani appreciated the performance of police teams and said that the arrested accused will be brought to justice with concrete evidence and will be punished, and the crackdown will continue against drug dealers.

54,330 challans issued

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi issued 54,330 challans to violators last month while 2,340 vehicles and motorcycles were impounded in different police stations due to incomplete documents. According to a CTP spokesman, the motorcyclists were at the top of breaking the rules, some 24,680 motorcyclists were issued challans. In addition, 12,281 vehicles were issued challan tickets while action was taken against 17,369 other commercial vehicles. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan said that CTP trying its best to make Rawalpindi district road accident-free and making further improvements to ensure smooth traffic. Khan dispelled the impression that traffic wardens were given a target of issuing challans and he said that challans are issued only for the correction of citizens so that they can protect themselves and other road users from road accidents. The traffic education unit is engaged in providing awareness to the citizens on the highways about the traffic rules on a daily basis besides educating in schools and colleges.



ISLAMABAD: People visited a national monument which was turned red to celebrate 74th National Day of China.

Pakistan, Turkiye condemn terrorism, express solidarity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkiye on Monday strongly condemned the reprehensible acts of terrorism taking place in their respective regions. In a telephonic conversation, Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and Head of Turkish Religious Affairs Dr. Ali Arbash said Pakistan and Turkiye, standing together against terrorism, vowed to combat those who target innocent civilians and attempt to undermine Muslim nations through their mutual cooperation.

They, in a joint statement, said Islam was a religion of peace and safety, and any individuals or groups that perpetrated violence against innocent humanity were enemies of Islam. "Such individuals, organizations, or entities have no connection to Islam," they added.

Dr. Ali Arbash, expressed his heartfelt condemnation of the recent terrorist incidents in Mastung and Hangu. He also expressed gratitude on behalf of Turkiye's government and people for Pakistan's strong condem-

nation of terrorism.

Ashrafi emphasized the brotherly bond between Pakistan and Turkiye, stating that recent acts of terrorism in both countries were unacceptable to the entire Muslim world. He reassured that Pakistan's government and people stood shoulder to shoulder with their Turkish brethren.

Both leaders agreed to enhance cooperation on important national and international matters. Furthermore, they prayed for the elevation of martyrs' ranks and the swift recovery of the wounded.

36 more dengue cases reported in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 36 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 1,332 in the district.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Monday said that, among the new cases, 26 cases had arrived from Potohar town urban, six from

Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi and two of each from Chaklala Cantonment and Potohar rural.

He said 126 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 95 were confirmed cases while 1,237 were discharged after treatment.

Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 21 FIRs, issued tickets to 10,

sealed two premises, and a fine of Rs 175,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 14,948 houses and larvae were found in 899 homes.

Similarly, he added that while checking 5,145 places, the teams found larvae at 126 sites during outdoor surveillance.

Minister directs PEIRA to ensure 10% scholarships for yearly registration of private schools



ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi on Monday ordered PEIRA to make 10 percent need-based scholarships mandatory for yearly registration of private schools.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting convened between the Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi and the Chairperson of Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool.

The meeting focused on critical subject of needs-based scholarships for deserving students and served as a continuation of the Federal Minister's previous visit to PEIRA in August where he first raised this subject.

Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool apprised the minister that as per his direction of offering these scholarships was now a compulsory criterion for private schools in Islamabad seeking registration with PEIRA. This stipulation on the

registration certificates issued to Private Educational Institutions by PEIRA.

This official observation from PEIRA, addressed to the administrators of private educational institutions, references relevant regulatory guidelines and obligations that these institutions must fulfill.

This policy targets students with financial constraints and aims to improve accessibility to quality education.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that he was deeply concerned about educational needs of deserving students, therefore, the said policy was developed by PEIRA and its implementation would be prioritized for strict compliance in true letter and spirit.

Noncompliance may result in regulatory action and could potentially result in the de-registration of the non-compliant educational institution. This action signifies a pivotal step towards achieving educational equity within the Islamabad Capital Territory, aligning with broader goals to elevate educational standards to compete globally.

Edu minister directs FDE to accommodate disabled employees: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi has ordered FDE to accommodate all its disabled employees and adjust them against permanent positions.

In a statement on Monday, he said that we need to make sure that we cater to every strata of the society. He directed the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to ensure that all current disabled employees are adjusted and further seats are created to accommodate more disabled candidates. Madad was briefed that 50 new seats will be created only for disabled people from grade 1-15.

Meanwhile, the minister said that it is a positive step and that such steps ensure that all members of the society are catered for. He highlighted the importance of taking care of disadvantaged strata of society.

He said that as an Islamic state, it is our responsibility to ensure that everybody gets an equal opportunity.

Police arrest 10 culprits

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi have conducted raids in different areas and netted 10 outlaws for possessing 45 liters liquor, five 30 bore pistols and ammunition.

According to a police spokesman, R.A.Bazar, Race Course, and Saddar Wah police held Aqeel, Shahid, Tahir, Naqash and Yasir and recovered 45 liters liquor from their possession.

The spokesman informed that Waris Khan, Sadiqabad, Westridge, Gujjar Khan and Dhamial police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Numan, Zia ul Haq, Usman and five 30 bore pistols and ammunition.

The SSP said that strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations against aerial firing and illegal weapon holders would continue.

31,061 screened for Hepatitis

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 31,061 persons have been screened for Hepatitis B and C so far during the second phase of the Local Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention (LHEAP) drive started on July 10.

According to the District Health Authority spokesman, the LHEAP was underway in four Union Councils (UCs)-10,11,14 and 15 of the city while 127 people diagnosed with HBV and 516 with HCV so far.

He informed that 8,344 people had received the first dose of the vaccine while 3,789 jabbed the second dose.

He added that 20 health teams, five in each UC were participating in the drive to vaccinate around 100,000 population against the deadly disease.

The spokesman urged the residents to come forward and screen themselves for Hepatitis free of cost. The LHEAP drive was being carried out in collaboration with the US-based task force for Global Health, he added.

Solution to all contemporary issues lies in Seerat-un-Nabi, says Aneeq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Monday said that the solution to all contemporary issues lied in the Seerat of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Addressing as chief guest, he expressed his appreciation for the first-ever Seerat Conference organized within the Federal Tax Ombudsman Secretariat, emphasizing that Allah Almighty had exalted the mention of His beloved Prophet, which

would endure until the Day of Judgment.

He said, "The excellent moral values exemplified by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) are the same values that guide us today."

The minister said the revered Prophet's exemplary ethics remained the standard for humanity. He said the Holy Quran, which is the first book on the Seerat of Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), should serve as a mirror for both individuals and nations. He said the Holy Quran sternly warns those who did not imple-

ment its system on Allah Almighty's land.

Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah organized the Seerat Conference themed 'Solving Contemporary Issues in the Light of the Prophet's Seerat' within his department.

The conference brought together tax officials and employees for a competition of Naats and speeches on the Seerat. The winners of the Naat and speech contests were awarded certificates and cash prizes as recognition for their outstanding contributions.

ANF crackdown against drug smuggling continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) continues its operations against drug trafficking and recovers more than 139 kg of drugs in 7 operations different operations while arresting 8 accused.

According to the spokesperson of ANF on Tuesday, 45 kg 600 grams of hashish and 12 kg of opium were recovered from the vehicle near Motorway Toll Plaza Khanewal on.

Meanwhile a resident of Islamabad was smuggling drugs by hiding them in the trunk of a car but was apprehended by the ANF.

During operation at

Allama Iqbal International Airport, 53 capsules filled with cocaine were recovered from the stomach of a passenger. The accused had reached Lahore from Muscat via flight number PK-230.

The spokesperson further said that 4 suspects arrested in a joint operation with Pakistan Rangers Punjab in Kasur and 7 kg of heroin was recovered from their possession.

At Sialkot International Airport, 50 ice and 50 hashish filled capsules were recovered from the passenger's stomach. The accused was a resident of Pakpattan and leaving for Doha via

flight number QR-631.

Meanwhile 9 kg hashish was recovered from a local resident near Ghazar Taos Bala Bazaar in a joint operation with FC Balochistan at Luck Pass Check Post. During the operation, 40 kg of ice was recovered from 5 parcels in the bus. Drugs were being smuggled to Karachi under the guise of vehicle spare parts. 5 kg hashish concealed for smuggling recovered near Padrak, Piski area.

ANF have registered cases against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation has been started.

Dr. Jamal inaugurates dialysis centre in Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health and Population Welfare Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir on Monday inaugurated the Dialysis Center at Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital Murree.

Talking to the media on the occasion, he said that the long-standing demand of the people of Murree, for setting up a dialysis center had been fulfilled.

He said that the dialysis of bladder and kidney patients from Murree and the suburbs would now be done at the local level.

Dr Jamal informed that

six dialysis machines had been installed in the dialysis unit while the number of beds at THQ, hospital Murree had been increased to 82 from 32 beds.

He said that free-of-cost treatment would be provided to dialysis patients round the clock.

Speaking on this occasion, Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatta said that the shortage of staff in primary and rural health centres was being fulfilled.

He said that the supply of medicines was also being ensured and that THQ hospital would be

made a model hospital.

Liaquat said that ambulance service was available at the hospital in case of emergency and added that the Punjab government was committed to providing the best healthcare facilities to the residents at their doorstep.

Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Captain (R) Qasim Ijaz, Assistant Commissioner Murree Kamran Sagheer, MSTHQ Dr. Abdul Salam Abbasi and other officers were also present.

DC directs crackdown against illegal petrol pumps

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon directed officers crackdown against illegal petrol filling stations and to ensure the quality and quantity of petrol sold at petrol pumps.

On the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area Awais Irshad Bhatti was also conducting inspections of petrol stations to check for the presence of duty and inspection of weights and measures as per the notified roster, ICT Spokesman said

on Monday.

The petrol stations found to be violating the rules were being sealed, and strict action would be taken against illegal petrol filling stations. The Deputy Commissioner has warned petrol pump owners and operators to ensure that they are selling pure and unadulterated petrol in the correct quantity. He has also appealed to the public to report any irregularities to the authorities.

The Deputy Commissioner's crackdown on petrol pumps was widely appreciated by the mass-

es. It will also help to curb the illegal petrol filling station business. The DC's crackdown on petrol pumps was part of a larger campaign by the government to ensure the quality and quantity of goods and services sold to the public.

The government has also taken steps to crack down on adulterated food and beverages, and on businesses that were using false or misleading weights and measures.

The public can play a role in ensuring the success of the government's campaign by reporting any irregularities to the authorities.

IESCO plans to start installing over 1.4 million AMI meters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has planned to start installing over 1.4 million Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters of all tariffs in Rawalpindi circle from January 2024.

Official sources told that the project would be completed within two years. Currently data back and operation centers were being set up at Gujjar Khan and IESCO Headquarters and G-10 respectively besides operational laboratory.

They said that initially some 512 AMI non-billing meters were installed in March 2022 as a pilot project.

Switching over to AMI system will bring about a permanent elimination of power pilferage with a systematic control of transmission through round-the-clock monitoring of the electricity meters.

This new technology, being introduced, would help reduce power sector losses, enhance quality of billing and recoveries, control power load-shedding and would also address the consumers' complaints of wrong or

over-billing, they said.

The AMI system will end human interventions in meter reading, enhance customer support, better measurements, more accurate billing, a degree of control of consumption and help the persisting dilemma of power outage by enhancing ability of IESCO to reduce non-technical losses.

This system has already been installed at Multan and Lahore Electric Supply Companies (MEPCO and LESCO) but at a very limited scale adding that the project was launched at Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

ADB had provided \$170 million for AMI project being carried out in the IESCO phase wise. "In the first phase, all electricity meters installed at Rawalpindi Cantonment and City Circles were being switched to AMI with an estimated cost of \$ 95 million. Over 900,000 electricity meters would be replaced in the city with

smart meters in four years," they said.

The authorities are confident that the AMI system would provide precise information regarding power supply and consumption down to individual consumers, enabling the power distribution companies to investigate causes of non-technical power losses.

"The AMI project would completely end human interventions besides bringing transparency in meter reading," remarked IESCO Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad. He said the company has around 3.4 million consumers and a data centre has been set up at IESCO's headquarters with the capacity of five million.

The project was a part of the second power distribution enhancement investment program under ADB financing that is hoped to significantly contribute towards improved information collection for asset management. "The AMI system would not only eliminate 'Kunda culture' and meter tampering but also help locate power breakdown areas in case of power suspension," he said.

IEA denounces attack

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a strong condemnation of the recent incident near Turkey's interior ministry in Ankara, which resulted in injuries to several Turkish police officers. Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the ministry's spokesperson, expressed the ministry's vehement disapproval of the unfortunate event. This incident led to multiple injuries among the police officers of the Republic of Turkey.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rabi-ul-Awwal 16, 1445 — Tuesday, October 03, 2023

40 health centers established

BALKH (Agencies): Over the past year, Balkh province has seen the establishment of 40 healthcare centers and treatment of 30,000 drug addicts. Dr. Najibullah Tawana, the director of public health in Balkh, highlighted that one of their significant achievements in the health sector is the provision of equal health services to citizens in both urban and rural areas. In the last year alone, 116 health centers have been renovated and equipped, with an additional 40 new centers established.

Girls' education an internal issue: Muttaqi



KABUL (BBC News): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi has said that the Islamic Emirate will not take any steps on girls' education that could cause division within the ranks of the IEA. In an interview with BBC Pashto broadcast on Sunday, Muttaqi said that the issue of girls' education

is an internal issue of Afghanistan. "We are trying to take steps which, God forbid, would not cause division. We look for a reasonable solution for every issue. We will find a solution that will be free of risk and controversy, even if it involves delay," Muttaqi said.

Regarding the demand of the international community to form an inclusive government, Muttaqi reiterated that the Islamic Emirate is an inclusive government. "If inclusivity means that there should be representatives of all ethnic groups in the government, then in our government, all ethnic groups exist, both at the lower level and at the cabinet level. If inclusivity means that there should be ministers from different provinces, we have a minister from Kabul, from Panjshir, from Badakhshan, from Faryab, from Kandahar and Nangarhar," Muttaqi said. Amir Khan Muttaqi added that no one has provided a specific definition of inclusive government.

Families of Kaaj attack victims still seek justice

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has called the attack on the Kaaj School on its first anniversary "horrific" and emphasized its commitment to standing with the victims and individuals affected by this incident and other violent incidents in Afghanistan.

UNAMA, wrote on its social media platform X, stating that in last year's attack on the Kaaj School, 54 people were killed and 114 others, mostly Hazara girls, were injured.

The United Nations representation stressed that decades of conflict and countless attacks have inflicted "irreparable" damage and left families without answers, justice, or accountability.

Kaaj Educational Center in western Kabul was targeted in a suicide attack in October last year, resulting in the deaths and injuries of dozens of students, primarily girls, who were preparing for their university entrance exams.

UNAMA also emphasizes its support for the people of Afghanistan to live their daily lives without fear and for the perpetrators of violence to be held accountable.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has stated that it stands alongside the victims and individuals affected by this incident and other violent incidents in Afghanistan.

Minister encourages youth

KABUL (Agencies): During a visit to Samangan province, Sheikh Neda Mohammad Nadeem, the Acting Minister of Higher Education, urged the youth to balance their pursuit of modern sciences with a strong foundation in Islamic faith.

This sentiment was expressed during a meeting with local officials, tribal elders, scholars, professors, and students in Aibak City, the capital of Samangan.

Mullah Dad Khoda Khadem, the deputy governor of Samangan, assured that security is maintained in Samangan and that the people support all programs of the Islamic Emirate.

He also encouraged students to understand the enemy's goals and to arm themselves with knowledge, practice, sincerity, and piety to resist the influence of Western ideas.

Sheikh Neda Mohammad Nadeem paid tribute to the students who lost their lives during the twenty years of occupation.

He stated that Afghanistan has passed a small test and is now facing a larger one – providing security, implementing justice, and enforcing Islamic Sharia.

He emphasized that strength comes from equipping oneself with knowledge and deeds and making people aware of their responsibilities.

This includes obedience to the Amir and maintaining sincerity among themselves.

The Acting Minister highlighted that the Islamic Emirate places special emphasis on students.

A budget of 250 million Afghanis has been allocated for those pursuing master's level studies inside or outside the country. Additionally, 100 million Afghanis have been set aside for equipping educational institution laboratories.

Tourists visit historical places in Kandahar

K A N D A H A R (TOLONews): Chinese tourists came to Kandahar to visit historical and ancient places.

These tourists said that they were determined to come to Afghanistan for a long time and added that the country is more developed than what they had heard about.

"We had decided to come to Afghanistan before, but the ground was not provided. Now that we have come, we see a lot of progress in the country, and we hope that Afghanistan will progress even more," said a tourist. "I will come to Afghanistan again with my family, Afghanistan will develop again because it is a member of the Belt and Road Initiative project," said a tourist.

The Information and Culture Department of Kandahar said that in the past six months, nearly 250 foreign tourists have visited the province. "In the first six months of the year,



about 250 foreign tourists from the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, Asian countries, Arab countries, India, Pakistan and Iran have come to the province," said Enamullah Samangani, head of the department.

"These historical places of Afghanistan are very

important, and we must protect them. I ask the Islamic Emirate to set a specific budget for better maintenance of historical places," said Mairwis, a resident of Kandahar.

"My request is that these historical places should be preserved so that they are

not destroyed," said Janan, a resident of Kandahar.

The Department of Information and Culture of Kandahar, in addition to ensuring security, says that increased opportunities are one of the reasons for the increase of foreign tourists in this province.

Afghan politicians abroad want to talk with Islamic Emirate: Omari

KABUL (TOLONews): Deputy Interior Minister Mohammad Nabi Omari said that some Afghan political leaders want to talk with the Islamic Emirate but "there is no issue" which needs to be discussed.

Speaking at a ceremony to introduce the Pakтия governor, he said that the Islamic Emirate has established its government and will not debate democracy.

"What will the agenda of the meeting be? The egregious democracy, which did not cause any result over the past 20 years -- if this would be the agenda of the negotiations, the Mujahideen and Taliban

have made sacrifices to deny it and they were ready to do so for another 100 years," Omari said.

The tribal elders in Pakтия meanwhile stressed the need for an end to conflicts in the country and called on the political leaders abroad to return. They also urged the Islamic Emirate to respect the rights of the citizens.

"They can freely come here and live in trust here and continue their life under the Islamic government," said Mohammad Anwar Sediqqi, a tribal elder in Pakтия.

"We call on all of the Afghans, who are our



brothers, to return and we welcome them. The Islamic Emirate should pay attention to them and take care of them," said Haji Mamor, a tribal elder in Pakтия.

After the Islamic Emirate came to power, many Afghan politicians left the country. They stressed the need for intra-Afghan negotiations.

Afghan woman entrepreneur empowers women, breaks barriers

KABUL (Khaama Press): Sima Noorzadeh, in a conversation with Khaama Press News Agency, mentioned that seven years ago, she and a group of girls established a wedding ceremonies office in Afghanistan.

Despite increasing restrictions on women and high demand for their services, she successfully created job opportunities for numerous girls.

According to Ms. Noorzadeh, unemployment and recent restrictions have caused psychological issues among women. She believes that addressing women's unemployment

not only puts an end to the mental struggles of millions but also contributes to society's overall prosperity.

As the manager of a wedding ceremonies office in Herat, she adds that the restrictions have affected wedding halls and the mobility of the country's citizens.

She encourages other women to engage in productive sectors like tailoring and flower arranging when unemployed to rescue themselves from isolation.

On the other hand, Jamila Amiri, who has been working in wedding ceremonies salons in Herat for

four years, expressed her satisfaction in her conversation with Khaama Press.

Despite all the limitations, she feels good about working outside her home.

Being the sole breadwinner for her family, she earns a living through this work and fears the day when all her hopes are shattered.

Ms Amiri encourages other girls to maintain their motivation and to participate in activities related to women.

It should be noted that following the rise of the Taliban administration, restrictions on education, work, and women's partic-

ipation in Afghanistan, tens of thousands have lost their jobs.

Meanwhile, Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Afghanistan, stated during the 54th session of the Human Rights Council that more than 60,000 women have become unemployed following the imposition of restrictions on women in Afghanistan.

Additionally, many women and girls, such as Husna Roufi, have created job opportunities for women by establishing workshops, restaurants, and shops.

Factory making intravenous lines, medicine starts up



KABUL (TOLONews): A drips and medicine production factory has been opened in Kabul with an investment of \$25 million.

The head of the factory said that by establishing the factory, they have provided work for hundreds of people.

In the factory, work is provided 24 hours, and (tens of thousands) of drips will be produced in the factory every 24 hours, there

are 10 types of drips," said Tawab Ghafory, head of the factory.

The Chamber of Industry and Mines said that so far the problems of the factory owners are the lack of electricity and land distribution section have not been resolved, and they want the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to the issue as well.

"The deputy has cooperated with us regarding elec-

tricity, land, and increasing tariffs, we want more cooperation in the field," said Sakhi Ahmad Payman, deputy of the chamber.

"We have committed to supply drips in the country through the factory," said Abdul Jabbar Safi, head of the industrial union.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce pledged that they support all investors in the country.

We call on all our countrymen to cure the pains of the nation, come and invest the property that God has given you in the country for your countrymen," said Qudratullah Jamal, deputy of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Before this, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that the work on 39 industrial parks was ongoing in the country and currently Afghanistan has reached self-sufficiency with 50 items.

People concerned about drying up trees in parks

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of Herat city, the capital of western Herat province, are concerned about drying up of trees at some parks and on roadsides, saying the phenomenon is harming the city's beauty.

They say creating a green space is essential for people, youth and teenagers to have fun and there is a serious need to take care and protect green spaces in the city.

Mohammad Aywaz, a resident of Herat city, told Pajhwok Afghan News that all people had a responsibility to contribute to greenness of the city and the leadership of municipality should establish facilities in parks to prevent trees from drying up.

He believed trees were drying up in most parts of the city, boulevards and parks and their management needed serious measures from the municipality.

Ahmad, another resident, also told Pajhwok the government should expand green spaces and pay serious attention to their maintenance.

Meanwhile, Hamid Elham, an official of the Environmental Protection Department, said a com-

mission had been established to create and maintain green spaces in Herat city.

The commission worked under the guidance of the provincial authority and supervision of the Department of Urban Development and Housing, University, Municipality, Agriculture and Livestock and Environmental Protection department.

He added the commission was planning to plant trees in open areas and dis-

cuss people's concerns in the next meeting.

However, without providing statistics or details regarding the drying trees and people's concerns in this regard, the Herat Municipality said in order to prevent trees from drying up, it had dug 14 wells and cleaned the existing drains.

Municipality spokesman Naseer Armal said this year alone they built 7,000 meters of boulevards for greenness and beauty of the city.

Australia donates US\$5 million to aid Afghanistan: OCHA

KABUL (Agencies): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) in Afghanistan has announced that Australia has donated five million US dollars to aid humanitarian efforts in the country.

In light of the upcoming winter and the need to support vulnerable families in Afghanistan, OCHA has appealed to the international community for approximately a billion dollars in assistance.

According to a statement from OCHA, the Australian government has contributed 8 million Australian dollars, which is equivalent to 5,115,875 US dollars, to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.

OCHA also highlighted that since the inception of the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, Australia has made contributions totaling 69 million Australian dollars.

IE forms new reform plan for youth: Rashed

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) said that it had prepared a "scheme for the intellectual and economic reform of youth," and its approval will soon be announced by the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

The Deputy of Youth in the Ministry of Information and Culture,

Mohammad Yunus Rashed, said that the scheme includes four fields under the title of "intellectual and economic reforms of youth."

"A plan has been made for intellectual and economic reform of youth which has been accepted by Amirul Momineen (Islamic Emirate leader) and will be announced in a

decree in the near future," he said.

The instructors said that the plan will also provide educational opportunities for youth.

"There should be attention paid to the situation of youth. The educational scholarship should be provided to the youth and will be beneficial in addition to the Islamic mindset," said

Mohammad Wali Salari, a university instructor.

"The school of Islamic thought is a worldwide school," said Adib, an instructor.

This comes as youth called on the Islamic Emirate to provide them with work opportunities as they are struggling with dire economic conditions. "When we finish our

education, we hope to serve the country and our people and improve our country and its economic condition," said Qudratullah, a student.

Rashed said that the thoughts of the youth that were distracted during the past year of foreign troops' presence will be reformed through the new scheme.



Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan at the level of special representatives and senior officials from China, India, Iran,

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan was held on September 29, 2023, and ended on Friday.

KP CM vows to eradicate polio with support of stakeholders

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, via video-link attended a meeting of National Task Force on Polio Eradication held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday to discuss matter how to make the National Polio Program more effective and result-oriented.

Chief Ministers of other provinces and other relevant high ups also attended the meeting. Talking on this occasion, caretaker Chief Minister. Muhammad Azam Khan reiterated the resolve of the provincial government to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa polio free, and said that well-coordinated efforts are being made to this end in the province which are yielding encouraging results.

Azam Khan informed the forum that in the year 2014, there were a total of 247 cases of polio in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which were reduced to 93 in the year 2019 whereas, at pres-

ent there are only two active cases of polio in the province which has been possible because of the tireless efforts of the relevant departments and organizations adding that, however, our goal is complete eradication of polio virus from the province for which serious efforts are underway.

Lauding the efforts of health department, civil administration, police, army and the partner organizations, Azam Khan said the role of frontline polio workers had been remarkable in fighting the menace.

The Chief Minister further informed that since June 2022, a total of 14 various anti-polio drives were launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa whereas a fresh drive under the National Immunization Drive (NID) has been launched in the province from 2nd October as elsewhere in the country, adding that the provincial government would put in its best to achieve cent percent targets of the drive.

Touching upon the challenges with regard to polio eradication in the province, Azam Khan remarked that

due to the peculiar geographic situation of the province, it faces some challenges in polio eradication, but the provincial government, in collaboration with all the stakeholders taking measures to overcome those challenges.

He informed that in order to prevent the cross boarder transfer of polio virus from Afghanistan, five various boarder points had been established along the Pak-Afghan border to ensure polio drops to every crossing child adding that consistence presence of Wild Polio Virus in the environmental sample of Peshawar is of serious concern, and measures are being taken to address the issue on permanent basis.

Stressing the need of removing the misperceptions of some people about polio drops, Azam Khan termed the role of religious scholars (Ulamas) as of vital importance, and suggested to develop a well-devised strategy to engage local Ulemas to educate the people so that the polio program could be made more effective and result-oriented.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti along with Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a press conference.

Nawaz books his ticket to return home on 21st

LONDON (INP): Former three-time prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has booked his air ticket for Pakistan, source said on Monday. Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Nawaz Sharif will land at Abu Dhabi International Airport from London on October 21 from where he will fly to Lahore on the same date.

Nawaz Sharif has booked a ticket for Ethad Airways' business class. The sources informed that he has booked Ethad Airways Flight EY 243 which will land at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport at 6:25 pm. The PML-N supremo will be accompanied by his staff and personal advisors including Muhammad Waqar, Dr Adnan and Mian Nasir Janjua.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui will also be accompanying the former prime minister. Several party leaders and former members of parliament also booked their seats on the same flight from Abu Dhabi, sources said adding that the PML-N workers from different walks of life would arrive at Abu Dhabi airport to receive them.

Talking to the media Sunday, PML-N senior leader and former federal minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said that Nawaz Sharif's return to the homeland on October 21 was irreversible. The PML-N supremo who was serving a sentence in jail following his conviction in a corruption case had left the country in November 2019 after getting permission from the Islamabad High Court which allowed him to go to the United Kingdom to get medical treatment for his ailment.

In February 2020, the then government had declared Nawaz Sharif an absconder, and later in the same year, an accountability court had declared him a proclaimed offender in the Toshakhana vehicles reference. It bears mentioning that in June 2023, in what was seen as a move to pave the way for Nawaz's return, both houses of the parliament passed the Elections (Amendment) Act 2023, which empowered the Election Commission of Pakistan to unilaterally fix the date for elections and also limits the lawmakers' disqualification period to five years with retrospective effect. In June, an accountability court also acquitted Nawaz in a reference pertaining to the alleged illegal allotment of plots in 1986 to the owner of a media house.

Nawaz Sharif has been living in Britain for the last four years in self-exile and has decided to return on Oct 21.

Sanam, others sent on remand

LAHORE (INP): In vandalism case, Sanam Javed Khan and other Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) woman activist on Monday were sent on a 14-day judicial remand. According to the report submitted by the police to the court, Sanam Javed Khan was identified in the case related to attack police van.

Police urged the court to grant the physical remand of PTI women activists in police van attack case. However, the court rejected the physical remand plea and sent the PTI women activist on 14-day physical remand where Ashima and Shah Bano were discharged from the case upon no evidence of their involvement in the vandalism case.

Policemen involvement in extortion ATC extends physical remand for three days

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar extended physical remand of two policemen for three days after the completion of 5 days earlier remand in case of extortion and attacking a residence with hand grenade, on Monday.

According to the prosecution, the policemen named Abdul Qadir and Hayat Khel were involved in extortion and attacking residence of Local Government member with hand grenade.

Police have taken Abdul Qadir and Hayat Khel into custody and requested for extension of physical remand for further interrogation and investigation. ATC Peshawar has extended physical remand of two policemen for three days involved in extortion and attacking LG member residence at Bara after arguments.

Meanwhile, ATC extended physical remand of alleged terrorist for five days involved transportation of explosive through loader-rickshaw and planning terrorist attack. Investigation Officer requested for extension of physical remand of Haroon Rashid after completion of 10 days remand. He informed that Haroon Rashid was arrested by security forces at Nalai check post while carrying explosive hidden in gross via loader-rickshaw vehicle. Investigation Officer argued that interrogation isn't completed and requested for extension of remand. ATC had granted five days physical remand of alleged terrorist after arguments.

Moreover, Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has rejected Contempt of Court (COC) against Inspector

General of Police (IGP) Sindh in arrest of Opposition Leader Haleem Adil Sheikh. The counsel argued that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Haleem Adil Sheikh was arrested by Sindh despite PHC order that court would be informed regarding arrest of accused on bail. The arrest of PTI leader is lay in the jurisdiction of contempt of court, counsel added.

Additional Advocate General Danyal Chamkani argued that petitioner was arrested in another case while PHC had granted transit bail in three cases. ATC has rejected police plea for remand after obtaining bail. AAG added. Additional Advocate General argued that it is doesn't lay in the jurisdiction of COC because Haleem Adil Sheikh is arrested in First Information Report (FIR) No: 218 while PHC has granted bail in other cases.

MDCAT scandal: 134 more suspects identified

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major progress in Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) test scandal, the authorities in Peshawar have identified 134 more suspected candidates on Monday.

The Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA) officials have said that these individuals will now appear before the UFM Committee. Their papers, too, will be presented in the court, they have said, and added, "When the papers of 3,200 successful candidates were rechecked, it was found out that they had not done the numerical work."

The officials have said that 3,100 candidates, however, did the rough work. As many as 219 candidates were caught red-handed while cheating with Bluetooth.

After the scandal was reported, the caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had to declare the results of the MDCAT void, and announce that the exam would now be reconducted. Earlier this month, over 40 candidates, including 20 females, had been arrested while solving papers with the help of Bluetooth device. Police had also lodged several cases in this connection. Secretary of Higher Education Anila Durrani told media that there was a gang that took hefty amounts from students in return for helping them solve the test with the help of Bluetooth.

IMF team to visit this month

ISLAMABAD (INP): An IMF mission will arrive in the last week of October for economic review of the standby arrangement agreement, it was learnt on Monday. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Ministry of Energy, State Bank of Pakistan, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), have been instructed to prepare their implementation reports on the IMF conditions.

The IMF mission will hold talks on the review with the economic managers for over one week. The energy sector's circular debt, FBR revenue generation and market-based currency exchange rate will be key points of the economic review. The visiting IMF officials will also review external financing, circular debt management plan, and issuance of bonds.

The team of global lender will review the adjustment and re-basing in the prices of electricity and gas as per the conditions of the standby agreement. The Ministry of Finance has assured the IMF, a reduction of 180 bnu rupees in circular debt of the power sector by June 2024.

The mission during its stay in Pakistan will also hold meetings with various political parties and discuss the next general elections in the country. The talks for the second tranche of the IMF bailout will likely to be held in the last week of October, media had reported recently.

Faizabad sit-in SC says parties in case have chance to present facts

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Supreme Court on Monday issued a written order in the Faizabad sit-in review case, saying all parties involved in the matter was being given another opportunity to present facts.

The four-page order linked by Chief Justice Faiz Isa says that they could submit their replies through affidavits by Oct 27 while the next hearing is scheduled for Nov 1. According to the court order, the attorney general said during the hearing that the defence ministry did not want to pursue the review plea it had filed. The Intelligence Bureau (IB), Pemra (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) and

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) too requested to withdraw the review petitions.

However, Sheikh Rashid – who is also among the petitioners – sought more time to hire the service of a new counsel while Ijazul Haq objected to the paragraph 4 of the judgment and raised four more questions during the hearing.

The order mentions that some of the parties is given more time due to their absence. Moreover, some people stated in public that they knew what had actually happened during the Faizabad sit-in episode and that the court did not take into account their viewpoint. The stance under paragraph 17 of the

Faizabad sit-in case judgment is surprising for the court, Chief Justice Isa notes in the written order.

In this regard, the order recalls that the court had mentioned in the Faizabad sit-in verdict that any party could submit its perspective in written form. Meanwhile, the chief justice also observed that the attorney general had argued that the Faizabad sit-in was for limited period and the judgment should not cover a wider scope.

It is important to note that the then prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had again stated during a recent TV talk show that he was ready to share the facts about the episode if the court provided a chance to him.

Corruption deteriorated country's economy: Siraj

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul-Haq has said that corruption, mismanagement, and reliance on an interest-based financial system have deteriorated economy and emphasized the need of competent leadership to rectify these issues.

Addressing a seminar titled "JI's Strategy for Revival of National Economy," held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Monday, he announced the JI's intention to initiate the Green Pakistan Project after coming into power with the support of the people.

Sirajul Haq said that the initiative was aimed to allocate millions of currently unused acres of land to skilled young individuals, with the goal of transforming it into productive, fertile land for agriculture.

ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, earlier, welcomed the JI chief and moderated the session.

The JI chief outlined a comprehensive plan for the nation's development over a 50-year period, emphasizing the incorporation of this plan into the national curriculum. He proposed replacing the existing taxation system with a model based on Zakat, enabling over 70 million people to contribute to the national economy and combat poverty. He said the JI demanded proportional system of democracy with free and fair elections.

Siraj criticized the rulers' failure to heed the recommendations of economic experts and business chambers, contrasting this with the global practice where governments typically give weight to such advice. He argued that the ruling elite often prioritized their own interests, resulting in the

hijacking of politics and democracy by corrupt elements. He pointed out that individuals with immense wealth could easily manipulate and win elections.

Highlighting the economic progress of neighboring countries, the JI lamented the contrast in Pakistan, where citizens were queuing up for basic necessities like flour. He accused the rulers of neglecting self-reliance and over-relying on foreign loans, making the country economically vulnerable. He stressed that a strong economy was crucial for Pakistan's global standing and emphasized the need for capable and honest leadership to achieve this goal. He announced the JI's commitment to a peaceful struggle for the rights of the people, mentioning an upcoming sit-in protest in front of the Governor House in Karachi scheduled for October 6th.

Govt moves LHC against bail granted to May 9 accused

LAHORE (PPI): The Punjab government on Monday approached the Lahore High Court against the decision of the anti-terrorism court to grant bail to the accused of the May 9 tragedy. The prosecutor general filed the applications seeking bail cancellation of the May 9 accused on behalf of the Government of Punjab. A two-member bench headed by Justice Aliya Neelam will hear the Punjab government petitions.

On September 23, an anti-terrorism court in Lahore granted post-arrest bail to nine accused out of 63 involved in the case of Jinnah House attack following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan in May. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders who were granted bail by the ATC included Sanam Javed, Shah Bano, Ashmia Shujah, Rubina Jameel, Mubeen Qadri, Syed Faisal Akhtar, Ali Hassan, Afshan Tariq, and Muhammad Qasim.

The prosecution had placed its arguments that the accused persons were

fully involved in creating mayhem and there was substantial evidence of their involvement in the attack on Jinnah House. It requested the court to dismiss their bail pleas. However, the court accepted the arguments of the counsels for the accused who contended that they had been implicated in a forged case merely to disgrace them despite the fact that they had nothing to do with this case.

The Sarwar Road police had lodged a case against the accused on the charge of creating a law and order situation and vandalizing the Jinnah House following the arrest of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman.

General elections: LHC seeks response from respondents: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday served notices to the respondents on a plea seeking general elections in Pakistan within 90 days. The Lahore High Court while hearing the plea moved by Barrister Muqsat Saleem issued notices to the respondents including the Election Commission of Pakistan,

the president of Pakistan and others.

The court observed no political party is interested in ensuring elections within 90 as a plea has been moved from an individual. The plea moved by Barrister Muqsat stated that holding general elections in January is a 'violation' of the constitution and the court's orders. The plea further stated that President Arif Alvi should be ordered to announce the election date and nullify the notification issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding elections in January.

Last month, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced that general elections would be held in the last week of January 2024. The electoral body was under immense pressure from the political parties regarding the announcement of the election date. The announcement came days after the ECP said it had scheduled a meeting with political parties next month to discuss the code of conduct for general elections.

(Continued from Page 1)

the current situation of the provinces and the government efforts. The meeting was also informed that Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir had been completely free from the polio virus, however two cases were reported in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Caretaker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan, top officials of National Task Force, chief ministers of all provinces, chief secretaries and other high officials of concerned departments attended the meeting.

PM launches anti-polio vaccine drive targeting 44m children: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar launched the five-day anti-polio vaccination drive targeting around 44 million children across the country.

The prime minister initiated the campaign by administering anti-polio vaccine oral drops and vitamin A to children, here at the PM House. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said 350,000 polio

workers would participate in the drive to administer anti-polio vaccine to 44 million children aged 0-5 years.

He termed the polio workers as the nation's heroes who braved challenges while making the anti-polio drive successful. He also mentioned the support of the international partners in helping Pakistan to eradicate polio. Kakar urged the religious scholars and clerics to play their role in convincing the parents to get their children administered with anti-polio vaccine.

"It is our religious, moral, and social responsibility to save our future generations from this crippling disease," he said. "We have to make Pakistan free from polio." Interim Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan and senior officials were also present.

Chairman Islamic Ideology Council calls on PM: Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Qibla Ayaz called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

During the meeting, Qibla Ayaz paid tribute to the prime minister on suc-

cessfully representing Pakistan in the United National General Assembly (UNGA). The chairman of the Council informed the prime minister about the current status of religious harmony in the country.

He also invited PM Kakar to attend the general meeting of the Council of Islamic Ideology. The prime minister said the Islamic Ideology Council had been playing an active role in maintaining law and order and religious harmony in the country. He said the Council should have to be more active to promote religious harmony across the country.

Meanwhile, the former Speaker Balochistan Assembly Jamal Shah Kakar called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, the PM Office said. The meeting discussed various matters pertaining to Balochistan.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam met here and discussed various matters, the PM Office said. The matters pertaining to the Law Ministry came under discussion.