

Ex-Sindh CM summoned

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Former Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah has been summoned by an Islamabad accountability court in the Nooriabad Power Plant corruption reference. The AC has recently revived the case against the PPP leader after the SC annulled the amendments to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO). The NAB has accused Shah of misusing authority and awarding contracts without feasibility studies of the projects.



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Two martyred by Afghan forces's fire at Chaman Border

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two innocent Pakistani citizens on Wednesday embraced martyrdom after an Afghan sentry employed at the Friend Ship Gate of Chaman Border Crossing along the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border in Balochistan Province opened unprovoked and indiscriminate firing at pedestrians moving from Pakistan to Afghanistan.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the incident occurred at the outbound gate, at 1600 hours, located on the zero line. The two innocents who embraced martyrdom included a 12-year-old child, while another child was injured.

The Pakistan Army troops exercised extreme restraint and avoided any exchange of fire in the presence of innocent passengers to avoid collateral damage. However, the dead bodies of the deceased were shifted to DHQ Hospital Chaman, and the injured child, who was immediately evacuated by security forces, was under treatment.

The Afghan authorities have been approached to inquire the reason for such irresponsible and reckless acts, apprehend and hand over the culprit to Pakistani authorities, it added.

Kabul reacts over expulsion of Afghan nationals from Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's decision to expel undocumented Afghan nationals was unacceptable" and urged authorities to revisit the policy. The statement was expressed by Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on Wednesday.

In a statement posted on social media platform X (erstwhile Twitter) in both Urdu and English on Wednesday, Mujahid said the treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was unacceptable and authorities should revise their policy in this regard. He said Afghan refugees were not involved in Pakistan's security problems and as long as they leave Pakistan voluntarily, Pakistan should tolerate them. The Pakistani Foreign Office has yet to issue a statement on this matter. In addition to the Afghan spokesperson's criticism, the policy announcement has triggered concerns from several quarters. In a post on X on Wednesday, former PPP senator Farhatullah Babar said the government was once again playing football with refugees and manipulating for some other objectives.

"IAG (Interim Afghan Government) is also expected to exercise control over its troops and impart discipline to act responsibly in order to avoid the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

Pakistan remains committed to contributing towards peace, prosperity, and development through positive and constructive bilateral relations, however, such unpleasant occurrences have the potential to harm the sincere intent and pur-

pose," the ISPR said.

The development comes a day after Pakistan told hundreds of thousands of Afghans living illegally in Pakistan to leave voluntarily until November 1 or face deportation. The order came as Pakistan grapples with a rise in attacks the government blames on militants operating from Afghanistan. Interim Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti said 1.7 million Afghans were in Pakistan illegally.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing the meeting of apex committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

2 martyred, 3 wounded in Chaghi blast

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Two people were martyred and three were wounded in a roadside explosion in Balochistan's Chaghi area on Wednesday, official said.

According to the Levies force, the blast took place in Chaghi bazaar — at a distance of 60 kilometres from Dalbandin near the Pak-Afghan border — when a security forces vehicle was passing by.

Security forces have surrounded the area, while the wounded have been moved to Dalbandin hospital for medical treatment, Levies said. The attack comes days after more than 60 people died in two separate suicide attacks in Balochistan's Mastung and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu city on September 29.

Meanwhile, a patrolling post in the Kundal area of Punjab's Mianwali district also came under attack by 10 to 12 terrorists. One policeman was martyred as security forces successfully repelled the attack killing two terrorists.

Usman Dar announces quitting PTI

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's close aide Usman Dar Wednesday announced leaving the former ruling party, with May 9 — the day when PTI workers ransacked state installations after the ex-premier's arrest — being the primary reason behind his decision.

Dar, who served as a special assistant during PTI's tenure, said Imran "brain washed" party workers to thwart his arrest. "He used workers as a human shield," the former government official claimed.

Dar has become the latest leader to quit the party, joining a long list of leaders including Fawad Chaudhry, Shireen Mazari, and Pervez Khattak — who parted ways with Imran following May 9. A crackdown was also launched against those involved in the events, leading to the arrest of hundreds of party workers and leaders — including vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

CTD guns down four TTP terrorists

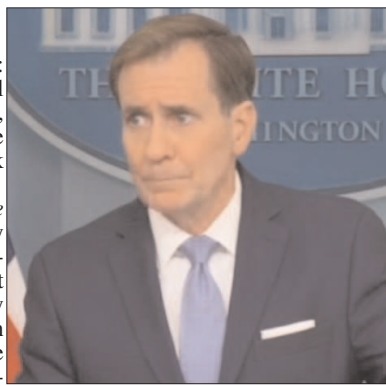
F.P. Report

BUNER: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Wednesday gunned down four alleged TTP terrorists during an operation in Buner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the CTD spokesperson, the TTP terrorists were involved in the extortion of money, target killing and other terror activities.

The spokesperson also claimed to have recovered four hand grenades, Pistols, bullets, six kg of explosive materials and other weapons from the terrorists' possession. Earlier, the CTD killed four alleged terrorists during an operation in Aghbarg area of Quetta. According to the spokesperson of CTD, the killed terrorists belonged to the banned organization.

Let Pakistan speak for its role in Ukraine: Kirby

Jalil Afridi



WASHINGTON DC: White House National Security Spokesperson, John Kirby said that he will let Pakistan speak for its role in Ukraine.

When asked by *The Frontier Post* that why Pakistan's role and support to Ukraine is not being highlighted by the United States, John Kirby said that there are more than fifty countries which are supporting Ukraine in one way or another and "we let those countries speak for themselves." He also stated that some countries which don't like to talk about the support they are giving to Ukraine.

To another question by *The Frontier Post* regarding a big protest rally in front of the White House by Pakistani Americans who condemned the removal and arrest of former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran

Khan, John Kirby said that this is domestic issue of Pakistani people and it's government and that "they have to deal with it".

While replying to a question by a correspondent of Press of India regarding the Sikh killing in Canada by an Indian diplomat, John Kirby said that the allegations of Canada are of serious nature and that he will leave it to India and Canada to solve this issue.

When asked by a Voice

of America correspondent about the normalization of ties with Taliban, John Kirby said that the US has not recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan and that the US will keep holding them accountable until they fulfill their commitments especially with regard to women having access to education. With regard to Afghanistan, Kirby also said that "terrorism is still a threat."

With regard to the Russia Ukraine war and the release of more aid by the United States, John Kirby said that the US will support Ukraine "for as long as it takes." John Kirby further said that every Committee in the US Congress and Senate has recommended the support to Ukraine and that this war has US national security interests involved.

COAS, US Defense Secy discuss 'developments'

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and US Defense Secretary Lloyd J Austin have discussed "areas of mutual interest as well as recent regional developments", according to the US Department of Defense.

In a brief statement, the US Defense Department noted that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Munir and US Defense Secretary Austin, during a phone call, discussed "areas of mutual interest" and "recent regional developments" between the two countries. However, the Inter-Services Public Relations,

Pakistan military's media wing, has yet to report the development. Brig-General Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon Press Secretary, confirmed the telephonic conversation between the top officials.

This was the second high-level interaction between US defence secretary and Pakistan Army Chief since the latter took over as the army chief last year in November. In December 2022, US Central Command (Centcom) Chief General Michael Erik Kurilla had visited Pakistan and held a meeting with the army chief. Terrorist activities have alarmingly surged in Pakistan, as according to a

recent report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an independent think-tank, at least 271 militant attacks took place during the first half of 2023, claiming the lives of 389 people and wounding 656 others.

It may be mentioned here that this is the second time that Gen Munir and the US defense secretary spoke over the telephone. The first time the Pakistan army chief and the US defense secretary spoke was in January. The US defence secretary had called the Pakistan army chief to congratulate on assuming the charge then.

Cipher case against Imran, Qureshi adjourned

ISLAMABAD (INP): The special court has adjourned the hearing of the cipher case against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi till October 9. The court did not provide the copies of the FIA challan to the accused today and they would be given the copies at the next hearing.

The court rejected the request made by the lawyers of the accused who sought a halt to the trial proceedings on the grounds that the Islamabad High Court is currently hearing Imran's bail application in the cipher case and that the high court has reserved its verdict on the plea challenging the in-camera proceedings of the case.

However, the special court judge ruled that the Islamabad High Court had not passed any stay order, therefore his court could not stop the proceedings of the case. The FIA prosecutor requested for an in-camera hearing, beseeching the court to keep the public out of the case. The judge, however, remarked that there is no public as the court is already holding an in-camera hearing.

Earlier, the special court judge reached Adiala Jail to hold the trial of former pre-

mier Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher leaking case. It was the first hearing of the cipher trial in the Adiala Jail after the transfer of PTI Chairman Imran Khan to this prison. Before that, the hearings of the case were held at Attock Jail.

Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain heard the case. The PTI lawyers and FIA prosecutors also reached the jail. Twelve PTI lawyers were allowed to enter the prison facility to attend the trial proceedings. It was expected that the PTI chairman and vice chairman Qureshi would be provided copies of the FIA challan which was submitted to the court last week.

The PTI lawyers were supposed to file miscellaneous applications to stop the distribution of copies of challan to the accused. In case of distribution of challan copy, one-week time would be fixed for the indictment of Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Outside Adiala Jail, security arrangements were tight and security was on high alert.

The FIA has declared both Imran and Qureshi 'principal accused' in the case, requesting the court to

hold a trial of the duo. The investigation agency invoked in the challan sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act which may lead to the death sentence, or two to 14 years' imprisonment, if proved.

Yesterday, the Ministry of Law and Justice said that it had no objection to holding former premier and PTI Chairman Imran Khan's trial in the cipher case at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi where he has been incarcerated these days. The ministry issued a notification in this regard after an inquiry was sent to it by the special judge regarding the venue of the trial.

Earlier on Tuesday, Special Judge of Official Secrets Act Court Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain wrote a letter to the Ministry of Law and Justice seeking its opinion on whether the hearing on the cipher case tomorrow would be held in Adiala Jail or the judicial complex. "Is there any security concern to bring the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman to the court?" the text of the letter read. "The PTI chairman is an important personality and the head of a political party. His security will have to be taken into consideration by the court," it added.



Illegal immigrants have 27 days to leave Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan have only 27 days left to leave the country and face deportation. Foreigners living illegally must leave Pakistan by October 31 or law enforcement agencies will ensure their arrest and deportation.

It should be noted that in the meeting of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan, it had been decided to take strict action against the illegal immigrants living in Pakistan and the trade and properties of illegal immigrants.

Police arrest 782 illegal immigrants in 23 days: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested 782 Afghan immigrants in last 23 days over charge of living illegally in Karachi. Police department in various operations in Karachi's eight districts from September 09 to Oct 02, arrested 782 Afghans illegally staying in the city, officials said.

Most of the illegal immigrants were arrested in Malir, Korangi and East districts, police said. Police arrested 204 illegal immigrants in East district, 135 in Malir and 114 in Korangi districts. Moreover, 126 Afghans arrested from Keamari, 90 from Central and 58 from Karachi West district, officials said. Police also arrested 35 Afghans from the City police district and 20 from South district, according to the police.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad following the apex committee meeting, the caretaker interior minister Sarfraz Bugti said that the immigrants have been given a deadline of November 01 to leave the country. Bugti further said that a task force has also been constituted which will take action against illegal immigrants.

"Pakistan is the only country permitting entry of people even without a passport," the minister declared. The meeting of the National Apex Committee with PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in the chair decided to evict foreigners, illegally living in Pakistan.

SIFC body reviews major macro-economic issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The apex committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on Wednesday reviewed major macro-economic issues affecting the investment climate including inordinate delays in restructuring/ privatisation of cash bleeding state owned enterprises (SOEs).

The committee also resolved with consensus on fast-tracking the privatisation process and hence, in the larger interest of the country, reduce recurring losses to the national exchequer. The SIFC convened 6th meeting of its

apex committee to review various initiatives being spearheaded through the SIFC forum.

The meeting was chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, members of the cabinet, provincial chief ministers and the high level government officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The ministries apprised the forum about the practical steps undertaken during the last one month to improve business and investment environment in the country. The commit-

tee expressed overall satisfaction regarding the ongoing negotiations with foreign and domestic investors for timely realisation of various investment prospects.

The prime minister appreciated the good work put forth by various ministries and departments and directed to continue with the 'Whole of the Government' approach to overcome economic challenges being faced by Pakistan. The chief of army staff assured unflinching resolve of Pakistan army to support the government's endeavours for a sustainable path towards economic recovery.



PESHAWAR: Pakistan People's Party central leader Sherjeel Inam Memon addressing party workers.

PPP to take country out of all crisis: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: People's Party leader Sharjeel Inam Memon has stated that we should not respond to anyone's abuse with more abuse; instead, we should reveal the truth through reasoned arguments. In the current economic situation, it is essential to instill positive hope in people, and the country needs proactive leadership.

During a conference in Peshawar, Sharjeel Inam Memon mentioned that Bilawal Bhutto has eradicated the toxic culture from all over Pakistan. It's not about being against any particular culture. Social media targeted the families of individuals.

Sharjeel Inam Memon also pointed out that some members of a party used social media for malicious purposes, attempting to tarnish Pakistan's image. Responding to such negativity with abuse is not our approach; we never resort to such behavior. No tit-for-tat.

Furthermore, he emphasized that our leadership has made significant sacrifices for democracy, the constitu-

tion, and the people of our country. Apart from the People's Party, no other party has made such sacrifices. Our leaders faced imprisonment but never fled the country. The Peoples Party did not launch campaigns against the judiciary or institutions. Our collective effort should be to strengthen the nation.

He noted that when the PTI government left office, Pakistan faced two major challenges: economic issues and international isolation. Sharjeel Inam Memon mentioned that Bilawal Bhutto has worked extensively to improve relations with all countries, convincing the world that Pakistan is a friend to all, not an enemy to anyone. Bilawal Bhutto has been vocal about the situation in Gujarat and Kashmir, boldly representing Pakistan's interests in India. He also stated that by implementing Asif Zardari's vision, we can revitalize the economy. Asif Ali Zardari laid the foundation for CPEC, and the People's Party can play a significant role in improving Pakistan's current situation.

Sherjeel also talking to

media here at the residence of the Secretary Information PPP KP, Amjad Khan Afridi has said that the chairman PTI Imran Khan is imprisoned due to his own misdeeds. He said that Imran Khan has sold gifts received from international dignitaries and orchestrated attacks on national institutions and public properties on May 9th and 10th. Former provincial president PPP KP, Hamayun Khan, Amjad Khan Afrid, Haji Farzand Ali and Gohar Afridi flanked him on the occasion.

The Sindh based PPP leader called for investigation into Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Peshawar and Billion Tree Tsunami projects. He said that the track record of PPP shows that it had always faced challenges with bravery and was capable of steering the country out of all crises. He said that in the current situation, PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari has once again emerged as the only leader capable of taking all institutions and stakeholders on board to put the country on the track of progress and development.



Workshop on job crafting held at UoS

LAHORE (APP): The Department of Psychology of the University of Sargodha (UoS) organized a one-day workshop on "Job Crafting in a gendered perspective: A tool for teacher's leadership" here on Wednesday.

The aim of workshop was to capacity building of teachers at higher academia.

Chairperson Department of Psychology Prof Dr Najma Iqbal Malik, Dr Hafsa Jamshaid from National Textile University, Faisalabad and Dr Irsa Fatima Makhdoom, Lecturer Department of Psychology were spokespersons for the workshop. Teachers from various departments of UOS, including education, psychology, engineering college, social work as well as from Ambala College and Govt Graduate College for women, Chandni Chowk participated in the workshop.

CPWB rescued 127 abandoned children in Lahore during September

LAHORE (APP): The Child Protection & Welfare Bureau (CPWB) rescued 127 abandoned children in the provincial capital while district offices handed over 602 rescued children to the parents during the month of September.

This was disclosed by Child Protection & Welfare Bureau Chairperson Sarah Ahmed in a press statement issued here on Wednesday. She said that rescue operations are being conducted on daily basis by the rescue teams under the anti-child trafficking campaign. In this regard, complaints about abandoned children are also being addressed on Saturdays and Sundays through rescue operations. She further mentioned that children from areas such as Campus Bridge, Gulberg Main Market, Johar Town, Akbar Chowk, Bhatta Chowk, Defence, Barkat Market, Kareem Block Market, Moon Market, MM Alam Road, Data Darbar, and other areas have been rescued.

Chairperson Sarah Ahmed urged people to report abandoned children and child trafficking activities to the Child Help Line 1121.

AC crackdown on price hikes; arrests one

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner City Islamabad Waqas Rashid on Wednesday conducted surprise inspections in various areas of the City Subdivision to ensure compliance with the notified rates displayed by the ICT administration.

Acting on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, the crackdown on price hikes was aimed at providing relief to the common man.

During the inspections, Waqas Rashid arrested one person and issued warnings to other violators. The arrest was made in a case where the shopkeeper was found to be charging exorbitant prices for essential commodities. The arrested person was transported to the police station for further action. The operation against price increases is being carried out on a daily basis in Islamabad.

The district administration is committed to provide relief to the people and ensuring that essential commodities are available at affordable prices.

CM Punjab announces financial aid for injured police worker

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi announced financial assistance

for the injured polio worker who was shot accidentally during duty in Khushab.

The CM stated that the Punjab government would provide Rs 2 million in financial aid to the injured polio worker,

Shahnaz Abdul Hameed.

The decision was made during the 28th cabinet meeting held in Rawalpindi.

Shahnaz Abdul Hameed, who was severely injured when shots were fired accidentally during her duty in Khushab, is now in stable condition after a successful operation at Jinnah Hospital Lahore.

Minister reviews Mineral dept's online cadastre portal

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals Ibrahim Murad chaired a meeting to review the Mineral Department's online cadastre portal.

During the meeting Ibrahim Murad expressed Punjab's commitment to attracting foreign investment in the mining sector.

He emphasized the numerous investment

opportunities available in Punjab that must be effectively capitalized upon.

The Provincial Minister directed Punjab Mineral Company to expedite work on the 8 billion-dollar copper project in Chiniot.

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals Ibrahim Murad said that although the project has experienced delays, earnest efforts will

be made to address the underlying issues and move it closer to completion for the benefit of public welfare. Ibrahim Murad underscored that Punjab holds the second-largest salt reserves globally, yet there is untapped potential in its export capabilities. The minister directed the department's officers to present a feasibility report on iron and coal in Chakwal.

Former MNA condoles girl's murder

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Former Member National Assembly (MNA) Mir Nadir Khan Magsoi condoled with the family Nazia Channa, on Wednesday.

Former MNA and Pakistan People's Party

leader condemned murder of the girl and claimed that culprits would be sent behind bars to face law of the land. He claimed that Nazia was daughter of Sindh and all residents would stand to obtain justice for the deceased.

During press PPP leaders including Ali Raza, Ijaz Kuhlro and Councilor Sadiq Tenio accompanied former MNA while Senior Superintendent of Police Qambar claimed that progress had been made in the offense.



12th National Rescue Challenge kicks off at Emergency Services Academy

LAHORE (APP): Emergency Services Department (ESD) Secretary Dr Rizwan Naseer on Wednesday officially inaugurated the 12th National Rescue Challenge (NRC) at Emergency Services Academy (Rescue 1122), Lahore.

This significant event aims to improve coordination and establish uniform standards for emergency services throughout the country. It will continue for three days, from 4 to 6 October 2023, and 19 teams from all over Pakistan are participating in six different challenges.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rizwan Naseer welcomed 19 participating teams from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gilgit Baltistan, Elite Police, Universities, NGOs and Volunteers Rescue Teams in 12th National Rescue Challenge. He wished them good luck and said that the Rescue Challenge will enhance professional competencies of rescuers to cope with emergencies and

disaster through healthy competition. It would also enhance coordination and professional capacity of Emergency Services of all provinces of the country. The three-day NRC 2023 has been organized in the

light of commonly faced challenges by the emergency services during response to medical emergencies, fire & rescue operations, water rescue and other complex emergencies across Pakistan.

اشتہار برائے حاضری

آپ کسی شاکر امیر ولد امیر بخش، جیل وارڈز حال انٹرنسٹ سنٹر لنڈی کوتل، سکسٹ فیمل کالونی، مکان نمبر 254، کیل احمد، بلاک B پشاور بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ آپ 30-07-2023 سے ڈیوٹی سے غیر حاضری ہوئے اور حال ڈیوٹی پر حاضری نہیں ہوئے۔ آپ کو 28-08-2023 مورخہ 2797 پر بطابق سپرنٹنڈنٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر جنرل پشاور تعلیمی نمبر 2797 مورخہ 28-08-2023 کو آپ کے کمرے کے پتہ پر نوٹس بھیجا گیا اور آپ کو ہدایت کی گئی کہ چندہ دن کے اندر اندر ڈیوٹی پر حاضری ہو کر اپنی غیر حاضری کی وجہ بتائیں مگر آپ ابھی تک نا ڈیوٹی پر حاضری ہوئے اور نہ ہی اپنی غیر حاضری کی وجہ پر تہمتی کے دفتر میں جت کر دئی۔

اس لئے آپ کو بذریعہ اشتہار ہذا آخری بار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اشتہار ہذا کے شائع ہونے کے 15 دن کے اندر اندر سپرنٹنڈنٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر جنرل پشاور کے سامنے پیش ہو کر اپنی غیر حاضری کی وجہ بتائیں بصورت دیگر آپ کے خلاف کیسٹروٹ کارروائی عمل میں لائی جائیگی جو کہ آپ کی ملازمت سے براہ راست پر متعلق ہوگی۔

سپرینٹنڈنٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر جنرل پشاور

INF(P) 2420/23



LAHORE: Former Punjab Chief Minister and PML-N central leader Hamza Shahbaz Sharif is addressing the Workers Convention at Model Town.

IGP starts new series 'Police Station Diaries'

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has started a new series entitled Police Station Diaries of Punjab Police.

In the first program of Police Station Diaries, IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar talked with DPO Sargodha Muhammad Faisal Khan and AIG Admin and former DPO Sargodha Amara Athar.

During the interview, the recent performance of Sargodha Police was reviewed and high profile cases traced by Police teams were discussed.

Muhammad Faisal, DPO Sargodha said during the conversation that the Sargodha police foiled the deliberate conspiracy of inter-religious dispute and sectarianism with the timely actions and effective strategy, several cases of blind murders including the abduction of a newborn child and other high profile cases were solved using modern

technology and accused were arrested by working day and night.

AIG Admin Amara Athar highlighted the modern professional training and working of victim support officers of Punjab Police.

IG Punjab also spoke with the SHOs and investigating officers who investigated the cases and arrested the criminals.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that the performance of other districts including Lahore will be reviewed in the upcoming episodes of Police Station Diaries.

Free medical camp organized in Police Lines: On the instructions of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, a free medical camp was held at Police Lines Qila Gujar Singh here on Wednesday for the health welfare of police employees.

A large number of police employees participated in the medical

camp organized in collaboration with Mukhtaran Rafiq Foundation, and availed free medical facilities.

AIG Welfare Naveed Ajmal visited the medical camp and conducted a medical check-up.

Ophthalmologists in the medical camp conducted free check-ups of patients with eye diseases, free medicines were also provided to the police officers in the camp along with medical tests.

Senior doctors and consultants of various disciplines were present in the camp all the time and gave necessary guidelines for treatment by doing check-ups and necessary tests of the employees.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that all possible steps will be taken for the health welfare & treatment of the police force and their families and facilities will be provided to the employees coming to the camp.

SSP distributes welfare fund cheques among police veterans

LAHORE (APP): On the special instructions of CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamayana, the process of distribution of welfare funds among police employees is going on.

SSP Admin Atif Nazir distributed cheques of welfare funds among police veterans and parents of special children at the CCPO office here on Wednesday. Four million rupees have been distributed in the month of September, while the series which started from September 1 is still going on. Around 149 families have benefited from welfare funds in the month of September.

LDA auctions 9 plots for Rs 103.9484 mln

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority on Wednesday held grand public auction of various plots at LDA Community Center Garden Town in which 9 plots were auctioned for Rs 103.9484 million.

A large number of citizens participated in the auction. In the public auction, lease rights of the marquee site covering an area of six kanals in Jubilee Town were auctioned for Rs 13,500,000 per annum; Lease rights of 11 kanal five marla parking site located in Gulshan Ravi Civic Center were auctioned for Rs 8,800,000 per annum; A one kanal

area residential plot No. 5 Block B in Jubilee Town was auctioned for Rs 42,770,400; Three Marla 44 Sq.Ft Commercial Plot No. 179-A/11 (Corner) Block F in Sabzar was auctioned for Rs 9,425,600; Three Marla Commercial Plot No. 547 Block D in Tajpura was auctioned for Rs 7,261,500; Plot No. 1/Q, Sector B2 located in Quaid-e-Azam Town was auctioned for Rs 6,702,400; Plot No. 1-R Sector B Two located in Quaid-e-Azam Town was auctioned for Rs 6,070,500; Commercial Plot No. 1-S located in

Quaid-e-Azam Town Sector B 2 was auctioned for Rs 5,678,000; and Commercial plot 1-T 37 located in Quaid-e-Azam Town, Sector B 2, was auctioned for Rs 4,000,000.

LDA Auction Committee members Additional Director General Imran Ali, Director Finance Kashif Imran, Director Housing Ten Ali Bin Sohail, Director Avenue One Rehan Athar, Director Private Housing Schemes Mahmood Ahmed, Director Housing Shahbazul Haq Ghurki and other officers supervised the public auction.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (NORTH) IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT PESHAWAR PHONE # 091-9212123, E-MAIL chiefnorthirr@gmail.com						
NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING (Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure) (2 nd Time)						
Irrigation Department intends to execute the following ADP works. Sealed Bids are invited from the interested, eligible Contractors/Firms possessing valid registration with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in relevant Category & Code of Specialization and valid enlistment with the Irrigation Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in relevant category of works and cost for open competitive bidding through Single Stage Two Envelope Electronic Bidding System.						
S. No	Name of Scheme	Estimated Cost (Million)	02% Earnest Money+Stamp Duty (Rs)	Bidding Entry Fee @ 0.03%	Required Category of PEC & Code of Specialization	Last date of Submission of Technical & Financial Proposals
	ADP No. 2282-210754 "Uplift of Barandoo Water Channel of Annawar Shahbandi District Buner"					
1	Construction of Achelai Lift Irrigation Scheme District Buner Package-1	156.395	3167900/-	46,920/-	C-4 & Above CE-04, CE-10	26-10-2023 12:00 Noon
2	Construction of Achelai Lift Irrigation Scheme District Buner Package-2	51.841	1076820/-	15,555/-	C-5 & Above EE11, CE-09	-do-
TERMS AND CONDITIONS:						
(1) The interested Contractors/ Firms are required to provide Technical Proposal comprising information regarding Experience, Personnel Capabilities, Financial Status, Equipment Capabilities and other relevant information as explained in the Bid Soliciting Documents (one original one copy) in sealed envelopes & the Financial Proposal in separate envelope containing the Bid Security in Original @ 2% of the estimated cost in the shape of Call Deposit and an Additional Bid Security in Original@8% of the estimated cost in the shape of Call Deposit from scheduled banks, if the bidder quotes his rate further below than 10% on the engineer's estimate. (2) The Financial Bid shall be submitted electronically through E-Bidding System of Irrigation Department, not later than above specified date & time. (3) Bid Soliciting Documents containing Instructions to Bidders, Technical Evaluation Criteria, advertisement for Notice Inviting Bids and required forms to be filled by the bidders can be downloaded from the official website of Irrigation Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (www.irrigation.gkp.pk). (4) The Financial bids of the qualified bidders approved by the Competent Authority shall be opened by the notified committee after 10 days of uploading of evaluation on the Irrigation Department website. (5) Bidders shall provide copy of CNIC, Enlistment, Renewal, PEC Registration, KPRA Enlistment. (6) Electronic Bidding shall be done on "Above/ Below System" on BOQ/Engineer's Estimate, based on the MRS applicable. Only two digits after the decimal point shall be considered for evaluation purpose. (7) The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only Engineer Estimate. (8) The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineers Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated Cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. (9) Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and/or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2 nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. (10) In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof. (11) All the Bidders are bound to follow the instructions content KPRA Notification No.S.R.O.(14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22, dated 10-05-2022. (12) All Bidders are required to have valid Registration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act 2018 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act, XXI of 2013). (13) Electronic Bids shall be submitted electronically on or before the fix date/time. (14) Any Bidder who provides incorrect information shall stand disqualified and will be debarred. (15) Call Deposit of schedule Banks shall be acceptable. No Bank Cheque or Pay Order shall be acceptable. (16) The Competent Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any or all bids at any time prior to acceptance of a bid as per Para 47(i) of KPRA Rules 2014. (17) Bid Securities of 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd lowest bidders shall be retained till signing of the Contract Agreement with the lowest responsive bidder. (18) All the prevailing KPRA Act / Rules and other Government Notifications issued will be applicable. (19) Approval for tender process of the above scheme has already been granted by Election Commission of Pakistan vide No.F-10(4)/2023-Elec-II, dated 04-05-2023. (20) In case of identical lowest responsive bids, the successful bidder would be decided through toss.						
CHIEF ENGINEER (NORTH), Phone No.091-9212123						

INF(P): 2433/2023

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) INVITATION TO BID						
Sealed bids (in accordance with PPPRA Rule No. 36(b)) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-						
Description & Bid No.	Bid Fee (PKR)	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place	Last date for issuance of Bidding Documents	Basis PKR (Price)
Procurement of Power Amplifier (P/O Glide Slope-ILS Quetta) Make Select HQCAA/1992/215/XXLN	1,500/-	Rs. 124,500/-	24-10-2023 1100 Hours	24-10-2023 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	23-10-2023	F.O.R
Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents downloadable from the website www.caapakistan.com.pk (visible / downloadable after publication/uploading of Invitation to bid notice) and obtainable physically from the address given below on any working day between 0900 Hrs to 1230 Hrs by paying Bid Fee (non-refundable) through deposit slip in Account No. 6-1-2-20614-714-115525 (Title of account "Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority") in Habib Metropolitan Bank Ltd. Star Gate Branch Karachi and submitting the request letter along with bank deposit slip, proof of Active Taxpayer, GST/TIN certificates of the bidder. No Bidding Documents would be issued on the Bid opening date. Bids must be dropped in Bid drop Box placed at under mentioned office by or before due date as per schedule.						
Note: All bidders downloading the bidding document from CAA website shall immediately inform PCAA through Intimation letter (along with proof of active taxpayer list [ATL for sales tax and income tax] of FBR) at the address below OR on email: sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk , for inclusion in subsequent communication. PCAA will not be responsible for any lack of communication or non-receipt of information/intimation letter by bidders due to ignorance / violation of this instruction.						
Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period.						
PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk and CAA website www.caapakistan.com.pk .						
Warning: Any financial instrument submitted by bidder, if found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.						
Additional Director, Logistics (ANS), Logistics Center (South), HQs Civil Aviation Authority, JIAP Karachi Pakistan Tel: 021-99072265, 021-99072261 Fax: 021-99242675						
PID(K#) 1056/23						
www.caapakistan.com.pk						



Governor opens Mega Int'l Livestock Expo

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday inaugurated Mega International Livestock Expo that was organized by provincial livestock department.

The event attracted a significant turnout of farmers, landowners, stakeholders and representatives from various government and non-government organizations besides private companies.

The two-day International Livestock Expo featured over 60 diverse stalls showcasing agricultural machinery, fertilizers, seeds, dairy equipment, livestock and crop disease prevention solutions, vaccines, modern farming technologies, dairy products, livestock aqua feed, medicines, seeds and more.

The primary objective of the expo is to raise awareness among farmers

about livestock and agriculture production and its relationship to climate change. It also aims to promote crop production and make the province self-sufficient in meat, milk and egg production.

The expo was also aimed to provide valuable information and guidance to farmers, investors, and entrepreneurs looking to expand or start new ventures.

Additional Secretary

Livestock Asghar Ali, Director General Livestock Extension Dr. Alamzeb Mohmand, Director General Livestock Research Dr. Ijaz Ali, Director General Fisheries Dr. Khusrul Kaleem, Director General Agriculture Extension Jan Muhammad, Director General Agriculture Research Dr. Abdul Bari and President of Livestock Farmers Association Asif Awan also attended the inauguration ceremony.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali cutting a ribbon to inaugurate Mega International Livestock Expo.

Learning about China's socio economic growth need of hour



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan has prioritized enhancing cooperation in Energy, Mining, Information Technology and Agriculture as emphasized by the Dr. Najeib Ullah, Minister for Science and Technology, IT, Sports, and Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the 74th Anniversary event organized by the Pakistan China Friendship Association (PCFA) & China Study Centre (CSC) at university of Peshawar this morning. The minister thanked the PCFA & CSC for organizing the event and bringing both countries close to each other.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Najeib Ullah congratulated the Chinese people on their national day and advised students to pay

attention to understanding Chinese culture, history, and civilization. He also said that we have to learn a lot of things from China's expertise.

He highlighted different aspects where Pakistan needs to improve and can learn from China.

Science and technology are one of the sectors where we need a lot of improvements. He also stated the Economic Growth have different factors. One is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) the second is Skilled Labor and Higher Education.

He also mentioned that China has become a global leader in various industries and sectors by strategically using foreign direct investment. By welcoming multinational corporations into its market and establishing

favorable policies to attract foreign investors, China has benefitted from vital capital and expertise that has fueled its economic growth and development.

He said that we are working to start bankable feasibility in four thematic areas i.e. Agriculture, Mines, Information Technology, and Energy with the Chinese Government very soon. While celebrating the 74th Founding Day of the People's Republic of China today we should also follow our time-tested friend's advice. There are rich opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province to move ahead for socio-economic development. He also mentioned that we can benefit from Chinese experience in various fields for mutual interest.

Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht

Vice Chancellor of Agriculture University of Peshawar congratulated the Chinese people on their national day. The collaboration in higher education strengthened in the wake of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) further galvanized the academic cooperation among the institutions of higher learning between the two countries.

Prof. Dr. Kausar Takrim, Director, CSC, University of Peshawar welcomed the chief guest, Faculty members, students, and government & media officials to the seminar. She said today, we gathered here to celebrate the foundation day of the People's Republic of China, a nation that has a rich and profound history and has made remarkable strides in the past decades.

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Secretary General, of PCFA KP delved into China's rich history and highlighted the country's enduring struggles. However, China's persistent efforts have propelled it toward becoming the second-largest economy in the world. He also emphasizes that Pakistan and China share a unique bond and both countries have supported each other in tough times.

At the end of the event, a cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the "74th founding anniversary of the people's Republic of China".

EPA asked to act against noise pollution

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Lawyer at Peshawar High Court (PHC) Tariq Afghan Advocate asked the Director General Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to act against vehicles causing noise pollution in the provincial metropolis.

The senior lawyer Tariq Afghan wrote a letter to EPA in this regard seeking actions against pressure horns. The latter further transporters are using pressure horns while 90% vehicles in the provincial metropolis causing noise pollution.

The pressure horns impact every segment of society in Peshawar but badly affect patients in the largest and most equipped hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He added that mental and psychological diseases mostly caused by noise pollution due to pressure horns.

The senior lawyer argued that in 2021 Global Air Quality reported provincial capital Peshawar at 9th noisy city in the world. He requested Director General EPA to take stern action against causes of noise pollution especially on pressure horns.

World Teachers Day today

PESHAWAR (APP): To celebrate World Teachers' Day, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education organizes a central ceremony at Govt Hassan Shaheed Higher Secondary School, City No. 1, Peshawar today (Thursday).

Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan, Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department would be chief guest.

World Teachers' Day, also known as Salam Teachers' Day, is observed worldwide to honor and appreciate the invaluable contributions of educators.

This year's central event aimed to recognize the dedication and hard work of teachers in Pakistan.

Police arrested 15 gamblers

PESHAWAR (APP): The City Police Wednesday arrested 15 gamblers in the jurisdiction of Gulbahar Police Station during a successful operation here.

According to detail, given by the Police Official of the Gulbahar Police Station, among the arrested accused are Saeedul Rehman, Alfaz, Anwar, Nageeb, Siraj, Bashir, Haroon, Abdul Malik, Shaikat, Shahab, Khan Haider, Arshad, Hamid Ali, Wali and Imran.

The arrested criminals are residents of Khan Mast Colony, Qaziabad, Sheikhabad, Haider Colony, Ramdas and Soorizai, police said.

The official said that gamblers were engaged in gambling in Bukhari Colony of Gulbahar when the Police raided the site of the gamblers and arrested them on a spot.

During the operation, more than 1.27 million rupees, 27 mobile phones and gambling devices were also recovered, police said.

After registering a case against all the accused, further investigation is going on, police said.

Advisor emphasize need for greater transparency

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Advisor for Minerals, Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah here Wednesday emphasized the need for greater transparency and improvements in lease-related issues of mineral sector.

He was addressing a meeting in the committee room of Department of Minerals and Mineral Development in Peshawar.

He underscored the importance of ensuring educational scholarships and healthcare facilities to children of miners and concrete steps for safety of mine workers.

On the occasion, CM's aide was also briefed about mineral conservation, lease procedures and welfare of mines laborers. The meeting also discussed significant legislative acts like Mines Safety Inspection

and Regulation Act 2019, Coal Mines Rules 2021, Consolidated Mines Rules 1952, Labor Welfare Act 2021 and Mines Labour Welfare in KP.

The meeting was also attended by Secretary Mineral Development Department, Additional Secretary Admin, Chief Inspector of Mines, Chief Commissioner of Mines and Director of Training, Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shah.

DC reviews polio eradication campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): The Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Afzal Wazirs on Wednesday supervised the polio eradication teams in various areas while convincing reluctant parents to administer polio drops to their children.

Under the supervision of the provincial government, a seven-day polio eradication campaign is underway in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Afzal Wazir on the third day of the vaccination campaign visited Naseer Bagh Road, Regi, Hayatabad, Peshatkharra,

and other areas to oversee the polio eradication campaign. After meeting with hesitant parents and persuading them, he administered polio drops to children.

Administrative officers in their respective areas also supervised polio eradication teams and convinced reluctant parents to administer polio drops to their children.

During the polio eradication campaign in Peshawar, a total of 901,985 children will be administered polio drops, for which 2,496 teams have been formed, and their security has also

been ensured.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar appealed to parents to ensure the administration of polio drops to their children to protect them from permanent disability.

He also urged parents to cooperate with polio teams to help in the complete eradication of the polio virus from Peshawar.

He emphasized that it is our collective responsibility to work towards the eradication of polio, and it is only through our joint efforts that polio can be eliminated.



PESHAWAR: Syed Abbas Ali Shah with Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami KP Prof. Ibrahim and others after joining JI. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

FIA arrests 11 suspects, illegal money exchanger

PESHAWAR (APP): Anti-Corruption Circle of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Peshawar during crackdowns against corruption and hundi business arrested 11 suspects outside the office of Protector Peshawar and one illegal money exchanger.

The FIA Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar raided illegal business of Hawala/Hundi in Swat and arrested an accused while recovering foreign currencies in a huge amount.

The accused was identified as Tanveerullah having 7500 British pounds, 2400 US dollars, 1905 Australian dollars, and 500 Saudi riyals. The accused was doing illegal business of currency exchange without any authority or license.

The FIA Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar said, adding that the accused was shifted to FIA Peshawar and an FIR had been registered.

Similarly, in a crackdown against protector mafia under the direction of director KP Zone, a team of Anti-Corruption Circle arrested 11 suspects outside the Protector Office Peshawar.

The arrested accused were involved in minting money from applicants in the name of getting protectors. The accused used to trap innocent citizens in the name of installing protector stamps without waiting in long queues.

1,66,000 students dropped out at primary level in five years

PESHAWAR (APP): Disclosure of millions of students leaving government schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Education Secretary has said that he did not know about such a huge ratio of dropout students from government schools.

According to the official documents of the Education Department, it revealed that out of 571,000 students enrolled in 2017, 4,400,000 have reached the 5th class and a total of 29 percent of students dropped out till fifth class in five years.

Among them, 37 percent of girls, 22 percent of boys drop out before reaching

fifth grade, the document available here Wednesday. According to the documents Kohistan, Torgar, Dera Ismail Khan and Tank ranked among the first in dropout districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Most in Kohistan, 80 percent of children drop out before fifth grade, the document revealed. A total of 58% of children in Torgar and 55% in Tank did not reach fifth grade and 47% in Dera Ismail Khan, 38% in Swat dropped out before fifth grade while 57 percent in Shangla and only 44 out of 100 in Bitagram managed to reach 5th class.

Inauguration of ORC marks new milestone in eye care advancements



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The medical community gathered in unity and enthusiasm today at FIO Hospital to witness the momentous inauguration of the Ocular Research Center (ORC), a groundbreaking initiative poised to revolutionize the landscape of eye care research and innovation. The inauguration ceremony, held on August 23, 2023, was graced by distinguished luminaries, including Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Islam, Prof. Dr. Noor Ul Iman, Prof. Dr. Naeem Khattak, Prof. Dr. Lal Muhammad, Dr. Yousaf Jamal, Dr. Rab Nawaz, Dr. Noor ul Hussain, Dr. Adnan

Alam, and Dr. Irum Jihan Afridi.

The esteemed Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Islam, delivered an inspiring keynote address underscoring the significance of collaborative research in advancing the field of ophthalmology. Prof. Dr. Noor Ul Iman, the Guest of Honor and Principal of NWSM, echoed these sentiments and highlighted the potential of the Ocular Research Center to transform the academic landscape by fostering groundbreaking research in the realm of eye care.

FIO Hospital's CEO, Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad, extended a warm welcome

to the distinguished guests, expressing his gratitude for their presence at this historic occasion. He emphasized the pressing need for a dedicated research center in the domain of eye care, emphasizing FIO Hospital's commitment to pushing the boundaries of medical knowledge.

Director ORC, Dr. Rizwan Elahi, took the stage to present the comprehensive system and organogram of the Ocular Research Center, elucidating the center's innovative approach to interdisciplinary research and collaboration. With state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge equipment, and a multidisciplinary team of experts, the ORC is poised to drive meaningful advancements in the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of ocular conditions.

The distinguished guests collectively commended FIO Hospital's unwavering commitment to healthcare excellence and applauded the institution's expansion into the academic realm through the establishment of the Ocular Research Center. Each speaker acknowledged the significant impact that this initiative is poised to have on both medical education and patient care.

As the inauguration ceremony concluded, a palpable sense of anticipation and enthusiasm lingered in the air. The Ocular Research Center's inception signals a new era of scientific discovery and medical progress in the field of eye care, promising to elevate FIO Hospital's reputation as a trailblazer in healthcare and research.

The City School organizes seminar for students



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The City School Hayatabad Campus arranged awareness raising and career counseling and scholarship seminar for boys and girls here on

Wednesday. About 250 female and male students of different grade were provided detailed information about academic and scholarship opportunities under the British council.

The team received over-

whelming response from the management and students and city school staff and principal extended gratitude to the management of British council for arranging useful session for their students.

The student showed great interest. In the end, student and parents thanked the school management for organizing the wonderful session.



In brief

PDMA holds seminar in Swat Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and UNICEF here on Wednesday arranged a seminar to aware people about harassment at work places and protection of rights. Addressing the seminar, Project Director PDMA, Syed Musawair Gilani said that harassment is a hostile attitude that can be prevented by devising a policy and consensus at private and public sector level. He said that department should adopt a result oriented policy and prepare a set of procedure to provide help to victims of harassment. He also stressed participants of the seminar to aware women about their rights and to provide them guidance to register complaints about harassment. He said that harassment complaints can be registered on 1700, the toll free number of PDMA.

PESCO recovers Rs 8.5m dues

D I KHAN (INP): The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) staff recovered Rs 8.5 million pending dues from the consumers in Dera City division within two days. According to a PESCO official, the ongoing campaign against the 'Kunda mafia' and recovery from defaulters was in full swing in Dera Ismail Khan under the leadership of Dera Circle Superintending Engineer Sardar Aslam Khan Gandapur. He said the SDOs and PESCO staff have done effective operations in this regard collecting tens of millions rupees from defaulters. He said the PESCO team led by XEN City Division Engineer Fida Muhammad Mehsud recovered Rs 8.5 million and deposited this amount in national treasury. Moreover, the XEN City Division also sent letters to the police stations concerned for registration of cases against 12 electricity thieves. The power supply to Daraban and Darazinda feeders, with over 80 percent losses, has been disconnected. Besides, the power supply to Tribal Textile Mills feeder has also been disconnected from the grid station due to the pending dues of Rs 68.3 million. Likewise, the power supply was suspended from transformers to different areas including Minzabad, Fatima Town and Iqbal Town due to pending dues. About 200 direct hooks (Kundas) were removed during last two days, he said.

School teacher shot dead

GHIZER (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned down a school teacher and took away his motorcycle here on Wednesday. According to details, the incident took place in Bathriat area of district Ghizer of Gilgi-Baltistan where two armed shot dead a school teacher. The attackers sped the scene of crime with motorcycle of the deceased. Heirs and local people along with body staged sit-in due to which traffic heading to Gilgit from Gopas Yasin remain suspended. The police registered a case into the murder and started investigations.

Student dies after falling from bus

BAHAWALPUR (PPI): A student lost his life by falling from a bus in Bahawalpur on Wednesday. The tragic incident took place in Khanqah Sharif where a student fell from the bus. A large number of students staged a protest demonstration and blocked the traffic. Long queues of vehicles were seen as the area road was completely blocked by the protesting students.

BISP plans to serve marginalized segments: Amjad

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib has said that BISP is committed to serve the marginalized segments of society and actively working on an exit strategy for its beneficiaries, with a prime focus on equipping the children



of beneficiaries with professional training related to IT and other valuable technical skills. He underscored that this vision is an evidence of the program's long-term commitment to empowering vulnerable communities.

While talking to media, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib shed light on the BISP's ongoing efforts to provide financial assistance

to 9.3 million families across Pakistan. He reiterated the program's dedication to transparency in payment mechanisms and its promise of improving the welfare of those in need.

In a heartfelt plea to philanthropists, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib requested individuals and not-for-profit organizations to join hands with the

underserved, highlighting that a society's advancement depends on the efficient utilization of both state and individual resources. He expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity by Almighty Allah to serve the underprivileged and reaffirmed the BISP's commitment to ensuring the respect and dignity of these women.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib visited Point of Sale (POS) retailers in Risalpur, where he engaged in a productive dialogue with the retailers, soliciting their valuable input on the challenges they face in providing services to BISP beneficiaries. He encouraged them to suggest solutions to enhance the program's effectiveness and efficiency.

During his visit, Chairperson BISP also interacted with women beneficiaries at the retailer shop who had come to receive their quarterly stipend under the Benazir Kafaalat program. During this encounter, he appealed to the retailers to treat the recipients with kindness and urged them to motivate these women to send their children to school, plant trees and maintain clean surroundings, emphasizing the importance of environmental responsibility and moral values.

Patient care top priority at BKMC: Policy's Board

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Professor Dr. Zia-ul-Islam, Chairman of the Policy Board, emphasizes that enhancing patient care in teaching hospitals is their foremost priority. He made these remarks during the inauguration of a literary festival organized under the aegis of the Literary Society at Bacha Khan Medical College.

The event was attended by Dean BMC, Professor Dr. Amjad Ali, Medical Director Professor Dr. Imad Hameed, Hospital Director Dr. Tariq Mahmood, Board of Governors Secretary Zaher Khan, Finance Director Mohammad Shiraz, Chairman Literary Society BMC, Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Naem, Associate Professor Dr. Salman Malik, Human Resources Manager Altaf Ahmed, and

IT Manager Mohsin Ali.

Dr. Zia-ul-Islam mentioned that after assuming his role, he initiated visits to various teaching hospitals to gather information about medical facilities and administrative matters. These visits aim to identify issues and propose well-thought-out plans for improving the medical facilities provided in these hospitals.

He stated that the Policy Board is currently incomplete, but as soon as the remaining members are appointed, they will hold detailed discussions and meetings to address the identified issues and work on enhancing the patient care system in these hospitals.

Before this, Dr. Zia-ul-Islam inaugurated the literary festival organized by the Literary Society at Bacha Khan Medical

College (BKMC). As a special guest at the inauguration, Dr. Zia-ul-Islam highlighted the importance of extracurricular activities, including non-academic events, for students' mental and physical well-being. He emphasized that such activities provide students with opportunities to learn new skills and express their abilities. He also pointed out that engaging in non-academic activities alongside their medical studies is highly beneficial in shaping students into well-rounded individuals. Over the two-day festival, students from BKMC, Dental College, College of Medical Technology, and Nursing College participated in English and Urdu debates, speeches, poetry recitations, essay writing, qawwali performances, singing, dramas, and more.



HYDERABAD: A view of closed Rajputana Hospital by administration.

Excise arrests two antiquities smugglers

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Excise Police Station Mardan Region failed an attempt of smuggling of valuable antiquities worth Rs14 crores of Mahatma bad heads recovered from motor car bearing number AFY 213, on Wednesday.

The recovered antiquities were handed over to the Department of Archeology, Mardan Museum. According to Excise spokesperson, two suspects, driver Qayum resident of Manga and Wazeed Muhammad resident of Charssada were arrested on

the spot.

The investigation has started. The Director of Archeology Department appreciated and thanked the Excise Police Department for their action.

Youth committed suicide: Tired of domestic disputes in Takhtbhai, a young man ended his life by shooting himself with a pistol. Saroshah police reached the spot and started investigation by taking the deceased's widow into custody.

According to the details, twenty-year-old Samiullah, a resident of College Colony in the urban area of

Takhtbhai, allegedly shot himself with a pistol and ended his life. Police reached to the spot and shifted the body of the deceased to the hospital for post-mortem and started further investigation after taking his widow into custody.

It has been learned about the deceased young man that he got married about twenty days ago and he was a night watchman at Nahar Kinara Yousaf Plaza. From the first day of marriage, quarrels between the husband and wife became normal, which reportedly led to tension.



SHANGLA: ANP leader Ameer Haider Khan Hoti addressing Alpuri Bar Room during a ceremony.

ANP commits for supremacy of Constitution, says Hoti

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Central Vice President Awami National Party (ANP) Amir Haider Khan Hoti said that general election is only solution to overcome political instability in the country.

This he said while addressing lawyers at District Bar Association Shangla and added that rule of law is key for development and prosperity of the nation. He claimed that ANP is committed for rule of law and supremacy of constitution to secure fundamental rights of marginalized of the society.

Former CM said that ANP had passed 18th constitutional amendment with allied parties to devolve powers to provinces and added that fair distribution of resources will curtain poverty in Pakistan. He added that ANP will secure majority of seats in upcoming elections and will devolve financial power to district governments.

Water level in Mangla Dam drops

MIRPUR, AJK (INP): The seasonal water discharge from the country's biggest Mangla Dam begun on Wednesday and after release, the water level in the reservoir against the maximum capacity of 1242 feet fell to 1223.30 feet with live storage of 5.924 MAF.

As a result of the continual due inflow of water during the ongoing season, the water level in the country's largest reservoir Mangla Dam was recorded as 1223.30 feet after the discharge of 18.70 feet of water from the reservoir.

Mangla Dam stands the biggest reservoir in terms of water storage in the country, and was filled to its maximum conservation capacity of 1242 feet, on August 17 as seasonal impounding of the reservoir. According to media wing of WAPDA, at present 5.924 million acre-feet (MAF) water was available in the Mangla dam reservoir. The inflows of Jhelum River at Mangla reservoir was recorded as 12100 cusecs with outflows of the same 40000 cusecs of water from the dam.

At the same time, the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoir levels and the barrages remained on Wednesday as under:-

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 46500 cusecs and Outflows 85000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 12300 cusecs and Outflows 12300 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 63900 cusecs and Outflow 63900, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 12100 cusecs and Outflows 40000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 18100 cusecs and Outflows 5900 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 97900 cusecs and Outflows 89900 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 98100 cusecs and Outflows 95000 cusecs, Tansa: Inflows 99400 cusecs and Outflows 83500 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 105900 cusecs and Outflows 90300 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 88600 cusecs and Outflows 43900 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 43300 cusecs and Outflows 13900 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 22900 cusecs and Outflow 5400 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 25900 cusecs and Outflows 8700 cusecs.

PTI ex-MPAs held after cancellation of BBA

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir police on Wednesday arrested three former MPAs of Pakistan Tahreek Insaf on cancellation of their bail before arrest plea. The former lawmakers Malik Shafiullah Khan, Malik Liaqat Ali and Azam Khan were presented before an anti-terrorism court at Timergara where the judge cancelled their BBA in a case regarding the May 9 and 19 riots. They are facing a case under section 7 anti-terrorism act. The former lawmakers were given into police custody for a two-day remand.

Voters' registration: District election commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Tanoli has said the election commission of Pakistan has extended the deadline to Oct. 25 for registration, transfer and correction of voters' record. Talking to local journalists at his office in Timergara here on Wednesday the official asked the eligible citizens

to get them registered as voters till Oct. 25. Mr Tanoli said that by sending an SMS to 8300, an individual could confirm his/her vote registration status. He said the already registered voters could also verify their details by visiting his office.

About the recent delimitation, the official said that complaints, objections and appeals could be submitted to the ECP Islamabad office till Oct. 27. He said the ECP had started its preparations for holding free, fair and transparent elections in the country. He said the citizens could get information about the recent delimitation along with Form V for mass awareness on its website. He said the ECP would decide about objections and appeals against delimitation from Oct 28 to Nov, 26 after which the final report would be publicized.

Polio worker: A volunteer polio worker Bacha Muhammad, a resident of Siah died of cardiac arrest

during an anti-polio campaign here on Wednesday. The volunteer was rushed to a nearby hospital where in the doctors declared him dead. Later, he was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard.

Performance lauded: The JUI-F district secretary information Maulana Ismail and coordinator Matiullah Qasami on Wednesday appreciated the services of the acting district education officer in Lower Dir Mehboob Elahi. Talking to local journalists they said the acting DEO had restored the parents' confidence in state run schools in the district. The JUI-F activists said the district had improved significantly in enrollment as compared to other district due to the DEO commitment and devotion. They said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and high ups of the elementary and secondary education department should notify him as permanent DEO in the district.

ADR arbitrators for Bannu division approved

F.P. Report

BANNU: Commissioner Bannu Parwez Sabathkel has approved the panel of arbitrators (saliseen) for alternate dispute resolution committees to settle people's civil and criminal nature disputes with mutual consensus of both parties. He accorded approval to arbitrators' panels under Alternate Dispute Resolution Act at a meeting held under his chairmanship in Bannu on Wednesday.

RPO Qasim Ali Khan, Lakki Marwat additional DC Dr Tariqullah, Bannu additional DC Islahuddin, regional director prosecution Gul Waris Khan and army and judiciary officials were in attendance. Lakki Marwat's panel of arbitrators consisted of 50 saliseen while the ADR committees for Bannu and North Waziristan districts included 30 and 47 members respectively.

The divisional commissioner said that the ADR committees would resolve people's civil and criminal disputes without court proceedings. "The alternate dispute resolution law will prove helpful to provide speedy justice to people without any trial", he maintained.

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 46500 cusecs and Outflows 85000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 12300 cusecs and Outflows 12300 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 63900 cusecs and Outflow 63900, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 12100 cusecs and Outflows 40000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 18100 cusecs and Outflows 5900 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 97900 cusecs and Outflows 89900 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 98100 cusecs and Outflows 95000 cusecs, Tansa: Inflows 99400 cusecs and Outflows 83500 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 105900 cusecs and Outflows 90300 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 88600 cusecs and Outflows 43900 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 43300 cusecs and Outflows 13900 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 22900 cusecs and Outflow 5400 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 25900 cusecs and Outflows 8700 cusecs.

This eye-catching place is located at an altitude of 13500 feet above sea level. There are greenery and wild-

At the meeting, the participants proposed that the government should amend the law, binding both parties to abide by the decision of the ADR committee and declare divisional commissioners as appellate authority for them. Commissioner said that besides provision of quick justice to citizens, the alternate dispute resolution would also help to reduce the backlog of cases in courts.

Two arrested in blind murder case: Police have traced a blind murder case of a citizen and arrested two suspects including the complaint in Miryan area. On Sep 23, a complainant Khanzad Khan had lodged an FIR with Miryan police, claiming that three armed men deprived him of his motorcycle, a pistol, spare magazines, ammunition and mobile phones and also took away his friend Ibrahim with them in a vehicle.

Later the bullet-riddled body of Ibrahim was found in the fields near Saleh Khan Mandev area and section 302 (intentional murder) of Pakistan Penal Code was added to the FIR. Bannu regional police officer Qasim Ali Khan took notice of the incident and formed a special team headed by SP investigation

Aqeeq Hussain and comprising DSP rural Shad Ali Khan, SHO Altaf Khan Wazir and investigation officer Saeed Khan and tasked it to solve the case.

The regional police chief also directed DPO Iftekhar Shah to overlook investigation into kidnapping-cum murder case and ensure arrest of suspects involved in it. Aqeeq told journalists that they obtained the caller data record (CDR) of the complainant and spread a network of informers in the area to reach the culprits.

"With the help of CDR, human intelligence and ordered technology, the investigators came to know that the complainant along with his accomplice Rizwanullah murdered Ibrahim and dumped his body in the fields", he maintained. He said that police arrested both suspects and shifted them to the police station.

"During initial interrogation the arrested men confessed to have committed the murder as they did not want to pay loan to the deceased they had borrowed from him", the chief police investigator said. He added that the cops also discovered the motorcycle, a pistol and mobile phones on the identification of suspects.

Untapped Rashobeeni tourist spot needs authority's attention

F.P. Report

flowers everywhere. Very cold and clean water comes out from the foothills of the mountains in natural springs. This water flows down in the form of a canal which is twelve feet wide. Whenever the locals come here for a picnic, they must have a jumping competition across the canal.

There are naturally green grasses everywhere and it looks like someone has laid a green carpet here. While coming to Rashobeeni, there are green trees everywhere, forests and plenty of clear and milky water springs coming out of the mountains. The beauty of the valley has

been further enhanced by these springs and greenery. Being located at a height of 13500 feet above the sea level, one must face difficulties here, but when one reaches here, he forgets everything after seeing these beautiful scenes.

There is quite a peaceful atmosphere here, with the chirping of seasonal birds and the sound of flowing water, it fascinates the person by making very pleasant music like sounds. Local people said that this is our summer pasture Local women also coming here in past and people used to enjoy picnics here with their families.



Refugees who died off Italy 10 years ago remembered

LAMPEDUSA (Agencies): Vito Fiorino woke up in his boat to piercing screams. It was 6am on October 3, 2013, and the Italian fisherman had spent a rare night out at sea with his crew, hoping for a good catch. They scanned the dimly lit sky expecting to spot a flight of seagulls mewing in the distance. Instead, as the group sailed towards the noise, the scene that awaited them was one they had never seen.

"We woke up to an immeasurable tragedy," Fiorino said. "There were hundreds of people in the sea, screaming and crying for help." A rickety trawler carrying asylum seekers from Eritrea and Somalia had capsized a short distance off Italy's Lampedusa, a holidaymaker's dream island known for its azure waters and sandy beach. Only 155 people survived, while 368 people drowned.

The fishermen pulled 47 people onto their vessel before Italian authorities arrived. Days later, on October 11, a second vessel loaded with mostly Syrians fleeing the war-ravaged country capsized some 32km (20 miles) off the coast, killing 268 people, including 60 children. Ten years to the day, Fiorino joined Italy's annual day of remembrance for the victims of the 2013 shipwrecks and the thousands of refugees who have perished at sea since. He lit candles around an elliptical monument he designed and installed in Lampedusa's Piazza Piave. Swirling around the iron skeleton of a boat, the names of those who died in the shipwreck converged on a blue pedestal symbolising the sea.

Beside him, survivors and the fishermen who had saved their lives locked in an embrace, sobbing quietly. Adhanom Rezene, who was 22 when he fled Eritrea, lost childhood friends in the shipwreck. "It is important for me to be here to remember them. I don't want to forget," he told Al Jazeera. "We are not just numbers, we are human beings and we came in

search of freedom, and peace." The unprecedented scale of the double tragedy, a stone's throw from Italy's southernmost strip of land, shook the conscience of European officials at the time.

Jose Manuel Barroso, then-president of the European Commission, flew to Lampedusa, where teddy bears and flowers adorned hundreds of small white coffins, an image Barroso said would "never get out of my mind". "The kind of tragedy we have witnessed here so close to the coast should never happen again," Barroso said. Yet, similar tragedies have occurred time and again and the Italian island, with a population of just 6,000, is once again at the centre of a European refugee crisis. Last month in Lampedusa, as thousands of asylum seekers were crammed in a centre designed to accommodate 400, the Italian Coast Guard found the body of a newborn baby who died on the journey. Days earlier, a five-month-old boy drowned after a boat capsized a short distance from the coast.

In February, at least 94 people, including 35 children, died after a boat carrying refugees sank off the Italian coastal city of Cutro, in the southern region of Calabria. Vincenzo Luciano, a fisherman who attempted to save lives during the recent Cutro shipwreck, shared his testimony with a group of students in Lampedusa. "Unlike Vito, I couldn't save anyone. I took 13 children out of the water, but they were all dead," he said. "The youngest one was eight months old. He died in my arms."

Since 2014, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) says 28,105 people have been recorded as missing, but the real numbers are likely to be significantly higher. So far this year, at least 2,517 people have died while crossing the Mediterranean, according to the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR - more than last year's grim

toll. Survivors of the 2013 shipwrecks and relatives of the victims accused Italian and European institutions of prioritising their borders over lives. Emmanuel Ghebreyusu, 53, said his niece would have been 30 today had she survived. "It has really been tough over the past 10 years," said Ghebreyusu, as crowds marched to the 5-metre (16-foot) high Gate of Europe monument, where they tossed flowers in the sea, a poignant symbol of their mourning.

"I wish authorities would do more to save lives. Human lives are more important than anything," he said. In the aftermath of the 2013 shipwrecks, Rome launched a state-led operation to patrol the Mediterranean - calling it Mare Nostrum, the Roman name for the Mediterranean Sea - that saved more than 150,000 lives in its year of activity. However, the naval mission was suspended in 2014 after the EU refused to contribute to its operational costs. According to humanitarian groups that try and save refugees in peril, since then, the policies governing search and rescue operations have focused on pushbacks, the criminalisation of NGOs, and deliberate delays.

Rossella Miccio, head of the Italian non-governmental medical organisation Emergency, which operates the vessel Life Support, told Al Jazeera that Rome is "clear and explicit" in its desire to hamper the work of NGO ships. The government of far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose election campaign a year ago called for a naval blockade of North Africa to curb arrivals, has adopted decrees which limit NGO vessels to one rescue at a time, after which they must immediately disembark. The organisations say the Ministry of the Interior often assigns far-flung ports to disembark, limiting the boat's availability to carry out search and rescue operations. At times, they have been assigned distant northern Italian ports,



far from the stretch of the Mediterranean Sea where they operate.

"These policies curtail search and rescue operations and bring more deaths and pullbacks," Miccio said. In 2017, the EU struck a deal with Libya and in July signed a controversial agreement, allocating 100 million euros (\$112m) to Tunisia to help it combat undocumented migration. Both countries intercept and return boats, which human rights organisations say make the EU complicit in abuses.

"People are being taken back to Libya and now Tunisia, but what does this achieve? This is a vicious cycle because they will keep trying to flee," said Miccio. The mayor of Lampedusa, Filippo Mannino, said

political parties of all colours have kicked the can down the road and failed to offer viable solutions to the challenges posed by migratory flows. "The most concerning trend is that we are treating arrivals and deaths at sea as routine events," he said. "We are desensitised to them."

The leaders of nine Mediterranean and Southern European countries gathered in Malta, calling for a "significant increase" in the EU's efforts to tackle migration in origin and transit countries, after the peak of arrivals in Lampedusa reignited tensions within the bloc. Meloni said without "structural" solutions from the bloc, "everyone will be overwhelmed". French President Emmanuel Macron called for "a united European response", urging "solidarity with

Italy". Earlier, his interior minister stated that Paris would not welcome people coming from Lampedusa.

EU Commission head Ursula von der Leyen visited the island on September 17, waging a battle against undocumented arrivals. "We decide who comes to the European Union and under what circumstances, and not the smugglers and traffickers," she said as she presented a 10-point plan that included a possible European naval mission, which Meloni said should be run "in agreement with North African authorities". According to Emergency's Miccio, the terms of this proposal remain unclear. "We welcome a European naval mission," she said, "granted that it puts saving lives - rather than pushbacks - as its main priority."

North Korea vows strong response to Pentagon report

SEOUL (AP): North Korea slammed the United States over a recent Pentagon report that labeled it a "persistent" threat because of weapons of mass destruction, saying Wednesday that it will counter any US aggression or provocations with "the most overwhelming and sustained response strategy." Last week, the Pentagon released the unclassified version of its "2023 Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction" describing WMD challenges and methods to address them. The report stated that while China and Russia present "the principal WMD challenges," North Korea, Iran and violent extremist organizations remain "persistent regional threats" that must also be addressed.

Such US descriptions of North Korea and the North's angry response aren't unusual. But the latest exchange comes as concerns grow that North Korea is pushing for a weapons transfer deal with Russia in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. "The US has just revealed its dangerous intention for aggression to seriously violate the sovereignty and security of (North Korea) and other independent sovereign states by threatening them with WMDs, and realize its wild ambition for seizing global military hegemony," an unidentified spokesperson for North Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement carried by state media. North Korea's military will "counter the US imperialist aggressor's mili-

tary strategy and provocations with the most overwhelming and sustained response strategy," the statement said.

North Korea's nuclear program has taken on new urgency since it enacted a law last year that authorizes preemptive use of nuclear weapons. Since the beginning of 2022, North Korea has conducted more than 100 missile tests, many of them involving nuclear-capable weapons potentially able to target the US and South Korea. Last week, North Korea's parliament amended the country's constitution to include the nuclear law, an indication that the North is further boosting its nuclear doctrine. During the parliament meeting, leader Kim Jong Un called for an exponential increase in production of nuclear weapons and for his country to play a larger role in a coalition of nations confronting the United States in a "new Cold War." South Korea's Defense Ministry warned in a statement Wednesday that any attempt by North Korea to use nuclear weapons would result in the end of the Kim government. It said North Korea's inclusion of the nuclear law in its constitution will further deepen its international isolation and the suffering of its people.

The Pentagon report cited the North Korean nuclear law in explaining its security threat. The report said North Korea is developing mobile nuclear capabilities that place the US homeland and regional allies and partners at risk. The report also said

North Korea maintains up to several thousand metric tons of chemical warfare agents and the capability to produce nerve, blister and choking agents. It said North Korea's potential chemical deployment methods include artillery, ballistic missiles and unconventional forces. The US and South Korea have been responding to North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal with expanded joint military exercises and temporary deployments of US long-range bombers and a nuclear-armed submarine. North Korea calls such moves grave provocations that force it to further strengthen its nuclear program.

North Korea's Defense Ministry said in the statement that the term "persistent threat" is more suitable for the US, citing its intensifying military drills with South Korea and the deployment of the nuclear-armed submarine that it said carried weapons "large enough to totally destroy one state." In September, Kim traveled to Russia's far eastern region to meet with President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites. North Korea and Russia said the trip was meant to boost their cooperation but neither side disclosed details. Foreign officials and experts believe North Korea hopes to obtain advanced Russian technologies to help it develop spy satellites, nuclear-propelled submarines and powerful long-range missiles in return for supplying Russia with conventional arms exhausted by its war with Ukraine.

President el-Sisi to run for third term, opposition decry pressure

CAIRO (Agencies): Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has confirmed that he will stand for a third term in office at an election scheduled for December. The election, which el-Sisi is widely expected to win, comes as Egypt grapples with an economic crisis, record inflation, a sharply depreciated local currency and claims by the political opposition that its candidates are suffering harassment and intimidation.

"I have decided to nominate myself to complete the dream during a new presidential term," el-Sisi said, making the announcement during a televised speech. "I call on all Egyptians to participate in this democratic scene to choose with their patriotic conscience who is worthy," he said. An estimated 65 million Egyptians are reported to be eligible to vote in the election, which will be held over three days from December 10 to 12. Egyptians living abroad will be able to cast their ballots on December 1-3. A handful of politicians had already announced their bids to run for presidency but none poses a serious challenge to el-Sisi, who has been in power since

2014 after leading the army to remove Egypt's first democratically-elected President Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. El-Sisi was announced the winner of presidential elections in 2014 and 2018 with 97 percent of the vote. Egypt has witnessed a crackdown on freedom of expression under el-Sisi with hundreds of activists and political opponents imprisoned or forced into exile, which has led to outcries from human rights advocates.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been outlawed as a "terrorist" organisation and Egypt's fragmented political opposition says it has come under pressure ahead of the election. The campaign of Ahmed al-Tantawi, a former member of parliament and the most prominent potential opponent to el-Sisi, has complained that citizens have been impeded when they tried to register their support for his candidacy. Prospective candidates need 25,000 public signatures or the support of 20 members of a heavily pro-Sisi parliament to stand for election. Many of those showing up at public notary offices to register their support for al-

Tantawi were told the registration system was not working, ordered to come back later or register somewhere else, the opposition official's campaign manager Mohamed Abol Deyar told the Reuters news agency. Tantawi has branded himself the "rule of law" candidate, as his campaign posts videos of him accompanying supporters to registry offices. "In the end, they will not be able to say 'sorry, you don't have enough nominations'," he told supporters. In a video shared by Tantawi's campaign, dozens chanted "bread, freedom, social justice" - the popular rallying cry of the 2011 revolution that ousted longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak. Under el-Sisi, a former army chief who has overseen a crackdown jailing tens of thousands of dissidents, protests have been banned. The Civil Democratic Movement, which groups together some small opposition parties, also said in a statement that there had been multiple violations against citizens trying to nominate candidates to stand against el-Sisi. Egypt's National Election Authority says it is investigating complaints and has called such allegations baseless.

Boat carrying 280 migrants lands in Canary Islands

MADRID (BBC): A small boat carrying 280 migrants has landed in Spain's Canary Islands. The vessel arrived on the remote island of El Hierro, some 380km (238 miles) off Africa's western coast. Rescue workers said those onboard were of sub-Saharan African origin and it was the largest number of migrants ever to arrive in the archipelago in one go.

The crossing to the Canary Islands is one of the most commonly used and dangerous routes to Europe for migrants

from Africa. "I've never seen a boat with so many people on board," journalist and former migration adviser Txema Santana said on social media after the vessel arrived. Since the start of the year, 140 people have died or disappeared trying to make the crossing, according to the International Organization for Migration. Use of the route has increased in recent years as tighter controls have been put in place to stop people crossing the Mediterranean from Africa's northern coast.

Between 1 January and 130 September this year, a total of 14,976 migrants arrived in the Canary Islands, an increase of 19.8% on the same period in 2022, according to figures from Spain's interior ministry. Senegal's navy said it had intercepted four boats over three days with more than 600 people on board. In August, at least 60 people are believed to have died on a boat that was eventually found off Cape Verde, an African island nation that sits on the migration route to the Canaries.

Why Kenya volunteered to lead UN-approved forces to Haiti

NAIROBI (Agencies): The United Nations Security Council approved the deployment of international forces led by Kenya to curb escalating gang violence in Haiti. The Caribbean country of more than 11 million people, which had requested international assistance more than a year ago to curb the rising insecurity in the country, welcomed the decision.

"The Haitian people say thank you very much to the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations," Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry said on X, formerly Twitter, shortly after the UN vote. Henry also thanked the East African country for taking the lead in proposing to send troops to Haiti. The resolution authorises the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission "to take all necessary measures" to stem the violence.

The international forces are not deploying under the UN peace mission. They will be overseen by Kenyan forces, which received authorisation from the UN. The 2007 African Union intervention in Somalia to combat armed groups was also authorised by the UN. Haiti has recorded 3,000 homicides and more than 1,500 kidnappings for ransom between January and September this year, according to the UN. Gang-related violence has spiked since the assassination of President Jovenel Moise two years ago. The violence has forced some 200,000 people, half of them children, out of their homes, according to the UN, adding that the unprecedented level of insecurity has forced tens of thousands of children to not attend schools.

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere where half the population lives below the poverty line, has a small and ill-equipped military. Its police force, which has about 10,000 active personnel, has also been unable to contain the violence. The international forces will guard important public installations such as airports, ports and hospitals, among other places. They will be coordinating with the local police in carrying out anti-crime operations. The Dominican Republic has shut its border with Haiti while several other neighbouring countries have tightened their border security following the uptick in violence in Port-au-Prince. Kenya has a history of sending peacekeepers to volatile countries and offered to send 1,000 personnel to Haiti in July. Nairobi says it wants to take part in the "rebuilding" of the country, which has been run by unelected officials for years.

Bangkok mall shooting: Two dead, suspect held

BANGKOK (Agencies): Police in Thailand say they have arrested a teenage suspected gunman after a deadly shooting at an upscale shopping centre in the capital, Bangkok. Emergency services said that at least two people had been killed in the incident at Siam Paragon Mall, correcting an earlier statement that three people had died. It added six people had been wounded in total, five of those critically.

Major Thai media said the suspected gunman was 14 years old, though recently appointed police chief Torsak Sukvimol confirmed only that he is a minor and appeared to be suffering from mental illness. There was no information yet on the motive of the attack. Emergency services shared an image of a police officer apprehending and handcuffing an individual lying face down on the floor. The Central Investigation Bureau had earlier posted a

grainy image on its Facebook page of an individual they said was the gunman, dressed in khaki cargo pants and a baseball cap. Unverified videos on social media showed scenes of chaos, with people, including children, running out of the doors of the mall while security guards ushered them out.

One of the videos showed people taking cover in a darkened room inside a restaurant, while live television showed long queues of traffic outside the mall in torrential rain. Chinese tourist Liu Shiyang told The Associated Press news agency that she saw people running and saying someone had opened fire. She said she heard gunshots and an alarm ringing out and that the lights in the mall went out. "We're temporarily hiding. Who dares to go out?" she said while taking cover. She was later able to leave. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin expressed

concern over the incident at the shopping centre, which is among the best-known in Bangkok and is popular with locals and tourists.

He told reporters that he was informed by police that one of the dead was a Chinese tourist. "I would like to express my deepest condolences to the family of the deceased following the shooting inside Siam Paragon," said Srettha, who took office in August. "I would like to give my moral support to the families of all who died and were injured."

Gun violence is not uncommon in Thailand, although mass shootings are rare. A former police officer killed 22 children in a nursery last year during a gun and knife attack, while in 2020, a soldier shot and killed at least 29 people and wounded 57 in a rampage that spanned four locations in and around the northeastern Thai city of Nakhon Ratchasima.

US aid to Ukraine may hinge partly

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Speaker Kevin McCarthy's ouster could signal a shift in the US House of Representatives on aid to Ukraine, with some of his possible successors strongly in favor of assisting Kyiv but others staunchly opposed. The House voted for the first time to remove its leader, as eight of McCarthy's fellow Republicans voted with 208 Democrats against him. There was no immediate indication of who might succeed McCarthy, but the next speaker could push more Ukraine aid before a proposal reaches the House floor if that person opposes the idea.

The vote to oust McCarthy came just three days after he led the House to pass a stopgap spending bill to prevent a government shutdown that included no new money for Ukraine, highlighting the reluctance of some mem-

bers of his caucus to back Ukraine funds. A Ukraine "report card" by Defending Democracy Together's "Republicans for Ukraine" campaign rated the leading candidates on the strength of their support for past Ukraine aid. Republican opponents of the aid view it as excessive spending and a misplaced US policy priority. Those ratings ranging from A to F -- signifying support or opposition to prior bills -- could indicate how likely each would be to bring Ukraine aid to a vote if he becomes speaker.

Representative Tom Emmer, the House Republican whip, got the highest rating, an A. Representative Steve Scalise, the No. 2 House Republican, has long been favored to take over as speaker after McCarthy and received one notch lower, a B. Representative Matt Gaetz, who led the push to oust McCarthy, has said he

would support Scalise. Gaetz himself, House Judiciary Committee Chair Jim Jordan and headline rising star Representative Byron Donalds all received Fs.

The White House said it was confident that the United States would ultimately provide more assistance for Ukraine, no matter the fate of McCarthy's speakership. McCarthy, who got a B-minus grade, early this week denied accusations by Gaetz that he had cut "a secret deal" with Biden to allow the House to vote on Ukraine aid. McCarthy said then he wanted more information from the Biden administration. President Joe Biden asked Congress in July to approve another \$24 billion related to Ukraine, which Ukraine supporters - Republicans as well as Democrats - had hoped could become law as part of a spending bill.

18 killed in blast at illegal oil refinery in Nigeria

ABUJA (Agencies): At least 18 people, including a pregnant woman, have died in southern Nigeria when an illegal oil refinery exploded into flames, a security official and residents said. The blaze took place in Rivers State's Emohua district when a homemade refinery ignited a nearby oil reservoir, leaving victims severely burned, according to a

report by AFP news agency. "The fire outbreak started at a very late hour ... 18 victims were burnt beyond recognition while 25 injured persons were rescued," said Olufemi Ayodele, spokesman for the local Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps. "Most of the victims were youths ... a pregnant woman and a young lady getting ready for her mar-

riage ceremony next month were all casualties," he said. In another report, the Reuters news agency, citing a local Ibba community leader, said as many as 37 people died in the blaze. "Thirty-five people were caught in the fire. Two people who were lucky to escape also died in hospital," Rufus Welekem, the head of security in the community, told Reuters.

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Maldives' election and India factor

THE president-elect of the Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu, has marked his victory with a pledge to end the foreign military presence in his small but strategically placed atoll nation. Mr. Muizzu told his supporters during his first public appearance after winning a crucial election runoff, that his government will send back Indian troops currently stationed in the South Asian nation. The newly elected Maldives leader claimed to be pro-Maldives and vowed to be friends with those states and entities who respected and obeyed his pro-Maldives policy during his term in office.

The Republic of Maldives, an archipelago nation in South Asia, had been a battleground between two of its powerful neighbours People's Republic of China (PRC) and Modi ruled India over the past decade. Both Beijing and New Delhi had been in a close contest to install their like-minded government in a tiny but strategically most important nation in the Indian Ocean region which is next to globally vied Indo-Pacific Oceans. Interestingly, Both China and India invested massively in the tiny neighbouring nation in pursuit of their political and strategic objectives in the past years. Under President Abdullah Yameen, who enjoyed good relations with Beijing, Maldives received more than one billion in loans from China for the construction of historic bridges to connect Capital Male with the airport island and other suburb localities near Federal territory. Interestingly, the Maldives growing engagement with China especially in infrastructure development and economic cooperation raised concerns in New Delhi, which in turn provided Male with \$ 100 million in aid and about a \$ 400 million credit line for the construction of a 6.7 km long bridge to connect Capital Male with the Island of Villigili. India also provided Maldives with 2 helicopters and a reconnaissance aircraft for aerial surveillance of its territory while 75 Indian soldiers' technicians are currently deployed in Maldives to maintain and operate those aeroplanes. Historically, New Delhi enjoyed massive influence during the tenure of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih from 2018 to October 2023, until an anti-India politician took the lead in the nationwide election on September 30.

In fact, the geopolitical competition between India and China has the potential to impact the stability of the Indian Ocean region, including the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangla Desh. Pakistan is already suffering from the worst repercussions of a global tussle between Beijing and the United States. The Maldives has witnessed political instability and power struggles in recent years, leading to fluctuations in its foreign policy. This volatility has occasionally strained its relations with India, as both countries navigate the complex domestic politics of the Maldives.

The recent election in the Archipelago nation had been contested on Indian and Chinese factors. The world usually looks Maldives election as competition between pro-India and pro-China political groups who have bisecting policies and diverging interests. The new President-Elect Muizzu won the recent election on the India-out slogan, with the sole agenda of expelling Indian troops from his nation that had been the core driver of its election campaign throughout the past months.

Realistically, the ongoing political tussle between major powers and their regional supporters has caused an undesirable situation in the entire region. The third world developing nations have been plunged into a unique quandary where their economic, trade and political cooperation with either party is being viewed with a biased lens by the opposing bloc, who intentionally endeavours to sabotage those relations which are otherwise most crucial for national development and regional growth. The tiny state of Maldives does not afford animosity from any of its powerful neighbours including India and China. Unfortunately, the leaders try to steer their politics on foreign policy instead of domestic problems, economic issues and the well-being of the public. Presently, Maldives' politics revolve around India-out, China-in and China-out India phenomena which is surely damaging the national unity as well as economic stability in that country. On the other side, the belligerent nations used to station their troops in other countries to consolidate their influence which often becomes counterproductive and causes humiliation instead of flourishing military diplomacy. Earlier, New Delhi sent its troops to Sri Lanka in 1989 that were expelled by Sri Lankan President Premadasa just after one year, while it would be another humiliation of the Indian military at the hands of another neighbour. Hopefully, Indian Lok Sabha would learn a lesson from those experiences and would not repeat failed attempts of military diplomacy any time in future.

Adjudicators' powers and public interest

THE full bench of the honourable Supreme Court has resumed hearing of a set of petitions challenging the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 with the proceedings going live on TV channels. The 14-judge SC bench led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa heard the case relating to the powers and jurisdiction of the apex court on vital issues including the power of suo moto notice that had been the most lucrative and highly dumbest authority of the top judge in the past years. Meanwhile, the full bench also mull over the question that whether the Chief Judge authority to form benches comprising judges of his own choice was contradictory to the judicial laws or had ever undermined the impartiality of judicial system in the past when a few faces became a symbol of the important benches and their well defined verdicts while other judges complained about the dissociation of the Chief Judge. The full bench would also deliberate on the question that whether the recently approved Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 has put a bar on freedom and autonomy of the apex court or it only paused the hegemony of the top judge, resist group politics, like or dislike among the judges and blocked politically motivated advertisement of the judges.

Over the decades, Pakistan Judicial System fell prey to certain institutional and social biases including catelization of specific families, corruption and political affiliation that adjudicators often carried forward from their lawyership or low cadre service. Meanwhile, the suo moto power particularly in political issues has brought the Chief Justice at par with President and the Army Chief in respect of their powers under article 58 (2)B or Army Act clauses on military law respectively. The PDM government has attempted to contain the judiciary in its pure judicial role for dispensation of justice to the public instead of the power broker role that largely politicized the apex court and polarized the senior judges. Over the years, Pakistani institutions have vigorously rescued their institutional interests without caring about their primary role and responsibility. In the current scenario, the adjudicators themselves have to decide whether they should sacrifice their ego in the larger interest of the nation/public through salient delivery of justice or continue with their previous role with flashy headlines and news breaking stories in the media. That surely advertises the judges but does not provide relief to the public or petitioners.

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Why Putin wants a 'forever war'

Mark Galeotti

WHEN Westerners talk about the conflict in Ukraine becoming a "forever war," they tend to mean it as a bad thing. For Russian President Vladimir Putin, though, it likely is a goal. Last week, Putin made the date September 30 an official holiday: the inelegantly-named Day of Reunification of New Regions with the Russian Federation.

Marking the one-year anniversary of the annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions - even though most were not even in Russian control at the time - it provided an opportunity for Putin to return to one of his current obsessions: that this is a struggle "for the Motherland, for our sovereignty, spiritual values, unity and victory."

This is not, in his eyes, a struggle with Ukraine so much as a global one with the West, in which Ukraine is just one battlefield, even if an especially bloody and obvious one. In his speech at the 2023 Victory Day parade, usually a lengthy and bombastic litany of successes, Putin was bleak and stark, declaring that "a real war has been unleashed against our homeland." He raised the spectre of the Great Patriotic War - how the Russians describe the Second World War - and warned that "civilisation is again at a decisive turning point" because "Western globalist elites" were determined to "destroy and decimate" Russia.

On the one hand, this could be taken as an apocalyptic alibi for the relative failure of his so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine, in which what was meant to be a quick operation to impose a puppet regime instead became a bloody, full-scale war which has seen the flower of the Russian military destroyed. Yet it is more than that. When Putin talks of this as one of the "decisive battles for the fate of our Motherland," as he did at this year's Victory Day parade, he also seems to be speaking from the heart - and to the new creed of his regime. He was offering no clear vision of the future, nor even any real hope, just the message that the nation was locked in an existential struggle with a hostile West

with no real end in sight.

This sounds like a grim prospect, but from Putin's perspective it also has its clear virtues. Of course, the war is a catastrophe for Russia. US government sources suggest Russia may have suffered 120,000 killed and 170,000-180,000 wounded troops. The economic scarring will take years to heal even when peace has been agreed and sanctions are lifted. And the second-order effects on underfunded public service

principle of "late Putinism," it excuses - even demands - the tightening grip of repression Putin needs to maintain his control of the nation. Even the mildest dissent becomes treason, and the massive shift in resources to the defence sector becomes a necessity. The latest budget envisages military expenditure increasing by almost 70% next year, to a level of something like three times the combined health, education and environmental

punched some local breaches in the second. Kyiv's hope is that if it cannot cut the invading forces in two, it will at least get far enough to be able to shell the road and rail 'land bridge' links connecting Crimea with the Russian mainland.

As winter rains near, it is looking touch and go whether this will be possible. If not, Moscow will have a breathing space in which to build more defences, raise more troops and hope to see Western will to continue bankrolling Ukraine's fight in this war diminish. We cannot know whether Putin genuinely believes that Russia can drag some kind of victory out of his Ukrainian debacle or simply feels he has no alternative but to hope he can outlast his enemies. However, from his point of view, talk of a "forever war" has one final virtue for him - it is demoralising to his enemies.

It is, after all, one thing to imagine a Ukrainian military victory on the back of the determination of its soldiers and the superiority of Western-provided equipment. Yet there is a real gap between that and a lasting peace. Even if every Russian soldier is pushed out of Ukraine - which would take some doing - then that simply moves the front line to the national border. Russia will still be able to rebuild its forces, launch drones and missiles at Ukrainian cities, and do what it can to impede reconstruction.

Meanwhile, while Putin's handling of the July mutiny by Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin and his mercenary army has left many within the elite uncertain whether he has lost his skill managing the system, Prigozhin's subsequent untimely and suspicious death was seen as a stark warning to any not to challenge him. Sanctions are having a real effect on Russian defence production, but cannot prevent its escalation, nor is the economy facing collapse. Casualties do not seem to be deterring Russians from volunteering to fight, such that the General Staff is saying that it does not plan another mobilisation of reservists. No war lasts forever, but peace is still well over the horizon.

CNN

Jordan studies its options as Assad fails to stop drug smuggling

Osama Al-Sharif

JORDAN'S delicate rapprochement process with its northern neighbor, Syria, seems to have suddenly stopped. Last month in New York, King Abdullah voiced his frustration with President Bashar Assad's inability to stop the smuggling of drugs from his country into Jordan. Speaking at the ME Global Summit, King Abdullah said he was unsure whether Assad was fully in charge of the country in light of the "major problem" of drugs and weapons being smuggled into Jordan.

"We are fighting every single day on our border to stop massive amounts of drugs coming into our country," he said. "And this is a major issue that all the parties, including some people inside the regime, and the Iranians and their proxies, are all taking advantage of." A few days later, his Foreign Minister Ayman Al-Safadi was quoted by CNN as saying that trafficking of the addictive amphetamine Captagon from Syria to Jordan had only increased since the normalization talks that led to Assad's return to the Arab League in May.

Jordan was the first Arab country to take steps to normalize ties with Damascus after Syria's membership in the Arab League was suspended following the eruption of the anti-regime uprising in 2011 and the civil war that followed. King Abdullah tried to convince the Biden administration to accept "regime rehabilitation" instead of "regime change" in 2021, stressing that Assad was the legitimate leader of Syria. The US has imposed sanctions on the regime and thousands of its soldiers have been in northeastern Syria since 2014 fighting Daesh through an alliance with the Syrian Democratic Forces. Al-Safadi, who has visited Damascus a few times and met with Assad, had proposed an Arab solution to end the Syrian crisis in return for restoring Syria's seat in the Arab League. The UAE also invited Assad to visit Abu Dhabi earlier this year, while Riyadh issued an invitation to the Syrian president to attend May's Arab League summit in Jeddah, which he did.

But the quid pro quo did not work. Assad has not indicated that he is willing to engage in an Arab solution to end the crisis in his country and has, so far, done nothing to curb the smuggling of drugs into Jordan. As a result, it now appears that other Arab countries are joining Amman in suspending talks with Damascus. Western reports speak of intricate drug-making and smuggling networks involving Hezbollah, the regime and Iran that are worth more than \$50 billion annually. While some drugs reach local distributors in Jordan, larger quantities are moved to the Gulf region and beyond.

Syria has become a narco-state, yet the windfall profits resulting from such activities go into the pockets of key figures in the military and pro-Iran militias. Meanwhile, the Syrian economy is on the brink of collapse. For Jordan, reopening its borders with Syria following the liberation of Deraa from rebel groups in 2018 was meant to improve bilateral ties and pave the way for the normalization of relations. Jordan's 370-km border with Syria, running through largely empty and challenging terrain, was infiltrated by smugglers until King Abdullah ordered the army to alter its rules of engagement and do whatever it took to stop the

smugglers. Amman protested to the Syrian government and provided evidence that the Syrian military protected smugglers and facilitated their attempts to enter Jordan.

The Jordanian army said it had intercepted thousands of smuggling attempts since 2020 and, in recent months, had shot down dozens of drones coming from the Syrian side. Jordan's air force is believed to have launched two airstrikes against suspected Captagon facilities in southern Syria between May and August. There is chatter in Amman that more may be coming following King Abdullah's stern words, as he warned that the kingdom would take all necessary measures to protect itself from future threats from the Syrian crisis that could impact its national security. King Abdullah is talking about weapons smuggling as well. Recently, Israel accused Iran of smuggling weapons to Palestinian militant groups through Jordan, ordering Mossad to investigate the claim.

Civil unrest in the Suwayda governorate, which has been raging for more than a month, is also being watched by Jordan. King Abdullah warned that the kingdom cannot receive any new waves of refugees. The country is hosting about a million Syrians and recently stated that they should return home. A few weeks ago, two pro-government columnists wrote about Jordan and the drug war in the local media, calling for a tough response to Syria's indifference to Amman's complaints. One, Maher Abu Tair, mentioned creating a buffer zone, while the other, Malek Athamneh, wrote about "American proposals to help Jordan" protect its northern borders.

One informed source confirmed that Jordan is studying several options on southern Syria, including launching more airstrikes, but that Amman is avoiding any "boots on the ground" scenario. Walid Phares, a one-time adviser to former US President Donald Trump, tweeted that Washington is considering setting up "free zones" in Syria over the events in Suwayda and revelations that two US members of Congress had been in contact with the Druze community's highest religious figures there. With Moscow occupied by the war in Ukraine, the Russian military presence in southern Syria, which Amman had welcomed, appears to be no more. The chaos and power vacuum in southern Syria is a cause of genuine concern for Jordan and drug smuggling is only one aspect. The rise in Daesh movements in Syria's eastern desert and the activities by pro-Iran militias in southern Syria keep Amman on its toes.

Keeping its lines of communications open with all parties, Al-Safadi held a meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last month. According to media reports, the two ministers discussed the Syrian crisis and its resolution in line with the "step-for-step" process, whereby the Syrian regime is reintroduced to the international community in exchange for reforms. But Al-Safadi also "stressed the need to stop the threats the crisis poses to the security of Jordan and the region." For now, contacts between Amman and Damascus are on hold, but only after Jordan delivered a message that its patience over what is happening along its northern borders is running thin.

Arab News

Hunger at home haunts Syria's international outreach efforts

Zaid M. Belbagi

AS Syria steps out of its diplomatic isolation, calls for reconstruction are mooted by former opponents seeking to justify their relations and by the Syrians themselves, eager to capitalize on their new friendships. The recent dalliance with the Assad regime does not, however, illustrate the scale of developmental and humanitarian challenges that the country now faces - most significantly, hunger.

In recent weeks, Syria has seen widescale protests reminiscent of those that shook the Arab world more than a decade ago. In the absence of a political solution, the country's conflicts are in stalemate. But the paralysis of Syria's political factions is not reflected in the humanitarian situation, which worsens continually.

Demonstrations that began in the south of the country before enveloping Damascus and Aleppo followed the government's decision to cut fuel subsidies,

doubling the cost of gasoline. Amid a general deterioration in living standards, the government's decision coincides with a wider economic crisis, which is at its worst point since the onset of the conflict. More than 90 percent of Syrians live below the poverty line, while spiraling inflation and food shortages now mean that 12.1 million Syrians - more than half the population - are hungry, according to the World Food Program. The acute economic circumstances are now causing a crisis of malnutrition, with a further 3 million Syrians at risk of becoming food insecure. A staggering 532 percent increase in food prices in the space of two years is indicative of the scale of the problem.

Circumstances caused by the country's long war, exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine and economic crises in neighboring Lebanon and Türkiye, have created huge challenges. Within this context, the Syrian government has imposed tough austerity

measures, with cuts to subsidies on flour and wheat joining those imposed on fuel. The knock-on effect has been that millions of ordinary Syrians lack the products, food and fuel they need to survive. Human factors are principally to blame in this crisis. In a vicious urban conflict often characterized by attacks on bakeries, the human cost of military activity has been crippling. In a state hugely reliant upon aid, Syria ranks among the world's five most-violent contexts for aid workers. The deliberate targeting of aid workers, compounded by the dangers of operating in the Syrian context, has put incredible pressure on their ability to deliver aid and provide humanitarian assistance. In 2021, only 15 percent of aid requested by the UN for humanitarian assistance was delivered.

The government, alongside the factions it has opposed, is also responsible

for the imposition of sieges on certain territories and settlements, which have had a drastic impact on their ability to receive supplies, generate income and, importantly, to farm. It was estimated in 2019 that 2.5 million Syrians had been victims of sieges imposed mainly by the government and Russian forces. Compounded by the imposition of border closures owing to security concerns, Syrian families have resorted to burning rubbish and toxic plastics to heat the little food that they have. The respiratory problems, explosions and skin diseases this causes have been documented by activists and international aid agencies alike. In a country with semi-arid geography, where access to water is described as "tenuous," the deliberate targeting of water facilities has had a disastrous impact upon local populations. Most frequently recorded in the governorates of Raqqa, Deir Ezzor and Idlib, the targeting

of water supplies has meant that Syria's drinking water supplies have almost halved and the country has seen cholera outbreaks for the first time in a century. However, a more lasting impact of these attacks has been on irrigation, forcing the country's once-lucrative cotton production into decline and halving the production of grapes and other fruits.

The human action that has led to widespread hunger has been impacted by climate change. Syria, like other countries in the Arab world, has seen unprecedented warming. The droughts of 2006 to 2010 that encouraged the revolution have returned, with unprecedented levels of drought and rainfall scarcity. By some estimates, the level of arable land in Syria has halved, while the UN has even estimated that the country's wheat production could cease altogether. Last month, the neighboring Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources warned that the Euphrates river could be dry by 2040.

Syrian farmers have already suffered due to the falling water levels of the river. Poor harvests are therefore one of the many lasting consequences of Syria's long conflict. An already-battered population has been left overly exposed to the shocks in global commodity prices. Unable to afford the trickle of fuel that enters the country, hunger and cold threaten to cause widescale distress and loss of life this winter. Climate complexities, food prices and the ongoing internal conflict have resulted in 90 percent of Syrians living below the poverty line.

Within this context, it is critical that foreign efforts to support the Syrian people are conditional upon the government's ongoing compliance with the delivery of aid. The politicization of aid, alongside the deliberate targeting of critical infrastructure, has aggravated and intensified the lot of the Syrian people - their well-being must be at the forefront of attempts at political rapprochement.

French govt wants to ‘save’ Muslim women by controlling them

Hebh Jamal

ON September 8, France's top administrative court upheld a government ban on the abaya in public schools. The government had announced the measure in August, claiming it broke the rules of secularism in education. The following Monday, nearly 300 girls showed up to school wearing an abaya; some 67 of them who refused to change were sent home.

This ban is part of a series of measures undertaken by the French government in recent years, targeting the Muslim minority under the pretext of protecting secularism - or laïcité. How Muslim women should dress has become a particular obsession of the authorities. In 2004, the country banned the hijab in state schools. Then in 2010, it passed a ban on full-face veils in public. Since 2016, various municipalities have been introducing prohibitions on wearing full-body "burkini" swimsuits in public pools.

In November 2022, the then minister of national education, Pap Ndiaye, introduced a Laïcité plan which aims to prevent students from wearing modest - or what is seen as "religiously affiliated" - clothing in French public schools by "strengthening human monitoring", ie policing them. The plan instructs school staff to go after students wearing long skirts and long-sleeved attire to report them and sanction their behaviour if they refuse to change. Disciplinary action includes halting their education by "prohibiting the student's access to the [school]" until they understand via dialogue that "their behaviour harms secularism and the values of the Republic".

France's commitment to secularism, which it defines as the freedom from religious influence, has clearly been transformed into an ugly cult-like system. The

original concept of separating church and state to guarantee freedom of thought and to prevent the coercion of religious dogmatism is no longer the driver of official action. Instead, secularism is instrumentalised to establish complete control over a religious minority and further push them to the margins of society where they hold no social or political power. No other religious group in France is as targeted as the Muslim community.

French government officials routinely accuse it of what they call "Islamist separatism" - the idea that Muslims are hostile to the French nation as a whole and do not want to belong to it. In 2021, the government unveiled legislation aimed at combating this "separatism", by extending the ban on religious symbols, making it easier to close places of worship and coming after Muslim civil organisations. While the French authorities have launched systematic attacks on the whole community, Muslim women and girls have borne the brunt of the French authorities' obsession with controlling their bodies. It does not matter if the skirt or dress has any religious significance. If the Muslim female body is wearing it, it automatically becomes a danger to French secular values. Tomorrow, if a certain fabric, a T-shirt, or even a certain shoe style gains popularity among Muslim women, France will find a way to ban it.

The policing and literally undressing of Muslim women is justified, with the dominant narrative that the Muslim man is forcing the Muslim child and wife to wear Islamic clothing. The image of the helpless Muslim woman or child in need of liberation is one of the driving forces of these policies. That they are actually themselves coercive

is, of course, viciously denied. It is not the first time France has tried to control what Muslim women wear. In his 1959 book A Dying Colonialism, anticolonial thinker Franz Fanon emphasised that the control of Muslim women was crucial to the French colonial project in Algeria. He wrote that by forcing Muslim women to unveil, the French were "committed to destroying the people's originality".

According to Fanon, the French settler authorities "were under instructions to bring about the disintegration at whatever cost, of forms of existence likely to evoke a national reality and to concentrate their efforts on the wearing of the veil, which was looked upon at this juncture as a symbol of the status of the Algerian woman". Today, the French authorities have transferred their colonial obsession with controlling colonial subjects onto the Muslim community within their own borders. For Muslim girls, this violent experience starts as early as their first encounter with the public sphere - in the classroom.

By controlling their right to bodily autonomy from a young age, the French government is attempting to not only silence dissent, but program into the minds of Muslim children that it can give and withhold their freedoms as it pleases. Singling out and targeting Muslim students in schools does not make them more committed to current interpretations of secularism in France. It does, however, traumatisate them and further isolates and separates them from the rest of society - ie it does the opposite of "combating separatism".

For example, Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en Europe (CCIE), a non-profit organisation that documents and fights against discrimination and human rights

violations of Muslims in Europe, has highlighted the case of a French schoolgirl, who was harassed by one of her teachers because her skirt was considered to be too long. She told CCIE she was forced to take off her skirt and stay in leggings all day. Worse, school staff associated her choice of clothes with terrorism and with the beheading of French teacher, Samuel Paty, which deeply upset her and made her afraid to go back to school.

Unsurprisingly, French government policies and rhetoric attacking the Muslim community are fuelling Islamophobia in the country. In 2022, CCIE reported a total of 501 anti-Muslim incidents compared with 384 in 2021, an increase of more than 30 percent. It has also found that since the implementation of the 2004 law banning the hijab, 59 percent of Islamophobic acts within the education sector were committed against female Muslim students in high school. The CCIE and other Muslim civil society groups are also trying to challenge the backwardness of the republic and its mistreatment of Muslim women, but they are facing an uphill battle.

French Muslim women and girls, for their part, are resisting, despite the constant attacks, policing and harassment. They are constantly reasserting their agency and autonomy and choosing to wear the hijab and traditional Islamic clothing in the face of growing hostility from the French authorities.

They know these bans are not about protecting them but about denying them the ability to control their own bodies. Muslim women and girls are not "separatists", as the state so desperately wants to depict them. They are, however, freedom-seekers, and they will continue fighting for their right to live a life in France free from intimidation and coercion.

Congrats, Rishi: You’ve got a party so dreadful that Nigel Farage has turned you down

Marina Hyde

I'M still heavily sedated after the triumphant return of Liz Truss to the Conservative party conference, less than a calendar year after she caused an unfortunate lab accident involving the entire country. The spectacle is so absolutely mad that it has almost pushed through to the other side and become an impressive tale of resilience that you might use to inspire kids. "See that lady there, she fell off the horse, but she got right back on it like nothing happened." But no. Sorry, I'm simply not quite there yet. Liz Truss is the human equivalent of honking out a joke about a terrorist attack while they're still pulling bodies out of the rubble. She is a walking "too soon?". The only place you should be seeing her this October is as a Halloween costume (foam cheese wedge not included).

Instead, she's selling out the Last of Us suite at the Tories' Manchester conference hotel. Hand on heart, I would say Truss's attempt to reclaim her back catalogue is going slightly less well than Taylor Swift's. I don't know if you managed to catch her speech about how to create growth (Liz's version), but you may have heard that it was a rendition for which conference attendees were queuing up the stairs and down the corridors.

This certainly serves as a reminder that the questionably popular should always hold their events in small rooms. Tell you what, if Truss can sell out one night in a single 400-seat regional theatre to non-rubberneckers, then I'll pretend this is her Eras tour. Until then, we might have to face the fact that being popular within the very odd world of Conservative party

conference is the equivalent of having infectious diarrhoea pretty much anywhere else.

Then again, the tale of Truss is still judged a draw. I read this morning in Politico that the TV rights to Harry Cole and James Heale's book about her mayfly premiership have been sold, and that the story is soon to be made into a drama by the same people who did the Boris Johnson/Covid one that you probably didn't watch because it was on Sky. I don't know why the Conservatives hate the creative industries - they're the only ones they've accidentally grown. But look, like me, I'm sure you can't get enough of this trend for "making sense" of a situation via art-adjacent drama approximately four minutes after it's happened, as absolutely all contemporary events are rinsed for every possible form of content, with multi-genre looks at the same story not regarded as eating each other's lunch, but as mutually enhancing. To complete the typical modern set, we need two competing documentaries about Truss - one on Netflix, one on Amazon Prime - followed by two dramas (Channel 4 and Apple), plus a 44-episode podcast series (one ep for each day of the premiership) that the critics will call "a landmark anatomy of a very human disaster". Finally, we'll get the movie, which - because it comes a whole two years after the events described therein - is billed as "reflective" and a "historical drama". As for other ways into the story, are mortgage payments a genre? I didn't like the way that mine explored the Truss premiership.

Nigel Farage was in the audience for Truss's speech, and afterwards pointed out to reporters that he has stayed the same, but that much of the Tory party has moved towards him. Which is somewhat smug, but no word of a lie. For a guy who spent Monday night living it up at some Stygian karaoke event with Priti Patel, though, Nigel is playing it super-cool about wanting to join the Conservative party. I think he just happens to be on a mini-break in the same hotel in Manchester.

Still, everything changes, and according to the laws of the cursed timeline to which we are bolted, he can probably wait for the first byelection fought by a Suella Braverman-led opposition and become shadow foreign secretary then. Anyway, the other big conference plotline that Rishi Sunak is attempting to play out spoiler-free is the decision to scrap HS2. To say this has derailed his conference is a) a feeble pun and b) a million times less feeble than the way he's handled it. One of the rare character notes to the otherwise weirdly bland Sunak is that he is not very good at politics, and this really is a disasterclass even by his own standards. Not only are we now well over a week into headlines about the U-turn, but the failure to formally confirm it has made Sunak look like someone who can't make a decision.

Even as I type this, it is unclear how long it is going to be before the PM finally spits it out. There are suggestions it will finally get signed off in Manchester at an emergency cabinet meeting - which, for more directional readers, is government's equivalent of an emergency podcast. In fact, it's kind of incredible that there have already been several emergency

podcasts about the rumoured HS2 decision, before it has technically even been made. If Sunak had pissed about any longer, the Netflix doc about the decision could actually have come out while he was still droning on about not having decided it. This would have ripped a tear in the events-to-content continuum, reversing the natural direction of travel, and effectively ceding control of the UK to Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos. Then again, maybe it would be an upgrade. At this rate, the best hope for the country might be for Ryan Reynolds and the other one to buy us and use us as a content farm. The dominant current theory as to why Sunak has appeared to dither so long about the HS2 decision is that he had always planned to use his conference speech on Wednesday to announce it, and refused to adapt to circumstance even once it leaked. That feels quite a long way to go for a speech line - and also quite weird that his big centrepiece is cancelling something. Maybe cancelling policies is the good kind of cancel culture. The prime minister definitely seems to enjoy doing it - the recent net zero speech, in which he claimed to be ditching all kinds of policies that never actually existed, felt like a concerted attempt to get a catchphrase going. Every time Sunak referred to seven bins or enforced carpooling, he'd look up from his lectern and go, "I've scrapped it".

While we wait to learn what we already know, then, it's hard not to pass the time wondering if Sunak is scrapping the UK's future in a doomed attempt to save his own. It's a highly aggressive form of declinism - but I guess it will be a fun TV drama in a year or two, and that's what really matters.

Why Russia cares about UN Human Rights Council

Boris Bondarev

RUSSIAN foreign policy has always devoted considerable attention to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), especially considering how relevant the issue has become amid mounting authoritarianism under President Vladimir Putin's regime. While Moscow regularly dismisses the HRC as a platform where Western countries criticize Russia, it is now seeking re-election to the body, which it was expelled from last year after invading Ukraine. Considering the tools Russian diplomats have at their disposal, I think they will be successful in these efforts.

Having a seat on the HRC allows Russia to both respond to Western criticism and receive support from other countries that have a similarly loose definition of human rights. In Russia's view, human rights is an affair for each country to address on its own, and outside influences must not interfere in this process. This view has been welcomed by other states like China that have had similar difficulties in respecting basic human rights. Beijing even went one step further than Moscow and declared

that it has its own understanding of human rights that differs from the principles outlined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this way, Russia's expulsion from the HRC crippled Moscow's ability to promote its relativist worldview among its sympathizers and allies. It also lost the opportunity to block decisions pushed through by its adversaries - Ukraine and the West - such as the appointment of a special rapporteur to investigate human rights abuses in Russia.

It's no surprise, then, that as the next HRC elections approach the Kremlin is working hard to forge a coalition that would back its candidacy. Despite its tarnished reputation and limited resources, Russian diplomacy still manages to achieve some degree of effectiveness.

The most powerful tool Russian diplomats have at their disposal is their ability to promise assistance to the Global South - with money, weapons, mercenaries and other services provided to corrupt elites, such as help laundering money

from human trafficking and the drug and weapons trades. These countries will back Russia's candidacy to rejoin the HRC in exchange for these services.

Meanwhile, Russian state propagandists will portray the country's return to the council as a great triumph. They will say Russia is not in fact isolated, and that the West has been humiliated again by seeing that the international community is on Russia's side. Returning Russia to the HRC will legitimize the Kremlin's claim that its aggression is a justified response to the supposed genocide of Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine. In turn, this will further divide the UN over its response to the war in Ukraine.

All this clearly demonstrates how little respect there is for UN-recognized human rights and freedoms. The fact that so many countries willingly accept aid from a warmongering country, accused of some of the most serious crimes against humanity, shows they increasingly see human rights as the luxury of a prosperous West

Oslo Accords’ gloomy 30th anniversary

Yossi Mekelberg

WE all love a story with a happy ending, but tragically the Oslo Accords is not one of these. Instead, it is one of a great promise that led to a series of missed opportunities for peace, coexistence and reconciliation, to the detriment of the Palestinian people mainly, but also of Israel.

However, lamenting the accords' ultimate failure to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict without dissecting the reasons for it, while ignoring some of the remarkable breakthroughs it did make, would be an exercise in futility. When the next opportunity to strike a peace deal in one of the longest conflicts in recent history presents itself, the lessons from Oslo, and what followed it, might prove to be extremely useful.

Admittedly, the current conditions in Israel, Palestine and the international community do not lend themselves to a peace initiative - and things will probably get worse before they get better. However, those who believe that wars and conflict are not inevitable and irresolvable and that history has shown that eventually all conflicts come to an end should not be stopped from learning from the past, assessing the present and planning for a better and conflict-free future. It is also the case that the lack of any imminent prospect of a comprehensive peace agreement does not mean that steps should not be taken to reduce tensions, improve conditions on the ground and lay the foundations for future peace negotiations.

It was suggested that, to a large extent, the negotiations in Oslo were concluded with an agreement because all the stars happened to be in alignment. In Israel, a new government led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin promised its voters it would achieve peace with the Palestinians. The First Intifada served as a wake-up call for Israel to recognize that there was no military solution to this conflict, only a political one, and that the Palestinians would never give up their aspiration for self-determination. Meanwhile, the Palestine Liberation Organization and its leader Yasser Arafat were going through ideological changes, acknowledging that the state of Israel was a reality that they would have to learn to live with and recognize. However, their miscalcula-

tion in supporting Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait upset most countries in the region, especially in the Gulf, and also Western countries. This forced the Palestinian leadership to search for a ladder to climb out of the hole they had dug for themselves.

Additionally, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ceased being associated with the politics among the superpowers. Instead, a young US president, Bill Clinton, in office for less than a year, with no notable achievements to date and suffering from low approval ratings, was desperate for some international success. And although the agreement was not brokered by Washington, the Clinton administration was delighted to bless and embrace it, as if it were the midwife.

Three decades later, after another bloody intifada and round after round of violent clashes, the search for peace has become even more complex. A number of attempts have been made to revive the process, while the topography and demography of the West Bank changed dramatically as a result of Israelis building hundreds of settlements and outposts. In 1993, the leaderships were ready to take risks for peace but that readiness is now completely missing.

In the case of Rabin, he ended up paying for his commitment to peace with his life, when relentless incitements against him by the far right and religious messianics led to a Jewish extremist shooting him dead following a peace rally. Some of those who led the incitements against Rabin and his government now sit at the heart of the current Israeli government. Consequently, and with an ailing and dysfunctional Palestinian political system, any prospective renewed search for peace will require a radical overhaul of both political systems, bringing to the fore pragmatic leaderships that are open to new ideas.

One of the mistakes, at least in my eyes, of those who signed the Oslo Accords was that they refused to clearly state that any lasting and genuine peace agreement required the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living alongside Israel, with Jerusalem as the capital of both, and a just and fair deal for the

refugees. By being vague about the nature of the final agreement, they left many Palestinians suspicious about whether they would ever see their wish for self-determination materialize and led Israelis opposing such an outcome to believe that a Palestinian state could still be averted.

To be sure, the disastrous developments in relations between Israel and the Palestinians over the three decades that have elapsed since the Oslo Accords were signed on the White House lawn have left scars and deep distrust in both societies. This distrust underlines one of the main shortcomings of the Oslo process: of failing to build a proactive, critical mass of support among both peoples to resist the small but determined minority that has more of an interest in the conflict continuing than in bringing it to an end. Reestablishing such trust is going to be even more difficult in the current climate, with relations between the two sides as bad as they have ever been.

But when viable peace negotiations do resume, albeit at some unforeseeable future date, they will have to be based on the equality of the rights of everyone on both sides of the Green Line, as well as of the 5.7 million registered Palestinian refugees. Today, most Israelis and Palestinians were not even born when the Oslo Accords were signed and, for them, the event is the distant history of an attempt that failed to end the conflict peacefully. They are not aware that the very notion of a two-state solution was not an option that was ever seriously discussed, nor did it produce any significant documentation on resolving the Palestinian refugees issue; Jerusalem as the capital of both nations; or how to ensure that the settlements would not be able to block the road to peace. Hence, it is left for a new generation of leaders, peace activists and a proactive civil society to take the positives of Oslo, including the belief that obstacles are there to be overcome, and find a new path to peace. This can only happen once a majority of Israelis and Palestinians, led by courageous politicians, marginalize those who advance maximalist partisan objectives and embrace the notion that all Israelis and Palestinians deserve the same human, civil and political rights. The rest then becomes mere detail.

Lampedusa’s tragedies remind us we need urgent action from EU

Giovanna Di Benedetto

ON October 3, 2013, one of the Mediterranean's worst shipwrecks occurred off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa. The vessel carrying almost 500 people, sank, resulting in the loss of at least 368 lives. I was working in the humanitarian field in Rome at the time and was horrified to have something so tragic happen so close to home. I heard stories from colleagues about divers who were pulling victims out - body by body, day by day - lining them up on the harbour. I was heartbroken to see the photos of neatly arranged caskets in a warehouse; a few small white ones carrying the bodies of children were pulled up in the front.

It has been 10 years since this tragedy and the horrible memories of it still haunt Lampedusa. Unfortunately, not enough has been done to prevent such deadly incidents from happening again. More than 28,000 people have been reported dead or missing since 2014 in the Mediterranean Sea, more than 1,100 of them children. A few weeks ahead of the anniversary, I found myself in Lampedusa. The island again was going through a difficult time. In a single week, it had seen the arrival of an estimated 10,000 people, a number which is nearly double its permanent population.

In all my years working for humanitarian organisations, I had never seen the island like this. The facilities set up to accommodate new arrivals were overwhelmed by lines of men, women and children, some of whom were forced to sleep outside in the streets. People wandered into town in search

of food and water after spending days without eating. Each individual arriving had a story marked by sacrifice and resilience. Many came with nothing, often carrying only a plastic bag with an object from a loved one or soil from their homeland. There were children who had experienced gender-based violence and mothers who had survived rape. There were people who had lost loved ones on the way.

Amid the pain and suffering of the people arriving by boat, one story of humanity stood out for me. An 18-year-old young man from West Africa had just arrived with a three-year-old child. They weren't relatives; he had discovered the child alone in the desert and protected him throughout their perilous journey across the Mediterranean. The child is receiving appropriate care, but his name, nationality and exact age remain unknown. Tragically, he is among a growing number of young children arriving alone.

Throughout Italy, we have seen the arrival of over 133,000 migrants this year, including more than 11,600 unaccompanied minors, according to the Italian Ministry of Interior. Alarming, children aged between zero and six years, alone, without family, represent over 2 percent of these arrivals - a tenfold increase from previous years. At the same time, children continue to lose their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean. Since the start of the year, more than 4,500 people, including many children, have died, or gone missing while attempting the dangerous journey by sea to Europe.

At Lampedusa, I met two mothers who told me they had just lost their small children, a newborn and a five-month-old, at sea. Their heartbreaking testimonies reminded me of another story that has stuck with me for more than seven years now: A child, who survived a shipwreck because his mother handed him over to a man, shortly before drowning - a final act of love and desperation to save her son's life. But in my work, I have also heard stories of hope that keep me going. In June, I met a 14-year-old boy from Gambia in Sicily, whose only dream was to study. Today, he is in an Italian school, immensely grateful for the opportunity to continue his education.

Every child must be protected and receive proper care and education. Anyone fleeing adversity must be able to find refuge and hope. A decade after the Lampedusa tragedy, we are yet to see substantial reform and proactive measures within the European Union that can ensure this. We still need a coordinated European search and rescue mechanism and safe and regular routes allowing people fleeing poverty, conflict and climate change-related disasters to reach Europe. The time for solidarity and coordinated action is now. The responsibility to protect and receive people seeking safe haven is a collective one, and we must all push for unified action to ensure their safety and well-being. Migration is not an emergency, but a human phenomenon which needs to be addressed and properly managed. Mass death in the Mediterranean is fully preventable and must be prevented.

Aljazeera

The Moscow Times



Traders' role vital in economic progress: SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq said businessmen are the backbone of the economy and a leading contributor to the economic progress and prosperity of the country.

The SCCI chief recalled the business community of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had rendered incalculable sacrifices in war against terrorism, which are exemplary and their no precedence in any part of the world.

He said the business community required proper patronage of the government and relief to mitigate hardships of the crisis and war-hit traders' in KP province and to continue their share in economic prosperity and development.

Fuad Ishaq was speaking to a traders delegation led by SCCI's former president and Anjuman E Tajaran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pres-

ident Haji Muhammad Afzal here at the chamber's house on Wednesday.

The SCCI's vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi also present in the meeting.

The delegation consisted of presidents and office bearers of different bazaars and markets traders union and associations, prominently the Anjuman E Tajaran

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa senior vice chairman Pir Dilawar, secretary general Malik Abid Hafeez, vice presidents Saddar Gul, Tariq Haideri, Haji Gul Zaman, Haji Sherzada Mohmand, Haji Ihsanullah Mohmand, Information Secretary Saleem Bokhari, Ajab Khan, Haji Sabz Ali, Muhammad Ayub, Haji Khanzada, Rabail Gul, Ishtiaq Paracha, Haji Liaqat, Haji Nadeem Rauf, Haji Shah Muhammad, Malik Miraj, Raza Khan, presidents, secretaries of different bazaars traders unions and associations were present in a large number on the occasion.

Fuad Ishaq on the occasion assured traders' issues will be taken up with relevant authorities in an efficient manner and proactive steps would be taken to gain maximum relief, incentives and facilities for the business community.

While recounting achievements, he said SCCI is an effective voice and solely platform of the business community, which had played an important role in provision of special incentives and relief to the community.

He said the country's economy is still dire strait.

He added the melting economy can only be revived by providing special incentives, relief and facilities to the business community by central and provincial governments.

Fuad Ishaq called for elimination of multiple/double taxes, reforms in the existing taxation system and simplifying procedures for the filing of tax returns.

He furthermore emphasized the broadening of the

tax-base instead of imposing further burden of additional/new taxes on taxpayers.

The SCCI's chief called for restructuring and revamping of trade and export related institutions.

Earlier, the Anjum E Tajaran KP president Haji Muhammad Afzal formally congratulated Fuad Ishaq for being elected as president of the chamber.

He on the occasion highlighted a number of issues that were being faced by the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Haji Afzal expressed the hope that newly elected president Fuad Ishaq along with the rest of the cabinet will play a crucial role in resolving business community issues.

Fuad Ishaq said they will give due respect and take up all issues of traders by keeping view of their dignity and resolve all issues on priority grounds by effectively taking up with the relevant government authorities.



MULTAN: A large number of women standing in a queue waiting their turn outside Utility Store to purchase grocery items at Rasheedabad.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where threeships namely, Maersk Kinloss, MSC Elaine and Zoe Schulte carrying Containers and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Ocean Bright, Hyde Park and Mirela carrying Steel Coil, Chemicals and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of themthree ships, MSC Elaine, Maersk Kinloss and Spottailare expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo throughput of 128,804tonnes, comprising 98,748 tonnes imports cargo and 30,056 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,904 Containers (3,136 TEUs Imports and 1,768 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are eleven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Sky Blue, Al Soor-II, Mirela and Hyde Park & another shipMSC Jemima carrying Palm oil, Gas oil, Coal, Chemicals and Containers are expected to take berths at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Oil Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Engro Terminal and Containers Terminal respectively on Wednesday, while two more container ships, Seaspan Ganges and Vancouver are due to arrive at Port Qasim on 5th October.

PSX stays bullish, gains 323 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Wednesday and gained 323.03 points, showing positive change of 0.69 per cent, closing at 47,079.83 points against 46,756.80 points the previous day.

A total of 330,249,094 shares valuing Rs.7.304 billion were traded during the day as compared to 213,188,395 shares valuing Rs. 6.094 billion the previous day.

As many as 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 172 of them recorded gains and 134 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 36 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 150,526,082 shares at Rs.1.39 per share, Pak Refinery with

12,978,337 shares at Rs.15.89 per share and Bankislami Pak with 11,208,643 shares at Rs.17.59 per share.

Colgate PalmXD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.45.00 per share price, closing at Rs.1,413.21, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile with a Rs.23.63 rise in its per share price to Rs.541.63.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.24.00 per share closing at Rs.1,675.00, followed by Premier Sugar with a Rs.21.37 decline to close at Rs.500.00.

Rupee gains Rs1.04 against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed the 21st consecutive recovery session as it gained Rs1.04 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.68 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 285.72.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.25 and Rs 285 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased Rs 1.23 to close at Rs 298.33 against the last day's closing of Rs 299.56, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paisa to close at Rs1.91, whereas a decrease of Rs1.25 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs343.97 as compared to the last closing of Rs345.42.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 28 paisa each to close at Rs77.50 and Rs 75.89 respectively.

Breast Cancer Awareness Day:

Advancement in treatment, research highlighted at SKMCH&RC



F.P. Report

LAHORE: On October 4th, a breast cancer awareness day was organised at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) in Lahore. A large number of young students participated from different private and government colleges.

On this occasion, doctors from the hospital spoke on a range of topics related to breast cancer awareness including common signs and symptoms, advancements in treatment, research and the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Gulnaz Ayaz, a breast cancer survivor who was diagnosed in 2014, shared her inspiring journey of fighting cancer and encouraged women to go to the right

place for diagnosis and to take any unusual symptoms seriously.

Dr. Sadia Abdullah, Consultant Radiation Oncologist, said that early detection is key to improving survival. "Take out 5 minutes for yourself and regularly perform breast self-examination. If you know your normal, then you will be able to detect any unusual signs and symptoms of breast cancer. Watch out for lumps, changes in size, shape, skin, nipple discharge, even lumps in the armpit area, and tenderness that is persistent. Don't be shy about it, talk to family members and seek medical attention. The condition may be benign or cancerous but it is important to get it checked to rule out cancer," she said.

Dr. Zeeshan Tariq, Con-

sultant Medical Oncologist, emphasised that breast cancer is very common as every 8th woman in the world is expected to get it during their lifetime and in Pakistan, every 9th woman will get breast cancer during her lifetime. Early detection is important and his message was breast self-examination for women under 40 years of age and mammography for women above 40.

He said that in stages 1 and 2, survival rates are over 90% and this percentage drops sharply if breast cancer is stage 4. He said that in our country, women still present in late stages due to lack of awareness and limited access to healthcare facilities.

Dr. Amina Khan, Consultant Surgical Oncologist, highlighted de-escalation of treatment due to advancement in science and medicine.

She said that 70% of breast cancer surgeries being done at Shaukat Khanum Hospitals are without amputation or breast organ removal, which is equally effective and saves patients from psychological trauma. People are afraid of treatment and she wanted them to know that we are able to control side-effects better

now. She said that breast cancer is manageable and you can live a meaningful life after treatment.

Dr. Usman Rashid, Senior Research Scientist, discussed important breakthroughs in breast cancer treatment including precision medicine, genetic testing and screening, targeted therapies, liquid biopsies, immunotherapies, and artificial intelligence and machine learning.

He said that these advancements have changed the landscape of breast cancer management. He also said that women are often the nucleus of their families and it is imperative that you take care of yourselves.

In the end, Dr. Aasim Yusuf, Chief Medical Officer of SKMCH&RC, thanked all the participating colleges and sponsors who made the event possible and encouraged students to take the life-saving message about early detection of breast cancer back to their communities.

He also said that two specialist cancer hospitals cannot manage the entire burden of disease in Pakistan and for this reason, the third Shaukat Khanum Hospital is being built in Karachi which is expected to open next year.

Crackdown against gas pilferers continued; 133 connections disconnected, says SNGPL

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 133 connections while imposing fine of Rs17.048 Million and 418 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas and 05 disconnected on the use of compressor, 38 under billing cases processed while imposing fine of Rs5.784 million booked against gas theft

and Rs0.021 Million booked against under-billing.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected 09 connections on use of compressor while another 01 against illegal use of gas and 22 under billing cases processed. In Multan, the company disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas, 03 disconnected on the use of compressor, 03 under billing cases processed while imposing fine of Rs0.026 million booked against gas theft and Rs0.012 Million booked against under-billing. In Sheikhupura, the regional team disconnected

17 connection on illegal use of gas and 72 under billing cases processed

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 44 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. Rs0.805 Million has been booked against gas theft. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected 07 gas connections on illegal use of gas. SNGPL's team in Mardan 11 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas, 100 under billing cases processed and Rs0.6 Million booked against underbilling.

The regional team in Gujranwala were disconnected 02 meters on the use

of compressor and 06 disconnected on illegal use of gas and 44 under billing cases processed while imposing fine of Rs0.154 million booked against gas theft and Rs0.064 Million booked against under-billing. In Sargodha, the regional team disconnected 03 connections on the use of compressor, 47 under billing cases processed. Rs0.096 Million booked against underbilling.

In Sialkot, the regional team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas while imposing fine of Rs0.391 million booked against gas theft and Rs8.670 Million booked

against underbilling.

The company disconnected 08 connection on illegal use of gas in Islamabad, 10 under billing cases processed while imposing fine of Rs0.240 Million booked against under-billing. In Sahiwal, 04 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas.

The regional team in Faisalabad 82 under billing cases processed and 05 disconnected on illegal use of gas and another 02 on the use of compressor while imposing fine of Rs0.150 million booked against gas theft and Rs0.035 Million booked against underbilling.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) is all set to launch its unique four-month long campaign titled "Empower Her" to promote girls' participation in sports in Pakistan.

Supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, the initiative will run from October 2023 to January 2024 and will include training camps, tournaments, mentoring sessions, panel discussions, and a final exhibition match in Islamabad.

While talking about the initiative, Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha said that promoting women in sports is not just about scoring goals on the field; it's about breaking barriers, shattering stereotypes, and championing equality. "When we empower women

in sports, we empower society to strive for fairness and inclusivity," she said.

'Empower Her' is an initiative designed to tackle the challenges that hinder girls and women from participating in sports, particularly in football, in Pakistan. Despite significant progress in various fields, girls and women in Pakistan still encounter numerous barriers to access and participate in sports. These challenges include limited sports infrastructure, inadequate funding, deeply ingrained societal stereotypes and gender biases, a shortage of training and developmental opportunities, and a dearth of female representation at all levels of the sport.

'Empower Her' aims to redress these disparities by establishing a supportive and inclusive sports ecosys-

tem that empowers women and girls to actively participate, compete, and excel in football. The project will initially focus on four cities in Pakistan: Karachi, Quetta, Chitral, and Islamabad.

To achieve these goals, the NCHR has collaborated with local implementing partners deeply embedded within the beneficiary communities including Karishma Ali Foundation in Chitral, Women United Football Academy in Quetta, and Karachi United Foundation in Karachi.

"NCHR's 'Empower Her' initiative is an affirmation of the Commission's commitment to advancing women's active involvement in sports and fostering an environment where women's athletes are cherished and celebrated," said NCHR Chairperson.



CG for knowledge sharing, technology transfer between China, LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday celebrated the 74th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

The ceremony was attended by Acting Consul General of China Cao Ke and LCCI President Kashif Anwar spoke on the occasion while Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Vice President Pakistan (China) Shandong Chamber of Commerce Chen Qianjiang, Vice President Pakistan Chinese Federation He Yubing, Vice President Pakistan Chinese Chamber Chen Qianjiang, President Pakistan Tax Bar Association Rana Munir Hussain

and LCCI Executive Committee members were also present.

Acting Consul General of China, Cao Ke, emphasized the significance of Lahore as a pivotal city and lauded the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry for its commendable efforts in promoting trade and industry.

He expressed a strong desire for knowledge sharing and technology transfer between China and LCCI, highlighting the importance of mutual learning.

Furthermore, Cao Ke noted that this year marks the 10th anniversary of both the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative, along with the

74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. He underscored CPEC's transformative impact on Pakistan's economy, with a substantial \$24.4 billion investment, and said that the ML1 Project will be launched soon.

Cao Ke also emphasized the commitment of the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people, and President Xi Jinping, in modernizing and socializing China, and said that China is committed to uphold global peace.

He pledged continued support for Pakistani businesses, facilitating their participation in events such as the China International

Import Expo (CIIE) and the Canton Fair.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that it has been great honour for all of them to have the opportunity to host very important Chinese business leaders in this event who are not only representing the key business support organizations in Pakistan but also doing excellent job for bringing the business people from both the countries close to each other.

He extended warmest congratulations to all the Chinese friends who celebrated their National Day on 1st October 2023. This day signifies not only the birth of a great nation but also a reminder of their remarkable journey tow-

ards making excellent progress in almost all fields of life. "We applaud the achievements and advancements that China has made, serving as an inspiration to other nations across the globe."

The LCCI President said that the diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China began in 1950 which brought two countries very close as dependable strategic allies and trustworthy neighbours.

The enduring friendship between Pakistan and China is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. This friendship is based on mutual respect, trust, and a shared vision for social and economic prosperity.

"You all will agree with

me that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has added great value to these mutual ties," he added.

He said that the 10th Anniversary of CPEC speaks itself about the collective vision of China and Pakistan whose prime aim is to shift the focus from geo-politics to geo-economics.

Pakistan's strategic location as a crossroads between South Asia, Central Asia, China, and the Middle East is ideal to transform it into a regional hub for trade, commerce, manufacturing, and agriculture, he added.

Kashif Anwar said, "We have already witnessed tremendous infrastructure

development in recent years on account of numerous projects being carried out under CPEC. We are pinning high hopes on these partnerships which have already laid solid foundation for transfer of technology and transfer of knowledge from China through direct investments and joint ventures in many sectors of economy."

He said that it is paramount responsibility of organizations like Lahore Chamber of Commerce to play an instrumental role in promoting these partnerships which are not only essential for the development and progress of our respective countries but also important for promoting peace, stability, and

prosperity in the region and beyond.

The LCCI President hoped that the strong bonding among Lahore Chamber of Commerce, Consulate of China, and Joint Pak-China Business Support Organizations will go a long way in reaping the sweetest fruits of friendship between China and Pakistan.

He also mentioned about the Chinese culture that assign a symbol at the beginning of new Chinese Year. On 22 January 2023, 'The Year of the Rabbit' began which is a symbol of longevity, peace and prosperity. "I pray that 2023 may prove to be a year of hope for every one of us," he added.



In brief

PFF announce squad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has named the men's team squad for the FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifier. The green shirts would play their World Cup qualifier match against Cambodia on a home-and-away basis. According to details, the team would travel to Cambodia to play an away leg, scheduled on October 12 while the home leg was scheduled on October 17. Pakistan Squad: Goalkeepers: Usman Ali, Salman ul Haq and Yousaf Butt; Defenders: Mamoon Moosa Khan, Mohibullah, Sohail Khan, Juniad Shah, Ali Khan Niazi, Rao Umar Hayat, Abdullah Iqbal and Easah Suliman; Midfielders: Alamgir Ghazi, Ali Uzair, Rajab Ali, Nizamuddin, Harun Hamid and Rahis Nabi; Forwards: Waleed Khan, Mohammad Waheed, Yousuf, Fareed Khan, Abdul Samad, Otis Khan, Moin Ahmed and Shayak Dost.

POA honours squash team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Olympic Association (AOA) hosted a reception to honour the Pakistan squash team who won the silver medal in the team event in on-going 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou, China. President Pakistan Olympic Association Lt. Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan who was the chief guest at the occasion encouraged the young athletes with cash prizes while Secretary General POA Muhammad Khalid Mahmood, Dr. Asad Abbas and other officials were also present on the occasion, said a press release. Arif Hasan said that despite limited resources, reaching the Asian Games final shows excellent skills of the players. It may be mentioned that India beat Pakistan by 2-1 in the final of Men's squash team event final.

PNF Netball Cup from Oct 9

ISLAMABAD (APP): The PNF Netball Cup under the auspices of the Pakistan Netball Federation in collaboration with Sindh Netball Association would start from October 9 at PSB Coaching Centre, Karachi. According to Mudassar Arain, President of Pakistan Netball Federation, the preparations for the event have already been started. A total of four categories of boys and as many of girls would be contested in the event. These competitions include boys under 17 and girls under 13, under 15, under 17 and open category competitions. The tournament would continue till October 12 and prizes would be distributed among the winning players at the end of the tournament. The registration process for the teams participating in the tournament had already kicked off from October 1.

2 doping cases caught at Asian Games

H A N G Z H O U (Agencies): Two doping cases were found in the ongoing Asian Games in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, Chinese state-run media reported on Wednesday. Announcing the two cases, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said Saudi Arabia's long-distance runner Mohammed Yousef Al-Asiri has been provisionally suspended after his Sept. 26 test returned positive for the prohibited substance darbepoetin. Xinhua News reported. Last week, boxer Mohammad Khaibari Nooristani from Afghanistan tested positive for the non-specified prohibited substances, it said.

Cricket World Cup picks up where it left off, with England against New Zealand

AHMEDABAD (Agencies): After combining to produce the most dramatic finish ever to a Cricket World Cup, England and New Zealand will meet again this time to open the 2023 edition in India.

England was awarded its first title four years ago at Lord's on a contentious countback against the New Zealanders after the final finished tied and a so-called Super Over also failed to separate the teams.

The tiebreaker was a heavily derided and subsequently dumped countback of boundaries, giving England the narrowest of victories as it hosted the pinnacle competition in cricket's one-day format for the fifth time.

The defending champions and runners-up will get the six-week tournament started Thursday at the 134,000-seater Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. This same venue will host the highly anticipated India-

Pakistan showdown on Oct. 14 and the final on Nov. 19.

Top-ranked England arrived in India aiming to be just the third team — following West Indies (1975 and '79) and Australia (1999, 2003 and '07) — to win back-to-back ODI World Cups.

Jos Buttler has taken over from 2019 skipper Eoin Morgan, but England's attacking approach — high risk, high reward — remains the same.

Ben Stokes returned from his short-lived ODI retirement to rejoin the likes of Liam Livingstone, Sam Curran, Moeen Ali and Chris Woakes — all players who can play multiple roles, thus allowing the batting to run deep.

England is coming off a series win over New Zealand at home last month, and a four-wicket win over Bangladesh in an unofficial warmup at Guwahati on Monday. "We had a valuable outing in terms of bowlers get-

ting to bowl and some batters getting time in the middle," Ali said after the win over Bangladesh. "We are ready. It's going to be a massive game (against New Zealand) ... They're a dangerous side."

Stokes is back as a specialist batter. Slotting in at No. 4, Stokes scored 182 from 124 balls in the series-clinching third game against New Zealand last month at The Oval, where England won by a thumping 181 runs. Stokes was the key player in England's victory in the 2019 final and his return to ODI duty only bolsters his team's chances of back-to-back titles. However, he is not certain to play against New Zealand because of a sore hip.

Buttler, speaking ahead of his side's final training session, said: "He's got a slight niggle with his hip, but fingers crossed that it'll be good news for us. We'll see." England is spoilt for choices in terms of batting power, with

Harry Brook's chances of breaking into the starting XI linked to Joe Root's form. The veteran Root has been a long-term leader in the England lineup but has posted only one half-century in his last nine ODI innings.

In its last ODI match in India, back in March 2021, England lost a three-match series 2-1. It posted totals of 251, 337-4 and 322-9 in those three games at Pune, and Buttler's lineup will be aiming to replicate those last two scores on a regular basis in this tournament. For New Zealand, this tournament presents a chance to go one step further, without worrying about the boundary countback.

A simpler rule has replaced it: this time tied finalists will keep contesting Super Overs until there is a clear winner. But it's too early for the Black Caps to be thinking about that, particularly after a run of injuries.

Veteran pace bowler Tim Southee's thumb injury is likely

to keep him on the sidelines until later in the tournament. Kane Williamson, who scored 54 and 37 in the two warmup games, also won't play the opener against England because he needs more time to recover from a long-term knee injury.

"I'm really fortunate to be a part of this World Cup. Five months ago, that didn't seem a possibility," he said after New Zealand's warmup win over Pakistan. "There is still some time to go (to full fitness), and it is great to get through some batting in the middle." Tom Latham will lead the Black Caps in Williamson's absence which, in turn, will allow both Glenn Phillips and Mark Chapman to feature in the game.

The middle-order duo has become a vital cog for New Zealand in ODI cricket over the last two years, as they make good use of the last 20 overs with some impressive power hit-

ting. New Zealand also has Devon Conway to share Williamson's run-scoring burden. The 32-year-old left-handed opener made his ODI debut in 2021 and averages 46 in 22 matches since. Conway also has extensive experience of Indian conditions, given he is a vital batsman for the IPL franchise Chennai Super Kings.

New Zealand is also well rounded in the bowling department, with spinners Ish Sodhi and Mitchell Santner expected to perform well in the conditions. Left-arm pacer Trent Boult is part of the mix, despite relinquishing his full national contract, and it is surely to be his last World Cup for the Black Caps. Since 2015, New Zealand has qualified for the semifinals of every ICC white-ball tournament, and reaching the last four would again be a minimum expectation for its golden generation of cricketers.



AHMEDABAD: Shakib Al Hasan, Dasun Shanaka, Temba Bavuma, Kane Williamson, Rohit Sharma, Jos Buttler, Babar Azam, Pat Cummins, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Scott Edwards pose with the trophy, World Cup.

Europe, Africa and South America to host games in 2030 World Cup: FIFA

PARAGUAY (Agencies): Morocco, Portugal and Spain will be joint hosts for the 2030 World Cup but games will also be played in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay as the footballing showpiece celebrates its centenary, FIFA announced on Wednesday.

FIFA said in a statement that the matches in South America, one each in Montevideo, Buenos Aires and Asuncion, were part of the celebration to mark 100 years since the first World Cup in Uruguay.

The bulk of games will be played in the three host countries. The announcement puts an end to competition between two major bids, one led by Spain and Portugal and the other from Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay.

Once the technical criteria have been validated, the governing body of world football will make official the award of its flagship event in 2024. But, following the "unanimous"

approval by the FIFA Council, the way seems clear for this unprecedented intercontinental format, which promises complex political and logistical challenges and raises further questions about the environmental impact of major sporting events.

At one stage, Spain and Portugal had included Ukraine in their bid, saying they wanted to send "a message of solidarity and hope" and pay tribute to the "tenacity and resilience" of a country invaded by Russia in February 2022.

Morocco, a five-time unsuccessful candidate to host the tournament, joined them in mid-March. The agreement between European body UEFA and its African (CAF) and South American (CONMEBOL) counterparts confirms the withdrawal of Ukraine and also that of the South American countries, in exchange for a symbolic concession. "In a divided world, FIFA and football are

uniting," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino. "The FIFA Council, representing the entire world of football, unanimously agreed to celebrate the centenary of the FIFA World Cup, whose first edition was played in Uruguay in 1930, in the most appropriate way."

The statement said a "centenary ceremony" will be held "at the stadium where it all began", in Montevideo's Estadio Centenario in 1930, when the event brought together 13 teams in a single host city - compared with 32 for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and 48 from the 2026 World Cup in North America onwards.

FIFA also said it was inviting bids from the Asian and Oceanian continental confederations for the 2034 World Cup. It also said it was lifting its ban on Russian under-17 teams competing internationally. This follows UEFA's decision last week to lift a ban on Russia's youth sides.

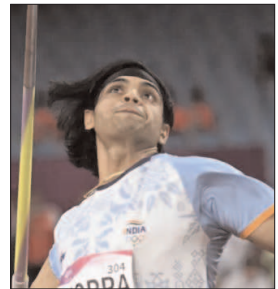
Chopra goes big for gold as Barshim leaps to Asian Games record

HANGZHOU (Agencies): India's javelin king Neeraj Chopra produced a giant throw to strike gold at the Asian Games on Wednesday and cap a gruelling season, with Olympic high-jump champion Mutaz Essa Barshim joining him as a winner.

They were among seven titlists on day six of the track and field in Hangzhou with just the men's and women's marathons left on Thursday, concluding an event dominated by hosts China.

Reigning Olympic and world champion Chopra was under pressure after teammate Kishore Kumar Jena produced a huge personal best of 86.77 metres, which he would later improve to 87.54m and eventual silver.

But Chopra responded emphatically with a season-best 88.88m to retain his Asian Games crown in style.



followed. Chopra eventually threw again, making 82.38m, then improved to 84.49m.

But Kumar Jena, who was fifth in Budapest, then produced his all-time best to put the pressure on, before Chopra hit back.

"I had some issues in the first throw. There may have been a technical problem or they may not have measured my first throw properly," he said of the delay.

"This is the first time this has happened to me in a competition. The rule is for six throws, but I threw seven times." Chopra's job was made easier after his chief rival, Pakistan ace Arshad Nadeem, pulled out on Tuesday with a knee injury.

Kumar Jena was content to finish behind his "idol". "Keep watching, you will see more of us in the future too," he warned.

Saudi Arabia announces bid to host World Cup in 2034

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia announced on Wednesday it plans to bid to host the 2034 World Cup, the latest step in a campaign to turn the kingdom into a global sports powerhouse.

The bid "intends to deliver a world-class tournament and will draw inspiration from Saudi Arabia's ongoing social and economic transformation and the country's deep-rooted passion for football", said a statement from the Saudi Arabian football federation.

News of the bid comes one year after neighbouring Qatar hosted the first World Cup in the Middle East, where the Saudi national team stunned the world with a group stage defeat of eventual winners Argentina.

On the heels of that tournament, Saudi Arabia signed Cristiano Ronaldo to play in the Saudi Pro League, the first in a slew of major stars drawn by eye-watering salaries to play in the world's biggest crude oil exporter.

Sport is a major component of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform agenda, which aims to transform Saudi Arabia into a tourism and business hub while transitioning away from fossil fuels.

In the coming weeks, the kingdom is set to host the final LIV Golf League tournament of the regular season, a boxing match featuring Anthony Joshua and the Next Gen ATP Finals tennis tournament.

It will also host the FIFA Club World Cup in December.

Riyadh's willingness to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on sporting events has drawn accusations of "sportswashing", or using sport to distract from oft-criticised human rights abuses.

In an interview with Fox News last month, Prince Mohammed dismissed those attacks, saying "I will continue doing sportswashing" if it will benefit the Saudi economy.

Pakistan eye easier ride on World Cup rollercoaster

HYDERABAD (Agencies): Pakistan tackle outsiders Netherlands in their opening match of the World Cup on Friday desperate to avoid a repeat of the disastrous start of four years ago which undermined their campaign.

In 2019, Pakistan lost to the West Indies first up in Nottingham. Shot out for a paltry 105 in 21.4 overs, Pakistan went down by seven wickets. They eventually missed out on a semi-final spot on net run-rate.

Four years on and Pakistan are already riding a familiar tournament rollercoaster. They crashed out of last month's Asia Cup after a big defeat against arch-rivals India before being ousted by Sri Lanka in the Super Four stage.

They also lost both their recent World Cup warm-ups against New Zealand and Australia. Despite the sketchy form, captain Babar Azam insists his team are ready for the World Cup in a country which only two of the squad have ever visited.

Pakistan last played in India in 2016 at the Twenty20 World Cup. "We had good practice in the last week since our arrival and two useful workouts in the warm-up games," said Azam. The captain is the top-ranked batsman in ODI cricket and reinforced his

credentials with knocks of 80 and 90 in the two warm-ups, returning to form after a dismal Asia Cup.

"The first match of a tournament is always very important so we are definitely looking forward to a winning start," he said.

Babar insisted 1992 champions Pakistan will not underestimate the Dutch, a team they have defeated six times in six meetings. The Netherlands, ranked 14 in the world, had to come through the qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe earlier this year and made it to the World Cup alongside Sri Lanka.

"I want to congratulate the Netherlands for playing in this World Cup. They played some good cricket in the qualifiers and that is why they are here," added Babar. "There is no room for complacency and we will be on the ball from the first match." Pakistan will hope their spin trio of Shadab Khan, Usama Mir and Mohammad Nawaz, backed by part-timers Iftikhar Ahmed and Agha Salman, expose opponents' weaknesses against slow bowling at the tournament.

Although they are without the injured Naseem Shah, spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf will pose a formidable new ball threat. The Netherlands

have only ever won two matches at the World Cup since their maiden appearance in 1996. Spinners Colin Ackermann and Rens van der Merwe, and pacer Paul van Meekeren are back after missing the qualifiers.

Wesley Barresi, the only surviving member of the 2011 World Cup on the sub-continent, lends experience to the batting which also boasts prime run-getters Max O'Dowd, Vikramjit Singh, Teja Nidamanuru and skipper Scott Edwards. But their hopes will rest largely on all-rounders Bas de Leede and Logan van Beek, key performers at the qualifiers.

De Leede scored 285 runs and picked up 15 wickets in Zimbabwe while Van Beek smashed 30 runs and took two wickets in the knife-edge Super Over win against the West Indies.

"The opportunity to play in a World Cup is something that a lot of these guys have dreamt of," said Tonga-born Edwards. Despite their status as rank outsiders, the Dutch do not lack confidence. "We hold high hopes going into this World Cup that we can put in a couple of really big performances and those can result in wins," coach Ryan Cook told AFP. "We'll be putting everything that we can in to getting five or six wins to take us into the semifinals."

Sinner bosses big moments to beat Medvedev in China Open final

BEIJING (AFP): Jannik Sinner said holding his nerve in "important moments" was the key to edging out world number three Daniil Medvedev in Wednesday's China Open men's final, which turned on a pair of high-stakes tie-breaks in Beijing.

The Italian triumphed 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/2) in an otherwise deadlocked match to claim the first such tournament since 2019 after Beijing ditched tight pandemic-era health restrictions. Neither man was able to break the other's serve but Sinner missed a presentable opportunity in the first set when he whalloped an over-head volley long on break point and allowed the Russian to hold from deuce.

It was a different story in the tie-break, with the world number seven racing into a 5-0 lead and sealing the deal when Medvedev struck a forehand into the net.

A similar stalemate ensued in set two with the first dozen games going with serve before Sinner again showed his composure when it mattered.

He took the lead in the tie-break with a left drop shot and never looked back, whipping a stunning cross-court passing shot for match point and battering back a Medvedev serve to seize victory in front of a raucous crowd. "At some point, I started to return a little bit better... read his serve a little bit better, and that gave me confidence, especially for the tie-break," Sinner said at a post-match news conference.

"The important moments in every match... today I also managed somehow that they (went) my way," the

22-year-old added. "Today's final was a very high-level final, (and) I'm very happy about the ending of this tournament," he said.

Medvedev admitted that his opponent played "much better than me" in both tie-breaks. "He managed to control his emotions better in these tie-breaks (and) not make mistakes... (while) I made some easy ones," said the 27-year-old.

"In a way it's luck, but also experience and stuff like this. That's why he won." World number two and tournament favourite Carlos Alcaraz was eliminated by Sinner in their semi-final on Tuesday. The top-ranked men's player, Novak Djokovic, is not playing in China this year.

Swiatek into quarter-finals

Earlier, world number two Iga Swiatek swatted aside compatriot Magda Linette to surge into the China Open quarter-finals with a 6-1, 6-1 victory. Swiatek raced into a 5-0 lead in the first set and snuffed out any hope of an unlikely comeback when she forced her fellow Pole to fire a forehand long.

The four-time Grand Slam champion then presided over a second-set masterclass, blitzing an exhausted Linette with an unrelenting salvo of mighty groundstrokes to wrap up the match in just over an hour.

Swiatek faces Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina or the ninth seed Caroline Garcia of France next. "It's always nice to play like that because you make your opponent run," Swiatek said after the match.

"But overall, I just kind of played what I felt I needed to

and what I felt was right at the moment." World number four Jessica Pegula crashed out with a 6-4, 6-2 defeat to Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko.

Ostapenko faces Liudmila Samsonova in the last eight after the Russian defeated Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5.

Murray misery deepens in Shanghai

Meanwhile, the first round of the ATP Shanghai Masters kicked off in the financial hub Wednesday.

A delighted home crowd watched on as Zhang Zhizhen and Bu Yunchaokete both made it through to the second round -- the first time two Chinese men have done so.



Serbia's Dusan Lajovic eliminated three-time major champion Stan Wawrinka in straight sets to add to his impressive list of wins this year -- including over Djokovic and Sinner.

But Britain's Andy Murray had a miserable night, losing to Russian Roman Safiullin 6-3, 6-2. The loss crowns a disappointing set of recent results for the 36-year-old, who has won the tournament in Shanghai three times previously. He also crashed out of the China Open in the first round last week in Beijing.



In brief

‘World Teachers’ Day’

ISLAMABAD (APP): On Thursday, the world comes together to celebrate "World Teachers' Day," a day dedicated to recognizing the invaluable contributions of educators worldwide. Under the collaborative efforts of AFAQ and SOS Foundation, a vibrant art competition will be held at the Rawalpindi Arts Council at on Thursday. This initiative aims to honor teachers through the beauty of colors and creativity. The students from local schools will participate, showcasing their artistic talents through various forms of art and paintings.

14% children die from Pneumonia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts on Wednesday said that around 14% of children die due to pneumonia in Pakistan. They were addressing the launching of research 'Breathing for Tomorrow; Exhibiting Advances in Respiratory Health with Focus on Under Five Pneumonia'. They said that Pneumonia continues to be one of the leading killers of children under five globally, with one child dying of the disease every 30 seconds. District Health Officer (DHO) Islamabad, Dr Zaeem Zia said that doctors had an important role to play in strengthening the health care system. He said that doctors should follow medical ethics in hospitals to properly serve the patients. Director Research, Neoventive Solutions, Dr. Hana Mahmood said that with over a decade of experience conducting high quality research in childhood pneumonia, Neoventive Solutions is helping to address this issue as part of the NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Respiratory Health (RESPIRE). She said that Neoventive Solutions in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services and with support of International Research Force conducted research in Pakistan to generate evidence at three levels of the healthcare system.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension program for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, SES, Fazal Ghi, NDC.1, H-11/4, 1-10/2, New Exchange, Kidney Centre, Dr. A.Q. Khan, Islamic University, Bahria University, G-10/1, G-10/2, G-10/4, G-9/1, CWO, AQ Khan, Golf City, Mandala, Shahdara, NCP, University Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Dhok Najo, Raja Sultan, Eid Gah, Azizabad, People's Colony, P&T Wini Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, IST, New Rawat Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Medina Town, Wanhar Feeders, Attock Circle, HMC Road, Taxila, Sher Shah Suri, Pind Pran, Vally, Gulshan Sehat, Sangjani, Shah Allah Ditta, AWT 4, MVHS, MPCHS B-17, Paswal, Sarai Kharboza, Kamra Rural, Mansar, Gondal, Haji Shah, Hameed, Ghorghashiti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Deer, Radio Pak. I & II, Laranpur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 02:00 PM, GSO Circle, Dher Kot, Chamankot, Ringla, Dana Express, Dhila, Soha, Minhasa, Nimbail, Birut Kazmi, Dhirkot.II feeders and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Geir Thomas Tonstol, Country Director International Labour Organization, calls on the SAPM on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik.

Ashrafi praises 40-year Afghan hospitality, assures for ongoing support in compliance with local laws

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Wednesday hailed the forty-year-long hospitality extended to Afghan brothers and assured a continued commitment to their well-being in line with Pakistan's laws.

Addressing a joint press conference of Ulama and Mashaykh regarding the issue of non-Pakistani residents in the country, he underscored that possessing information about them was essential but should not lead to unwarranted complaints. Ashrafi said the issue of non-Pakistani residents in the country posed a challenge. As neighboring nations, it was incumbent upon the Pakistan and Afghanistan governments to collabora-

tively address and resolve these challenges, he added.

He categorically stated that stability in Pakistan equated to stability in Afghanistan, and vice versa. He said the decisions on such matters would be made by the state, with unity among all the stakeholders in this regard.

He said there was no acceptance of recognizing Israel as Kashmir and Palestine were declared common issues for the Muslim Ummah, with a special focus on the ongoing oppression faced by the people of Kashmir. He also highlighted the need for international awareness of the plight of Kashmiris, emphasizing that Kashmir remained incarcerated. He urged the international community to take note of these concerns. Furthermore, Ashrafi who is also the President of

the International Interfaith Council, reaffirmed the rights of minorities in Pakistan, emphasizing that their protection was the responsibility of the state.

Strongly denouncing the recent terrorist incidents that occurred on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, he labeled them as acts of barbarism that were in direct opposition to Islam and humanity. He noted a recent surge in such attacks over the past two months emphasizing that those who perpetrated such violence had no affiliation with true Islam and were clearly acting against its teachings. He mentioned that Muslim World League Secretary-General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa had also condemned these incidents of death and destruction in the strongest terms.

Health Minister launches health card mobile App

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Wednesday launched the health card mobile App "Meera Sehat Card".

Addressing the ceremony, the minister said that "Sehat Sahulat Program" has been a pioneer in the adoption of digitalization in healthcare since its inception. He said that now "Meera Sehat Card" is available on Android play store and Apple App store.

He said that currently "Meera Sehat Card" is for

permanent resident family (as per NADRA records) of Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and District Tharparkar (Sindh).

The minister said that soon "Meera Sehat Card" will be available for all citizens of Pakistan.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the App gives a comprehensive list of family members.

The digital records will empower families to manage their health needs effectively. He said that the App will also provide a

record of effective medical treatment history. The App ensures that medical caregivers have access to accurate information, he added.

He said that citizens will now have access to a transparent list of available treatments through the App.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the government has formulated an integrated strategy to ensure the provision of modern facilities in the health sector.

He said that reforms are being made to improve the health sector.

CDA planning to initiate residential scheme for Overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is planning to launch a new state-of-the-art residential scheme only for overseas Pakistanis at Mauza Kuri in the federal capital.

"The new scheme, sprawling across 14,000 kanal of land along Kuri Road, adjacent to Park Road, will be reserved exclusively for overseas Pakistanis," an official in the CDA told APP.

The official said that the plots within the scheme would be marketed and sold to overseas Pakistanis in US dollars, contributing to the country's foreign exchange reserves.

He said that in the initial phase, the

CDA has given the go head to the relevant authorities for the appointment of a design consultant, adding that the decision was made during a meeting chaired by CDA Chairman, Captain (r) Anwar ul Haque.

The official said the designated consultant would be responsible for overseeing the scheme's execution and conducting various essential studies, including those related to environmental impact, traffic management, and hydrology.

Furthermore, he said the consultant would develop the design for infrastructure, road development, ensuring that all modern amenities are seamlessly integrated into the scheme.

CTP committed to eliminate encroachment in a bid to maintain traffic flow

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) is fully committed to eliminate the encroachments in a bid to maintain traffic flow. Following the orders of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan, Murree Road Circle conducted operation against encroachments.

In-charge Murree Road Circle Inspector Mirza Usman carried out successful operation against encroachment at various places of the circle.

During the operation, CTP issued 57 challan tickets to vehicles obstructing the flow of traffic. While, two FIR were

lodged against encroachments despite warnings. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan, appreciated in-charge Traffic Murree Road Circle and his team for their good work.

CTO said that with the coordination of traders, the smooth flow of traffic and the beauty of the city will be restored.

He said that strict action against encroachment and wrong parking would be continued on a daily basis. CTO directed that regularly check and balance should be ensured after operations so that they do not cross their limits again.

PBM provides free accommodation, education to over 6,000 orphans

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Baitul-Mal (PBM) offered free accommodation, meals, and educational opportunities to over 6,000 orphans residing in its Sweet Homes throughout the country, said an official on Wednesday.

Talking to APP, a PBM representative, said the Sweet Homes were situated throughout the country, with 11 in Islamabad and Azad Kashmir Region, 9 in Lahore, 5 in Multan, 3 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 11 in Sindh, 8 in KPK, and four in Balochistan.

In these facilities, orphaned and homeless children are provided with a wide range of complimentary services, including standard accommodation, meals, education, uniforms, books, medical care, skill development programs, laundry services, religious education, and counseling. These Sweet Homes accepted orphaned children aged between 4 and 6 years old, the representative added.

AIOU commences final exams on October 16

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is conducting examinations of Associate Degree (Arts, Commerce, Education) BBA, BS, and B.Ed programs offered in the spring 2023 semester from October 16, 2023, to December 15, 2023, throughout the country.

The date sheet is available on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Roll number slips are being uploaded to students' CMS portal, according to a press release on Wednesday.

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the examinations department to ensure transparency and provide all facilities to the students during the conduct of examinations.

Examination centers are being established across the country in nearby and easily approachable vicinities of the students for their convenience.

Special teams will make surprise visits to the exam centers to eradicate the element of cheating and will check the identities of students. Moreover, a ceremony was recently held at AIOU to celebrate World Translation Day.

Education in nation-building is as essential as foundation stone: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussain Mullick Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights and Women Empowerment on Wednesday made it clear that the role of education in nation-building is as essential as the foundation stone and our young generation through education can play a significant role in the uplift and development of the country. "We can create awareness about human rights only through education," she added. The SAPM made these remarks while speaking as a chief guest at a ceremony titled the Millennium Education One World Campus, E-11/4 Islamabad hosted by Student Council Investiture Ceremony and High Achievers Awards 2023 aimed at encouraging young individuals to regularise the student body and become responsible citizens.

She said that it was next to impossible to enslave educated people; hence the Indian notorious fascist government was making all-out efforts to deprive the people of education through various coercive tactics. Mushaal stated that the occupation authorities were well aware of the power of education that a war-like situation was created and a curfew was placed in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under a well-conceived plan so that parents could not send their children to educational institutions because of fear of their detention and torture at the hands of brutal Indian forces.

Enlightening the Millennials about pro-

gressive education, she said education is not only the name of getting marks but also the name of improving the different abilities of the students.

Mushaal encouraged the learners to work hard and put their best efforts towards their respective clubs and societies. Highlighting the role of education in breaking the shackles of slavery, the SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment said that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan laid the foundation stone of the Aligarh College which became the focal point of the Muslim activities during the Pakistan movement that eventually led to creation of Pakistan.

Similarly, Mushaal shed light on the role played by Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry in awakening the youth, who, she said offered immense hope to the young because his imagery of the dawn to come is emphatic, adding that Iqbal emphasized the youth. "See your present in the light of the past." "Iqbal's message was very clear: he meant that the

"New Dawn" could only come from the modern youth who are capable of overthrowing the shackles of external materialism and reawakening their inner fire," she added. Therefore, Mushaal underlined that it was high time to focus on education for the progress and prosperity of the country.

The SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment said: "We are proud of our children who have made Pakistan famous in "OA" levels.

33 cases registered for violating dengue SOPs in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Health Authority(DHA) had lodged 33 FIRs and sealed two premises on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Wednesday said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to eight and imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

Presently, the health officer informed that 148 patients were admitted to different district health facilities, of which 109 were confirmed cases while 1,334 were

discharged after treatment.

Dr Sajjad added that with the arrival of 38 more cases during the last 24 hours, the district's total tally had reached 1,443 confirmed cases.

Among the new cases, he informed that 26 patients had arrived from the Potohar town urban area, six from Rawalpindi Cantonment, five from Municipal Corporation, and one from the Chaklala Cantonment area.

During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 16,695 houses and found larvae in 821 homes.

Similarly, he added that while checking 6,972 places, the teams found larvae at 110 sites during outdoor surveillance.

Climate change hits Pakistan's elderly population most: George

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George on Wednesday at a seminar on Older People Day Tuesday said the devastating climate change impacts massively affected the elderly population of the country which was unable to protect itself from natural disasters.

He was addressing the HelpAge International Pakistan national seminar held in collaboration with the Ministries of Human Rights (MHR) and Climate Change here, focusing on the theme "Climate Change and its Impact on Older People." The International Day of Older People observed annually on October 1st, serves as a platform to highlight the challenges faced by older individuals globally while celebrating their invaluable contributions to society. This year's event aimed to draw attention of climate change and the well-being of older people.

George said the country lost many of its senior citizens due to natural calamities due to climate change and COVID-19 pandemic which left the society deprived of its mentors and guiding forces.

He said love for elders is the proof of our success in the world and raising awareness among the youth to prevent elder abuse is an important task.

He added that the government had initiated many positive initiatives to ensure the rights of the elderly people which should be promoted and endorsed by the society.

"It is the responsibility of the government to provide the basic needs of the nation. We are doing positive work to give relief to the elderly.

We have to work together to achieve this goal. Our ministry always stands with the oppressed," he added.

The main objectives of the International

Day of Older People's observance are to raise awareness about the specific challenges faced by older individuals in the context of climate change, advocate for policies prioritizing the protection and well-being of older people in a changing climate, recognize and celebrate the contributions of older individuals in climate action and sustainable development.

Vice Chancellor of Government College University Lahore, Dr. Asghar Zaidi was the keynote speaker at the event where he addressed the audience on Ageing and Demographic Transition in Pakistan.

He added: "As we stand at the cliff of environmental challenges, it is crucial that we turn our attention to the often overlooked and vulnerable demographic of older individuals. Failing to do so is like knowingly awaiting a devastating tsunami, whose arrival we have been forewarned of. The time to commence preparations is not tomorrow, but today."

Panel Discussion was held on Climate Change and Vulnerabilities for Older Individuals, a group of experts came together to explore and discuss the multi-layered challenges faced by older individuals in the wake of a changing climate. The panelists included the chairperson of the National Humanitarian Network (NHN) – Pakistan, Muhammad Amad, Country Coordinator at Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), Syed Shahid Kazmi, National

Advisor/National Coordinator at the National Adaptation Plan project of the Ministry of Climate Change and United Nations Environment Programme, Arshad Samad Khan and Dr Sumaira from NUST. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Javeria Afzal.



ISLAMABAD: W.H.O Pakistan Mission Head is receiving shield from Federal Minister of National Health Service Regulation and Coordination on the occasion of 'Mera Sehat Card' App launching Ceremony.

Embassy engaged with ministry

KABUL (Agencies): Afghan Embassy in Netherlands said it is in engagement with the foreign ministry in Kabul over consular services. “The Embassy informs all clients that this Embassy represents Afghanistan and, out of consideration for consular services, is in engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and assures you that your relevant consular documents will be forwarded to Foreign Affairs Ministry in Kabul with priority,” mission said in notification.

2 killed in traffic accident

JAWZJAN (Khaama Press): Two individuals died in a traffic accident on the Balkh-Jawzjan highway, and another person was injured. Kefayatullah Sadeghat, the commander of security forces said this incident occurred in the “Gorjak” area of Faizabad district in this province. According to the statement, the vehicle, a type of Saracheh, was travelling from Jawzjan towards Balkh when it collided with a tractor-type vehicle due to the driver’s negligence.

Ministry making efforts for food self-sufficiency

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock announced is making efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency in the country. The acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Attaullah Omari, in a meeting in Ghor province, spoke of the arrival of Afghanistan’s agricultural products in regional and European countries. “Agriculture products, like Badakhshan and Takhar berries, have this year been exported to China and India,” said the acting minister. The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock said that in the current year, the exporters of agricultural products have suffered due to the blocking of the Torkham crossing and the mountain slide on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. “In the export sector, our traders were able to export, but recently, due to the blocking of the Torkham crossing and the mountain slide of the Kabul-Jalalabad Road, our traders could not export their goods. The businessman has suffered,” said Merwis Hajizada, deputy of the ministry. Some political analysts said that if Afghanistan’s agricultural lands are properly managed, the country has the capacity to produce various agricultural items. “Afghanistan has 9.2

US facilitates reunification of children with families

KABUL (Khaama Press): The US Department of State has announced that reunifying Afghan children relocated to this country with their families is among its top priorities. The department has released an updated form that allows eligible families to reunite with their children in the United States. This process is specifically designed for children under 18 who arrived in the United States as part of the “Welcome” operation, which took place after the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in August 2021. These children subsequently entered the United States as part of this operation, and the process is tailored to address their reunification with their families and eligible relatives. On Tuesday, the US Department of State placed the new version of Form DS-4317 on its official website, which permits Afghan children in the US and their eligible parents, siblings, and relatives outside the country to join each other. The US government initiated the evacuation of its Afghan allies on August 15, 2021, as part of a concerted effort. During this evacuation, numerous unaccompanied children were transported from Kabul Airport to the United States. These children, who were without adult guardians or family members during the evacuation, were included in the relocation efforts to provide them with safety and care in the United States. During the evacuation of Afghan citizens, it is estimated that more than 1,500 unaccompanied children were relocated to the United States. This significant effort was undertaken to ensure the well-being and security of these vulnerable children separated from their families during the tumultuous events in Afghanistan. The US government, alongside various organizations, played a pivotal role in facilitating their safe transfer and providing them with necessary support and care upon their arrival in the United States.

China asked to share energy expertise with Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), recently visited Sichuan Shenghua Power Supply Technology Co., Ltd. in Chengdu, Sichuan Province.

This company is recognized as one of China’s largest power supply sources. As per a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi met with company officials to discuss potential electrical energy cooperation between Afghanistan

and China. He expressed interest in learning from their experiences in electrical energy production. Muttaqi highlighted that Afghanistan possesses significant potential for the production of hydroelectric power, wind energy, solar energy, and coal-based

power. He emphasized the vast opportunities available for foreign companies interested in investing in these sectors. Mawlawi Muttaqi, leading a delegation, had traveled to China to participate in the third meeting of the Trans-Himalayan Forum.

Afghan FM discuss issues with UN SG



KABUL (Agencies): Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate, has urged for Afghanistan’s right to participate in international meetings, including those related to the UN. This issue was raised during a meeting with the UN Special Representative for Afghanistan. According to a statement from the Ministry, Stanekzai discussed regional coordination, combating drug trafficking, revitalizing private trade and banking sectors, and mine clearance activities with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the head of UNAMA in Kabul. Stanekzai emphasized that despite differences of opinion in some areas, it is crucial to work on common issues and grant Afghanistan the right to participate in various international meetings, including those of the United Nations. He further stressed that humanitarian affairs should be kept separate from politics and that political differences should not hinder interaction in humanitarian aid, drug control, mine clearance, and other sectors. Roza Otunbayeva, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the head of UNAMA, shared information about her recent trip to New York. She stated that efforts are being made to secure global aid for ensuring food security, combating narcotic drugs, treating drug addicts, and promoting alternative plants to narcotics.

Handicrafts producers demand proper market

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Handicrafts makers in southeastern Khost province say their production level is reasonable, but finding buyers for their goods remains a challenge. The handicraft industrialists ask the government to help them in finding good market for their products and prevent the ancient industry from stagnating. Handicrafts produced in Khost include straw-trays, bread covers, hand fans, brooms, mates, mirrors and some other decoration items. These handicrafts are mostly made from the leaves of Nannorrhops ritchieana, the Mazari Palm which grows in areas close to the Durand Line, the handicraft producers say. Faizullah is a resident of Sadiqo village in Alisher district. He brings his handmade straw-trays to Khost city for sale. He said nowadays people purchase fewer trays than they did in the past. He told Pajhwok his family has been producing these items since last two decades and selling them to shopkeepers in the city. He said: “We sell these handicrafts in the city and in villages as well, the sales have decreased because people are not economically in good condition.” Ghazoo Khan, another resident of Khost, said he sold straw-trays and other items produced by women in their houses. “The prices of these items are not as high as they were in the past.” Ghazoo said: “We produce these handicrafts in our houses and sell them in the city, sometime traders come to our village and purchase these things from us and take them to the city, these items are hard to produce, each piece of a straw-tray takes 3 or 4 days to produce.” A handicraft seller said additional to selling these items in domestic markets, some people were exporting them to foreign countries. Gull Mohammad Gurbaz has been selling such domestic handicrafts since two decades in his shop. He told Pajhwok these goods had a good market in the past, but recently their business had weakened and people were not willing to buy them. “If a proper market is created for these items, hopefully this business can revive.” He said: “Handicraft business has completely vanished, if the government pays little attention to it, it can revive again, I would export such handicrafts to Saudi Arabia, Dubai and even Germany during the previous government, but nowadays no one asks for them.” Caretaker government officials accept problems in the marketing of such handicrafts, but Maulvi Shamsul Ahmad, the Commerce and Industry department head, told Pajhwok they would allocate a special market to such items in near future in Khost. He said: “The government of the Islamic Emirate (IE) plans to create special markets for the development of the handicrafts industry, the provincial administration has been assured support in this regard.” Some residents of Alisher, Zazi Maidan, Sabari and other areas of Khost province have long been associated with handicraft industry.

People with disabilities call for rights

KABUL (TOLOnews): People with disabilities complained about not having access to monthly support payments and humanitarian aid and said that they are facing a bad economic situation. Abdul Hadi, 62, said that during the former Soviet Union’s time in the country, his leg was injured due to the war, and he is unable to provide food for his nine-member family. “It has been two years since I received my salary,” said Abdul Hadi. “They have to pay disabled people salaries because disabled people are needed people,” said Asadullah Khalid, a disabled person. According to the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled statistics, in the last six months more than 100,000 disabled people have been provided with assistance. “We helped nearly four hundred orphans, disabled people, and widows in six months of the current year and gave them their monthly salaries,” said Faisal Khamosh, spokesman of the ministry. The World Food Program has announced in a report the start of a plan to provide services to the disabled in the country. “The disability service mapping report can help humanitarian actors, service providers, OPDs, and other stakeholders to refer persons with disabilities to the right services in a specific province. Furthermore, this document can also help in preventing duplication of services in different provinces of Afghanistan,” said the WFP.

Completion of over 200 development projects in Baghlan

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) has announced the successful completion of 243 projects in Baghlan province, facilitated through the Social Support Program. As per a statement issued by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, these projects encompass a variety of initiatives including road reconstruction, canal repair, and cleaning, as well as the construction of culverts and retaining walls. The Aga Khan Foundation implemented these projects under the supervision of the Department of



Rural Rehabilitation and Development in several districts of Baghlan province, including Doshi,

Khanjan, Talah wa Barfak, Deh Salah, Pul Hisar, and Banu. The financial expenditure for these projects amounted to 322 million Afghanis, funded by the World Bank.

Herat residents 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 commission had been established to create and maintain green spaces in Herat province. 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 discuss 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. The Spokesman of Municipality Naseer Armal said this year alone they built 7,000 meters of boulevards for greenness and beauty of the city.

Nawaz not coming back for revenge: Shehbaz

F.P. Report

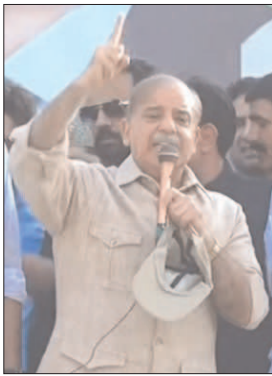
LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has reassured that party supremo Nawaz Sharif is coming back to the country not taking 'revenge but in fact to rescue the country out of crisis'.

Addressing a political gathering in Lahore on Wednesday, Shehbaz once again reiterated and confirmed his brother's homecoming on October 21 and said that Nawaz is coming back to serve the people of Pakistan and to once again recommence the journey towards prosperity.

Nawaz, the three-time prime minister, has been in self-imposed exile in London since November 2019 owing to health reasons. He was disqualified for life in 2017 by the Supreme Court for not declaring a receivable salary.

Asking the party workers to get ready to welcome Nawaz to highlight the injustice done to him, Shehbaz said that the people of Pakistan — due to the ouster of Nawaz — were "in fact deprived of progress and development".

Commenting on the performance of the Nawaz-led PML-N government, the



former PM said that his brother came into power at a time when the country faced long hours of load-shedding. In only four years Nawaz Sharif rooted out load-shedding, he added.

"During Nawaz Sharif's tenure [as prime minister] flour was at Rs35 per kilogramme," the PML-N president said while comparing economic indicators and inflation during Nawaz's previous term as premier with that of now. "I will work with Nawaz Sharif [...] to put the country back on track for development and growth."

Recalling the PML-N supremo's achievements, Shehbaz said that his brother — despite then-US president Bill Clinton's telephone call — conducted six nuclear tests in response to

India's atomic tests. The country's progress and development were halted, Shehbaz said while terming the 2018 general elections as "rigged".

It is pertinent to know that the former three-time prime minister will return to Pakistan on October 21 and address a public gathering at 6pm at Minar-e-Pakistan on the same day, senior PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah revealed on Tuesday.

Nawaz's legal team has completed preparations to seek protective bail from the court ahead of his arrival. According to party sources, the new plan was devised following discussions among the party's top officials, including former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz, and Vice President Hamza Shehbaz.

Initially, Shehbaz, Maryam, and other party leaders were scheduled to speak at the event as well, but it has since been determined that Nawaz will be the only one to do so. Nawaz would unveil a narrative to the PML-N workers in his address, sources said adding that the move was suggested by Chief Organiser Maryam.

Protest movement against Wapda soon

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee announced to launch protest movement against the unjustified power taxes of WAPDA. This demand was made by Malak Naseer Shahwani, Chairman, Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee while addressing a press conference with other office bearers of BZAC here on Wednesday.

Shahwani said eight percent population of the province were associated with agriculture to earn their livelihood, adding that agriculturists of the province faced loss of Rs. 300 billion owing to flood. He said that dozens of tubewells in the province had been dysfunctional due to floods. He said that duration of supplying electricity to the agriculturist of the province from agriculture feeder was 2 to 3 hours which was not suffice to meet the requirements of agriculturists of the province besides violation of agreement concluded between government of Balochistan and Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee.

He said that BZAC had decided to launch protest movement against the behaviour, unjustified and exorbitant power bills of QESCO, adding that protest would be observed on October 05, 2023, followed by a protest rally to be taken out on October 11. He said if demands of Balochistan Zamindar Action Committee were not addressed, wheel jam strike would be observed on October 18, 2023 and all national highways of the province would be closed for vehicular traffic during wheel jam strike. On the occasion, Haji Abdul Rehman Bazai, General Secretary, BZAC, Abdul Rahim Kakar, Abdul Jabbar Kakar, Rasheed Nasar, Musa Baloch and others were also present.

Aleema tells Imran upset with Alvi

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman is upset with President of Pakistan Arif Alvi for not announcing the election date, revealed his sister Aleema Khan on Wednesday.

Talking to journalists outside the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore, Aleema claimed Imran is saddened over not announcing the date of the election. President Arif Alvi should have stood for the rights of the people, Aleema said. Responding to a query, the sister of the former premier alleged that she is being considered a criminal for taking Donald Lu's name, who PTI thinks was behind the ouster of its government. Aleema said she was ready to be arrested.

Earlier in the day, the Lahore police sought the arrest of PTI leader Asad Umar and two sisters of PTI Chairman Imran Khan in the cases of May 9 violent incidents. The interim bails of Asad Umar and Aleema and Uzma Khan were extended till October 16 by ATC Lahore. The court also summoned the lawyers for final arguments in the Lahore Corps Commander House vandalism and arson case.

Ministry confirms 3rd polio case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Third polio case of the year 2023 was confirmed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Bannu district on Wednesday as Pakistan struggling to get rid of the crippling disease, health ministry said.

The National Polio Laboratory has confirmed, the polio virus found in a child from Bannu district of KP, health ministry sources said. "Polio virus has been confirmed in an 18-month girl at UC Ghora in Bakakhel," sources added.

In the year 2022, as many as 20 cases of poliovirus were reported across the country. Pakistan was close to eradication of disease in year 2021 when only one case was reported in the country. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar on Monday launched a five-day anti-polio vaccination drive targeting around 44 million children across the country. Speaking on the occasion, he said 350,000 polio workers would participate in the drive to administer anti-polio vaccine to 44 million children aged 0-5 years.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing an event themed 'Rising Women 2023' organized by Women's Business Network at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PTI's leaders seeking record of cases PHC orders to make NAB as respondent

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Waqar Ahmad adjourned the hearing in Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Senator Azam Swati and Murad Saeed till 12th October cases while ordered to make National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as respondent, on Wednesday.

Advocate Shah Faisal Ottomankhel appeared in the writ petition filed by Qazi Muhammad Anwar seeking the provision of records regarding cases and inquiries against Murad Saeed and Senator Azam Swati. Deputy Attorney General Muhammad Iltaf and Additional Advocate General Danayal Asad appeared before PHC divisional bench on behalf of federal and provincial governments respectively.

The writ pleaded that the police raiding the resi-

dences of Senator Azam Swati and Murad Saeed and harassing their families while not providing records of cases registered against them. Police as well as other departments didn't provided records of cases and inquiries initiated against PTI's leaders on demand, the petition stated. Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad informed that there are no inquiries or cases against PTI's leaders at the Anti-Corruption Establishment. However, Shah Faisal Ottomankhel argued that NAB didn't submit a reply in the case. In the meantime, Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibra inquired from counsel as the petitioner had made NAB as respondent in the case while the advocate answered with negation.

Latterly, Chief Justice ordered the counsel for petitioner to make NAB as the respondent within three day in supplementary petition while PHC adjourned further hearing till 12 October.

Meanwhile, PHC's Justice Syed Arshad Ali confirmed bail plea of former Advisor for Commerce to Chief Minister Abdul Karim and ordered police to return his mobile phone. PHC stopped former Advisor for Commerce Abdul Karim from selling confiscated mobile-phone till further orders in this regard.

The counsel Muzzamil Khan advocate informed that the Anti-corruption establishment Swabi had registered a case for illegal recruitment against Abdul Karim on an anonymous complaint. He argued that the petitioner didn't made any decision against the law and there is no evidence against the former Advisor for Commerce.

The counsel argued for bail confirmation because the petitioner already obtained Bail before Arrest while PHC had confirmed bail plea and ordered police to return his mobile in another supplementary plea.

IHC issues notices in Ali Wazir case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday issued notices to all parties in the terrorism case, including secretary interior and Islamabad inspector general of Police (IGP), registered against ex-MNA and co-founder of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) Ali Wazir.

IHC judge Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the petition filed by Wazir, seeking disposal of case against him. Advocate Ataullah Kundi, who represented the ex-MNA in the court, said hardly 15 minutes after the registration of a case against his client, another case was registered, and that too of terrorism.

Kundi, on the occasion, referred to the Supreme Court's verdict in Sughran Bibi case, "A false case was registered against Wazir; therefore this is my request to the court to dispose it of," the lawyer said. The court adjourned the case's hearing until next week.

Mastung attack: Eight suspects held

MASTUNG (INP): Investigation sources shared on Wednesday that eight persons have been detained over suspicion of facilitation or involvement in suicide attack in Mastung.

Sources said that further operations being conducted on indication of detained suspects in assistance with the law enforcement agencies. A spokesperson of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has said that no data received about the identity of the suicide attacker. "Other sources also being used to establish identity of the bomber," spokesman said. Forensic and DNA reports yet to be received, CTD official said.

The Counter-Terrorism Department Balochistan on Saturday registered the FIR of the suicide blast in Mastung district near a 12 Rabiul Awwal procession, which killed at least 55 people including a police officer while dozens were injured. Mastung police's DSP Nawaz Gishkori was among the deceased. Police said the explosion was a "suicide blast" and that the bomber exploded himself next to DSP Gishkori's car.

Maneka sent to jail on remand

OKARA (INP): A local court on Wednesday sent Khawar Maneka, the ex-husband of former first lady Bushra Bibi, to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in corruption case. Senior Civil Judge, Abrar Ali Khan, heard the case and rejected police request seeking an extension in the physical remand of Maneka.

According to anti-corruption, Khawar Maneka got a marriage hall and some shops constructed "illegally" on the land of a cemetery in Haveli Lakha. On the reference of the Okara deputy commissioner, an inquiry is underway against him. On September 25, the Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) arrested Khawar Farid Maneka, ex-husband of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, on illegal construction charges in Lahore.

Stability linked with transparent elections: JJ

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Siraj-ul-Haq linking the stability to the conduct of transparent elections has urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the date for the national vote.

Addressing a press conference at Mansoorah on Wednesday, he asserted that the caretaker government lacks the authority to make decisions on matters of policy, adding the increases in electricity and gas tariffs were outside their jurisdiction, placing an undue burden on people.

Sirajul Haq stated that the JI would persist in its protest movement aimed at safeguarding the rights of the people and would stage a sit-in in front of the Governor's House in Karachi on October 6. Prior to this, he chaired a meeting of the central leadership, which discussed the JI's preparations for the upcoming general elections and other challenges confronting the nation. He

informed journalists that the JI had already nominated candidates for 80 percent of the seats in both the national and provincial assemblies.

In response to a query, the JI chief argued that those who had repeatedly held power in the country for years had failed to bring about any meaningful change. Instead, he contended that the former rulers bore direct responsibility for the current crises facing the nation.

Addressing another question, he decried the allocation of substantial development funds for specific constituencies as a form of pre-election rigging, vowing to raise the issue with the ECP. He stressed the importance of institutions maintaining their apolitical stance and adhering to the constitution, emphasizing that the upcoming election must prioritize transparency over superficial appearances.

Siraj called for a forensic audit of Independent Power

Producer (IPP) agreements, citing massive payments to private companies in the form of capacity charges. He urged the government to address issues such as line losses, electricity theft, and the practice of the ruling elite enjoying free electricity usage, as well as the imposition of multiple taxes on power bills. He pointed out that Pakistan had the highest inflation rates in the region, leading to a decline in the purchasing power of the people. Meeting basic expenses such as school fees for children and medical bills for families had become increasingly difficult for a common man, he said.

The JI chief maintained that foreign loans were not a viable solution and instead urged the government to tackle corruption, improve governance, and promote equitable resource distribution. He asserted that the JI was the sole party capable of presenting comprehensive solutions to the nation's myriad challenges.

GCC-Pakistan FTA termed as breakthrough for trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz here on Wednesday termed the recently signed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as breakthrough for trade, making Pakistan the first country to secure such arrangement and providing it access to substantial market.

"This is very positive news for Pakistan exports towards gulf countries," the minister said while addressing a press conference. He was flanked by Federal Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Minister for Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali and Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti.

He said, GCC, the six-country bloc comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, was established in 2009 and it was after 14 long years that any country was having FTA with the council. The FTA was signed at 5th round of GCC meeting held last week. The minister said that GCC was market of around \$1 trillion exports and \$550 billion imports, however Pakistan's share in imports from was it was \$19 billion dollar average as it was importing energy and petrochemical products while the exports' share was just \$2.5 billion dollar.

The minister lauded Saudi Arabia for playing important role in materializing the agreement with six gulf countries, adding that all members of all countries

were present during the agreement and they even celebrated it to have such agreement with any country. The minister said that Pakistan also discussed issues of Pakistani overseas workers in Saudi Arabia. He said, discussion were made for putting in place a mechanism to facilitate workers to have proper certification to comply with new laws of Saudi Arabia.

The minister said that the government had made proper law to facilitate Afghanistan transit trade adding that the smuggling of transit goods from Afghanistan had increased from \$4 billion to \$6.7 billion. He said, the government took measures to curb this menace and under new law it had also prepared negative list for exports to Afghanistan.

He said, Pakistan was committed to facilitate genuine trade to Afghanistan, however added that the neighbouring country would have to pay bank guarantees equal to duties of goods and 10 percent transit fee for using Pakistani infrastructure. He said, the government wanted to ensure that the goods meant for Afghanistan do not come back to Pakistan adding that around \$500 million that were earned by Pakistani overseas was financing Afghan transit.

He said, even the State Bank of Pakistan did not intervention and even then dollar went up to Rs.330 and now it is around Rs.280 due to government measures and crackdown on hundi- hawala set ups. He said, money came back to interbank market and the

situation has changed now adding the currency would further stabilized.

The minister said that the caretaker government was committed to boost exports upto \$32 billion this year. He said, the export oriented would be provide energy on priority basis in winter to help boost exports. He also mentioned bumper cotton crop as 5 million bales were harvested till September and the figures would grow further and also highlighted boosting of rice exports by \$1 billion as good developments for economy.

Meanwhile speaking on the occasion Caretaker Minister for Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali said an amount of Rs 16 billion has been collected from electricity defaulters so far during ongoing crackdown against the power pilferers and defaulters.

He said the government has launched crackdown against the power pilferers that would continue adding the government has also decided to change Board of Directors (BoDs) of all power distribution companies (DISCOs). It was also decided to hand over the management of DISCOs to private sector on long term concession, he added.

The minister said despite various constraints, all out efforts were being made to ensure availability of gas to domestic, industrial and fertilizer sectors and carrying out minimum gas load-management in the coming winter season. "We have only two LNG terminals and limited natural gas but today we have finalized two LNG cargoes for December," he said.