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SC disposes off 224 cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court has disposed off 224 cases (excluding CMAs) during the period from 2nd October 2023 (Monday) to 6th October, 2023 (Friday). Meanwhile, 312 new cases have been instituted during the period from 2nd October 2023 (Monday) to 7th October 2023 (Saturday). The Chief Justice and the judges of Supreme Court remained committed to accelerate disposal of the cases and diminish the backlog.

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Hamas attack kills 200 Israelis Tel Aviv's air strikes martyr 198 Palestinians

Netanyahu says 'we are in a war and we will win it', US ready to offer 'support' to Israel after Hamas attack

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: The Israeli death toll has risen to 200 as Hamas's "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm" rages on, while at least 198 Palestinians have so far been martyred and 1,610 wounded in the Gaza Strip in Israel's retaliatory air strikes. According to Israel's N12 News, at least 200 Israelis have so far been killed in the attacks launched by the Hamas movement.

The Palestinian health ministry said up until 4:20 pm (1320 GMT) there were "198 martyrs and 1,610 wounded with different injuries" in the conflict. Meanwhile, Palestinians were scene celebrating the highly coordinated assault, which totally blindsided Tel Aviv, are doing rounds on social media. Lior Hayat, the spokesperson of the Israeli foreign ministry, said Israel was a "nation in shock by the murders, the attacks" after civilians were targeted in Hamas' military operation, according to Al Arabiya English.

Meanwhile, Israel's army said it was fighting Gaza fighters who entered Israel by land, sea and air using paragliders after a barrage of rockets was fired at Israel from the Palestinian enclave. "It was a combined ground raid which happened through paragliders, through the sea and through the ground," army spokesman Richard Hecht told reporters.

"Right now we're fighting. We're fighting in certain locations around the Gaza Strip... our forces are now fighting on the ground" in Israel, he added. Hecht confirmed there are casualties but would not be drawn on details, nor discuss reports that multiple Israelis had been captured by Palestinian fighters. Thousands of military reservists are set to be drawn up for Gaza, as well as northern Israel, near foes Lebanon and Syria, and the occupied West Bank.

"We're looking at all arenas... we understand this is something big," Hecht said. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in a statement said: "His people have the right to defend themselves against the 'terror of settlers and occupation troops'". Abbas said this at an emergency meeting held in Ramallah with a number of top officials from the Palestinian Authority.

Earlier, Hamas commandos attacked southern Israel after firing over 5,000 rockets at the settlers from the Gaza Strip, which was later followed by heavy infiltration of armed freedom fighters into the oppressive Jewish state. The Al Jazeera's correspondent said the unprecedented attack has left Israelis in "tremendous shock". "I spoke by text with an acquaintance in Tel Aviv. She says she was hurrying to get into a bomb shelter. The fact that several villages including some towns were attacked and captured - this is something that



has never happened before," Reynolds said.

"This took a lot of planning, strategising from Hamas," he noted. Soon after the massive surprise attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war against Palestine saying that Hamas had made a "grave mistake." The attack marked an unprecedented infiltration by an unknown number of Hamas gunmen into Israel from Gaza and one of the most serious escalations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in years, Reuters reported.

Israel's police chief said there were "21 active scenes" in southern Israel, indicating the extent of the attack. In Gaza, people rushed to buy supplies in anticipation of days of conflict ahead. Some evacuated their homes and headed for shelters. Hamas military commander Mohammad Deif announced the start of the operation in a broadcast on Hamas media, calling on Palestinians everywhere to fight.

"This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on earth," he said, adding that 5,000 rockets had been launched. The last major flare-up between Israel and Hamas was a 10-day war in 2021. "Our enemy will pay type of a price which it has never known," Israeli PM Netanyahu said in a video statement, adding that his country is in a "war" that it "will win".

Speaking to Israel N12 News by phone from a Nir Oz, a kibbutz near Gaza, a woman identified as Dorin said gunmen had infiltrated her house and tried to open the bomb shelter where she was hiding. "They just came in again, please send help," she said. "There are a lot of homes harmed... My husband is holding the door closed... They are firing rounds of bullets." Israeli Defence Minister Gallant said Hamas had "launched a war against the State of Israel". Israeli "troops are fighting against the enemy at every location", he said.

The Israeli military said its forces were operating inside Gaza but gave no details. "A number of terrorists have infiltrated into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip," the military

said in a statement, adding that residents in the area surrounding the Gaza Strip had been told to stay in their homes. Israeli media reported that gunmen had opened fire on passers-by in the town of Sderot, in southern Israel, and footage circulating on social media appeared to show clashes in city streets as well as gunmen in jeeps roaming the countryside.

Hamas media displayed videos of what it said were bodies of Israeli soldiers brought into Gaza by fighters, and Palestinian gunmen inside Israeli homes and touring an Israeli town in jeeps reportedly been driven into Israel by the attackers. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the footage. Palestinian media also reported that a number of Israelis had been taken captive by fighters and Hamas media circulated video footage apparently showing a destroyed Israeli tank. The Israeli military was aware of reports of captives, a security source said but provided no further details. In a briefing with reporters, an Israeli military spokesman declined to comment.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he would meet top security officials in the coming hours and Gallant authorised the call-up of reservists. In Gaza, the roar of rocket launches could be heard and residents reported armed clashes along the separation fence with Israel, near the southern town of Khan Younis, and said they had seen significant movement of armed fighters. Israel's ambulance service said teams had been dispatched to areas in southern Israel near Gaza and residents were warned to stay inside.

A group representing military reservists who had planned to refuse to attend training over their objections to the government's plans to overhaul the judiciary called on reservists to report for duty. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group said its fighters were joining Hamas in the attack. "We are part of this battle, our fighters are side-by-side with their brothers in the Qassam Brigades until victory is achieved," said Islamic Jihad armed wing spokesman Abu



Modi says we stand with Israel; countries urge immediate truce

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X, "Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour."

World leaders have called for end to hostilities and safe passage for civilians amid the "war" between Israel and Hamas, which started after the Palestine terrorist group launched thousands of rockets into Israel this morning.

The Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit called for "an immediate halt to military operations in Gaza" and "the cycle of armed confrontation between the two sides". He said: "Israel's continued implementation of violent and extremist policies is a time bomb depriving the region of any serious opportunity for stability in the foreseeable future." The Saudi foreign ministry called for an "immediate cessation of violence".

"The UAE calls for the exercise of maximum restraint and an immediate ceasefire to avoid serious repercussions," the official news agency quoted the foreign ministry as saying. Kuwait expressed its "grave concern" over developments between Israel and the Palestinians, blaming Israel for what it called its "blatant attacks".

An adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Saturday congratulated Palestinian fighters, the semi-official ISNA news site reported. "We will stand by the Palestinian fighters until the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem," it quoted Yahya Rahim Safavi as saying. Iran's state television showed parliament members rising from their seats to chant "Death to Israel".

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani spokesperson was quoted by ISNA as saying: "In this operation, the element of surprise and other combined methods were used, which show the Palestinian people's confidence in the face of the occupiers." Huthi rebels who control the capital Sanaa said they supported "the heroic jihadist operation".

(Continued on Back Page)

Hamza on a post on Telegram.

Palestinians in Gaza expressed disbelief at the infiltration into Israel. "It is like a dream. I still can't believe it," said one Gaza shopkeeper. The attack came a day after Israel marked the 50th anniversary of the 1973 war that brought the country to the verge of catastrophic defeat in a surprise attack by Syria and Egypt.

United States President Joe Biden, during his telephone call with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, assured of "appropriate means of support" to Israel following Hamas' attack on Saturday. "The United States was ready to offer all appropriate means of support" to Israel after an attack from pro-Iran

group Hamas," the US president said.

The two leaders — who met in New York last month despite strained relations — spoke on the phone as the number of casualties from Hamas' attack according to Israel's N12 News soared to 200. Defending Israel's right to "defend itself", Biden warned any other party hostile to Israel from taking advantage of the volatile situation. "The United States warns against any other party hostile to Israel seeking advantage in this situation," he said.

The attack comes amid efforts by Biden and his team to negotiate a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia and a US-Saudi defense pact. Meanwhile, according

Violence underscores urgent need to address 'the Palestine Question': PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday said that he was heartbroken by the escalating violence in the Middle East which underscored the urgent need to address 'the Palestine Question'.

In a post on X, the prime minister said "We urge restraint and protection of civilians. Enduring peace in the Middle East lies in a two-state solution with a viable, contiguous, sovereign State of Palestine, founded on pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al-Sharif at its heart."

Meanwhile, Pakistan expressed concerns over the latest Palestine-Israel conflict after Hamas launched an attack against the occupying forces, the biggest in years.

"We are closely monitoring the unfolding situation in the Middle East and the eruption of hostilities between Israel and Palestinians," the Foreign Office said in a statement. "We are concerned about the human cost of the escalating situation," the Foreign Office said, calling upon the international community to join hands to end the hostilities. The ministry's statement added that the world powers should "come together for cessation of hostilities, protection of civilians and for a lasting peace in the Middle East".

Pakistan has consistently advocated for a two-state solution as the key to enduring peace in the Middle East, with a just, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions. A viable, sovereign, and contiguous State of Palestine should be established on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, the statement added.

to the Palestinian health ministry, there were "198 martyrs and 1,610 wounded with different injuries" in the conflict after Israel launched retaliatory airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. There are also reports of several Israeli citizens taken captive by Hamas fighters. The Israeli military was aware of reports of captives, a security source said but provided no further details. In a briefing with reporters, an Israeli military spokesman declined to comment. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he would meet top security officials in the coming hours and Gallant authorised the call-up of reservists.

Focus on bolster disaster management capabilities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that mindful of Pakistan's susceptibility to disasters and the grim specter of climate change, the government was resolutely committed to bolstering the disaster management capabilities, enacting requisite legislation, promoting governance that was attuned to risk, erecting resilient infrastructure, and above all, fostering adaptability.

Disaster Management System in Pakistan was witnessing a transition from a reactive to a proactive approach which signified a crucial shift in how they collectively responded to unforeseen crises, the prime minister said in a message on the occasion of "National Resilience Day", being observed on October 8. "I believe that the National Resilience Day will inspire the people of Pakistan to not only deepen their understanding of disaster risk management but also share the vital message of readiness, resilience, fortitude, and self-sufficiency," he added.

He said previously, the focus was primarily on reacting to emergencies after they occurred, often resulting in significant loss of life and property. However, with advancements in technology and a deeper understanding of natural phenomena, Pakistan was moving

towards a proactive approach, he said, adding this involved establishment of a modern National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) at NDMA.

NEOC had the capacity to create common operating picture enabled by multiple satellite feeds, software, Artificial Intelligence tools that would strengthen digital risk assessment, early warning systems, and preparedness strategies, he observed. The caretaker prime minister further said "Alhamdulillah, today, we have a robust institutional structure for disaster management in the form of NDMA and PDMAs.

We now, need to strengthen the Disaster Management system at the district level to evolve as the actual implementing bodies of Disaster Risk Reduction policy and plans at the local level." He said National Resilience Day was marked on 8th October as a solemn tribute to the indomitable spirit of the people of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, who had borne the brunt of harrowing disasters.

"It serves as a stark reminder that we reside in a region profoundly susceptible to calamities. Pakistan ranks as one of the most vulnerable countries declared by the Climate Risk Index. We have witnessed a series of natural catastrophes in the shape of earthquakes, floods, GLOF events, scorching heatwaves and forest fires - exacting a toll on the pre-

cious lives as well as billions of dollars lost to infrastructure," the prime minister said.

On this day, he said, they aimed to raise awareness of the devastating impacts of climate change-induced disasters with a special focus on disaster resilience. Last year, once again, he said, Pakistan bore the brunt of a climate-induced catastrophe in the form of unprecedented floods. The province of Sindh and parts of the province of Balochistan suffered the most. One-third of the country was submerged with a toll staggering over 1700 precious lives lost, 12867 injured, and 33 million lives forever altered, he said, adding over a million valued livestock perished, and four million acres of vital crops lie ruined. The communication grid lay in tatters.

The federal and provincial governments, working in unionism, marshaled every resource within grasp - financial, administrative, and organizational - for the rescue and relief of their affected citizens, the caretaker prime minister added. "Let us move forward with determination, resolve, and a shared vision of a stronger, more resilient Pakistan. Together, we shall not only weather this storm, but emerge from it stronger and more united than ever before. Together, we shall not only endure, but prevail," he emphasised.

Afghan refugees: UN to support Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) "stand ready" to provide support in registering and managing Afghan nationals, the agencies said on Saturday. The statement comes amidst the government's crackdown on illegal immigrants residing across the country.

In a joint statement on Saturday, both UN agencies stated they had a "longstanding and strong collaboration" with Pakistan and stood ready to "provide support in developing a comprehensive and sustainable mechanism to register and manage Afghan nationals, including those who may be in need of international protection". It added that the UNHCR and IOM said they were appealing to Pakistan to "continue its protection of all vulnerable Afghans who have sought safety in the country and could be at imminent risk if forced to return".

The UN agencies urged all countries to "suspend forcible returns of Afghan nationals and ensure any possible returns to the country take place in a safe, dignified and voluntary manner". They highlighted that Afghanistan was going through a "severe humanitarian crisis with several human rights challenges, particularly for women and girls".



ISLAMABAD: Former member Balochistan Assembly and Provincial Minister Sardar Saffraz Domki called on Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

No country allows stay of illegal immigrants: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi reiterated on Saturday said that no government would permit the stay of illegal immigrants in their country. Talking to media, the minister clarified that individuals with legal rights could only reside in Pakistan.

He mentioned three categories of Afghan residents residing in Pakistan currently. The first group comprised of individuals who arrived in Pakistan in 1978 and had Proof of Registration cards. While the second category included those Afghans who had been in Pakistan since 2016 and had Afghan citizen cards verified by the previous government of

Afghanistan.

The third group, totaling approximately 1.7 million people, entered Pakistan after August 15, 2021, he said, adding among them, some possessed expired visas, while others had entered the country illegally. To a query, he said most of the illegal immigrants in Pakistan were from Afghanistan. Solangi emphasized that the illegal immigrants must voluntarily leave Pakistan by October 31, as the caretaker government was committed to implementing the law.

He stressed that the national interest could not be compromised for the sake of bilateral relations, underscoring that action would be taken indiscriminately against illegal activities. The

minister said a recovery amounting to Rs16 billion was made in the government's crackdown against electricity theft.

He also highlighted the positive impact of administrative actions, leading to a significant reduction in the prices of essential commodities such as oil, sugar, wheat flour, and fertilizer. Solangi reassured the public that the caretaker government was dedicated to the betterment of the country and affirmed their responsibility to continue taking necessary actions. In response to an upcoming query about the upcoming elections, the minister said that the Election Commission of Pakistan bore the responsibility for conducting free, fair, and transparent elections in the country.

2 terrorists killed in Kech action

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: At least two terrorists were gunned down during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by security forces in the general area Zerber in Balochistan's Kech district, the military's media wing said Saturday.

"On [the] night [between] 6/7 October 2023, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in general area Zerber, Kech District on the reported presence of terrorists," a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. During the operation, an intense fire exchange took place between the security forces and the terrorists, and as a result, two terrorists were killed, read the statement.

"The killed terrorists had been actively involved in multiple terrorist activities against the law enforcement agencies." The military's media wing said that a "large quantity of equipment and explosives" were also recovered from the terrorists' possession.

It further said that sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. "Security forces of Pakistan are committed to thwart efforts of enemies of peace in the country," ISPR added.



IPP announces worker conventions from 13th Oct

ISLAMABAD (APP): Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) Central Information Secretary, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan on Saturday announced that the party will hold worker conventions and public gatherings across the country from October 13.

Addressing a press conference, she said, "Under the leadership of Jahangir Khan Tareen and party president Abdul Haleem Khan, IPP has decided to organize worker conventions and public gatherings from October 13 throughout the country. These public gatherings will demonstrate that IPP represents the public at the grassroots level."

Following the party's registration

with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), she said IPP is embarking on a journey dedicated to serving the people of Pakistan.

Dr. Awan emphasized that with the support of the masses, IPP aimed to fulfill the dreams of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a prosperous Pakistan. She regretted that while some parties have promoted the slogan of "respect the vote," for their interest IPP will give "respect to the voters," who are the real stakeholders in the progress, prosperity, and development of the country.

She further emphasized that the country required leadership that

serves public and national interests rather than advancing personal agendas. IPP is determined to lead the nation towards progress, prosperity, and development. Dr. Awan added,

"The objective of IPP's politics is to unify politics and the state and bring the public together on one platform for the betterment of the country." She said, IPP aimed to unite a nation divided along religious and political lines, harnessing the power of the people for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. She said the party's manifesto revolves around working towards the country's progress while seeking the trust and input of the public.

FIA arrests 4 passengers with fake documents

GUJRANWALA (NNI): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) – Gujranwala zone – apprehended a total of four persons including a wanted individual traveling abroad on fake documents.

According to the details, one out of the four arrested individuals – Identified as Ahsan Mukhtar – attempted to travel to the Netherlands using counterfeit travel documents including a fake Portuguese permit.

The suspects – identified as Zaheer Abbas, Ali Raza, and Muhammad Imran were apprehended from Gujranwala and Wazirabad. Notably, Zaheer Abbas – operating as an agent – was involved in producing bogus passports, permits, and visas for ordinary citizens.

Moreover, Muhammad Imran – a wanted suspect – received a substantial amount of money by luring the people that he would secure their employment in Italy.

However, the FIA initiated an investigation to curb human smuggling and dismantle these counterfeit documents network in the country.

Earlier to this, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested four alleged fraudsters involved in the preparation of counterfeit travel documents. According to the FIA, the suspects had established a fake lab to create fake travel documents.

The FIA officials recovered the fake passports from India, Italy, Bangladesh, the United States, and Canada from the possession of the arrested individuals.

In addition to fake passports, the suspects were also involved in producing counterfeit visa stickers, stamps, printers, and various tools, as stated by the FIA.

DG reviews LDA projects

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Director General Muhammad Ali Randhawa, during a meeting held here on Saturday, reviewed the development projects of LDA City, LDA Avenue and Jubilee Town housing societies.

The DG assessed the pace of development work and directed officers to take strict measures against land grabbers. He ordered improving services and facilities to the residents of LDA Avenue-I and Jubilee Town. He said that increase in commercial activities in LDA societies had created new opportunities for investment.

Randhawa said that the LDA would start plantation drive in its societies to control environmental pollution and minimize smog. He directed all housing directors of LDA to start plantation of trees in their respective areas and search new places for plantation in LDA housing societies.

The DG announced that a special plantation drive will be started from Avenue-I and Jubilee Town from next week.

The meeting was briefed on the construction of new mosques, greenbelts and parks in LDA Avenue-I and Jubilee Town. The plan of giving possession through phases in the Jinnah sector was also reviewed.

Additional DG Imran Ali, Chief Engineer Israr Saeed, Additional DG Khalid Gurahya, Chief Town Planner One, Chief Town Planner Two, Chief Metropolitan Planning Nadeem Akhtar Zaidi, Director DG Headquarters Asif Hussain, Director Finance, Project Director, Directors of LDA City and Avenue-I and other officers participated in the meeting.

Naqvi stresses collective efforts to achieve desired results

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on said that collective efforts were needed to achieve desired targets.

Addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz here on Saturday, the CM appreciated the role of the agriculture department, APTMA and Pak Army which provided technical support to control a whitefly attack on the cotton crop.

The CM said the whitefly

attack had damaged almost 1.5 million cotton bales while floods in the Satluj also destroyed cotton grown over 70,000 acres of land.

"This year rice worth \$2 billion will be exported," he added. Mohsin Naqvi said special attention was being paid towards achieving maximum per acre yield of wheat this year.

The CM said that the provision of quality seed and fertiliser to farmers was necessary besides implementing a good strategy to obtain desired produc-

tion targets. "It is the need of the hour to streamline research institutes," he added.

To a question, he said that the price of sugar had been reduced from Rs 180 to Rs 140-150. "The situation will further improve after smuggling completely stops," he maintained.

He said that an all-out effort was being made to complete development work at the earliest.

He also added that relevant departments were working to control smog.

LESCO detects 14,259 power pilfering lines

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 14,259 connections from where the consumers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts – Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara – during its 30-day anti-power theft campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media on Saturday that the company had thus far submitted FIR applications against 14,127 electricity thieves, out of which 13,314 cases had been registered in respective police stations, while 4,653 accused arrested. The spokesman said that all the electricity thieves had been

charged Rs 1.33 billion [Rs 1,331,516,512 exactly] for 29,424,716 detection units.

On the 30th consecutive day (October 7) of the campaign, the spokesman added, LESCO found 475 connections involved in electricity theft in all its circles and also submitted FIR application against 473 electricity thieves in the respective police stations, out of which 256 FIRs have been registered while 37 accused have been arrested.

During the operation, he said, large agricultural and commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the

seized connections, 01 industrial, 10 commercial, 05 agricultural and 459 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 875,478 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 37,081,514.

On the 30th day of anti-power theft operation, the LESCO charged 110,212 detection units worth Rs 2,314 million to an agricultural connection in Baghbanpura area of Lahore; 40,000 detection units of Rs 1.1 million to another connection in Ichhra area on Ferozpur Road Lahore; and 9,500 detection units worth Rs 677,678 to a power pilferer in Imamia Colony near Shahdara area.

Murtaza Wahab files nomination papers

KARACHI (NNI): Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad on Saturday submitted their nomination papers for by-election on local government seats.

Election will be held on November 5 from 8:00am to 5:00pm without any break. The election commission will announce the results on November 8.

Murtaza Wahab will contest from UC 13 of Saddar Town, UC 3 of Mauripur Town and UC 7 of Ibrahim Hyderi. Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad will submit his nomination paper from UC 7 Gadap Town.

As per the new rules, mayor, deputy mayor and other members of local

government should have to contest election within six month.

A total of 886 vacant seats of general member, chairman and vice chairman will be filled across the province after the by-polls.

The by-polls for direct local government seats on November 5 would be held in Jacobabad, Kashmir, Shikarpur, Larkana, Sukkur, Ghotki, Khairpur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Naushero Feroz, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tharparkar, Tando Allahyar, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Thatta and four districts of Karachi —Malir, South, Central and Keamari.

According to the schedule, the ECP will issue a public notice for the by-polls on October 2, after

which candidates will be able to file nomination papers at RO offices from October 5 till 7.

The scrutiny of nominations will take place on October 9 and valid nominations will be announced on October 12.

Appeals against approval or rejection of nomination papers will heard from October 16 to 18 and decision on the appeals will be announced on October 19. The revised list of candidates will be displayed on October 20, and candidates will be allowed to withdraw their candidature on October 21.

The ECP will allot election symbols to the candidates on October 22. The polling will take place on November 5.

Punjab govt gives approval for upgradation

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab government has given approval of funds of Rs5 billion for improvement and up-gradation of treatment facilities in major hospitals of Punjab.

The decision was taken in the 29th meeting of the provincial cabinet, chaired by caretaker chief minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday.

The cabinet also gave formal approval to rent out the lawn of Punjab House Karachi for events to increase revenue and the lawn of Punjab House Karachi can be rented for events at Rs300,000.

In this regard, the cabinet also gave approval to enter into an agreement with a major hotel chain regarding renting out the lawn for events.

Deputy Commissioner

Lahore will be the administrator of Metropolitan Corporation Lahore.

It also was instructed in the meeting to further improve the financial assistance package for the families of Government servants who die in service.

However, the package of financial assistance should be presented for approval in the next meeting of the cabinet, said CM Mohsen Naqvi. He said that standard treatment and rehabilitation facilities will be provided to kidney, psychological and drug-addicted patients.

The cabinet has approved setting standards for MSDS in dialysis, psychiatric and addiction centres. The cabinet also gave approval for the

devolution of powers to union councils under the "Ab Gaon Chamkein Ge" programme.

The cabinet approved the recruitment procedure for DG and other posts of the Punjab Agriculture, Food and Drug Authority (PAFDA).

Cabinet also gave approval of the special performance and audit reports of the accounts of the Punjab government and district governments for the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The cabinet gave approval to the reports of the Council of Islamic Ideology.

Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, Advocate General of Punjab and related officials attended the meeting.

Governor directs VCs/Rectors to facilitate differently abled persons

LAHORE (INP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman issued a letter to the Vice Chancellors/Rectors of public and private sector universities and directed them to provide facilities for differently abled persons.

In the letter, attention is invited to Section 6 of the Punjab Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2022. As per the details, the Punjab Governor issued directions to the Vice Chancellors/Rectors to make all existing and new proposed buildings (academic blocks, auditorium,

library, sports fields, cafeteria and hostels etc.) accessible with facilities like wheelchair ramps and priority seating.

The letter further stressed that if not possible in all, at least some university transports should be provided with ramps for wheelchair access and priority seating. In the letter, it has been directed to start counselling services for differently abled persons and their families and to arrange flexible working hours for the employees who are suffering from any disability.

It stated that the participation of

differently abled persons in curricular activities and decision-making process should be encouraged. Workshops/seminars and awareness campaigns should be organized to sensitize the public about the challenges faced by these individuals.

The letter further said that arrangements for assistive technologies should be ensured to help the disabled. Educational institutions should play a role in improving the attitude of university officials and the public towards differently abled people and ensure that it is not derogatory or demeaning.



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN NATIONAL DATA BASE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (Headquarters, G-5/2 Islamabad



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Candidates from respective district are invited, for Walk-in Test/Interview for below mentioned project based vacancies of Temporarily Displaced Persons – Emergency Recovery Project (TDP-ERP), for a period of one year (extendable if required):

Job Title	Qualification & Experience	Location & Number of Positions	Test Date	Interview Date
Coordinator (35 Years)	MBA/MCS/MIT/MSc (CS)/MS (IT) (2 years)/BBA/BCS (Hons) (4 years) or equivalent from HEC Recognized University + Preferably 04 Years' post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Tank (1) Kot Musa, Jandola	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 2:00 PM
Site in Charge (35 Years)	MBA/MCS/MIT/MSc (CS)/MS (IT) (2 years)/BBA/BCS (Hons) (4 years) or equivalent from HEC Recognized University + Preferably 04 Years' post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Bannu Domel (1)	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 2:00 PM
Supervisor (35 Years)	Graduation from HEC Recognized University + Preferably 04 Years' post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Khyber Tirah (1) District Dikhan Daraban (1) District Bajour Barang (1) District Lakki Marwat Lakki City (1) District South Waziristan Sararogha (1) District North Waziristan Spinwam (1)	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM	16-Oct-2023 (Monday) 2:00 PM
Junior Executive (Male) (35 Years)	Intermediate or equivalent with Computer Certification + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Bajour Charmang (4), Barang (5), Khar (5), Larkhalozo (5) District Khyber Bara (Takia) (4), Dogra (3), Jamrud (7), Landi Kotai (4), Tirah (5)	17-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	18-Oct-2023 (Wednesday) 9:00 AM
		District Bannu Amandi (2), Bakka Khel (1) District Mohmand Bautha (2), Ghalanai (5), Yakkaghund (5) District North Waziristan Boya (3), Mir Ali (1), Miran Shah (2), Razmak (5), Spinwam (4) District South Waziristan Ladha (3), Sararogha (2), Sarwakai (7), Wana (3)	18-Oct-2023 (Wednesday) 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	19-Oct-2023 (Thursday) 9:00 AM
		District Kurram Dogar (7), Parachinar (2), Sadda (3) District Orakzai Ghilio (4), Kalaya (3), Kuraiz (2) District Tank Jandola (3) District Lakki Marwat Lakki City (4)	19-Oct-2023 (Thursday) 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	20-Oct-2023 (Friday) 9:00 AM
		District Bannu Domel (4) District Khyber Dogra (3), Jamrud (1), Tirah (5) District Bajour Charmang (3), Barang (3), Khar (3), Larkhalozo (3) District Mohmand Bautha (3), Ghalanai (3)	20-Oct-2023 (Friday) 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	21-Oct-2023 (Saturday) 9:00 AM
		District North Waziristan Boya (4), Mir Ali (2), Miran Shah (4), Razmak (5), Spinwam (5) District South Waziristan Ladha (2), Sararogha (1) District Kurram Dogar (2) District Orakzai Ghilio (4), Kuraiz (1) District Tank Kot Musa (2) District Lakki Marwat Sarai Naurang (2), Titar Khel (2)	21-Oct-2023 (Saturday) 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM	22-Oct-2023 (Sunday) 9:00 AM
Junior Executive (Female) (35 Years)	Intermediate or equivalent with Computer Certification + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Khyber Jamrud (1) District Mohmand Bautha (2), Ghalanai (1) District North Waziristan Mir Ali (3), Miran Shah (1), Razmak (1), Spinwam (1) District South Waziristan Ladha (2) District Kurram Parachinar (1), Sadda (1) District Orakzai Ghilio (1), Kalaya (1) District DI Khan Kulachi (1), Darazinda (1), Paroa (1) District Bannu Amandi (2), Bakka Khel (3), Domel (1), Kakki (2) District Lakki Marwat Lakki City (2), Sarai Naurang (1), Titar Khel (2)	-	23-Oct-2023 (Monday) 9:00 AM
Security Guard (45 Years)	Matric/Middle + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Bajour Barang (1) District Khyber Bara (Takia) (1) District Kurram Dogar (1) District Tank Jandola (1)	-	24-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM
Office Boy (35 Years)	Matric/Middle + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District South Waziristan Sararogha (1) District Kurram Parachinar (1)	-	24-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM
Generator Operator (35 Years)	DAE (Electrical or Mechanical) /Matric along with one-year Diploma in Mechanical or Electrical from reputed institution + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Mohmand Bautha (1) District Orakzai Ghilio (1)	-	24-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM
Sweeper (35 Years)	Primary/Middle + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Mohmand Bautha (1) District Orakzai Ghilio (1)	-	24-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM
Lady Searcher (45 Years)	Primary/Middle + Preferably 01 Year post-qualification relevant experience is required	District Khyber Jamrud (2), Tirah (2) District Kurram Dogar (1) District North Waziristan Mir Ali (2), Spinwam (1) District South Waziristan Ladha (1) District DI Khan Darazinda (1) District Bannu Bakka Khel (1)	-	24-Oct-2023 (Tuesday) 9:00 AM

Venue: Regional Head Office NADRA, Phase-5, Hayatabad, Peshawar

Terms and Conditions:

- Residents of respective District **ONLY**, shall be allowed.
- A candidate can apply for one position only.
- Females, Transgenders & differently – abled people are encouraged to apply.
- No TA/DA will be admissible.
- Candidates shortlisted after the Test (for concerned positions) shall be interviewed.
- Interested candidates must bring their Original Documents i.e. Personal, Educational & Professional.
- 05 years' age relaxation already included in maximum age.
- Posting request to other Project / Site will not be entertained unless the Management requires it.
- Sample Test is available at <https://careers.nadra.gov.pk/> and can be viewed for reference.

Note: Positions are for a specific Project; therefore, selected staff shall be laid-off upon completion of Project. This contract shall not confer any entitlement of regular/contractual employment in NADRA.

Regional Head Office NADRA, Peshawar
Human Resource Section, Phone No. 091-9217735

PID(I) 2155-23



‘Uplift of poultry sector imperative’

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Saturday said that employment opportunities could be created for youth by developing poultry sector in KP.

He said efforts would be made to facilitate people associated with poultry sector in the province.

The Governor expressed these views during a meeting with office bearers of all poultry association led by its patron in chief

Malook Khan here at Governor house.

The delegation appraised the Governor about their problems.

The Governor directed the concerned authorities for its speedy resolutions.

Governor meets with three disabled persons at Governor house, announces jobs: Demonstrated love and affection, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali here Saturday met with three disabled persons of

Mardan district upon their requests at Governor house and announced Govt jobs besides handed over cash assistance to them.

The Governor met with them at the staircase of the Governor house after coming out of his office to welcome them.

The governor encouraged the special persons Saifur Rehman, Rahamdil and Asad Khan and assured to provide jobs to them after they requested for the same on disabled quota.

KPBC flays police for nominating lawyers in FIR

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) condemned police for nominating lawyers from Mardan and Takht-bhai in First Information Report (FIR), on Saturday.

In this regard KPBC issued press release that holding political assembly is the constitutional and legal right of every citizen while condemning police for nomination of lawyers in FIR for political activities.

KPBC vice chairman Zar Badshah and Chairman Executive Committee Syed Mubashir Shah urged police and provincial government to ensure fundamental rights of legal fraternity. They argued withdrawal for FIR against lawyers otherwise KPBC will sue police and provincial government in the courts of law.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali meeting with Pesco Senior Management regarding power load shedding.

PHC reinstates Dr Salman as member syndicate

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad reinstated Dr Salman Ullah as member syndicate at Kohat University of Science and Technology while declaring earlier termination null and void.

The counsel Akhundzada Ahmad Saeed advocate argued that the petitioner is an Assistant Professor at Department of Pharmacy and serving the teacher's association as president of the varsity. He

added that the petitioner's syndicate membership was abrogated on 4th July 2023 by Vice Chancellor KUST as he objected on several issues which is unconstitutional as well as illegal.

The counsel further argued that Dr Salman Ullah had made applicant before Vice Chancellor but he didn't decide it despite passage of several months. He added that Vice Chancellor had no jurisdiction to terminate the syndicate's membership.

Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology had terminated syndicate membership of

Dr Salman with the observation that the applicant didn't represented his position properly, the counsel argued.

PHC's inquired from varsity's lawyer under which law Vice Chancellor KUST had terminated Dr Salman Ullah syndicate membership while he informed that VC had powers to make such decision while adding that the petitioner can make appeal against the decision.

However, PHC observed that the varsity's lawyer arguments and evidences didn't satisfied the court regarding termination syn-

dicade's membership while declared VC KUST orders null and void as well as reinstated Dr Salman Ullah as member syndicate.

Fake advertisement gone viral

PESHAWAR (APP): Fake advertisement related to illegal Afghans has gone viral with the phone number of SSP Operations Office is also listed in the advertisement.

In the advertisement, it has been directed to give information about Pakistani Identity Card holder Afghans to the Police Station.

The name of those who reported on the phone will be kept confidential, written in the text of the fake advertisement.

It is illegal to give illegal Afghans work and houses on rent, the text of the fake advertisement says.

In the advertisement, it is requested to inform the office of SSP operations on phone number 0919210508, however, when contacted the Police Control Peshawar, the official has confirmed that it is a fake advertisement that went viral.

Alleged wanted criminals held

PESHAWAR (INP): The Urmur Police arrested four outlaws in an ongoing crackdown against criminals here early Saturday morning.

According to details given by the Police control Peshawar, the crackdown against wanted criminals continued in order to maintain law and order and peace. He said Police are taking action against criminals by arresting four persons involved in various crimes.

Among the arrested alleged accused are Muhammad Anwar Haq, Khair Basr, Naseeb Gul and Muhammad Shahab, police officials told the media men soon after the arrest was made. The accused are residents of different areas of Peshawar, who are involved in illegal weapons and other crimes.

Police have recovered arms from them including three pistols, magazines and several cartridges used in killing and snatching at gun-point.

Police have registered a case against the arrested accused and started further investigation.



PESHAWAR: Global Director Nutrition International in a group photo with Caretaker Minister Asif Rafiq after meeting.

Report reveals Afghan SIMs linked to crimes

PESHAWAR (INP): A recent report has exposed the extensive use of Afghan mobile phone SIM cards in acts of terrorism and criminal activities within Pakistan.

The report sheds light on the disturbing ways in which these SIMs are being exploited, alongside a disconcerting discovery regarding the involvement of many National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) officers in facilitating the addition of Afghan names to Pakistani families.

The report highlights that unregistered Afghan SIM cards are alarmingly accessible in the border regions between Pakistan

and Afghanistan.

These SIMs have become a preferred tool for terrorists operating in the region, enabling them to communicate and coordinate their activities discreetly.

Popular communication apps like WhatsApp and others are used on these Afghan SIMs, allowing terrorists to maintain anonymity while planning and executing their nefarious acts.

Many Afghans have been found to have fraudulently acquired Pakistani identity cards, often with the complicity of corrupt NADRA officials.

Beyond terrorism, these Afghan SIMs have been

implicated in a range of serious crimes, including murder and kidnapping for ransom.

In response to the report's findings, recommendations have been made to address these security challenges effectively. It has been suggested that measures should be taken to curtail the use of Afghan SIMs in sensitive border areas.

Additionally, the report underscores the importance of strict monitoring of suspicious activities on Wi-Fi networks, as this has emerged as another avenue for illicit communication and coordination among individuals involved in 'unlawful activities'.

2 held in raid on currency exchange

PESHAWAR (INP): The Commercial Banking Circle of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested two accused and recovered thousands of US dollars in raid on money changer in Saddar area of Peshawar on Saturday.

On directions of Deputy Director Rizwan Shah, the FIA Commercial Banking Circle raided illegal money exchange running business of money changing without license.

During operation, two accused Atifullah and Khalid were arrested besides recovery of US\$40,000. The detainees were being investigated after registering a case against them.

Weather remain clear in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The weather would remain clear in Peshawar on Saturday with 24 degrees Celsius, an official of the Meteorological Department said here.

Chance of rain up to 34 degrees Celsius and the humidity ratio in the air is 52% recorded with a possibility of rain including strong winds in some upper areas of the province, the official of the met office said.

However, rain is expected in Abbottabad, Haripur, Butgram and Kalam with a chance of heavy rain in Shangla, Chitral, Dir, Malakand and Bajaur, the official of the met office said.

Traffic system and wardens to be monitored



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In order to ensure the presence of traffic wardens at designated points, the Chief Traffic Officer Peshawar Qamar Hayat Khan on Saturday inaugurated the body came to directly review the traffic system.

An event was held last day at traffic headquarters

in which SP Traffic headquarters, Shazia Shahid, DSPs, Traffic Wardens and other officials were also in attendance.

Talking to participants on the occasion, Chief Traffic Officer told that the traffic system can be directly reviewed with the help of body came and traffic wardens can also be aware of the traffic system and where

ever there is any issue in the system it can be promptly resolved.

He clearly said the traffic police in the city are implementing first Salam and then Kalam which can not be compromised. He started the traffic police in provincial city are taking all possible steps to facilitate people and ensure smooth way of traffic as well.

Anti-polio campaign underway in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (INP): A 7-day anti-polio campaign is underway in Peshawar, under the supervision of the district administration. The polio campaign entered the fifth day on Saturday. Commissioner Peshawar Muhammad Zubair and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaz Wazir are also supervising anti-polio teams in different areas.

Commissioner Peshawar is meeting the parents and informing them about the Anti-Polio campaign.

During the Anti-Polio campaign, 901,985 children were given Polio vaccines in Peshawar for which a total of 2496 teams were formed, said Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaz Wazir.

He said adequate arrangements were made for the security of these teams. DC Peshawar Afaz Wazir appealed to parents to give their children polio vaccine

to protect them from permanent disability and should cooperate with anti-polio teams.

"We will not have to play our role for the eradication of polio and it will be possible to eradicate polio only with our joint efforts," he said.

play our role for the eradication of polio and it will be possible to eradicate polio only with our joint efforts," he said.

Crackdown against illegal housing societies to recover dues

PESHAWAR (APP): In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it has been decided to launch a strict crackdown against illegal housing societies as defaulter of billions in terms of paying of electricity bills and speed up the operation against commercial electricity consumers.

The recovery of electricity bills from the users of defaulter feeders in various districts of the province continued without any break for which directives have been issued to district administrations and police officers across the province to ensure implementation of SOPs

before registration of FIRs against electricity consumers.

Under the supervision of KP Task Force for energy, during a short period of single month operation more than 20645 accused involved in Kunda Culture have been disconnected, while in terms of fines and arrears, more than Rs. 1.43 billion amount have been recovered and Rs. 110 million have been recovered from the electricity consumers involved in the heinous act.

Third important meeting of the Provincial Task Force was held under the

chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Mohammad Abid Majeed, the Head of Provincial Task Force for Energy.

Senior officials including Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, District Police Officers, Representatives of Energy & Power and Industries departments and CEO PESCO also attended the meeting.

It was told in the meeting that from September 5, more than 10,406 raids were conducted in various districts of the province

jointly by PESCO, district administration and police in streets, neighborhoods and bazaars, where large commercial hubs and factories involved in illegal use of electricity were raided. More than 20645 connections of Kunda mafia including consumers were cut while cases were registered against more than 7080 accused by local police, amongst them 479 accused were also arrested.

Moreover, the Chairman Task Force Muhammad Abid Majeed emphasized that strict action should be taken against such housing colonies which have been

established without government permission, where the customers have arrears of billions of rupees and big commercial customers are involved in power theft.

The operation against big fish should also be speeded up. Recovery campaigns against consumers in Bannu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan and Mardan divisions should be done at the level of feeders and it was emphasized to speed up the ongoing targets, he added.

At the end, the Senior Joint Secretary, Power Division, Arshad Majeed,

while issuing instructions to PESCO Chief, said that the procedure of collecting dues from defaulting customers in installments and the process of motorization should be accelerated and all company's officers should spend all their energies in achieving the recovery targets.

He expressed satisfaction with the performance of PESCO and paid tribute to the administration of all the districts including the head of the provincial task force for establishing excellent performance and coordination on the national issue.

‘People of all faiths enjoy complete religious freedom in Pakistan’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith harmony, Aneeq Ahmed here Saturday that there was a complete religious freedom in Pakistan and followers of all faiths were free to perform religious obligations as per their beliefs.

He said Islam was a religion of peace, brotherhood and strongly prohibit bloodshed, extremism and terrorism.

The Minister was addressing Religious Interfaith Harmony Conference here at a local hotel attended by KP Caretaker Religious Minister Justice (r) Arshad Hussain, Khateeb Masjid Mohabat Khan Tayyab Qureshi, leaders of different faiths including Islam, Hindu, Sikh, Christian and others.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq

Ahmed said the conference was an important event where representatives and leaders of different schools of thoughts came together to promote and broader understanding about mutual coexistence, peace, tolerance, and cooperation for the benefit of people.

He said the leaders of all faiths have already announced that there was no room for terrorism and militancy in Pakistan and have strongly condemned Mastung, Hangu and others terrorists attacks. The people of Pakistan have strongly rejected terrorism in all forms and manifestation and all institutions were working together to wipe out menace of terrorism.

The Minister said great responsibilities rest on shoulders of religious scholars to promote message of brotherhood, unity, interfaith harmony, compassion and mutual coexistence imperative for a prosperous



society.

He said the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as Rehmatul Lil Aalamin and His life was a beacon of light for entire humanity.

He said youth are future of Pakistan and urged ulama and religious scholars to educate them about the teaching of holy

Quran and Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in its true perspectives.

Aneeq Ahmed said he was standing before participants of the conference today with a deep sense of gratitude and hope as we were gathered here to work with unity for progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

It is a privilege to witness the unity and diversity that define the world's religious landscape.

Pakistan give equal rights to all minorities and they are living peacefully here. As the world that often seems divided, conferences like these serve as beacon of hope, said the minister.

The minister reminded that

despite differences in beliefs, rituals, and practices, there is a commonality of kindness, empathy and respect that binds us together.

He said each religion has its unique teachings and traditions, offering a pathway to a meaningful life and a deeper connection with the divine but all are against terrorism and condemn terrorists attacks in Pakistan.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that sometimes, these differences have led to misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, it is our moral duty as leaders and representatives of different faiths to work towards interfaith harmony and mutual coexistence.

Interfaith dialogue is not about erasing differences or converting others to other beliefs, but building bridges of understanding, tolerance, and respect, said Aneeq.

He said it was about finding

common ground and working together to address the shared challenges faced by humanity.

"Let us pledge to be the change by fostering harmony within our communities and extending a hand of friendship to those of different faiths for prosperity," he added.

The other speakers said that as we engage in meaningful conversations and share our perspectives today, let us remember that true harmony begins within ourselves. It begins with open hearts and minds, willing to listen and learn from one another.

The speakers underscored the need to carry the spirit of the conference beyond these walls.

"Let us return to our communities with a renewed commitment to promote religious interfaith harmony and mutual coexistence, for it is only through unity that we can create a more peaceful world for all."



In brief

Mob thrashes Pesco staff

BANNU (INP): Thousands of protesting electricity consumers attacked a Pesco grid station in Bannu and forcibly switched on a shut feeder for the restoration of electricity in their area on Saturday. According to the spokesperson of Pesco, more than 2,500 people swarmed the Guluzai grid station and started hurling stones at the Pesco installations. The enraged protesters also subjected to torture the staff of the grid station. Then the people forcibly turned on the feeder which the Pesco staff switched off to make up for the line losses. The spokesperson said that 84% line losses were reported from this feeder. The besieged Pesco management called the police for security following the attack by the protesters. It may be mentioned here that several feeders and transformers worth millions of rupees had gutted in a fire that engulfed the NDC Jaranwala grid station on Monday last. As the grid station had caught fire, the supply of electricity to all the feeders had suspended depriving the entire FESCO region of the availability of power. Everything in the grid station was reduced to ashes including a 40-MVA transformer. The rampant fire caused loss of millions of rupees to the national kitty. The worth of the burnt transformer was around Rs80 million. The management had then shifted the 1,500 ampere load of Jaranwala grid station to other grid stations of the FESCO.

Two killed in incidents F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: Two including an elderly person and a student were killed in separate incidents in different localities of Mansehra on Saturday. The first incident took place in village Sharka of Battal where 65-year-old Taos Khan while cutting grass on a hill slipped and fell into gorge which resulted in his instant death. A 17-year-old student of FA identified as Hamza s/o Muhammad Khalid hailing from Baghwar Shinkinari was killed in motorcycle accident at College Doraha Mansehra. The bodies were shifted to hospital where they handed over to heirs after legal formalities.

Robber killed, cop injured

GUJRANWALA (INP): A robber was killed while police official injured in exchange of fire in Saddar police station jurisdiction in Gujranwala on Saturday. According to details, after being chased, robber opened fire at police injured in exchange of police chowky. The robber was killed in retaliatory firing of police. The body of killed robber and injured police official were shifted to hospital.

Man throws acid on school teacher

VEHARI (INP): Three including a woman and two children were scorched after a wicked person hurled acid on a school teacher for rejecting wedding proposal, police said on Saturday. According to details, the incident took place in 9-11/WB area, Daneawal police station jurisdiction where accused Mithoo Khan wanted to tie knot school teacher identified as Ghulam Sabira. However, Sabira rejected the marriage proposal after which accused threw acid at her resultantly the school teacher and two kids passing by were scorched. The citizens held the accused after the incident and after sound thrash held him over to police.

Tareen donates Rs10m to two govt schools

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHARAN: The prominent politician and philanthropist Jahangir Khan Tareen has generously donated Rs: 10 million to enhance the quality of IT education and upgrade the computer laboratories at two government schools in Faisalabad including Govt Girls High School MC-1 Jaranwala and Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Khurrianwala, on Saturday. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Faisalabad Abdullah Nayyer Sheikh, has signed a 3-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with TEF (Tareen Education Foundation) and expressed his appreciation for Jahangir Khan Tareen's generous contribution. The MoU signing ceremony witnessed the presence of senior government officials, including the Additional Deputy Commissioner Shahab Aslam, and the CEO of Education District Faisalabad Kashif Zia.

Both schools' management con-



veyed their sincere gratitude for Tareen's generous donation. Akbar Khan, CEO of Tareen Education Foundation, assured the DC that the

upgrades for both IT labs would commence immediately, with the labs anticipated to be fully operational by the conclusion of December 2023.

PkMAP hails inclusion of Pashto in curriculum

Anees Ur Rahman

MARDAN: The Government of Pakistan has made the significant decision to introduce Pashto and other regional languages as compulsory subjects in schools. This move aligns with the Constitution of Pakistan and international agreements, marking a positive step toward linguistic diversity and cultural preservation.

These remarks were made by Advocate Ijaz Hoti, a prominent legal expert and central leader of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), during a meeting with various party delegations in his office. He emphasized that it is now the responsibility of the Education Department officials to implement this decision promptly, without any delays. He further stated that a systematic program, involving teams, will visit all schools to gather information on the execution of this decision.

Any shortcomings will be addressed, and in case of resistance, public protests and legal recourse to higher courts will be pursued. During this occasion, party representatives including Shab Allah, Afzal Hayat, Ifthikhar Ali, Sajjad Ali, Shahab Khan, Kareem Ullah, Zia Khan, Abdullah, Adil Khan, Afser Khan, and others were also present.

Ijaz Hoti said that this development reflects the government's commitment to promoting regional languages and fostering linguistic diversity, which is essential for cultural preservation and inclusivity in

education.

Meanwhile, the accused who was arrested in the case of killing her husband in College Colony of Takhtbhai turned out to be a famous stage dancer and Tik-toker of Peshawar. According to the details, 18-year-old Samiullah son of Khaista Rehman (deceased), the watchman of Yousaf Plaza, belonging to Sharifabad urban area, who was married to Basma daughter of Parvez Resident Peshawar on September 15.

The newlywed bride shot her husband dead with a pistol while he was sleeping in their house after his janitorial duty. Husband and wife had lived in a rented house in College Colony a few days ago and her deceased husband used to work as a watchman on a salary of 12 thousand rupees. Then he staged his suicide. Bashir Khan, SHO of Police Station Saroshah took full action and detained the victim's wife, the new bride, on the basis of suspicion. During the investigation, the accused revealed to the police that before marriage, she used to dance on tik tok and at wedding and private parties. Because of not liking my husband, I killed him. The police produced the accused in the court of Civil Judge Takhtbhai Yasir Khan, where the court gave him District Jail Mardan.

Police booked 86 PTI's workers: Police have registered cases against 86 important party leaders and workers including six former members of Tehreek-e-Insaf Assembly and district nazim on the charge of

protest and road blocking.

According to the details, according to the FIR registered in the complaint of Police Station Parhota SHO Khaista Khan, yesterday, Tehreek-e-Insaf workers former members of the Provincial Assembly. Ifthikhar Mashwani, Abdul Salam Afridi, Tufail Anjum, Ameer Farzand, Zahir Shah Toru, Under the leadership of former MNA Junaid Akbar from Malakand and former District Nazim Ehtsham Khan Advocate etc., they raised slogans and blocked the road on Swabi Road.

Later, they gathered in the Hujra of former provincial minister Atif Khan and held a rally on which former members of assembly Ifthikhar Mashwani, Abdul Salam Afridi, Tufail Anjum, Zahir Shah Toru, Ameer Farzand, former member of National Assembly of Malakand Junaid Akbar, former district nazim Mardan Khan advocate, former candidates of provincial assembly Umar Farooq Kakakhil, engineer Adil Nawaz, District President Sajid Iqbal, Zakaullah Khan, Dr. Sahibzada, Sadat Tawani, Saifur Rehman Mehsood, Khalid Mohmand, Ayaz Safi and Nadeem Shah Advocate have filed cases against 86 leaders and workers under section 186, 147, 149, 341. Instructions have been issued to the concerned police stations for their arrest. It is known that the wanted members of the assembly and other party leaders have started hiding with the police to avoid arrest.

Road construction machinery set on fire F.P. Report

BARA: Unknown miscreants sit on fire road construction machinery here in Dora area of Sipah, subdivision Bara on Friday night.

Station House Officer (SHO) police station, Bara, Hardam Gul Afridi said that soon after the happen, police officials rushed to the site, collected evidence and initiated investigation to trace the culprits. Partially damaged was done to the tractor, he added.

The policeman maintained that work of road construction was in progress under police security and till evening the scheme will be completed. The contractor of the road had not approached them therefore First Information Report (FIR) had not been lodged, SHO informed.

Hoarded wheat sacks recovered F.P. Report

SHAHDADKOT: In a joint operation of the administration and intelligence agencies in district Qamber, Shahdadt Kot raided the Ayub Mughiri Rice Mill located on Mirokhan Road, in which one and a half lakh sacks of hoarded wheat were recovered, on Saturday.

The administration arrested the Ayub Mughiri. The mill was sealed while talking to the media on this occasion. Assistant Commissioner Shahdadt Kot Abdul Qadir Mashuri said that the administration of district Qamber Shahdadt Kot artificially stockpiled sacks of various types of fertilizers including ghee, sugar, wheat and other household items.

Actions against the black mafia will be intensified and those who are hoarding food items and agricultural land use in the towns of different tehsils of the district will be arrested and brought to justice while the Sindh government will punish the people. Efforts are always made to provide facilities.

Fraudulent sentenced for three years imprisonment: Civil Judge Shahdadt Kot sentenced fraudulent for three years of imprisonment. After the fraud case was proved during the hearing on the application filed by the Civil Judge Shahdadt Kot, the accused Mehboob was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

Minister opens state of the art tech infrastructure

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Provincial Minister for Information Minister, Sports and Youth Affairs Dr. Najeeb Ullah Marwat Saturday inaugurated the latest technological infrastructure in the main campus of the University of Swat.

Dr. Najeeb Marwat unveiled the university's state-of-the-art 'optical fiber cable based LAN infrastructure and Wi-Fi blanket'. Arshad Khan Secretary Higher Education Department and Daud Khan Secretary Local Government Elections and Rural Development Department, Professor Dr. Hasan Sher Vice Chancellor University of Swat also participated in the ceremony.

The inauguration of this modern technical infrastructure will be an important milestone for the University of Swat, which underlined commitment of the government to provide world-class educational resources to students. The optical fiber cable based LAN infrastructure and Wi-Fi blanket will not only rev-

olutionize the way students' access information but also improve the overall learning experience. The Minister for IT, Sports and Youth Affairs said that emphasizing the importance of digital connectivity in today's education scenario, he resolved to take all possible steps for this development.

He pledged his support in achieving the vision of digital year of Swat University and said that the students will have access to the latest technologies and online resources. The Provincial Minister announced the establishment of a data center for Swat University. The data center will be a hub for storing and processing vast amounts of digital information, facilitating research, innovation and administrative functions.

SMC to celebrate silver jubilee on 10th: The four-day silver jubilee celebrations of Saidu Medical College (SMC) will begin from 10th October. There will be important programs including cultural shows and musical nights.

This was disclosed by Asrarul Haq while talking to media and said that the small sapling that was planted in Saidu Medical College on October 12, 1998 has become a tree today and with the grace of Allah Almighty and the hard work of the faculty members, it has become a tree today. He said that the Silver Jubilee celebrations are starting from October 10 which will be inaugurated by Advisor to the Chief Minister on Health Riyaz Anwar, for which all the arrangements are going on fast and the decoration of the college is also being done.

A traditional cultural show is being invited in the program. Musical night, fireworks, scientific season, stalls, anthems, national songs, blues, etc., so that local elders including students can be entertained. He said that by the grace of Allah, today Saidu Medical College is being counted among the top three medical colleges of the province and God willing, the day is not far when it will become a premier institution.

Several infrastructures demolished in Lakki

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Several permanent structures were razed during an anti-encroachment operation in Naurang town, said an official and added that the operation was launched on the directives of deputy commissioner Lakki Marwat district.

The official said that land grabbers had erected illegal constructions along the main grand trunk road thus hindering traffic between Bannu and DI Khan. "The occupation of roadsides was also causing inconvenience for the general public and transporters", he maintained.

The GT road passing through Naurang town is also used by transporters from Bannu to go to Punjab and Islamabad through the CPEC route. Rehmat took serious notice of the situation and directed tehsil municipal administration to launch action against land grabbers and illegal occupants of state lands.

After receiving clear instructions from the deputy commissioner, the anti-encroachment squad of the municipal body came into action and demolished illegal constructions with the help of machinery. Additional assistant commissioner Gohar Ali supervised the daylong operation while a large police contingent led by DSP Ismail Khan assisted the municipal workers. The debris of razed buildings was also removed from roadsides.

The deputy commissioner said that the successful anti-encroachment operation would help to ease traffic on busy roads and end inconvenience faced by transporters and the general public. He said that his administration would protect each and every inch of state-owned land from illegal occupants. He warned that his administration would also deal sternly with those people occupying roadsides for business purposes", he warned.

Three salt factories sealed: Three salt factories

were sealed on producing non-iodised salt in Karak district. Following the directives of deputy commissioner Ahmad Zeb, assistant commissioner Amanullah Khan along with universal salt iodisation programme zonal manager Musawair Atta raid salt units in Speena Mor area", said an official.

He said that the official checked salt produced at the factories with the help of kits and learnt that non-iodised commodity was being manufactured there. He said that potassium iodate solution was also not available at the factories.

Atta told this scribe that edible salt could be iodised by mixing potassium iodate with it in a controlled manner. He said that four factories were sealed and legal action would be initiated against the owners. He called upon the people to avoid using non-iodised salt produced in the local factories as the commodity was not fit for human consumption.

JI to bring prosperity to Dir: NA candidate

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: The young generation can avoid bad company and bad activities through sports digging activities. Jamaat-e-Islami will repopulate the deserted sports grounds of Dir Lower in power, these views were expressed by the former member of the National Assembly / nominated candidate of the Provincial Assembly Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan.

While speaking as a special guest in the final match of the cricket tournament in Rihanpur, a large number of players were present on the occasion, former MINA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan said that the young generation is our capital and future, but the government There is no project for the welfare of the youth, he said that Jaat-e-

Islami will play its full role to restore the sports fields. He urged the youth to actively participate in sports activities as well as welfare activities.

Meanwhile, Rahim Shah, Principal of Dir Learning Academy and Girls College, Chamanabad, Dir Lower, needs no introduction. He is an educationalist, a religious figure and is very committed to fasting and prayer. Dir Learning Academy Chamanabad Lower was founded in 2006.

After many years of hard work and dedication, Dir Learning Academy has turned into a major educational institution of Dir Lower and now 1600 students are studying in Dir Learning Academy Chamanabad Dir Lower. Rahim Shah, the principal

of his institution, said that in our educational institution, around 500 poor, orphaned and helpless male and female students are getting free education. He said that our staff always strives to make the students who study in our educational institution responsible members of the society.

The parents of the students have put full trust in our institution and our educational institution is engaged in hard work and efforts to fulfill the trust of these parents. And three women scholars are paying full attention and working on the religious training of students, the first year students of our girls college have secured prominent positions in the annual intermediate examination sponsored by the Malakand Board.

Selection of educational institution after intermediate

Dr. Muhammad Sarwar

When selecting an educational institution for a 4 or 5-year degree program after completing intermediate education, students should carefully assess various critical factors to ensure a well-informed decision. The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, stands out as a distinguished choice when considering the following essential criteria:

1. Accreditation: The institution and its programs boast accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies, guaranteeing adherence to defined quality standards.

2. Academic Program: The University offers a comprehensive

sive range of degree programs and majors that align with diverse career aspirations and personal interests. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to provide a well-rounded education.

3. Reputation: With a strong standing in the academic community, the University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, has earned recognition for its faculty expertise, successful alumni and a historical track record of excellence.

4. Location: Situated in a strategic location, the campus offers options that cater to individual preferences. Its proximity to your home, accessible transport facilities and opportunities for internships or part-time work make it an attractive

choice.

5. Financial Considerations: The University is committed to affordability, with competitive tuition costs and a range of financial aid, scholarships and grants to support students in their educational journey.

6. Facilities and Resources: The campus boasts state-of-the-art facilities, well-equipped libraries, advanced laboratories and cutting-edge technology resources, ensuring a conducive learning environment.

7. Class Size and Student-Faculty Ratio: The institution prioritizes personalized education with smaller class sizes and a lower student-to-faculty ratio, fostering meaningful interactions with professors.

8. Alumni Network: The

University's extensive alumni network provides valuable connections and opportunities for career advancement, reflecting the institution's commitment to student success.

9. Support Services: An array of support services, including academic advising, career counseling and tutoring, is readily available to assist students in achieving their academic goals.

10. Extracurricular Activities: The campus offers diverse extracurricular activities, including clubs, organizations, sports teams and cultural events, enabling a well-rounded and enriching university experience.

11. Internship and Job Placement Opportunities: The University has a proven track

record of assisting students in securing internships and job placements in their chosen fields, facilitating a smooth transition to the workforce.

12. Diversity and Inclusion: The institution is dedicated to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion, ensuring an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students.

13. Graduation Rates: High graduation rates reflect the commitment to student success, ensuring that students typically complete their degrees within the expected time frame.

14. Career Services: Quality career services and job placement assistance are provided to students and graduates, enhancing their employability and career prospects.

15. Personal Preferences: The University accommodates personal preferences, offering class schedule flexibility, a diverse campus culture and a willingness to address unique needs and requirements.

In conclusion, selecting the right educational institution is a significant decision that should align with your academic and career goals while considering personal preferences and financial circumstances. Thorough research, campus visits and guidance from counselors, mentors and current students are valuable steps toward making an informed and original decision. The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus, stands as an excellent choice that embodies these crucial criteria.



ABOARD THE GEO BARENTS: Life vests are distributed to migrants as they are being rescued by a MSF (Medecins Sans Frontieres) rescue team boat, after leaving Libya trying to reach European soil, in the Mediterranean Sea.

4m people in Lebanon need help

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Lebanon faces one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with nearly 4 million people in need of food and other assistance, but less than half getting aid because of a lack of funding, a UN official said.

Inran Riza, the UN humanitarian chief for Lebanon, adds that the amount of assistance the world body is giving out is "much less than the minimum survival level" that it normally distributes. Over the past four years, he said, Lebanon has faced a "compounding set of multiple crises" that the World Bank describes as one of the 10 worst financial and economic crises since the mid-19th century. This has led to the humanitarian needs of people across all population sectors increasing dramatically, he said.

Since the financial meltdown began in October 2019, the country's political class — blamed for decades of corruption and mismanagement — has been resisting economic and financial reforms requested by the international community. Lebanon started talks with the International Monetary Fund in 2020 to try to secure a bailout, but since reaching a preliminary agreement last year, the country's leaders have been reluctant to implement needed changes.

Riza noted Lebanon has been without a president for almost a year and a lot of its institutions aren't working, and there is still no political solution in Syria. The UN estimates about 3.9 million people need humanitarian help in Lebanon, including 2.1 million Lebanese, 1.5 million Syrians, 180,000 Palestinian refugees, over 31,000 Palestinians from Syria, and 81,500 migrants.

Last year, Riza said, the UN provided aid to about a million Syrians and slightly less than 950,000 Lebanese. "So everything is on a negative track," Riza said. In 2022, the UN received more or less 40% of funding it needed and the trend so far this year is similar, "but overall the resources are really going down and the needs are increasing."

"In a situation like Lebanon, it doesn't have the attention that some other situations have, and so we are extremely concerned about it," he said. According to the UN humanitarian office, more than 12 years since the start of the conflict in Syria, Lebanon hosts "the highest number of displaced persons per capita and per square kilometer in the world."

"And instead what we're seeing is a more tense situation within Lebanon," Riza said. There is a lot of "very negative rhetoric" and disinformation in Lebanon about Syrian refugees that "raises tensions, and, of course, it raises worries among the Syrian refugees," he said. With some Lebanese politicians calling Syrian refugees "an existential threat," Riza said he has been talking to journalists to get the facts out on the overall needs in Lebanon and what the UN is trying to do to help all those on the basis of need — "not of status or a population."

Belarus Red Cross mulls call for ouster of its chief

TALLINN, Estonia (AP): The Belarus Red Cross says it is examining a call by the international Red Cross to fire its chief, who made headlines earlier this year for bragging that his organization was ferrying children from Russian-occupied Ukraine to Belarus.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva said it wants Dzmitry Shautsou ousted for violating its rules on neutrality and integrity. He was seen in occupied cities of the Donbas region in a military uniform with the "Z" insignia of Russian forces and said he favored deployment of nuclear arms in Belarus.

Yulia Sytenkova, a spokeswoman for the Belarus Red Cross, said Shautsou was re-elected as its head Sept. 7 at a special congress where "the majority of members of the Belarusian organization expressed confidence in him." Belarusian TV aired images of authorities in the Belarusian city of Novopolotsk showing a recently arrived group of Ukrainian children to foreign diplomats. Ukrainian officials and human rights groups have decried the transfers as illegal removals, and it is not clear whether they were carried out with the consent of the children's parents or legal guardians.

The children arrived in Belarus on Sept. 19, and included 44 from the eastern Ukrainian cities of Lysychansk and Severodonetsk. The cities have been occupied since July 2022 and sit near the current front line between

Russian and Ukrainian forces since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine over 19 months ago. The head of the government of Novopolotsk, Dzmitry Dziaimidau said another group of children had previously arrived in the city — and both were brought in "to tear children away from the horrors of war."

One girl, identified as 11-year-old Polina Snihurska, said she was enrolled at a Belarusian school. Belarusian authorities did not specify whether the children were orphans or had guardians in Ukraine. The two-day visit by diplomats included envoys from former Soviet republics plus China, India, Syria and Mozambique, Belarusian officials said. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry urged diplomats not to take part in the "propaganda trip."

Both the Belarus Red Cross and international Red Cross in recent days have said the Belarus chapter wasn't involved in the transfers of children from Ukraine. The Red Cross and local officials said a charity founded by Belarusian Paralympic athlete Alexei Talai, which has government support, conducted the transfers. But a report aired in July by state Belarus 1 TV channel showed Shautsou visiting Lysychansk and saying the Belarus Red Cross was taking "an active part" in the transfers, which he said were designed for "health improvement" purposes.

The International Red Cross said its board has given the Belarus chapter

until Nov. 30 to dismiss Shautsou or else it will suspend the branch and recommend that all affiliates halt new partnerships and funding for it. Sytenkova, the Belarus Red Cross spokeswoman, said it was studying the decision "and a reaction will soon follow."

The Belarusian opposition has called for President Alexander Lukashenko and all others involved in the removal of children from Ukraine to be brought to justice over the transfers. Opposition leader Pavel Latushka, a former government minister, has said he has handed over documents to the International Criminal Court proving that there have been illegal transfers of Ukrainian children to Belarus.

"Alexander Lukashenko, members of his family, as well as people close to him organized a system of removing children — in particular orphans — from the occupied territories of Ukraine to Belarus," Latushka told The Associated Press. "The main purpose of sending these children to Belarus is their ideological indoctrination in accordance with the narratives of the 'Russian world,'" he said.

Latushka said at least 2,100 Ukrainian children aged 6 to 15 years were transferred from over a dozen Ukrainian cities to Belarus between September 2022 and May of this year. Belarus has been Moscow's closest ally since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Lukashenko allowed the Kremlin to use Belarusian territory to send troops and weapons into Ukraine.

Shortfall in climate change cash grows ahead of COP28

BERLIN/BRUSSELS (Reuters): The United Nations' main fund for helping vulnerable countries cope with climate change said it had raised \$9.3 billion, falling short of a \$10 billion target after wealthy nations, including the United States, failed to pay in.

The amount represents just a fraction of the \$200 billion - \$250 billion that developing countries will need every year by 2030 to adapt to climate change, according to an estimate given in a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change report that showed how the costs of preparing for climate impacts and the damages from extreme weather events continue to mount. With the UN's COP28 climate summit set to begin in less than two months in Dubai, pressure is ramping up for wealthy governments to make good on promises to help developing countries prepare for and cope with climate change.

A climate funding conference in Bonn, Germany, saw a handful of countries add cash to the Green Climate Fund — the UN's main funding arm for dispersing climate finance. Among those donating were Japan, which said it would contribute up to 165 billion yen (\$1.11 billion) over 2024-2027, and Norway, which offered around \$300 million.

There were no new funding pledges made from the

world's top two polluters, the United States and China. A US representative said the country was not in a position to pledge due to uncertainty in its domestic budget process, but was "working on" an announcement. China, meanwhile, has yet to agree to join wealthy countries in providing climate finance through the UN system.

Australia, Italy, and Sweden said they also were also working on contributions, but did not make pledges. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is aiming to exceed the \$10 billion in contributions it raised in its last three-year round. Mahmoud Mohieldin, the fund's facilitator said he expects the top-up to comfortably surpass the last contribution round once the countries that promised funds announce their pledges.

"If these countries just came with what is expected and some of them of what they contributed last time with a slight increase ... we'll be in that safe zone," Mohieldin told Reuters. Germany, Britain, France and Japan are the biggest backers so far of the UN fund, which was set up to channel money to help poorer nations meet their targets to reduce CO2 emissions, develop clean energy and adjust to a warming world.

"I also increasingly see countries that are not traditional donors as having responsibility: for example

the Gulf states, which have become rich from fossil fuels, or emerging countries like China," German Development Minister Svenja Schulze said at the conference. But GCF's Mohieldin said the Gulf countries should be encouraged and incentivized to contribute rather than pressured, citing the fund's mandate where developed countries voluntarily offered their commitment without pressure based on the Common but Differentiated Responsibility principle.

"China has its own way of doing business ... But I'm not expecting China to contribute in this cycle," he added. The UN's official list of nations that should provide climate finance - which dates back to 1992 - includes only a few dozen wealthy countries. The issue of climate funding is set to dominate this year's UN COP28 climate summit, which begins in November in Dubai.

There, countries plan to launch a new international fund dedicated to supporting vulnerable nations where climate change is causing irreversible damage. Traditional donors, including European nations and the United States want a bigger pool of countries to pay in. David Ryfisch climate policy expert at campaign group Germanwatch said the Green Climate Fund tally was disappointing and a "poor signal" ahead of COP28.

NGO rescue ship saves 258 migrants off Libya

ABOARD THE GEO BARENTS (AP): A non-profit rescue ship operating off the coast of Libya saved 258 migrants in two separate operations.

The first of the two rescues involved a 7-meter-long (23-foot-long) wooden boat filled with 162 migrants, including 17 women and 29 minors, many of them in a cramped area below the deck. The boat had an engine but no navigation system, said Fulvia Conte, rescue coordinator for the Doctors Without Borders rescue ship Geo Barents. The group of Syrians and Egyptians had spent hours at sea with the boat low in the water.

"Many of them were below deck, in the belly of the boat, a place that is even more unsafe as far as ventilation is concerned," Conte told The Associated Press, adding that rescuers have found people dead below deck during previous rescues. The second rescue involved 96 people on a similar wooden boat, including nine children, mainly Syrians.

The Italian Maritime Authority has told the Geo Barents to take the rescued people to the port of Salerno, near Naples, 400 kilometers (250 miles) from their current location, according to Conte. She said the assigning of a far-off port keeps rescue ships out of the area where they are needed for long periods of time. "It means to have probably more people crossing in a very unsafe way, or even dying or disappearing or being intercepted and then brought back to Libya."

In a recent statement, the aid group denounced "the scandalous inaction of the governments that sentence to death thousands of people every year." According to Italian Interior Ministry statistics, as of Oct. 6, nearly 136,000 people had arrived in Italy this year, compared with 72,000 in the same period in 2023.

US resumes food aid to refugees in Ethiopia

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States is resuming food aid to refugees in Ethiopia after assistance was paused earlier this year because donations were being diverted, a senior US Agency for International Development (USAID) official said.

Ethiopia's food crisis has deepened in recent years as a result of war in the Tigray region and the Horn of Africa's worst drought in decades. "The resumption of food assistance to refugees will save lives and alleviate suffering for some of the most vulnerable," the official said.

The decision to resume the aid was made after the implementation of strengthened reforms that the Ethiopian government and partners made to the refugee food assistance structure, including strengthened program monitoring, reinforced commodity tracking and improved registration processes, the official said. The decision will impact dozens of refugee sites around Ethiopia, the official said. None of them are in Tigray, where a two-year war between the federal government and forces led by the region's dominant political party ended in a truce in November last year after killing tens of thousands of people and creating famine-like conditions for hundreds of thousands.

Artillery fire has killed 11 people in a Sudanese city

CAIRO (AP): Heavy artillery fire killed at least 11 people and wounded 90 in a major city in conflict-torn Sudan, the aid group Doctors Without Borders said. The attack took place in the Karari neighborhood in the city of Omdurman, just next to the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, the group said, without saying which of the country's warring parties was responsible.

The group, also known by its French acronym MSF, said on X, formerly known as Twitter, that children were among those killed and that the wounded are being treated at Al Nao hospital in Omdurman. The hospital is one of several facilities where the medical group operates. Sudan has been rocked by violence since mid-April, when fighting erupted between the country's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces,

commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamden Dagalo.

The clashes then spread to several parts of the country, reducing Khartoum and Omdurman to an urban battlefield, and fueling ethnic violence in the restive western Darfur region. The military and the paramilitary force did not respond to requests for comment.

Separately, MSF said one of its vans was hit by gunfire while traveling between Khartoum and Wadi Madani, a small city roughly 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Khartoum. No one was hurt in the incident. The MSF blamed the military for the attack. Wadi Madani is entirely controlled by the army, while Khartoum remains contested, with the paramilitary occupying vast swaths of the city.

"In September, our teams have already responded to seven mass casualty incidents in hospitals we support. The suffer-

ing this brutal fighting is causing for the population is unbearable," MSF posted on X. The fighting has driven 5.5 million people from their homes, according to the latest United Nations' figures. There are 4.3 million people internally displaced within Sudan while 1.2 million have crossed into neighboring countries.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN's humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, said that 18 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. So far, aid agencies have only reached around 3.6 million people in the country, she said. "The population of Sudan is balancing on a knife's edge," she added, describing the situation as "the world's fastest growing displacement crisis." Sudan's conflict has killed at least 5,000 and wounded more than 12,000, according to the UN Activists and medical groups in Sudan say the true death is far higher.

Beijing flexes muscles in South China Sea

NEAR THE SECOND THOMAS SHOAL, South China Sea (Reuters): The crew of the Philippine coastguard boat watch anxiously as an imposing Chinese vessel draws near and cuts off its path, coming within a metre of collision in a vast stretch of open water in the South China Sea.

The captain of the BRP Sindangan shuts off the engine and activates the reverse throttle. China's coastguard issues a warning via megaphone to leave as the Filipino crew watch closely on a radar that shows two vessels side by side. "In accordance with international and Philippine national laws we are proceeding," a crew member responds. "Request to stay clear from our passage."

Tense encounters like this, about 100 miles (185 km) off the Philippines and witnessed by a Reuters journalist, are becoming more frequent in Asia's most contested waters as China presses its claim of ownership over almost the entire South China Sea. China rules the waves here, and the Philippine mission is symbolic of a wider battle between Beijing and

neighbours determined to uphold sovereign rights in their exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

The Philippine coastguard ship is escorting smaller boats to the Second Thomas Shoal that carry supplies to a handful of troops posted to a makeshift garrison aboard the Sierra Madre, a World War Two navy ship that was intentionally grounded on the reef a quarter of a century ago. Their constant presence aboard the rusty ship has irked China and turned the Second Thomas Shoal into a strategic battleground, with Beijing deploying its more modern coastguard ships and clusters of fishing boats as far as 620 miles (1,150 km) from the Chinese coast.

Just 800 metres away, a grey navy ship starts to follow the Sindangan, joining the four Chinese coastguard vessels and five other boats suspected by the Philippines of being militia. The Sindangan hangs back as the supply boats advance to complete the remaining nine miles (17 km) to reach the troops aboard the Sierra Madre.

China condemned the resupply mission, saying

Philippine vessels had "intruded" in its waters in the Spratly Islands without its permission. It has previously ordered the Philippines to tow the grounded ship away from the atoll. The stakes are high if this brinkmanship turns to miscalculation in the South China Sea.

Relations between the Philippines and China have further soured this year at a time of strengthened military engagement between Manila and Washington that Beijing says risks stoking regional tensions. The Philippines and the United States have a Mutual Defense Treaty, and the Pentagon in May made clear it would protect the Philippines if its coastguard came under attack "anywhere in the South China Sea".

Jay Triarla of the Philippine coastguard said it was his country's right to operate freely in its EEZ and accused China of violating international law. "They have carried out dangerous manoeuvres and blocking operations to prevent our routine operations in providing supplies for our military troops," he told reporters.

China, Vietnam prepare for Xi visit to Hanoi

HANOI/BEIJING (Reuters): Vietnamese and Chinese officials are preparing for a possible visit from President Xi Jinping to Hanoi at the end of October or early November, on the heels of US President Joe Biden's trip in September, four people familiar with the plans said.

The visit would underline the Southeast Asian manufacturing hub's growing strategic importance, as big powers jostle for influence in the region amid rising tensions between Beijing and Washington. Work is under way on a joint statement that would be issued during the visit, four people informed about the negotiations told Reuters.

Two of them said the parties were discussing a reference to being together in a "community of common destiny", a phrase often used by Xi that some find controversial. Vietnamese officials were cautious about adding

that reference, the two sources said. A fifth Vietnamese source said the joint statement was likely to include that reference. It could be interpreted as an elevation of ties between the two countries, according to two of the sources, but it is unclear what that would entail and what concrete agreements might be announced.

That person, and the four informed about the negotiations, declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter. The visit has not been announced and could still be called off or postponed, but logistical arrangements have been explored.

"All important diplomatic activities of Vietnam would be announced to you when appropriate," Vietnam's foreign affairs ministry spokesperson Pham Thu Hang told a news conference when asked about the possible visit. The ministry did not reply to emailed ques-

tions from Reuters about the timing of the visit and the content of the joint statement.

China's foreign ministry said it had no information to offer when asked for comment. One of the sources said China had sent a team to Hanoi to organise accommodations for Xi's delegation. Another said the team has been looking to book 800 rooms in hotels in Vietnam's capital, a number in line with a state visit.

China's foreign minister Wang Yi was expected to visit Hanoi in mid-October to help finalise the joint statement, the source added, if sufficient progress on the text has been made. The timing of Xi's visit would coincide with Vietnam's bi-annual monthlong parliament session, where he gave a speech during a previous trip to Hanoi in 2015. The trip has been under preparation for months, officials had said.

China plays Philippine re-supply mission to disputed atoll

BEIJING/MANILA (Reuters): China has condemned a mission by four Philippine ships to re-supply Philippine troops on a disputed South China Sea atoll, saying the vessels had entered its waters in the Spratly Islands without its permission.

The Philippines said it had successfully sent supplies to its troops stationed on a World War Two-era transport ship-turned-military outpost on the atoll despite attempts by China's coast guard to block it. While China is in dispute with several of its neighbours over its extensive claims in the South China Sea, its relations with the Philippines have been particularly

fraught recently over the issue, especially since Ferdinand Marcos Jr took over as Philippine president last year.

"Philippine supply ships and two coast guard ships entered the waters ... in China's Nansha Islands without permission from the Chinese government," China Coast Guard spokesperson Gan Yu said a post on its website, using China's name for the Spratly Islands. The atoll in the area is known as Ayungin in the Philippines, while China calls it the Renai Reef. Also known as the Second Thomas Shoal, it is 105 miles (109 km) off the Philippine island of Palawan.

A small number of Philippine troops

live on board the old navy transport ship, the BRP Sierra Madre, which the Philippines grounded on the shoal in 1999 to reinforce its sovereignty claim. China Coast Guard said in its post that it issued stern warnings and added it firmly opposed the illegal Philippine transport of materials to the ship that "sits on the beach" illegally.

The Philippines last completed a resupply mission to the grounded ship on Sept. 8. A month earlier, a China Coast Guard vessel fired water cannon at a Philippine supply boat during a similar attempt, drawing condemnation from the Philippines and old ally the United States.

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Is the Ukraine war turning global?

RUSSIA has recently hinted that it was moving swiftly towards revoking ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) after President Vladimir Putin held out the possibility of resuming nuclear testing after almost three decades. According to the Russian President, Russia's nuclear doctrine is an accomplished strategy but Russia should look at revoking ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as the United States is a signatory to the treaty but Washinton did not ratify the accord over past decades. Meanwhile, the Speaker at the state doma has confirmed that the Council will discuss the issue of revoking the ratification of the treaty, as America and Europe have unleashed a war against their country.

The Russia-Ukraine hostility in Eastern Europe not only remained intensified but gained new heights and accomplished new milestones in the history of global wars with every passing day. Russia added the worst ruthlessness and the newest barbarism in its war manoeuvres against innocent civilians while Ukrainian forces inflicted heavy losses on their adversary in recent weeks. The conflict has seriously disturbed the strategic balance in Eastern Europe, as the North Atlantic Alliance has bolstered its presence in the region, and European countries have significantly increased their defence spending to deter potential aggression from Moscow. At the same time, Ukraine's bid for NATO membership and the West's limitless economic, military and diplomatic support for Kyiv have paved the way for the Moscow-Beijing partnership against their common adversaries. Furthermore, persistent setbacks on the military front prompted the Kremlin to revive its relationship with Pyongyang to strengthen its defences along with unfolding the long-closed chapter of nuclear testing which undoubtedly thrashes world peace and stability.

The strategic impact of the Russia-Ukraine war continues to evolve, and its long-term consequences will depend on how the conflict ultimately plays out and the actions of various stakeholders including Russia, Ukraine, the United States and its allies, which are resolutely stood beside Kyiv and adding to the hostility through all possible means/resources. The CTBT is a crucial international treaty aimed at preventing nuclear testing to curb the arms race and ensure global peace and stability. If Russia were to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), it could have a significant impact on global security, together with an escalation of a fresh arms race, weakening global non-proliferation regime, erosion of trust and undermining other multilateral agreements such as Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and MFCT etc that will undermine the security landscapes in the world.

As of now, the Ukrainian conflict is gradually heading toward a war scenario in which both sides would eventually be ready to use Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) either chemical or nuclear arsenals against each other to achieve a decisive victory or fail their enemy. The principle of preemptive war was first coined by the United States and the West to weigh a war against Iraq which encouraged Moscow to launch a special military operation against a sovereign nation. Presently, warring Blocs have turned Ukrainian land into a global battlefield and a weapons testing laboratory for their modern arsenals. Western nations are continuously pouring their latest weapons into the conflict which prompted Putin's thirst for allies. In response to West's collision with Kyiv, Russia forged a strategic partnership with Beijing, sealed a weapons deal with North Korea and uncovered a long-range cruise missile together with harnessing its nuclear arsenal. All these developments will surely not promote peace and stability rather those deadly actions would weigh destruction and ruin the global peace. It is high time that the United Nations and the global community take notice of the devastating actions of beligerent nations which might levelled unimaginable cost to the world. Hence, diplomacy and dialogue are the only way forward to resist war hysteria and settle down hostility, otherwise, the hegemonism of certain states and the battle for global supremacy will sabotage world peace in the future.

Totalitarian politics in Pakistan

THE former premier and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shehbaz Sharif asserted that if PML-N voted to power, the party Chief Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would become the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the PML-N supremo would make history by grabbing the top most position for fourth time. The PML-N founding father and three-time Prime Minister is currently self-exiled after the top court approved his bail and authorised his London trip on medical grounds considering his deteriorating health conditions date back to 2021. Unfortunately, the PML-N supremo extended his four weeks of sick leave to an unlimited period for fear of mistreatment and biased prosecution at the hands of the PTI leadership, who neither displayed statesmanship with his adversary nor dealt with opposition on legal and parliamentary grounds. However, the sloganeering of thieves and corrupts had been resounding in public rallies and media until the anti-graft watchdog filed petitions against Mr Khan on charges of corruption and disloyalty.

Interestingly, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif did not dare to return to the country during the one-and-a-half rule of his party after the ouster of his staunch rival from Prime Ministership. Initially, the PML-N could not implement the return plan of its leader due to fear of a backlash from PTI governments in Punjab and KP, later the resolute opposition from the former Chief Justice sabotaged the PML-N plans who batted up to the last ball and invoked several important legislations. In fact, the annulment of NAB amendment Bill-2023, not only reopened the corruption cases of dozens of people including former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Yousaf Raza Gillani and President Asif Ali Zardari putting them all together in one rank and file.

Realistically, Pakistani politics could never come out from old age stagnant political philosophies, feudalism and family politics. The civic business was enslaved to a few clans as PPP was the heirloom of Bhuttos, PML-N was a guardian of Sharif's politics, the ANP was the property of the Wali Khan family while the court's decision confirmed Shujat's ownership of PML-Q. Although it has not been decided yet, the PTI would be surely possession of the Niazi family, now or whenever Mr Khan quits national politics. Hence, each leader enjoyed rule multiple times, offshoots after parents used to grab top slots of the parties as well as the government while seasoned politicians were compelled to play the role of Darbaris/courtiers. How one can expect any political progress or revolution in such dictatorial politics until and unless leaders adopt real democracy in their groups and politicians announce a rebellion?

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Washington's turmoil plays right into Putin's hands

Frida Ghitis

If you've found this week's spectacle in the US House of Representatives gripping and more than a little baffling, imagine how it looked for the people of Ukraine, whose life-and-death struggle to defend their country from Russia's invasion risks suffering yet another demoralizing and dangerous blow as the result of the Republican Party's mind-boggling infighting.

As is well known by now, a band of far-right GOP legislators removed now-former Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy on Tuesday night, days after he prevented them from shutting down the government by reaching a deal with House Democrats to fund operations for 45 days. That late Saturday night agreement left out urgently needed military funding for Ukraine. Ukrainians reacted with anxiety. And that was before McCarthy was dethroned and the Speaker's chair was left empty, with the outlook for support for Ukraine in limbo as the result of almost-incomprehensible political games in Washington.

When asked by CNN staff in Kyiv, Olha Hrubryna, 60, said she's been following events on Capitol Hill. "I think it's awful, because the safety of our people depends on financial support," she said Wednesday. "We will fight to the last, naturally, but (lack of support) means a lot of losses." Volodymyr Kostiak, a Ukrainian serviceman, called it all political games related to the 2024 US elections, telling CNN, "We [Ukrainians] are hostages to this process."

Ukrainian news outlets tried to explain this latest crisis for Kyiv at a time when the horizon is starting to look rather grim.

While the Congress tangled itself in MAGA madness, Slovakia, a member of NATO and the European Union, gave first place in parliamentary elections to the populist Pro-Russian candidate Robert Fico, who has vowed not to send "a single bullet" to Ukraine if he's able to form a coalition as prime minister. In the meantime, a top NATO official warned that the arsenal for supporting Ukraine is running low. "The bottom of the barrel is

now visible," said Adm. Rob Bauer of the Royal Dutch Navy, chairman of NATO's Military Committee.

Ukrainians have been fighting ferociously to defend their country, and it's hard to imagine that would ever stop. But the odds for victory would shrink if the US withdraws its support. And a loss for Ukraine would constitute a defeat for NATO, for the US, and for the democratic world.

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A Russian victory would not only empower Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has repeatedly telegraphed his wishes to reconstitute the former Soviet Union, and even larger Russian Empire, it would also embolden other autocracies – like China – to expand their borders by force. However poorly the war has gone for Russia, which expected a swift victory, this new turn of events is playing right into Putin's plans; plans we long suspected but have now been confirmed by his spokesman.

The Kremlin's Dmitry Peskov described the scenario: "Fatigue over this conflict," he said, "will grow in various countries, including the US." He added, "Fatigue will lead to the fragmentation of the political establishment." Putin is counting on a divided United States, with former President Donald Trump – who declared Putin a "genius" as he moved to annex pieces of Ukraine, and never uttered a negative word about the

Russian autocrat while in office – to stoke antipathy toward Ukraine, fueling it with questions about the cost of supporting it.

The European Union is trying to calm Kyiv's fears. EU foreign ministers traveled to Kyiv this week, holding their first ever meeting in a third country as a sign of enduring support. The EU's top foreign policy official, Josep Borrell, said, "Let's see what will happen in the US, but from our side, we will

one-third of one percent (0.03%) of GDP, and less than 5% of the defense budget.

Krugman argues that the real reason the far-right opposes Ukraine aid is because they, the most devoted admirers of Trump, "view the Putin regime's cruelty and repression as admirable features that America should emulate." I don't know how many Republicans in Congress think the US should emulate Putin. But there's no doubt that America's far-right nationalists do. Just days after Putin launched the invasion of Ukraine, with much of the world aghast at the unfolding invasion, white nationalists held their America First Political Action Conference (AFPAC). Their meeting erupted in a round of applause for the Russian president, with delegates shouting "Putin! Putin!"

What happens in Washington in the days, weeks, and months ahead will go a long way in determining the fate of Ukraine and the outcome of the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II. The Ukrainian ambassador in Washington, Oksana Markarova, says she's in contact with potential incoming speakers. "I can only say that we lead a good and constructive dialogue with the vast majority of potential candidates and her teams," she wrote.

But some of the potential candidates would spell trouble. A report card of GOP members' votes on Ukraine prepared by Defending Democracies Together, gives Rep. Steve Scalise a score of B, or "Okay." But Rep. Jim Jordan, the firebrand Trump supporter, scores an F, "Very Poor." And he's not alone. He voted against four of five bills supporting Ukraine as it sought to defend itself from a Russian invasion, which is now in its 20th month.

Depending on how it plays out, the outcome of this crisis – and of the mayhem in the GOP – will be felt acutely in Ukraine; it will affect the security of Europe, and could shape America's standing for years to come. Asked if Ukraine would be able to fight without US military support, 37-year-old Olha said, "Of course, we will fight – but it will be many times bloodier."

CNN

How diverse Lebanon can have a more inclusive government

Khaled Abou Zahr

FOLLOWING a long stalemate, the Lebanese file was in June passed on from French President Emmanuel Macron to former Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. His current mission is still to help Lebanon elect a president. But is this the right mission for the countries that are looking to help Lebanon? Should there not be a more impactful way to help Lebanon once and for all?

To start with, this mission reveals how much the confessional system is hurtful for Lebanon. Indeed, the election or selection of any of the three key roles of the state – president, prime minister and parliament speaker – never seem to be related to all the people's affairs, but rather limited to each concerned community.

Let me explain. Currently, with each position being reserved for a single community, the election by the parliament of a new president is, for example, viewed through the lens of the Christian/Maronite community. Just like the continued failure to name a prime minister is seen through the lens of the Sunni community. And the speaker of parliament, which is the only one of these positions that is currently filled, indicating where the power in the country lies, seems to be a Shiite affair. In all logic, this raises the question of an absence of a Druze head of state. What about the aspirations and fears of this community, which has given its blood and made sacrifices? Unfortunately, in today's Lebanon, the Druze would probably only have an "acting representative" or another empty seat.

There is hence no country, just confessional minorities. I understand why some Maronites have fear because Michel Aoun was their last president. This fear can be applied to Sunnis and the prime minister. We can clearly see now how this system does not work and how it invites shady deal-making at the expense of the people, thanks to the exploitation of this exact fear. Any centralized system, such as a direct presidential election regardless of confession, would make these fears explode into potential civil war.

This is exactly why a system that has a centralized head of state for each community does not work. A federal system would solve many of these issues. But it would not be a magic wand. There are examples of federal systems that are dysfunctional. The clearest example that comes to mind is Belgium. It is a European federal constitutional monarchy in which the king is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government in a multi-party system. Decision-making powers are not centralized but divided between three levels of government: the federal government, three language-based communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) and three regions (Flanders, Brussels-Capital and Wallonia).

Unfortunately, Belgium has become known for its political instability. In 2020, it finally formed a government after 652 days of caretaker and minority governments, following the collapse of the previous administration in December

2018 due to interparty tensions over migration. So, it is not only Lebanon that suffers from this disease. This marked a new record for Belgium's longest post-election period without a government, surpassing the previous record of 541 days after the June 2010 elections, which ended with the swearing-in of Elio Di Rupo as prime minister after a similarly complex negotiation period.

The advantage is that, while there were problems at the federal level, people's lives were unaffected because what mattered to them was decided at the local level. Unfortunately, and here lies the risk, we are noticing today a growing demand for Flemish independence ahead of federal elections next year. Questions over migration and general policies are pushing this demand.

This is why I once again use the example of Switzerland as a model for Lebanon, with its federal council when it comes to state-linked affairs. This is the best example Lebanon should follow. The Swiss Federal Council is Switzerland's highest executive authority and serves as the collective head of state and government. This council has seven members, each representing a different political party, and it works on a consensus-based decision-making system.

By overseeing the administration, proposing legislation and representing Switzerland in international affairs, it plays a significant role in the country's political landscape. The Federal Assembly, which is the country's bicameral legislature, chooses the members of the Federal Council, who each serve for four years. For more than a century, this unique and balanced governance system has been a hallmark of Swiss political stability. It has helped Switzerland become known as a model of direct democracy and federalism.

In Lebanon, adopting a similar system would be a positive power-sharing solution. It could pave the way for more effective governance. A federal council including all confessions would have representatives serving the country and not their respective communities. Moreover, a member of the Druze community could be added alongside the representatives of all the other communities.

Just as Switzerland's system ensures that the various linguistic, cultural and religious groups within the country are represented in the Federal Council, Lebanon could have a more inclusive government that reflects the nation's multifaceted identity. This would strengthen the bonds between communities instead of pitting them against each other.

There is no doubt that, despite the current political vacuum and the failure to nominate the heads of state, the Lebanese people are in a de facto decentralized system.

They have their own solutions, from banking and cryptocurrencies to having generators for electricity. Therefore, countries looking to help Lebanon should support the transformation toward a new political system and not a temporary solution to keep an archaic one alive. This needs to be done before secession becomes the only solution.

Arab News

America's shameful neglect of its Afghan friends and allies

Luke Coffey

SINCE the Taliban returned to power there has been no shortage of crises facing Afghanistan. A humanitarian disaster is affecting millions of Afghans. Food insecurity is a major concern. Young girls are not allowed into schools. Transnational terrorist groups are operating across most of the country with impunity. Ethnic and religious minorities are routinely under attack.

However, there is another problem with Afghanistan that deserves more attention. After entering Kabul in August 2021, the Taliban promised not to seek retribution against those who fought for the Afghan government or supported international forces over the years. Unsurprisingly, they have not lived up to this commitment. For example, according to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: "Between Aug. 15, 2021, and June 30, 2023, the country's de facto

authorities were responsible for 218 extrajudicial killings, 14 enforced disappearances, over 144 instances of torture and ill treatment, and 424 arbitrary arrests and detentions."

The US has not lived up to its commitments either. It left tens of thousands of Afghan partners at risk in Afghanistan after promising to get them out of the country. When the Taliban took over President Joe Biden said: "We're going to do everything, everything that we can, to provide safe evacuation for our Afghan allies, partners, and Afghans who might be targeted because of their association with the United States ... the United States stands by the commitment it made to these people." Leading up to the withdrawal, US military chief Gen. Mark Milley said: "We must remain faithful to those Afghans who risked their lives to help the United States troops and personnel."

During the chaos of 2021,

it is estimated that the US brought only 124,000 Afghan partners out of the country. Of these, only 90,000 have since made it to the US. The rest are in third countries such as Qatar. Of these, only 21,000 have been issued a special immigrant visa that provides much-needed clarity on their legal status and right to remain and work in the US.

The remaining Afghans are in the US under a process known as humanitarian parole. This is authorized by the Department of Homeland Security and allows Afghans to legally reside in the US while their visa applications are considered. According to the State Department's inspector general, Diana Shaw, another 152,000 visa applicants are still in Afghanistan. Including family members, the total number of Afghans eligible to come to the US is in the hundreds of thousands. In addition to the visa appli-

cants, there are also tens of thousands of more Afghans who helped the US but do not qualify for protection.

For example, between 20,000 and 30,000 Afghan special forces remain in Afghanistan. Some have joined resistance groups such as the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan. Most are in hiding. There are also thousands of Afghan prosecutors who were trained by the US and its allies over the years, and fear for their lives in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. It is thought that more than 50,000 Taliban members were prosecuted and imprisoned over the years. Now the lawyers, magistrates and judges who administered that judicial system face retribution from the Taliban. Finally, several thousand journalists in Afghanistan fear for their lives. Within a year of the Taliban takeover, 60 percent of the nearly 12,000 Afghan

journalists had ceased operating in the country. In addition to America's promise to help its Afghan partners, there are practical benefits for the US in doing so. For example, according to the NGOs Upwardly Global and Evacuate Our Allies, more than 10,000 Afghans brought to the US are thought to have at least a college education. It is estimated that 28.5 percent of these have master's degrees, and 5.8 percent have advanced medical training. The same report estimated the potential annual earnings of Afghan newcomers to the US at \$1.71 billion. This sum could generate \$227 million a year in federal tax revenue annually. Afghans brought to America could also provide indirect humanitarian aid in the form of remittances to Afghanistan. At their height in 2019, personal remittances sent to Afghanistan comprised 4.4 percent of the country's GDP.

In December 2021,

World Bank reform will remain elusive until this is understood

Matt Kennard & Claire Provost

THE World Bank’s new President Ajay Banga is on a mission to write “a new playbook” for the almost 80-year-old institution that he took over in June. As described in a welcome email he sent to staff, his vision is for it “to create a world free from poverty on a livable planet.”

Behind him are growing calls for reform of the World Bank to make it more effective in responding to climate change and off-track development goals. They’ve included demands for more resources to tackle these global challenges, and easier and faster ways to disburse money, as well as calls for increased transparency and accountability including to local communities. But meaningful reform will remain elusive until this is understood: the bank has actually been very successful – just not for the poor it’s claimed to serve. Ending global poverty is not a new official mission for the World Bank. Ten years ago, it adopted “ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity” as its overarching objectives. Poverty was first articulated as a target 50 years ago, in 1973 when the bank’s then-President Robert McNamara set out twin goals “to accelerate economic growth and to reduce poverty”.

Over the last half-century, under this supposed poverty-fighting mission, the bank has rolled out initiatives and built institutions that gave countries only two bad choices: facilitate corporate power, or be disciplined by it. They include its infamous structural adjustment programmes and their successors, which have forced countries to privatise and liberalise their economies. Unbeknownst to most taxpayers whose governments fill its coffers, three of the bank’s five branches focus explicitly on boosting private investment. They include the International Financial Corporation (IFC), which directly invests in private companies itself, as well as the International Centre

for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which oversees cases filed by foreign investors against states taking actions they don’t like.

All of these initiatives and branches have sat under the bank’s anti-poverty mission for decades, and so it is natural to judge them based on those objectives – and to be disappointed or upset by their

failure. The bank’s reputation has been attacked and killed. Villagers in Honduras have also complained about threats to their land and access to water on the edge of a dystopian “private city” – whose developer has filed a claim against the country at ICSID, demanding \$11bn in compensation after a law enabling such projects was repealed.

“Skepticism about the Bank’s

They include its infamous structural adjustment programmes and their successes, which have forced countries to privatise and liberalise their economies. Unbeknownst to most taxpayers whose governments fill its coffers, three of the bank’s five branches focus explicitly on boosting private investment. They include the International Financial Corporation (IFC), which directly invests in private companies itself, as well as the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which oversees cases filed by foreign investors against states taking actions they don’t like.

results, which have included evidence that they’ve actually harmed development goals. Structural adjustment programmes, for example, have been found by academics to have “a detrimental impact on child and maternal health” as they “undermine access to quality and affordable healthcare and adversely impact upon social determinants of health, such as income and food availability”.

IFC’s investments have been dogged with complaints of forced evictions and other abuses against poor communities. It was even accused of “profiting from murder” through loans to a giant palm oil producer in Honduras, where local farmers opposing its expan-

sion have been attacked and killed. Villagers in Honduras have also complained about threats to their land and access to water on the edge of a dystopian “private city” – whose developer has filed a claim against the country at ICSID, demanding \$11bn in compensation after a law enabling such projects was repealed. “Skepticism about the Bank’s capacity to address the challenges facing developing countries is running high,” noted a former managing director in a June op-ed. This makes sense, given its track record. But consider that track record from another perspective: that of who’s benefited. While researching our recent book, Silent Coup: How Corporations Overthrew Democracy, we went to Tanzania to see one of the IFC’s investments – in a diamond mine. Workers and local villagers told us that “the company controls everything, and not everyone is happy”, and that “what the company is bringing to us is peanuts” in the way of helping the area.

The mine’s financial manager

told us a different story. He was effusive about the IFC’s investment, explaining that it had given it better terms than commercial banks would have, and that it had been “very considerate” in readjusting the company’s repayment schedule for the loans it had received. We heard similar things in Romania, where the head of a private healthcare company boasted about its IFC’s investment as “very special and unique thing” that had helped its image and connections. He didn’t seem to recognise the bank’s official goals of ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

Enthusiasm was also echoed recently by CEOs who were “delighted”, “excited” and “grateful” to be named as founding members of the bank’s new “Private Sector Investment Lab” announced in July to “address the barriers to private sector investment in emerging markets”. Most of them, including the chairman of Tata Sons, didn’t even mention poverty reduction in their comments.

That conglomerate has also benefited directly from World Bank support – including IFC investment in its subsidiary Tata Mundra’s coal-fired power plant in India, which local fishermen and farmers said “destroyed their livelihoods”. These very different perspectives on the World Bank are also reflected in calls for reforms, which aren’t all coming from the same place. As Scott Morris at the Center for Global Development think-tank noted, “reform of the World Bank is in the eye of the beholder – not just how it’s going, but even what it is”.

This is why calls for greater resources and faster disbursements alone will do little to change the World Bank’s record and impact on its supposed mission. At the heart of the problem that must be addressed is a long-standing mismatch between what the bank says it prioritises, and who actually benefits from it.

Aljazeera

Canada, Nazis and Ukraine

Andrew Mitrovica

THE perpetual outrage-du-jour circus otherwise known as Canada’s political discourse is, surprisingly, on pause. By my count, it’s been about 48 hours or so since the bucolic capital, Ottawa, has been seized by a real or manufactured convulsion that has caused the country – thought by most outsiders to be the much larger, North American equivalent of dull, sedate Switzerland – to appear to have lost its senses.

What a welcomed relief it has been. If only for a moment, Canada has returned to its once reliably boring self. This week’s big, devoid-of-any-age news was the election of a new speaker of the House of Commons – a genteel, universally respected Liberal member of parliament, Greg Fergus, who is the first Black Canadian to hold the job.

Of course, the ex-speaker was encouraged to resign after he invited an old Nazi, Yaroslav Hunka, to the House, where the “hero” was feted with a fulsome standing ovation by every member of parliament, including a beaming prime minister and his beaming cabinet, as well as the visiting and beaming president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Cue the understandable burst of near aneurysm-inducing fury. Lost in the cacophony of incredulity, shock and global embarrassment was any consideration of the following questions.

First, how is it possible that so many loyal, unrepentant Nazis – in this case, a Ukrainian volunteer in the genocidal Waffen SS – live well past 90 years of age? This maddening mystery has always stumped me and is proof, I say, that a just and merciful God does not exist. The second, more urgent question has, predictably, not been raised, let alone addressed, by the familiar crowd of preening politicians and columnists busy, as they are, trying to outduel each other on the Nazi-outrage meter.

How many Ukrainians today – in and out of uniform – would not only applaud Hunka’s Nazi collaboration and wartime “service” to liberate Ukraine from the Soviet Union’s grip, but also share his obscene belief in and fidelity to fascism? The pundits and politicians who express their unqualified devotion to Ukraine’s cause in hyperbolic missives and speeches are loath to ask or answer that query because it offends the happy narrative they remain wedded to: Ukraine brims with democracy-loving saints, while Russia is filled with dictator-adoring sinners.

So, rather than tackle a tricky, but stubborn, reality,

they prefer the comfort of wilful ignorance or obfuscation designed to deny or diminish a glaring truth: there are too many Ukrainians – in and out of uniform – who would indeed celebrate Hunka as a “hero” and fight, just as he did, with Nazi insignias pinned with pride and conviction to their chests.

This is not a grotesque insult as the sophomoric scribes who, in a performative act of solidarity, affix a Ukrainian flag to their X – handles, would, no doubt, insist. It is, instead, a fact that these glib apologists refuse to concede or acknowledge since it challenges their jejune, George-W-Bush-approved worldview that reads: You are either with us or against us.

In this doctrinaire construct, nuance or myth-busting details are belittled or treated with contempt if they are taken into account at all. For evidence of this let’s-tip-toe-around-the-Ukrainian-neo-Nazi-tulips attitude, I refer readers to this instructive New York Times story, published earlier this year, that I bookmarked for future use in a column.

The headline is itself, prima facie evidence of how reluctant – by institutional ethos and inclination – most Western news organisations are to admit that the Ukrainian military harbours more than a few Nazis who remind me of the now vilified Hunka. “Nazi symbols on Ukraine’s Frontlines Highlight Thorny Issues of History,” the Times wrote with almost laughable restraint.

Yes, I agree, Ukrainian “troops’ use of patches bearing Nazi emblems” is a “thorny issue” when, with a handful of exceptions, the entire Western political and in-lock-step media establishment has lionised the Nazi-patch-wearing soldiers and their brothers- and sisters-in-arms as “freedom fighters” who share its enlightened, pluralistic values.

The piece goes on to describe how Ukrainian authorities have moved swiftly to erase from popular social media sites images of its troops openly and proudly parading notorious Nazi symbols on their uniforms lest it “fuel” Russian “propaganda” about there, you know, being Nazis in Ukraine’s military. The reporter also noted that the “West has spent a half-century trying to eliminate” such monstrous “imagery”. Gee, I wonder why?

Could it possibly be to erase any tangible evidence that behind Russia’s supposed “propaganda” lies a morsel of disturbing, but

inconvenient, honesty concerning who is doing the fighting on Ukraine’s behalf and what they stand for? Perhaps inadvertently, the Times story provides ample ammunition – with one disingenuous caveat – to rebut the standard suggestion that these Nazi-emblem-adorned Ukrainian troops amount to “a few bad apples”.

“The iconography of these [far-right] groups, including a skull-and-crossbones patch worn by concentration camp guards and a symbol known as the Black Sun, now appears with some regularity on the uniforms of soldiers fighting on the front line, including soldiers who say the imagery symbolizes Ukrainian sovereignty and pride, not Nazism,” the Times wrote. Sure, it does.

Buried in the Times’ meandering piece are references to two units of Ukraine’s military who have trumpeted their ultra-nationalist pedigree or neo-Nazi links – the Da Vinci Wolves, dubbed the nation’s “far-right warriors” and the better-known Azov regiment, which was widely saluted for “holding out during the siege of the southern city of Mariupol” in 2022. Both volunteer units have been folded into Ukraine’s regular forces and have played a key role in rebuffing Russia’s invasion.

A measure of the esteem that these units enjoy among Ukrainians was Zelenskyy’s decision to attend the funeral for the Da Vinci Wolves’ commander – who was killed in March – where he was declared a national hero. It’s undeniable. The noxious spirit of Yaroslav Hunka lives on in Ukraine in 2023. There is one final, prickly question that ought to be asked given Hunka’s ugly, decades-long presence in Canada.

How many other Ukrainians who share his odious history, beliefs or sympathies have arrived in Canada before or after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced in March 2022 that anyone fleeing the war could live and work here for up to three years – no questions, in effect, asked. That distinct possibility must be confronted, too.

The shameful irony is that when desperate Jewish children, women and men tried to escape the murderous pogroms and Holocaust engulfing Europe – engineered and executed by Nazis like Hunka – they were turned away. Despite the best efforts of the cliché-addicted cognoscenti to sanitise Ukraine, we can no longer afford to turn away from mounting testimony of troubling aspects of its past and present.

Syrian government must address the people’s grievances

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

WHILE the Syrian government is attempting to put the civil war behind it, protests continue to erupt in some parts of the country, posing a significant challenge to the leadership in Damascus. Even though the civil war, which broke out in 2011, has not yet been fully resolved, the Syrian government appears to be entering the next phase, which is seeking regional and international rehabilitation and attempting to reintegrate itself into the global financial system. Syria’s readmission to the Arab League in May and the latest diplomatic rapprochements between Damascus and other regional powers are likely to be just the start of a long process that will hopefully help to resolve the crisis in the country.

But any widespread protests in the country could create obstacles for the government’s rehabilitation efforts. For example, protests have recently been witnessed in Suwayda, with women playing a prominent role. Suwayda is under the control of government forces and it is the heartland of the nation’s Druze minority, which has attempted to avoid being dragged into the civil war. Protests have also taken place in the north (Aleppo and Idlib), the south (Deraa), government strongholds along the Mediterranean coast, the capital Damascus and the northeast (Deir Ezzor, Hasakeh and Raqqa).

As a result, it is critical for the Syrian leadership to address people’s grievances in order to facilitate the country’s rehabilitation process. But in order to accomplish this crucial goal, the people’s most pressing grievances must first be identified. While the conflict has ended in many parts of the country, this key development has not translated into economic recovery for the overwhelming majority of the Syrian people. In fact, many people believe that the economy has become worse since the fighting dissipated. Sawсан, a mother of three who works as a secretary at a doctor’s office in Damascus, pointed out: “We are very grateful that the civil war has ended and we do not constantly hear bombs and bullets in the suburbs of Damascus anymore. We thought that the conflict and fighting finishes, we will go back to the old days. But the financial situation keeps getting worse and it is surprising to many of us that it is more difficult to make ends meet now in comparison to a few years ago during the war.”

The economic shock of a war can often be long-standing and its real impact is only revealed after the war ends. On top of that, the February earthquake, which inflicted an estimated \$5.1 billion of damage in Syria, has further exacerbated the situation caused by more than a decade of civil war. Even before

that disaster, more than two-thirds of the Syrian population needed humanitarian assistance, according to UNICEF, due to the “worsening economic crisis, continued localised hostilities, mass displacement and devastated public infrastructure.” First and foremost, the Syrian government must enhance people’s purchasing power. This means addressing three core issues: inflation, the devaluation of the currency and unemployment.

Inflation is reportedly now at its highest ever level. While Syria’s average inflation rate from 1957 to 2020 was about 11 percent, it last year reached 139 percent – higher than countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Libya. This placed Syria fourth in the world in terms of highest inflation rates, only ranking behind Venezuela, Sudan and Lebanon, according to World Population Review. To put this in perspective, Syria’s inflation rate is about 40 times higher than the average in the Arab Gulf states. The likes of Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Oman are among the countries with the lowest inflation rates in the world. It is worth noting that a healthy and standard rate of inflation is about 2 percent to 3 percent per year.

Before the civil war, the unemployment rate nationally was almost 9 percent. Some areas in Syria have recently experienced

unemployment rates that have reached a staggering 85 percent. Prices have increased by more than 800 percent in the last two years alone, with nearly 90 percent of the Syrian population now living below the poverty line. The government did recently double pension payments when it cut fuel subsidies, but the problem is that the Syrian currency keeps losing its value at a fast pace, making any wage raises trivial. At the start of this year, the exchange rate was 7,000 Syrian pounds to the US dollar, but it recently hit an all-time low of about 14,000 pounds to the dollar, which means it has lost more than 80 percent of its value in less than a year.

What is the best policy for the Syrian government to take on key issues such as unemployment, inflation and the dire economy? It is a step in the right direction that the Syrian leadership is attempting to reintegrate itself into the global financial system and bring the country out of isolation. More fundamentally, however, Damascus needs to invest significant political capital in the reconstruction of the nation’s infrastructure, as this can play a key role in creating jobs and improving the economy. This means attracting investments from other countries as well. In a nutshell, as the Syrian government seeks regional and international rehabilitation, it is critical for the leadership to address its people’s economic grievances.

Sunak’s elitist A-level tinkering is driving me mad

Judith Woods

ANY attendees from the Conservative conference want to do a swap? I hear by the end Suella was handing out gift baskets of winsome kittens (electoral catnip!) and Jeremy Hunt was bribing weepy Red Wall MPs with ponies. Oh, and if some random voter got given the HS2 rotating cutters in this week’s Great Sunak giveaway, I’d happily take those. I can leave them back when Rishi’s next digging the Tories into a ruddy big hole.

I’m not sure who allowed our PM to eat the blue Haribos before his party (no, Rishi, not that kind of party) speech but I’m not in the least bit surprised his splendid wife was on hand to reassure us he’s very loveable actually and generally calm things down before nap time. He had no idea what Akshata was going to say. We had no idea what he was going to say. But in scenes reminiscent of Oprah Winfrey telling her audience “You get a car! You get a car!” He reeled off a list of random treats we hadn’t asked for; smoking bans for children not yet born? Oh, all right then. An end to the culture wars? Lovely. But we’re not sure it counts as a proper cessation of hostilities if the other side keep weaponising the issue and slapping out their “lady” meat and two veg in the female changing rooms at the local sports centre.

Oh, and did Rishi Sunak really

axe A-levels? Yes, yes he did. Weird. Given the parlous state of education in this country, the crumbling schools, the estimated 24,700 children missing from school on census day in Spring 2023, the post-pandemic mental health time-bomb that has placed a generation at risk, it’s hard to credit his best brainwave is to tinker around with exams so far down the line they make the Manchester high speed rail link look eminently viable.

Yes, yes, we know smarty pants Sunak is ashamed our state-educated teenagers aren’t better at trigonometry. His mates at Stanford still take the proverbial. And he would much prefer it if Britain’s youth were au fait with the Canterbury Tales and didn’t carry knives. But here’s the thing. As our last-but-one Prone Minister might have said: “In the words of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, ‘Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man.’”

That’s us done for. In his headline-grabbing flurry of announcements, Sunak obviously didn’t register new research revealing that post-pandemic, twice as many seven-year-olds are now failing to reach their expected reading age. The National Foundation for Educational Research, which has followed 6,000 pupils who were in Reception and Year 1 in March 2020, tested the same cohort again

earlier this year. The results show those with very poor reading skills has doubled since the pandemic.

It doesn’t take Nostradamus to predict a child who struggles to reach their milestones in Year 3 is unlikely to show the requisite aptitude to study maths and English up to the age of 18. Hand on heart, to make a real difference at grassroots level then we must look to another public figure - the Princess of Wales and her commonsense crusade to support early years development.

Kate, a mother of three stratospherically privileged children, is genuinely dedicated to supporting those who desperately need help if their offspring are to thrive. In June 2021, she launched The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, with the aim of driving awareness of and action on the crucial impact and knock-on effects of nurturing, stimulating and instilling confidence into youngsters from birth. Start as you mean to go on.

Not fiddle about with exams young people don’t want to sit. For a child who hates maths, the idea of being force fed numbers (bona fide maths, not the “Princess of Wales geometry gag”) past GCSE is the stuff of nightmares. And for STEM kids, instinctively drawn to science, the prospect of ploughing through Jane Eyre would feel like

an unspeakable punishment. I know this because as the mother of two daughters, I have one of each.

Arguably it would be far more helpful to find out why-oh-why must too many schoolkids still have to choose between geography and history? They can access porn and buy Bitcoin and hack into the Pentagon on their smartphones; is it really beyond the wit of grown-ups to figure out better timetabling so no child has to forgo the corn laws in favour of cartography? Just something to think about, Prime Minister, while your special advisers dream up new wheezes to distract the electorate as your Government hurtles towards oblivion. A-levels? Smoking bans? These are so feeble they don’t even qualify as bread or circuses.

We just want stuff to work. We don’t much care who makes it happen; ideology is a luxury we can’t afford when there’s sewage in our rivers, kids are getting stabbed on the way to school, NHS waiting lists are Kafkaesque, shoplifting has become the UK’s number one leisure activity, the cost of living is crippling and inflation has its foot on our necks. That’s before we even venture near the moral quagmires of Ukraine and the small boats crisis. If your showing at this conference, Rishi, was a test - of maths, psychology or strategy - I hate to break the news, but you failed it.

The Telegraph

EU’s growing protectionism

Chen Weihua

THE European Commission’s launch of an investigation on Wednesday on subsidised electric cars from China and its recommendation on Tuesday of risk assessment for critical technologies are the latest signs of rapidly growing protectionism in the 27-member bloc. While the commission has not named China in its so-called collective risk assessment of critical technologies, it is abundantly clear that China is the main target.

The four technology areas that the commission listed for initial investigation include advanced semiconductor, artificial intelligence, quantum technology and biotechnology. Further investigations could be expanded to advanced connectivity, navigation and digital technologies, advanced sensing technologies, space and propulsion technologies, energy technologies, robotics and autonomous systems and advanced materials, manufacturing and recycling technologies.

If agreed by the member states on the four areas by spring of 2024 as the commission hopes, EU could adopt investment and export restrictions on a wide range of technologies in the name of protecting its economic security. Such protectionist measures, however, will only lead to the technological bifurcation that many, including the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, have warned

against in a potential new Cold War where the world is divided into rivaling political blocs.

China has conducted fruitful technological cooperation with other countries, including EU member states, the United States and Japan, in the past decades. It is hard to imagine that such cooperation, which has benefited both sides and the whole world, will be stopped due to political and ideological differences. EU’s export restrictions could slow down China’s technological development for the short term, but they will also hurt EU and its member states since China has become one of the technological powers in the world in multiple areas including quantum computing, artificial intelligence and clean technology.

In a similar stunt, the arms embargo on China imposed by the US and EU 34 years ago have not prevented China’s advance in military technologies. On the contrary, it has propelled China to make greater strides in its national defense modernization. It is just a reminder that any EU technology curbs on China are doomed to fail. In the past few years, EU has been coerced by Washington to ban Huawei 5G on groundless national security allegations. It has let the US government to dictate and bully its technology companies, such as chipmaking equipment giant ASML of the

Netherlands, to restrict exports to China, a move that aims to hurt China’s technological rise but in reality also harms ASML, the Netherlands and EU sovereignty.

What is more disturbing is that EU, which touts itself as a global leader in fighting climate change, has been targeting China’s electric vehicles, solar panels and other technologies related to fighting climate change. These measures are undermining the badly needed global cooperation on climate change and are sending a dangerous signal ahead of the COP28 to be held later next month in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. China, the US and EU have all been subsidizing their green technologies as reflected in the US Inflation Reduction Act and EU’s Green Deal Industrial Plan.

But China’s huge progress in green technologies from solar and wind to EVs should be attributed to the nation’s early start and great emphasis on clean technology, rather than subsidies. It should be applauded as great achievements for tackling the most urgent global challenge of climate change and not be demonized or undermined as the European Commission is trying to do. The latest EU moves will not only risk a tit-for-tat trade wars between the two large trade partners but also divide the world and undermine the climate fight, making everyone worse off.

The China Daily



USAID-ERDA extend support to KP depts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As part of its efforts towards private sector led economic growth, USAID-ERDA extended support to the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Livestock Farmers Welfare Association KP for organizing the International Livestock, Agri, Fisheries Exhibition 2023 in Peshawar.

The exhibition provides an opportunity and platform to MSMEs from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and NMDs to showcase their products, meet potential customers face-to-face, and enhance their capacities in various aspects of their businesses, including product presentation, packaging, and mar-

keting.

Despite multiple challenges, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have emerged as a critical force in the region's economic recovery and rehabilitation.

Recognizing the increasing need for private sector led economic growth in the region, the USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA) is implementing several impactful interventions to strengthen and promote micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and mobilize private sector investments in KP.

Ghulam Akbar from Wana Waziristan exhibiting olive oil and other exotic products from his area, emphasized the pivotal role of MSMEs during crises

and challenges. He expressed that MSMEs have shown resilience and have the potential to drive economic recovery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

The Chief of Party for USAID-ERDA, Shad Muhammad, commented on the need for much needed support, stating, "It is imperative to empower micro and small-scale enterprises to unlock their full potential and contribute to sustainable economic growth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through technical and capacity building support, networking, and access to high-end markets, we can create a thriving ecosystem for MSMEs."

At the sidelines of the exhibition, USAID-ERDA organized a 'Market Linkages and Networking

Session' that brought together over 100 participants, including 40 national-level private sector companies—i.e., inputs providers, technology providers, extension services providers, public sector departments, farmers, and allied enterprises.

The session aimed to foster market linkages, networking, and partnerships between farmers and allied MSMEs with the national level private sector companies to support boosting local economies and empowering MSMEs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and NMDs.

Through these efforts, USAID-ERDA is committed to driving economic growth, fostering partnerships, and unlocking the immense potential that exists within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and NMDs.



MULTAN: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Energy, Industries, Commerce, Investment & Skill Development SM Tanveer addressing a seminar on World Cotton Day hold by Cotton Ginners Association.

Gold prices seem to decline continuously

ISLAMABAD (INP): On Saturday, the current rate for 24-karat gold stands at Rs187,500 per tola, while those interested in 22-karat gold can acquire it at Rs171,875 per tola.

For individuals looking to purchase smaller quantities, 10 grams of 24-karat gold are now priced at Rs160,751, and 10 grams of 22-karat gold can be obtained for Rs147,355.

It's noteworthy that the value of pure gold in Pakistan has been on a consistent downward trend.

It's crucial to mention that gold rates in Pakistan can fluctuate several times a day in response to global market trends. These rates are sourced from reliable outlets, primarily based in Karachi and Multan.

However, the official gold rates provided by the All Pakistan Jewelers Association, which typically updates daily gold prices, have not been available since September 12, 2023.

On the other hand, to make the gold trade more transparent and promote the development of the gold sector, a 15-member advisory council has been established, and the federal Ministry of Industries has issued a notification.

However, senior gold trader Haji Haroon Chandko has not been included in the council.

For those closely monitoring the gold market, it is advised to stay vigilant as rates continue to respond to global developments in the world of gold.

Rest assured, we are dedicated to keeping our readers well-informed and will provide regular updates on the gold market in Pakistan. Stay tuned for the latest developments in gold prices.

Gas theft crackdown continued:

55 connections cut off, fine imposed: SNGPL

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 55 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 30 million and 479 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 15 connections on illegal use of gas and another two on use of compressor and 47 under billing cases have been processed and 1 FIR has been launched against gas thieves.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected seven connections on use of compressor while another 16 against illegal use and 17 under billing cases processed.

The company disconnected 11 connections on illegal use of gas while another 09 on compressor use and 06 under billing cases have been processed

in Multan. The regional team imposed fine of Rs 0.04M against gas pilferers.

In Sheikhpura, one connection was disconnected on use of compressor while 63 under billing cases have been processed and amount booked of Rs3.01 against gas theft and Under Billing by the region.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 44 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also launched 2FIRs against gas thieves.

In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected six gas connections on direct and illegal use of gas while another one on the use of compressor.

SNGPL's team in Mardan 64 under billing cases processed and six connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The team also booked an amount of Rs1.66M against gas theft and Under Billing cases.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected 02 connec-

tions on use of compressor, 01 on illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.07 booked against gas theft.

In Sargodha 38 under billing cases processed. The regional team in Gujranwala 145 under billing cases processed and 04 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor while another 05 on illegal use of gas.

In Gujrat, 03 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas and 57 Under billing cases have been processed. The company disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas in Islamabad.

In Sahiwal, 05 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas and Rs 0.04m has been booked against gas theft.

The regional team in Faisalabad 42 under billing cases processed and 06 disconnected on illegal use of gas and another 01 on the use of compressor. Fine of Rs.0.13M was also imposed against gas pilferers.

Sanallah Khan assumes charge as senior vice president of SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sanaullah Khan formally took charge of his office as senior vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ghazanfar Bilour, former FPCCI president and Fuad Ishaq president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with representatives of traders including former senior vice president Engr Manzoor Elahi, Saavedullah, Azmatullah, Sports Event Standing Committee chairman Nisar Ahmad, Munir Butt, Sohail Masood, Hashim, Shehryar, Aamir Afzal, former member of SCCI's executive body Waqar Ahmad and Haji Latif, Haseeb Chughtai,

Arshad Mehmood, Hassan Farid, Zafar Ahmad, and Hamza Ahmad formally congratulated to SVP SCCI Sanaullah, after taking charge of his office, according to a press release issued here on Saturday.

Former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour and traders' leaders while extended heartfelt felicitations to the SCCI's president Fuad Ishaq and senior vice president Sanaullah Khan Saraf hoped they along with other members of their cabinet will play an important role in resolution of the business community issues.

Ghazanfar Bilour said SCCI believes in indistinctively and selfless services to the business community and vowed this forum will continue its vigorous

efforts to resolve traders' issues on priority grounds.

Former FPCCI chief said businessmen have a highly distressed situation under the prevailing circumstances. He added economic and trade activities have slowed down while government unilateral policies were also adding to the financial woes of the business community.

Fuad Ishaq while speaking on the occasion said businesses, trade and exports are reeling and a stagnated situation has also prevailed in other sectors, and a number of units have been shut that has triggered a massive unemployment in the country.

He praised the business community resilience and consistent role toward eco-

nomics development of the country.

Despite the prevailing scenario, he added, the business community has continued its unwavering support toward stabilizing the national economy, which is a good and positive sign and highly laudable.

Fuad Ishaq urged the government to facilitate businesses and trade to improve the national economy and put the country on a path of sustainable progress.

He recalled SCCI had played a pivotal role in serving the business community in every era and vowed consistent support to traders will continue in future as well and no stone will remain unturned to resolve the issues.

ICCI calls for better uplift of Blue Area to boost trade activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Saturday urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to focus on the better development to Blue Area in order to facilitate the growth of trade activities in the federal capital.

It said that Blue Area is the largest commercial centre of Islamabad, which plays an important role in the development of the economy

While talking to a delegation of Traders Welfare Association, that visited ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhta-

wari, President ICCI said that parking is the most serious issue of the Blue Area.

He urged CDA to allow parking of vehicles on the green area of Fazal Haq Road till the construction of a parking plaza is materialized.

He said that ICCI intends to organize a mega shopping festival in the Blue Area in collaboration with TWA Blue Area to boost trade activities and enable customers to get a chance of shopping at affordable rates.

Raja Hassan Akhtar, President, Traders Welfare

Association Blue Area highlighted the important issues of traders of his market.

He said that the non-availability of parking, the old sewage system and non-functional street lights are the main issues of the Blue Area and stressed that the CDA to address them on an urgent basis.

He stressed to set up a flower market in Blue Area besides pruning trees. He demanded that the CDA to set up a food street in the Blue Area, which is the need of the hour for the traders and citizens.

He said that Ahsan

Bakhtawari is working actively to resolve the problems of traders and hoped that he would address the unresolved issues of traders in his remaining tenure.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Blue Area is the key hub of business activities in Islamabad and urged the CDA to develop it on modern lines.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that ICCI would fully cooperate with TWA Blue Area in resolving the key issues of traders to facilitate them in business development.

Car workers strike not expanded as concession made

LONDON (BBC News): The United Auto Workers (UAW) union has not expanded its strike action against three of America's biggest car firms, citing "significant" progress in talks.

Union boss Shawn Fain said it would hold off after General Motors had agreed that workers at its electric vehicle battery factories would automatically become union members.

But while it will not stage walk outs at new locations, the strike continues.

"Our strike is working but we're not there yet," said Mr Fain.

Roughly 25,000 car workers at GM, Ford Motor and Chrysler parent Stellantis are currently on the picket line.

The union, which represents roughly 146,000 people at the firms, declared a strike in mid-September, after contracts between the two parties expired.

It is the first industrial action by the UAW to target all three companies at once, but it has remained limited in scope, as the union calls on select locations to participate, wielding the threat of more to try to pressure the companies to agree a deal.

So far, the union has ordered walkouts at five factories and 38 parts depots operated by GM and Stellantis.

This week, the UAW considered a strike at GM's SUV manufacturing plant in Arlington, Texas, but Mr Fain said the company had "leapfrogged" the pack in talks.

GM said in a statement that negotiations were "ongoing", adding the company would "continue to work toward finding solutions to address outstanding issues".

"Our goal remains to reach an agreement that rewards our employees and allows GM to be successful into the future," the car maker said.

Why are US car workers on strike? The union opened negotiations calling for pay rise of roughly 40% over four years and an end to practices that give newer hires lower pay and fewer benefits, among other demands.

The companies have maintained that the union's requests would impact their ability to invest in the long term. They have countered with pay increase of about 20% and some other concessions.

How workers at battery plants, formed by joint ventures, would be treated had loomed over the talks, as the industry prepares to ramp up electric vehicle production. US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, who is running for re-election, have both visited Detroit area to address the strikes, which comes as labour tensions simmer across the country.

Mr Fain said the fight for better contracts was about more than workers, saying: "This is the entire working class," at an event in Detroit.

"It's shameful where we are as a nation," he added.

Gohar Ejaz marks World Cotton Day

— announcing record cotton yield

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Industries and Commerce Gohar Ejaz has marked World Cotton Day by announcing that Pakistan has achieved record cotton production after a lapse of eleven years.

"Cotton arrivals crossing the five million bales mark on October 1, 2023, is a momentous achievement for Pakistan. This is even more than last full year's figure of 4.9 million bales, which was a 34 percent YoY (year on year) decline over the preceding year," he added.

He was addressing a press conference here at APTMA House on Saturday. Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, APTMA (North) Chairman Kamran Arshad, Senior Vice Chairman Asad Shafi, former Chairman APTMA Syed Ali Ahsan, Secretary General Raza Baqir and other members were also present on the occasion.

Gohar said that World Cotton Day is being celebrated in the country after eleven years when Punjab had produced eight million bales, which was set to reach five million bales during the current year.

He also highlighted that the province had produced 3.3 million bales besides 1.6 million bales in Sindh.

He congratulated Punjab Chief Minister Syed

Mohsin Naqvi, Chief Secretary Punjab and Secretary Agriculture Punjab for their dedicated work towards enhancing cotton production in the province. The country would save foreign exchange worth \$ 3 billion with this increase in cotton production, he stressed.

According to him, Pakistan has become part of five major cotton producers in the world and all credit goes to the Punjab chief minister to achieve this stature. He also announced Rs 100 million fund for the Cotton Research Centre on behalf of APTMA, making it clear that APTMA would not fund salaries of the staff of the centre.

Gohar said, "This remarkable growth showcases the dedication and hard work of our farmers and the resilience of our cotton industry."

He said the cotton production this year is estimated to be more than 100 percent compared to that of the last year. The cotton bales produced this year are likely to be more than 12 million which was five million in the past year, he expressed the hope and pointed out that the production of cotton increased by 71 percent annually.

The minister stated that the cotton bales delivered to factories till September 30 were more than five million. The arrival of cotton

bales in Punjab reached 2.1 million with an increase of 34 percent while that in Sindh reached three million with an increase of 113 percent. He pointed out that the production had dropped by 34 percent last year.

He said efforts were being made to ensure affordability as well as availability of regionally competitive tariff for the textile industry in Punjab.

Either the cross subsidy would bring to an end for the industry or dedicated power supply from a power plant in Punjab would be ensured ahead, he said. On this occasion, Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the Agriculture Department for its hard work to revive cotton production in the province. He also extended his special thanks to Pakistan Army for controlling the attack of white fly on the cotton crop, saying that a timely action avoided disaster to the standing crop in Punjab and Sindh.

According to him, revival of the research centre with the help of APTMA is underway. He said the Punjab government has already rescinded seed approval once it is obtained from the federal government.

He said the Provincial Minister for Industry S. M. Tanveer was in Multan to mark the World Cotton Day.

LCCI chief happy with cotton sector's revival

LAHORE (APP): The cotton sector of Pakistan can play a critical role in economic development and poverty alleviation provided the government forms sustainable and supportive policies with the consultation of stakeholders.

In a message on World Cotton Day here Saturday, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashif Anwar President said that it is a good sign that Pakistan's cotton sector has made a remarkable recovery after suffering massive losses due to last year's devastating floods and around 71 percent surge has been recorded in cotton production.

He said that the credit goes to Federal Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz, Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and Punjab Minister for Energy, Industries, Commerce, Investment & Skills Development SM Tanveer for making serious efforts for the revival of the cotton sector.

The LCCI President added that cotton is the primary raw material of the textile sector which contributes about 60 percent to the overall exports of the

country. He said that cotton, often referred to as "white gold," is an essential crop that forms the backbone of our textile industry, supporting the livelihoods of millions of people across Pakistan.

He said that shocking rains during last year triggered flash flood, destroying people's houses and farmlands across much of the country.

The LCCI president said that it was a matter of concern that the production of cotton had witnessed a sharp decline, dropping from 8.3 million bales in the 2021-22 season to 4.9 million bales in the 2022-23 season. But now it has been registering a notable improvement.

He said that cotton is not merely a commodity; it is a lifeline for our textile industry, which is a significant contributor to our national economy. "The decline in cotton production impacts not only our farmers but also the entire value chain, including textile mills, exporters, and allied industries. It is imperative that we work collectively to revitalize this crucial sector and

improve the overall economic landscape of our nation," he added.

Kashif Anwar said that to enhance cotton production, we need to focus on adopting modern agricultural practices, utilizing advanced technologies, promoting research and development, providing access to quality seeds, and offering financial support to our farmers. Additionally, fostering an enabling environment that encourages innovation and sustainability in cotton farming is paramount, he maintained.

He added that our collective efforts to bolster the cotton sector will not only lead to increased production but also contribute to achieving self-sufficiency and economic security for our nation. As stakeholders, let us join hands to promote the cultivation of cotton and invest in sustainable agricultural practices, thereby securing a brighter future for our farmers and the textile industry, he added.

The LCCI president hoped that the sustainable growth would continue in the cotton sector.

US stocks close higher

NEW YORK (APP): US stocks ended higher on Saturday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 288.01 points, or 0.87 percent, to 33,407.58. The S&P 500 added 50.31 points, or 1.18 percent, to 4,308.5. The Nasdaq Composite Index increased 211.51 points, or 1.60 percent, to 13,431.34.

US dollar falls despite stunning jobs additions

The US dollar lost in late trading on Friday, despite US job gains being far higher than expected and above August's total of 227,000.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, decreased 0.28 percent to 106.0454 in late trading.

The US job growth heated up in September, adding 336,000 positions, according to data released Friday

by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While September marked the 33rd consecutive month of job growth for the United States, the Federal Reserve has been aiming to slow the economy and cool down the labor market. The US dollar eased after a brief rise, wiping out all its daily gains.

JPMorgan Chase's chief US economist Michael Feroli said Friday that the

China's central bank adds liquidity via reverse repos

BEIJING (APP): China's central bank conducted 200 billion yuan (about 27.86 billion US dollars) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent Saturday. The move aims to keep liquidity in the banking system reasonable and ample, the People's Bank of China said in a statement. A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.



In brief

Bangladesh beat Pakistan

H A N G Z H O U (A g e n c i e s) : Bangladesh beat Pakistan to clinch the bronze medal in the cricket competition of the 19th Asian Games in China's Hangzhou city in a last-ball thriller on Saturday. Pakistan, whose ambitions to secure a gold medal were dashed after they were beaten by Afghanistan at the same venue on Friday, locked horns with Bangladesh for the third spot in a match delayed by rain and shortened to 13 overs a side. Bangladesh won the toss and opted to field first. Pakistan managed only 48-1 after five overs before rain interrupted play. Pakistani batter Mirza Baig scored an unbeaten 32 off 18 balls, his innings featuring four fours and two sixes. "As no further play was possible during Pakistan's innings, Bangladesh were given a revised target of 65 to win from five overs," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement. "In the run-chase, Bangladesh got off to a flying start and were on course to achieve the target with ease, needing 25 runs from two overs." However, Pakistani fast bowler Arshad Iqbal conceded only five runs in the penultimate over and dismissed Afif Hossain (20 runs from 11 balls), leaving Bangladesh requiring 20 runs in the final over. Left-arm spinner Sufiyan Muqem conceded 16 runs in the first four deliveries but delivered the goods when he dismissed Bangladeshi batter Yasir Ali (38 runs from 16 balls). With Bangladesh needing only 4 runs from the last ball, Rakibul Hasan struck a boundary to help his side clinch the bronze medal. For Pakistan, Arshad was the most successful bowler with three for 14 runs from two overs.

Protests in men's kabaddi final

H A N G Z H O U (A g e n c i e s) : The final of the men's kabaddi competition at the Asian Games descended into chaos on Saturday as players and coaches protested over a referee decision with the game even on points and with just over a minute to play. The match was suspended at one point and it was unclear whether it would be concluded, but eventually it was and India went on to beat reigning champions Iran 33-29. The drama centred on a decision about allocating points for a "raid" by an Indian player into the Iranian half. With the match on the line, coaches and players from both sides remonstrated immediately with officials, waving their arms angrily. Officials gathered round a screen to watch the replay of the incident but when they ruled in Iran's favour, the Indian coaches and players redoubled their protests. More chaos ensued, with officials walking on and off the court and attempting unsuccessfully to get the Indian coaching staff to accept the decision. It appeared at one point that the Indian coach and one official might come to blows. When the Iran players were ready to restart, the Indians sat in their half in protest, and officials returned to the court. A caption on the live feed in the main media centre read "Competition Suspended". When it appeared the decision would go India's way, the Indian players stood up and the Iran side sat down. A game with two 20-minute halves which started at 3 p.m. local time (0700 GMT) took until around 5:15 p.m. to restart with India in front. India made sure of the win in the last minute, sparking wild celebrations by their players on the court.

World Cup 2023

Markram hits fastest World Cup century in SA win

DELHI (A g e n c i e s) : Aiden Markram hit the fastest World Cup hundred as South Africa made 428-5 - the highest score in the tournament's history - in a statement 102-run victory over Sri Lanka in Delhi. Markram made his ton off 49 balls, one quicker than Ireland's Kevin O'Brien against England in Bangalore in 2011. He finally fell for 106 from 54, after Quinton de Kock had earlier hit 100 from 84 balls and Rassie van der Dussen a 110-ball 108. David Miller, who struck 39 from 21, and Marco Jansen then took the score beyond the previous record of Australia's 417-6 against Afghanistan in 2015. Sri Lanka, who are coached by former England coach Chris Silverwood, crumbled amid the carnage on the flattest of pitches. They leaked 21 wides and had to bowl the final two overs with another fielder up inside the ring because of a slow over-rate. Matheesha Pathirana conceded 26 runs from the 43rd over, with the seamer's 10 overs costing 95 for one wicket. They fought admirably with the bat - Kusal Mendis' thrilling 76 from 42 balls with eight towering sixes even giving them hope of the most unlikely of victories early on. Charith Asalanka smacked 79 from 65 and captain Dasun Shanaka held up South Africa's progress with a defiant 68 off 62, but Sri Lanka were eventually dismissed for 326 in 44.5 overs South Africa's next match is against Australia in Lucknow on Thursday, while Sri Lanka travel to Hyderabad to play Pakistan on Tuesday. Proteas power to record total South Africa's in-form batting line-up

has led to many, not for the first time in these competitions, tipping them as dark horses for a first white-ball title.

At the first opportunity they showed their prowess in devastating fashion.

After captain Temba Bavuma fell lbw to left-armer Dilshan Madushanka in the second over, De Kock and Van der Dussen built relatively carefully - reaching 48-1 after 10 overs and 118-1 from 20.

Van der Dussen, who was dropped at backward point on 71, scored all around the wicket, including reverse sweeps to the spinners. De Kock increased his intent after reaching his 50 from 61 balls, playing his trademark flowing strokes.

His 12th four, a fine flick through mid-wicket, took him to his first World Cup ton but he top-edged Pathirana a ball later.

That brought in Markram, whose innings began with glorious straight drives before becoming increasingly brutal as he struck 14 fours and three sixes.

It was also the first time in a Men's World Cup three batters have scored centuries in the same innings.

Miller kept the scoring rate high, while it was a high straight six from all-rounder Jansen in the penultimate over that set the new record. There was also 32 from 20, including three sixes, by Heinrich Klaassen - one of five South Africa batters in the top 15 of the world rankings.

Their bowling and fielding must improve, left-armers Jansen conceded 92 runs for his two wickets and two catches were dropped, but the rest of the tournament should take note.



DHARAMSALA: Rashid Khan missed a straighter one from Mehidy Hasan.

Saad Baig to lead Pakistan U19 against Sri Lanka U19

LAHORE (APP): Saad Baig will continue to lead Pakistan U19 against Sri Lanka U19 in the home series, set to be played in Karachi.

The two sides will compete in a solitary four-day match, followed by a series of five 50-over matches.

The recently appointed seven-member junior selection committee, headed by Inzamam-ul-Haq, has selected the 16-member Pakistan U19 squad for the four-day match. The match is scheduled to take place from 15 to 18 October.

The squad for the one-day series will be announced later next week. The one-day series will be held at the same venue - National Bank Stadium, Karachi - from 22 to 31 October.

Saad Baig, who captained Pakistan U19 on the tour to Bangladesh earlier this year, will have the services of eight players who were part of the playing XI in the only four-day match on the tour. The list includes Ali Asfand, Amir Hassan, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awaish, Mohammad

Ibtisam, Mohammad Ismail, Shahzaib Khan and Wahaj Riaz.

Six of the remaining seven players part of the 16-member squad have notably excelled in the ongoing National U19 Championship 2023-24. These are Ahmed Hussain (Peshawar U19, three matches, 19 wickets), Hamza Nawaz (Bahawalpur U19, three matches, 280 runs, 1x100, 2x50s), Huzafa Ayub (Bahawalpur U19, three matches, 15 wickets, one five-fer), Mohammad Zubair (Peshawar U19, three matches, 236 runs, 1x100, 1x50), Naveed Ahmed Khan (Karachi Whites U19, three matches, 20 wickets, one five-fer) and Shahmeer Ali (Rawalpindi U19, three matches, 244 runs, 1x100, 1x50) have performed well in the ongoing National U19 Championship 2023-24. Meanwhile, the seventh player Aimal Khan is currently representing FATA Region in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24,

where the right-arm fast bowler has taken six wickets in two outings.

Pakistan's squad will assemble in the team hotel on Tuesday night and will train at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi on the following two days. The team management and training schedule will be announced in due course.

Pakistan U19 squad - Saad Baig (captain and wicket-keeper), Ahmed Hussain, Aimal Khan, Ali Asfand, Amir Hassan, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awaish, Hamza Nawaz, Huzafa Ayub, Mohammad Ibtisam, Mohammad Ismail, Mohammad Zubair, Naveed Ahmed Khan, Shahmeer Ali, Shahzaib Khan and Wahaj Riaz

Series schedule: 15-18 October - Four-day match 22 October - First One-Day 24 October - Second One-Day 27 October - Third One-Day 29 October - Fourth One-Day 31 October - Fifth One-Day.

Swiatek ends Gauff win streak to reach China Open final

BEIJING (AFP/APP): World number two Iga Swiatek breezed into the China Open women's final with a one-sided victory over Coco Gauff in Beijing on Saturday, handing the American her first defeat in 17 matches.

Swiatek beat the US Open champion 6-2, 6-3 to set up a clash with either Elena Rybakina or Liudmila Samsonova on Sunday. The Pole seized the advantage early in the first set and never gave an error-plagued, injured Gauff a sniff of getting back into the match.

Swiatek wasted no time in gaining a double break of serve and wrapped up the opening set when Gauff slammed a forehand into the net. The four-time Grand Slam winner broke again in the opening game of set two before the match

was paused while Gauff received treatment for an injury to her right shoulder.

Afterwards, Swiatek picked up where she left off and sealed the win when the 19-year-old hit yet another forehand into the net. "I feel like I'm playing less aggressively than past tournaments, and more solidly... I'm making less mistakes than I did before," Swiatek said at a news conference after the match.

"Playing against Coco is tough because she's really good at keeping the initiative, but she can also play great in defence," she said.

"You have to really be patient and ready for her to fight for everything... when I felt like the moment was right to push and play faster, I did." Gauff had not lost a match since falling to compatriot Jessica Pegula in Montreal in August.

"I was feeling (the injury) in the first set," Gauff said after the match.

"It's definitely a new experience. I'm not used to playing with pain in general," she told reporters. "When you're experiencing pain... your whole mind starts (thinking). Is it serious? Should I keep playing or not?" World number five Rybakina plays Samsonova, ranked 22nd, in the other semi-final on Saturday.

Rybakina eliminated the top-ranked women's player and tournament favourite Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets on Friday. The China Open is taking place for the first time since 2019, after Beijing ended its isolationist zero-Covid policy. The men's competition concluded on Wednesday, when Italy's Jannik Sinner beat world number three Daniil Medvedev in the final.



DELHI: Adien Markram celebrates a historic hundred, South Africa vs Sri Lanka, World Cup 2023.

Bangladesh beat Afghanistan by six wickets in opener

DHARAMSALA (A g e n c i e s) : Bangladesh cruised to a six-wicket victory over Afghanistan to begin their World Cup campaign in Dharamsala. Afghanistan batted first on a good pitch but squandered the opportunity as they were bowled out in a haze of loose strokes for 156 in 37.2 overs.

The Tigers were 27-2 in reply, but a stand of 97 between Mehidy Hasan and Najmul Hossain Shanto helped them reach their target with 15.2 overs to spare. Bangladesh next meet England at the same venue on Tuesday (06:00 BST).

Afghanistan, who have now lost 13 consecutive World Cup matches dating back to 2015, play hosts India in Delhi on Wednesday.

Shakib sets Tigers up and running This promised to be an intriguing affair, a meeting of two of the lower-ranked teams in the tournament, both with hopes of an outside run at the semi-finals. At the picturesque Dharamsala ground, surrounded by the Himalayan mountains, Bangladesh comfortably overcame their opponents.

Not only did they waste a good start with the bat, Afghanistan also missed chances in the field, leaving plenty for their coach, former

England batter Jonathan Trott, to improve on. From 47-0 and 83-1, Afghanistan would go on to lose their last eight wickets for 44 runs. The initial instigator of their downfall was 36-year-old Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan, appearing in his fifth World Cup.

The left-arm spinner bowled an immaculate line for his 3-30, supported by Mehidy, whose fine all-round performance also included 3-25 with his off-breaks. Left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman claimed the key scalp of Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who made 47 before becoming one of a long list of Afghan batters who wasted their wicket.

Defending a modest target, Afghanistan looked to have a chance when Tanzid Hassan was run out by Najibullah Zadran's direct hit and Liton Das played on off Fazalhaq Farooqi. But Najibullah put down a simple chance at point when Mehidy had only 16, with the same batter also surviving a poor effort by Mubeen-ul-Rehman at third man when he had 23.

Shanto could also have been run out on 16, but Rashid Khan was too casual with his attempt to take the bails at the non-striker's end.

Both reprieved, Mehidy and

Shanto compiled the decisive partnership, even in the face of a threatening spell from star leg-spinner Rashid.

Mehidy could not see the job through, falling for 57 to a spectacular one-handed catch by Rahmat Shah, high above his head at mid-off from the pace of Naveen-ul-Haq.

Shakib made a breezy 14 before holing out to deep square leg, leaving Shanto, unbeaten on 59, to hit the winning runs. On top of the result, of interest to England will be the poor nature of the Dharamsala outfield. The soft, sandy surface might not be the place to risk Ben Stokes' injured hip.

"We should learn from our mistakes" - reaction

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan: "It wasn't easy but I am very happy with the way we bowled." All five bowlers chipped in, the spinners played a bigger role but it's a long tournament. I am sure the fast bowlers will contribute more."

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi: "We had a good start but, after the fall of the first wicket, we had bad shot selection but their bowlers bowled very tight. "We look forward to our upcoming games. We should learn from our mistakes."

Sterling inspires Chelsea to comeback win

LONDON (A g e n c i e s) : Raheem Sterling inspired Chelsea to an impressive comeback win as Burnley slumped to their fifth successive Premier League home defeat of the season.

Eighteen-year-old French forward Wilson Odobert marked his first Premier League start by drilling low and hard past Robert Sanchez to send home fans into raptures at Turf Moor.

Chelsea were disjointed for spells but were back on level terms before half-time thanks to an unfortunate own goal. A cross by Sterling, back in the starting XI after a virus, struck the knee of Belgium defender Ameen Al-Dakhil and looped over James Trafford into the net.

Chelsea then scored three times in a strong second-half showing to take the points. Sterling, who has not featured for England since the World Cup, won a penalty after being fouled by Brazilian defender Vitinho, which allowed Cole Palmer to score his first goal for the Blues since moving from Manchester City.

Sterling - a four-time Premier League winner - then scored his side's third with an arrowed finish after Conor Gallagher had spotted his run. Play restarted after Sterling's goal before referee Stuart Attwell stopped the game as a check by the video assistant referee (VAR) for a potential offside was continuing. The goal was eventually allowed to stand.

Substitute Nicolas Jackson sealed the points with a spin and finish, with Sterling once again involved in the move. Having won at Fulham on Monday, it is the first time Chelsea have secured back-to-back away wins in the Premier League since October 2022.

Sterling sends reminder to Southgate

This was a comprehensive showing by Mauricio Pochettino's side as they scored four goals in a Premier League match for the first time since April 2022. Chelsea have found goals hard to come by this season but, with Sterling running the show, they had no such problems in east Lancashire.

KP Women reaches National Women Volleyball Championship semi-finals

PESHAWAR (APP): The strong team of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took berth into the semi-finals of the ongoing National Women Volleyball Championship being played at Quetta, Balochistan, Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Volleyball Association, national coach Khalid Waqar told APP here on Saturday.

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team qualified for the semi-finals in the first CM Balochistan Inter-Provincial Women's Volleyball Championship by recording an unbeaten run and in the last quarter match defeated Gilgit-Baltistan 3-0, the score was 25-19, 25-19 and 25-22.

Regarding the performance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa women's volleyball team, Provincial Secretary Volleyball Association Khalid Waqar Chamkani, said that the women players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have a lot of talent.

The talent is there and it is hoped that Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa will win the Championship by maintaining an unbeaten run so far. This series will continue in the future as well, he added. According to the results of the matches played last day, in the second quarter-final, the Islamabad team qualified for the semi-finals by defeating Azad Jammu Kashmir by 3-0, the score was 25-22, 27-25 and 25-21.

The quarter-final was played between Sindh and Balochistan White in which the Sindh team won the match by 3-0, the score was 25-20, 25-22 and 27-25.

Likewise, in the last quarter-final, Balochistan Green defeated the Punjab team 3-1 and reached the semi-finals. Now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would clash against host Balochistan in the semi-finals while Sindh would face Islamabad in the second semi-finals, Khalid Waqar said.

He said, Balochistan team also played well and defeated Punjab by 3-1 in a tough battle, the score was 25-21, 20-25, 25-23 and

27-25. He said in the other matches Balochistan Green defeated Islamabad by 3-1, the score was 22-25, 25-22, 2w5-19 and 25-21 while Punjab defeated AJK by 3-0, the score was 25-19, 25-17 and 25-22. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded victory against Balochistan White in straight sets, the score was 25-21, 25-18 and 25-19 while Sindh recorded victory against Gilgit-Baltistan in straight sets, the score was 25-22, 25-21 and 25-19.

The Chief Minister Balochistan Volleyball Championship for Women started on October 5 and would end on October 9. Hopefully Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would show a better result against host Balochistan in the semi-final.

Preparations for holding the 53rd National Senior Volleyball Championship have already been completed and the Championship for the Men would be played from October 11-17, 2023, Khalid Waqar Chamkani said.

Pakistan fans and media face visa delay for World Cup

NEW DELHI (A g e n c i e s) : The organizers of the 50-overs World Cup in India are working to secure visas for fans and media from Pakistan, the governing International Cricket Council (ICC) said after complaints from the Pakistan board.

Visas for the Pakistan team were granted barely 48 hours before they left for what is their first tour of India since the T20 World Cup in 2016.

Cricket has been a victim of a soured political relationship between the neighbors and bitter rivals, who play each other only in multi-team events like the World Cup. The Babar Azam-led team were

pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome they received in Hyderabad, but they have lamented a lack of support from the stands as their fans remain stranded in Pakistan.

"This is an obligation of our host and they are working hard on it with our full support," an ICC spokesperson said in a statement to Reuters.

"Every effort is being made to get this sorted."

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement on Friday that the visa delay had put the PCB "under immense pressure."

"PCB is disappointed to see that Pakistani journalists and fans are facing uncertainty about obtaining

an Indian visa to cover Pakistan's opening game in the ICC World Cup," it said.

"Their presence not only adds vibrancy to the stadium but also contributes to the global coverage and appreciation of the game."

"We have been reminding ICC about their obligations and members' agreement on issuing visas for fans and journalists for the last three years and continue to raise concerns with all relevant authorities."

Pakistan began their campaign on the field with an easy victory over the Netherlands on Friday. They next take on Sri Lanka in a match between two former champions on Tuesday.



In brief

ANF foils bid smuggling

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Intelligence foiled a bid to smuggle 240 imported liquor bottles from Peshawar to Punjab near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad here Saturday. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the ANF team managed to net ring leader, an Afghan national, along with another smuggler, resident of Peshawar. The ANF recovered 240 imported liquor bottles of different brands from the possession of the accused. The accused confessed that they were members of a drug trafficking gang who were involved in smuggling of drugs from Peshawar to Punjab in the past as well. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process.

140,900 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Saturday released 140,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 77,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1532.88 feet and was 134.88 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 44,500 cusecs and 75,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1220.80 feet, which was 170.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 6,600 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 72,000, 82,800, 65,300 and 23,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Dry weather forecast

ISLAMABAD (INP): Dry weather is likely to prevail over most parts of the country during the next twenty-four hours. However, rain and wind with thunderstorm is likely at isolated places in Chitral, Dir and Gilgit Baltistan. Temperature of some major cities recorded on Saturday morning. Islamabad nineteen degree centigrade, Lahore twenty-four, Karachi twenty-nine, Peshawar twenty-one, Quetta and Muzaffarabad seventeen, Gilgit and Murree fourteen degree centigrade. According to weather forecast for Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, partly, cloudy and dry weather is expected in Srinagar, Leh and Shoptan while dry weather in Jammu, Pulwama, Anantnag and Baramulla. Temperature recorded. Srinagar, Anantnag thirteen degree centigrade, Jammu twenty-three, Leh six, Pulwama, Shopian and Baramulla twelve degree centigrade.

Car lifter arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Islamabad Capital Police Tarnol police station team has arrested a wanted member of a car lifter gang and recovered a stolen vehicle worth Rs 2.5 million from his possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Police complete geo-tagging of Afghan nationals

ISLAMABAD (NNI): As the government has launched a countrywide crackdown on the Afghan nationals staying illegally in the country as part of its plan to send them to their homes, Islamabad Police have completed geo-tagging of these nationals living in different parts of the federal capital.

Sources said that survey of the properties owned by Afghan nationals had also been completed.

They elaborated that the exact number of foreigners living in the country was known in the first digital census held in the country

recently. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics has gathered the data of people living illegally in the country.

A day earlier, on Friday, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch had said that all illegal Afghans must leave Pakistan by October 31; otherwise the law will take its own course.

The authorities started a clampdown on the illegal Afghan nationals after civilian and military leadership had taken the decision at the apex committee meeting to launch a massive operation against these people.

“Facilitation will be provided to those who voluntarily return to their countries but action will be taken against the illegal alien who does not return within 25 days,” the spokesperson said.

It is pertinent to note here that now only 25 days are left for the evacuation of foreigners living illegally in Pakistan.

“Pakistan’s laws regarding illegal residents are very clear and violators of the law will be fined and deported while no country can grant freedom of illegal residence to a person,” she added.

Dr Nadeem to represent Pakistan at health forum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan will represent Pakistan at the highest regional health forum involving 22 nations.

Speaking at Islamabad International Airport, the minister mentioned that meetings with health ministers from friendly countries had been scheduled.

He said that during these meetings, they will discuss enhancing cooperation in the field of technology transfer for vaccine production in Pakistan.

He said that efforts would be made to ensure robust advocacy for Pakistan’s hosting of the Global Health Security

Summit, which was a prestigious opportunity.

The 70th session of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean Region is commencing in Cairo on October 9.

During this session, Dr. Nadeem Jan will brief on Pakistan’s initiatives and challenges and present future action plans.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region, spanning from Pakistan in South Asia to Mauritania in North Africa, is the focal point of discussion.

The election of the Regional Director for WHO EMRO is also on the

conference agenda, and Pakistan will cast its vote.

Dr. Nadeem Jan, on behalf of Pakistan, will also participate in the election of the Regional Director for the EMRO region.

In addition, Pakistan will present its annual performance report to the Health Ministers of the EMRO region during the conference.

Discussions during the conference will encompass topics such as universal health coverage, health emergencies, and associated challenges.

Dr. Nadeem Jan will provide insights into reforms aimed at addressing challenges in the healthcare sector.

RDA seals eight illegal commercial properties

RAWALPINDI (INP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, here on Saturday carried out an operation against illegal and unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings and sealed eight properties in Civil Lines area.

According to the RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad of RDA conducted the operation and took action against the rules violators. The properties constructed on plot number 8, plot number B-10 Duplex, plot number 11, Kamal Homeo Cure Centre, plot number 39, plot number 17 and plot number 17-A Silver Oaks school, plot number 38 Sadeeqa’s Learning System (SLS) School, plot number

24, plot number 25, Fauji Security Services, CIT, Civil Lines, were sealed.

He said that the Enforcement Squad including the Deputy Director of Building Control, Assistant Director of Building Control/ Incharge Enforcement Squad, Building Superintendent, and Building Inspectors carried out the operation under section 39 of the Punjab Development of Cities (PDC) Act 1976.

The spokesman said that earlier notices were also issued to the owners of these properties namely Tahir Shahzad, Sh Usman, Asad Pervaiz Qureshi, Muhammad Zaman, Talha Umar, Hamid Iqbal, Dr. Rustam and Khalid Mehmood.

He said that the owners of the sealed properties violated approved plans/maps, the PDC Act 1976 and

RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2020 and constructed illegal commercial buildings without approval and No Objection Certificates.

He said that the DG had directed the Land Use and Building Control (LU&BC) Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any discrimination.

The spokesman informed that the DG had also directed the Building Control Wing to conduct a survey regarding illegal residential and commercial buildings so that action in accordance with the law could be taken against the rules violators.

The citizens were also requested to remove encroachment to avoid legal action, he added.

AIOU issues instructions for admission candidates

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has closed admissions for matriculation and FA programs offered in the semester autumn 2023.

According to the admissions department, students who applied manually and paid the fee but have not sent the admission form and documents to the university are instructed to send these documents by October 13, 2023.

Admission will not be granted in the said semester and the candidate will

be responsible for not dispatching documents in the given time.

Candidates of Matric and FA programs who have applied online but have not yet received the admission confirmation are directed to visit <http://aiou.edu.pk/application.index.php> online. If there is any objection on their form, then those students are instructed to remove objections as soon as possible and upload the required documents by 13th October to confirm their admission. In case of

any delay. Admission will not be granted, and students will be responsible for that.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has instructed all the Academic and Servicing Departments to ensure the timely completion of academic activities to facilitate the students.

In this regard, the admission department has sped up admission verification to complete the admission process within the stipulated time frame.

Patients receive free examination at camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 23 patients of cleft lip and cleft palate on Saturday, received free examination services from expert surgeons at a medical camp.

These deserving patients mostly from far-flung areas like Malakand were short-listed for treatment and surgery.

The treatment and surgery process will soon be started at the local hospitals of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

A team of doctors and surgeon led by Dr. Azhar

Sheikh conducted the detail examinations. The camp was arranged by Islamabad Cleft Lip and Palate Association (ICLAPA).

Cleft lip, cleft palate patients receive free examination at camp

According to the association’s senior member Mrs. Farhat Akhtar Rehman, ICLAPA’s team of surgeons are working to bring smiles on the faces of lip and palate patients bringing positive change in their lives.

She said that the association has been working to

provide free medical facilities to the poor families since 2004 with the support of families, friends and philanthropists.

She added the ICLAPA is a group of volunteers, which relied on donors to bring hope and happiness in the lives of people, for whom it was financially difficult to give treatment to their children.

She said that for any assistance and guidance pertaining to ICLAPA, citizens can contact at mobile numbers 03335157676 and 03005192490.



ISLAMABAD: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) spokesperson Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan addressing a press conference at National Press Club. —APP Photo

14 outlaws held, drugs recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 14 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directives, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Afzal and Sajam Masih and recovered one 30 bore pistol and 20 liters of alcohol from their possession. The Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Adil Masih and recovered 20 liters of alcohol from his possession.

Likewise, the Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Fayyaz Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. Shams Colony police team arrested an accused namely Abdul Shakoore and recovered 30 liters of alcohol from his possession.

Similarly, the Humak police team arrested two accused namely Afnan Wajid and Haroon Francis and recovered one 9mm pistol with ammunition and a gallon of alcohol from their possession. The Phulgrah police team arrested an accused namely Nadeem and recovered 140 gram heroin from his possession.

Moreover, the Bhara Kahu police team arrested an accused namely Afzal Shafiq and recovered 510 gram hashish and 10 gram ice from their possession.

During the crackdown against absconders and proclaimed offenders, the Islamabad capital police teams arrested five absconders involved in heinous crime.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

ICCPPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed the police officials to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard", he maintained.

Wanted snatcher arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Sumbal police team arrested a wanted member of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities and recovered snatched mobile phones from his possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Sumbal police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of the Sumbal police station jurisdiction. The accused was identified as Abdullah.

Pak, UK to work jointly for women empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick and Afzal Khan MP Labour Party Shadow Minister UK Parliament on Saturday agreed to work together in adopting sustained policy initiatives for Pakistani economic women empowerment and growth in the work sector.

During the meeting, the SAPM on HR and Women Empowerment and MP Labour Party Shadow Minister UK Parliament discussed adopting sustained policy initiatives to empower Pakistani women in detail, said a press release.

They both agreed that there was not only a dire need to start skill development programs for Pakistani women but also to give them funds in order to enable them so they could play their role alongside male col-

leagues for the betterment and uplift of the country.

SAPM on HR and Women Empowerment also discussed the plight of women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) with Afzal Khan.

Mushaal said that fascist Narendra Modi-led Indian army had been criminally involved in human rights violations as they were not only involved in gang-rap- ing over 11000 women but also rendering around 22,963 women widows during the last few years.

She informed the Shadow Minister UK Parliament that the Modi regime hatched numerous conspiracies to change the demography of the occupied valley in sheer violation of UN resolutions and international laws.

She reiterated that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute was imperative not

only for durable peace in India and Pakistan, but also for the entire world because unresolved Kashmir issues would remain a constant threat to world peace.

Mushaal asked international organizations, including the UK government to build pressure on the Indian notorious government to release the unlawfully incarcerated Kashmiri leaders including her husband Yasin Malik.

She said that Yasin Malik was being implicated in false, fabricated and politically motivated cases in a bid to silent him because he was the most powerful voice of the Kashmir peaceful struggle.

The British MP on the occasion held out assurance to SAPM on HR and Women Empowerment that he would take up the issue of the Indian atrocities and human right violations in UK parliament.

Govt paying attention to water supply projects

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Saturday said that the Punjab government is paying special attention to water supply projects.

The Commissioner during a visit to the under-construction Dadocha Dam said that the project would be completed within the stipulated period.

The Commissioner was briefed by the authorities concerned while he also met with local residents.

The patriotism and sacrifices of the local population, especially the residents of Barwala including Azari Sehail, Malikpur, Azizal and Khanpur areas, are commendable, the Commissioner said.

“We value the sacrifices of the local population and would make every effort to provide them with the full

benefit of these sacrifices,” Liaquat Ali Chhatta said.

In the light of the Supreme Court’s decision and the directives of the caretaker government of Punjab, the local population would be given the prices of their land according to the current market rates, the Commissioner added.

The local residents whose property is affected by the construction of the dam would be given fair compensation, he said.

The district administration and the people should work hard on this project to provide clean water for future generations, Liaquat Ali Chhatta said.

The Commissioner was briefed that Dadocha Dam Located 25 km from Rawalpindi has 123 feet height. After its construction, the dam would provide 35 million gallons of

water per day for Rawalpindi city, which would benefit domestic consumers.

The construction of dam would provide a clean water facility to the residents of Rawalpindi, Cantt and adjoining areas.

The construction work of Dadocha Dam would be resumed soon, the Commissioner added.

The construction of the dam would be started in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Court, he added.

“Building a dam is the most important need of the time and we should also think for our tomorrow,” he said.

The Development and Finance Department should plan the construction of the dam in collaboration with the FWO, he directed the authorities.

NORI holds cancer awareness programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute (NORI), the top-notch public sector hospital of the federal capital, on Saturday, organized a breast cancer awareness programme as a part of its efforts to promote awareness about the disease, cure and prevention measures.

The state-of-the-art NORI hospital has recently been designated as an International Atomic Energy Agency-Anchored Centre. Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwer, as a chief guest, handed over the anchor centre plaque received from IAEA Vienna to Director NORI, Dr. Muhammad Faheem.

The programme was attended by media, health professionals, PAEC officials, cancer patients and the general public. Speaking on the occasion, Director of NORI

Hospital, Dr. Muhammad Faheem, apprised the audience about the latest diagnosis and treatment facilities available in the hospital.

He also gave an overview of the historical journey of NORI Hospital from its inception to becoming an IAEA-anchor centre. His presentation included an overview of the prevalence of cancer in the region and the facilities available in the 19 cancer hospitals operated by PAEC in Pakistan.

Chairman PAEC appreciated the efforts of PAEC Cancer Hospitals and especially NORI Hospital and its team for serving humanity with great enthusiasm and passion. He also expressed affection and appreciation for cancer patients who are going through the toughest test of their lives with determination and hope.

He also promised to extend all possible support to the PAEC administra-

tion to ensure the provision of medical facilities across Pakistan. He called for designing a work plan for the activities at NORI under the IAEA’s “Rays of Hope” initiative.

Dr. Humaira Mahmood, Head of Oncology informed about the various activities organized from time to time in NORI to create awareness about breast cancer as well as other cancers and remove misconceptions about this disease.

Apart from cancer screening, these activities include pink lighting of the building, distribution of brochures, display of posters, cancer awareness walk, sharing experiences of cancer survivors and awareness lectures.

Children and adult cancer survivors also participated in the programme and shared their experiences regarding their fight against cancer and expressed their satisfaction with the services provided at the hospital.

Embassy to serve Afghans

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate has established communication with the Afghan Embassy in Madrid, Spain, a statement from the ministry said. A statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs read that the embassy represents Afghanistan and its citizens and is prepared to cooperate to resolve issues and provide efficient and timely consular services. The embassy liaises with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan on consular matters.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 21, 1445 — Sunday, October 08, 2023

UNICEF provides assistance

URUZGAN (Agencies): UNICEF has donated medical supplies to the healthcare centers of Uruzgan province. These supplies are set to be distributed across sixty-four health centers. Mullah Fateh Khan Sehatmand, Deputy Director of Public Health, expressed his gratitude for assistance in a statement said. He believes that these tools and equipment will help address some of the current shortcomings in Uruzgan's health sector and improve the delivery of health services to the local population.

Afghanistan's soil should remain uninvaded: Mujahid

KABUL (Agencies): On Saturday marks the anniversary of the US invasion of Afghanistan.

Twenty-two years ago, the United States launched an attack on Afghanistan under the guise of combating terrorism.

This led to the deployment of Afghan military forces and their allies, resulting in devastating consequences for the already war-stricken country.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the

spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, emphasizes that this day serves as a reminder that no entity should harbor ambitions of invading Afghanistan's soil.

Mr. Mujahid expressed his views on X (formerly known as Twitter), stating that October 7, which corresponds to the 15th of Mezan in the solar year, is a day of US aggression against Afghanistan.

He described this day as

a dark chapter in Afghanistan's history but also noted that it ended in victory after twenty years when American aggression was met with defeat.

According to Mujahid, Afghan Muslims are resilient and deeply love their religion, country, freedom, and independence.

He further added that Afghans are loyal, honest, and benevolent people who appreciate good deeds presented to them by anyone.

Afghan Minister seeks cooperation with China



KABUL (Agencies): Dr. Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy for Afghanistan, has requested collaboration with a leading pharmaceutical company "Tebit" during his visit to Tibet City, China.

The Tibet pharmaceutical company is one of the

largest of its kind in China.

During his visit, Dr. Nazari expressed interest in fostering cooperation between this Chinese company and pharmaceutical companies in Afghanistan.

He assured the company officials that the Afghan government would

provide necessary support for their operations in Afghanistan.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to strengthen ties between Afghanistan and China and to enhance the pharmaceutical industry in Afghanistan.

Afghan-made sports car on display at Geneva show



KABUL (TOLONews): The first car made in Afghanistan was exhibited at the 2023 Geneva International Motor Show in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The latest designs and technology in the automotive industry have been displayed in the exhibition.

Mohammad Riza Ahmadi, CEO of Entop Company, said that after many efforts, he succeeded in transferring the car made in Afghanistan to participate in the Qatar international exhibition.

"The legendary bird that has the answer to all questions....," said Mohammad

Riza Ahmadi.

Major automobile companies of the world participated in the exhibition and displayed their latest designs.

Mohammad Naeem, acting head of the Afghanistan Embassy in Qatar, was present at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, and visited the display of the car made in Afghanistan.

"An automotive industry in Afghanistan is unprecedented and can be considered a positive point for the Afghanistan economy," said Shaker Yaqubi, a political analyst.

"Some economic experts said that with the initiative

of the automobile industry, Afghanistan has taken another step in the progress of the economy and providing employment," said Shabeer Basher, an economist.

"Production can have two arguments, the first argument is that it shows the identity of a country in the world, but in the economic discussion, it can create employment," said Abdul Naseer Reshtia, an economist.

The 2023 Geneva International Motor Show opened on Thursday (October 5) and is scheduled to continue for ten days.

Laborers struggle to find work

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): Laborers and daily wagers in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, are complaining about lack of work and ask the government to provide them with permanent employment opportunities.

According to the Department of Work and Social Affairs, averagely 800 workers daily gather at different areas of Mazar-i-Sharif city to find work.

The municipal square in the first district of the city is one of the areas where dozens of laborers gather every day to find work.

One of these workers, Khudaiddad, who had come to Mazar-i-Sharif from Faryab province, said: "We come to this area every day to find work, but if I find work for one day, I stay unemployed for several days".

He said: "I come from Faryab. I pay 3,000 afghanis house rent per month. If I get a job one day, I do not find it for several e days."

He added in addition to lack of work, there had been a decrease in wages of workers as well. In the past, a worker was paid 300 afghanis a day, but now people did not pay more than 250 afghanis, he said.

Sher Mohammad, another worker, also complained about lack of work and said: "I come here in the morning expecting to find work, but most of the time I find no work until the evening". He added: "Work was good in the past, we used to find work every day, but now we find work one or two days a week and stay unemployed the remaining days."

Ahmad Farhad, another worker, requested the government to provide them with permanent job opportunities.

Syed Hussain, another worker, also made similar statements and said the government should provide employment opportunities to the youth so they avoided going to foreign countries for work.

On the other hand, the Department of Labor and Social Affairs of Balkh province acknowledged the complaints of laborers and assured them of providing work opportunities.

Nasir Ahmad Abu Khalid, director of labor and social affairs, said that the number of workers was increasing, but the department was trying to create jobs for these people by implementing development and community projects in coordination with relevant departments. He said 800 workers used to gather in different areas of the provincial capital to find work on a daily basis.

Earlier, the caretaker government had said it was working on short-term and medium-term plans to reduce unemployment and create a national employment policy.

Humanitarian situation raises eyebrows as winter sets

KABUL (Pajhwok): Humanitarian situation raises eyebrows in Afghanistan as winter sets. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) says that Afghanistan is one of those countries facing massive humanitarian crisis in 2023.

A report from the UNOCHA said 3.28 million Afghans needed humanitarian aid, last year 18 million people needed aid.

Economic crises, growing unemployment and natural disasters were termed as reasons for poverty in Afghanistan. Recently the EU also expressed concerns over the issue and said in a statement: "This winter the lives of millions of Afghans was linked with humanitarian aid."

Hanafi urges scholars to foster enlightenment, unity



KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister

for Administrative Affairs, has called on Islamic scholars from Panjshir province to intensify their efforts in promoting enlightenment and unity among the people. This call was made

during a meeting with several scholars from the province.

According to a statement from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Hanafi emphasized that the Islamic Emirate is committed to social welfare and job creation within its available resources.

Sheikh Masihullah and Mawlawi Abdul Matin Azzam, representing the scholars,

provided an overview of the social, economic, and local governance situation in Panjshir province.

They expressed satisfaction with the Islamic Emirate's leadership in

addressing people's issues and improving the education sector.

The scholars acknowledged the diligence of local officials in serving the people and improving government operations, emphasizing that this is a responsibility shared by all Afghans.

'Gender apartheid' belongs on UDHR meeting agenda: Tayib

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghan envoy at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva suggested that the issue of "gender apartheid" be an "item on the agenda of the 75th anniversary of the UDHR (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights)."

The legal advisor of the Afghanistan Mission in Geneva, Mohibullah Tayib said this at a meeting voicing concerns over issues of human rights in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Hannah Neumann, a German member of the European

Parliament, urged that "flexible visas" be provided for human rights defenders who are "under threat" in Afghanistan. She said that the situation in Afghanistan "seems devastating, media spotlight has shifted – but our attention should not!"

"There are things we can do: advocate for gender apartheid to be recognized as a crime under international law, make sure that human rights defenders under threat are given flexible visas, so that they can continue their important work in Afghanistan," she said.

Human rights defenders meanwhile urged the Islamic Emirate and the international community to pay attention to the rights of women in Afghanistan.

"In the current circumstances, there is no attention to the situation of women; neither by the Islamic Emirate nor from the international community," said Frozan Daudzai, a human rights activist.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said the Islamic Emirate is committed to the rights of women within a Sharia structure.

"The Islamic Sharia has determined the rights of men and women. The Islamic Emirate is committed to the rights which it has given to the men and women.... Afghanistan is an Islamic country, and its people also seek Islamic law and sharia laws," Mujahid said.

The US special envoy for Afghan women and human rights, Rina Amiri, in a meeting held on the margins of the UN General Assembly last month, called on the Islamic Emirate to reconsider their decisions.

Over 700 crime suspects detained in 6 months in Balkh

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): At least 718 people have been arrested for various criminal activities in the last six months in northern Balkh province, an official said on Saturday.

Amir-ul-Haq Tayyeb Ahmad, crime branch chief for Balkh, told a press conference in Mazar-i-Sharif that security forces had detained 718 individuals on charges of various crimes in the past six months. He said the detainees faced charges including kidnapping, murder, robbery, illicit relationships, sexual abuse, elopement and forgery.

Meanwhile, police spokesman Mohammad Asif Waziri assured residents of the province of full security and warned habitual criminals not to commit crimes.



One killed, 9 injured in Paktia, Bamyan accidents

GARDEZ/BAMYAN

(Pajhwok): One person died and nine others sustained injuries in two separate traffic accidents in Bamyan and Paktia provinces.

Paktia Information and Culture Director Sawab Jan

Islamyar told Pajhwok Afghan News one person was killed and another injured in a traffic accident in Gardez, the provincial

capital, on Saturday.

The Information and Culture Director said the collision between two cars took place in Stokando area.

The injured person has been shifted to hospital and his condition was stable, he added.

In Bamyan, a woman and two children were among eight people injured in a traffic accident in Bamyan city, the provincial

capital, police spokesman Muhammad Khawani Rasa told Pajhwok Afghan News.

According to him, the accident happened in Regshad village yesterday (Friday) when two cars collided head-on.

He said the injured had been transferred to the provincial hospital and their injuries were not life-threatening.

Dasht-i-Qala residents construct school building at personal cost

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Local residents in the Orta Zulam area of northern Takhar province's Dasht-i-Qala district have decided to construct a school building at their personal cost.

The decision comes after the students of Tora Khan School got their education under scorching sun that motivated the local resident to collect funds and build an infrastructure for the school.

Abdul Basir, head of the local development council, told Pajhwok Afghan

News the foundation stone of Tora Khan School was laid 25 years ago by local officials but the building was not erected until this time.

He said: "For many years, our children have been studying under the scorching sun in the summer and under the snow and rain in the winter, and now, after frequent request from to the government officials for the construction of the school building which were ignored the local residents had decided

to bear the cost and build this school themselves," he said.

He stated that the majority of the schools in this district are without building and demanded government attention this problem.

Abdul Ali, another local resident, said the non-availability of infrastructure, lack of sturdy materials for students and other issues discouraged students and they stopped going to school. Now after the creation of classrooms

students found interest in the study.

He stressed that government should pay serious attention for the construction of schools buildings and provision of necessary materials.

Qari Qudratullah Qudrat, deputy head of Dash-i-Qala education department, said of the 26 district schools seven were without building and efforts were underway for their construction.

He acknowledged the Tora Khan Schools situat-

ed on one acre land has 700 students and due to the lack of proper infrastructure its students are faced with problems.

He added that now local resident planned the construction of classrooms which would help address the problem to some extent.

He said discussion had been held with the Education Ministry and some NGOs to address the problems faced by the education sector in the province.





ISLAMABAD: Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi handing over the command scroll of Pakistan Army to Admiral Naveed Ashraf during Change of Command ceremony.

Only elected government to address issues: Fazl

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Central Ameer of Jamiat Ulema Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rehman here Saturday said that identification of loopholes in elections process should not be considered as postponement of elections and the success of his party in local bodies election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa testified the rising popularity of JUIF in masses.

Addressing social media convention here, the JUIF leader said that he did not like to give statements against political opponent who was in jail due to his alleged misdeeds. Politicians should not be in jails, he said, adding however those who broke laws of Pakistan should be held accountable.

Maulana Fazl said that only an elected government could address the country's problems. He said good governance and strong economy was imperative to move the country's on road to progress and prosperity. Due to PTI Government incompetency, he said the country was reached at the verge of bankruptcy.

Indian police receive threat to blow up Stadium

MUMBAI (Agencies): The Mumbai police has received an email threatening to blow up the Indian prime minister and the Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad, which is currently the venue for several ICC Cricket World Cup matches.

The email warned the authorities that the group that sent the email has already mobilised individuals to carry out the assaults if the Indian government does not pay \$5 billion Indian rupees and release infamous gangster Lawrence Bishnoi who is currently lodged in Mandoli jail, in Delhi, Indian media reported. The threat message, which allegedly originated in Europe, was sent to India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) who then informed the Mumbai police about it, the police said.

"We have received the email from the NIA, which has alerted all concerned agencies in other places as well. We also got the email ID from which the NIA got the email and are trying to trace that as well and prima facie it seems that the mail has come from Europe," a police officer said. He said the message appears to be a hoax or mischief played by someone sitting in a foreign country, but they have still launched the manhunt for the sender, and the security of all cricket matches will be reviewed and beefed up if required.

The email sent to the NIA read: "We will blow up Narendra Modi and the Narendra Modi stadium as well if the government fails to pay us Rs 500 crore and release Lawrence Bishnoi." "Everything sells in Hindustan, so we too have bought something. No matter how much you secure, you won't be able to remain safe from us. If you wish to talk, do so on this email," it added.

Admiral Naveed assumes command of Pak Navy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Admiral Naveed Ashraf HI(M) TBT has assumed Command of Pakistan Navy as 23rd Chief of the Naval Staff. The Change of Command was held in an impressive ceremony at PNS ZAFAR Islamabad, in which Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi NI (M) SBT, upon completion of his tenure of Service, handed over the reins of Command to Admiral Naveed Ashraf.

In his farewell address, the outgoing Naval Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi said that today Pakistan Navy stands as a strong and vital arm of the country's Armed Forces, capable of protecting our maritime frontiers and radiating deterrence. Referring to the enormous military buildup by the eastern neighbour, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi highlighted that Pakistan Navy remained fully cognizant of the challenge and continues to pursue progressive capability development through induction of state-of-the-art naval platforms and equipment to enhance its combat readiness and potential.

The outgoing Naval Chief underscored that vitalization of Blue

Economy is important for the economic development of the country. In this regard the successful conduct of first ever Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC) under the patronage of MoMA as part of PN efforts for awareness and development of maritime sector and Blue economy was a great stride.

In the end, the outgoing Naval Chief congratulated Admiral Naveed Ashraf on his appointment as Chief of the Naval Staff. He reposed complete confidence in the incoming CNS for leading Pakistan Navy to new heights and wished him a successful tenure in office.

The change of command ceremony was attended by Senior Government officials, former Naval Chiefs, serving and retired PN officers, CPOs/ sailors and Navy civilians. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1989 and he was awarded Quaid-e-Azam Gold Medal on successful completion of initial naval training at Germany and Pakistan.

During his illustrious naval career, the Admiral has served on various Command and Staff appointments. His rich Command experience of

over 10 years include; Commanding Officer of a Gun Boat, a Mine Hunter, three Destroyers and Command of 25th & 18th Destroyer Squadrons. Besides, Admiral Naveed Ashraf remained Commandant of Pakistan Naval Academy and had the honour to Command Pakistan Navy Fleet. His distinguished Staff appointments include Fleet Operations Officer at HQ Commander Pakistan Fleet, Captain Training at HQ Flag Officer Sea Training, Chief Staff Officer to Task Force-151 at HQ NAVCENT Bahrain, Deputy President National Defence University.

Naval Secretary, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Admin), Director General C4I, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Training & Personnel), Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) and Chief of Staff at Naval Headquarters.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad, Naval Staff College USA and Royal College of Defence Studies UK. In recognition of his meritorious services, the Admiral has been awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-e-Basalat.

Earthquake kills 15 in western Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit western Afghanistan on Saturday killing 15 and injuring dozens more, officials said, predicting the toll could rise after reports of landslides and victims trapped under collapsed buildings.

The United States Geological Survey said the epicentre was 40 kilometres (25 miles) northwest of the region's largest city Herat, and was followed by seven aftershocks with magnitudes between 4.6 and 6.3. Crowds of residents fled buildings in the city at around 11:00 am (0630 GMT) as the quakes began, lasting just under three hours. "We were in our offices and suddenly the building started shaking," 45-year-old Herat resident Bashir Ahmad told AFP.

"Wall plasters started to fall down and the walls got cracks, some walls and parts of the building collapsed." "I am not able to contact my family, network connections are disconnected. I am too

worried and scared, it was horrifying," he said. Men, women and children stood out in the wide streets, away from tall buildings, in the moments after the first quake and remained wary of returning to homes as aftershocks continued. "The situation was very horrible, I have never experienced such a thing," said 21-year-old student Idrees Arsala, the last to safely evacuate his classroom as the quakes began. In a video statement, National Disaster Management Authority spokesman Mullah Jan Sayeq said "around 40" had been injured in tremors felt across three provinces, in addition to 15 killed. "These are the preliminary numbers. There is the possibility the numbers could increase," he said.

Earlier in the day he told AFP there had been landslides in nearby rural and mountainous areas. Public health director of Herat province Mohammad Taleb Shahid put the fatality figure

slightly lower at 14, with 78 injured, but agreed the tally would likely rise. "We have information that people are buried under rubble," he told AFP. Hundreds of fatalities were possible, according to a USGS preliminary report. "Significant casualties are likely and the disaster is potentially widespread. Past events with this alert level have required a regional or national level response," it said. The USGS had earlier reported the first quake's magnitude as 6.2. It had a shallow depth of just 14 kilometres, it said. Herat — 120 kilometres east of the border with Iran — is considered the cultural capital of Afghanistan. It is the capital of Herat province which is home to an estimated population of 1.9 million, according to 2019 World Bank data.

Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates.



KARACHI: Afghan families waiting for transport as leaving they leaving Pakistan after government deadline.

Cop martyrd, jawan injured in Buner terrorist attack

Abdul Rehman Abid

BUNER: A police drive was killed and army personnel injured when terrorists attacked security forces vehicle with rocket in Elum mountainous area of Buner district, on Saturday.

The police vain driver identified as constable Amir Zada and army man Hawaldar Nisar Khan while militants attacked their vain on way to joint operation camp in Elum. District Police Office confirmed that the police vain was on way to joint operation team base camp at GMS Elum Ghar while the militants hit the vain with rocket killing the police vain driver on spot and injured army man.

The DPO office shared the police vain was taking food stuffs for the joint operation camp. The DPO office shared that the police and army personnel were rushed the spot and the dead body and the injured were taken to DHQ hospital Daggar.

As per DPO office the dead body was coffin in Pakistan and police flags and presented guard of honour at police Daggar where Namaz Janaza offered and the coffin transported to native village Katlang for last rituals. The police party and army personnel rushed to the spot and cordoned off the area and started search operation to net the militants and dozens suspected were netted. However no arrest from the wanted militants were shared till our going to the press.

As per DPO office the police and army teams were there in Elum Ghar for search and strike operations for the last many days to trace the militants. Its pertinent to mention here that the district police were arrested two militants with hands grenades on way to Gokand who during interrogations were identified net work in tehsil Gadezai following CTD team was raided and arrested about 40 militants and recovered arms. This joint search and strike operation in the popular Elum Ghar was started in the light of informations were received from the arrested militants.

Petrol price should cut to Rs150 per liter: JJ

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Siraj-ul-Haq said that two families have been dominating the country for a long time and are now dreaming of ruling again.

In his statement on Saturday, He said that Jamaat-e-Islami will come to power and hold those accountable who return home and build properties outside. Haq said that inflation and unemployment have increased due to the wrong decisions made in the last five years. He said that the caretaker government is sticking to the policies of the previous governments and the situation is getting worse. He demanded that petroleum price be decreased to 150 rupees per liter, after the fall of dollar value and oil prices in the global market.

Haq said that Jamaat-e-Islami is in the field to protect the rights of the people. He said that the movement against inflation and expensive electricity continues and there will be a sit-in in front of the Governor House in Karachi on October 8.

Haq said that Jamaat-e-Islami is struggling to protect the rule of law and the rule of law in the country. He said that we want a clean and transparent election and the Election Commission should give the date of the election and conduct the election in an impartial manner. Haq said that Pakistan is the only country in the world that came into existence on the basis of an ideology.

He said that the world colonial powers did not accept it wholeheartedly from the beginning and made it the center of conspiracies. Haq said that the economic depression, unrest and explosions in the country are the result of the conspiracies of the colonial powers. He said that the ruling elite imposed on the country for years submitted to colonialism instead of the nation and protected the interests of financial institutions and also promoted personal interests.

PPP welcomes Nawaz's return to Pakistan: Bilawal

F.P. Report

JACOBABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said Saturday his party welcomed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif's plan to return.

"It has been PPP's long-standing demand that Nawaz should return. PPP is very happy that he is coming back. It is incumbent upon everyone to work for Pakistan's development," Bilawal, a former foreign minister, told a press conference in Jacobabad. Taking a jibe at the PML-N, Bilawal said the preparations of the party to welcome their leader "were not up to the mark" and they could have "at least done wall chalking".

"This is a test for those who were ministers during Nawaz and PDM's tenure," the PPP chief said. In his



press conference, Bilawal also mentioned that his party was heading into the general elections without an alliance and it "stands firm" on this decision. "PPP's going to contest polls on its own symbol, we will not be a part of [any alliance, including] PDM."

On the possibility of an alliance with the Imran

Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Bilawal said the PPP had no plans in this regard as of yet. "Until those involved in the events of May 9 aren't 'minused', there is no chance of an alliance," Bilawal said, as several PTI workers and leaders face jail time and penalties for their involvement in attacks on state installations.

India's flood toll hits 56

NEW DELHI (Agencies): At least 56 people are confirmed dead in floods that hit India's northeast as of Saturday, with the army warning munitions washed away by the deluge posed a public safety risk. Violent torrents struck Sikkim state on Wednesday after the sudden bursting of a high-altitude glacial lake.

Climate scientists warn that similar disasters will become an increasing danger across the Himalayas as global temperatures rise and ice melts. "So far 26 bodies have been found in Sikkim," state relief commissioner Aniraj Rai told AFP by phone. Thirty more bodies had been recovered from the Teesta river basin by search and rescue teams downstream in neighbouring West Bengal state, Jalpaiguri district police superintendent K. Umesh Ganpat told AFP.

"The river stretches up to 86 kilometres," he added. "The search operation is continuing." Among the dead are seven Indian army soldiers posted in Sikkim, which sits on India's remote frontiers with Nepal and China and boasts a sizeable military presence. Sixteen soldiers are among the more than 100 people still missing. India's defence ministry said in a statement that the floods had washed away "firearms and explosives" from military camps.

The army has "established

lookout teams all along the river" to recover loose ordnance, the ministry added. Local media reports on Friday said that two people had been killed and four others injured by a mortar shell that exploded while flowing through the flood waters in West Bengal. Roads, bridges and telephone lines have been destroyed across much of the state, complicating evacuations and efforts to communicate with thousands cut off from the rest of the country.

More than 1,200 houses had been damaged by the floods, according to the latest Sikkim government bulletin. More than 2,400 people had been rescued while nearly 7,000 others were taking shelter at makeshift relief camps set up at schools, government offices and guest-houses, the bulletin said. The water surge came after intense rainfall burst the high-altitude Lhonak Lake, which sits at the base of a glacier in peaks surrounding the world's third-highest mountain, Kangchenjunga.

Water powered downstream, adding to a river already swollen by monsoon rains, damaging a dam and sweeping away houses. Himalayan glaciers are melting faster than ever due to climate change, exposing communities to unpredictable and costly disasters, according to the ICIMOD research group.

We stand with Israel

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In a statement published on the website of SABA news agency, the group said the attack "revealed the weakness, fragility and impotence" of Israel. It called the operation "a battle of dignity, pride, and defence". Egyptian Foreign Ministry Egypt warned of "grave consequences" and called for "exercising maximum restraint and avoiding exposing civilians to further danger".

"We call for restraint from all parties," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said. Qatar foreign ministry said Israel alone was responsible for the ongoing escalation of violence with the Palestinian people, and called for both sides to show restraint. "The Kingdom of Morocco expresses its deep concern at the deterioration of the situation and the outbreak of military action in the Gaza Strip, and condemns attacks against civilians wherever they may be," a foreign ministry statement said.

Middle East peace envoy Tor Wennesland said: "This is a dangerous precipice, and I appeal to all to pull back from the brink." UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said: "This attack is having a horrific impact on Israeli civilians ... Civilians must never be the target of attack." "Terrifying news reaches us today from #Israel. We are deeply shocked by the rocket fire from Gaza and the escalating violence. Germany condemns these attacks by Hamas and stands by Israel," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on social media.

French President Emmanuel Macron strong-

ly condemned the attacks. "I express my full solidarity with the victims, and their families and those close to them," he said. "Canada strongly condemns the current terrorist attacks against Israel. These acts of violence are completely unacceptable. We stand with Israel and fully support its right to defend itself. Our thoughts are with everyone affected by this. Civilian life must be protected," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on X.

"The UK unequivocally condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians. The UK will always support Israel's right to defend itself," British Foreign Minister James Cleverly said. EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said: "I unequivocally condemn the attack carried out by Hamas terrorists against Israel. It is terrorism in its most despicable form."

Foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said: "We unequivocally condemn the attacks by Hamas. This horrific violence must stop immediately. Terrorism and violence solve nothing." Russia is in contact with Israel, the Palestinians and Arab countries in connection with the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said, urging restraint.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned what he called a "terror attack" on Israel and said Israel's right to defend itself "cannot be doubted". The Lebanese group Hezbollah, an arch foe of Israel, said it was in "direct contact with the leadership of the Palestinian resistance" and described events

as a "decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalisation with Israel".

"I'm shocked by today's brutal attacks on Israel by Hamas. Rockets attacks and detention of civilians as hostages arouse our deepest opposition. Poland strongly condemns all acts of violence," Polish President Andrzej Duda said. "The attack conducted from the Gaza Strip is a deplorable act of terrorism against the State of Israel and the civilian population," Czech Republic President Petr Pavel said in a statement.

"The rocket attacks and the infiltration of Hamas commandos into Israel will block any efforts for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for a long time." "A meeting chaired by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was held today on the dramatic situation unfolding in Israel, which has been the target of a military and terrorist attack," a statement from the Italian prime minister's office said.

"The government is following the evolution of the situation with concern ... Particular attention is being paid to the security of the Jewish community in the country." Japan strongly condemns rocket launches and cross-border attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian groups into Israeli territory, the foreign ministry said.

"We repudiate the planners, funders and implementers of this heinous attack. While Israel has a right to retaliate, a peaceful path to resolving this unfortunate development is urged," Korir Sing'oei, principal secretary at Kenya's foreign ministry, said on X.