

Ex-KP minister arrested F.P. Report

BANNU: Police have arrested ex-KP minister for transport, Malik Shah Muhammad Khan for his alleged involvement in corruption and vandalism during 9th and 10th May riots on Monday. Police said Shah Muhammad Khan was on pre-arrest bail from the court in corruption and involvement in 9th May riots however, after cancellation of his bail by an ATC, the ex-KP minister was arrested.

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First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

UAE envoy calls on PM F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday expressed satisfaction at the robust and wide-ranging engagement between Pakistan and UAE, and stressed the need to focus on strengthening cooperation in energy, trade and investment. The PM was talking to Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him at the PM's House.

Vol. XXXIX

No. 303

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-UL-AWWAL 05 1445 -- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar launching ZARRA mobile app on the eve of Universal Children's Day.

Transparent polls vital for country's progress

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Chairman, Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here Monday said that free, fair and transparent election was penance of all the country's problems.

Bilawal addressing a workers' convention in Nowshera said that he is thankful to the Jiyalas for providing him with an opportunity to meet them. Bilawal said that the PPP is feeling the loss of Liaqat Shabab after reaching Nowshera.

The series of the party's conventions has made it apparent that the Jiyalas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have woken up, are charged, demanding for elections and not running away from them. Bilawal said that the Jiyalas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faced three dictators and also faced terrorists and extremists while looking at them in the eye. They rendered great sacrifices but did not back down from their ideology and support for the Party. We are proud of our Jiyalas.

Bilawal said that there is a plethora of issues we are witnessing in the country. Inflation, poverty and unemployment have reached unprecedented levels and Islamabad is doing nothing to rectify them. The peace that had been established in the country with much difficulty, through the sacrifices of the people and the country's security forces. The terrorists we worked so hard to chase out of the country were willingly brought in and released, which has led to catastrophic consequences. The police and Army are being targeted.

Today, people are questioning whether this is the same democracy that had been promised by Quaid-e



Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for which he accepted martyrdom along with his daughter, heed Benazir Bhutto. Chairman Bilawal said that we need to derive solutions for all the problems that we are faced with, be it those related to our security, economy, democracy or the Constitution. Only the PPP can do this.

This is because it is a party of the people. It is our hope that the Election Commission of Pakistan and Justice Qazi Faez Isa will ensure that the upcoming elections are not controversial and their results are not questioned, because if they are, then what is the use of wasting billions of rupees that belong to the people? If free and fair elections do not take place, then the government made as a result will not be able to represent the country and solve its problems. We will witness the same old outcome, with one side ruling over the country unjustly while the other cries foul.

It is our request to the other political parties that they do not waste their manifestos and narrative by contesting the elections with the help of the administration. We do not need the help of any administration as the PPP trusts the people of Pakistan. This is because we know that the people of

Pakistan will vote in favour of the PPP because only one party has consistently represented the poor instead of the elite along with the farmers, labourers, students and the four provinces. The farmers were given ownership of their land by the PPP. The labourers were given their rights by the PPP. The Benazir Income Support Programme, an initiative of the PPP has supported the poorest of women financially.

In the manner in which poverty and unemployment are increasing rapidly, the people know that only the PPP can hinder their pace. Those who criticise the slogan of 'Roti, Kapra Aur Makaan', should know that as long as these problems persist, the Party would continue to raise it.

For the PPP, this is not just a slogan as we do not forget our manifesto after winning the elections. "It is my promise to the people of the country that I will fight for them, run the economy as per the principles of Bhuttoism, so that the benefits are reaped by my farmers labourers and not the elite". Chairman Bilawal said. This is not to say that the businesses are to suffer, it is just our demand that they share their profits with the shareholders, including the poor and the labourers.

Toshakhana vehicles case: Court accepts Nawaz's plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Accepting former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's request, an accountability court (AC) in Islamabad on Monday ordered the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to record his statement in the Toshakhana vehicles reference by November 30.

AC judge Muhammad Bashir heard the reference. Pleaders of Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari, former prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Khawaja Abdul Ghani Majeed and Anwar Majeed appeared in the court.

Qazi Misbah Advocate, counsel for the PML-N supremo, prayed to the court to order the NAB to record his client's statement. "A supplementary reference will have to be filed. The first one had been filed in Nawaz's absence," he said, adding, "We want his statement to be recorded in the case." NAB's prosecutor, on the occasion, sought time from the court to read the application filed by the former prime minister. He further said that it was the investigation officer (IO) who had to record the statement, and only he would record it. "We have no objection to the IO recording the statement," the prosecutor added.

The court marked the suspects present, and adjourned the case's hearing until November 30. An accountability court in Islamabad on Monday summoned Yousaf Raza Gilani and 11 other accused on January 11, 2024, in connection a NAB reference regarding unfair distribution of government advertisements.

Children were most precious asset of any nation: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said the government was determined to ensure inclusive development, education, healthcare, participation, dignity and security for "all our children, as envisaged in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child".

He said the children were the most precious asset of any nation and the sole guarantee for its future prosperity. Addressing an event in connection with the Universal Children's Day, the prime minister said the government was fully devoted to the well-being and safety of the children. The government and non-government organizations and the society as a whole should contribute towards the noble cause of safeguarding the children rights and to make their future safe and prosperous, he added.

The Universal Children's Day is being celebrated under the theme "For every child, every right" to reaffirm the commitment to safeguard the rights and well-being of children. The prime minister on the occasion launched the ZARRA Alert App - a mobile application that can be used to report missing and abducted children.

Appreciating the endeavours of National Commission on the Rights for Children (NCRC) and the Ministry of Human Rights for launching the ZARRA Alert App, he highlighted it was the collective effort of all stakeholders involved. The prime minister said children were the most precious asset of any nation and the sole guarantee for its future prosperity. "On International Children's Day, we are determined to ensure inclusive development, education, healthcare, participation, dignity and security for all our children, as envisaged in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child'".

The prime minister also mentioned the Israel's oppression on the innocent people, especially the children, in Gaza and called upon the world powers to

PM designates parliamentary affairs minister to look after non-assigned ministry portfolios

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister has designated the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to look after parliamentary business pertaining to Senate, in respect of ministries, divisions and offices whose portfolio rest with the prime minister, the PM Office said Monday.

The parliamentary affairs minister has been designated as the Minister-In-Charge. An office order of the Prime Minister's Office with subject 'Conduct of parliamentary business in the Senate' also mentioned the list of ministries and divisions which have not been assigned ministers and thus their portfolios rest with the prime minister. These offices include the President's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Secretariat, National Security Division, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Housing & Works Division, Inter Provincial Coordination Division, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division, and the States and Frontier Regions Division.

help end their brutal killing. "We are witnessing the children holocaust in Gaza that must have to be stopped immediately," he added.

He maintained that the Israeli armed forces had become pawns in the eyes of the people around the world who were killing the defenceless people and children, instead of fighting with a professional army. It had become an issue of all mankind that went beyond any religion, he said, adding the world was condemning the Israeli atrocities over the defenceless people of Gaza and the West Bank. "We are doing our utmost endeavours to cease violence in Gaza at the platform of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)." Later interacting with the differently-abled children, the prime minister said he was amazed by their intellect, perseverance, and desire to positively contribute to the social sphere. "Their spirit for proving their talents against all odds is simply impressive."

Caretaker Minister for Human Rights Khalil George, on the occasion, said it was the state's responsibility to protect the children's rights and help them become respectable citizens in future who would play a vital role in the development and prosperity of the country. He said the ZARA App was

connected with all the police stations and would be helpful in recovering the missing and abducted children. National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq said the government was making every effort to protect the rights of every child in the country.

Climate change becomes an issue of national endurance for developing countries: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that climate change had become a national issue of survival for the developing nations and Pakistan despite its lesser share of below one percent carbon imprints in the global climate change was among the most affected countries.

The caretaker prime minister presided over the second session of Pakistan Climate Change Council. The meeting was attended by caretaker ministers Ahmed Irfan Aslam, Shamshad Akhtar, Jalil Abbas Jilani, Umar Saif, Kausar Abdul Malik, Sami Saeed and Muhammad Ali, Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, representatives of the provincial governments, civil society, NGOs and global entities, besides the relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Heavy fighting surrounds another Gaza hospital

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip: Heavy fighting erupted Monday around a hospital in northern Gaza where thousands of patients and displaced people have been sheltering for weeks, as Israeli forces focus on clearing out medical facilities that they say Hamas militants use for cover.

The advance on the Indonesian Hospital came a day after the World Health Organization evacuated 31 premature babies from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, the territory's largest, where they were among more than 250 critically ill or wounded patients stranded there days after Israeli forces entered the compound.

The plight of Gaza's hospitals is at the focus of a battle of narratives over the war's brutal toll on Palestinian civilians, thousands of whom have been killed or buried in rubble since the six-week-old war was sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israel. Israel says Hamas uses civilians as human shields, while critics say Israel's

siege and relentless aerial bombardment amount to collective punishment of the territory's 2.3 million Palestinians.

Marwan Abdallah, a medical worker at the Indonesian Hospital, said Israeli tanks were visible from the windows. "You can see them moving around and firing," he said. "Women and children are terrified. There are constant sounds of explosions and gunfire." Al-Jazeera television aired footage apparently shot from inside the hospital showing tanks firing just outside the facility.

Abdallah said the hospital had received dozens of dead and wounded in airstrikes and shelling overnight. He said medical staff and displaced people fear Israel will besiege the hospital and force its evacuation. The Israeli military, which rarely publicizes troop movements, had no immediate comment. UN bodies were able to safely evacuate the babies, who were in critical condition, from Shifa to a hospital in southern Gaza, and plan to transport

them to a hospital in neighboring Egypt. Four other babies died in the two days before the evacuation, according to Mohamed Zaout, the director of Gaza hospitals. Over 250 patients with severely infected wounds and other urgent conditions remain in Shifa, which could no longer provide most treatment after it ran out of water, medical supplies and fuel for emergency generators amid a territory-wide blackout. Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants outside its gates for days before entering the facility last Wednesday.

Israel's army said it had strong evidence supporting its claims that Hamas maintained a sprawling command post inside and under the hospital's 20-acre complex, which includes several buildings, garages and a plaza. The military released a video showing what it said was a tunnel discovered at the hospital, 55-meter (60-yard) long and about 10 meters (33 feet) below ground. — Arab News



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Every child has right to grow in safe environment: Baqar

KARACHI (APP): On World Children's Day, the Sindh government reaffirms the right of every child to grow, learn, play, and flourish in a safe, responsive and friendly environment, free of distress, hunger, fear and oppression.

This was stated by Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar while speaking at the World Children's Day programme organised by the school education department in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan at a local hotel.

The programme was attended by Sindh Caretaker Minister for Education Rana Hussain, Secretary of School Education Dr. Shereen Narejo, Representative, UNICEF Pakistan Abdullah Fadil, Representative, UNICEF Pakistan, children. The Chief minister said that World Children's Day was a day to have fun and celebrate the children in our lives, while also standing up for their rights and giving them the chance to speak out on the biggest challenges they face.

"Sindh joins the world community today in celebrating World Children's Day 2023, which is an occasion for us all to reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental principles laid down in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child as well as our national obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child," Interim CM said and added that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was an international human rights agreement that outlined the specific rights that children and young people could claim.

Baqar said that as a party to the CRC and its two Optional Protocols,

the Pakistan government was committed to upholding the promotion and protection of the human rights of all children and fulfilling its national and international obligations in that regard. "On World Children's Day, my government reaffirms the right of every child to grow, in a safe, free of distress, hunger, fear, and oppression.

The CM said that the Children were the most precious resource of any nation and the sole guarantee for its future. "The Government of Sindh is determinedly striving and making every effort to ensure that children have access to and enjoy their rights particularly birth registration, access to education, nutrition and healthcare, clean drinking water and sanitation, dignity, security, and all other rights as envisaged in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child," he said.

He disclosed that the Sindh government has undertaken a range of institutional and legal measures to eliminate the exploitation of children and their discrimination based on gender, religion, and ethnicity. He appreciated the UNICEF and other partners and the education department working collaboratively for the full realization of child rights. The Minister of Education Rana Hussain speaking on the occasion said that World Children's Day prompted us to acknowledge the challenges that our children face while fostering the optimism that, collectively, we can and should do more to ensure that every child's rights are not just recognized but fully realized. She added that our collective responsibility lies in recognizing the challenges that many children continue to face, their needs and

rights often unmet.

She underscored the essential role of women in the holistic development of children, both at home and in schools. Women play a pivotal role in rearing children, influencing their well-being, and shaping their futures. Recognizing and supporting this role is fundamental to fostering a nurturing environment for our children.

Secretary of School Education Sindh Dr Shireen Narejo said that for access to quality education for every child, Sindh developed its first Education Sector Plan in the year 2014 and then a new Education Sector Plan in 2019 with support from UNICEF and other partners. She added that during the past few years, - overall educational planning, implementation and oversight have been improved in areas related to sector coordination, early learning, and emergency education - and recently Sindh has inducted a large number of teachers in the education system, school construction has been expedited, rules for the Act on Prohibition of Corporal Punishment has been launched, curriculum reforms, non-formal education programs, girls' stipend programs are ongoing, the exercise of annual school census being carried out regularly, private school census has been completed for the first time, daily school monitoring is ongoing, school clustering approach, professional development of teachers and educational data systems have been further strengthened and enrollment and retention campaign was recently launched. The representatives of UNICEF also spoke on the occasion and emphasized the need to provide a safe and secure environment to every child.



ISLAMABAD: Shehzad Roy, renowned singer and the founder and President of the Zindagi Trust along with Mariam Chughtai the Director of NCC) called on the Federal Minister for Education Madad Ali Sindh.

Govt determined to provide best facilities to Hajj pilgrims: Aneeq

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, Monday said that government was determined to provide the best facilities to Hajj pilgrims as facilitating citizens in performing religious rituals and worship was among the responsibilities of the state.

He was addressing to inaugural ceremony of Bankers Training regarding Hajj portal for Hajj 2024 here, said that for the first time in the country not only a significant decrease had been witnessed in Hajj expenses but the ministry was striving to ensure maximum facilities to pilgrims throughout their entire pilgrimage. He said that Hajj expenses had declined to Rs10,75,000 this year from Rs 11,75,000 of the previous year while negotiations were underway with airlines for reduction in airfare.

In case of cut down in air ticket the corresponding amount would be transferred into accounts of Hujaj-e-Karam, he added.

Another innovative facilities being introduced this year was launch of an App for Hujaj that would provide updates to pilgrims from filing of the Hajj application to their return from the Hijaz-e-Muqadas, the minister informed. The 'Road to Makkah' program, a facility being offered by Saudi government to Hujaj, was earlier limited to Islamabad only but this year it will be extended to Karachi airport as well, Aneeq Ahmed said adding that MORA was striving to expand the facility to other major airports of the country for better facilitation of pilgrims.

The minister said that another positive progress made this year was provision of tent space in Old Mina area to Pakistani Hujaj while they would also be provided commuting facility through dedicated fleet of state of the art buses. The ministry would provide QR code marked suite case and other articles to every pilgrim while specially designed head scarves with Pakistani flag would be given to

women Hujaj, he stated adding that special care had been taken to ensure quality services to pilgrims.

The minister appreciated role of banking sector in providing special services every year to the intending pilgrims and said that banks had always extended assistance to government in the process of Hujaj applications without compromising the quality of services.

General Manager Business HBL, Raja Suhail Siraj said that entire Hujj process was being carried out in an organized and smooth manner this year. He said that bank officials also wanted to gain prayers of Hujaj-e-Karam and they would leave no stone unturned for ensuring the best services to intending pilgrims.

At the occasion, the participants of training workshop were briefed in detail about the process and requirements for filing Hajj applications and data collection forms while queries of the participants regarding various aspects were answered as well.

Sindh Prisons embrace telemedicine for inmate healthcare; focus on reintegration, rehabilitation

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Minister for Home and Prisons, Brig. (Retd.) Haris Nawaz, Monday highlighted the significant strides towards implementing telemedicine within correctional facilities to enhance inmate healthcare while reducing costs and minimizing risks associated with external hospital visits.

Chairing a meeting of the Sindh Prisons Policy Board at the IG Prison office here, Brig. Nawaz emphasized the pivotal need for this initiative.

Under the directive of the Sindh Prisons Policy Board (SPPB), a proposal was greenlit for the introduction of telemedicine systems across all prisons.

The initial phase is slated to begin with the Central Prison Sukkur, serving as a pilot project. Plans are underway to set up telemedicine desks at various hospitals, including NICVD and SIUT. The recommendations of the SPPB will be forwarded to the government for final approval and execution.

The minister underscored the importance of establishing District Oversight Committees and Welfare Committees to address several critical aspects, such as improving the lives of vulnerable prisoners, enhancing health and hygiene conditions, establishing dedicated spaces like Sweet Homes for children residing with their

mothers in jails, setting up well-equipped libraries, and initiating vocational training programs.

The meeting delved into diverse issues, focusing on introducing inmates to modern technology, Information Technology usage, and providing substantial support to families affected by the incarceration of breadwinners, adhering to the specified legal frameworks.

Established under The Sindh Prisoners and Corrections Services Act-2019, the 17-member SPPB aims to craft policies ensuring prisoners' safety, fundamental rights, and successful societal reintegration as responsible citizens. The primary objective remains

the transformation of prisoners, fostering productivity, and developing strategies for the existing and future prison structures.

The board meeting boasted the presence of high-ranking officials, including Secretaries from the Sindh Home and Law Departments, representatives from various provincial departments such as Finance, Health, Works and Services, Higher Technical Education, Social Welfare, Women Development, Information Technology, and the Prosecutor General's Office, along with the President of the Committee for Welfare of Prisoners.

13,006 power pilferers arrested, 26,690 FIRs registered

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) has got arrested 13,006 power pilferers by respective police which also registered a total of 26,690 FIRs in the entire five region's districts- Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Nankana Sahib and Okara- during 73 days of a grand anti-power theft campaign.

According to the Lesco spokesman here Monday that during the 73 day of operation against electricity thieves, the company has detected a total of 28,107 power pilferers and submitted 27,755 FIR applications in the respective police stations. All the power thieves have also been charged an accumulative 50,459,768 units in the form of detection bills amounting to Rs 2,063,249,447.

The grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are

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

On the 73rd consecutive day (Nov 20) of anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, the Lesco found 286 connections involved in electricity theft in all its circles and also submitted FIR application against 283 electricity thieves in the respective police stations, out of which 167 FIRs have been registered while 28 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, eight were commercial, four agricultural, one industrial and 273 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 390,007 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 12,627,684.

On the 73rd day of anti-power theft operation, the Lesco charged 2,866 detection units worth Rs 175,000 to a connection in Nawab Town; 2,866 units worth Rs 175,000 to another connection in Sattu Katla area; 3,000 detection units worth Rs 150,000 to a power pilferer in Shahdara Town Lahore; and Rs 150,000 to a customer stealing electricity directly from transmission line in Mustafa Town.

Ilyas Khan Mandal Rasm-e-qul observed

FP Report

TAKHT BHAI: A prominent tribal leader and central general secretary of Utmanakhil Qaumi Ithad, late Ilyas Khan Mandal Rasm-e-qul, was held at Mandal House takht bhai on Monday. The participants recited the Holy Quran and offered Fatiha for the departed soul.

On the occasion, political personalities, social and business classes who came from the local and different districts, tribal leaders, senior police officers, officials of various departments, former chief ministers, ministers, members of the assembly, lawyers, journalists, teachers, scholars, senior civil and government officials, friends and relatives participated in a large numbers and offer prayer for the bereaved family. The Rasm-e-qul prayer ceremony was held in his residence Mandal House.

Floral wreaths were placed on the grave of the deceased by various tribal organizations. While offering condolences, they expressed their sympathy to the bereaved family. Meanwhile, the bereaved family thanked to those who participated in the funeral prayers of the late Ilyas Khan Mandal, as well as those who participated in the Rasm-e-qul, and offer condolences from across the country and abroad via phone, WhatsApp and other social media groups.



LAHORE: Artist giving final touches to the painting in Deewane Aam Painting Competition at Shahi Fort.

CS inaugurates e-Procurement System

LAHORE (APP): 'The e-Procurement System' developed by the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) in collaboration with the Federal and Provincial Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Boards, was inaugurated by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) on Monday. The system has been introduced by the Punjab government in departments to streamline the public procurement process.

The ceremony presided over by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman was attended by key officials and stakeholders, including SMBR Nabeel Javaid, Additional Chief Secretary Ahmed Raza Sarwar, Planning & Development Secretary Mazhar Sial, PPRA Punjab MD Waqar

Azim, PITB Chairman Faisal Yousaf and DG e-Governance Sajid Latif. Addressing the ceremony, the chief secretary highlighted that the e-procurement system was a significant step toward good governance, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and time-saving in government procurements.

He commended the Punjab IT Board team for the successful launch, expressing hope for the system's success in achieving its goals. PITB Chairman Faisal Yousaf stated that the system incorporated modern techniques to make government procurement secure and efficient.

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- Exact No of participants will be given at the time of work order.
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PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retired) Arshad Hussain Shah presiding over an important meeting regarding financial issues of province.

Tenure of VCs wouldn't be extended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of faculty members and other employees met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to redress their grievances and a comprehensive strategy for uplifting public sector universities across the province, on Monday.

The delegation led by FPUSA Khyber Pakhtun-

khwa Dr. Feroz Shah, All Universities Employee Federation president Arbab Amir Khisrow while Engineering's university represented by Dr. Sadiq Ali, Islamia College Teacher Association, Agri's university and representative of Peshawar University Teacher Association were also present during the meeting.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam

Ali assured provision of 30%, 35% and 17.5% increment in the salaries as well as that Vice Chancellors tenure wouldn't be extended as well as redressal of other grievances was ensured.

It is worthy to mention that employees of all four universities in the greater university's campus Peshawar at PUTA Chowk since last week.

E&SED observes Child Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED) observed International Children Day along with partner organizations at Government Shaheed Usama Zafar Sentinel Model High School, on Monday.

The event was jointly organized by E&SED, RDS and VSO while students from different schools along with teachers and officials of the district education office were present on the occasion.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa E&SED officials claimed that as many as four lac children have been enrolled in the schools while stressed for protection of marginalized segments of the society from harassment to physical violence.

District Education Officer Peshawar Sajjad Akhtar, DEO female Safia Amin, school's principal Malik Mir Daud Khan, Deputy Director Establishment Mushtaq Ahmad, DDEO Muhammad Arif, DDEO female Dr. Rana Gul, Regional Director AIOU Dr. Shafat-u-Rehman, MYRP Programme Manager Tariq Hayat Yousafzai along with officials of PRDS and VSO were present during the event.

The participants stressed upon importance of International Children Day and committed to increase enrollment at schools by mass campaign.

They stressed that community should ensure maximum enrollment in government schools by assuring sponsorship of marginalized children for their education.

Use of pasta causes zinc deficiency

PESHAWAR (APP): A recent research study conducted by PhD scholar Saud Khan, Department of Agronomy, University of Agriculture Peshawar has revealed that increased use of durum wheat products including pasta, macaroni, and noodles was causing zinc deficiency and other problems.

The scholar while defending his research paper on "Grain Quality and Yield Enhancement of Durum Wheat Using Different Priming Sources and Foliar Zinc Application at Various Growth Stages" concluded that use of zinc-rich durum wheat could resolve the problems of food security, dietary diversity, and zinc deficiency in this large segment of Pakistani population.

The study revealed that Pakistan's urban population

is growing at the fastest rate in the world at an estimated annual rate of about 1.8 percent, due to which the use of durum wheat has also increased.

The research study of the PhD scholar was endorsed by renowned professors from Germany and Turkey. Dr. Saud Khan successfully defended his research paper by answering the questions raised by the participants in the defense seminar held here on Monday.

Chairman Agronomy Prof Dr Habib Akbar, Director Farm Prof Dr Muhammad Arif, and other faculty members students and scholars were present on the occasion.

The participants congratulated the supervisor Professor Dr Inamullah and the scholar Dr Saud Khan for the successful defense.

Call for creating awareness on climate change

PESHAWAR (APP): The speakers of a dialogue on "Climate dialogue and Sustainable Agriculture" said that increasing awareness among farmers and stakeholders on climate change was vital for promoting sustainable agriculture.

Addressing the participants of the dialogue, the speakers and experts said that educating farmers about the impacts of climate change on their crops, water resources, and livelihoods can encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices.

This includes using drought-resistant crops, optimizing water management, and implementing agroforestry techniques, they said and noted that the governments, NGOs, and agricultural extension services could play a key role in disseminating information and providing support for sustainable farming practices to ensure resilience in

the face of a changing climate.

Vice Chancellor Agriculture University, Peshawar Professor Dr Jahan Bakht said that Pakistan being an agriculture country was badly affected by climate change, adding that the phenomenon was happening rapidly and increasing the financial and food related problems day by day.

He stressed on the students that to the farming community around them about these issues and also highlight the importance of water.

The event was organized by the Department of Agricultural Extension, Education and Communication of the University in collaboration with the Pak-US Alumni Network.

In the closing ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht, Dean Faculty of Rural Social Sciences Prof Dr Maqidullah Khan, Chairman Department of

Agricultural Extension, Education and Communication Prof Dr Muhammad Idris and Abdul Rahman of Pak US Alumni, faculty members and students of the University were present.

Professor Dr. Inamullah, Associate Professor Dr Saima Hashim, University Registrar and Director of Planning and Development Dr Rizwan Ahmed were the speakers of the climate dialogue while the organizer of the dialogue was Department of Agricultural Extension, Education and Communication Assistant Professor Dr Raheel Saqib.

They said that climate change can significantly impact agriculture through various means; rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events can lead to changes in crop yields, crop quality, and the distribution of pests and diseases.

Arrangements for conduct of MDCAT finalized

PESHAWAR, (APP): A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary Home Abid Majeed on Monday in connection with the preparations for Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) organized by Khyber Medical University (KMU).

Additional Secretaries HED/Health, VC KMU Prof Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Registrar KMU Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, Divisional Commissioners, Rescue 1112, Police and representatives of intelligence agencies participated.

The purpose of the meeting was to make the recent MDCAT examination clean and transparent.

Arrangements have been finalized and all the departments have submitted reports on their respective responsibilities. Instructions were issued to the stu-

dents to appear in the MDCAT test.

It should be remembered that the MDCAT test will be held in seven cities of the province in Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, Swat, Chakdara, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan on November 26, including four centers of Peshawar, Islamia Collegiate ground Peshawar, Hostel No. 2 Ground Peshawar University, Pakistan Forest Institute ground Peshawar University Public School Opposite Peshawar University, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KMU-IMS Kohat, Gomal Medical College DI Khan, Ayub Medical College Abbottabad, University of Malakand Chakdara and University of Swat Charbagh are also included.

Every candidate must download their roll number slip/ admit card from the KMU official website

(www.cas.kmu.edu.pk) and affix their recent photograph on the roll number slip. The candidates will be allowed to appear in the examination center only after taking their admit card and thumb impression.

If a candidate fails to bring original documents like Identity Card, Passport, Form B and admit card, he will not be allowed to appear in the test and no other document will be acceptable for appearing in the test. Traffic plans on the official website were shared for the convenience of the aspirants.

All the candidates will be provided ball point, clipboard and food packet, juice biscuits, napkins.

The candidates will be allowed to enter the examination center with empty hands and pockets. Candidates should not carry cell phones, smart digital

watches, hidden cameras, headphones, bluetooth, pen, pencil, clipboard, eraser, sharpener, calculator, books or notes, bag, purse, pouch, metal pen, credit card and bank ATM cards.

If anyone is found with a mobile phone or any other electronic devices inside the examination center or any other illegal device used during the examination, they will be handed over to the police team deployed at the examination center and an FIR will be logged against him/her.

The competent court may punish him with imprisonment or fine or both, the recovered device will be confiscated, his/her papers will be cancelled and henceforth the candidate will be debarred for two years from appearing in any examination conducted by KMU and will be considered as ineligible.

CTO visits Saddar Road to review flow of traffic

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan visited Saddar Road to review the traffic system and nine parking zones.

SP Cantt Inayat Ali also accompanied him during the visit. During the visit, Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan reviewed the flow of traffic and directed the traffic officials to take action against the encroaching mafia on a daily basis so that the citizens do not face any kind of problems.

He said that the traffic staff should clear the footpaths from the encroaching mafia so that the pedestrians do not face any kind of difficulties. The Chief Traffic Officer directed the authorities to take strict action against the violators of the no parking zone so that citizens do not park their vehicles on the side of the road while taking legal



action against the culprits.

CTO Qamar Hayat Khan has said that all capabilities should be used to improve the flow of traffic uninterrupted and any kind of

negligence will not be tolerated in this regard. I will continue to raise awareness for traffic rules and elimination of encroachments as it is yielding better results.

He said that the business community should cooperate with the traffic staff to eliminate encroachment from the city and ensure smooth flow of traffic.

PESCO arrests 2282 power pilferers, imposes Rs585.6m fines

PESHAWAR (APP): Following the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan and Secretary Power Division and directives of CEO Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), Qazi Muhammad Tahir, crack-down against power pilferers and defaulters continued unabated across the province.

According to Assistant Manager PR, PESCO on Monday, the task forces of the company conducted raids against power pilferers and defaulters in Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat, Bannu and Khyber circles and imposed heavy fines, besides arresting the power pilferers

Since the operations were started, the PESCO task forces have removed more than 15694 hooks and imposed fines amounting to Rs 585.6 million.

The PESCO task forces also registered more than

5295 FIRs and arrested 2281 power pilferers, the PESCO official said.

Power suspension in Besham, Nowshera notified

Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Besham Grid Station on 22nd November from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly, Thakot and Pattan Grid Stations related feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply, it said will remain suspended from Kholian Bala Grid Station on 22nd November from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly Haripur and Havelian Grid Stations related feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, power supply will remain suspended from Nowshera Industrial Grid Station on 22nd November from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly, con-

sumers of R.A Bazaar, Ziarat Kaka Sahib and Armored Core Colony, Bahadar Baba feeders will New Cantt, Aman Garh, face inconvenience.

Dry weather predicted for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted that mainly dry weather is expected over most districts of the province, while cold and partly cloudy in the upper parts.

It said that foggy conditions are expected over Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Peshawar, Swabi and D.I. Khan districts, as well as, over Motorway (M1) / Highways in late night & morning hours. The center advised the travelers on Motorway and highways to take precautionary measures.

During the last 24 hours cold and dry weather occurred in most districts of the province. Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was nil.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar 23/10, Chitral 20/02, Timergara 23/06, Dir 22/01, Mirkhani 26/04, Kalam 17/-01, Drosh 18/07, Saidu Sharif 23/06, Pattan 23/09, Malam Jabba 15/05, Takht Bhai 23/07, Kakul 19/05, Balakot 21/07, Parachinar 23/05, Bannu 26/09, Cherat 21/08, DI Khan City 26/12.

The lowest temperature recorded in the province was -01°C in Kalam.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa celebrates Universal Children's Day 2023



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF, Islamic Relief and Special Education Complex Hayatabad celebrated the Universal Children's Day 2023 under the theme "For Every

Child, Every Right". The event was organized with full participation of children from the Special Education & Women Empowerment Department, Peshawar and provided a dedicated opportunity to children with special needs an opportunity to express themselves through various activities during the event. Madam Justice Retired

Irshad Qaiser the Honourable Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Department, graced the event as Chief Guest. It was also attended by Mr. Muhammad Farooq, Additional Secretary, Social Welfare Department. Said Ali Bakhs, Director Special Education Complex,

Peshawar, extended a warm welcome and shared insights during the welcome note, setting the stage for the day's activities.

The day's proceedings marked our unwavering commitment to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the inclusive vision outlined in the Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2010.

The event showcased performances by children, including those with special needs, underscoring our collective dedication to creating a society where every child's rights are not only recognized but actively protected and promoted.

The collaborative efforts for today's events involved key stakeholders, including Mr. Said Ali Bakhs, Director Special Education Complex, Peshawar; Mr. Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Chief Protection Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child

Protection & Welfare Commission; Syed Naheed Shad, Area Program Manager, Islamic Relief Pakistan; Mr. Anwar Iqbal, Director Operation NCHD Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and special thanks to Sohail Ahmad, the Child Protection Specialist from UNICEF Field Office Peshawar, who played a key role in the collaboration process.

Mr. Sohail added in his speech that this day is a day of self reflection for all us as duty-bearers. He also appreciated the efforts of KP government including the KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission and the civil society organization collectively working towards the fulfillment of children's rights.

He also reiterated that today's theme for celebrating the universal children's day is a reminder to us of ensuring the every child should get every right; without discrimination of any kind. He also shared

with the participations some of the key child protection issues and challenges including child labour, child marriages, violence against children and lack of universal birth registration and emphasized on systemic solutions to these through collaborative efforts and right prioritization.

Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Chief Protection Officer, emphasized in his speech the pioneering role of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in introducing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection & Welfare Act on October 4, 2010. He highlighted that the Act serves as a focal point for effective supervision and coordination of child rights matters at provincial and local levels, implementing policies for the prevention, protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children at risk.

Ijaz Muhammad Khan further stated, "We are managing and supervising

Child Protection Units currently operational in 12 settled and 9 Newly Merged Districts. At the divisional level in the district, we have the privilege of having eight Child Protection Courts, and the KPCPWC has provided services in 31,570 cases, including 19,647 boys cases, 11,916 girls cases, and 7 transgender cases."

"At the district level, we have child protection committees working under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioners, and we are expanding our child protection system into the community level," he added.

In his vote of thanks, Additional Secretary Muhammad Farooq expressed gratitude for the collaborative spirit that made the event possible. He acknowledged the importance of joint efforts in aligning initiatives with UNCRC principles and the mandates of the Commission, emphasizing the need for a society where

every child's rights are championed and upheld.

Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment, Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser, in her closing remarks, commended the collaborative spirit that made the event possible. She underscored the Government of Pakistan's commitment to the protection, welfare, and overall well-being of children, as outlined in the Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2010.

The Minister acknowledged the pivotal role of partners, parents, teachers, and civil society organizations in shaping the future of the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As the event concluded, the Minister expressed confidence in a brighter and safer future for the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urging continued collaboration and collective efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in the province.



In brief

World Children' Day marked F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The district administration in collaboration with the Child Protection Unit arranged a function at the district assembly hall here on Monday to mark World Children' Day. The additional assistant commissioner Hazrat Bilal was chief guest on the occasion while students, their parents and social workers attended the function. The district youth officer Shehzad Tariq, social activist Ebrash Pasha, assistant director NCHD Muhammad Asad Khan and in-charge Welfare Home Chakdara Naik Badshah were also in attendance. The students of various schools from Timergara, Munda, Manial and Ashiana Gul Welfare Organization presented songs, speeches and tableaux and got applause from the audience. The Child Protection Unit's assistant director Muhammad Tayyab explained the aims and importance of World Children's Day. He also informed the participants about the Child Protection Act 2010, juvenile justice system Act 2018 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. He said the UN Convention covered all aspects of a child's life and ensured the civil, political, social and cultural rights of children. The AAC said the administration was playing its active role to ensure the implementation of child labor laws and various acts regarding the protection of children. He said the administration would extend its full support to the Child Protection Unit in launching an awareness campaign regarding the children's rights in schools, colleges and religious seminaries. Ali Akbar, assistant director Labor department, explained the Prohibition of Employment of Children Act 2023 and the Bonded Labor System Abolition Act 2015. Human rights activists Akbar Khan highlighted the various laws of the United Nations regarding the protection of children and emphasized the steps to make their practical implementation. He demanded that full protection, medical aid and food supply be ensured to the children in the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Religious scholar Maulana Abdul Rahman Huzifi said that the religion Islam had recognized the children's rights from the mother's lap to the death which no other religion in the world had recognized. He said that parents had been made duty bound to provide food, education, health care and basic needs to their children. Make children a responsible citizen so that they can contribute to the welfare of the society.

CPO orders strict action F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (Retired) Muhammad Ali Zia has directed police officers to take strict action against display of weapons and firing across the district. In a statement here on Monday, the CPO said that display of weapons and firing was an illegal act which created a law and order situation. Hence, all police officers including circle officers and station house officers should take stern action against the violators, he ordered. He also directed the station house officers (SHOs) to make announcements through loudspeakers of mosques in addition to displaying banners at conspicuous places to sensitize people about harms of display of weapons and firing especially during wedding ceremonies and other festivities.



SARGODHA: Students presenting flowers to SOS Village children during an event organized by NCHD on the eve of World Children's Day at SOS Village.

Law & order situation Traders hold protest in Larkana

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Against the growing unrest in Larkana district and the lack of street lights in the city and against the weakness of the police, the businessmen protested against the weakness of the police. Sikandar Ali Dinari and others protested and said that the people of the entire district are worried due to the increase in crime in Larkana, while the silence of the police is surprising.

The SEPCO authority has suffered a loss of crores of rupees, but even on Monday, the police has remained a silent spectator. Industry District Larkana President Ahmad Ali Sheikh said that the caretaker government has com-

pletely failed to restore law and order, while regarding Larkana, Sindh Home Minister Brigadier Haris Nawaz said that the law and order situation in Larkana district in two weeks two months ago.

While the crime incidents are continuously increasing during one and a half months, while millions of rupees have been looted from the traders, on the other hand, various political parties have restored peace and order at Jinnah Bagh Chowk, a suburb of Larkana. A dharna was held during a protest demonstration, where the protesters demanded the caretaker government of Sindh to remove SSP Larkana Abdul Rahim Shirazi posted in Larkana immediately,

while various business centers of the city, Bandar Road, Resham Street and the series of looting by criminals from the people in the areas is increasing day by day.

Other than that, many times unknown people have stolen medicines for various diseases including air conditioners from different places of the famous Chandka Medical College Hospital of Larkana district, which has not been found yet, he demanded from the caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh and the Chief of Army Staff that the Rangers should be deployed to end the growing unrest in Larkana district so that the people would be puzzled and restless.

3500 schools closed in Balochistan

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Education, Abdul Qadir Bakhsh Baloch on Monday said that some 3,500 schools in the province had been closed owing to shortage of teachers during the last two months.

He said, "The Provincial Education Department has been facing acute shortage of teachers. Due to political and departmental constraints, the department has not been able to recruit the teachers since 2019. Moreover, over 300 teachers are retiring every month."

Qadir Bakhsh stated that without enrolling children in schools, it was

impossible to increase the literacy rate in the province. He said the caretaker government had decided to upgrade 150 primary schools to middle in the province, four each in every district. To a question, he said that due to the last year's flood, more than 5,500 schools in the province were destroyed, and only 50 of them had been repaired so far. "The international organizations have assured their all-out support to repair the damaged schools," he added.

The provincial minister for education said the government had decided to establish a model school

which would help in the promotion of education in the province. As per official data, about 0.8 million children of school-going age are out of school in the province, and some 1,964 schools have no building. Half of the total 12,000 primary schools in Balochistan have one teacher.

Likewise, 11,000 schools do not have electricity, 10,000 do not have water and 1,800 do not have washroom facilities. "More than 80% of the budget of Education Department is spent on the salaries of teachers and other employees," the minister said.

Rahim made member of JUI-F central executive council

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The JUI-F provincial chief senator Maulana Attaur Rehman on Monday appointed prominent educationist and religious scholar Muhammad Rahim Haqqani as member of the party central general council. Muhammad Rahim, a retired school headmaster, has authored a total of 14 books on different topics and published several research papers in newspapers so far.

He also served as advisor to the chief minister on education during the MMA government from 2002 to 2008. He also visited the USA on the invitation of the state department. Later he also officially visited the United Kingdom and Bangladesh. The JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din has congratulated him on his new position and hoped that he would better serve the party and the public in Dir.

Fishers Director: Mr Sajjad Khan, a grade 18 officer assumed the charge

of his duties as district director fisheries in Lower Dir here on Monday. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa secretary livestock and fisheries approved his transfer and directed him to take over the charge of his new task.

The official had also served in the district as deputy director fisheries in the recent past. Talking to local journalists he said that illegal fishing would be strictly checked and the people involved in it would be punished.

Cop shot dead in Quetta

QUETTA (INP): Armed men gunned down a policeman in jurisdiction of Hanna Orak police station in Quetta on Monday.

According to details, armed men targeted the cop identified as Ghulam Murtaza while he was on his way to home after performing duty. The cop received five bullets in different body parts which proved fatal and assailants fled the scene. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Two men shot dead

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Two men were shot dead while another injured by their rivals over a land dispute in Hafizabad District on Monday. The firing incident was reported from Hafizabad's suburban area of Chak Sabu.

The slain men were identified as Yousaf and Qaisar. Police have taken the bodies into custody and shifted them to a hospital, while initiating an investigation into the murder.

The Punjab Food Authority officials raided over two dozen marriage halls in Hafizabad and slapped heavy fines on them for serving expired items to the guests. During their raids on 25 wedding venues, the PFA personnel wasted expired food items and imposed heavy fines on halls for substandard arrangements and ignoring previous directives.

Drive against encroachment

F.P. Report

HANGU: District administration started crackdown against encroachment and profiteers by demolishing cabins as well as imposed fine on shopkeepers respectively, on Monday.

According to details, deputy commissioner Hangu directed assistant commissioner for actions against encroachment and profiteers on several public's complaints.

Assistant Commissioner Hangu-I Atif Khan Afridi said that administration is committed for elimination of encroachments from the premises and establishment of law by ensuring good governance to assure provision of edible items on reasonable prices.

Universal Children Day observed in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: The child protection unit Buner district observed Universal Children Day by organizing a function at Government High School Ghazikhanay, on Monday.

The CPU Buner coordinator Ehsanullah Khan Social Case Worker M. Rouf Khan Journalist Abid, the school principal Ibrar Ali Khan the teaching staff and students largely attended the gathering.

On the occasion the CPU Buner Coordinator Ehsanullah Khan delivered speech about responsibilities of the CPU and servic-

es and facilitation for protection of children. He sent a message it was due right of every child to make sure every right him adding the child protection court in Buner would make sure rights to every child while the CPU Buner staff would facilitate and seve every child free of cost.

CPU coordinator asked children under 18 years of age to contact 1121 Universal number in case of any breach to their rights physically mentally and sexually. He asked parents to have contact uncase of reporting any sort of crime against their children so as to timely ensure legal

course and psychoanalysis followed therapy of the victim for rehabilitation and proceeding the case onward.

The school teachers and students also addressed and best highlighted about rights of children and obligations of the society and assured cooperation with the CPU Buner in larger interests of the children and civilized society as well. The school principal Ibrar Ali Khan extended thanks to the CPU Buner for conducting an important event in the school and also thanked the teaching staff the students for making the event successful.

Sports' competitions among schools concluded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The annual sports' competitions among the government and private high and higher secondary schools of Lower Dir concluded here on Monday.

The government high school (GHS) Mian Banda got first position in cricket, government higher secondary school (GHSS) Sarai Bala in hockey, GHSS Mayar in football, Danish Public School Biari in volleyball, GHSS Lal Qila in badminton, GHSS Ziarat Talash in basketball, GHSS Samarbagh in handball, GHS Khadagzai in tug of war, GHS Khungi in table tennis, GHS Odigram in Huns e Qirat, GHS Shamshi Khan Talash in Hamd, GHS Timergara in Naat, GHSS Luqman Banda in national anthem, GHSS Khall in milli nagma, the Intellectual School and College Talash in Urdu speech, GHS Timergara in English speech, GHS Takuro in quiz, GHSS Chakdara in Urdu essay, GHS Shawa in painting, GHS Kandaro Khall in long jump, GHSS Samarbagh in high jump, shotfit throw, discus throw, GHS Shamshi Khan Talash in

triple jump, Iqra Public School Samarbagh in 100 meter race, 200 meter race and 400 meter race, GHSS Saddo in 800 meter race and 1500 meter race.

The winning teams would take part in the divisional level competitions to be started this month. The games were played at different grounds at Chakdara, Talash, Saddo, Lal Qila, Timergara, Munda and Khall. The event continued for the last 20 days and hundreds of schools' players participated in various games. The district education officer Lower Dir Mahboob Ilahi and general secretary of the sports' organizing committee Principal Salahud Din appreciated the schools' management for actively participating in the games. Speaking at a concluding ceremony at Saddo they said that students of more than 200 high and higher secondary schools showcased their talent during the event.

IJT protest: The Islami Jamiat Tulba, University of Malakand has threatened to boycott the Governor Haji Ghulam Ali visit to the varsity to address convocation on Nov 23 if its demands

were not accepted. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club here the other day, the IJT nazim UoM Hanifullah, provincial secretary information Roman Khan and others alleged the varsity had become a hub of issues but the administration did nothing to resolve it. They said that instead of resolving the students' issues they were being harassed by the management.

They said the varsity's software engineering department was not registered with the engineering council and its graduates faced difficulty after getting degrees. They said the archeology and Urdu departments lacked permanent faculty members that badly affected students' studies. They said the library database had crashed due to which students were facing difficulty in getting clearance. The IJT leaders alleged that several deserving students had suffered due to lack of a transparent system of scholarships distribution. They threatened to hold a protest rally during the Governor's visit if their genuine demands were not accepted.

Al-Khidmat chief visits holding Center for Afghans

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Central head of Al-Khidmat Foundation, Pakistan Dr Hafeez-ur-Rehman reviewed arrangements for the facilitation of repatriated Afghan Families during his visit to the Holding Center, Landi Kotal, on Monday.

Flanked by provincial chief of the Foundation Khalid Waqas and local leader of Jamat-e-Islami, Khyber Dr Hafeez-ur-

Rehman met with Afghan immigrants and had breakfast with them. He also distributed sweaters among the children of the retreated Afghan families.

Speaking on the occasion the visiting guest said that from the day first, Al-Khidmat Foundation was the front line organization to serve the Afghan immigrants and strived hard to ease them while returning back to their homes.

Serving humanity is the motto of the Al-Khidmat

Foundation and it will continue its services without discrimination in natural and human made disasters, he opined. He appreciated local volunteers of the organization who left no stone unturned to work for the betterment of repatriated Afghan nationals. Earlier, Dr Hafeez-ur-Rehman examined Al-Khidmat camp where he was briefed of the services, placed for the relief of the Afghan immigrants.

Research imperative to deal with modern-era challenges

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan has stressed the need for tangible integrated research and said it was imperative to deal with challenges of the modern era.

He was presiding over a programme project review workshop of the Endowment Fund

Secretariat here on Monday. He said that research-based solutions of agricultural problems were being found which would improve the economic condition of farmers in addition to increasing per acre production.

He said that the country was facing water scarcity, soil infertility and other problems. To overcome the challenges, we need to

adopt modern agricultural technologies, he added. Pro-Vice Chancellor/Dean Agriculture Prof Dr Muhammad Sarwar Khan said that UAF newly developed herbicide tolerant and insect resistant transgenic sugarcane varieties would help increase productivity and farmers' profit. The university is making efforts to develop agriculture on modern lines, he added.

World fisheries day - developing fishing communities

Dr. Nazia Sher

WORLD Fisheries Day (WFD) is celebrated globally on November 21 since 2015. On World Fisheries Day 2023, individuals, communities, and organizations worldwide are encouraged to take action. This may include participating in local events, organizing educational programs, or supporting initiatives that promote sustainable fisheries and the well-being of fishing communities.

As per the Economic Survey (2022-23), the fisheries sector in Pakistan demonstrated commendable growth, with a sectoral expansion of 1.44%, a notable rise from the previous year's 0.35%. In the fiscal year 2023, the overall fish production reached 700,000 metric tons, comprising 475,000 MT from

marine sources and 225,000 MT from inland sources. This marks a modest 0.6% increase compared to the preceding year, where marine and inland productions were 468,000 MT and 228,000 MT, respectively. At the core of this progress are the fishing communities, encompassing over 300,000 individuals reliant on various fishing activities for their livelihoods. These communities go beyond economic contributions, acting as custodians of a heritage intricately connected to marine life and serving as the social and economic pillars of coastal regions. Noteworthy is Pakistan's strategic utilization of the export potential in its fisheries sector in recent years, with a consistent uptrend in seafood and fish product exports.

The theme "Developing Fishing Communities" resonates with Pakistan's Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). By empowering these communities, it directly addresses SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), contributing to economic well-being. The emphasis on education aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) while promoting alternative livelihoods supports SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Moreover, the focus on stewardship is in harmony with SDG 14 (Life Below Water), underscoring the significance of preserving marine ecosystems. This theme encapsulates a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, intertwining economic, social, and environmental aspects to ensure the welfare of fishing communities and the conservation of marine resources in Pakistan.

The historical overview of

mariculture in Pakistan underscores the intricate relationship with fisherman communities, revealing a sector often overlooked. The decline in oyster culture and sea ranching post-independence impacted coastal communities reliant on marine resources. Challenges faced in finfish and shrimp mariculture projects directly affect fisherman communities, as economic opportunities diminish. The setbacks in crab fattening, once a thriving activity, highlight the vulnerability of these communities. Addressing the overlooked mariculture sector becomes imperative to uplift and sustain the livelihoods of fisherman communities, emphasizing the need for holistic and inclusive development strategies.

Pakistan's seafood sector achieved a noteworthy \$500 million export value in FY 2022-23

but faces challenges, including U.S. and EU bans on shrimp exports impacting 300+ processing units. This sector, contributing 2.01% to agriculture and 0.39% to GDP, is pivotal for the well-being of fishing communities. The bans resulted in closures affecting livelihoods, necessitating comprehensive measures like legal frameworks and infrastructure development. Collaborative efforts are vital for advocacy and responsible fishing practices. A commitment to sustainability by businesses can positively impact the 1% directly employed and 600,000 indirectly benefiting individuals, ensuring long-term prosperity.

Challenges persist in Pakistan's fisheries sector, underscoring the vulnerabilities faced by fishing communities. The historical decline in traditional practices like oyster cul-

ture and sea ranching, coupled with setbacks in mariculture projects, directly impacts the livelihoods of over 300,000 individuals reliant on various fishing activities. Moreover, the recent bans on shrimp exports by the U.S. and EU have exacerbated the situation, leading to closures of more than 300 processing units, posing severe threats to the economic stability of fishing communities.

In essence, NIMA's strategic advocacy and community-focused initiatives can steer Pakistan's fisheries sector toward sustainable development, ensuring the well-being of fishing communities. The institute's pivotal role lies in championing inclusive policies for a prosperous future in the sector.

The writer is associated with the National Institute of Maritime Affairs.



Palestinians fleeing Gaza recount horror

GAZA STRIP: Thousands of displaced Palestinians have been forced to leave Gaza City and northern Gaza, making their way to the central region of the coastal territory under attack by Israel. But many Palestinians described the so-called "safe corridors" that Israel announced to allow for their evacuation as replete with horror.

Ahmad al-Ruweishi had been staying at Al Fakhoura school in the Jabalia refugee camp when the Israeli army bombed it, killing at least 100 civilians. He said he helped move the remains of at least 20 people killed, as their bodies were torn into pieces. "I had to leave to protect my family," he said. "It was a tough journey and the soldiers shot at me just because I was pushing my mother in her wheelchair."

Al-Ruweishi said the Israeli soldiers made the men strip naked and arrested some of them. "You could not look behind you, and if you dropped anything, they would shoot if you bent down to pick it up," he said. The United Nations says at least 1.6 million Palestinians have been internally displaced, with a majority of them staying at UN-run schools. Others are staying with host families or in hospitals. For weeks, the Israeli military has called on the Palestinians in northern Gaza to flee to the south, but has continued to target and bomb civilians even there.

"We saw death in every colour on Salah al-Din Street," said Mahmoud al-Madhoun, referring to the main arterial road that connects the north with the south. "We saw burned-out cars and dead bodies on the road, with dogs eating away at their flesh," he said. "We couldn't even dignify them by covering them up with blankets." Al-Madhoun was staying at al-Shifa Hospital before he managed to leave. He narrated the terror that patients and displaced people at the hospital felt when Israeli soldiers raided the complex and targeted it with bombs. "When we were able to finally leave the hospital, there were Israeli snipers stationed at the roads," he said. "They had erected dirt barriers



ers and used surveillance technology that took our eye print. It was frightening. We never thought we would see the soldiers in the heart of our city where we lived and worked."

As there were no cars or even ambulances for the sick and injured, al-Madhoun said, they covered the long journey on foot. He said the Israeli soldiers ordered them to hold their IDs in hand. He also saw men, women and children being taken away by the soldiers, their fate unknown. "These are not 'safe corridors', these are 'deception corridors,'" he said. "They humiliate us, take us away, or shoot at us." The most vulnerable patients at al-Shifa Hospital - dozens of prematurely born babies in critical condition - have been evacuated to the south of the Gaza Strip. Of the 39 babies who had been left without incubators when al-Shifa Hospital was left short of fuel and medical supplies after Israeli forces raided on Wednesday, 31 have made it out. Mohammed Zaqout, director-general of hospitals in Gaza, told journalists that "all 31 premature babies in al-Shifa Hospital ... have been evacuated" along with three doctors and two nurses, and "preparations are under way" for them to enter Egypt.

Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from the Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, said the babies were on their way to southern Gaza hospitals. Six Palestine Red Crescent

Society (PRCS) ambulances transported them, in an effort coordinated with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the group said in a post on its Facebook page. Israeli forces ordered doctors, patients and displaced people at Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital to evacuate the medical compound, forcing some to leave by gunpoint, doctors and Palestinian officials told Al Jazeera. A WHO team that visited the hospital reported that there were still hundreds of patients there, including many in extremely critical condition, trauma patients with severely infected wounds, and others with spinal injuries who are unable to move. "Patients and health staff with whom they spoke were terrified for their safety and health, and pleaded for evacuation," the agency said, describing al-Shifa as a death zone. Doctors said that four babies had died during the raid.

The babies were transferred to the south of Gaza "in preparation for their transfer to the Emirates Hospital in Rafah", the PRCS said. Later in the day, Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesperson for the Health Ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza, told a news conference that the babies had been moved to Tal al-Sultan Hospital in Rafah and will be sent to Egyptian hospitals with their families tomorrow. — Aljazeera

Orbán says Ukraine is 'light years away' from joining EU

BUDAPEST (AP): Hungary's prime minister said that Ukraine is "light years away" from joining the European Union, further signaling that his government is likely to present a roadblock to Kyiv's ambitions to join the bloc.

Speaking at a biannual congress of his nationalist Fidesz party, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said he and his government would "resist" talks scheduled for mid-December on whether to formally invite Ukraine to start membership negotiations. Admitting a new country requires unanimous approval from all existing member countries, giving Orbán a powerful veto.

At the party congress in Budapest, he was reelected as the president of Fidesz for the 11th straight time since 2003. Orbán said afterward that standing in the way of Ukraine joining the EU would be one of his government's top priorities in the coming months. "Our task will be to correct the mistaken promise to start negotiations with Ukraine, since Ukraine is now light years away from the European Union," Orbán said. The EU's executive commission earlier this month recommended beginning accession talks with Ukraine, saying the government in Kyiv "has shown a remarkable level of institutional strength, determination and ability to function."

But Orbán, one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's only EU allies, has argued that negotiations should not begin with a country that is at war, and that Ukraine's membership would reorient the 27-member EU's system of distributing funds to member countries. Some critics have speculated that Hungary is using its resistance to leverage concessions concerning billions in funding that Brussels has withheld from Budapest over concerns that the government has failed to uphold rule-of-law and human rights standards. Orbán also has threatened to block an EU plan to provide a four-year, 50 billion-euro (nearly \$53 million) aid package to Ukraine. He has criticized Ukraine over what he says is the violation of the rights of ethnic Hungarians in western Ukraine to study in their own language. In September, he told the Hungarian parliament that his government would "not support Ukraine on any international issue" until the language rights of the minority are restored.

Hundreds of Thais being evacuated

TAIPEI: Over 200 Thai nationals caught in the crossfire of clashes between soldiers and armed ethnic-minority groups in northern Myanmar are being rescued and flown back to Thailand, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced. Myanmar's military, which took power in a 2021 coup, is battling armed resistance from an alliance of three ethnic-minority groups and pro-democracy fighters. The fighting is especially intense in the country's north, with armed fighters taking over key towns near the Chinese border and blocking trade routes.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry says they are working with Myanmar authorities to evacuate a group of 266 Thais, along with an undisclosed number of Filipinos and Singaporeans, who are stuck in the town of Laukaing in the northern Shan State. The group will receive clearance to enter China and will then fly from the Chinese city of Kunming on two chartered flights to Bangkok. There, they will be screened for human trafficking and criminal records, the foreign ministry said. The groups are expected to arrive in Thailand, the Bangkok Post reported. Authorities previously said some people trapped in Myanmar were victims of human trafficking, and others might be involved in telecom scams. Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, has become a hub for telecom and other online fraud, according to the United Nations, with hundreds of thousands of people trafficked by criminal gangs and forced to work in scam centres and other illegal operations. — Aljazeera

Lai names Taiwan's former US envoy as election running mate

BANGKOK: William Lai, the frontrunner for the presidency in Taiwan's 2024 election, has named Hsiao Bi-khim, the self-ruled island's former envoy to the United States, as his running mate. Lai, the candidate for the governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the man leading most opinion polls ahead of the January 13 election, said 52-year-old Hsiao was the right person for the job.

In a post on his Facebook page, Lai said he would formally present Hsiao as his running mate on Monday afternoon. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it had accepted her resignation. "I believe that Bi-khim is definitely an excellent person when it comes to Taiwan's diplomatic work today, and she is a rare diplomatic talent in our country," Lai said. "I am confident that, together with Bi-khim, we will succeed in the final 50 days to unite the consensus of the people and unite all forces to win the election, and allow Taiwan to continue to grow on a steady path forward."

Taiwan is heading to the polls at a time when Beijing has become increasingly assertive in its claims to the democratic island, which it says is part of China. It has not ruled out the use of force to achieve its goal. The DPP, which won power

in 2016 under President Tsai Ing-wen, has said it is up to Taiwan's people to choose their future. Like Lai, Hsiao is despised by China, which has twice placed sanctions on her, most recently in April, calling her an "independence die-hard". China's Taiwan Affairs Office last week referred to Lai and Hsiao as an "independence double act", adding that Taiwan's people were "very clear" about what their partnership meant for the "situation in the Taiwan Strait". It did not elaborate. China carried out military drills around Taiwan in August, after Lai returned from a brief visit to the US. The Chinese military said its exercises were a "serious warning against Taiwan independence separatist forces colluding with external forces to provoke".

Hsiao became Taipei's de facto ambassador to the US in 2020, and is widely regarded as a well-connected diplomat who is adept in navigating the geopolitical tensions between Washington and Beijing. Rupert Hammond-Chambers, president of the US-Taiwan Business Council who has known Hsiao since the 1990s, said she was a "formidable politician", and would add much-needed diplomatic and security heft to Lai's ticket. "Bi-khim's relationships in [Washington] DC

will be invaluable to President Lai if he is elected. She's going to bring all of those relationships into his government and he doesn't have those," he told the Reuters news agency. The US is the island's most important international supporter and arms supplier although, like most countries, it has no formal ties with Taipei.

The DPP's smooth handling of its election candidates stands in contrast with efforts by Taiwan's two main opposition parties to agree on a joint ticket. The largest opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), which traditionally favours closer ties with Beijing, is locked in a dispute with the smaller Taiwan People's Party about which of their candidates should run as president and which as vice president after initially agreeing to work together.

The deadline to register presidential candidates with the election commission is this Friday. Hsiao was born in Japan to a Taiwanese father and an American mother and initially worked in the office of then-President Chen Shui-bian, also from the DPP, and then as a party lawmaker. Unusually in Taiwan, she uses a Taiwanese Hokkien spelling of her name in English to underline her identity as being Taiwanese and not Chinese. — Aljazeera

UN plastic treaty talks grapple with debate

NAIROBI (Reuters) -A third round of United Nations negotiations to try to deliver the world's first treaty to control plastic pollution has drawn more than 500 proposals from governments, participants said. Negotiators, who spent a week meeting in the Kenyan capital at talks known as INC3, have until the end of next year to strike a deal for the control of plastics, which produce an estimated 400 million tonnes of waste every year.

The plastics industry, oil and petrochemical exporters, including Russia and Saudi Arabia, have said a global deal should promote recycling and reuse of plastic, but environmental campaigners and some governments say much less needs to be produced in the first place. Environmental group Greenpeace said a successful deal would require the United States and the European Union to show greater leadership than they have so far. "The hard truth is that INC3 has failed to deliver on its core objective: delivering a mandate to prepare a first draft of a treaty text," Graham Forbes, head of

delegation for Greenpeace, said.

"This is not progress. This is chaos," he said referring to the number of submissions. Two more rounds of talks will take place next year to try to finalise the deal. A proposal to hold an extra session before the next round in Canada, known as intersessional talks, failed to advance in the final plenary meeting, participants said. Bethanie Carney Almroth, an eco-toxicologist at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, who was involved in the talks, said the world was confronting a huge challenge. "Plastics are connected to climate change, to biodiversity loss and other major threats and crises that we as the human population are facing on the planet," she said.

There was no immediate comment from the United Nations. Stewart Harris, a spokesman for the International Council of Chemicals Association, an industry body that favours measures like re-using plastic containers as opposed to production curbs, said the Nairobi talks had delivered good ideas. A proposal by Switzerland and Uruguay

to hold more discussions on curbing harmful polymers and chemicals of concern garnered support from more than 100 members states. But some participants were disappointed by what they called the lack of a clear path towards an effective deal. "Major fossil fuel producers and exporters stalled efforts to move forward in an efficient manner," said Tadesse Amera, co-chair of the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), a global network of non-governmental organisations. Less than 10% of plastic waste is recycled, the UN Environment Programme says, while at least 14 million tonnes end up in oceans every year, the International Union for Conservation of Nature says. Canada, Kenya, and the European Union were among those who said plastic production needed to be limited, while a coalition of Russia, Saudi Arabia and others has sought to emphasise recycling. Members of the Saudi delegation at the talks declined to talk to Reuters, while Russian delegates could not immediately be reached for comment.

Qatar: Minor challenges to Israel-Hamas captive deal

DOHA: Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has said that only "minor" challenges remain to a deal to release some of the more than 200 people taken captive into Gaza after Hamas's attack on Israel last month. Sheikh Mohammed, a former foreign minister, gave few additional details or a timeline.

"The challenges that remain in the negotiations are very minor compared to the bigger challenges. They are more logistical; they are more practical," he told a joint press conference with the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. Qatar has been acting as an intermediary in negotiations to free those taken captive in Hamas's surprise attack on Israel on October 7, in which at least 1,200 people were killed. After the attack, Israel launched a relentless air and ground campaign on the besieged Gaza Strip, bombarding the densely-populated territory in an effort to destroy Hamas. More than 13,000 people have been killed in the weeks since.

Borrell, who was due to meet Qatar's emir before

travelling to Jordan, called for the "unconditional release" of all captives and condemned Hamas for the attack. "There's no hierarchy between horrors, one horror doesn't justify another horror," he said, urging an end to the escalating violence and the creation of "sustainable peace" in the region. The Reuters news agency reported on November 15 that Qatari mediators had been seeking a deal between Israel and Hamas to exchange 50 captives in return for a three-day ceasefire that would help boost emergency aid shipments to Gaza civilians, citing an official briefed on the talks. At the time, the official said general outlines had been agreed, but that Israel was still negotiating details. The Washington Post newspaper reported a tentative agreement had been reached to free the women and children among the captives in exchange for a pause in fighting.

Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper said all parties would halt combat operations for at least five days with the captives to be released in small groups. The US newspaper's report was

denied by the White House, which said discussions on a deal were continuing. United States President Joe Biden told reporters he was not in a position to say when the captives might be freed. "I want to make sure they're out and then I'll tell you," he said at an event in Virginia. Sheikh Mohammed said that such reports were "counterproductive" and that the negotiating process went through ups and downs. "I think that I'm now more confident that we are close enough to reach a deal that can bring the people safely back to their homes," he said. The talks are continuing as Israel prepares to expand its ground offensive against Hamas into Gaza's southern half.

The US, Israel's main ally, has urged caution, as Gaza's 2.3 million people struggle to find anywhere safe to stay out of the line of fire. The civilian death toll in Gaza was "staggering and unacceptable," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said as he renewed his appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. Israel has so far refused all calls for a ceasefire. — Aljazeera

Argentina elects outsider Javier Milei on platform of radical reform

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina has elected libertarian outsider Javier Milei as its next president, taking a chance on the eccentric economist's programme of radical economic reform after decades of stagnation. Milei's win heralds a dramatic shake-up of the Latin American country's economy and institutions amid public anger over high inflation and record poverty rates under the centre-left Peronist coalition.

In an address to Argentinians, Milei said his victory marked the beginning of the "reconstruction of Argentina." "Today begins the end of Argentina's decline," he said. "Today ends the impoverishing model of the omnipresent state, which only benefits some while the majority suffers." In the capital Buenos Aires, hundreds of Milei supporters honked horns, set off fireworks, and chanted his popular refrain against the political elite. "Out with all of them!", as rock music played. Economic Minister Sergio Massa earlier conceded defeat as provisional results in the run-off election showed Milei with 56

percent of the vote to his 44 percent, with nearly 90 percent of votes counted. "Obviously the results are not what we had hoped for, and I have spoken to Javier Milei to congratulate him and wish him well, because he is the president that the majority of Argentines have elected for the next four years," Massa said. Milei, a self-described "anarcho-capitalist", has promised a series of radical reforms, including slashing public spending by 15 percent, abolishing the central bank and switching to the Argentinian peso to the United States dollar.

The 53-year-old political maverick, whose abrasive style has drawn comparisons with former US President Donald Trump, has also staked out conservative positions on social issues, opposing abortion and sex education, and railing against political correctness. He has also questioned the death toll under Argentina's dictatorship, attacked Pope Francis and denied that humans are responsible for climate change. "I think his election reflects a disastrous government that was neverthe-

less strong enough, due to the deep roots of Peronism, to reach the runoff, and thus allow an outsider such as Milei to become the one standard bearer for the entirely justifiable desire for change," Felipe Campante, an expert in Latin American politics at Johns Hopkins University, told Al Jazeera. Milei's diatribes against the "thieving" political class struck a chord with Argentinians, particularly young men, amid rising poverty and triple-digit inflation in the Latin American country, which has stumbled from economic crisis to crisis for decades. "I think what moved me the most was the simple way he explained concepts," David Urbani, a 20-year-old economics student at the National University of Mar del Plata, told Al Jazeera ahead of the election. "The guy is an academic, not a politician." Alan Quiroga, a 28-year-old Uber driver in Buenos Aires, said he was first drawn to Milei when he saw him on television talking passionately about Argentina's "golden age" in the early 20th century. "What he wants to

implement is what they do in the United States, in Spain, in normal countries," Quiroga told Al Jazeera before the vote. "What we are experiencing here is going towards Venezuela, Cuba." Milei will face a daunting set of challenges when he takes office on December 10, including government coffers that are in the red, a \$44bn debt programme with the International Monetary Fund and inflation approaching 150 percent. He also faces a divided legislature that threatens to constrain him from implementing his radical vision. Campante said there was a high risk of instability due to Milei's weak political support and the difficult economic situation. "He seems attached to economic ideas that are very risky, to say the least - eg dollarization," Campante said. "If he doubles down on them, things risk going very badly. If he changes course and chooses a more orthodox and conciliatory approach, then things could be better, but oftentimes characters like him are unable to choose a moderate path." — Aljazeera

Russian doctors call for release of imprisoned artist

LONDON (AP): More than 100 Russian doctors signed an open letter published that demands the immediate release of an artist and musician who was sentenced to seven years in prison for swapping supermarket price tags with antiwar messages.

The letter calling for Sasha Skochilenko to be freed was addressed to Russian President Vladimir Putin and warned that time in prison could lead to a "significant deterioration" in the 33-year-old artist's health. Skochilenko was "diagnosed with a number of severe chronic diseases that require proper medical supervision and a special diet," states the letter, which goes on to note the doctors' indignation at the "obvious injustice of the verdict." A Russian court sentenced Skochilenko on Thursday. She was arrested in her native St. Petersburg in April 2022 and charged with spreading false information about the military with her messages opposing the war in Ukraine.

"The Russian army bombed an arts school in

Mariupol. Some 400 people were hiding in it from the shelling," one replaced price tag read. Another said, "Russian conscripts are being sent to Ukraine. Lives of our children are the price of this war." A customer at the supermarket who found the slogans reported them to authorities. Skochilenko did not deny but rejected the accusation of spreading knowingly false information.

Skochilenko's arrest came about a month after authorities adopted a law effectively criminalizing any public expression about the war that deviates from the official Kremlin line. The legislation has been used in a widespread crackdown on opposition politicians, human rights activists and ordinary citizens critical of the Kremlin, with many receiving lengthy prison terms. Because Skochilenko was in custody for nearly 19 months before her trial, her seven-year sentence will be reduced by more than two years since every day served in a pre-trial detention center counts as 1.5 days of

time served in a regular penal colony.

But she has struggled while in custody due to health problems that include a congenital heart defect, bipolar disorder and celiac disease, her lawyers and partner have said. Russia's most prominent human rights group, Memorial, a co-winner of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, has

declared Skochilenko a political prisoner. According to OVD-Info, a rights group that monitors political arrests and provides legal aid, a total of 19,834 Russians were arrested between Feb. 24 2022, when the war in Ukraine began, and late October of this year for speaking out or demonstrating against the war.

Rosalynn Carter, former US first lady, dies at 96

WASHINGTON: Rosalynn Carter, the former first lady of the United States and the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as president, has died at age 96. The Carter Center said she "died peacefully, with family by her side" at her rural Georgia home of Plains after living with dementia and suffering many months of declining health.

"Rosalynn was my equal partner in everything I ever accomplished," Carter said in a statement. "She gave me wise guidance and encouragement when I needed it. As long as Rosalynn was in the world, I always knew somebody loved and supported me." Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter were the longest-married presidential couple, having wed in 1946 when he was 21 and she was 18. After his term ended in 1981, he also enjoyed more post-White House years than any president before him and she played an instrumental role during those years, including as part of the nonprofit Carter Center and the Habitat for Humanity charity. She was seen as unassuming and quiet before coming to Washington in 1977 but developed into an eloquent speaker, campaigner and activist. — Aljazeera

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Gaza crisis, and newest diplomacy

GAZA'S Health Ministry said at least 30 premature babies have been evacuated from Al-Shifa Hospital and will be transferred to hospitals in Egypt. According to the United Nations, 291 patients were left at Gaza's largest hospital after Israeli troops had evacuated hundreds of others by force and coercion. Those left included 32 babies in extremely critical condition, trauma patients with severely infected wounds, and others with spinal injuries who were unable to move. The team was able to tour Al-Shifa Hospital for an hour after about 2,500 displaced people, mobile patients, and medical staff left the sprawling compound Saturday morning. Israel's military has been searching Shifa Hospital to unearth a Hamas command centre that it alleges is located under the facility.

After days of aerial bombing and fierce fighting in the outskirts of Gaza's largest Al-Shifa Hospital, the Israeli troops finally entered the Hospital compounds and a forced mass exodus of patients including elderly women and children along with premature babies to other hospitals in Southern Gaza or Egypt currently underway. According to patients and their attendants, Tanks and snipers have taken positions inside and around the hospital complex. The Israeli troops detained three Palestinians and pushed patients and hospital staff out of the complex at gunpoint. The Israeli troops are blatantly carrying out ground operations in thickly populated residential areas, while an Israeli airstrike hit a crowded UN shelter in the main combat zone. The scenes were horrifying, dozens of people were killed in the urban Jabalya refugee camp, and corpses of women and children were lying on the ground. The WHO has planned emergency evacuations from several other hospitals pending guarantees of safe passage in the next 24-72 hours issued by the belligerent military.

Amid such a high level of hostility and dire humanitarian situations in Palestinian territory, global diplomacy of Arab nations and backdoor contacts between Hamas-Israel and the United States are currently underway with the silent facilitation of the Qatari government to realize a temporary truce or a permanent ceasefire between combatant factions as early as possible. There are reports that the trio-parties including Hamas-Israel and the US had reached an accord for a five-day temporary ceasefire and release of nearly fifty Israeli hostages to pave the way for a permanent ceasefire and release of all hostages in the second phase of that tri-party engagement. Meanwhile, a committee of foreign Ministers of Islamic nations has currently set a course on a global voyage to important countries commencing with China to push for a diplomatic threshold not only to achieve a ceasefire in the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict but also a permanent resolution to the Palestine dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions and the two-state solutions that pave the way for the creation of an independent Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders and Al-Qudus Al-Sharif as its capital.

Historically, the Muslim Ummah is currently embattled with its internal issues together with security challenges, sectarian rivalries, and economic glitches. Hence, a polarized Muslim community and impotent OIC have a meek voice, weak diplomacy and trivial impact at the international level. The Muslim nations must use alternative mechanisms including the Russo-China alliance and the US-led Western forum to conceive peace and resolve the Palestine dispute, to optimize their leverage as the core dependence on Western allies complicated the Palestine issue and proved disastrous for the region. It is high time, that the OIC and Arab nations do not compromise on any temporary arrangement and push for the creation of a fully sovereign and autonomous Palestinian state. That is essential for permanent peace and stability in the broader Middle East region.

Pak's quest for agri-innovations

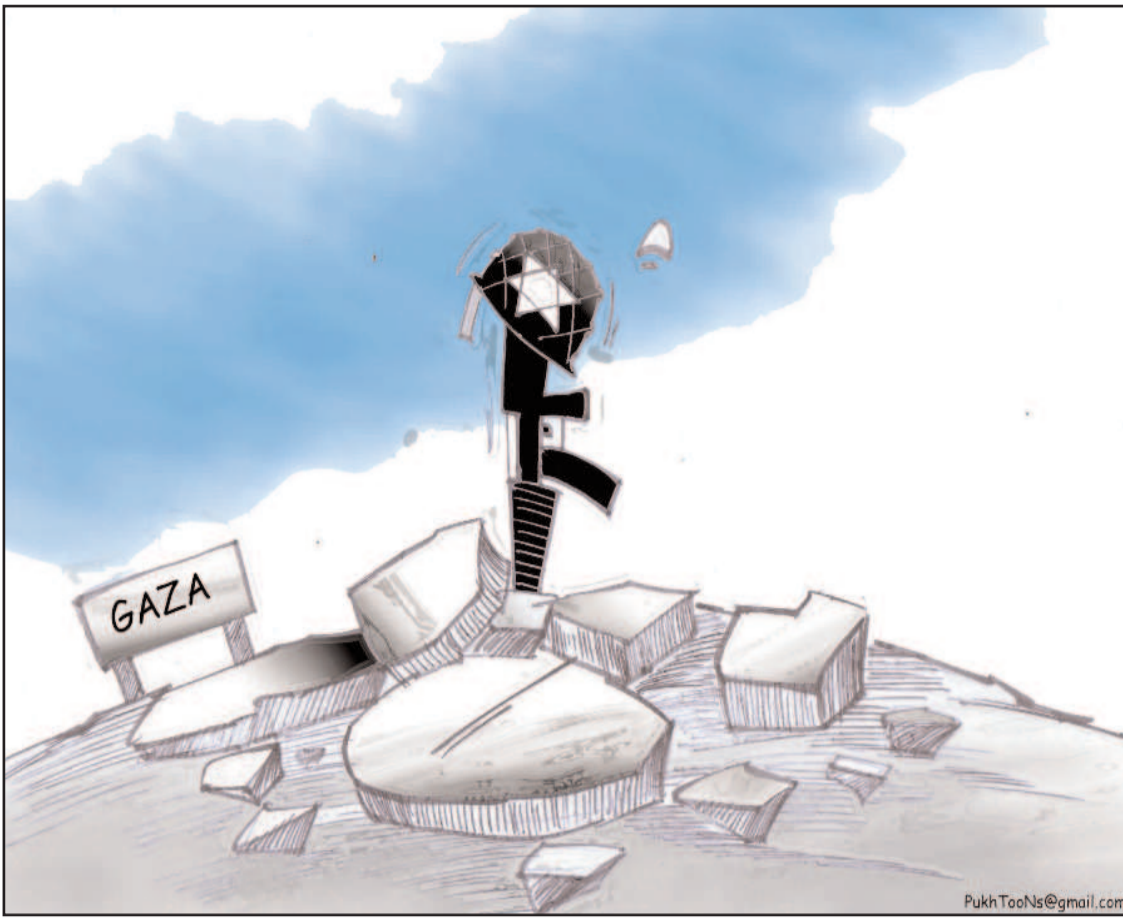
THE United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has recently unveiled a dynamic portfolio of 40 diverse projects strategically dispersed across various regions of Pakistan. These initiatives, with varying scopes, financial parameters, and target audiences, underscore the FAO's commitment to fortifying agriculture and food security in the country. As said, these initiatives span a spectrum, including enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability, supporting livestock and fisheries development, and implementing food security programs to alleviate hunger and malnutrition.

Pakistan's economy is marred by multiple issues relating to economic policies, administrative and planning hitches, and local regulations relating to farming, livestock, agriculture, and housing that not only tarnished the overall economic outlook but severely collapsed the agricultural industry in the Country. Historically, Pakistan has one of the world's largest irrigation systems, along with highly cultivable lands, multiple weather conditions, and a conducive environment, yet the South Asian nation fell victim to food insecurity, and a lack of food grains, and vegetation because the successive governments could not maintain, grow and expand that valuable infrastructure while improper irrigation practices and salinization rendered millions of acres of land uncultivable and barren. At the same time, the giant of housing societies gulped up a huge chunk of Greenland and pitched up residential buildings and business districts in most parts of the country. Thus, a grain-sufficient nation turned into a food-deficient state over the past decades.

Meanwhile, the pace of agricultural research and innovation has largely been marred due to bureaucratic hurdles, corruption, and nepotism that did not move forward from flimsy claims, towery projection, and scanty results throughout the past. Presently, the FAO has extended massive agricultural support and launched numerous initiatives and programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's agriculture and food security sectors. Now, it is the duty of the planning division, ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant departments to avail of this opportunity and achieve optimum results from this endeavour. So, this country came out from persistent grain shortages, food insecurity and commodity price hikes permanently.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Road to good health

Zhou Taidong

THE Health Silk Road, specifically targeting public health and international cooperation in healthcare, is a crucial component of the Belt and Road Initiative. Its objectives are at least threefold: improving healthcare infrastructure in partner countries, enhancing international health cooperation, and strengthening global health governance.

First, the Health Silk Road aims to improve the accessibility, quality and sustainability of healthcare services in partner countries. Through investing in the construction and modernization of hospitals, medical laboratories and other healthcare facilities, and providing equipment and technology for healthcare institutions, the Health Silk Road has played a significant role in reducing the burden of disease, lowering mortality rates and improving overall public health. For example, China has constructed the China-Laos Friendship Hospital in Vientiane, Laos, and the China-Cambodia Friendship Hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to enhance the capacity of these countries' healthcare systems. China has also been investing in public health and disease surveillance systems in partner countries, such as the China-aided Malaria Control Project in Cameroon, which includes the construction of a national malaria control center, laboratories, and training facilities. The China-built African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases in Nigeria aims to advance the study of genomics and contribute to the control of infectious diseases in the region. The Health Silk Road also supports the establishment and enhancement of training centers and medical schools to develop the capacity of healthcare professionals in partner countries. The China-Zimbabwe Friendship Hospital School of Nursing is such an example that helps bolster the training of local nursing professionals.

Given the increasingly important role of digital health solutions in enhancing healthcare accessibility

and efficiency, particularly in remote areas, China has also been collaborating with partner countries to develop telemedicine and e-health infrastructure. In 2018, the Chinese company Huawei signed an agreement with the government of Papua New Guinea to build a telemedicine system that will facilitate remote medical consultations and improve healthcare delivery in rural areas. Second, the Health Silk Road is committed to enhancing global health cooperation. It seeks to foster collaboration between China and participating countries across various health-related domains, including disease prevention and control, public health policy, medical research and healthcare technologies. By facilitating knowledge and technical exchanges, capacity building, and joint initiatives, the Health Silk Road has the potential to contribute to improved global health outcomes and address shared health challenges more effectively.

China has dispatched medical teams to African countries since the 1960s, providing medical services and training local healthcare professionals. The Health Silk Road has expanded this initiative, with thousands of Chinese medical personnel working in over 50 countries worldwide. China has also launched joint programs on public health. For instance, the China-Africa Public Health Cooperation Plan, established in 2018, focuses on joint initiatives in areas such as malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention and control. The China-Brazil Center for Disease Control and Prevention, established in the same year, aims to foster cooperation in epidemiological research, surveillance and laboratory testing. As a unique medical diagnosis and treatment approach, traditional Chinese medicine is put as a priority. Nearly 100,000 overseas TCM institutions have been opened in more than 30 countries so that people in the Belt and Road countries could benefit from high-quality and inexpensive Chinese medicines. In addition, 86 TCM cooperation agreements

have been signed with Health Silk Road countries and regions. In June 2018, the TCM Foreign Exchange and Cooperation Alliance was officially established to exchange and cooperate with the Belt and Road countries in TCM.

Third, the Health Silk Road helps strengthen global health governance. China has established various platforms for health cooperation, including the China-ASEAN Forum on Health Cooperation, the China-Central and Eastern European Countries Health Ministers' Forum, and the China-Arab States Health Cooperation Forum, and is increasingly active in global health forums and initiatives, such as the World Health Assembly, the G20 Health Ministers' Meetings and the Global Health Security Agenda. By engaging in these platforms, China contributes to deliberation of global health policies and sharing of best practices. The Health Silk Road also pursues partnerships and collaborations with international organizations, governments and private sector entities to address global health challenges. For instance, in 2017, China signed a memorandum of understanding with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to cooperate on global health and development issues, including infectious diseases, vaccine development and healthcare innovation. The collaboration continued following the COVID-19 pandemic, marking a strong China-US collaboration on health and medicine. In the meantime, China has increased its funding to multilateral health organizations, such as the World Health Organization, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

By engaging in various health-related initiatives, providing financial contributions, technical assistance and capacity-building support, participating in global health forums, and forging strategic partnerships, the Health Silk Road demonstrates China's growing commitment to global health cooperation

and its ambition to position itself as a proactive and responsible global health actor. Nevertheless, the construction of the Health Silk Road has encountered several obstacles. Externally, the Health Silk Road is challenged with a prominent issue of securitization in the context of China-US strategic competition. In particular, the United States has been prone to adopt security-related discourses, emphasizing the possible security threats from the extension of the Health Silk Road, especially to Western countries. Skepticism of the West toward the Health Silk Road has partially shaped the perception of countries involved in the initiative, damaging its reputation. Internally, there are issues related to interagency coordination and fragmentation that impede the Health Silk Road becoming a high-impact health initiative.

Healthy lives and well-being are essential to sustainable development and building prosperous societies. It will be wise for developed and developing countries to consider global health more as a public good. Assurance of health as a public good necessitates investment in improvement of public health on the domestic front and contributions to international collaboration on disease prevention and treatment. Such rethinking can lead to a renewed impetus for global health cooperation among countries rich and poor, particularly in times of a pandemic. Domestically, China will need a whole-of-government approach to global health challenges. To improve its impact on the health system in partner countries, the Health Silk Road projects should come as a "package", building an effective integration plan for health assistance and cooperation, and integrating healthcare facility construction with health projects such as dispatching of medical teams and hospital-to-hospital technical cooperation. Fragmentation could be countered by ensuring that joint and individual agency strategies delineate roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms, and provide assessing progress toward objectives.

The China Daily

Israel's slaughter of Palestinian children must end

Brad Parker

In a speech delivered on November 6, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declared that "Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children". While his comments garnered immediate media attention, they somehow still understated the reality for Palestinian children.

In Gaza, Israeli forces are killing Palestinian children at a previously unfathomable rate. Over the past 40 days, Israeli forces have murdered more than 5,000 children in Gaza - with an additional 1,800 children missing under the rubble of destroyed buildings, most of them presumed dead. That is more than 6,800 Palestinian children killed over a period of 40 days. That amounts to over 170 children killed each day. In the West Bank, Israeli forces have killed 54 Palestinian children since October 7, according to documentation collected by Defence for Children International-Palestine (DCIP). This includes 38 Palestinian children killed in October alone, the highest number of Palestinian children killed in a single month since Israel's military occupation of the West Bank began in 1967.

As in previous Israeli military offensives on Gaza, Israeli attacks the DCIP has investigated have been overwhelmingly indiscriminate and disproportionate. The Israeli army has targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure in densely populated civilian areas with wide-area-effect explosive weapons. In other words, every bomb the Israeli army drops on Gaza potentially constitutes a war crime. Make no mistake, Guterres was sounding the alarm because he knows that Palestinian children are living and dying in an unrivaled moment. Israeli forces killed more children in the first month of the war than state and non-state actors did in other armed conflicts over the past two years combined, according to the UN chief's own annual reports.

Nearly 50 percent of the 2.3 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip are children. This incredibly youthful population has experienced 16 years of Israeli siege, which amounts to collective punishment. Palestinian children have faced repeated Israeli military offensives where direct, indiscriminate, and disproportionate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and systemic impunity have been the norm. Guterres knows the death toll is expected to rise dramatically as Israeli authorities have cut off Palestinians in Gaza from food, water, electricity, medical supplies, and fuel, catapulting a captive civilian population into what he described as a "nightmare" that "is a crisis of humanity".

Among Gaza's population are an estimated 50,000 pregnant people. This means there are 160 deliveries on average taking place daily. Pregnant people struggle to access essential health services as the healthcare system has collapsed. People in the postnatal period and babies in neonatal units are at

grave risk due to dangerous fuel shortages as the Israeli authorities have prohibited the entry of fuel desperately needed to operate generators to run life-saving equipment.

Survivors of Israeli bombardment face escalating food insecurity and lack of clean water, which puts pregnant women and children particularly at risk of disease, malnutrition and health complications. British humanitarian organization Oxfam has declared that, due to Israeli authorities' near complete denial of humanitarian access, starvation is being used as a weapon of war against civilians in Gaza. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has noted conditions are inhumane and continue to deteriorate as days go by for more than 717,000 internally displaced people sheltering in 149 UNRWA facilities.

Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have repeatedly rejected increasing calls and pressure for a ceasefire in Gaza. Instead, Israeli forces have intensified indiscriminate and direct attacks against residential buildings and civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, bakeries, and solar panels. As Israeli officials are seemingly undeterred in their attempt to depopulate Gaza and create conditions that eliminate Palestinian life, world leaders show, day after day, that they lack the courage to force an end to the bombardment and instead are actively supporting the Israeli onslaught.

The administration of US President Joe Biden has recently approved a \$320m deal with Israel for the purchase of United States precision bombs and has allowed the sale of thousands of assault rifles to Israeli authorities despite concerns that they could land in the hands of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. This is apart from the \$14bn emergency funding for Israel requested from the US Congress. These arms sales and funding make Washington even more complicit in the apparent mass atrocities the Israeli army is committing in Gaza.

For decades, the international community has supported and justified Israeli war crimes and the denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, prioritising the security of the Israeli people at the expense of Palestinian life. Palestinian children are bearing the brunt of that complicity and the failure of international law, protection, and accountability mechanisms. It is paralysing to think that around 9 to 10 classrooms of students are being obliterated from the Earth each and every day by the Israeli army's intensive bombardment of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure in Gaza. The Biden administration's endorsement of Israel's actions and the genocidal green light it has given must be opposed. World leaders need to heed the UN chief's call for an immediate ceasefire and help put an end to the slaughter of Palestinian children.

Aljazeera

It is widely accepted that truth is the first casualty of war. The conflict in Ukraine is no exception. One of the most common lies being spouted by Vladimir Putin and his cronies is that Russia is effectively at war with NATO. This makes it more acceptable to explain to the mother or widow of yet another young Russian conscript killed in battle: he is portrayed as a heroic patriot, fighting to protect his homeland from the might of more than 30 Western nations.

The truth, of course, is very different. On February 24 last year, Russia attempted an unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine in the belief that it could overrun its smaller neighbour within days and with no significant NATO response. Ukraine, much to its regret, is not a NATO member, although it has long been a NATO "partner" since 1994, three years after the Soviet Union broke up. Had it been a full-blown NATO member, Russia is unlikely to have tried to invade Ukraine for fear of massive retribution by the West.

To defeat Russia once and for all

Lord Ashcroft

Nato - the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation - was formed in 1949 by 12 countries, including the US, UK, Canada and France. It currently has 31 members across Europe and North America, which have agreed to help one another if one of them is attacked. Ukraine would become a Nato member tomorrow if that offer was on the table, but to date it is not - member countries fear it would lead to a massive escalation of the conflict in eastern Europe. So Nato countries continue to provide weapons and other aid to Ukraine, but without putting its armed forces on the ground. In an essay published earlier this month, Ukraine's commander-in-chief, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, gave a realistic assessment of the war, which is now in its 21st month. He suggested that the conflict was at somewhat of a stalemate, and was moving towards a stage of "static and attritional fighting".

So what now? I have visited Europe's second largest country five times since the

war began, spending much of that time in cities and towns close to the frontline. I have sounded out countless Ukrainians, military commanders and civilians alike, for their thoughts. The dream for Ukrainians is that the West, notably the US, will give them limitless F16 fighter jets and other hi-tech weaponry to enable them to win.

But that is little more than a dream as things stand today, and as "war fatigue" and the cost of the conflict grow. There are two more gloomy scenarios now being talked about privately by Ukrainians in hushed tones. The first is to save yet more lives being lost through a partial capitulation, whereby Ukraine reluctantly cedes part of its Russian-occupied territory, perhaps Crimea and land in the east, as part of a peace deal.

The second scenario, no less appealing to Ukrainians, is a war of attrition possibly lasting up to a decade or more, which would again

favour Russia. Before the war, Ukraine's population was just under 44 million (and it is much smaller now) compared with Russia's population of almost 150 million. So, in a prolonged war and with its greater manpower, Russia would slowly gain the advantage. However, there is a third and more appealing scenario that I am advocating today. This is to progress on the political and diplomatic fronts - while also supporting Ukraine militarily and imposing sanctions on Russia - so that the country moves towards Nato membership and greater protection, sooner rather than later.

Significantly, Ukraine moved a step closer to EU membership last week, but it is Nato membership which is, ultimately, far more important. Some progress in this area has already been made but more is needed. As of July, Nato agreed that Ukraine does not have to complete the Membership Action Plan process, one of

the usual two requirements that would-be members usually have to meet. This means Ukraine's path to membership will now be a "one-step process": its invitation to join will come when allies agree and conditions on membership are met.

Furthermore, the G7 group of industrial nations (the US, the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan) is committed to what are called "security guarantees" to help Ukraine fight its war in the short-term and to ensure that, after this war ends, Russia never again tries to invade its neighbour. President Zelensky has welcomed these "guarantees" as a way of moving forward, but stresses they must not be looked at as an alternative to Nato membership in the long run. One shrewd Ukrainian MP told me: "The path that I favour is to acknowledge that we will not be able to achieve victory immediately. That it will be a step-by-step process towards us achieving our goals of both an integral and

sovereign Ukraine and a situation whereby Russia never again threatens our borders. Given the current situation, membership of Nato is even more important than the immediate liberation of our territories."

In reality, the process by which Ukraine obtains Nato membership may be much slower than this MP and others would like. However, in the end, we all, including Western countries, sometimes have to take "the least worst option". The one outcome of this war that Nato must never permit is that Russia defeats its neighbour. It should also be remembered that bullies, whether of the playground or the global-leader variety, often back down when they are challenged.

Allowing Ukraine to have full membership of Nato and the risks that go with it are surely better than allowing a power as evil as Putin-led Russia to absorb parts, or even all, of Ukraine. That would be both a betrayal of Kyiv and would undoubtedly send the wrong message to the world at a time when global peace has rarely been more fragile.

Israel attacking Lebanon would be illogical, but don’t rule it out

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

WHILE people were scared that Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah would announce a war when he spoke on Nov. 3, they were ultimately relieved by his statement, in which he indirectly said that he would not escalate. A week later, his position became even milder. However, the real threat of escalation comes from Israel, not Hezbollah.

Lebanon represents a dilemma for Israel. On the one hand, it does not make sense to voluntarily open another front and dilute your firepower. On the other hand, Israel has a deep trust crisis with its own citizens, with 200,000 Israelis having left 105 communities in the north close to the Lebanese border and in the Gaza Envelope. This situation builds pressure on the Israeli government, as these people are residing in government-sponsored guest houses waiting for the military to give them assurances so that they can go back.

There are an estimated 100,000 Israelis who have left settlements in the north. They will not go back unless they are sure that what happened on Oct. 7 in the Gaza Envelope will not happen to them. But how can they be convinced to go back as long as Hezbollah is alive and kicking? Yoav Gallant, the defense minister, spoke of a preemptive strike and was shunned by the US. The Biden administration advised against adding to the front with Hamas by opening a new one with the much stronger Hezbollah. The US, which has a strong naval presence in both the Mediterranean and the Gulf, does not want to be dragged into a direct confrontation

with Iran.

Israel is stuck between two hard choices. It needs to focus on Gaza. So far, the only "success" it can claim is in the record number of women and children killed. After two weeks of its ground campaign, it has been incapable of incapacitating Hamas. The hype about the "intelligence" that Al-Shifa Hospital was the headquarters of Hamas and the center of its web of tunnels has proven to be propaganda. The Israeli army could not find rockets or tunnels. They found fewer rifles than one can find hanging on the wall of any arms collector in Texas.

There is no way that Hamas has been operating from Al-Shifa. The myth has been debunked despite the media that is embedded with the Israel Defense Forces, which it uses to try and support its claim. The IDF has been posting and then removing videos, trying to find a credible argument to justify raiding a civilian hospital, which is a flagrant war crime. So far, the IDF has found no evidence to validate its claims. What an embarrassment for Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, whose popularity is dwindling and who faces criminal charges.

Meanwhile, Hamas is still functional and rockets are still falling on Israel. Netanyahu has nothing to claim as a victory. None of the main Hamas leaders have been captured. In fact, Hamas seems to have the upper hand. Hamas' leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar had the guts to cut ties with the Qatari mediators after the Israeli forces raided Al-Shifa. This will create further pressure on Netanyahu, as it will impede Israel's

ability to salvage anything on the hostages front.

Families of the captives last week started a march from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to demand the government put in more effort to secure their release. This is an additional pressure on Netanyahu. How can he secure their release without caving in to Hamas' demands? So far, Israel has not been able to inflict any significant damage on the group's capabilities. Gaza is still not a win for Netanyahu can offer to his base, but he needs a win or at least the optics of a win.

He is desperate and desperate people take desperate measures. Though opening a second front is illogical, it might be the only thing Netanyahu can do at this time. At least he will appease the displaced Israelis from the north. If he succeeds in landing a blow on Hezbollah, this could be a win to promote to his people.

There is UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that ended the 2006 aggression on Lebanon. The resolution called for "security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities, including the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL (the UN Interim Force in Lebanon)." It also calls for the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon in accordance with the Taif Agreement. In the current circumstances, there is no way to apply the resolution or for Hezbollah to voluntarily abide by it. It will be like an admission of defeat

facing Israel.

Gallant is reiterating Hezbollah's threat. Instead of the areas bordering Israel, he threatened to turn Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, into another Gaza. He is raising the stakes. The Americans are also passing on messages to the group, warning it not to escalate. Everyone is tense, Israel is cornered and it has the capabilities to strike. Despite the pressure that the US is trying to impose on Israel to keep its response measured, Netanyahu has his neck on the line. He knows very well that President Joe Biden is not going to save him from prison. But he has confidence that pro-Israel groups in the US can pressure the administration and Israel can get away with whatever it wants. This has been tried and tested before. Netanyahu humiliated Barack Obama in front of the US Congress and received a standing ovation, so why should he not get away with a military campaign against Lebanon? It is a risk. Israel can destroy Beirut and destroy the group's stronghold in Dahieh, in the suburbs of the capital, but it also knows that Hezbollah has precision-guided missiles.

However, when one is desperate, one is more likely to take risks. Netanyahu is cornered and he knows he is on his way out. Two weeks ago, a poll showed that only 27 percent of Israelis believe that Netanyahu is the right person to run the government. Today, with the intelligence failure of Al-Shifa and no tangible results coming from the ground campaign, that figure is likely to be even lower. He needs an escape and has nothing to lose. In these circumstances, striking Lebanon could be a likely option.

US seeks to preempt Russian influence operation targeting Latin America

Jeff Seldin

THE Spanish-language article with a Moscow dateline and a provocative headline first appeared in early August, suggesting a heist of sorts was underway in Ukraine. "Why are sacred objects being transferred to the West from Ukraine?" it asked, describing an effort to send Ukrainian religious relics to the United States and other countries to plunder Ukraine's riches under the guise of saving them from destruction in the war between Kyiv and Moscow.

But according to US officials, the real ruse was the article itself, an early example of a Russian influence operation aimed at winning hearts and minds for the Russian cause across Latin America. Even the author, listed as Nadia Schwarz, may be a figment of someone's imagination. I honestly don't know if that's a real name or not," a US State Department official told VOA, describing the article as "just a blatant falsehood."

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details of the Russian influence operation, said it is difficult to know whether the article gained any traction. The organization that published the article, Pressenza, does not show page views on its website. And a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, managed only 24 views. The US official said the lack of attention is just proof the Russian operation is still "in its early stages." "It hasn't really gotten off the ground," the official said. "What they would have originally done with this article, the type of amplification they would have probably liked to see - the full infrastructure isn't there." And that, the official said, is why the US decided to go public, issuing a statement earlier this month, describing the Russian operation in detail. The State Department described the Russian effort as an "ongoing, well-funded disinformation campaign" spanning at least 13 countries, from Argentina and Chile in the south all the way up to Mexico in the north. The plan, according to US officials, was to have Russian public relations and internet companies recruit and cultivate Latin American journalists, influencers and public opinion leaders, to seed their publications and broadcasts with content favorable to Moscow while hiding any links to the Kremlin.

"They've been somewhat successful in using RT

[Russia Today] and Sputnik in Latin America," said State Department Global Engagement Center Special Envoy and Coordinator James Rubin. "The difference here is they're trying to operate surreptitiously. They're trying to create content in Russia and launder it through Latin American journalists," Rubin told VOA. "They are covertly co-opting local media and influencers to spread disinformation and propaganda." In addition to Pressenza, which is based in Italy and Ecuador, and which publishes in eight languages, including Spanish, Portuguese and English, the alleged network includes Chile's El Ciudadano news site, as well as websites serving Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. US officials said it is unclear how many of the journalists and opinion leaders are aware they are being fed Russian disinformation, though a senior State Department official told VOA, "There are definitely some willing participants." Others involved in the network may be so-called "useful idiots" - sympathetic to the Russian viewpoints but unaware that the directions are coming from Moscow. "Pressenza is a newspaper that, over the years, has attempted to give voice to those who, with regard to these fields, oppose rearmament processes, militarization processes, and wars," Pressenza's Antonio Mazzeo was quoted as saying in the publication's response earlier this week. "I fear a crack-down, a restriction of freedom of expression," Mazzeo added. "This is what should make any citizen worry."

"Suddenly they realized that some independent journalists from a faraway country wrote something without consulting them," Yasinsky wrote, according to a Google translation of his response. "Why does the State Department care about what is published in Latin America?" Yasinsky added. "Their media and social networks control the media space of most of the world to expose our insidious plots. Isn't that enough?" But US officials accuse Yasinsky, who identifies himself as a Ukrainian, as the point man for the Russian influence operation. Yasinsky is "the key figure here... that is really trying to orchestrate this, that is trying to build this network of potential useful

idiots," the state department official told VOA, saying that he appears to be based in Chile though he has also operated from Europe. The State Department's note earlier this month said it is Yasinsky who maintains and leverages the nascent network of Spanish and Portuguese speaking journalists critical to laundering the Russian disinformation to pass it off as local news and opinion. US officials though, say the content comes directly from three companies all with ties to the Kremlin: the Social Design Agency (SDA), the Institute for Internet Development, and Structura.

The three companies develop topics for news articles in line with Moscow's priorities, write them in Spanish and then seed them throughout their Latin American network, where local journalists and editors make sure the language has a local flavor that is more likely to be accepted by readers and, perhaps, get picked up by more mainstream news outlets. US officials said some of the early efforts have even involved booking journalists or analysts on radio programs to talk about their reporting. "They're trying to diffuse this information through multiple sources," the State department official said. "They really want to space it out and they want to make it look organic." "The US administration once again unfounded blames Russia for all sins," according to a post on the Russian embassy's Telegram channel.

"It attributes to the use of its favorite method - interference in the internal political processes of independent states," the embassy said. "The reason for this is simple: the United States is losing popularity in this region, due to neocolonial aspirations and attempts to impose its will on others." US officials, however, said the reason they sounded the alarm about the influence operation is so the people targeted by the Russian linked actors can decide for themselves. "We want to make sure that throughout the region that all the relevant stakeholders, the academic organizations, the think tanks, the NGOs [non-governmental organizations], and especially the journalists themselves know about this operation so that they can judge what they see and what they read and what they hear with an understanding that the Russians may be secretly manipulating the situation," said Rubin.

VOA

Bad behavior test isn’t just about Santos

Richard Galant

IN his new book "Determined," neurobiologist Robert M. Sapolsky argues that there is no such thing as free will: everything we do is the result of factors such as biology, environment, culture and genetics. "When you behave in a particular way, which is to say when your brain has generated a particular behavior," he writes, "it is because of the determinism that came just before, which was caused by the determinism just before that, and before that, all the way down...we are nothing more or less than the cumulative biological and environmental luck, over which we had no control, that has brought us to any moment."

The consequences of accepting Sapolsky's view would be revolutionary: it would make no sense to blame people for bad behavior. What they do results from neurons firing in assorted regions of the brain, the product of an array of causes they can't control. Yet even Sapolsky recognizes that taking the absence of free will seriously "sounds absolutely nutty." But how else to explain what went on in Congress last week?

On Tuesday, Sen. Bernie Sanders had to intervene when a fellow senator challenged the Teamsters president, who was testifying at a hearing, to a "stand your butt up" fight. A House committee chairman called a colleague a "smurf" and a "liar." And, as Douglas Heye, who formerly worked for the House Republican leadership, noted, "Tennessee Republican Rep. Tim Burchett accused former Speaker Kevin McCarthy of elbowing him with a 'clean kidney shot,' a charge McCarthy denies. These events - all of which happened before lunch was over - are more and more typical of daily life in Congress." "The reality is that Congress has become a terrible workplace, and members and staff are feeling those effects," Heye observed.

Burchett was one of eight Republicans instrumental in McCarthy's ouster for the sin of allying with Democrats to pass a short-term measure to keep the government operating. Decapitating the speaker led tortuously to the choice of a new speaker, Rep. Mike Johnson. What did Johnson do last week? He allied with Democrats to pass a short-term measure to keep the government operating. As if to punctuate the wild week, the House Ethics Committee issued a report Thursday accusing the indicted Rep. George Santos of New York of seeking to "fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal financial profit." He charged the campaign for expenses related to apparently personal trips to Las Vegas and Atlantic City, along with cosmetic products and services, the report alleged. It accused him of "blatantly" stealing from his campaign, deceiving "donors into providing what they thought were contributions to his campaign but were in fact payments for his personal benefit" and constantly lying about his "background and experience." Santos, facing potential expulsion from the House, responded by announcing he will not seek reelection next year. As Julian Zelizer noted, we know of Santos only because he "fabricated a record, a whole fake life really, to become one of the handful of Long Island Republicans who helped swing control of the House from the Democrats to the GOP..."

"The Santos story, as dramatic as it has been, is just one piece of a much bigger puzzle that has allowed US democracy to descend into a morass of disinformation

and falsehood." "Santos may be bowing out, but Trump is still their 2024 presidential frontrunner. Four indictments aside, as well as numerous civil suits, Trump remains popular and enormously powerful despite a fact-checking record so long that it should find a place in the Guinness Book of World Records," Zelizer wrote. Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley is gaining ground with New Hampshire voters, according to a CNN poll, which puts her second in the GOP primary race, though still far behind Trump. But SE Cupp argued that Haley made a big misstep in saying on Fox News "that if elected president she'd solve the problem of social media bots and incivility by requiring 'every person on social media [to] be verified by their name.'" She later amended that thought to apply it only to people outside the US.

Cupp pointed out that "What Haley is missing isn't just the importance of anonymous speech in our founding, or the fact that anonymous speech is protected under the First Amendment, but the fact that anonymous speech actually keeps us safe." It protects whistleblowers, victims of sexual assault and harassment as well as dissidents living under repressive regimes, Cupp noted. "The most important factor in determining the political outcome of Israel's current war will not take place in Gaza - but will instead unfold in the West Bank," wrote Hussein Ibish, a senior scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. He argued that for Israel to cripple the political power of Hamas among Palestinians it will need "to seriously rethink its attitude towards the Islamist extremist group's archrivals: the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on the international stage."

"Without strengthening these Palestinian groups, which still represent the mainstream of the national movement, Hamas and even more extreme groups will almost certainly continue to grow and thrive among the Palestinian people." "A negotiated agreement with the Palestinian factions who, despite everything, still want to reach a peace deal with Israel - for good or ill, currently led by Abbas - can bring that about. It's the only thing that can bring Israelis peace and genuine security." After the outbreak of the war, Fatma Ashour, a lawyer and human rights activist, fled south from Gaza City to Khan Younis, where she is living in a house with 28 people. "Eight children, and 3 elderly people. Our priority is those 11 people. We give them breakfast. If there is no bread, they can have a biscuit or whatever can be found. If we find dates, they can have one each. If there's neither, we use powder milk to make them tea. That's how things stand. We, the grown-ups, we have to endure. We only eat lunch..."

"Some of the people with us have run out of money. We help them as much as we can. Every now and then someone bursts out crying - a member of his family has been killed, or his house destroyed. It's an unbearable situation." Rabbi Jessica Rosenberg, a progressive based in Minneapolis, drew national attention after she bought a ticket to a campaign fundraiser for President Joe Biden and stood up to ask him to "call for a ceasefire right now." Biden replied by recommending "a pause." And while Israel has implemented regular pauses, Rosenberg argued that these are not enough. "Biden and others in his administration have

continued to mince their words, calling time and again for a pause, instead of speaking out loudly and unambiguously for the one thing in Gaza that will truly end the suffering and save innocent lives: a ceasefire."

Aviva Klompas, former director of speechwriting at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations, observed that "accepting a ceasefire now will cost many more lives in the long run" if Hamas' infrastructure isn't destroyed after its October 7 attack on Israel. "A ceasefire would be a de facto victory for a nihilistic jihadi terrorist organization that is financed and backed by Iran, one of whose leaders recently stood on American soil and warned that 'new fronts will be opened up against the United States.' Any truce would leave Hamas' leadership, military, weapons and deadly ideology - along with its network of tunnels - intact. It would also broadcast a message to Iran and its other proxy terror groups that there are no real consequences for committing large-scale atrocities." A 21-year-old "Letter to America," purportedly written by terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, became the focus of posters on TikTok, who endorsed his critique of US behavior in the Middle East. The Guardian, which had posted the letter as part of its news coverage in 2002, took it down amid the flurry of attention last week.

Peter Bergen, author of a biography of bin Laden, wrote, "Let's be clear: Osama bin Laden was not a deep thinker but the leader of a group responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans and other Westerners, along with tens of thousands of people in Muslim-majority countries. So, the fact that people on TikTok are extolling bin Laden's 2002 'Letter to America,' al Qaeda's rationale for the 9/11 attacks, in videos that have been watched at least 14 million times is simply baffling. Most of the people praising bin Laden on TikTok seem to be in their 20s, so they were either not born or were young children when 9/11 happened, and they seem to be entirely ignorant of the actual history of al Qaeda." President Biden met with China's President Xi Jinping at an estate outside San Francisco Wednesday. The fact that the leaders of the two powers, increasingly at odds, are still talking is likely more important than the specifics of their agreement on matters such as restoring direct contact between US and China military leaders.

There was no visible sign of progress on the wars in Gaza and Ukraine. Writing before the summit, Frida Ghitis noted, "Biden may want Xi to help bring down the temperature on the world's ongoing wars and help prevent new ones from igniting. But from Xi's perspective, today's open conflicts are damaging to the US-led world order and hence, I believe, helpful to his goal of seeing the US fail as the world's preeminent superpower, allowing China to emerge as an alternative." After the four-hour meeting, Biden said Xi agreed to reduce exports of chemicals that are used to manufacture fentanyl, the powerful synthetic opioid routinely smuggled from Mexico to the US. "If China can indeed get a handle on the flow of fentanyl precursor chemicals, that might help make a difference in preventing the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans succumbing each year to overdoses," Peter Bergen wrote.

Who will guard the guardians? That question, posed by Juvenal, the Roman poet more than 2,000 years ago, is at the heart of the controversy over the Supreme Court's

new ethics code, which sets out 14 pages of rules and commentary. It follows revelations about unreported financial ties between two justices and deep-pocketed conservatives. As Stephen I. Vladeck asked, how is the public "supposed to have faith that they'll be followed. In adopting these rules, the Supreme Court didn't address that issue at all."

"What's needed is some mechanism for obtaining the justices' compliance with the rules. One possibility is the creation of an Article III inspector general. It's a position that has long been proposed for lower federal courts but that could also have at least a modicum of authority to monitor the justices' behavior as well." Finally there may be some good news for home buyers. A jury's ruling last month in Kansas City, Missouri is likely to end the 5% to 6% real estate commission rate that is typical in the US, but much higher than in most parts of the world. "The industry argues that requiring homebuyers to pay commissions would make it difficult for some to afford homeownership," wrote Stephen Brobeck of the Consumer Federation of America. "In reality, effective rate competition would lower - not raise - the cost of buying a home. Today, buyer agent commissions are baked into the sale price of homes, but buyers are unable to comparison shop for and negotiate them. If buyers knew they were paying these commissions, many would look for lower rates, have serious conversations with their agents about compensation and try to negotiate lower commissions."

"Airlines make money when they cut costs and increase profits, which can mean worse service for flyers. If we want to make flying less miserable, policymakers - and the traveling public - will have to tackle these incentives." The airline industry once gave passengers piano bars in planes, poker machines and steak and champagne, Sitarman noted. But in 1978, Congress deregulated the airlines and it became a race to the bottom. "Today's miseries of flying derive from this choice to deregulate airlines and unleash them into the Hunger Games of ordinary incentives. Added fees for baggage, an increasing number of fare classes, differential pricing - these all make perfect sense as a way to squeeze money out of passengers."

The beginning of the final season of the royal soap opera "The Crown" has landed, and it doesn't hold back. As Holly Thomas wrote, "The undisputed star of season six - or at least, of the first four episodes released this week - is the late Princess Diana, played by Elizabeth Debicki. This installment, which covers the weeks leading up to Diana's death in 1997, sees the stiff fabric of the show unravel as everyone is dragged irresistibly into her orbit."

The measured, stately pace of the series so far is upended by the all-consuming tragic story, which even includes "ghostly, posthumous visions of Diana." "The episodes melt into each other," Thomas noted. "Their themes are all the same: Diana, as ever, outshining her former in-laws; Prince Charles' jealousy as he seeks public approval for Camilla Parker-Bowles; the senior royals' resisting modernization and Mohamed Al-Fayed's attempts to fashion his son Dodi as the new Mr. Spencer. Images of Diana cavorting on Al-Fayed's yacht in a swimsuit and the paparazzi hurtling after her could be placed almost anywhere on the storyboard. It's deliberate chaos, perhaps, but chaos nonetheless."

CNN

Israeli hawks set the stage for Gaza ethnic cleansing

Baria Alamuddin

ISRAELI pop singer Eyal Golan told a right-wing TV channel: "Erase Gaza. Don't leave a single person there." A host on the same channel declared: "It's time for Nakba Two." Such repulsive genocidal rhetoric could be dismissed as heat-of-the-moment hyperbole. But it chimes with exterminatory language emerging from the highest levels of Israel's political echelons, demanding the eradication of Palestinians from Gaza.

Extreme-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir proposed that anyone who sympathized with Hamas should be "eliminated." Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared that Israel "would no longer be able to accept" a Palestinian entity in Gaza, calling for the "emigration" of Gaza's entire population. Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter championed the military campaign as "Gaza Nakba 2023," while Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu was suspended for saying that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza was "a possibility" - an embarrassing own goal given that Israel doesn't even admit it possesses nuclear weapons.

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed Eliyahu's nuclear bomb comments as "disconnected from reality," he hasn't refrained from genocidal advocacy himself. Referring to Hamas, Netanyahu said that Israel was "committed to completely eliminating this evil from the world," before cryptically adding: "You must remember what Amalek has done to you." This is a chilling biblical quote from the Prophet Samuel instructing King Saul to "attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them;

put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys." Among official proposals for how such an ethnic cleansing project could be implemented, a leaked Intelligence Ministry document advocated forced transfer of Palestinians to Sinai. A bill has been submitted to the Knesset mandating the return of Israelis to Gaza after the war. Even if Israel ultimately backed off from such a brazen move, it may refuse to allow a million Palestinians to return to northern Gaza - although the army has said it will expand its operations into southern Gaza too.

Israeli Holocaust historian Omer Bartov denounced this genocidal rhetoric as having "clear intention of ethnic cleansing," while a UN human rights panel warned that Israel's actions raised "the risk of genocide in Gaza." Arab states that made peace with Israel are also warning that the Gaza campaign has gone too far. Bahrain Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, speaking at the Manama Dialogue last weekend, emphasized the necessity of a "just and lasting peace" entailing both the establishment of a Palestinian state and security for Israel. "There must be no forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza, now or ever. There must be no reoccupation of Gaza. There must be no reduction in Gaza's territory. And on the other side, there must be no terrorism directed from Gaza against the Israeli public. Those are the red lines," he said.

Hamas and Hezbollah have also been guilty of exterminatory rhetoric, amid calls for a new era of "armed resistance." Senior Hamas leader Ghazi Hamad vowed that the

group would wipe out Israel and threatened to repeat the Oct. 7 atrocities. Such far-fetched macho bombast, at a time when Gaza citizens are being slaughtered, is routinely exploited to peddle the lie that "Palestinians are not interested in peace." Perpetrating genocide requires dehumanization of the victims. Hence comments by Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that "we are fighting human animals," echoed by former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's "we're fighting Nazis."

Who knows what such desperate nonsense seeks to achieve, when reliable statistics put the death toll at more than 13,000, at least 5,000 of whom are children - with thousands more buried under the rubble? The UN high commissioner for human rights estimated last week that 1 in every 57 Gaza residents had been killed or injured.

We traditionally expect Israeli propaganda and fake news to be slick, eloquent and convincing. Instead, Israel's botched phony videos reek of panic and desperation, because they know they are calamitously losing the information battle as horrified global audiences witness the Gaza massacre playing out in real time.

Instead of a gratuitous land grab of the minuscule, impoverished, rubble-strewn Gaza Strip - which can only create lasting global enmity - Israel should seek peace and security within its actual borders, alongside a sovereign Palestinian state. Truth is inevitably the first casualty of war, but clumsy Israeli efforts to perpetuate untruths about the conflict serve only to trap Israel in permanent conflict - ultimately jeopardizing the tenets of its own nation statehood.

Arab News



SCCI, CG to strengthen Pak-Iran trade ties

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq and Consul General of Iran in Peshawar Ali Banafsheh Khah have agreed to start a series of online meetings to bring Pakistan-Iran business community closer to each other and bringing duties/tariffs structure equal between Pakistan and Iran.

On the occasion, Fuad Ishaq emphasized the need to trade in local currency and sign free trade agreements with Iran, Afghanistan and China.

According to the details, Consul General of Iran in Peshawar Ali Banafsheh Khah, held a meeting with President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, Fuad Ishaq here at the Chamber House, said in a press release on Monday.

On this occasion, Commercial Attaché Peshawar Consulate Hossein Maliki, Senior Vice President of the SCCI Sanaullah Khan, Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and the translator of the Consulate of Iran were present on this occasion.

Fuad Ishaq while talking about the MoU signed between the SCCI r and the Mashhad Chamber, emphasized the need to implement the agreement.

The chamber president said that the online meetings should be started immediately between SCCI and Mashhad Chamber.

He also invited the business community of different chambers of Iran to

come to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sarhad Chamber is ready to host them.

Fuad Ishaq said that the business community is keen to improve mutual trade between Pakistan and Iran. He called upon the governments of Pakistan and Iran to come together and make a joint action plan and initiatives to resolve duties/tariffs and other issues so that the problems of the business community of both countries can be resolved and mutual trade and relations can be further improved.

He also urged Iran to play role in removing the obstacles in TAPI gas pipeline project.

The SCCI chief said that sufficient electricity was available with Iran and hoped that laying of a trans-

mission line on the Pakistan side will play an important role in fulfilling the country's energy needs.

Later, Consul General of Iran Ali Banafsheh Khah while talking on this occasion said that Iran and Pakistan tied in strong traditional, commercial and cultural relations.

He informed that current mutual trade volume between Iran and Pakistan there stood at \$2billion.

Ali Banafsheh said his country's supreme leader and president was keen to further improve and strengthen ties with Pakistan.

The Iranian diplomat visited the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a trade exhibition in Tehran which is going to be held in February next year.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq presenting Chamber's shield to Consul General of Iran in Peshawar Ali Banafsheh Khah.

IBA's 3rd Annual Int'l Conference: Governor SB discusses macroeconomic issues

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS) at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi organized the 3rd Annual International Conference on 'Challenging Linearity'. The three-day conference commenced on November 16 and concludes on November 18, with an aim to challenge linear thinking in Pakistan across various sectors through rigorous research.

The second day of the conference commenced with an engaging discussion on 'Cultivating Inclusivity: Women in Economics,' moderated by Dr. Asma Hyder, Professor and Dean, School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS). Panelists included Ratna Sahay, Professor, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi; Dr. Hadia Majid, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Economics,

Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS); Dr. Aliya Khan, Professor, Quaid-i-Azam University; and Sundus Saleemi, Senior Researcher (Development Research), University of Bonn. They stressed upon the need to ensure women empowerment in the different sectors of society and highlighted various problems related to it.

Jameel Ahmad, Governor, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), delivered a keynote speech, addressing 'Macroeconomic Challenges and the Way Forward.' He highlighted the significance of monetary policy in controlling inflation and managing expectations. Mr. Ahmad emphasized SBP's current consideration of supply-side inflation while making decisions regarding monetary policy and interest rates.

In collaboration with the World Bank, the conference hosted an award distribution ceremony for a competition centered on the theme 'Poverty Through Your

Eyes.' This competition received 300 nominations from youth aged 16 to 25. A panel of 17 judges meticulously selected seven winners across various categories of creative work. Each winner was awarded a cash prize of PKR 5,000 along with a participation certificate.

The second day included two keynote speeches, two panel discussions emphasizing women's inclusivity in Economics and Urban Mental Health (UMH), eight technical sessions, two literary cafes, and one roundtable discussion, followed by a cultural night where musicians from Bhit Shah performed Sufi Music.

The third and final day of the conference features panel discussions focusing on complex economics datasets and cultural dynamics in Indonesia, a doctoral symposium, a distinguished lecture on Colonialism and Decolonization, and a prize distribution ceremony.

Rupee gains 53 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday gained 53 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 285.96 against the previous day's closing at Rs 286.49.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 286.2 and Rs 289 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.12 to close at Rs 312.36 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 02 paise to close at Rs 1.92; whereas an increase of Rs 2.22 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 357.01 as compared to the last closing of Rs 354.79.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 15 paise each to close at Rs 77.85 and Rs 76.24 respectively.

PPL-operated joint venture discovers gas

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited, operator of Shah Bandar Block (2467-16) (63 percent working interest (WI)) along with joint venture partners Mari Petroleum Company Limited (32 percent WI), Sindh Energy Holding Company Limited and Government Holdings (Private) Limited (2.5 percent WI each) has made a gas and condensate discovery at exploration well Jhim East X-1 in District Sujawal, Sindh. This is the second discovery in Shah Bandar Block.

Jhim East X-1 was spud on October 8, 2023 and drilled to a depth of 2,545 m to test the hydrocarbon potential of upper sands of Lower Goru formation. Based on the drilling results and wireline logs, potential hydrocarbon bearing zones were identified.

During testing of Lower Goru upper sand (A sand), the well flowed 13.69 MMscfd gas and 236 barrels/day condensate at wellhead flowing pressure of 2,668 psig at 32 /64" choke.

The well is being further evaluated to obtain necessary information



about its performance.

The well was tested and tested by utilizing indigenous expertise. This discovery will add hydrocarbon reserves to reduce the gap between energy supply and demand.

PSX gains 14.80 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday gained 14.80 percent, a slight positive change of 0.03 percent, closing at 57,077.96 points against 57,063.16 points the previous trading day.

A total of 718,285,234 shares valuing Rs16.686 billion were traded during the day as compared to 901,596,869 shares valuing Rs 23.428 billion the previous day.

As many as 377 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 202 of them recorded gains and 161 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 14 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 89,794,643 shares at Rs.3.55 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 64,623,166 shares at Rs.1.62 per share and Fauji Foods Ltd with 50,193,356 shares at Rs.9.34 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.721.59 per share price, closing at Rs.10,342.84, whereas the runner-up was Hoechst Pak Ltd with a Rs.67.50 rise in its per share price to Rs967.50.

Unilever Foods XD witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.499.85 per share closing at Rs22,500.15, followed by Nestle Pakistan with a Rs.100.00 decline to close at Rs.8,500.00.

Afghan refugee's repatriation

Khawaja Wajih u Din

Afghanistan is our brotherly country. We are hosting our brothers and sisters from Afghanistan for more than 40 years now. It is a historical fact that many people in and around the boundary between the countries share family bonds and they have common ancestors. Many people living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa feel pride in calling themselves as Afghans by caste. We with great satisfaction recall the Anglo Afghan wars and the deadly fate of the imperialist army at the hands of local Pathans. The colonial army in its usual tactics of divide and rule tried its best to overcome the locals.

In the 19th century Britain twice invaded Afghanistan (the first and second Anglo-Afghan Wars; 1839-40 and 1878-80). The British were unable to fully subdue the country, and the third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) led to its full independence. The British forces were almost completely wiped out during 1842. It was a nightmare for the imperialist forces who wanted to play a kingmaker in Afghanistan.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a crisis for

the very honorable citizens of Afghanistan. It was followed by another invasion by the allied forces led by the United States of America. They caused unimaginable devastation and destruction. The Civil War's compounded the difficulties. The ordinary people on both sides of Pak-Afghan border were firstly exploited in the name of jihad and later in the name of democracy and freedom. It is ironic that initially the afghans were treated as freedom fighters and mujahedin's. They were invited in the White House and were praised for the role.

However due to change in policies they became persona non grata for most of the world. It is a historical fact that none of the foreign countries has ever been able to subjugate the Afghans and defeat their Valor. Former USSR tried and failed. The Americans tried along with their allies and miserably failed. Ultimately all the invaders had to leave in shame.

Common man in any crisis suffers the most. The crisis in the brotherly country lead to severe problems for the ordinary people living on both sides of the border. Unfortunately millions had to migrate to various countries. Those who could afford went to the western countries. However the neighboring countries including Pakistan also had a chance to fulfill its religious obligations of hosting our brothers and sisters.

Court Notice

In the Court of Senior Civil Judge/Aala Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Application No. 48/2. Institution. 11/11/2023. Date of hearing. 23/11/2023. Mst Bibi Sakena widow Gulzar Khan Jowar Buner VS General Public Notice to defendant No.1) Irshad Ahmed s/o sher Muhammad r/o sambat (Presently Saudi Arab mob 00966594947259). Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 9 am dated 23/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

gious obligations of hosting our brothers and sisters.

The world has little idea of the enormous sacrifices that people of Pakistan in general and Kpk in particular made due to the influx of refugees from Afghanistan. They cannot be counted in terms of money. Its impact on financial capacity, economics, social and cultural approaches could not be documented.

Simultaneously it is also a fact that some people in Pakistan enjoyed the dollars which came pouring in from the international community for the afghan refugees.

Being a refugee is a worst thing that can happen to you in life. It forces you to do things and adopt a way of life which in normal circumstances you would not. Majority of the people have to start life from a scratch and in most of the cases it becomes impossible to make the both ends meet.

However the fact remains that due to Soviet invasion Pakistan suffered tremendously on all fronts. The culture of Klashnekoff, heroin bomb blasts, suicide bombing and terrorism became known to the locals. Some people also think that amalgamation of the refugees with the locals resulted in degradation of the local social set up, moral and cultural values and stopped mental and social advancement of the locals. They argue that this major tactical blunder

Court Notice

In the court of Kiran Noor judge family court Tehsil Matta Swat. Case # 158/FC institution Year. 2023. Next Hearing date 05/12/2023. Mst. Maryem VS Irshad Ahmed etc. Notice to defendant No.1) Irshad Ahmed s/o sher Muhammad r/o sambat (Presently Saudi Arab mob 00966594947259). Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 05/12/2023. At 8.30. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the Court.

resulted in enormous difficulties for the country.

Pakistan and Iran host one of the largest refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom come from Afghanistan. In Iran around 780,000 are registered Afghan refugees and another 2.6 million who are either undocumented or have received a headcount. Of the more than 4 million Afghans living in Pakistan, the government estimates 1.7 million are undocumented. As of October 2023, the United Nations estimates that nearly 3.7 million Afghans reside in Pakistan, while Pakistani authorities believe the number to be as high as 4.4 million. As per the UNHCR report 1333749 are registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan while 4388058 Afghan refugees were facilitated for voluntary repatriation between 2002 to 2022.

In Pakistan thanks to the Government's progressive and inclusive policies, refugees have been given access to education, health, and livelihoods opportunities and facilities- helping them thrive, not just survive. They run all types of businesses including transport, property, money exchange etc. It is said that through "benami" transactions they purchased a lot of property in the Posh colonies in KKP. It is estimated that majority of the refugees live in cities, towns and villages side by side with the host community, some enjoying a very lavish lifestyle.

In 1979 the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a Godsend opportunity for the military dictator of Pakistan at that time. The world before the invasion, were isolating the chief martial law administrator at that time. However after the Soviet invasion he suddenly became a personality most liked by the west. The reason in the background was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and therefore, he was termed as a freedom fighter fighting the Soviet advance to warm waters.

Pakistan's involvement and fiddling with the neighbors affairs and taking sides, without any planning or foresight were at the expense of the national

interest. Perhaps to some people the foreign aid was more important than the interest of the country. Everyone who was someone chipped in and became billionaires in a short span of time.

I can recall the time of 70s with clarity and have been an eyewitness to some Occurrences of terror including bomb blasts in the then NWFP. The government and press at that time held The National Directorate of Security, also referred to as Amniyat or Amaniyat (Afghan Secret Service) accountable.

Unfortunately the situation was exploited by India and as a result we had to endure deteriorating law and order situation in our country including bomb blasts, suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks which we had never seen before. Horrifying scenes were witnessed when human beings were blown to pieces in shape of mince meat. One horrific scene I remember in a bus terminal in Peshawar which looked like a Butcher's shop. The law enforcement agencies persistently send reports that the deteriorating law and order situation can only be controlled by minimizing the influx of the refugees. But the political leadership was too scared to act.

I remember when as a school college student while traveling in public transport run by afghan refugees there was a fight between a local and another afghan refugee. After exchange of hot words it ended when the locals were told that the authorities would side with the Afghan refugees and not with them. I have been narrated various instances of such type repeatedly. Ultimately it became an issue of identity crisis for the citizens of the country.

History tells us that Afghanistan was the only state to oppose Pakistan's membership in the UN in 1947 when a vote on rejoining Afghanistan was disallowed in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). In 1949, a Loya Jirga revoked all agreements with Britain, including those relating to the Durand

Line. Afghan territorial claims over Pashtun-majority areas that are in Pakistan were coupled with discontent over the permanency of the Durand Line, for which Afghanistan demanded a renegotiation, with the aim of having it shifted eastward to the Indus River. Pakistan immediately rejected it. An organized campaign was launched by the enemies of the state and afghan governments, in Pakistan towards achieving that goal. History also tells us that a special ministry was established by the Afghan government to promote the slogan of Pakhtoonistan. Despite all the efforts the slogan of Paktoonian died its natural death in due course of time. But in early 70s People of the then NWFP had to endure almost daily bomb blasts and killing of Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao aged 38, in one of the blasts is one of my horrific childhood memories. Series of occasional armed skirmishes and firefights have occurred along the Pak-Afghanistan between the armed forces of the two countries since 1949.

Some people say that the recent surge in terrorism is due to the government's decision of repatriation. According to a report of Brown University's Watson School of International Public Affairs, 23,372 Pakistani civilians and 8,832 Pakistani security personnel were killed in the war on terrorism. Pakistan recorded the second largest increase in terrorism-related deaths worldwide in 2022, with the toll rising significantly to 643, a 120% rise from the 292 deaths the previous year, as per the report of VOA. In 2018, Pakistani newspaper Dawn reported that the Pakistani economy suffered a total loss of \$126.79 billion since 2001 due to the War on Terror.

The treatment that the Pakistanis have repeatedly got in cricket matches in England between the two countries and subsequently in Dubai and now in India, at the hands of afghan crowds really disappointed and discouraged most of the Pakistani's, with the uncalled for behavior of some. The social, Print and

electronic media have been highlighting aggressive stance taken by various afghan officials of the Afghan government towards Pakistan.

I remember when as a school college student while traveling in public transport run by afghan refugees there was a fight between a local and another afghan refugee. After exchange of hot words it ended when the locals were told that the authorities would side with the Afghan refugees and not with them. I have been narrated various instances of such type repeatedly. Ultimately it became an issue of identity crisis for the citizens of the Pakistan.

Pakistan officials blame India and Afghanistan for supporting terrorism in Pakistan. However, Afghanistan admitted to providing support for terrorist groups such as (TTP) (reference Report of Wikipedia) As of 2022, most terrorist activities in Pakistan have been concentrated in provinces of KPK and Baluchistan. KP accounting for 64 percent of the reported casualties (633 fatalities in 2022), followed by 26 percent in Balochistan, 5.8 percent in Sindh and 2.8 percent in Punjab.

From the point of view of the other side Pakistan's baggage emanates from support to Mujahideen to the Taliban it sits at the heart of the anti-Pakistan sentiment of some interested parties. Different parties while in power in the neighboring country have different points of views and naturally different blames. Without going into the blame game the national interest is always supreme. Pakistan had to take a tough decision keeping in mind it's on ground realities. The brave decision of repatriation was required in the national interest.

The propaganda that 'people of Afghanistan do not Pakistan' is not at all true. This false propaganda serves the interests of the rich and powerful in Afghanistan and the vested interest. The poor majority in Afghanistan that hates the war is being kept illiterate over the years for an

unwanted and unpopular conflict from its beginning. Scapegoating Pakistan is best for them because it hides their miscalculation as well as their greed.

It is a fact that poor Afghans have been exploited throughout by their leaders and our neighbor India. The influence of India in Afghanistan was present even in early 70s. Even at that time there were Indian movies in the cinemas and scores of people including almost all the tourists watched them. The nexus did not give anything to the ordinary people Afghanistan. As a child when I visited Afghanistan in summer vacations I remember all the big businesses were occupied by the Hindus or Sikhs and average Afghans had only menial jobs to do. I remember Afghan children looking at all the tourists with the desirous and envious eyes. But they never begged or stole anything. They always had a sense of pride and strength of character.

Having interacted with the Afghan refugees over a long period of time I can say that they are very proud of their heritage and sincerely longed to return back to their country.

Most of the children that I interacted with loved Pakistan as their home because they were born here and had a very strong sense of belonging to their birthplace. There would be very few people who permanently wanted to live in Pakistan. Afghans in Pakistan have always believed in the dignity of labor. They were ever ready to do any hard work which provided a tough competition to the locals.

Whatever the relations between the governments of the two countries the people to people contact between the two neighboring countries would always be very strong. It's very encouraging from a human point of you to see that government officials, police and ordinary people are trying their level best to help the refugees in any form they can and giving them a good sendoff.

(The writer is former Registrar Peshawar High Court)



In brief

Ticket revenues to support Palestinians

DOHA (Agencies): Ticket revenues for the Asian Cup 2023 in Qatar are to be donated to support Palestinian relief efforts, the football tournament's local organising committee announced on Monday, as Israel's bombardment of Gaza continued. "We have decided to donate ticketing revenue generated from the Asian Cup in Qatar to much needed relief efforts in Palestine," the committee's chairman said without giving details on what proportion of sales would be given in aid. "We will be certain that this corporate social responsibility initiative will benefit those most affected, and that football fulfils its role as a support mechanism for people during the most difficult of times," Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani added. Israel launched its assault on Gaza in response to an unprecedented attack by Hamas on October 7 in which 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and 240 taken as hostages, according to Israeli authorities. Since then, Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says more than 13,000 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory with increasing alarm over its dire humanitarian situation. Qatar will host the Asian Cup beginning in January and, like other Gulf nations, has donated aid and medical supplies to Gaza via Egypt. A wide range of local and international businesses and organisations based in the gas-rich Gulf state have also launched their own campaigns to raise funds for the Palestinian territory.

'Will give best against Tajikistan'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan football team coach Stephen Constantine on Monday said the national squad would give its best in FIFA World Cup Qualifiers 2 match against Tajikistan on November 21 here at the Pakistan sports Complex. Every game is important and FIFA World Cup Qualifiers 2 matches will not be taken lightly," he said at a press conference here along with attacking midfielder Otis Khan. Khan said football was coming back in Pakistan and we had many opportunities to score goals against Saudi Arabia but could not be materialized. He said Pakistan was a new team for FIFA World Cup qualifying. We have played three FIFA qualifying matches so far. To a question, he said that he would play good game against Tajikistan and try to win the match. Pakistan football team played less international matches in the past, he said. He said teams of Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan were continuously playing international matches while Pakistan was competing with best teams. The match against Tajikistan is important for Pakistan, he said. He was of the view that no one expected Pakistan to win match against Cambodia, but we did beat Cambodia in a crucial match. There should be maximum number of matches for the improvement of Pakistan football. Football leagues should be started in Pakistan, he said. Meanwhile, coach of Tajikistan football team Petar Segrt, said the fans who were warmly welcomed upon arrival in Pakistan will get to see an excellent football. A tough match is expected between both teams. FIFA World Cup Qualifiers match will be important for Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Wahab announces Pakistan Test squad for Australia series

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Chief selector Wahab Riaz Monday announced an 18-member Pakistan Test squad for the tour to Australia comprising three matches scheduled from December 14, 2023, to January 7, 2024.

This will be Wahab's first assignment since he took charge of the national men's selection committee last week, while the same applies to Shan Masood — who was picked as captain after Babar Azam resigned. Masood has been named Pakistan's captain for the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle after taking over the reins from Babar following a humiliating World Cup campaign.

Haris Rauf 'pulls out'

Riaz, in his maiden press conference as chief selector, said pacer Haris Rauf had assured the cricket board that he would play Test cricket for the national side, but yesterday, he informed the management that he does not want to be part of this series. "It is important to inform you about this because people should have clarity about what's going on," Riaz told journalists, highlighting that Rauf had concerns about whether he would have fitness issues if he partook in the tour.

"We have tried facilitating him in every way. Even if he failed in this tour, I was ready to accept it. Our fitness consultant told us that he [Rauf] would not have any issues moving forward."

"We could have managed the issues [...] but he pulled out at the last moment. I believe this will be a set back to Pakistan," the chief selector explained.

Maiden calls

Left-handed opening batter Saim Ayub has earned his maiden call-up to the Test team after an impressive run in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24.

The 22-year-old scored 553 runs in four matches for Karachi Whites and had three centuries to his name, including a match-winning double-century against Faisalabad in the final of the tournament. He continued his form in the Pakistan Cup (one-day tournament), where he was named the best batter of the tournament, ending as the competition's highest run-getter.

Right-arm fast bowler Khuram Shahzad has also been awarded his maiden Test call-up, on the back of a successful domestic season thus far. The 23-year-old was the highest wicket-taker of Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 with 36 wickets in eight matches at an average of 20.31 and picked up 13 wickets at 16.62 in the recently concluded Pakistan Cup.

Returns

Pace bowling all-rounder Faheem Ashraf, who last appeared in Tests for Pakistan during England's tour of Pakistan in late 2022 has returned to the squad. Left-arm pacer Mir Hamza, who registered 32 wickets at 20.88 in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24, and right-arm pacer Mohammad Wasim Jnr are making a return to the squad as well. The two fast bowlers were part of Pakistan's squad during New Zealand's tour of Pakistan that took place from December 2022 to January 2023.

Chief selector Wahab Riaz, reflecting on the squad selected for the Australia tour, said: "The squad has been assembled keeping in mind the challenging Australian conditions. We have kept the pitches in mind and added more pace bowling resources to the team to ensure that the management can be flexible with the team combinations."

Finding success in Australia

Chief selector Wahab Riaz, reflecting on the squad selected for the Australia tour, said: "The squad has been assembled keeping in mind the challenging Australian conditions. We have kept the pitches in mind and added more pace bowling resources to the team to ensure that the management can be flexible with the team combinations."

in all three Test matches."

"Saim Ayub has been added to the squad after the extraordinary domestic season he has had this year. He has impressed with the bat during the Quaid-e-Azam trophy and Pakistan Cup, pushing the case for his selection. His inclusion will strengthen our solid batting line-up."

"Pakistan has started off the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 really well, after their success in Sri Lanka earlier this year. We hope that the team can carry this momentum ahead in Australia as well. We have tried to ensure that the team has all relevant resources to find success in Australia."

Preparations

The squad will assemble in Rawalpindi on November 22 for a training camp ahead of the tour. The camp is scheduled to run from November 23 to 28 at Pindi Cricket Stadium. The team will fly out on November 30 from Lahore.

Some additional players have also been invited to feature in the training camp. The players called for the camp are Arshad Iqbal, Kashif Ali, Mohammad Nawaz, Shadab Khan, Shahnaaz Dahani, Usama Mir, and Usman Qadir.

Squad

Shan Masood (captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi

Pakistan tour of Australia

First Test: December 14-18, Perth Stadium

Second Test: December 26-30, MCG

Third Test: January 3-7, SCG

Punjab Police wins Tchoukball Championship

FAISALABAD (APP): Punjab Police team has won 7th Tchoukball C'ship after defeating Punjab Color team with 53-51 scores here on Monday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team grabbed the third position by defeating Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) team in a decisive match. Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed witnessed the final match as chief guest and later distributed prizes and trophies among the position holder teams. Speaking on the occasion, she announced to arrange international tchoukball competition in Faisalabad very soon.

Director General (DG) Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Muhammad Asif Chaudhry, Divisional sports Officer Tariq Nazir, Chief Engineer FDA Mehr Ayub, Director Town Planning Asma Muhsin, Secretary General Pakistan Tchoukball Federation Emanuel Asad and others were also present on the spot.

No Pakistani player in ICC Men's CWC 2023 team

ISLAMABAD (APP): No Pakistani player has been included in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Team of the Tournament.

Stars from champions Australia, runners-up India, semi-finalists South Africa and New Zealand, as well as Sri Lanka all feature in the line-up, said a press release issued here on Monday.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell and spinner Adam Zampa were included after helping Australia to a record-extending sixth triumph.

KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah were among the six Indian stars selected alongside leading run scorers Kohli and Sharma, as well as leading wicket-taker Mohammed Shami.

The selection panel consisted of Ian Bishop, Kass Naidoo, Shane Watson (Commentators), Wasim Khan (ICC General Manager, Cricket) and Sunil Vaidya (Journalist, Ahmedabad Mirror).

The team of the ICC Men's World Cup 2023 (in batting order) include Quinton de Kock (wk) (South Africa) — 594 runs at 59.40; Rohit Sharma (c) (India) — 597 runs at 54.27; Virat Kohli (India) — 765 runs at 95.62; Daryl Mitchell (New Zealand) — 552 runs at 69; KL Rahul (India) — 452 runs at 75.33; Glenn Maxwell (Australia) — 400 runs at 66.66 and six wickets at 55; Ravindra Jadeja (India) — 120 runs at 40 and 16 wickets at 24.87; Jasprit Bumrah (India) — 20 wickets at 18.65; Dilshan Madushanka (Sri Lanka) — 21 wickets at 25; Adam Zampa (Australia) — 23 wickets at 22.39; Mohammed Shami (India) — 24 wickets at 10.70 and 12th player: Gerald

Coetzee (South Africa) — 20 wickets at 19.80.

Named in the Team of the Tournament for the second 50-over World Cup running, Sharma set the tone at the top of the order for India.

The veteran opener put a disappointing opening performance against Australia behind him with a blistering 131 from just 84 balls to win the Player of the Match award against Afghanistan.

The retiring Quinton de Kock partners him at the top of the order.

The South African became the first wicket-keeper in World Cup history to surpass the 500-run mark and claim 20 dismissals in a single tournament.

Completing the top order was Kohli, who topped the run scoring charts just as he did in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 12 months ago. Kohli hit a staggering 765 runs at an average of 95.62, shattering the previous record held by Sachin Tendulkar, who amassed 673 runs during the 2003 edition.

Batting at No.4 is Mitchell, who hit two hundreds against India in his first maiden 50-over World Cup. The prolific Kiwi blasted a swashbuckling 130 in the round robin against the Men in Blue and scintillating 134 in the semi-final to take his final tally to 552 runs.

India's Rahul is at No.5 after chipping with several key knocks throughout the tournament as well as a hundred in a routine win over the Netherlands. Rahul top scored for India in the final with 66 but it proved in vain as the hosts were denied by an inspired Australia side.

At No.6 is all-rounder

Maxwell, who hit the winning runs in the final as Australia lifted their sixth crown.

Maxwell crashed 106 from 44 balls for the fastest century in World Cups against the Netherlands in the round robin, with the 309-run winning margin becoming the biggest in tournament history.

India's Jadeja takes the second all-rounder spot after impressing with the ball, most notably against South Africa when he became only the second Indian spinner after Yuvraj Singh to take a five-wicket-haul in ODI World Cups.

Bumrah, like teammate and opener Sharma, was included for the second World Cup running after taking 20 wickets, two more than his tally in 2019.

At No 9 is budding Sri Lankan superstar Madushanka, who announced himself onto the world stage with figures of five for 80 against India.

Zampa was at No 10 after taking 23 wickets and bamboozling the world's best batters throughout the tournament.

Completing the line-up was Shami, who recorded the best figures of any bowler in a World Cup knockout game after his seven-for in the semi-final success over New Zealand.

And the 12th man is Gerald Coetzee, who was among the wickets in every match he played on his ICC tournament debut.

Coetzee emerged as a key force in the Proteas side following injuries to Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala with 20 wickets in eight matches as he became the leading wicket-taker for South Africa in a single edition of the World Cup.



AHMEDABAD: Australia Captain Pat Cummins poses with the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Trophy near the Atal Bridge on the Sabarmati Riverfront.

UCP win All-Pakistan Inter-University Men Athletic C'ship

PESHAWAR, (APP): University of Central Punjab (UCP) has clinched the Iqbal Trophy after securing 292 points with 11 gold medal, seven silver and 6 bronze medals in the All Pakistan Inter-University Men Athletic Championship played under the aegis of the University of Peshawar inside the campus on Monday.

Secretary Local Govt Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President KP Squash Association Daud Khan was the chief guest on this occasion who gave away medals, certificates and cash prizes.

Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar Professor Dr. Muhammad Idrees, Vice Chancellor Agri Culture University Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, Vice Chancellor University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Muhammad Iftikhar, Vice Chancellor Islamia College University Professor Dr. Gul Majeed, Director sports and Organizing Secretary Bahre Karam, international athletes Muhammad Shah, Asad Khan, Ifta Hussain, Director Dr. Farooq Hussain, Professor Dr. Bahar Hussain, Deputy Director Sports Higher education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Arshad Hussain, Representative of the HEC, officials, players and a large number of spectators were also present.

On the last day of the championship, the University of Central Punjab won the Iqbal Trophy by winning 11 gold medals, seven silver

medals and 6 bronze medals by securing 192 points, followed by Punjab University with six gold medals, five silver medals and as many bronze medals by securing 216 points, University of Lahore got third position trophy by winning 2 gold medal and three silver medals, recording 75 points.

University of Management and Technology took fourth position by winning one silver and one bronze medal, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan won one silver medal and three bronze medals, Superior University Lahore won one silver medal and one bronze medal, GCU Lahore won one gold medal, Iqbal University got one silver medal, Garrison University claimed one bronze medal and Sargodha University claimed one silver medals.

On the last day event, Nadeem Ali of the University of Central Punjab has declared the fastest Man of the Championship who won the 100m gold medal by recording a clock time of 11.62sec, followed by Ali Ahmad UCP with a time 11.65sec got silver medal and Ahmad Saeed of UCP won bronze medal with his clock time 11.84sec.

Osama of Punjab University won gold medals in 800m, 1500m and 3000m while got bronze medals in 10,000 meters and was declared as the best Athlete of the Championship. In the 400m race, Fahad Khan UCP won the gold medal, followed by Ahmed Saeed of the same and Ahmad Abdullah of Punjab

University got the bronze medals.

On the third day Shazil of UCP created a new record in High Jump by clearing a height of 1.97 by defeating the old one of Rs. 1.96. Muhammad Hassnain of Punjab won a silver medal with 1.93 meters and Adeel Anjum got a bronze medal with the same 1.93 meters.

In the 5000meters Kaleem Akhtar of PU won gold medal, followed by Nosherawan Ashiq UCP and Shahsawar of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, in the 200m Ali Ahmed Sukara of UCP won the gold medal, followed by Nadeem Ali of UCP and Waqas Khan of Punjab. In Javelin throw Abdul Qadir UCP won the gold medal with his throw 67.83 meters, followed by Umair of UCP Lahore with his throw of 63.08 and Muhammad Usman got bronze medal with 59.89meters.

In the 4X100meters Relay UCP with their time of 43.28sec got a gold medal, followed by PU with 43.59sec and UMT 44.16sec got bronze medals. In the 4X400m Relay, UCP got first position, followed by the University of Lahore and Punjab University took third position. In the 10,000meter Kaleem of UCP won gold medal, Subhan Ashiq of the University of Lahore won the silver medal and Noshairwan Ashiq, both brothers, won bronz medal, in the Pole Vault Ali Adnan of PU won the gold medal, followed by M. Hassan of Superior Univesity and Zahir Farooq of UCP.

Iqra University wins HEC All Pakistan Inter-University Squash Women Iqbal Trophy

PESHAWAR, (APP): Twin sisters from Iqra University steered the team to win the Iqbal Trophy of the HEC All-Pakistan Women Squash Championship played here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex on Monday.

Legendary Qamar Zaman was the chief guest on this occasion. Deputy Director sports and Organizing Secretary Mariyyah Samin, Coach Salma Faiz, Chief Referee Munawar Zaman, Referee Adil Faqeer and Riaz Khan, administrator Peshawar Sports Complex Syed Jaffar Shah, players and officials were also present.

In the final of the HEC All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash Championship played for the Iqbal Trophy, Iqra University team recorded a victory against Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad by 2-0. The team of Iqra University, a twin sisters of Umme Kulsom and Zohra through tournament exhibited excellent display and defeated some strong teams like Punjab University, University of Central Punjab, Lahore

College University, University of Lahore and Bahaduddin Zikria University Multan in their league round matches.

In the first singles match Umme Kulsom of Iqra recorded a victory against Haram Safdar of Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad by 11-9, 11-8 and 11-8. Umme Kulsom played well and did not give much chance to Haram Safdar to strike back.

After winning the first singles Zohra of Iqra University defeated Nimra Aqeel of Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad in a tough battle 3-2, the score was 11-8, 3-11, 11-8, 8-11 and 11-5.

Zohra faced tough resistance against her strong rival Nimra Aqeel in the marathon 3-2 sets, which lasted for 49 minutes. Zohra is a good outstanding player who defeated national ranking player Nimra Aqeel in the five sets battle.

In the third position match Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan defeated Lahore College for Women University by 2-0. In the first singles Hira Aqeel, the younger sister of Nimra Aqeel, defeated Tania

Younis of Lahore College for Women by 3-0, the score was 11-2, 11-4 and 11-4 and in the second singles Maira Hussain of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan defeated Anzdeela Ramzan by 3-0, the score was 11-4, 11-3 and 11-4.

A total of 15 Universities took part in the All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash Championship for the Iqbal Trophy awarded by the chief guest to winners Iqra University, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad got runners-up trophy while Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan took third position.

FINAL RESULT
IQRA (2-0) QAA
Umme Kulsom (Iqra) (3-0) Haram Safdar (QAU) (11-1 11-4 11-2)
Zohra Abdullah (Iqra) (3-2) Nimra Aqeel (QAU) (11-8 3-11 11-8 8-11 11-5)
3RD POSITION
RESULT
AWKUM (2-0) LCW
Hira Aqeel (awkum) (3-0) Tania Younis (11-2 11-4 11-4)
Maira Hussain (awkum) (3-0) Anzeela Ramzan (11-4 11-3 11-4).



In brief

PHA improve city's beauty

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi is taking solid steps to improve beauty of the city. According to a PHA spokesperson, the authority was making efforts to renovate city parks. Under a project, the renovation work of 'Al-Aqsa' Park was being completed, she said. PHA was planting saplings to improve the beauty of the city, she added. On the directives of the Director General, the PHA Rawalpindi had also accelerated the process of producing plants and seedlings in the PHA nursery. Special measures were also being taken to ensure the provision of best recreational and tourism facilities to the citizens, she informed. In this regard, ornamental plants and saplings were being planted in various city parks to provide the best recreational facilities to the people. The beautification and cleanliness work of Al-Aqsa Park would be completed soon, she added.

Rs 145,000 fine imposed

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Health Authority (DHA) in collaboration with allied departments had imposed a fine of Rs 145,000 and issued the ticket to one on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Monday said that presently 33 patients were admitted to different district health facilities, of which 18 were confirmed cases while 2,613 were discharged after treatment. He added that with the arrival of two more cases each one from Gujar Khan and Potohar town urban during the last 24 hours, the district's total tally had reached 2,633 confirmed cases. The health officer informed that dengue cases were declining with changing weather and hoped that in the coming days, the dengue cases would end as the weather turned cooler, which was not suitable for the survival of the dengue insect.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Shikraparian, Filtration Plant, G-6/3, Babul-Salam, Marvi, Waheedabad, Sohadrn Road, Khanna Dak, Alipoor, F-8, G - 10 Center, I-8/2, I-10/2, G-13/4, F-11/4, Rahara, CM Pak Zong, Kari, Birut, Kaldana, Nimble, Patriata, Upper Topa, Anguri, Park Enclave, Scheme-II, Chhata Bakhtawar, Sohadrn Road, Anguri, UC Road, Coral, Comstick, Khanna East, Rahara, Ghorri Garden, Khanna-2, Azad Shaheed Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Saidpur Road, Faizabad, B.B. Hospital, Curry Road, Khanna Road, Khanna II, Al Noor Colony, Muslim Town, Sector 4, APHS, Gangal, Zafarul Haq, Dhok Khaba, Gulshanabad, Jama Masjid, Industrial, Quaidabad, Gwalmandi, Abu Bakar, Amin Town, Kayani Road, Askari XI, Ameer Hamza Colony, Shams Colony, Noon, Ratta Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mall Road, Jahangir Road, RIC, Rawalpindi.III, SPD.II.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with the delegation of Pakistan Humanitarian Forum at Parliament House.

Shehzad Roy, Mariam Chughtai meet education minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The founder and President of Zindagi Trust Shehzad Roy along with the Director of National Curriculum Council, Mariam Chughtai called on the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindh on Monday. The minister welcomed Shehzad Roy and appreciated his contribution towards education reform in the country, especially for his work on the integration of Child Protection into the provincial curriculum of Sindh. His contribution in the field of education was highly commendable, he added.

Sindh said due to Shehzad Roy's efforts, Sindh Government approved the "Teacher Performance Evaluation" format developed by Zindagi Trust for the government teachers across the province, the National Assembly also recognized Shehzad's efforts and passed a law criminalizing corporal punishment. Shehzad Roy, who is also a renowned singer briefed the minister about the contribution and aim of Zindagi Trust.

He discussed the initiatives taken by Zindagi Trust to make education accessible to all children in Pakistan and especially in Sindh. In continuation of his efforts, he presented Madad Ali Sindh with a proposal to develop and implement special elective

courses focused on Chess, Liberal Arts, and especially music in all public schools in Islamabad.

He said that Zindagi has developed a curriculum in collaboration with the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for the students of class 3 to class 8. Shehzad said that the introduction of such a course aims to provide children with a platform to enhance their cognitive learning. He emphasised that chess along with other liberal arts, enables children to further develop and enhance their mental capabilities. On the Minister's direction, NCC along with Zindagi Trust will develop a curriculum focused on teaching Chess and Musical instruments to students from grade 3 to grade 8.

It will be further developed for the students of grade 9 and 10 as well. Madad said that such elective courses should be developed by NCC which can further be implemented by FDE on the ground.

He said that extra curricular activities must be formally taught and encouraged at public schools.

Madad said that he has given special instruction to FDE to ensure that sports events, debates and other such events are regularly organised in all FDE schools and colleges.

Shehzad said that while recognizing the vital role of art education, Zindagi Trust (ZT) initiated its Art pro-

gram in 2015, offering a diverse range of activities that act as conduits for creative expression.

To this end, ZT curated a space conducive to artistic expression by making a designated art room in all its managed schools.

Following this, ZT focused on building the capacity of government teachers designated to the art program. Through stakeholder engagement, and focus groups with experts in the field, ZT developed a comprehensive Art Curriculum to be used by all government schools across Pakistan as it continues to advocate for art to be recognized as a fundamental subject. He continued that Chess was introduced in Zindagi Trust-managed schools in 2011.

Shehzad Mirza, who trained in Russia and was a FEDA-certified master chess player, initiated the programme that currently runs for students from Grade 3 to Grade 8.

By running a master training programme, additional teachers were trained to allow the scaling of the programme. ZT students have succeeded at local and national level championships and their alumni now support other schools in offering Chess. The chess curriculum was developed after consultation of various sources in different languages and considers the cognitive stages of children.

ED PIMS asks protesting nurses to serve patients

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director (ED) Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Prof Dr Imran Sikandar on Monday asked the protesting nurses to end their strike and serve the patients.

According to Dr. Mubashar Mushtaq Dahi, spokesperson to ED PIMS, the hospital administration will take legal action against nurses in case of not ending the strike. In this regard, Dr. Imran Sikandar already informed the Ministry of Health, keeping in view the suffering of patients due to the protest of nurses.

He said that ED PIMS Prof Dr Imran Sikandar will not compromise on the treatment and care of patients under any circumstances. "Therefore, all these nurses on strike are

warned to return to work as the problems of the patients will not be compromised," he said. He said that the management of PIMS Hospital is responsible for running the hospital affairs efficiently. He said that blackmailing FMTI nurses to the hospital management is not acceptable in any case. He clarified that the issue of one-year extension of the contract period of 248 nurses was raised before the Ministry of Health after which the Ministry requested the Establishment Division, the matter was sent to the Election Commission of Pakistan for approval by the Establishment Division, but they rejected it.

He said that nurses' ongoing strike and blackmailing of the administration is not acceptable in any way as thousands of patients are facing problems due to the behaviour of nurses which is not acceptable in any way.

He said that on the issue of nurses, meetings have been held with their representatives.

ED PIMS Prof Dr. Imran Sikandar has assured all possible support from the PIMS administration and he is trying his best to solve the problem, but some elements are trying to spoil things, he added. He said that there is only Rs 10 million in the FMTI budget while Rs 120 million budget is needed to pay the salaries of all these employees. He said that Dr. Imran Sikandar has made efforts and sought approval from the Ministry of Health and after approval, the salaries will also be paid.

Railways to restore Awam Express in December 20

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has finally decided to restore Awam Express next month which was closed by the department after the deteriorating flood situation of 2022 in Sindh and other parts of the country.

"The decision to reinstate this crucial train service has been made after the suspension due to the severe flood situation in 2022, promising a renewed connection between major cities," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said the Awam Express, operating on the route from Karachi to Lahore and Lahore to Peshawar, is set to resume operations following directives issued to the carriage factory officials at the Railway Headquarters. The official said that the department would prepare 18 bogies,

accommodating economy class, lower AC, and AC business class coaches for the relaunch scheduled in December.

He said the Awam Express is one of the longest continuous running services, covering a published distance of 1,721 kilometres along the Karachi-Peshawar Railway line.

The train journey typically spanned approximately 33 hours and 30 minutes, serving as a crucial link between these prominent cities, the official added.

To a question, he said the department has granted a one-month extension in services of the Shalimar Express train that operates on the Karachi-Lahore route. In May 2023, Pakistan Railways revived the high-speed Shalimar Express passenger train after eight months.

Iconic poet 'Faiz Ahmad Faiz' remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iconic poet and writer Faiz Ahmad Faiz was remembered on his 39th death anniversary today (Monday) where fans from all walks of life through media platforms paid him rich tributes for his unforgettable services.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz was born on February 13, 1911, at Kala Qader in the Narowal district of Punjab.

He was a notable member of the Progressive Writers' Movement and an avowed Marxist. He received the Lenin Peace Prize from the Soviet Union in 1962, a private news channel reported.

Faiz's literary work was posthumously publicly honoured when the Pakistani Government conferred upon him the nation's highest civil award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz, in 1990.

Health Minister meets DG WHO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan had a meeting with the Director General World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros during the Global Food Security Summit being held in London, UK.

He expressed his grief on the grave situation of health and nutrition in the flood affected areas in Pakistan affecting more than 33 million population.

He appreciated the efforts of Government of Pakistan in addressing this challenge faced by the country especially the vulnerable groups including adolescent girls, mothers and children.

Dr Nadeem Jan also shared the vision of the current government with regards to reach to the communities through UHC

and focused on "Health for all" approaches and he thanked the WHO for extending their support for provision of equipment and supplies.

Dr. Tedros assured complete support of WHO to alleviate the suffering of those in need in the flood affected areas and discussed the role of WHO Pakistan in the overall efforts of UN organizations and partners. He also discussed the bilateral support provided by WHO Pakistan to address the nutrition issues in Pakistan especially those affecting women and children. He updated that WHO Pakistan is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health in areas nutrition in emergencies and this collaboration will be further strengthened as required.

Inspection team visits Passport Office after receiving complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Wafaqi Mohtasib, an inspection team visited the Passport Office on Monday after receiving complaints about delays in issuing passports.

Taking notice of complaints, the inspection team visited the Passport Office Islamabad, on the direction of Ombudsman Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, said a press release. The inspection team led by the Senior Advisor discussed in detail the entire process of issuing passports to ascertain the causes of inordinate delay and breakdown of efficient delivery of services in the Passport Office.

The team interviewed a large number of people who had come to get their passports in the Passport Offices located in the G-8 and G-10 Sectors.

The team was informed by the applicants that they

had been visiting the Passport Office to collect their documents for many months and their visas had expired in the process.

The administration of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports informed the visiting inspection team that the printing of passports got delayed due to the non-availability of lamination paper.

They assured the inspection team that the backlog would be cleared soon as the lamination paper was now in hand. The inspection team advised the administration to ensure the timely procurement of lamination paper in future so that the applicants do not face this problem again.

The administration was also advised to ensure the issuance of passports within the prescribed time-frame. The inspection team further advised the admin-

istration of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports Office to refund the fee charged for urgent passports in case of late delivery.

The inspection team on arrival at G-10 Passport Office observed hundreds of applicants waiting to collect their travel documents. The lack of proper seating arrangements was causing further agony to the visitors.

The inspection team will submit its report based on its recommendations for the consideration of the Wafaqi Mohtasib within one week. Meanwhile, Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed the Secretary Interior Division to take stock of the working of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports comprehensively to ensure efficient delivery of services in future.

Islamabad's 35% residents, only 10.3% of Lahore's segregate waste at source for livelihood

ISLAMABAD (APP): A recent study titled "Waste as Resource: Case Study of Lahore and Islamabad" has revealed that 35% of residents of Islamabad and only 10.3% of Lahore segregate waste at the source for economic reasons.

The segregated waste included the selling of plastic bottles, paper, and other materials to a local scrapyard by the household or their domestic help. Other non-sellable materials are disposed of at the community collection point. The Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (hbs) jointly organized a consultative meeting on a research report titled "Waste as Resource: Case Study of Lahore and Islamabad". The meeting aimed to explore current practices, policies, and gaps in waste management, focusing on the potential of waste as a valuable resource, a news release said.

The findings of the research report revealed that approximately 50 million metric tons of waste are produced annually in Pakistan, highlighting the urgency to adopt sustainable practices.

The survey was meant to find out about the behaviour of communities in Islamabad and Lahore towards waste management. Ms. Ayesha Majid, Senior Program Coordinator IoU, presented research findings and shed light on the gravity of waste-related illnesses. It was alarming to note that 24% of the respondents in Islamabad and 12.3% in Lahore reported burning waste around their locality.

It was evident that residents wanted the municipality to initiate waste segregation by providing multiple bins systems in residential areas. Residents

of Islamabad (69%) and Lahore (68%) showed their support for adopting waste segregation in households given the infrastructure provision by the municipality. On average 50% were also willing to pay extra for the improvement of waste management services where recycling and segregation were a priority.

The role of private and public sector and youth was discussed by a panel of experts including Mr. Farid Rais, Senior Anchorperson from Dunya News, Farah Rashid, expert environmental sustainability; Gulraiz Yaqoob, Managing Director of Five Star Pvt. Ltd.; Uniqa Batool, Co-Founder of DIYAR; and Umar Chaudhry, Senior Manager of Communication at Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC). The private sector was of the view that trash can be recycled which they affirmed is an untapped opportunity, especially for young entrepreneurs. Uniqa Batool, a young startup lead expressed, "We are recycling plastic and making prefabricated walls for building low-cost and affordable houses, contributing to sustainable housing solutions." Gulraiz Yaqoob spoke about the clear PET flakes that they make out of recycled plastic at the facility in Lahore. They discussed the challenges and opportunities in recycling and highlighted the industry's growth opportunities and the need for municipalities to support businesses in the provision of the basic capital i.e. waste plastic.

Farah Rashid shared the role of the development sector in uplifting new ideas and finding new avenues for recycling. She highlighted that Engro

Foundation announces internship opportunities for youth annually where they can work on their ideas around sustainability and produce successful green business models.

Umar Chaudhry underscored the adoption of critical policy measures during the meeting. These initiatives encompass a robust focus on encouraging source-level segregation through public awareness campaigns, the implementation of comprehensive youth engagement programs like the "50 Thousand Clean Campus Drive" to instil responsible waste practices, and the active promotion of public-private partnerships. Additionally, a transparent policy framework is adopted for issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to the private sector for waste management. Collectively, these policy measures aim to establish sustainable waste management practices, mitigate environmental impact, and nurture a sense of responsibility among both citizens and businesses.

The IoU team that convened the meeting included Samima Durrani, Head of Finance and Operation, Tayyaba Pervaiz and Mohsin Ali, Program Assistants, and Muhammad Haris, Finance Officer. The consultative meeting helped bring together important and diverse actors that can contribute to making waste management efficient in Lahore and Islamabad including experts, entrepreneurs, and policymakers. The policy recommendations of the report will form basis of the future dialogues with the policy makers and other actors for making cities more green and clean.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi addressing a press conference.

IEA working on constitution

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is working to frame a new constitution, reports a private broadcaster. Improved governance and people's better economic condition would pave the way for drafting the basic law, the IEA spokesman believed. TOLONews quoted Zabiullah Mujahid as saying: "There are some priorities which we need to do to reach a phase where the ground for the constitution is paved."

Activists' release demanded

TAKHAR (Khaama Press): In Takhar province, a group of courageous women is demanding the release of women's rights activists currently detained by the Taliban administration. These activists have been champions of gender equality and women's empowerment in the country, tirelessly advocating for women's fundamental rights and opportunities. However, their recent arrest has raised concerns about their safety and the future of women's rights in the country.

IEA's Deputy PM visits Spin Boldak



KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate's deputy prime minister Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi and other officials visited Spin Boldak in Kandahar on Sunday where they met with refugees who had returned from Pakistan. Hanafi, who is also head

of a commission tasked to deal with problems of returning refugees, visited a number of people in their homes and held a meeting with officials from various local committees working in Spin Boldak. Mullah Shirin Akhund, the governor of Kandahar,

was also at the meeting. Participants discussed various problems and challenges faced by returning refugees and made suggestions. The delegation from Kabul assured the local committees of their full support in order to resolve the problems raised.

Concerns grow over failure to enforce travel bans

KABUL (Khaama Press): Despite the sanctions imposed on the Taliban's authorities, which restrict their foreign travels, some members of the group have recently undertaken foreign trips, resulting in reactions. Abdulbari Omar, the head of the Food and Drug Administration of the Taliban, recently embarked on a European journey that controversies have accompanied. Reports suggest that this official from the Taliban administration is currently travelling in European countries, with his presence confirmed in at least Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The German Foreign Ministry has responded to widespread criticism regarding the presence of this Taliban official in Germany, stating that they are reviewing the issuance

of a visa for this member of the Taliban. The ministry emphasized, "We do not recognize the Taliban. As long as the Taliban openly violate human rights, especially the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, the normalization of relations with their regime will not take place." In a strong reaction, the German Foreign Ministry continued, "No one should provide a platform for extremist Islamists in Germany. The Taliban are responsible for widespread human rights abuses, and the responsible authorities are investigating this matter rigorously." Abdulbari Omar left the country after the German Foreign Ministry's reaction. In the latest videos released by supporters of the Taliban, he is seen wan-

dering in one of the cities in Belgium. Michael McCaul, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in the United States, also criticized the failure to enforce travel bans on members of the Taliban officials and said, "The European trip of the Taliban is unacceptable." According to him, "The international community should stand together in implementing and expanding travel bans on Taliban members. This is unacceptable." The Taliban administration is accused of widespread human rights violations and open hostility towards women, which is considered as gender inequality and gender apartheid by the international community and organizations.

Maryam wins Chamisso Literary Prize



KABUL (Khaama Press): In 2023, Maryam Mitra, the poet known for her collections "Living on the Margins" and "I Have Seen the Wind's Wrath," was awarded the prestigious Albert von Schamisso Literary Prize. Ms. Mitra has shared in her social media network that the "Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts has announced that this year's 'Schamisso' literary prize was awarded to Maryam Mitra, a poet from Afghanistan."

Maryam Mitra has so far published two poetry collections, one in Persian and the other in German, establishing herself as a well-known figure in the field of poetry and literature in Afghanistan. According to German media reports, the Albert von Schamisso Literary Prize was awarded to Ms. Maryam Mitra. In an interview with "Hasht-e Sobh," Maryam expressed that awards like this for Afghan poets and writers provide an opportunity to discuss "Afghan culture and literature." She also added, "I can use this opportunity to draw the attention of the German society to the situation of Afghan women. So, I am trying to be a voice for Afghan women."

Maryam also mentioned on her Facebook page that this literary prize, named after Albert von Schamisso, a German poet and botanist, is awarded annually by the Friedrich-Bödecker Foundation and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts to a writer in Germany. Afghan women's creative abilities and talents are recognized and celebrated on the international stage, showcasing their resilience and potential to shine in various fields. However, these talented women in Afghanistan often confront many challenges and restrictions that hinder their full participation and realization of their potential. Their achievements abroad serve as a beacon of hope, inspiring change and progress for women within Afghanistan and highlighting the importance of addressing the obstacles that hinder their progress in their homeland.

Doctors concerned by spread of diseases

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of doctors talked about the spread of some infectious diseases among newly deported refugees from Pakistan. Some of these doctors said that many of the patients have infectious skin diseases, the prevalence of which was rare in the country before. Among dozens of sick people who have recently been deported from Pakistan, Aqela, a refugee, called for the Afghan caretaker government to pay serious attention to the health challenges of the deported refugees. "We came here out of necessity. I have children and Pakistan forced us, otherwise why would anyone bother to come during the cold season?" Aqela told TOLONews.

"refugees who have been expelled from Pakistan have brought diseases from this country with them, such as skin diseases, eczema, and also diseases that they have encountered along the way, such as diarrhea and seasonal diseases, which have become problematic due to the cold weather," said Wasi, a doctor. A number of refugees who are suffering from various diseases asked the caretaker government to treat their illness before it becomes a big challenge. "I have a heart disease and I'm shaking so much that I can't even pray," said Fatima, an expelled refugee. "In Pakistan, where we lived, the police didn't treat us right, and even when we got sick, they harassed us in hospitals," said Rahimullah, an expelled refugee. Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate announced the continuation of talks with the Pakistani authorities to stop the deportation of Afghan refugees from this country on the eve of winter.

"Meetings were held with them and they are in touch with all levels through the embassies and communication committees that we have along the line, but those who made this decision are unfair and against the principles," said Bilal Karimi, the deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. Earlier, the World Health Organization said that they need 10 million dollars in aid to provide health services to the refugees who voluntarily or forcibly return to the country from Pakistan. Meanwhile, Mullah Muhammad Isa Sani, the acting minister of the Ministry of Public Works, recently conducted a site visit to assess the progress of road construction in the Arghnistan district of Kandahar province. According to a statement from the Ministry of Public Works, Mullah Muhammad Isa Sani, during his visit to the Marouf-Arghastan road construction site, provided necessary instructions to the project officials. His directives focused on accelerating the pace of work, enhancing quality, and ensuring the timely completion of the project.

New standards for billboards finalized, says MoIC

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Information and Culture said that a procedure has been finalized and sent to all provinces of the country for the correction of writing on commercial and personal signs and billboards. Haqmal Zia, acting deputy of the ministry, said that the writing should be common and in national languages so that the citizens of the country do not face problems. "In general, we try to

make sure that all the writings are understandable, in national languages that people can understand, and that there are no non-Islamic images, and that it should not arouse political sensitivities," said Haqmal Zia. According to the ministry, the process will move away from the bias of writing in national languages. Some citizens of the country praise the action of the current government and consider it effective in promoting Afghan culture.

"We should use Dari and Pashto language, why should we use foreign language?" said Mohammad Naseem, a Kanul resident. "Some people who come to Kabul from distant provinces, some of them are not literate, and if it is written in the Persian language, they can solve their problem by asking others to cooperate," said Arsalan, a Kabul resident. Some shopkeepers said that they need English writing in addition to national

languages, and changing the signs is costly for them. "It is not a problem for those whose billboards are in English or in Dari, but many foreigners who come do not understand them," said Sultan, a shopkeeper. Ministry of Information and Culture emphasized that to implement the process, they have created a commission with the participation of Kabul Municipality, the Ministry of Interior, and the city guilds to implement the process in a serious manner.

Refugees, victims of natural disasters receiving help: Baradar

KABUL (TOLONews): The deputy PM for economic affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, said at the Kandahar-Uruzgan Road Construction Commencement ceremony that the Islamic Emirate has taken care of the situation of immigrants and victims of natural events in the country. Baradar said that the Islamic Emirate has started the work of several other big projects in the country to address the challenges of the citizens and will continue its efforts in this field.

"Alhamdulillah, a regular plan was prepared for the immigrants, which has surprised the people," said the deputy PM for economic affairs. "In my opinion, not a single person should remain unemployed in the country and our country is an agricultural and livestock country," said Mohammad Esa Sani, acting Minister of Public Works. The local officials of Kandahar said that the road, which passes through



Kandahar and Uruzgan under the name of the Northern Corridor, costs \$150 million and in the next section, the road will connect to the northern provinces through the Daikundi route. "In the future, God willing, we will connect the road with the North, where

the transportation of Asia passes through the road," said Sher Hussan Khoshwal, an official of the Public Works department in the southern area. "It will be very useful for us, there should be no betrayal and the work should proceed quickly because we are facing many problems,"

said Abdul Salam, a resident of Kandahar. Officials of the Islamic Emirate said that after the Islamic Emirate came to power, several large and small projects have been started throughout the country and thousands of people were provided with work.

6 Afghan families with Canadian ties deported from Pakistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): According to reports, a non-profit organization in Canada has disclosed that six Afghan families who were awaiting relocation to Canada have been returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan. "I'm extremely concerned by the current stance that Pakistan has taken to deport Afghans out of the country," said Jon Feltham, an Afghan war veteran and program director for Aman Lara. CBC News reported that this non-profit works to evacuate people from countries in crisis. "We're taking them out of one hotspot, and what we're doing now is putting them into another." Feltham emphasized that these deportations highlight the pressing necessity for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to expedite the processing of paperwork for Afghans seeking refuge in Canada. The situation on the ground is increasingly dire, and delays in processing applications could result in more individuals facing deportation and being exposed to potential harm.

Towards the end of October, Pakistan initiated a crackdown on what it described as undocumented Afghan migrants, detaining and subsequently deporting them. This development has raised concerns about the safety and well-being of Afghan asylum seekers, especially given the volatile situation in Afghanistan. It underscores the need for international cooperation and swift action to protect vulnerable individuals seeking safety and security in other countries. The exact number of Afghans seeking to come to Canada through special immigration measures for former employees of the Canadian Armed Forces or the federal government remains undisclosed. The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has cited operational security concerns for not revealing this information. Aman Lara, an organization dedicated to assisting Afghans with an "enduring relationship with the government of Canada," estimates that it has supported nearly 2,500 individuals in temporarily relocating to

Pakistan while awaiting further steps in their immigration process. While the organization couldn't provide an exact count for the six families affected, it referenced the United Nations estimate that an average Afghan household consists of approximately eight people. This highlights the potential scale of the impact on these families and the urgency of their situation. The lack of transparency regarding the number of Afghans seeking refuge in Canada and the challenges faced by organizations like Aman Lara underscores the complexities of the Afghan refugee crisis and the importance of coordinated efforts to provide assistance and support to those in need. CBC News interviewed Sanaullah Azizi, who reported being arrested in Islamabad on Monday while running an errand with his wife. Azizi and his wife, along with other migrants, endured a 17-hour bus journey before being left at the Afghanistan border. His

presence in Pakistan was in pursuit of approval to relocate to Canada, leveraging his father-in-law's prior role as an interpreter for the Canadian Armed Forces. Azizi explained that he never had the opportunity to pursue his relocation plans. "They snatched my phone right away," he revealed through an interpreter to CBC, noting that the device contained all his documents and was his sole connection to the outside world. The phone was only returned after they were left at the border, leading him and his wife to go into hiding in Afghanistan since then. This comes as the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada had previously declared that Afghan citizens with pending Canadian immigration cases should not be deported from Pakistan. It is worth noting that hundreds of Afghan citizens, who had cases pending with countries like the United States, Canada, and Europe, sought refuge in Pakistan following the takeover of the Taliban.

Rising suicides, child marriages in Afghanistan: Rawadari report

KABUL (Khaama Press): A human rights organization in Afghanistan known as "Rawadari" has reported in its latest release, marking World Children's Day, an alarming increase in various forms of violence against children in Afghanistan. This includes forced and early marriages, instances of self-harm, and violence within educational environments. The organization "Rawadari," led by the former chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, Shahzad Akbar, emphasized in its latest report published on Sunday that the "laws protecting children, which had criminalized violent behaviours," were revoked after the return of the Taliban administration, resulting in detrimental consequences for the human rights situation of children.

The documents from the Rawadari organization shed light on numerous violations of children's rights in Afghanistan, with a predominant focus on girls. This report examines the state of children from August 2021 to October 2023. The investigation involved interviews with 181 defence lawyers, judicial and legal personnel, victims, and their family members. Conversations were held with 139 males, 30 females, and 12 children across 25 Afghan provinces. Rawadari hasn't provided specific statistics on child rights violations over these two years. Still, it has highlighted cases of self-harm, forced marriages by members of the Taliban administration, early marriages, violence, and mistreatment of children in educational settings, as

well as the recruitment of children as soldiers. Local sources in Ghazni province have informed Rawadari that forced and underage marriages have increased significantly in this region. One documented case in Rawadari's research reveals that a 17-year-old girl was forced into marriage without consent on October 22, 2022, leading to her tragic suicide. Another case involves a 15-year-old girl who was compelled into a forced marriage after being denied an education. Underage girls forced into marriages by Taliban members The Rawadari report reveals that despite the Taliban's leadership order prohibiting underage marriages, this directive has not been adequately enforced. Commanders of the Taliban in various provinces have

continued to engage in marriages with underage girls. The report states, "In Nimroz province, a local Taliban official forcibly married a 13-year-old girl. Due to economic difficulties and security concerns, the victim's family could not raise objections to this incident. In another case in Maidan Wardak province, a girl was married off by force before reaching the legal age of marriage for a sum of 600,000 Afghanis." In a similar incident, it has been reported that another Taliban commander in Inam Sahib District of Kunduz province married a 15-year-old girl without her family's consent, despite having two other wives. Another instance highlighted concerns a Taliban commander in the Darqad district of Takhar province who married a girl as his

third wife on August 26, 2022. Rawadari has also noted similar cases in Maidan Wardak province. They emphasize that many similar incidents have occurred in eastern provinces but are less publicized due to security concerns and cultural sensitivities. Surge in suicide attempts among children According to the Rawadari organization's report, suicide attempts among children have increased in the past two years due to various reasons, including poverty and financial pressures. The organization, citing health centres in Bamyan province, has stated that 50% of the total recorded cases of suicide attempts in this province involve girls under the age of 18. Local sources in Ghur province have reported a

significant increase in child suicides. Additionally, this report has mentioned at least 35 cases of suicide in Badakhshan province, involving both boys and girls. This report describes the factors contributing to child suicides as mostly family mistreatment, forced and early marriages, deprivation of the right to education, and despair, which have been exacerbated since the rise of the Taliban in the country. Violence and mistreatment of children in schools (Madrasa) Recent research continues to show that over the past two years, the Taliban administration has placed its targeted individuals in positions of leadership, authority, and teaching in schools. These individuals, primarily graduates of reli-

gious schools, have contributed to violence and the punishment of children in the educational environment. One source in Kandahar province has reported that the Taliban has placed its targeted individuals in various educational positions, leading to an increase in instances of punishment, including beating with sticks, using rulers, electric shocks, kicking, caning, boxing, pulling ears and hair, placing pens between fingers, making children stand on one leg, putting shoes in children's mouths, suffocation, and forced labour. Reports from organizations continue to highlight cases of sexual abuse in schools, citing several incidents in Badakhshan and Herat provinces where children endure sexual abuse. However, they cannot dis-

close these abuses due to concerns for their safety and cultural sensitivities. According to some reports, children in Helmand province are being subjected to military training under the pretext of teaching religious studies, and in some cases, they are recruited as soldiers. Meanwhile, on November 20th, the United Nations stated on the occasion of Universal Children's Day that the rights of children are under attack in some parts of the world. Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Taliban, has denied these claims and asserted that the allegations from the organization are not accurate. He claimed that approximately 10,000 children are supported in the country's orphanages.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi meeting with a delegation of children wearing traditional attires representing four provinces, Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Policy decisions, mandate of an elected govt: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that it was the mandate of an elected government to make policy decisions on major national issues.

Responding to a motion suggesting that State Bank take steps to demonetize Rs 5000 currency note, as a reason of inflation and corruption, he said: "Can the government, with limited duration and powers, should make policy decisions? It would be appropriate if we wait for the next parliament to decide on the issue."

He called for a comprehensive debate on the important issue in the presence of the caretaker Finance Minister. The minister said Rs 5000 current notes were issued in May 2006, and currently, around 905 million currency notes of Rs 4525 billion were in circulation in the country.

Solangi clarified that the State Bank of Pakistan issued or discontinued currency notes as per the State Bank Act. He also said that during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, the SBP had been granted more autonomy.

Yasmin, Cheema remanded

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Yasmin Rashid and Omar Sarfaraz Cheema, already held in multiple cases tied to May 9 events, faced a fresh arrest linked to an attack on ex-PM Shehbaz Sharif's Model Town residence.

They appeared before a court in Lahore, where they were remanded to jail for 14 days. In court today, fresh charges against Yasmin and Cheema were detailed in a supplementary statement by the police. Allegedly, on May 9, a group including PTI leaders attempted to breach the gates of the PM House, instigating around 800-900 supporters armed with clubs and stones, threatening staff and attempting to start a fire.

The charges listed include obstruction of public servants, creating public nuisance, intimidation, mischief by fire, rioting, theft, and even terrorism charges. Despite a request for a 30-day remand to gather evidence, the court granted a 14-day judicial remand, rejecting the police's request due to a lack of evidence linking the accused to weapons or likely possession.

PTI chairman's arrest triggered widespread violence, leading to a crack-down on his party by the state.

Shehbaz Sharif, who was premier at the time, had his residence designated as the Prime Minister's House. Recently, Punjab police intensified action against PTI workers and activists, making numerous arrests across the country, based on a list of 884 individuals marked as targets, most identified as the 'B team' of PTI's leadership.

LHC issues directives for schools closure

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Monday ordered the closure of all educational institutions in Punjab on Saturdays until the end of January to curb smog.

LHC judge Justice Shahid Karim issued a written order on petitions filed by citizens seeking measures to tackle air pollution in the country. In a detailed order, the judge has directed the provincial government to issue a notification for closure of schools, colleges and universities on Saturdays till last week of January. The order further said that the government was taking measures to ensure work from home for two days a week. On November 18, the Punjab Government imposed a smart lockdown in the 10 most polluted districts on Saturday (November 18).

Movement was restricted in Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin and Narowal districts having the highest Air Quality Index (AQI) and as such potential hotspots for Conjunctivitis

due to smog. "The spread of Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye due to bacterial or viral infection, smoke, dust or chemical exposure is increasing day by day, which poses a serious and imminent threat to public health", read a notification issued by the Punjab Health Department.

A day earlier, the provincial government has made it mandatory for people to wear mask while going outdoor. It is pertinent to mention here that a four-day holiday was observed in smog-hit areas of the province on last week and some businesses were also asked to shut down, but later allowed to remain operational as rains had subdued the smog.

Court orders govt to submit report within a week in Stent case: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday directed the provincial government to submit a reply to a plea seeking action against the responsible in the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) expired stents case.

LHC Justice Raheel Kamran took up the plea of Rana Sikandar advocate seeking action against those

responsible for the expired stents case scandal. At the outset of the hearing, the counsel of the caretaker Punjab government sought time to submit the reply in the case, which was okayed by the LHC bench.

The high court directed the Punjab government to submit its response to the expired stents case within a week. Earlier, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) report ? revealed 38 patients were inserted as many as 39 expired stents at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC), last year.

The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) preliminary report on the use of expired stents stated that 500 stents were bought from a private company in 2019.

The acquired stents were supposed to be inserted in 2020 but they were to be inserted into the patients even after 19 months of their expiry date. The report revealed that despite the availability of stents, the PIC kept on demanding the same from other hospitals showing the element of malice in the case as evidence, the report read.

Germany blasts Taliban official's appearance at Cologne mosque

BERLIN (AFP): Germany on Monday condemned an appearance by a Taliban official at a mosque in Cologne, with the interior minister demanding explanations from the Turkish organisation running the site.

Abdul Bari Omar, who is an official with the Taliban-run health authority in Afghanistan, attended the mosque to speak at a conference organised by an Afghan association in the city. "The appearance of a representative of the Taliban in Cologne is completely unacceptable and must be strongly condemned."

"No-one should offer radicals a platform in Germany," said Interior

Minister Nancy Faeser. She urged Ditib, the Turkish-Islamic association managing the mosque in the city's Chorweiler district to explain "how it could have been possible that the room was used" in this manner. Ditib's management said it had no prior knowledge of the Taliban official's planned appearance.

"Contrary to the original contract, it was transformed into a political event and a speaker who was not known to us had been invited," it said. Ditib rejected "any proximity — even spiritual — to the Taliban". The foreign ministry said the Taliban official had not been issued with a visa to enter Germany.

He had apparently been able to travel to the country using a Schengen visa issued by a "neighbouring country", it added. Local media said Omar had arrived from the Netherlands, where he had participated in a World Health Organisation conference in early November.

Since the Taliban swept back to power in August 2021, billions of dollars in aid and assets have been frozen by the West in what the United Nations has described as an "unprecedented fiscal shock" to the aid-dependent Afghan economy. Ditib — the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs — is one of the largest Islamic organisations in Germany.

ECP 'finalises' code of conduct for elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finalised the Code of Conduct for political parties for the general elections 2024, it was learnt on Monday.

According to sources, the Election Commission of Pakistan has drafted a code of conduct in consultation with political parties in connection with the general election. The suggestions of the political parties have also been included in the Code of Conduct draft. According to sources, political parties will not speak out against the sovereignty of Pakistan during the election campaign. The political parties will also avoid ridiculing the ECP during their election campaign.

Political parties and candidates will strongly refrain from encouraging violence on polling day, and showing weapons during the election campaign will be completely banned. Aerial shootings and firecrackers will also be banned in the public gatherings. According to the Code of Conduct, the election agent must be a voter of the relevant constituency, and

PFUJ stages rally against journalist Mahar's murder

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) on Monday staged a rally and demonstration against the murder of journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar. In Karachi, journalists from all over Sindh gathered at Karachi Press Club and marched towards the CM House to register their protest against the failure of the authorities to arrest the main culprit involved in the murder.

The demonstrators raised slogans against the caretaker Sindh government and demanded immediate arrest of culprits. The protest demonstrations were also held in Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Sukkur, Multan, Hyderabad and other cities. The PFUJ leaders would announce their future course of action at the end of the rally. The action committee will meet immediately after the rally at the KPC and consult with other PFUJ affiliated bodies about the next action plan.

Political parties and candidates will strongly refrain from encouraging violence on polling day, and showing weapons during the election campaign will be completely banned. Aerial shootings and firecrackers will also be banned in the public gatherings. According to the Code of Conduct, the election agent must be a voter of the relevant constituency, and

Four private member bills introduced in Senate

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Four private member bills including the State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Smart Institute of Sciences and Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Right of Access to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2023, were formally introduced in Senate on Monday.

Senators Bahramand Khan Tangi, Fawzia Arshad, Dilawar Khan and Dr Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur introduced the bills in the Upper House. Senate Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani referred all the bills to the standing committees concerned for detailed deliberation after no objection by the government.

In response to the Right of Access to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2023, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said that the Right to Access to Information bill was under the implementation process and the government was also reviewing it. He said the article was part of the constitution which could not be bypassed.

To promote literacy among the children in the country, the Senate on Monday adopted a unanimous resolution, seeking urgent steps and initiatives by the government.

Moved by Senator Sana Jamali, the resolution highlighted the fundamental right of every child to access quality education, emphasizing the need for gender-neutral, geographically inclusive, and socio-economically equitable educational opportunities. The resolution asked the government to take effective steps to promote the literacy for children and youth in general and girls in particular across the country, and also strengthen the non-formal education (NFE) system on an urgent basis to deliver the programmes.

It further asked for promoting skills-based and innovative learning models to provide right to education to out-of-school children and youth with a special focus on girls' education to facilitate life-long learning. The resolution stressed to take steps in order to promote gender equality in education and eliminate disparities by ensuring girls' and women access to quality education, besides eliminating any barriers, impeding their access to education.

It further called for launching comprehensive awareness campaigns to inform both urban and rural communities about the significance of education through outreach programmes, workshops, and community events in collaboration with the stakeholders and partners. The resolution pleaded for prioritize and substantially increasing the funding for education and literacy programs and devising the mechanisms to ensure transparency in the allocation and utilization of budgets for education in the country.

Next PM from JI: Siraj

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has said that all institutions should be neutral and the next prime minister will be from JI.

Addressing a news conference in Lahore, he said that the job of the army was to protect the borders of the country and the role of the establishment was defined in the constitution.

Sirajul Haq said that all the institutions of Pakistan including the army should be neutral, the institutions do not belong to any party but belong to 25 crore people. He said that we have seen Pakistan Peoples Party, Muslim League (N) and Pakistan Tehreek (PTI) while we have also seen dictators in the form of Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and General Zia.

The JI chief said that he expects the Election Commission will ensure transparent elections and claimed that next prime minister will be from his party. Reacting to the statement of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari regarding elderly person, Siraj said that the PPP chairman was referring to his father.

KP CM reviews financial issues of province

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting regarding financial issues of the province was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Monday with the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah in the chair. The meeting discussed in detail the financial issues of the province, specially of the Merged Districts related to the federal government, and decided to take up those issues with caretaker prime minister of Pakistan for redressal.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Syed Intiaz Hussain Shah, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Senior Member Board of Revenue Ikramullah Khan, Secretary Finance Aamir Sultan Tareen and other relevant officials attended the meeting. Caretaker provincial minister for Tribal Affairs Amer Abdullah also attended the meeting via video link.

Briefing the meeting about the current financial situation of the province, it was informed that administrative merger of the erstwhile FATA into Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa province had been completed, but financial integration is still incomplete due to which, the provincial government is facing financial problems. Besides, commitments made with the province at the time of merger are not being fulfilled which has badly affected the overall development process in the newly merged districts.

It was also told that the province is not getting its due share in various federal transfers due to which the provincial government is faced with a major challenge of financial crunches adding that with the merger of erstwhile FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the population of the province has increased but the share of the province in NFC Award has not been increased accordingly which needs to be updated to enable the province to get its due share.

The meeting was told that as per the existing population after merger of erstwhile FATA, the NFC share of the province comes to 19.64% of the total but the province is getting only 14.62%, and added that annually, Rs 142 billion are required for the current expenditures of NMDs but only Rs 66 billion have been allocated to this effect for current fiscal year and

thus, the government is facing a deficit of 76 billion rupees only in terms of current expenditures. It was further told that commitments made by the federal government with regard to the fast track development of the Newly Merged Districts at the time of merger had not yet been fulfilled.

The participants of the meeting were told that a commitment to provide a sum of Rs 19.7 billion for strengthening of police in the merged districts was also made but not yet fulfilled. With regard to the outstanding dues under the head of Net Hydrel Profit, it was apprised that approximately Rs. 88 billion are due against the federal government whereas Rs 50 billion under the head of windfall levy on oil are also due against the federal government.

Addressing the participants, caretaker Chief Minister said that merged districts need special attention for their development and redressal of their decades long deprivations, but insufficient transfers from federal government has resulted in slow paced development work in NMDs. However, he said that all out efforts would be made to steer the province out of this financial crisis.

Rescue 1122 recruitment: PHC send case to NAB

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Waqar forwarded a case against illegal recruitments in Rescue 1122 for former Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (Erstwhile FATA) to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for probe, on Monday.

The counsel argued that in 2019 several vacancies were advertised for different positions in Rescue 1122 for districts of erstwhile FATA. He argued that outsiders were recruited on the vacancies sanctioned for residents of the Mohmand tribal district. The rules and regulations are abrogated as

well as violated during the recruitment process while ineligible people were also appointed in Rescue 1122 at erstwhile FATA, the counsel argued.

The challenged Rescuers didn't possess experience for the advertised positions but were recruited on political affiliation and nepotism, the lawyer added. The counsel requested for granting status quo against the recruitment till final decision.

PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Waqar Ahmad forwarded the plea for to NAB for inquiry regarding irregularities in recruitment of Rescue 1122 personnel for erstwhile FATA while observed that the petitioner may approach

the court after NAB's probe.

Meanwhile, PHC's Justice Sahibzada Asadullah confirmed bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Hangu president Yousaf Khan, arrested for obtaining direct power connection. The counsel Syed Sikandar Hayat advocate argued that the petitioner is nominated in a case for obtaining direct power connection despite the electricity meter didn't register on Yousaf Khan name.

The case is registered for political victimization because he serves PTI as president Hangu district, the petitioner claimed. PHC's Justice Sahibzada Asadullah confirmed bail plea of PTI's Hangu president after conclusion of arguments.



PESHAWAR: KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali administering oath from Barrister Feroze Jamal Kaka Khel as Caretaker Minister.

JUI-F decides active participation in elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Central General Council meeting of JUI-F has decided active participation in the upcoming general elections and directed district organizations of the party to dispatch final recommendations of candidates on National and Provincial Assembly constituencies till 27th of the current month.

Two-day meeting of the Central General Council of JUI-F concluded in Mufti Mahmood Markaz with JUI-F Central Ameer, Maulana Amjad Khan Lahori, Mufti Rozi Khan, Maulana Abdul Wasi (Ameer JUI-F Balochistan), Maulana Mahmood Shah

(general secretary), Maulana Abdul Qayyum Halijvi (Sindh), Maulana Rashid Mahmood Soomro (Sindh), Hafiz Naseer Ahrar, Mufti Mazhar Asaadi (Punjab), Senator Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman (Ameer JUI-F KP), Maulana Atta-ul-Haq Darwaish (general secretary KP), Maulana Attaulah Shahab (Gilgit-Baltistan), Maulana Saeed Yousaf (Azad Kashmir), Senator Kamran Murtaza advocate, Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, Engineer Zia-ur-Rehman and Hafiz Hamdullah, former members National and provincial assemblies and members of the general council from across the country attended the meeting.

The meeting elected Maulana Fazalur Rehman and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri as central Ameer and general secretary of the party for another term of next five years. The

meeting also authorized district chapters of the party for making seat adjustment with other political parties in consultations with office bearers. During the meeting, Maulana Fazalur Rehman briefed the participants about his meetings during visit to Qatar.

The provincial organizations of the party presented performance and political situation-based reports over which the central general council expressed satisfaction. The meeting while expressing profound concern over the atrocities of Israel against innocent Palestinians and daily incessant bombardment on hospitals, schools and civilian population, announced to observe the upcoming Friday (November 24, 2023) as Solidarity Day with Palestinians. The meeting decided to take out solidarity rallies with Palestine in district headquarters across the country.