

Asad Qaiser sent to jail
F.P. Report

SWABI: A judicial magistrate in Swabi on Thursday sent PTI leader Asad Qaiser to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in an alleged corruption case. Qaiser, who is accused of corruption in the procurement of equipment for Gajju Khan Medical College, was arrested from Bani Gala. Judicial magistrate Muhammad Khalil heard the case and handed over Qaiser to judicial remand in the corruption case.



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Police repulse attack
F.P. Report

BANNU: Terrorists, armed with sophisticated weapons and hand-grenades attacked a police check post in domel area of Bannu district, however, police effectively repelled the attack and no casualty was reported. Bannu police informed on Thursday that the assailants attacked the Spina Tangi check post during wee hours with modern weapons and hand grenades.

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PM directs all stakeholders to pursue SIFC initiatives

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday directed all the stakeholders to vigorously pursue the Special Investment Facilitation Council's (SIFC) initiatives through a collaborative approach to reap the dividend in short to medium terms, besides initiating processes for long term endeavours in the larger national interest.

The prime minister said this while chairing the 7th meeting of the Apex Committee of SIFC that was attended by the Chief of Army Staff, members of the federal cabinet, provincial chief ministers and high level government officials. The meeting was held to review various initiatives being led through the SIFC forum, a PM Office press release said.

In the meeting, the ministries presented progress on projects identified in key sectors and gave plans to further improve the ecosystem for realizing the envisaged investments in a timely manner. The committee showed extreme satisfaction on overall progress under the umbrella of SIFC, appreciated the enhancing



level of engagements with friendly countries, both public and private entities, and the outreach strategy to proactively engage investors' community, which was translating in enhanced traction and approvals at domestic and global stages.

It reviewed progress on various measures undertaken to improve investment climate and approved policy level interventions to further improve investors' confidence including repatriation of profits, strengthening domestic dispute resolution mechanism, infrastructural and human resource development, and

speedy operationalization of EXIM Bank.

The committee also directed to make a comprehensive strategy to address oil and gas issues in a sustainable manner by investing in relevant industries. The apex body reviewed and appreciated the progress on privatization of State-Owned-Enterprises and directed to keep the process at fast pace. The Chief of Army Staff reassured undaunted resolve of the Pakistan Army to backstop government initiatives in various domains for sustainable recovery of the economy.

Biden-Xi talks lead to little but a promise to keep yalking

SAN FRANCISCO: President Biden said that four hours of discussion with President Xi Jinping of China had brought about two significant agreements, on curbing fentanyl production and on military-to-military communications. But both American and Chinese accounts of their first encounter in a year indicated little progress on the issues that have pushed the two nations to the edge of conflict.

For a summit that had so many issues to address it is striking that the president only took four questions, with reporters carefully vetted by his aides, and two follow-ups.

Taiwan remains the biggest point of contention between the two nations. The January presidential elections will be a test. Biden and his aides are watching for what China intends to do — will it engage in cyberinterference, for instance? Will it try to use military means, possibly lobbing missiles around the island, to try to scare the Taiwanese into voting for a party more favorable to China? US officials are bracing for any surprises from China.

The absence of any mention of climate change also speaks to the fact that the agreement announced last night between the United States and China is hardly groundbreaking. It takes some important technical steps, but it does nothing to

rein in China's rapid expansion of coal-fired power plants. It's truly stunning that he didn't even mention climate change. It really undercuts the Biden administration's insistence that he see it as a key foreign policy and national security issue.

Biden is asked if he'd still refer to Xi as a dictator. "Well, look, he is," the president replies. Biden says he has not put a time limit on when he might urge the Israeli military to cease its ground invasion of Gaza. "I think it's going to stop when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder, abuse and just do horrific things to Israelis," Biden said that, at this point, Hamas still could, and still maintains weapons and technology underneath Gazan hospitals. "I don't think it ultimately ends until there's a two-state solution."

Biden said the end point for the Israel-Palestinian conflict should be a two-state solution that is "real." He said he has been negotiating with Arab nations on the next steps. He reiterated the idea that Israel should not occupy Gaza. Biden mentioned the US has been working closely with the Qataris on getting Israel and Hamas to agree to a group hostage release by Hamas. The two sides have been discussing a release of about 50 to 100 women and children. Biden mentioned

Israel agreeing to a "pause," but then backtracked and said he didn't want to get into details.

Biden is boasting of his administration's strengthened military agreements with Australia and the Philippines, as a way of countering China. He also mentioned the Quad, a non-military partnership among the US, India, Australia and Japan. Asked if he trusted Xi on his willingness to regulate fentanyl precursors, another exchange he framed as a diplomatic achievement of this summit, the president says: "trust but verify, as the old saying goes. That's where I am. We're in a competitive relationship. My responsibility is to make this rational and manageable so it doesn't result in conflict. That's what I'm all about."

Biden said he told Xi that the US does not want China to interfere in any way in Taiwan's affairs. Taiwan has a presidential election coming up in January. It's notable that when listing the agreements reached with China, Biden didn't mention a promise of joint cooperation that his climate change envoy, John Kerry, struck with the Chinese government. Biden says that he made clear that the US disagrees with China's "nonmarket" economic practices and that his administration will continue to address with them.

— The NY Times

Four wanted terrorists slain, soldier martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A soldier was martyred while four wanted terrorists including a high-value target were gunned down in a shootout in Peshawar.

According to an ISPR statement released on Thursday, the security forces engaged the terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Peshawar's Badaber area. The ensuing gunbattle left behind four terrorists dead and a member of the security forces martyred, who was identified as Lance Naik Muhammad Ijaz Khan.

The slain terrorists were named as Commander Samiullah alias Sheeney, Commander Usman alias Ahmad, Imran alias Muhammad and Hazrat Umar alias Khalid. According to the ISPR, these terrorists were wanted by the law-enforcement agencies for long.

The latest encounter came a day after security forces shot dead another seven most-wanted terrorists during a gunbattle between the Pakistan Army led security forces and the insurgents in Tank district of DI Khan division. The security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in Kiri Machan Khel area of the district on the reported presence of terrorists.

The outlaws offered tough resistance that led to a gunfight between the forces and the terrorists thus resulting in the killing of seven terrorists who were wanted in a number of serious terrorism cases against the forces as well as the civilians.

Punjab, KP CMs discuss various issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at Punjab House Islamabad on Thursday.

Stabilization of wheat and sugar prices, issues related to the evacuation of illegal foreign nationals and provincial border security came under discussion during the meeting. Talking to his KP counterpart, Punjab Chief Minister said sugar mills in province are starting the crushing season from 25th of this month. Mohsin Naqvi said Afghan citizens residing illegally in Punjab will be sent back through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Telecommunications cut off in Gaza after fuel runs out

GAZA: Palestinian telecommunications companies Jawwal and Paltel have announced their network went out of service in the Gaza Strip as a result of failure to allow fuel into the besieged territory. The companies wrote in statements on X on Thursday that "all energy sources sustaining the network have been depleted". They had warned a day earlier that Gaza was facing a "complete blackout" due to a lack of fuel to operate main data centres and switches.

The companies said basic network elements have been relying on batteries since Wednesday afternoon. All fixed, cellular and internet services in Gaza have now been interrupted, leaving its 2.3 million residents largely cut off from the outside world and from each other. "Ambulances are now standing outside Nasser Hospital with medical staff waiting to hear of any bombardments so they can rush to the areas quickly," Al Jazeera's Youmna ElSayed reported from Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

"This is not the first time this has happened, and it has caused a great crisis for people trying to reach ambulances or civil defence teams when bombardments occur," she said, adding that the humanitarian situation in the south was also deteriorating. "There has been no food, water, fuel or electricity for over a month," she said. Israel cut off fuel shipments into the Gaza Strip as part of a "complete siege" on the territory after Hamas fighters from Gaza launched an attack on southern Israel on October 7, killing around 1,200 people, according to Israeli authorities. Since the attack, Israel has bombarded the Palestinian territory, launched a ground offensive and severely restricted supplies of water, food and electricity. More than 11,600 people have been killed in the Israeli assault, according to Palestinian authorities, including more than 4,700 children.

The first fuel truck to enter Gaza since Israel imposed the siege arrived on Wednesday. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said it had received

23,000 litres of fuel. However, Israeli authorities have restricted its use exclusively for the transport of aid delivered from Egypt. "It is appalling that fuel continues to be used as a weapon of war," said UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini.

Since Israel launched a ground invasion in late October, Gaza has already experienced two blackouts after Israel cut communications and internet services. Humanitarian agencies and first responders have warned that blackouts severely disrupt their work and put lives at risk. "People will be deprived of access to lifesaving information, such as finding areas of safety or contacting emergency services," said Rasha Abdul-Rahim, director of Amnesty Tech.

"The critical work of humanitarian agencies will also be severely disrupted, as workers lose contact with each other," she added. "Prolonged and complete communications blackouts, like those experienced in Gaza, can provide cover for atrocities and breed impunity while further undermining humanitarian efforts and putting lives at risk," said Deborah Brown, senior technology researcher at Human Rights Watch. Communications networks in Gaza have been unreliable since the war began due to lack of electricity and damage to infrastructure due to the bombardment. The Palestinian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has previously appealed to neighbouring Egypt to operate communication stations near the Gaza border and activate roaming services on Egyptian networks.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has condemned Israeli raids on Al-Shifa hospital, Gaza's largest medical facility, and bombing near a Jordanian field hospital in the Strip. In a post on X, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Israel had "blatantly targeted civilians and medical staff" in actions that were a "flagrant violation of international human rights law and international conventions."

— Arab News

Occupation of Gaza 'a big mistake': Biden

WOODSIDE, California: US President Joe Biden said he had made it clear to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that a two-state solution was the only answer to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict and that occupying Gaza would be "a big mistake."

Biden told reporters he was doing everything in his power to free hostages held by the Hamas militant group in Gaza, but that did not mean sending in the US military. The US president had told reporters this week that his message to the hostages was "Hang in there, we're coming," raising questions about what he meant.

Asked to clarify the comment, Biden told a news conference: "What I meant was, I'm doing everything in my power to get you out. Coming to help you, get you out. I don't mean sending in military in there ... I was not talking about the military." Biden said he was working on the issue constantly, and would not stop until the hostages — including a three-year-old American child — were freed.

Qatar, where Hamas operates a political office, has been leading mediation between the Islamist militant group and Israeli officials for the release of more than 240 hostages. They were taken by militants when they stormed into Israel on Oct. 7. Israel says 1,200 people were killed during the rampage. Israel then launched an unrelenting bombardment of Hamas-ruled Gaza and late last month began an invasion of the enclave, where more than 11,000 people have been killed, around 40 percent of them children with more buried under the rubble, according to Palestinian officials.

— Arab News

PTI chairman moves SC for bail in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (PPD): Former prime minister and PTI chairman approached the Supreme Court (SC), seeking post-arrest bail in missing cipher case, ARY News reported on Thursday.

Imran, who is incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, filed the plea through his counsel Salman Safdar. In his plea, the PTI chairman urged the apex court to overturn IHC order in cipher case and set him free. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) issued a stay order against the jail trial of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI) chairman in the cipher case. A two-member bench of Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Raffat announced the decision on the former prime minister's plea.

Justice Aurangzeb remarked that the notifications issued by the federal government for the jail trial seemed to be prima facie against high court rules. He also said that many questions needed to be answered about the trial. The judge also remarked that while IHC's chief justice had been

consulted, the special court was created through an executive order. The attorney general told the court that the federal cabinet had approved the jail trial in the cipher case and the notification would be presented in court.

The IHC judge also remarked that the federal cabinet had only approved the jail trial two days ago which raised questions over the status of the trial that had already taken place. The judge also asked under what conditions had the decision for jail trial been taken.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irshad Hussain meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

A TASTE

of things to come

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EMIRATES BUSINESS



Punjab bans entry of vehicles lacking fitness certificate

LAHORE (INP): Punjab government and National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) under which entry of vehicles lacking fitness certificate and route permit on motorways and highways will be banned.

Addressing the MoU signing ceremony in Lahore on Thursday, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the provincial government will build a trauma center at the Lahore Islamabad Motorway with the support of the National Highway Authority. Chief Minister Punjab also declared a holiday on this Saturday for schools and public sector offices across the province to curb smog.

15 drug peddlers, illegal weapon holders netted

RAWALPINDI (INP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 15 accused besides recovering over nine kg charras, 30 liters liquor, three 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Saddar Wah police held Sheraz for having 2600 grams charras while Gujar Khan police netted Amjad Khan for possessing 2160 grams charras.

Kahuta police also recovered 2000 grams charras from the possession of an accused namely Inzamam. R.A.Bazar, Rattaamral, Kalar Syedan, Bani and Race Course police rounded up Abdul Wahad, Abdul Majeed, Waqas, Pitras and Qadir and recovered 3110 grams charras from their possession. He further informed that Taxila, Saddar Wah and Kalar Syedan police arrested Abdullah, Israr, Muhammad Nabi and Subhan and recovered three 30 bore pistols, a dagger and ammunition.

Gujar Khan and Pirwadhai police held Qaiser and Rehan and recovered 30 liters liquor from their possession.

14 outlaws arrested

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

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directions the Sangjani police team arrested an accused namely Nusrat Shah involved in illegally selling petrol. The Industrial-Area police team arrested three accused namely Saddam Hussain, Mushatq and Adil Malik and recovered one 30 bore pistol, one dagger and 315 gram heroin from their possession.

Two more Lahore's projects near completion

LAHORE (NNI): Two more development projects in Lahore are near completion courtesy personal interest taken by Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi. Cavalry Ground underpass on November 25 while the Ghorra Chowk flyover will be completed on December 7. The chief minister visited the sites of both these projects early Thursday morning and reviewed the progress made so far as well as the quality of construction work. He also watched labourers place a heavy girder on the underpass's roof.

The CM directed that water be regularly sprinkled on the projects' sites.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that after the completion of these projects, there would be a signal-free corridor between Gulberg's Center Point and Ghorra Chowk, Defence Morr which would greatly benefit residents of Kalima Chowk, CBD, Cavalry Ground, Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and Walton areas of the city.

Commissioner Lahore division and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, chief engineer LDA and the contractor briefed the CM about these projects.

Central Business District Authority's Chief Executive Officer Imran Amin informed him that Ghorra Chowk flyover consists of three lanes.

Provincial ministers Amir Mir, Bilal Afzal, Ibrahim Hassan Murad and Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar also accompanied him on the visit.

Dengue outbreak: 223 new cases in Punjab on Thursday

LAHORE (APP): Dengue outbreak is still active in Punjab, as 223 new cases were recorded on Thursday. According to the latest Health Department data, a total of 12,268 confirmed dengue cases were reported across 36 districts in Punjab this year.

Lahore took the lead in this unfortunate count with a staggering 5,412 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 2,533. Multan with 1,215, Gujranwala with 1,200 and Faisalabad with 653 cases.

The situation continues, with Lahore reporting an additional 95 new dengue cases, Rawalpindi with 18, Multan with 37, Gujranwala with 28, Faisalabad with 20, Sheikhupura with 8, Sargodha with 03, Toba Tek Singh with 02 and Chiniot with 02 new Dengue cases. Meanwhile, Kasur, Sahiwal, Sialkot, Chakwal, Gujrat, Rahimyar Khan,

Vehari, Jhang, Pakpattan and Rajanpur each reported a case of dengue within 24 hours.

Currently, 173 Dengue patients were undergoing treatment in various hospitals across Punjab, with 80 of them in Lahore district hospitals.

The Secretary of Health Punjab, Ali Jaan Khan, issued a compelling plea to citizens, urging them to maintain clean and dry surroundings as a preventive measure against dengue fever.

He also called for cooperation with health department teams that were working tirelessly to combat this outbreak. For those in need of Dengue treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints, a free helpline is available through the health department at 1033. Vigilance and proactive measures were crucial to contain the alarming spread of Dengue in Punjab.

Azaan Sami Khan's album AZAAN is out now

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Singer and composer Azaan Sami Khan just dropped his sophomore album, titled AZAAN, after an entire year of taking his fans along the journey of making the album. The album comes as a follow-up to the singer's debut album, Main Tera (2021).

The album comprises eight tracks, including Maa, Nadaan Dil, Beby, Aap Hi Rehtay Hain Dil Main, Husn e Jaan, Ham Dam, Man Azaan, and Rang De. AZAAN the album's journey was kickstarted with a trailer release in October, featuring Khan in various roles and providing a sneak peek into the album's diverse personas. With appearances from Sanam Saeed, Syra Yousuf, and Aena Khan, the trailer set the stage for a visually dynamic musical journey.

According to the artist, AZAAN the album is like a personal journey set to music, exploring different sounds and blending them with familiar tunes from his past. Rooted in his love for the larger-than-life emotions found in 'filmy' music, this album is all about connecting with different feelings.

"I will always say that my music will always be somewhat biographical in nature. It will always give you the most real insight into who I am. And with this album, I like that



there's a certain randomness to it. If I try to define it too much or make it binary, it might actually take away from it. I'm enjoying the most this time around is that I feel a bit freer," said Khan while discussing the album. The artist had similar thoughts when making it a self-titled album. "I named it 'Azaan' because I felt like it was very intimate. It was what I was feeling at that time. If anything, it's a random collection of emotions of mine that I felt over the past couple of years," he shared.

AZAAN the album's release journey began with Nadaan Dil, the video of which was recorded at the iconic Abbey Road Studios in London. Moving on

with a personal touch, Khan shared a snippet of another track Maa, from a performance he did in front of his mother, Zeba Bakhtiar, at the Knock Knock Show.

Prior to the album release on 12th November, Khan released a music video for Beby, a collaboration with Filmwala Pictures, directed by Nabeel Qureshi and produced by Fizza Meerza, and featuring Aena Khan. These initial releases gave a glimpse into the diverse palette of AZAAN the album, which features tracks covering various genres and moods. AZAAN the album is now streaming on all major platforms.



KARACHI: A woman selecting to purchase used clothes from a set-up by vendor in Saddar area.

Karachi's 106 roads streetlights to shift to solar energy: Murtaza

KARACHI (NNI): Mayor Murtaza Wahab has announced his plan to install solar-powered streetlights on 106 roads of Karachi.

Mayor earlier stated that, due to the ever-increasing tariff of the electricity, the KMC would install streetlights that would be powered by solar panels.

He said that the solarization plan has not yet been successful in

Karachi because of the warm temperature and the dusty weather.

He said that a plan being evaluated to energise streetlights with solar panels and make sure they do not get covered with dust.

Wahab said that in coming 10 days 32 roads in the SITE area will be inaugurated. He said that Shahrah-e-Noorjahan was built by the People's Party, but another

political party hoisted its flags on the road.

He said a new road will also be inaugurated in Lyari soon. He promised an early completion of development projects in Malir.

Murtaza Wahab said that the People's Party has first time got the reins of Karachi and people will witness work in every town of the city.

LESCO detects 346 power pilferers on 69th day of anti-power theft campaign

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 346 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 69th day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

LESCO spokesman told the media here Thursday the company has also submitted FIR applications against 340 electricity thieves, out of which 226 FIRs had been registered in respective police sta-

tions, while 31 accused had been arrested.

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

them were also being brought to justice.

On the 69th consecutive day (Nov 16) of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, a large 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 07 were commercial, 01 agricultural and 338 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 400,395 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 14,930 million.

Apprising the media about some major power pilferers, he explained that LESCO charged Rs 230,000 detection bill against 9,305 units to an electricity pilferer in Bhikkhi area of Sheikhupura; Rs 150,000 fine in the form of detection bill against 1,650 units to a customer stealing electricity in Ferozwalla; Rs 150,000 detection bill against 1,650 units to another power thief in Mustafa Abad; and Rs 120,045 detection bill to a power thief in Baghbanpura Lahore.

KU declares results of BA Part-II

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi announced the results of BA Part- II and both parts (Regular) Annual Examination 2022.

According to the gazette issued, 5, 229 candidates were registered and 4, 980 students appeared in the exams of which 693 candidates were declared passed with the first division, 1, 256 students with the second division, and one candidate managed to clear the papers with the third division. The overall pass percentage was 39.16 per cent.

CDA seals 10 illegal buildings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Thursday sealed 10 illegal buildings in Jeddah Town and one building in Agosh Society and issued notices to the owners for violating building by-laws.

This operation aligns with the Chairman CDA's directives to eliminate encroachments and illegal structures within the city. The Building Control Section, in collaboration with the Enforcement Directorate, district administration, and Islamabad Police, took decisive action against building by-law violations.

PFA destroys mounds of vegetables irrigated from wastewater

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority's enforcement teams on Thursday uprooted unhealthy vegetable crops by ploughing on 320 marla land during the operation on Kasur Bypass.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that PFA took indiscriminate action against the farmers for irrigating vegetables with sewerage water. He said that PFA discarded thousands of kilograms of unhealthy spinach, daikon and other vegetables that were cultivated on 16-Kanal land.

He said that the vegetables irrigated from wastewater was to be supplied in the vegetables market of Lahore. He said that the use of wastewater to irrigate crops causes health diseases after adding its toxic materials in the ready crops. He further said that farmers can cultivate the only alternative/non-edible crops with sewerage and industrial wastewater.

Moreover, he said that the food authority is vigilantly supervising all stages from food preparation to delivery to ensure the provision of pure food in the market.

DG PFA warned farmers

to avoid irrigating crops with sewerage water otherwise, lawbreakers would be dealt with strictly. The slogan of providing healthy food 'From Farm to Fork'

is not merely a saying but is the top priority of authority under the mission of the Punjab government "Safe Food, Healthy Punjab," he added.

Public Notice

- All prospective students are advised in their own interest, to apply for admission in MBBS and BDS programs in only those colleges which are recognized by the PM&DC.
- The PM&DC will not register any student who is admitted in unrecognised medical or dental college.
- Please keep visiting PM&DC official website (www.pmdc.pk) for relevant information and other updates.
- All medical and dental colleges/institutions are advised to strictly follow the rules & regulations of the PM&DC before commencing any medical or dental program or admission as per allocated seats specified by the Council. In case of any violation, PM&DC shall take penal action as per provisions of the PM&DC Act, 2022.



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Pakistan Medical & Dental Council
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Ph: 051-9190000
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PID(I) 2997/23



LAHORE: A vendor decorating his work place with flower garland used for a wedding and mehndi ceremony.

PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Waheed with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Ms. Safeen Begum citizen number 1350305426318 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Sofia Noreen (Daughter) 2.Kinza Fareed (Daughter) 3.Muhammad Waheed (Son) 4.Muhammad Danish (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice. INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Arshad with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Noor Muhammad Khan citizen number 1610125169241 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Nargas Bibi (Daughter) 2.Meharshad Begum (Spouse) 3.Wisal Khan (Son) 4.Mohammad Arshad (Son) 5.Shakeel Ahmad (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice. INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MARDAN-SFU	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Hafeez Khan with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Aurangzeb citizen number 1310108214803 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1.Tehmina Bibi (Daughter) 2.Yasmeen (Spouse) 3.Muhammad Hafeez Khan (Son) 4.Muhammad Nafees Khan (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice. INCHARGE SFU, NADRA ABBOTABAD-SFU	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Asma Tabassam (Daughter) 1.Aasma Tabassam (Daughter) 2.Shoukat Zaman (Son)3.Tahir Zaman (Son)4.Liaqat Zaman (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice. PID(I) 2995/23 INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RING ROAD-DSFU



RTS orders DPOs for registration of FIRs

— Assistant Sub Inspector suspended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC/RTS) ordered District Police Officers (DPOs) Kurram and Mardan to lodge First Information Report (FIR) regarding land grabbing and attacking residence with bombs as well as directed for submission of report within fortnight respectively, on Thursday.

Chief Commissioner RTS Muhammad Salim Khan along with commissioners named Muhammad Asim Imam and Zakir Hussain heard seven complaints from different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while issuing orders to competent offi-

cers for delivery of public services within stipulated timeframe.

RTS also ordered DPO Mardan for registration FIR on complaint of Noor Muhammad regarding grabbing of his land.

DPO Battagram suspended Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) and transferred concerned Station House Officer (SHO) for failure in delivery of public services as registration of FIR on complaint of Sanobar within stipulated timeframe on the directions of RTS. The commission ordered District Public Prosecutor (DPP) Battagram along with concerned SHO to appear before the commission along with record of FIR pleaded by Sanobar.

Settlement Officer Lower Chitral didn't appear before RTS due to health condition on complaint of Wajid Ullah regarding provision of land's Fard while the commission ordered him to appear along with medical report on next hearing.

The resident of Kurram Abdul stated that close relatives had grabbed his land and also attacked his residence with bombs but the police didn't register an FIR against the culprits. However, RTS ordered DPO Kurram to register FIR otherwise submit a reply in writing.

A complainant approached RTS for registration of FIR against running of his wife from home, however, concerned SHO Waris

Khan appeared before the commission that the applicant's spouse had knocked the door of court for separation/divorce. SHO argued that FIR can't be registered in the case because woman had approached the court.

Moreover, the commission ordered Muhammad Arif to approach the competent court for implementation of judicial orders because court had decided transferred of property.

Chief Commissioner RTS Muhammad Salim Khan said that delivery of public services is responsibility of public's servant as it is legal right of the citizens to ensure good governance. He added that RTS wouldn't tolerate negligence and ignorance in delivery of public services.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Ministers of Punjab SM Tanveer and Azfar Ali meeting with Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary.

CM lifts ban on transfers, appointments

PEHAWAR (INP): The Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (R) Arshad Hussain on Thursday has lifted the ban on appointments and transfers, paving the way for inter-district transfers within the province.

According to media reports, the ban was imposed on May 23, and its lifting comes after the passing of the previous caretaker Chief Minister, Alaa Muhammad Azam Khan. Justice (R) Arshad Hussain assumed the role of caretaker Chief Minister today and promptly issued a notification rescinding the ban.

Concerned ministers and administrative secretaries have been instructed to proceed with inter-district appointments and transfers as deemed necessary.

This decision is expected to bring relief to government employees who have been waiting for transfers for an extended period.

Session held between BC and EZDMC

PESHAWAR (APP): An interactive session was held between British Council (BC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) to discuss the formation of industry advisory taskforce group in Hattar Economic Zone (HEZ), said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The purpose of holding the session was to promote a sectoral approach in the food and beverage sector that requires collaboration between industry and academia to improve the skills development in selected sectors.

The Group will promote inclusive wellbeing and access to learning and opportunities for growth in the food and beverage sector.

The session was also attended by representatives from Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), Hattar Industrial Association, University of Haripur, and Pak-Austria Fachhochschule to make it a collaborative and forward-thinking initiative.

217825 illegal immigrants deported

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government said on Thursday that a total of 217,825 undocumented Afghan nationals were deported to Afghanistan over the past two months.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department said that a total of 217,825 immigrants have been sent back to Afghanistan through three border points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Out of it, the majority, 214,194 immigrants, were repatriated through the Torkham border.

This figure encompasses 18,167 families, comprising 60,307 males, 47,221 females, and 106,666 children, from September 17, 2023, until now.

Additionally, 3,212 foreigners were returned to Afghanistan via Angoor Ada at the Lower Waziristan border, and 410 through the Kharlachi border in Kurram district.

On November 15, a notable repatriation took place, with 522 families, including 525 males, 493 females, and 974 children, sent back to Afghanistan via the Torkham border.

Simultaneously, 233 illegal foreigners were deported through Torkham on the same day.

Joint efforts stresses to enhance cooperation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Joint efforts stressed to enhance economic prospects and collaboration between both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab in order to achieve economic growth in both the provinces.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary met with Punjab's caretaker ministers to explore business opportunities and collaboration for economic growth in both the provinces.

The ministers engaged with the business community and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peshawar, discussed business opportunities in sever-

al areas, especially in the agriculture sector.

Highlighting the conducive investment environment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary assured provision of necessary facilities for investors, saying that there is huge potential for setting up new factories in special economic zones and industrial estates.

He added that women investors are also offered economic opportunities.

Punjab's Caretaker Minister for Industry, Commerce and Agriculture SM Tanveer said that Punjab has surplus wheat and offered to supply wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He further said that the

caretaker government's agricultural-centric strategy, aims to revitalize the national economy.

Additionally, he mentioned the ongoing development of a ten-year plan in consultation with stakeholders to bolster the agricultural sector's growth.

Discussing the pivotal role of business activities in stabilizing the economy, SM Tanveer stressed on collective efforts for national progress and prosperity.

SM Tanveer stated that Punjab's government extends all-out support to industrialists to attract new investments in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Estates.

Fake Deputy Director arrested red-handed

PESHAWAR (INP): In a daring operation, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar on Thursday apprehended a fake Deputy Director of FIA red-handed while he was attempting to extort gold from a government official, says in media reports.

The accused, identified as Sajjad Hussain, a motor mechanic by profession, had been impersonating an FIA officer and contacting government officials, claiming to be conducting inquiries against them. Using spoofing technology, he would make calls and send messages, demanding gold and other valuables in exchange for resolving the alleged cases.

During one such instance, Hussain instructed a complainant officer to bring 25 tolas of gold along with receipts to a hotel, where he was accompanied by several fake officials. Alert to the situation, the FIA Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar, under the instructions of Deputy Director Saadullah, dispatched a raiding team that swiftly apprehended the accused outside the NAB office in Peshawar.

A thorough search revealed several fake identity cards, a counterfeit FIA service card, an arms license, and two mobile phones in Hussain's possession. During interrogation, he confessed to utilizing social media to gather

information about government officials and acquiring their call records through online means.

Hussain admitted to using this information to harass and extort government officials, including female doctors and officers, in the guise of fake inquiries. He also revealed that similar cases had been registered against him in Abbottabad, resulting in a five-year sentence in one instance.

The FIA has initiated strict action against such impersonators and urged the public to be vigilant. If you receive any calls from individuals claiming to be FIA officials, immediately report the incident to the nearest FIA office.

PIC to host conference

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Institute Of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) is hosting a three-day 12th Biennial International Cardiac Surgery Conference to focus on new developments in the field of cardiology, starting from today (Friday).

The conference brings together renowned and leading cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, and other health experts from around the world, including Pakistan.

According to PIC Spokesperson Riffat Anjam, the theme of the conference is "Empowering quality Through Collaboration For Brighter Future In Cardiac Surgery."

The conference, jointly organized by the Pakistan Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons (PACVTS) and Peshawar Institute Of Cardiology will start from November 17th today.

In the conference famous cardiologists, cardiac surgeons and health experts from Pakistan and from the

different countries will participate.

Ms Anjum further added that the conference will focus on new developments in the field of cardiology, major and minor cardiac surgeries, non-invasive procedures, innovative treatment options, and research related to heart diseases.

The three-days conference will include workshops, symposiums, and presentations on various topics.

Dr. Shahkar Ahmed Shah, Chief Executive, Medical Director, and Conference Convener of the Institute of Cardiology, Peshawar, expressed his honour in hosting such a significant event and highlighted that providing the best and world-class treatment facilities has always been the top priority of the Institute.

He emphasized that the trust of both local and international institutions in the Institute's capabilities has made such a grand event possible.

Fact-finding body formed

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department has constituted a fact-finding committee to probe the justification and purchase of Rs one billion body scanners by the previous government for six outsourced hospitals in the merged districts.

According to an official document, the ex-FATA health department purchased the body scanners during the financial year 2019-20 and installed these in six outsourced DHQ hospitals of merged districts and since then these scanners have been non-functional.

It said that the cost of a full body scanner unit was Rs 1,58,000,000 while Rs one billion was incurred on the purchase of six body scanners at that time.

The Health Department has asked the fact-finding committee to probe whether these full-body scanners were actually required by these hospitals and why these scanners were not made functional after the lapse of four to five years.

UN, PPAF collaborate to empower refugee families

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has embarked upon the distribution of productive livelihood assets to Afghan refugee families under the UNHCR funded Poverty Graduation Programme (PGP) for Afghan Refugees. Currently in its fourth phase, the programme is committed to empowering over 3,000 Afghan Refugee families residing in six refugee camps in Districts Nowshera, Quetta, Pishin and Islamabad. This would enhance their self-reliance and livelihoods by equipping them with transferable skills applicable in both Pakistan and Afghanistan upon their return.

In the initial distribution phase, a total of 1,200 livelihood assets are being distributed among beneficiaries. A ceremony was held in Akora Khattak camp where Chief Programmes, PPAF, Arshad Rashid,

Livelihood Focal Point Officer, UNHCR Peshawar, Ashfaq Hussain distributed livelihood assets among the eligible Afghan Refugee families.

Abdul Rehman, Chief HR, Admin and Procurement, PPAF and Executive Director, Initiative for Development & Empowerment Axis (IDEA), PPAF's implementing partner, Muhammad Amad were also present on this occasion.

Expressing gratitude to UNHCR for their enduring trust, Arshad Rashid highlighted the positive sustainable change brought about by the PPAF and UNHCR partnership, impacting over 7,000 Afghan Refugee families since 2017. Beneficiaries, equipped with productive assets and comprehensive training, have progressed significantly in enterprise development, asset management, and financial literacy, leading to enhanced self-sufficiency.

Muhammad Amad

expressed thanks to UNHCR and PPAF for their support, acknowledging the programme's role in addressing vulnerabilities, improving livelihoods, and enhancing psychological well-being among Afghan refugee families.

Notably, each household receiving livelihood assets underwent mandatory 3-day enterprise development training to ensure efficient and sustainable asset utilization. The programme also emphasizes gender equality, particularly focusing on enhancing skills among female Afghan refugees.

The UNHCR is committed to fostering sustainable solutions for displaced populations, ensuring their protection, and promoting their self-reliance. The ongoing partnership with PPAF stands as a testament to this dedication and is enabling Afghan refugee families to lead dignified lives marked by self-sufficiency.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali addressing to media.

AD&SJ orders action against SP in abduction

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Bakht Alam ordered police high-ups to initiate legal proceedings against both parties including Superintendent of Police (SP) Training Branch Shakeel Khan along with gunman Masood and driver named Mudassir as respondents for torturing and abduction of retired Sub Inspector as the petitioner, on Thursday.

The counsel argued that SP Training Branch Central Police Office (CPO) Shakeel Khan along with gunman Masood and driver

Mudassir abducted and tortured retired Sub Inspector police named Malak Zada Khan while returning from Session Court's Peshawar.

The counsel further added that respondents including SP Shakeel Khan along with driver and gunman forcibly obtain thumb impression on vacant stamp-paper as well as recorded video from him. He added that the respondents also snatched Rs1 lac 10 thousand from petitioner and produced evidences against SP Shakeel Khan, Masood and Mudassir before the court.

The counsel argued that court ordered police high-

ups for legal actions against SP Shakeel Khan along with driver Mudassir and gunman Masood.

However, the respondents lawyer argued that retired Sub Inspector Malik Zada Khan along with friends attacked house of SP Shakeel Khan while report had registered at local police station in this regard.

AD&SJ Peshawar Bakht Alam ordered police high-ups to initiate legal proceedings against both parties including retired Sub Inspector and SP Shakeel Khan along with driver and gunman after conclusion of arguments in 22A plea.

Dry weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Thursday predicted that mainly dry weather is expected over most districts of the province, while cold in the hilly areas.

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 28/10, Chitral 21/03, Timergara 26/07, Dir 25/03, Mirkhani 25/03, Kalam 18/-01, Drosh 21/08, Saidu Sharif 26/05, Pattan 27/11, Malam Jabba 15/04, Takht Bhai 29/09, Kakul 22/05, Balakot 25/06, Parachinar 19/04, Bannu 29/10, Cherat 18/08, DI Khan City 29/12.

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

PUTA blames Vice Chancellor for malpractices and mismanagement

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar University Teaching Association (PUTA) argued competent authorities including Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for legal and administrative actions against Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Idress for his illegal acts like holding Syndicate Session without completion of quorum, on Thursday.

In this regard, PUTA had issued press statement adding that Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar (UOP) Dr. Muhammad Idress had acted against will and welfare of faculty members and students respectively. The more protests were held during Dr. Muhammad Idress Vice Chancellorship in the history of UOP.

The press statement added that largest protests

as an indicator of incompetence of UOP's vice chancellor. Joint Action Council had ended strike after mediation of government following agreement which was signed by VC Muhammad Idress but didn't implemented till today.

UOP 436th Syndicate meeting was concluded without completion of quorum in which allowances were deducted while work-

load was increased illegally. Similarly, the 448th syndicate meeting was called to adjust blue-eyed officials in administration and impose junior Head of Departments, the statement blamed UOP's VC.

VC Dr. Idress had initiated Campus Management Solution which isn't operationalized till today but receiving money from students, PUTA statement claimed.



PESHAWAR: General Secretary Anjuman-e-Farooqia Imran Khan addressing press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



In brief

JUI rally: Govt school closed Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Government Girls High School Manki Sharif in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Nowshera district has been ordered to close its doors today to facilitate a political rally organized by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). The rally, featuring an address by JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, is scheduled to take place in the Manki Sharif area of Nowshera. The decision to close the school was taken by the district administration to ensure the safety and security of students and staff during the JUI gathering. The administration has clarified that the closure is temporary and will only affect today's school day. The closure of Government Girls High School Manki Sharif has been met with mixed reactions from the local community. Some parents have expressed concerns about the disruption to their children's education, while others have acknowledged the need for precautionary measures during the political rally. The district administration has assured the public that all necessary arrangements have been made to maintain law and order during the JUI event. Additional security personnel have been deployed to the area, and traffic flow will be monitored closely to minimize disruptions.

Victims get residences' keys F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Lakki Marwat distributed keys of homes among the people whose homes were destroyed by the rain and flood, on Thursday. According to detail, in an event organized by the Helping hand, Assistant Deputy Commissioner Lakki Marwat Habib Ullah Wazir, Assistant Commissioner Khayyam Nasir distributed keys of the homes built by the Helping hands organization. The guests appreciated the role of organization in uplifting the deprived part of society. He added that our society is full of such talent, we need to explore and take care of that talent. This section is the future of the country and we need to explore and uplift them by fulfilling their needs. Relief manager Sajid Ali, head of HR department Shakir Abbasi and Ijaz ul Haq were also present at the event. They added that the organization is providing 470 homes to the orphans and spends more than fifty thousands on an orphan or special child. They appreciated the efforts of administration in helping the organization.

Police recover 2 abducted girls

FAISALABAD (INP): The two girls, abducted from the Faisalabad University town area, were successfully recovered from Islamabad, police said on Thursday. Punjab police successfully arrested two individuals, identified as Nasir and Hameed, and recovered the girls, who were allegedly kidnapped on October 09. According to the police officials, the arrest was made possible with the help of social media chat and ID. Last year, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cyber-crime circle swung into action after the alleged harassment and torture of a medical student in Faisalabad. The FIA cybercrime circle has also registered a case against the prime suspect, Sheikh Danish, over the complaint of the affected medical student. Danish's wife Maham and his daughter Ana were also nominated in the harassment and torture case.



SARGODHA: Chairperson BISP, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib addressing a gathering at Jamia Masjid Qasim ul Aloom.

Action against sale of polythene bags directed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has directed administrative officers in Mardan and Swabi districts to implement robust and sustainable measures to yield positive results against polythene bags and unlawful encroachments. He addressed officials at the monthly regional revenue and performance meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office. The meeting, attended by Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Gohar Ali, along with additional deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, and additional assistant commissioners, focused on government revenues, the overall status of development schemes, illegal encroachments, and the campaign against polythene bags in their respective districts.

Commissioner Mardan instructed deputy commissioners to shut down shops of traders involved in selling polythene bags and advised taking legal actions against them. The meeting highlighted the successful control of dengue in both Mardan and Swabi, with no active cases reported in either district at present. DC Swabi announced that Swabi district would be declared polythene-free by the end of this month, while efforts were underway to make Swabi city load shedding-free by upgrading feeders.

The officials also discussed an initiative against electricity theft in Mardan and Swabi. Commissioner Mardan declared load shedding-free status for Mardan city, and he emphasized the need for the administration to take effective measures against electricity theft in collaboration with the PESCO authorities.

Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai reaffirmed his commitment to address the issue of polythene bags and ensure sustainable solutions. He urged officials to coordinate with law enforcement agencies and take strict actions against those violating the law. The Deputy Commissioners were instructed to provide regular updates on the progress made in these initiatives.

The meeting concluded with a focus on enhancing public services and addressing the challenges faced by the community. The officials expressed their determination to implement the directives effectively, contributing to a cleaner environment, reduced electricity theft, and improved public services in Mardan and Swabi.

Role of youth stressed to fight climate change

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: A one-day seminar was held organized by the helping hand with the title Youth for A Cooler Planet in which environment analyst Hamid Ahmad Mir presented a presentation on climate change and the changes in the world due to smoke and imitation and carbon dioxide gases.

Environmental Experts said that thousands of factories are existing in the developed countries in the world exhausting carbon dioxide and poisonous gas hugs, in Pakistan there are very less factories and there is no factory in Chitral, but still smoke from the factory in these countries, badly affecting even such backward districts like Chitral. Experts said that due to global warming, causes melting of centuries old glaciers lying on the mountains of Chitral, causing sudden floods, which causes massive financial and human loss. Experts urged on the young generation for sapling more and more plants to protect their planet, (world) from global warming and the negative effects of climate change, so that the damages ratio can be minimized in case of any natural disaster.

During the seminar, experts from different fields spoke in a panellist discussion and also answered the participants' questions. Participants objected that

GLOF-II project of eight billion rupees running under UNDP financial support to save people from the loss of glacier exploding on the mountains area, but they only spends money on verbal deposit but does not appear to be practical work. Responding to his question President of Chitral Press Club Zaheeruddin Ajaz said, "This is half true. We were recently visited in Chitral and Swat, Dir, by GLOF-II Project where they have constructed protection walls, irrigation channels, community halls etc to protect the people in flood-hit areas from further destruction.

During the seminar it was reported that people in Chitral often burn wood for cooking and heating purposes to keep themselves warm in the winter, which on one hand, if smoke rises, while on the other hand it also has a lot of burden on the forests which have very negative impact on the environment. They demanded from the government to provide cheap electricity or Gas as alternate fuel to people of Chitral to use it for cooking and heating purposes so as to minimize burden on forest. Shuja-ul-Haq said that the main purpose of this seminar was to create awareness among the public especially in young generation to play their role how they could protect their environment from negative effects. Nasreen Bibi says that

whenever there is a natural disaster, children and women are more affected and women who are pregnant cannot run, so we all have a responsibility to make our environment clean and save it from negative impact. AS well as we should to Play a key role in protection of our planet so that we can avoid the losses in the form of natural calamities. The seminar was attended by a large number of women and men which was ended with this prayer that Allah Almighty should protect Pakistan from all kinds of evil and natural affairs.

Two arrested F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: The Motorway Police arrested two members of inter-provincial drugs peddling gang besides recovering Heroin worth millions of rupees here on Thursday.

The Motorway Police signaled to stop a suspected car near Sukheke area of Hafizabad. However, the car riders instead of stopping sped the scene. The Motorway Police chased the fled car riders, held them in nearby locality and during search of car recovered over seven kilogram Heroin worth Rs70 million from secret cavities of the vehicle.

PHC CJ visits Central Prison Haripur F.P. Report

HARIPUR: The Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Peshawar Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan Thursday visited Central Prison Haripur along with Justices of Abbottabad Bench, District and Sessions Judge Haripur Shahnaz Hameed Khattak, Aun Haider, Deputy Commissioner Haripur, Omar Khan, District Police Officer, Haripur were also present.

The Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and other guests were warmly welcomed by Umair Khan Superintendent Central Prison Haripur and Muhammad Naem Regional Prison Officer Hazara along with their teams.

The Guard of Honour was presented to the Chief Justice. A brief presentation on history of Haripur jail, prisoners details as well as the various health care facilities and prison industries was presented to guests.

The delegation visited and inspected the female section, hospital section, juvenile section, and various other parts of the prison where they met with prisoners. Issues of prisoners related to their trials were noted and necessary directions were given on the spot to concerned Judges for quick disposal. A total of 14 prisoners in petty nature crimes were released during the visit.

Saplings planted in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: Assistant Commissioner tehsil Mandarn has planted a sapling at Govt Primary School No 3 in Koga during clean and green drive, on Thursday.

The AC addressed a seminar on the topic "Role of parents and students in education". She said it was due to her parents role when she got education and became administrative officer.

AC added it was her keen interest in education and come to the expectations of family. She wished parents play due role and students show due interest so as to achieve the target of becoming responsible citizen and to feed family with honor and serve the nation with density.

34 factories sealed

FAISALABAD (INP): Assistant Director Environment Atif Imran said on Thursday that 34 industrial units were sealed, 20 were served warning notices, 43 owners were booked and Rs 3.9 million fine was imposed on various others during inspection of 126 small and large industrial units in the district during the last two weeks.

He said the anti-smog squads were conducting raids at industrial units, brick-kilns, rural areas, besides checking of fitness of big and small vehicles to minimise air pollution. He said that a total 169 brick kilns were checked, out of which 60 were sealed, 40 were served warnings, 69 owners were booked and a fine of Rs 5.4 million was imposed.

Release of committed fund to help uplift of tribal districts

F.P. Report

WANA: KP Caretaker Minister for Tribal Affairs, Dr Aamir Abdullah has said that the release of the committed funds of Rs.100 billion would help resolve issues relating to uplift activities in the tribal districts of the province.

He expressed these views while addressing a tribal jirga held in the Deputy Commissioner's Committee Room at Wana, district headquarters South Waziristan on Thursday. Besides, Deputy Commissioner (DC) South Waziristan Lower Nasir Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kashmir Khan, District Police Officer (DPO) Farmanullah Wardag and district heads of various department, tribal elites also attended the tribal jirga.

On this occasion, the tribal elders highlighted problems. Development projects, law & order and hurdles in uplift schemes in the district South Waziristan Lower in detail. The tribal elders especially complained regarding unfulfillment of commitments made at the time of the merger of erstwhile Federal Administered Tribal Area (FATA) with



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and neither final shape was given to the recommendations of the Sartaj Aziz headed committee in this regard. They requested the provincial minister for utilization of all available resources of the provincial government to initiate large-scale development schemes in the district to mitigate the problems of the residents of South Waziristan Lower. The tribal elders and elected public representatives of the local government also highlighted various other issues and called for their address. In response to the demands of the tribal elders and elites,

the provincial minister conceded hurdles in the release of the committed fund of Rs.100 billion for the development of the tribal region. However, he said that the provincial government is in constant contact with the federal government in that regard.

Speaking about borders demarcation between South Waziristan Lower, South Waziristan Upper and North Waziristan, the provincial minister said that a commission would be formed soon to settled the dispute and added that in this connection Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) has already been assigned the task.

Minister pledges support for FACHHOCHSCHULE Varsity

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister Ahmad Rasool Bangash Thursday pledges support for Kohat FACHHOCHSCHULE University and Oil and Gas Royalty Fund Release.

Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, Excise Taxation, and Narcotics Control in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ahmad Rasool Bangash, has also announced a commitment to foster higher education in Kohat division through the establishment of Kohat FACHHOCHSCHULE University, following the model of Haripur FACHHOCHSCHULE University in collaboration with PAK-Austria.

Speaking at a high-level meeting on the Kohat Division Development Project, the minister

assured pragmatic steps to unlock the oil and gas royalty fund for Kohat Division under the district development plan. This move is expected to facilitate the completion of ongoing and near-completed projects in the region. The meeting, attended by Project Director Habibullah Khan and senior officials, included a detailed briefing on the Kohat Division Development Project, ongoing schemes, and the project's work plan.

Minister Bangash directed the Kohat Division Development Project to liaise with the Election Commission, submitting a note through the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to expedite the release of oil and gas royalty funds under the District Development Plan. He emphasized efforts

to secure funds for scholarships for students in Kohat Division and to distribute shares of oil and gas royalty funds equitably among all districts in the division. In addition, the caretaker minister committed to addressing contractor-related issues with practical efforts and affirmed the dedication to resolving challenges faced by the project.

Highlighting the significance of establishing FACHHOCHSCHULE University in Kohat division, Bangash emphasized the enhanced educational opportunities it would offer to local students. He underscored the commitment to utilizing all available resources for the province's development, striving to fulfill the mandate and guide the province on a path of progress.

Importance of RTI & RTS Acts stressed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A comprehensive workshop on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013 and the Right to Public Services Commission was organized by Saiban Development Organization in collaboration with the non-governmental organization CPDI and Individualland.

The workshop saw active participation from elected representatives of local government, members of the civil society, men and women, individuals with special needs, and youth. The awareness workshop featured lectures by Noor Alam Khan, Project Coordinator of CPDI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Aziz Ahmed, Provincial

Coordinator of Individualland; Adnan

Babar; and Farhan Zaid from the Right to Public Services Commission. Muhammad Arif from Saiban Development Organization also shared insights during the workshop.

The speakers highlighted the significance of the Right to Information Act, emphasizing that it empowers citizens with the right to access information related to their resources. They acknowledged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for being the first province to implement this law before other regions. They further explained that the law grants people the right to obtain information, making institutions transparent and accountable, contributing to good governance.

The primary objective of the law is to provide citizens with information that

helps eradicate corruption in institutions and promotes accountability. Before the implementation of this act, it was not feasible for the common person to acquire public information from institutions. The Right to Information Act has significantly improved the system of providing public services.

The officials concluded that the workshop aimed to increase awareness about these essential laws, ensuring that people understand their rights to information and public services. They encouraged active participation from the community to utilize these rights for the betterment of governance and transparency in institutions. The Right to Information Act stands as a milestone in promoting a more open and responsive government.

Provision of maximum relief to masses directed

HYDERABAD (INP): Commissioner Hyderabad, Syed Khalid Haider Shah on Thursday directed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure provision of maximum relief to the masses, particularly in the health and education sectors of their respective districts.

While presiding over a meeting at his office, Khalid Haider asked the DCs to ensure daily visits to health and education centres in person and point out the issues being faced by the people of their respective districts. The report regarding the non-availability of required facilities as well as a shortage of staff at health and education centres should be submitted to the Commissioner's Office and the same data should also be updated at the portal of the Sindh Chief Minister, he added.

The Commissioner also directed the DCs to review the progress of ongoing development schemes and ensure the quality of work

with the utilization of granted funds on the projects. The prices of essential commodities should also be checked regularly with imposition of fines and require legal action against the hoarders and profiteers, he added.

Khalid Haider also directed the DCs to visit petrol pumps in their respective districts, check the quality of petroleum products, prices and action against the owners of those petrol pumps who were involved in violation of the government directives. The DCs should submit the performance report to the Commissioner's Office and also update the progress at the portal of the Sindh Chief Minister, he added. The DCs, the majority of them attended the meeting through video link, briefed the Commissioner about the performance of their respective districts and also apprised the issues being faced by them in updating the data at the portal of the Sindh Chief Minister.



Madagascar votes in presidential election boycotted by opposition

MADAGASCAR (BBC): Madagascar is holding presidential elections despite an opposition boycott following weeks of protests. A curfew was declared overnight to prevent any trouble. Political tensions have been running high, with the opposition saying that the incumbent, Andry Rajoelina, should be disqualified. There have been six weeks of demonstrations, which have seen opposition supporters clash with police.

Angelo Ravelonarivo, a police prefect in the capital of Antananarivo, said the curfew was imposed following "various acts of sabotage" including the "burning of a polling station". Opposition leaders have complained of an "institutional coup" in favour of Mr Rajoelina. They say he should be disqualified because he acquired French nationality in 2014. Ten out of 12 opposition candidates have raised concerns about the vote's credibility and called on voters to boycott the elections.

Opposition supporters have been using cauliflowers as a symbol of police repression. Former President Marc Ravalomanana, ousted by Mr Rajoelina in a 2009 coup, was seen holding one as he joined calls for a boycott. He said: "If this election is not postponed, Madagascar will experience a major crisis because the population will reject the results." Roland Ratsiraka, one of the protesting candidates, described the elections to AFP as a "fraud" and a "joke on Madagascar." A Red Cross worker helping in the capital told the BBC: "The situation is intense every day. We have many injuries and we've had



to provide first aid to 36 people."

According to the World Bank, Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 75% of people living below the national poverty line in 2022.

The country has reserves of cobalt, gold, nickel, uranium and other minerals. However it has struggled with sluggish growth and persistent poverty for decades. So whoever is going to take over will be expected to address widespread poverty, among others challenges. With a population of around 30m, just 11m people are registered to vote in Madagascar. Polls opened at 06:00 local time (03:00 GMT) and will close at 17:00 (14:00 GMT) on Thursday. Mr Rajoelina, who officially resigned in September in order to run for re-election, has denied the criticism from opposition leaders and

expressed confidence that he will win. According to AFP, his government has said the protests are motivated by a "desire to overthrow power" and to "sabotage the electoral process". It has also accused the opposition of "threatening the stability of the country". Originally the president of the Senate was supposed to take over from Mr Rajoelina but declined. This left the decision to a "collegial government" headed by the prime minister, seen as a Rajoelina ally.

Despite this being accepted by the Constitutional Court, many are angered by Mr Rajoelina's candidacy because of his dual French nationality. After taking power in 2009, Mr Rajoelina became Africa's youngest head of state. He did not contest the 2013 election but was voted back into power in 2018.

Mason: SC ruling leaves Rwanda policy in tatters

LONDON (BBC): The government has lost. And lost big time. Sometimes, the words of a court room amount to mumbo jumbo to the occasional visitor. And as a political reporter I am an only occasional visitor to court. But sitting there in Court 1 of the Supreme Court this morning, the words and the decision were crystal clear. They leave the government's Rwanda policy in tatters.

At the heart of it, a couple of sentences. "There is a legal rule that refugees must not be returned to their countries of origin, either directly or indirectly, if their life or freedom would be threatened in that country." This is known technically as "refoulement".

"The legal test which has to be applied in this case is whether there are substantial grounds for believing that asylum seekers sent to Rwanda would be at real risk of refoulement. The Court of Appeal concluded that there were such grounds. We are unanimously of the view that they are entitled to reach that conclusion." Pow. They all agree, in the UK's highest court, that the Rwanda plan is a legal dud. And so now the political row, particularly within the Conservative Party, begins. Those on the liberal wing of the Tory Party are clear. Former First Secretary of State Damian Green told me: "Anyone who thinks leaving the European Convention on Human Rights is a sensible response to this judgement has not read it. It wouldn't make any difference." But there are those of a radically different view within the party too.

Brendan Clarke-Smith has shared a photo of a Daily Mail headline from a few years ago, describing judges as "enemies of the people". Allies of former Home Secretary Suella Braverman tell me the judgement is "damning" and is "so damning there is nothing the government can do with the tools that they currently have". They claim Mrs Braverman privately argued within government for an alternative option to be set down in law, where there would be offshore processing of claims in Rwanda, handled by UK officials. Those granted refugee status would have been returned to the UK, but others would not. "No10 blocked it, because they had blind faith that they would win in court," one ally claimed.

US helps forge global group

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The US and more than a dozen countries and groups have forged a working group to advance efforts to measure greenhouse gas emissions across the natural gas supply chain to cut global output of the pollution blamed for climate change, the Energy Department said. The MMRV Working Group aims to advance efforts to measure, monitor, report and verify emissions of methane, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. It seeks to do so for the entire gas supply chain including production, processing, transport, liquefaction, and distribution of the fuel.

Participants are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, East Mediterranean Gas Forum, European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mozambique, Norway, South Korea, Britain and the US. Brad Crabtree, assistant secretary of fossil energy and carbon management at the Energy Department, said there is a pressing need to provide comparable, reliable information on emissions cuts by gas producers and exporters to global markets.

"It's really critical that we develop on a global basis a framework that is agreed to and supported by both importing countries and exporting countries, one on the governmental side, but also has the investment and support of industry and other stakeholders," Crabtree told Reuters. In the first half of this year, the US was the world's largest exporter of gas that is super-chilled so it can be transported by tanker in the form of liquefied natural gas, or LNG.

A record Russian budget will boost defense spending

LONDON (AP): Russia's State Duma took a step forward towards approving its biggest-ever federal budget which will increase spending by around 25% in 2024, with record amounts going on defense. Defense spending is expected to overtake social spending next year for the first time in modern Russian history, at a time when the Kremlin is keen to shore up support for President Vladimir Putin as Russia prepares for a presidential election in March.

Record low unemployment, higher wages and targeted social spending should help the Kremlin ride out the domestic impact of pivoting the economy to a war footing, but could pose a problem in the long term, analysts say. The draft budget "is about getting the war sorted in Ukraine and about being ready for a military confrontation with the West in perpetuity," said Richard Connolly, an expert on Russia's military and economy at the Royal United Services Institute in London. "This amounts to the wholesale remilitarization of Russian society," he added.

Russia's finance ministry said it expects spending to reach 36.66 trillion rubles (around \$411 billion) in 2024 with a predicted budget deficit of 0.8% of Russia's gross domestic product. Part of the Russian budget is secret as the Kremlin tries to conceal its military plans and sidestep scrutiny of its war in Ukraine. Independent business journalists Farida Rustamova and Maksim Tovkaylo said on their Telegram channel Faridally that around 39% of all federal spending will go on defense and law enforcement in 2024. Analysts suggest Russia is in third place globally for defense spending behind China and the United States, which spends around \$850 billion a year. During the second reading of the federal budget, the State Duma focused on the allocation of social, health and education funds, some of which are complemented by regional government spending. The third and final reading of the budget will be on Nov. 17.

The Russian finance ministry is able to table a record budget partly because the economy has held up under sanctions much better than many observers first expected. That's because Russia is still able to earn substantial government revenue from oil exports, the Kremlin's key moneymaker. Although shunned in the West, the Kremlin "expects to fund expenditures in 2024 from oil and gas revenues thanks to buyers from China and India," said Alexandra Prokopenko, from the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center in Berlin and a for-

mer Russian Central Bank official. Russia still sells more to the rest of the world than it buys, and because the ruble is weak, it receives more rubles for its energy sold in dollars, giving it revenue for imports including weapons components.

In recent years, the Russian finance ministry has also attempted to pivot the economy away from its dependence on hydrocarbons, raising increasing amounts from import taxes and VAT and, following the invasion of Ukraine, supposedly "one-off" windfall taxes on state and private companies. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said in September that Russia's economy should grow by 2.8% by the end of this year but that was in comparison to 2022, when the economy shrank as a result of the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Analysts question whether the draft budget is based on realistic projections for growth. If it is not, or if the economic outlook changes, Russia could have to adjust its spending. "Expecting the same rate of growth shows the degree of optimism that's underneath this," said Connolly, adding that Russian officials seem to be aiming for levels of growth comparable to those when recovering from a recession. The main driver of that growth is Russia's war in Ukraine, which is now as important to the Kremlin economically as it is politically.

The state and military are now playing a much bigger role in the economy than they have historically, and industries related to the war - including defense production - have helped to drive Russia's unemployment level down to a record low of 3%. The war has also taken hundreds of thousands of workers out of the economy, either because they're fighting in Ukraine or because they've fled Russia, often to escape conscription. Defense companies and those associated with the sector are working at full capacity, leading to labor shortages as vacancies go unfilled, putting more money in the pocket of ordinary Russians as employers compete to hire them, offering higher salaries. While this is good for the Kremlin ahead of a presidential election, against a backdrop of an already tight labor market it will be a "struggle" for the economy to keep growing while vacancies remain unfilled, Connolly said. Over the longer term, the government's increased defense spending also threatens to worsen inflation, as military-related factories operate around the clock, putting money into workers' pockets from where it flows into the cash registers of local businesses.

South Africa: World must urge Israel to stop 'crime'

CAPE TOWN: The world has seen enough of the tragedy in Gaza and it is time for countries to use their influence over Israel to put a stop to "this real crime against humanity", South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor has said. South Africa was one of the few countries that cut ties with Israel in response to its attack on the Gaza Strip.

Pandor told Al Jazeera that her government may refer Israel to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as it continues its assault on Gaza. "We are

appalled at how this horror and tragedy that is unfolding continues to get worse and worse. I think the world has seen enough, and it is time for the most powerful in the world to put a stop to this horror that Israel is unfolding against the people of Palestine," she said. "It is only countries that have influence over Israel who can stop this real crime against humanity that we are seeing right before our eyes." The Palestinian people experience conditions similar to

those in apartheid South Africa, she added. South Africa has been outspoken about the plight of Palestinians and recalled its diplomats from Israel this month, as the death toll from Israel's bombardment of Gaza continues to climb. Palestinian authorities have said that more than 11,200 people in Gaza, more than a third of them children, have been killed since Israel began its attack on the Gaza Strip in retaliation for an attack by Hamas that Israeli authorities say killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

While that attack by Hamas was widely condemned, Israel's response has garnered criticism as a campaign of relentless air strikes has wiped out entire neighbourhoods and as an Israeli siege chokes off access to necessities such as food, fuel and electricity for Gaza's 2.3 million residents. The United Nations has said that about 70 per cent of people in Gaza have been displaced, with few options for safe haven as the Israeli strikes pound every corner of the Strip, includ-

ing areas that Israel told Palestinians they should relocate to in order to avoid the fighting.

"We would have anticipated that the ICC would react much earlier because thousands of people have been mowed down," Pandor said. "And these are innocent Palestinian people who have suffered decades of harassment and occupation." That occupation, she said, also has "very, very clear similarities," to some of the practices that defined apartheid South Africa. "We know people cannot own property, [and] that property can be seized without any compensation, which is what we experienced in our own country. People have to carry identity documents that reflect your ethnicity rather than citizenship. All of this is part of the apartheid feature," Pandor told Al Jazeera. "So, there can be no denial that the corollary between the conduct of the Israeli state against the people of Palestine is so closely aligned to the apartheid conduct." — Aljazeera

France issues arrest warrant for Syria's al-Assad

PARIS: France has issued international arrest warrants for Syria's president, his brother and two other senior officials over the use of banned chemical weapons against civilians in Syria, according to a judicial source and lawyers representing victims. The arrest warrants charge Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, his brother Maher, military generals Ghassan Abbas and Bassam al-Hassan with complicity in crimes against humanity and complicity in war crimes, according to a judicial source quoted by the Reuters news agency and lawyers representing Syrian victims.

Maher al-Assad heads an elite Syrian military unit, the 4th Armoured Division, while the two military generals, Ghassan Abbas and Bassam al-Hassan, work with a Syrian research agency accused of developing chemical weapons, according to the rights group Civil Rights Defenders. The warrants follow a criminal investiga-

tion into chemical attacks in the town of Douma and the district of Eastern Ghouta in August 2013, which killed more than 1,000 people. It is the first international arrest warrant that has been issued for the Syrian head of state, whose forces responded to protests that began in 2011 with a brutal crackdown that UN experts have said amounts to war crimes. These are also the first international arrest warrants that have been issued over the chemical weapons attack in Ghouta, said Mazen Darwish, lawyer and founder of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCMF), which filed the case in France. France claims worldwide jurisdiction for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. Syria denies using chemical weapons but a previous joint inquiry of the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons found that the Syrian government used the

nerve agent sarin in an April 2017 attack and has repeatedly used chlorine as a weapon.

There was no immediate comment from Damascus. Darwish said the decision was "a victory for the victims, their families, and the survivors" of the 2013 chemical attack, and a step towards "justice and sustainable peace in Syria". "It's a huge development...An independent jurisdiction is recognising that the chemical attack couldn't have happened without the knowledge of the Syrian president, that he has responsibility and should be held accountable," Darwish said.

The case against al-Assad and the high-ranking military officials was bolstered by first-hand witness accounts and deep analysis of the Syrian military chain of command, Darwish said. Activists in 2013 posted amateur videos on YouTube said to show the effects of the attack, including footage of dozens of corpses, many of them chil-

dren, stretched out on the ground. Other images showed unconscious children, people foaming at the mouth and doctors apparently giving them oxygen to help them breathe.

The scenes provoked revulsion and outcry around the globe. A UN report later said there was clear evidence of the use of sarin gas, a deadly nerve agent. Syria agreed in 2013 to join the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) global watchdog and give up all chemical weapons. The OPCW has since blamed Damascus for a series of chemical attacks during the civil war. The Syrian government has denied the allegations. Syria's civil war broke out in 2011 after al-Assad's repression of peaceful demonstrations escalated into a deadly conflict that pulled in foreign powers. The war has killed more than half a million people and displaced half of the country's pre-war population. — Aljazeera

DR Congo opposition discuss coalition candidate, fair election

PRETORIA: Representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo's main opposition parties began talks this week in Pretoria to decide on a potential joint candidate to challenge President Felix Tshisekedi in the December 20 general election. The electoral commission has approved a list of 25 candidates to face Tshisekedi who is seeking a second five-year term.

Campaigning for the election in the DRC, the world's largest producer of battery material cobalt and a major copper producer will start on November 20. Opposition candidates include Tshisekedi's old rivals such as Martin Fayulu, a 66-year-old former oil executive who came second in the disputed 2018 presidential vote which he claimed to have won, and first-timers such as Congo's renowned Nobel Peace Prize-winning gynaecologist Denis Mukwege. Moise

Katumbi, the former governor of mineral-rich Katanga province and chairman of football club TP Mazembe is also in the running.

Fayulu told the Reuters news agency that discussions in the South African capital were to ensure that the elections were transparent. "The question of a joint candidacy will certainly be discussed in due course," he said, adding that the main concern was to agree ground rules for holding peaceful elections. A divided opposition field could be an advantage for Tshisekedi in a single-round election that requires a simple majority of the vote to win. Before the 2018 presidential election, Fayulu was chosen as the joint opposition candidate in a deal that at the time included Tshisekedi, and Vital Kamerhe, currently the vice prime Minister and minister of the economy. However, Tshisekedi and Kamerhe

pulled out of the deal a day after it was agreed following what they said were protests from their supporters, and Tshisekedi went on to win the disputed vote.

Herve Diakiese, a spokesperson for millionaire businessman Katumbi said there was a need to bolster one opposition candidacy. "We're going to look for a leader, line up behind him and make him president," Diakiese said. "Without discriminating against the others, the three names that stand out are Denis Mukwege, Moise Katumbi and Martin Fayulu." The Katumbi campaign had said in an emailed statement that "Tshisekedi and his cronies in Kinshasa [have] robbed us of the hope he promised when they took office in 2019". There are concerns about the conduct of the election as the Central African country grapples with unending violence in its restive region from mul-

tiplied armed groups including the dreaded M23 group, which the European Union, United Nations experts and Kinshasa say is being backed by Rwanda. Kigali has denied the allegations. Opposition parties have also raised alarm and warned that the election could be flawed, alleging irregularities during the voter registration period orchestrated by the national election commission to favour Tshisekedi's ruling coalition. The commission has denied the accusation promising a fair election. Albert Moleka, an adviser to Mukwege said the joint candidacy must be based on programme, but the key to a fair election was for the opposition and civil society to be organised and monitor the vote. "If we all go our own way, with fraud in the offing, can we win? How can we mobilise witnesses? How can we get around?" Moleka said.

Gaza telecom companies warn of coming blackout

GAZA: The two main telecommunications companies in Gaza have warned of a "complete telecom blackout in the coming hours" due to a lack of fuel amid an Israeli siege on the Palestinian territory. "Main data centers and switches in the Gaza Strip are gradually shutting down due to fuel depletion," Paltel and Jawwal said in a joint statement.

The companies said "all generators" operating network elements in Gaza have ground to a halt, and that basic network elements were now relying on batteries. "The countdown has begun for the halt of all communi-

cations and internet services in the Gaza Strip," Laith Daraghmeh, CEO of the Palestinian telecommunications regulatory authority, said in a statement cited by the Turkish state news agency Anadolu. He said talks were under way with international institutions "to ensure the entry of quantities of fuel necessary for the operation of the communications service". Palestinian Communications Minister Yitzhak Sidr warned that all communications and internet services would stop in the Gaza Strip by Thursday due to depleting fuel. Israel cut off fuel shipments into the Gaza Strip as part of a

"complete siege" on the territory after Hamas fighters from Gaza launched an attack on southern Israel on October 7, killing around 1,200 people, according to Israeli authorities. Since the attack, Israel has bombarded the Palestinian territory, launched a ground offensive and severely restricted supplies of water, food and electricity. More than 11,300 people have been killed in the Israeli assault, according to Palestinian authorities, including more than 4,600 children. The first fuel truck to enter Gaza since Israel imposed the siege arrived in the besieged territory. The UN agency for Palestine

refugees said it received 23,000 litres of fuel, which Israel said could be used to transport aid coming in via Egypt. UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said that 160,000 litres a day are needed just to run basic humanitarian operations. "It is appalling that fuel continues to be used as a weapon of war," Lazzarini said. "This seriously paralyses our work and the delivery of assistance to the Palestinian communities in Gaza." Since Israel launched a ground invasion in late October, Gaza has experienced two blackouts previously, after Israel cut communications and internet services. — Aljazeera

DHAKA: Bangladesh will hold parliamentary elections on January 7, its Election Commission has announced, as deadly protests by opposition parties demanding the prime minister's resignation have rocked the country. "The 12th parliamentary election will be held on January 7 in 300 seats," Chief Election Commissioner Habibul Awal said in a live television broadcast, urging parties to hold talks to resolve the political crisis.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), whose top leaders are either jailed or in exile, has already said it will boycott the polls if Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina does not resign and transfer power to a non-partisan caretaker government to oversee the general election. Hasina has led Bangladesh for the past 15 years and has been accused of ruling with an iron fist. She is seen as

almost certain to return to power for a fourth time if the opposition boycott goes ahead. Hasina's main rival and two-time premier, BNP leader Khaleda Zia, is effectively under house arrest for what her party calls trumped-up corruption charges. The BNP boycotted the 2014 elections, but participated in 2018. Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamist party in the Muslim-majority country, and the Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) party also said they would spurn the polls. Thousands of IAB supporters marched to the Election Commission's offices to protest the announcement, the Agence France-Presse news agency reported. Mass antigovernment demonstrations and a widening crackdown on the opposition have been simmering for months and intensified over recent weeks. "We sincerely wish the government would shun this path of violence

and coercion of the opposition, so that an appropriate congenial environment is created, ... ensuring peaceful coexistence where people can freely exercise their democratic rights," Abdul Moyeen Khan, a former minister and member of the BNP's highest policy-making body, told the Reuters news agency. Hasina has been accused of authoritarianism, human rights violations, a crackdown on free speech and suppression of dissent while jailing her critics.

The government is under pressure from Western countries to hold "free and fair" elections. The United States, the top buyer of Bangladeshi garments, said in May it was implementing a policy allowing for the restriction of visas to Bangladeshis who undermine the democratic election process in the country of nearly 170 million people. — Aljazeera

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IMF's review and policy challenges

PAKISTAN has reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the first review of a \$3 billion bailout, which has paved the way for the release of \$700 million after approval from the Executive Board of the Washington-based global lender. This important development has enabled Pakistan to access an additional \$700 million, crucial for bridging inflow-outflow gaps and tracking its economic stability in the time ahead. According to the IMF, the agreement supports the Pakistani authorities' commitment to advance the planned fiscal consolidation and accelerate cost-reducing reforms in the energy sector.

The state and the people of Pakistan have passed through dreadful moments in their history, as the unceasing turmoil and politically motivated policies of the past governments have pushed the country on the verge of a total disaster. Ranging from Tarin's reckless economic policies to the unrealistic Dar's dogma, the nation has witnessed severe economic volatility and mismanagement, skyrocketing inflation, unimaginable degradation of national currency along with the incapability of the Pakistani leadership that practically kneeled the nuclear-armed state in the recent past. Historically, the review talks and technical/ policy level appraisal of Pakistan's current situation and future economic outlook was crucial through which the global lender had to ascertain whether the government was on track to meet benchmarks set under the \$3 billion standby arrangement agreed in July. The IMF team held in-depth discussions with the Pakistani authorities on the implementation of the Standby Bailout Agreement (SBA) conditions. So far the IMF team okayed fiscal management and economic handling of the Pakistani rulers that will bring in total disbursement under the programme to almost \$1.9 billion along with augmenting an improved economic rating that is crucial for the South Asian economy to garner economic support from the global donors to further consolidate its economic gains.

Realistically, the Pakistani interim rulers have relatively performed well as compared to their publicly mandated predecessors in the revival of the national economy as they owe less political agenda and indifferent appeasement of certain mafias and business cartels in the country. Over the past months, Pakistan has remained susceptible to significant external risks, including the intensification of geopolitical tensions, resurgent commodity prices, and the further tightening of global financial conditions. The inflation has steadily declined and significant stability has been noticed in the prices of energy products which is essential for the advancement of the planned fiscal consolidation and acceleration of cost-reducing reforms in the energy sector. The government undertook painful economic reforms including hiking electricity and gas tariffs in line with the Lender's conditions in a bid to avert the looming default risks through a short-term loan agreement with the IMF. As of now, Pakistan's economic team must continue its efforts to build economic resilience and sustainability to envision a complete return to a market-determined exchange rate and pursue state-owned enterprise and governance reforms to attract investment and support job creation and social uplift programs. There has been a significant economic recovery in recent months that needs to be preserved through stabilisation and consolidation policies to safely steer the nation out of prevailing crises. Pakistani economists must focus on policy priorities for balanced growth and macroeconomic sustainability along with continued fiscal consolidation to reduce public debt and sustain economic development/growth. There is a dire need to continue the current austerity drive, restrain unnecessary spending and improve revenue performance in the coming months to sustain these achievements and make further advancements in the economic field. So, this nation comes out of unceasing economic and monetary challenges once and for all.

US's charges against Taliban

THE US Inspector General for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan (SIGAR) John Spoko has recently accused the Islamic Emirate of diverting or otherwise benefitting from a considerable amount of US assistance meant for the Afghan public that is currently embattled with acute economic challenges, unemployment, freezing winter and famine.

During a Congressional hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Spoko shared how US funds have been provided to or diverted by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) since the collapse of the former government in August 2021. According to him, the SIGAR has found that Taliban (IEA) officials routinely pressure US partners to hire Taliban allies, insist that US partners contract with Taliban-affiliated companies, dictate which Afghans should receive US aid, demand payoffs from US partners before a project can begin, divert US food aid to Taliban soldiers, and tax recipients of aid once it is delivered. As said, this interference in and diversion of US assistance is worrying and presents multiple risks.

The accusations of the US Inspector General against the Taliban are not new but the repetition of the same allegations previously labelled by the US authorities against the Karzai government and the Ghani regime are now being levelled against the Islamic Emirate, is surely uncommon and damaging. The Taliban movement that came into existence in the mid-90s on purely reformation purposes to end social injustices, eradicate violence and warlordism and visualize peace and prosperity in the war-torn nation is now practising all those measures against which it stood resolute, took arms and fought war for several years until it grasped power for the second time in that country.

Historically, diversion and interference are common among other autocratic regimes and in the warzones that the US government has often sought to bypass to get aid directly to vulnerable populations. Nevertheless, the diversion of humanitarian assistance by the Taliban (IEA) is more concerning for US strategists because of the worsening humanitarian crisis and the Taliban's alleged linkages with terrorist groups. Although such allegations had been customary for the previous autocratic regimes in the past, as a majority of the past leaders were directly involved in corruption, drug cultivation and smuggling. The Islamic Emirate is very strict in governance and deals such cases with stern punishment and harsh measures which significantly improved the law and order situation and reduced the corruption index in the country. Interestingly, the US has delivered its message to Afghan interim rulers, however, their actions would determine the truthfulness of their allegations or otherwise. Hopefully, the Emirate would not sacrifice its years-long legacy for a trivial monetary benefit or insignificant tax on charitable items, that too come from abroad for public use.

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An SOS call from Gaza

Ghada Ageel

ON the morning of Sunday, November 12, I received a plea, an SOS, from my dear friend Shireen, a Christian Palestinian in Bethlehem. "Ghada, do you know any institutions in Gaza, other than the Red Cross, that can help evacuate people trapped in the north?" I had to respond: "No..."

Shireen is just one of many friends, loved ones and acquaintances who got in touch with me in recent days desperately looking for a way to find help for those stuck in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Israel's ongoing war on Gaza has created three simultaneous crises. First, there is the crisis experienced by every individual in the besieged Strip who is unable to escape. Then, there is the crisis of conscience that has seemingly taken over the international community, which is ignoring the desperate plight of civilians in Gaza. Finally, there is the global crisis resulting from the apparent collapse of all the mechanisms supposedly designed to promote and protect human rights.

Every day, I receive dozens of SOS messages, cries for help, from Gaza. As a Palestinian from Gaza who is currently out of the Strip, I am living a nightmare, because there is very little, if anything, that I can do to help those who are under siege and under attack there.

I know there is nothing I can do to stop Israel's war machine. I know this because I spent most of my life, about 36 years, in the besieged and occupied Gaza - the open-air prison that has since been transformed into a slaughterhouse. Still, I desperately try to do something, anything. Action is imperative - staying idle, doing nothing, feels like being stuck in another hell.

So despite not knowing how I could help, I messaged Shireen back: "Can you send me more details?" "Nour al-Nakhala's family is trapped in their home in Gaza City due to heavy bombardment," she responded quickly. "Nour is the wife of Dr Hammam Alloh. Their residence is in front of al-Basma kindergarten, on Abu Hasira Street in Gaza. Here is their cell number. Please help."

Shireen's plea to rescue

al-Nakhala and Alloh families triggered a flood of memories and made me think of all the other families I know in Gaza. I thought of the Luthun family, Bilbaisi family, al-Birwai family... I thought of the Awad family, which lives, or once lived, near the blood bank and the German representative's office - at the very heart of middle-class Gaza. I did not know the fate of any of these families. I did not know if they were alive or dead. But I feared the worst. And we still had no news from al-Nakhala and Alloh families.

Then, I received a desperate plea from the al-Bayid family - a household of six members, some with special needs, trapped in their home on al-Halabi street next to the Civil Affairs office. They were stranded without food or water. Another cry for help came from the al-Saga family, besieged in their home not far from al-Shifa Hospital. They were also trapped, immobile, together with their children and the elderly with little access to food or water. Tanks had ravaged their surroundings and were firing at anything that moved. Then, on the same day, Dr Majdy Alkhoully, who lives in Qatar, also took to Facebook to try and find someone to help al-Nakhala and Alloh families. He said they needed immediate evacuation because many of them, including Dr Hammam Alloh, and his father-in-law, Mahmoud, have been critically wounded as a result of the bombardment, and are bleeding.

Simultaneously, the Abu Hashish family, a group of around 15 people who are not far away from al-Shifa Hospital, sent out a heart-wrenching cry for help. The family said some among them have been severely wounded, and their lives are hanging in the balance. But the bombs were raining from the sky, and the presence of tanks around their home rendered them completely immobile. All these family names echoed in my mind, repeatedly, filling me with a feeling of dread that I know I will never be able to forget or get over for the rest of my life. All of this, repeated two million times over, every single day, is the first crisis that was born

out of Israel's latest war on Gaza.

The second crisis is one that is caused by the world's indifference to the pleas of Gaza's doctors and hospital workers. This is a crisis of conscience. Israel's military continues to target doctors, nurses, patients and medical facilities. At least 200 doctors and medics have been killed in the ongoing genocide. In stark numerical terms, the occupying force has claimed the lives of six doctors and medics on average every single day since the beginning of its latest assault on the besieged Strip. Just a few days ago, my own brother, a doctor at the Nasser hospital, narrowly escaped death. He had stepped out of his office to check on a patient when a nearby mosque was struck. The shelling also damaged the radiology unit of the hospital. The ceiling collapsed, creating a scene of devastation.

Meanwhile, my cousin Nour, a recent graduate of medicine, continues to work at the UN school in Khan Younis camp, which has been turned into a concentration camp with tens of thousands of people crammed into classrooms, using just eight washrooms between them. Despite the dire conditions, Nour is still tirelessly working, seeing at least 500 patients a day and offering advice and prescriptions to the sick, even though obtaining medications is nearly impossible. Whenever we can speak, she tells me how shortages have become the norm in Gaza, causing tragedies. She explains people are grappling with kidney problems, and diseases like diarrhoea, due to a lack of clean water. She tells me that they are also suffering from hunger-related illnesses and anaemia. That communicable diseases like chickenpox are spreading rapidly. Newly married girls expecting their first babies live in fear that when the time comes to deliver the baby, no one will be able to assist them. Two children in the school she works in lost their lives in the past week due to a lack of medication. The desperation is overwhelming. As I pen these words, most Gaza hospitals have run out of essential supplies, and become literal graveyards. The bodies of

those murdered, lie both inside and outside of al-Shifa Hospital, which is now occupied by Israeli soldiers. The world has ignored the calls from Gaza's doctors for fuel to be delivered to keep hospitals operational. Remarkably, countless locals, who are under a communications blackout and often do not even know exactly what is happening just around the corner from where they have taken refuge, heard these calls and rushed to the hospitals offering what little petrol they have in their cars or homes. Even though each one fears for their own life, they believed taking the risk, in the hope of helping someone even more desperate than themselves, was the right thing to do. This is the true spirit of Gaza.

Finally, Israel's war on Gaza led to a global crisis in the systems and mechanisms designed to protect civilians. All international institutions proved impotent. The International Criminal Court (ICC), which has supposedly been investigating the situation in Palestine for many years, is still doing nothing in the way of offering any justice and help to long-suffering Palestinians. The United Nations Security Council is powerless to even condemn Israel's indiscriminate attacks on Gaza despite there being ample evidence for crimes against humanity and genocide being committed in the besieged Strip and on the occupied West Bank. The best of what these institutions offer are hollow words, and in most cases, they cannot even achieve that. So this is an SOS call. An SOS call on behalf of every family in Gaza who needs an immediate ceasefire. An SOS call on behalf of the world's conscience and governance structures. Unless we act today and immediately, we risk accepting a world order where impunity is rewarded, the powerful is allowed to crush the weak, and no civilian is truly safe.

As I conclude this article, Dr Majdy has posted that Dr Hammam Alloh, and his father, Mahmoud, are no longer with us. They bled to death while the children watched. I am engulfed in darkness. And we still don't know what has happened to their relatives, the al-Nakhala family.

Aljazeera

Middle East crisis catalyst for change in UK

Mohamed Chebaro

IT is not an exaggeration to say that, far away from the Israel-Gaza border, this five-week-old conflict has claimed its first political victim. Suella Braverman, the UK interior minister who tried but failed to stop public demonstrations in support of a ceasefire in Gaza - using Armistice Day and Remembrance Day as an excuse - has been sacked. Braverman claimed that the demonstrations were "hate marches" and that they could spiral out of control to ruin the annual remembrance of those who have fallen while fighting for freedom in the First World War and subsequent conflicts.

The surprise ministerial

plagued by austerity, the miscalculation of Brexit and, above all, disrepute in Britain's political life through infighting, lies and instances of corruption.

If the reshuffle has revealed anything, it is that the country desperately needs a general election and a new mandate to bring some decency back into public life. People need to believe again that their future is in safe hands and that the country could turn a new page after the Conservative Party's many years of internal and nationwide attrition.

Israel's war on Gaza has surely been the catalyst that allowed this latest government reshuffle, but it remains doubtful that this will be enough to improve

But the reshuffle has been described as a "back to the future" moment that reflects how desperate the state of the Conservative Party has become after 13 years in power that have been plagued by austerity, the miscalculation of Brexit and, above all, disrepute in Britain's political life through infighting, lies and instances of corruption.

reshuffle announced by Rishi Sunak on Monday followed growing criticism of Braverman's inciteful rhetoric from opposition lawmakers and even members of her own Conservative Party. This enabled Sunak to remove her and other ministers he felt were not performing to bring in allies that could better serve his vision.

His hand was apparently forced when the ever-controversial Braverman defied him last week in publishing an unauthorized newspaper article accusing police of "double standards" at protests, suggesting they were tough on right-wing demonstrators but easy on pro-Palestinian marches.

To be fair, both the prime minister and his interior minister were of the mind that Armistice Day and Remembrance Day should be celebrated without any interference from marches. They both thought the protests could spoil the remembrance events if violence erupted, but the police did not see the need to prevent them from going ahead.

The opposition Labour Party went even further and suggested that Braverman's comments inflamed tensions between a pro-Palestinian demonstration and a far-right counter-protest in London on Saturday, when in reality both events should have been seen as occasions to reject wars and conflict.

This turn of events was used by Sunak as a pretext to get rid of some troublemakers in his government and reaffirm his grip on the party, even though he had to turn to old hands such as former Prime Minister David Cameron, who has been made foreign secretary.

Sunak's act was seen by some as a bid to bring some sunshine back into public life, sidelining the ultraright of the Conservatives and consolidating his leadership to better fulfill his promises to the country, as set out a year ago. But the reshuffle has been described as a "back to the future" moment that reflects how desperate the state of the Conservative Party has become after 13 years in power that have been

the chances of Sunak and his party at the next general election, as the polls are predicting a battering that could send the Conservatives back into the wilderness.

Many lawmakers will have breathed a sigh of relief at seeing Braverman go, as they feared she was determined to remodel the Conservative Party as a "Trumpist," populist "nasty party," with a hard-line view on immigration, the homeless and policing. Many also believed that she had a plan to focus her attention on preparing for a possible bid for the leadership of the party if the Conservatives lose the election that is expected next year, especially as the opposition Labour Party has consistently recorded a 20-point lead in the polls.

Sunak's lack of experience at handling international crises on the scale of the Ukraine war or the Israel-Gaza conflict has been obvious, as he has failed to bring any constructive narrative to the table at a time that calls for level-headedness in a highly volatile region like the Middle East. Domestically, he tried to relaunch himself only a month ago as the face of change at his annual party conference, only to make a U-turn and cancel parts of the only large rail infrastructure project Britain has been promised for decades, to provide a fast train link between the south and north of England.

Many in the UK are sympathetic with Sunak and his efforts to stabilize the ship of government, despite the conflictive nature at the top of the Conservative Party, since his authority was clearly questioned when his home secretary attacked the police in her unsanctioned newspaper article. But the reshuffle can only be read as an act of desperation.

The only true offer of change he can make is to call a general election soon, as that might offer a real chance for the nation to be put on a long-term recovery track after the wasted years of Conservative government, even if such a conclusion is reached on the back of yet another crisis in the Middle East.

Arab News

Chinese modernization benefits world

Alpha Mohamed Jalloh

CHINA'S rapid economic growth, which has paved the way for Chinese modernization, has a unique approach to development, combining elements of planning and market-oriented reforms.

China has not only been modernizing its economy, but also has become a significant partner of many developing countries, including African countries, in their development efforts. The relationship between China and Africa in the context of modernization is worth exploring, as it has the potential to reshape the global economic landscape.

China's multifaceted approach to development combines elements of socialism with rules of market economy. This model has been instrumental in propelling China from a largely agrarian economy to the world's second-largest economy in a relatively short period. The main factors driving Chinese modernization include the Chinese government's important role as well as the market's decisive role in developing the economy, encouraging private enterprises to play a bigger role in economic growth, and keeping key sectors such as finance, energy and telecommunications vibrant and strong.

The launch of reform and opening-up, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, opened up the Chinese economy to foreign investment, fostered entrepreneurship and promoted trade. The result has been the unprecedented growth and expansion of the middle-income group. China's modernization is anchored on the principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which are quite distinct from the West's philosophy of development.

China has invested heavily in infrastructure, both at home and abroad - more so as part of the Belt and Road

Initiative - especially to build vital transport and energy networks. These infrastructure initiatives have had a huge impact on China's development and laid the foundation for China's global engagement, including with African countries.

What is particularly important for African leaders is to take advantage of the infrastructure that China has helped develop in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya. Africa, a continent with abundant natural resources and a growing population, has been a focal point of China's international engagement. Sino-African relations are often characterized as "win-win" in which both parties benefit from collaboration.

China is Africa's largest trading partner, with substantial investments in sectors such as infrastructure, mining, agriculture and manufacturing. African

countries get part of the funding for their development projects from China, while China secures valuable resources for its industries from African countries and has found a big market for its goods in Africa. Also, China has assisted African countries in various technology transfer programs, boosting industrialization and local capacity-building. Initiatives such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation have facilitated knowledge exchange and training. And China has shared its agricultural expertise with African countries to boost food security and promote sustainable farming practices. These efforts have helped reduce poverty and hunger in Africa.

Besides, China has been involved in building healthcare facilities and supporting educational programs in Africa, which enhance the overall well-being and

human capital of African countries. This fact can never be overemphasized, because the presence of international students at the seminar shows how ready is China to cooperate with Africa to build on its human resources. Chinese modernization and the China-Africa joint development partnership represent a unique approach to development that has the potential to reshape the global economic landscape. As China continues its modernization drive and Africa seeks to accelerate its development, cooperation between the two sides becomes essential.

With responsible and sustainable practices, the Sino-African partnership can foster economic growth, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for millions of people in Africa. By embracing a win-win policy and thoughtfully addressing concerns, both sides can benefit from this mutually advantageous relationship.

With the world watching, China and Africa can strengthen their collaboration and turn it into a model for international cooperation in the 21st century. At their recent graduation seminar at the Guangzhou-based Huangpu Institute for Advanced Study, under the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a group of African scholars deliberated on Chinese modernization and China-Africa common development, focusing on China's development model, which has helped the country to eradicate extreme poverty by the end of 2020.

The African scholars are also keen to learn from the specific approaches China has adopted to achieve unprecedented economic growth and social development. Chinese modernization really helps build a community with a shared future for mankind to boost the economic development of their respective countries.

France charts an independent course on Gaza

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

ALTHOUGH France still considers Hamas a terrorist organization and has strongly condemned its Oct. 7 attacks, French President Emmanuel Macron has spearheaded efforts to stop the war in Gaza, improve humanitarian conditions and address the underlying Palestine-Israel conflict. France broke ranks with the US at the UN Security Council by supporting drafts, which the US eventually vetoed, calling on Israel to protect civilians and abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law. On Oct. 27, it voted in favor of the UN General Assembly Resolution on Gaza, which the US and a handful of European countries voted against, while most other European countries abstained.

Then, on Nov. 9, Macron hosted the International Humanitarian Conference for the Civilian Population in Gaza, which represented the clearest sign of France's determination to lead on these issues. About 80 countries and organizations gathered, at short notice, at the Elysee Palace, including heads of states and governments and leaders of international organizations. They included UN organizations that have lost staff in the war; scores have been killed in Israel's indiscriminate attacks, more than in any previous conflict. They were, in the words of one speaker, "the thin line between tragedy and safety, between slaughter and humanity."

At the start of the conference, the organizers apparently wanted to avoid discussing political issues for fear that they would be divisive. As such, they presented a purely humanitarian agenda, focusing on four key points: Ensuring adherence to international humanitarian law; protect-

ing civilians and humanitarian workers; responding better to health, water, food and energy needs; and mobilizing more funds to match those growing needs.

As delegates listened to compelling testimonies from relief groups, they were horrified by Israel's war tactics. Led by Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council, they demanded an immediate ceasefire and an end to the siege and collective punishment of Gazans. Egeland, a former state secretary in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and later a UN undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said it is an "affront to humanity and humanitarian law to wage war around, from and on hospitals in Gaza." He added: "Surely now there must be a universal call for a full ceasefire and release of the hostages. History will judge the parties and the bystanders."

Martin Griffiths, the current UN top relief official, was equally forceful, saying that "the situation is insupportable. To allow it to continue would be a travesty."

Then, speaker after speaker condemned Israel's actions, which have clearly breached international norms. They called on world leaders to push for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, better humanitarian access and compliance with the rules of war. Speakers from the US and the handful of countries that had expressed support for Israel in the past joined in, decrying the massive loss of life and the need for more effective aid delivery for the beleaguered civilian population.

Mobilizing funds was not the primary goal of the conference because the problem in Gaza is more of access than lack of funds, although more is needed. The

most urgent concern is that Gazans' access to aid is limited by Israel's tight siege and relentless bombardment, making it difficult for relief supplies to reach the civilian population. In addition, Israel has completely stopped supplies of fuel, which is essential to the operation of hospitals and water treatment facilities. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there was no pressure to announce financial pledges, about \$1 billion in aid was announced during the conference.

While calling for the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid and better access, most delegates also suggested that negotiations would be a better approach to getting hostages and civilian detainees released, as well as discussing the future of governance in Gaza.

Many also called for reenergizing the peace process toward a two-state solution along the 1967 lines as the only sure way to guide the region back to a path of peace and reconciliation.

Those speaking at the summit also called for concerted efforts to stop the Gaza war from spreading further to the West Bank. UN representatives reported that more than 150 Palestinians had been killed in the West Bank since Oct. 7, both by settlers and by Israel's security forces. Many families and a number of communities have been uprooted and made homeless by settler violence, often in concert with the army.

Some expressed concern that Israel's rogue behavior, if not checked, will undermine respect for the rule of international law. It could also spread to the wider region and the rest of the world and cause youth radicalization, as happened in the past. For example, Israel's invasion of Lebanon

and the bloody siege of Beirut in the summer of 1982 begat Hezbollah. Macron expressed concern about such radicalization happening in France itself.

After the conference, Macron made his new position clearer. He told the BBC that "the clear conclusion" of all governments and agencies present at the summit was that "there is no other solution than first a humanitarian pause, going to a ceasefire." He added: "De facto - today, civilians are bombed - de facto. These babies, these ladies, these old people are bombed and killed. So there is no reason for that and no legitimacy. So we do urge Israel to stop."

The Paris conference was a clear diplomatic success for the French presidency. It succeeded in articulating five key principles in addressing the Gaza war.

First, more pressure is needed to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and basic human dignity. This means that civilians must be protected and their essential needs met, wherever they are in Gaza. UN representatives stressed that they cannot be part of Israel's pushing of hundreds of thousands of desperate civilians in Gaza into so-called safe zones.

Second, humanitarian relief supplies, including fuel, should be permitted into Gaza safely, without impediment, reliably and at scale. Third, an immediate ceasefire should be the main objective and priority. Fourth, this conflict should not be allowed to spread into the West Bank or the wider region. Fifth, multilateral and diplomatic efforts must be maximized to arrest this vicious cycle of violence by reenergizing the peace process toward a two-state solution in a fair and comprehensive solution along well-known international parameters.

Russia's plans for Libya could shift regional power balance

Hafed Al-Ghwel

AS Moscow tightens its grip on the eastern regions of Libya, it has triggered new geopolitical tremors within the wider North Africa region, parts of the Mediterranean and even further west, across the Atlantic. The catastrophic flooding in September, which left up to 20,000 people dead in Derna, has turned into a strategic opportunity for Russia to increase its influence in the region. Notorious putschist Khalifa Haftar, who controls most of eastern Libya, is leveraging this same crisis to strengthen his reign, widening his ties with Moscow and, oddly enough, the US too. That is not all, but why is this alarming?

Of course, Russia's cozy "partnership" with Haftar is no secret. However, the increasing contacts with Russia, including a late September visit to Moscow and meetings with President Vladimir Putin, raise concerns about a rapid expansion of Russian influence and huge shift from a passive, often covert, role to a more active reengagement in Libya. Having successfully reorganized its primary "agent" in Africa's hotspots, the Wagner private military company, Russia is transitioning away from maintaining a significant but under-acknowledged presence in Libya's east and south, where Haftar, the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army's supreme leader, holds sway.

Particularly concerning are the unconfirmed reports that Moscow is pushing Haftar to sign a deal for the supply of air defense systems and pilot training in exchange for Russia establishing air and naval bases in Libya to sustain its operations there, as well as in the Sahel. The deal signals Moscow's intent to legitimize the activities that were previously undertaken covertly by Wagner in Libya and across Africa under the auspices of its Ministry of Defense. It is a profound shift in Moscow's ties to Haftar that date back to 2016, when he sought foreign military expertise from Russia, France and the US to combat extremist strongholds in Benghazi and Derna. Russia seized this opportunity to regain a foothold in Libya through Wagner's mercenaries, which have since established themselves in Sirte and Jufra, close to lucrative oil sites.

The last time Russia was this actively engaged in Libya, the Haftar-Moscow partnership almost led to the seizure of Tripoli, which ultimately failed thanks to Turkey's intervention. Since then, they have resorted to consolidating Haftar's grip on an expansive region, which he now leverages in ongoing negotiations on an enduring political settlement. Over the past few years, Haftar's "empire" has afforded Moscow all the cover it needed to continue carving out significant strategic advantages in Libya, turning it into a power projection platform toward the Sahel and potentially the Mediterranean. The Russian mercenaries in Libya now number between 1,000 and 1,500, supported by about 1,000 pro-Damascus Syrian militiamen that rotate between Benghazi and Syria. By lurching toward a profound shift - setting aside its motives that may or may not involve Russia's troubles in Ukraine - Moscow is signaling that it is here to stay in Libya. Even more worrying is the swift centralization and accumulation of power within the ranks of Haftar's immediate family and inner circle. At its core is an intricate process of nepotism masquerading as military restructuring. Command responsibilities previously distributed across various military personnel are now unmistakably converging under a coterie of Haftar loyalists, effectively marginalizing potential adversaries.

However, this introspective campaign for supremacy does not stop at merely subordinating the entire military command to Haftar pseudo-dynasty. It also involves an unchecked incursion into Libya's economic and political domains by erecting patronage structures and initiating a variety of revenue-generating ventures.

By broadening its influence, fostering alliances and dependency, the Haftar parallel regime can leverage these ill-begotten gains politically as the situation unfolds. To Russia, this is particularly encouraging because its long-term agenda for Libya will endure well into the future. The emergence of Saddam Haftar, Khalifa Haftar's youngest son, paints a vivid picture of an ambitious figure spearheading the family's political and economic pursuits. As he continues to make his mark in Libya's complex landscape, his incremental growth and influence not only provide insights on the Haftar family's overall roadmap, but they also reflect Russia's intentions as it seeks to reestablish itself after an unceremonious exit in 2011. However, even with a cunning gambit and its careful execution, the prospect of Moscow securing a legitimate defense agreement - as a first of many coups de grace - with Haftar's parallel regime is fraught with difficulties, although they are not insur-

mountable. The internationally recognized Libyan government led by Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh will still have to approve such an agreement and, given the current climate, that is very unlikely. Besides, even within Haftar's own fiefdom, there are problems. The eastern-based House of Representatives still retains the legal authority to scuttle such a deal if its ratification diminishes the influence of Aguila Saleh, the head of the parliament, who is keen to carve out his own sphere in post-settlement Libya.

However, the West should not bet on these apparent bottlenecks and lull itself into inaction merely based on "what-ifs" and an endless game of geopolitical probabilities. The developing situation in Libya, while in its infancy, is still an unvarnished reflection of Russia's broader geopolitical ambitions and Europe seriously needs to pay attention. Firstly, the fragility of Libya, a nation still grappling with long-standing political divisions and a protracted conflict between the east and the west, provides the perfect storm for Russia's ambitions. By aligning with Haftar, Russia not only gains a strategic ally but also a platform from which it can influence the region's dynamics. Besides, cultivating a closer relationship will prop up a post-Haftar dynasty, potentially catalyzing a new conflict hotspot right at what some would call Europe's doorstep. The quasi-military Wagner group continues to entrench itself in Libya, despite the recent loss of its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin. Yet, across Western capitals, there is still a palpable dismissive narrative that continues to frame Wagner and Russia's presence in Libya as mere opportunism. The reality, however, is that the mercenary group is only a small part of a prolonged engagement, just one manifestation of Russia's geopolitical ambitions that extend far beyond military or naval bases for spying in NATO's backyard

or being a proverbial thorn in the soft underbelly of Euro-Atlantic hegemony. The effects of this ongoing geopolitical chess are already tangible. With each new Russian move to extend its presence, the balance of power in Libya keeps tilting, mostly in favor of the Haftar-dominated east - affording Tobruk and Sirte unprecedented leverage in securing an enduring, albeit controversial and lopsided, settlement of Libya's protracted political divisions. Moreover, Russia has also not been shy about making inroads with Haftar's western rival, the Tripoli-based, Western-backed caretaker government led by Prime Minister Dbeibeh. By playing both sides, Russia is shifting from a passive role in a UN-managed process to active participation, which is potentially concerning. While Russia will continue publicly endorsing the UN process, it could also use its newly cultivated ties with both sides to covertly push for a settlement that safeguards Moscow's long-term interests, to the detriment of Libyan aspirations for

restoring long-lost sovereignty in a stable, unified state. In other words, if Moscow's interests are better served by a Libya in perpetual tumult, then the shift toward a more active role will not bode well, both for Libyans and the West's still-unclear vision for the North African country's future. The spillover effects of a Libya in perpetual limbo - drifting from one foreign-backed convulsion to the next - are immense, potentially resulting in increased migration flows toward Europe, the worsening of governance in Libya and the further entrenchment of malign actors. It is not just Libya that should be concerned. The potential spread of instability into the wider North Africa region, extending to the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, could worsen the already volatile security dynamics there, creating new vulnerabilities or introducing new complexities that only serve to extend the power vacuums caused by prolonged conflicts.

In conclusion, Russia's tactical efforts to fortify its military presence in eastern Libya cannot be viewed in isolation by Europe. Such assertive maneuvers, including the potential realization of a naval base on Europe's southern flank, could shift the delicate balance of power in the region. This could have ramifications not only for Libya's internal dynamics but also for the global geopolitical landscape, posing a tangible threat at Europe's doorstep. Therefore, it is vital for Europe to confidently navigate this strategic conundrum. To counter the growing impact of Russia's influence in Libya, Europe needs to display geopolitical sagacity. This could involve taking more decisive action in Libya, revitalizing diplomatic dialogue or strengthening the bloc's collective defense capacity. As Europe seeks to safeguard its regional interests, it must also advocate for a stable, peaceful Libya - which, in the end, is the true necessity for all parties involved.

Palestinian lives matter as much as any other human life

Alvin Botes

WE are living in a world of glaring double standards. A dangerous message has been sent by key policymakers in the international community that Palestinian lives matter less than Israeli ones and international humanitarian law can be applied selectively. The Geneva Conventions explicitly prohibit the targeting of civilians and essential civilian infrastructure in armed conflict. And yet, there has been muted criticism of the Israeli bombardment of civilian hospitals, schools and apartment buildings in Gaza; instead, it is justified by Israel's right to self-defence.

There is also no mention of the right of the Palestinian people to defend themselves from such egregious violations of international law, or their right to basic human rights under an inhumane and illegal occupation that has continued for 75 years. Under the laws of occupation which form part of the law of armed conflict, Israel does not have the "right to defend itself" using military means as it is the occupying power. This is a fact and not an allegation. It has been confirmed by the International Court of Justice in a 2004 ruling.

As the occupying power, Israel can use tools applicable to the rule of law, including policing powers to deal with criminal actions. An occupying state cannot exercise control over territory it occupies and simultaneously militarily attack that territory on the claim that it is "foreign" and poses an exogenous national security threat. The notion of Israel's right to defend itself through military means has been used erroneously by some and deliberately by others to justify its unlawful use of force on the people of Gaza and the West Bank. We categorically reject the myopic and distorted international responses that ignore the context

and root causes of this war, which is Israel's systemic oppression of the Palestinians, the occupation of their land and their ongoing ethnic cleansing.

International human rights bodies, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, along with local NGOs - among them at least 17 Israeli organisations - have characterised the oppressive Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land as constituting the crime of apartheid. They condemn Israel's cruel blockade of Gaza for the past 17 years as having created the world's largest open-air prison in which 2.3 million Palestinians are unable to freely enter or exit the confined strip of land, while the provision of water, electricity and goods remains at the discretion of their occupiers. When Palestinians have resorted to non-violent protests, they have been mown down with live ammunition. This is what happened to Black South Africans who peacefully protested against apartheid conditions in 1960 and were gunned down by their oppressors. The futility of non-violent resistance to oppression is what gave rise to the armed struggle in South Africa, which has similarly been the case in Palestine.

According to international law, those living under occupation have the right to resist. Armed struggle against a colonial occupation force is not just recognised under international law but specifically endorsed. Wars of national liberation have been expressly embraced through the adoption of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 as a protected and essential right of occupied people everywhere. But just as South African freedom fighters were labelled terrorists and most Western governments turned their

backs on our peoples' rights to freedom, human rights and self-determination, the rights of the Palestinians to security, human rights and self-determination on their own land have been ignored or paid lip service to by governments around the world for far too long. There is no Middle East "peace process" to speak of, and no intention on the part of the current Israeli government to compromise on the issue of land or the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. There can be no sustainable peace without a negotiated political solution which ensures that Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace.

Unfortunately, the current trajectory is being driven by Israeli extremists who seek to fully take over Palestinian lands by force, no matter the consequences in human lives or utter destruction. Similarly, the desperation of occupation has also led to extremism on the Palestinian side and the targeting of Israeli civilians which is prohibited under international law. The killing and kidnapping of Israeli civilians must also be condemned and the world has done so. But the disproportionate use of force by Israel and collective punishment of a besieged and helpless people which has been both cruel and unconscionable has not only been accepted but enabled. When Russia resorted to similar tactics in Ukraine, it was roundly condemned and punished with the harshest set of economic sanctions the world has seen. But in the case of Israel's bombardment of civilians and essential infrastructure in Gaza, there have been no sanctions and no marginalisation, only unqualified and unconditional support by most Western governments.

It is the people in the streets of Arab, Asian, Latin American,

African and Western capitals who have been the voice of conscience, condemning Israel's campaign of genocide against the Palestinians, calling out the international community for their double standards and demanding justice for the Palestinian people. It is the ordinary people around the world who have defied the Israeli government's dehumanisation of the Palestinian people and rejected their demonisation. The lessons of World War II are still heeded by freedom-loving people who recognise that the dehumanisation of a group of people is usually done in an attempt to eradicate them, and the pushback against this type of genocidal language must be strong and unforgiving.

There can be no more apathy in the face of the decimation of Palestinian men, women and children who are bombed as they sleep in their beds. We hear the piercing screams of babies as they are pinned under the rubble of their apartment buildings in a wholly preventable war crime. We know that the vast majority of those killed in the current military onslaught on Gaza have been women and children. Palestinians are not children of a lesser God, and it is incumbent on all of us to put maximum pressure for an immediate ceasefire and an arms embargo on Israel. The hostages must be released, humanitarian aid bodies must be given full access to Gaza, and those who have directed this war must be held accountable for their war crimes.

We fully reject the forced displacement of the Palestinian people from their land, and we will not stand by and watch as every red line in war is crossed and the region descends into a zero-sum game of death and destruction. Our common humanity dictates that all human lives matter. The time to act is now.

The China Daily

US needs to shift from 'Indo-Pacific' back to 'Asia-Pacific'

John Gong

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping is in the United States this week for the meeting with President Joe Biden and for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' meeting in San Francisco. It has been quite a while since he visited the US, the last time being in April 2017 to Mar-a-Lago in Florida when Donald Trump was president. Sino-US relations have seen a tumultuous period in the past six and a half years because of many reasons, the most important being Washington's somewhat antagonistic policy toward Beijing.

But it seems things could take a turn for the better after Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a visit to the US recently. With the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Palestine-Israel conflicts heavily draining the US Treasury, and probably after soul-searching reassessment of US hawks' bankrupt China policy, Washington has finally returned to the talks table for a constructive and meaningful discussion. Highlighting the importance of "Asia-Pacific" over "Indo-Pacific"

during this APEC moment is worth emphasizing. The distinction between the two terms goes beyond mere semantics. The difference between "Asia-Pacific" and "Indo-Pacific" is not just geographical. These are entirely different notions with entirely different economic and geopolitical implications. Political scientist Amitav Acharya had once famously said that Asia-Pacific is a concept coined by economists, and "Indo-Pacific" by strategists. The Asia-Pacific concept generally refers to the region surrounding the Pacific Ocean. The region's precise boundaries vary depending on context, but it typically includes economies in East Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania, sometimes Southern Asia, and parts of the Pacific-adjointing members in the Americas as well. The APEC forum is mostly an economic forum, emphasizing regional economic integration and cooperation against the backdrop of the rapidly growing emerging markets of this vast region. This is why the theme

of "creating a resilient and sustainable future for all" holds immense significance for both the region and the global community as a whole.

The "Indo-Pacific" concept is an entirely different notion, with its origins deeply rooted in geopolitics. The term was first concocted in Weimar Germany by scholars in oceanography and geopolitics. Some German political oceanographers and strategists envisioned a Germany-led alliance including India to counter "Euro-America". More recently it was picked up by the late Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe to promote the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) security architecture, an informal grouping of the US, Australia, Japan, and India. Washington immediately fell in love with the term that has been increasingly used in geopolitical discourse in the US for its China policy. Geographically speaking, China is nestled within the Asia-Pacific region and does not harbor any ambition or design for the Indian Ocean region. More importantly, China prioritizes eco-

nomic development for regional cooperation and tends to stay away from geopolitical power games or so-called security competitions. That is why China has been steadfastly rejecting the use of "Indo-Pacific", sticking instead to Asia-Pacific. China's participation in globalization and its rise in the world in general in the past 40-plus years have been a peaceful process, whereas the West's approach to globalization in the colonial era was backed principally by the navies and foreign legions. Today, the US' constant reference to the "Indo-Pacific" smacks of expansions and contests in the maritime domain during the colonial era. In contrast, China's Belt and Road Initiative is all about economic cooperation and development, devoid of the kind of geopolitical big-power politics of that time. In short, the term "Indo-Pacific" belongs to the 19th century mindset, whereas "Asia-Pacific" belongs to the 21st century and the future. Let us keep fingers crossed that the US will shift from "Indo-Pacific" back to "Asia-Pacific" from now on.



SCCI calls for Pak-US bilateral trade ties

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq said new discoveries made in oil, gas and other natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but geological survey wasn't conducted since last two decades, therefore, urged US to provide assistance in conducting a geological survey in the province.

Emphasizing on further cementing Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations, the SCCI chief invited US companies and investors to make investment in the potential sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He made these remarks during a meeting with US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore, who visited the chamber house on Thursday, according to a press release issued here.

On the occasion, the SCCI senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal, Zahidullah Shinwari, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Sherbaz Bilour, executive members Hafaf Ali Khan, Monawar Khurshid, Kashif Amin, Qurtul Ain and Fahad Amin, Khalid Sultan

Khawaja, Ashfaq Ahmad, Saleem Bokhari, Ihsanullah, Muhammad Akhtar, Saddam Gul, Fazl e Wahid, Ishtiaq Ahmad, Women chamber Peshawar vice president Aneela Khalid, traders and industrialists were present.

Accompanied by political economic section chief Mr Dustin DeGrande, Political Economic Officer James Pershing, and Economic Specialist Mr Shahid Islam, and others, the US diplomat said his country is fully committed to further enhance commercial, trade and economic ties with Pakistan.

He added the mutual trade volume can be improved by launching joint initiatives, ventures and efforts.

Shante Moore mentioned USAID has played a pivotal role in economic and social progress, especially promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), technical and financial assistance to youth, infrastructure development, education, agriculture and other important sectors.

Fuad Ishaq praised USAID for initiating a social and economic development program in K-P.

Commenting on trade with regional countries, he demanded to allow trade

with Afghanistan, Iran and China in Pakistan rupee.

He called for tax reforms, especially rationalizing duties/tariffs to further enhance bilateral trade volume with regional states.

On the occasion, he stressed the need for provision of constitutional rights on electricity and gas to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so that the wheel of business, industry and employment will keep running and ensure sustainable economic growth and development.

He mentioned that KP was adversely affected for the four decades due to unfavorable circumstances because the business, industries, economic and social progress have been slowed down.

Fuad Ishaq on the occasion called for reviewing the agreements of Independent Producers (IPPs), which has caused a severe energy crisis in the country.

He urged the US to take special initiatives of industrial and agriculture growth in Pakistan.

He said the abilities of Pakistani youth are unmatched which should provide technical and financial assistance to utilize their skills for economic development and prosperity.

He said long-term Pak-US relations and collaboration can bring economic prosperity and progress in the country.

Shante Moore said Pakistan is an important ally, friend and partner, saying that his country wanted to further collaborate in multi-sectors and enhance the bilateral trade and economic relations.

The CG stressed the need for joint initiatives to further cooperation and improve the bilateral commercial and bilateral ties between the two countries.

He acknowledged that abundant potentials exist in KP, especially youth who are highly skillful, which are providing technical and financial assistance through various interventions and programs.

Replying to various queries of SCCI members, Shante Moore assured that steps would be taken to ensure timely issuance of visas to the business community. He said collaboration will be further strengthened through joint measures and programs.

On the occasion former presidents and members of the business community also spoke on the occasion and highlighted importance for further improving Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq presenting Chamber's shield to US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore.

Rupee gains 77 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 77 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 287.37 against the previous day's closing at Rs 288.14.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 287.2 and Rs 290 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.55 to close at Rs 311.60 against the last day's closing of Rs 313.15, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen depreciated by 02 paise to close at Rs 1.89; whereas a decrease of Rs 3.26 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 355.90 as compared to the last closing of Rs 359.16.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 21 and 20 paise to close at Rs78.24 and Rs 76.62 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs 214,300 on Thursday as compared to its sale at Rs 214,800 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 428 to Rs 183,728 from Rs 184,156 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 168,417 from Rs 168,810, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs30 to Rs.2,550 whereas that of ten gram silver declined by Rs25.72 to 2,186.21.

Gas theft crackdown: 109 connections disconnected

F.P. Report

Lahore: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 109 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 5.02 million and 673 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 14 connections on illegal use of gas, another 16 connections on the use of compressor and 462 under billing cases processed. The team also booked Rs.2.11 million against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team processed 41 under billing cases. The team also booked Rs.0.17 million against under billing cases.

The company disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and 123 under billing cases have

been processed in Multan and amount of Rs 0.21 Million have been booked against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Faisalabad, the regional team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and 15 under billing cases processed. The team also booked Rs. 0.23 million against gas theft and under billing cases.

SNGPL's team in Mardan disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas, the team also booked Rs.0.42 million against gas theft.

In Peshawar, the Regional team disconnected 43 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The team also booked Rs.1.23 million against gas theft.

In Sargodha, the regional team disconnected 01 connection on the use of compressor and 32 under billing cases processed. The team

also booked Rs. 0.06 million against under billing cases.

The regional team in Gujranwala, 01 connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.22 million against gas theft.

The company disconnected 07 connections on illegal use of gas in Islamabad. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.33 million against gas theft.

In Sahiwal, 02 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.01 million against gas theft.

In Sialkot, the regional team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas.

In Gujrat, the regional team disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs.0.03 million against gas theft.

Swiss investors keen to explore Pak market for herbal medicines

ISLAMABAD (APP): Switzerland's herbal medicines company Herbamed AG showed keen interest to tap the Pakistani market for business collaboration in herbal medicines.

A delegation of the company led by its Managing Director Christoph Züllig visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed areas of mutual cooperation, said a press release issued here Thursday.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI said that the herbal medicines was a booming industry around the world while its global market was set to reach \$ 107 billion by the year 2024.

Therefore, he urged Pakistan and Switzerland to develop strong collaboration to share expertise and technology for the manufacturing of herbal medicines to export them around the world.

He said that Pakistan had established SIFC to facilitate the foreign investors in Pakistan and stressed that this was the right time for Swiss investors to explore Pakistan for joint ventures (JVs) and investment.

He assured that ICCI would cooperate in connecting the Swiss investors with right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director AG of Switzerland Christoph Züllig, Herbamed said that his company was manufacturing herbal medicines for the treatment of various diseases including hypertension, diabetes, liver problems, stomach problems, fever and common cold, prostrate and many others with no side effects.

He said that they want to penetrate the Pakistani market to address the health issues of patients with quality products with no side effects.

He also gave a detailed presentation on his company and products and hoped that the ICCI would help them in exploring business partnerships in the Pakistani market.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI stressed for close cooperation between Islamabad and Swiss Chambers of Commerce to bring private

sectors of Pakistan and Switzerland closer in order to explore new areas of mutual cooperation.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI emphasized that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore new business opportunities available in each country.

Khalid Iqbal said that Pakistan had great potential for tourism and Switzerland should cooperate with its expertise and technology to improve tourism infrastructure in Pakistan.

Mari Petroleum signs MoU with KUFPEC



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL) is pleased to announce that it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) K.S.C.C to collaborate, jointly evaluate, and participate in bidding for selected blocks both in and outside Pakistan in addition to evaluation of poten-

tial farm-in opportunities.

The MoU also covers to explore synergies to conduct joint studies for identified countries / regions and form a technical hub of specialist to provide expert opinions and suggest solutions for exploration, sub-surface and drilling operations. The parties have also agreed to strengthen strategic relationships, technical capabilities and knowledge transfer between them and through potential secondment opportunities in each

other offices and fields at their own cost.

This MoU is a part of MPCL's strategy to collaborate with leading E&P companies to increase its exploration acreage, reserves replacement ratio and maximize shareholder's value. This strategy is a part of the ultimate goal to meet the country's increasing energy demand from indigenous resources and lowering the burden of imported fuels on the national economy.

Chairman urges policy intervention to export surplus food products

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik Thursday stressed the need for policy intervention for exporting surplus food products to the global market, which would not only address domestic overproduction but also tap into the increasing demand for quality agricultural products

worldwide. Taking to a delegation of progressive farmers here today, he said, "Pakistan's diverse range of crops, including rice, maize, fruits, and spices, positions it favorably to cater to the varied needs of international markets."

He said, "Pakistan has consistently demonstrated agricultural prowess, resulting in surplus yields of var-

ious crops," according to a press release issued here.

"Capitalizing on this abundance presents a promising avenue to strengthen the country's economic standing through increased foreign exchange earnings," he added. Ali Malik said, "To effectively harness this opportunity, it is crucial to implement streamlined export policies, invest in mod-

ern agricultural practices, and ensure adherence to international quality standards." He said, "establishing strong trade partnerships, participating in global agricultural events, and marketing Pakistani produce as high-quality, organic, and sustainable can significantly enhance the country's presence in the international market."

IBA hosts 7th ICRC Humanitarian Reporting Awards

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Centre for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), conferred awards upon eight journalists for their outstanding contributions to the field of humanitarian reporting at the 'Humanitarian Reporting Awards 2023', at the IBA City Campus.

These awards were organized to highlight and promote ethical, accurate and responsible reporting on humanitarian issues including, but not limited to, violence against healthcare workers, disaster reporting, issues related to persons with disabilities, disaster response/preparedness, population movement (refugees/IDPs), climate change impact, etc.

This year, the awards were conferred in four categories. In Mainstream Broadcast (Urdu & Regional languages) category, Sidra Dar, Reporter, Voice of

America emerged as the winner, with Saher Baloch, Correspondent, BBC Urdu as the Runner-up. In Mainstream Print (Urdu & Regional languages), Iqra Ashiq, Assistant Multimedia Producer, Dawn won, and Saadia Ubaid Khan, Sub-editor, Jang Group was the Runner-up.

Hira Saeed Farooqui, Product Development Associate/Freelance, GEO News claimed the top position in the Mainstream Print (English) category, while Ayaz Khan, Editorial Assistant, Dawn Newspaper secured the Runner-up position. Shabina Faraz and Somaiyeh Hafeez, both Freelance Journalists, won and were Runner-up, respectively, in the Online (English, Urdu & Regional languages) category for news stories produced between October 17, 2022, and September 25, 2023.

Winners and runners-up were selected by a panel of senior journalists from a total of 309 entries from across the country. Jury members included Ghazi

Salahuddin, Senior Journalist and Staff Member, The News International; Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, Journalist and Analyst, Co-founder and Director News, The Khorasan Diary; Afia Salam, Freelance Journalist; and Shahzeb Ahmed Hashim, Journalist and Editor, Dawn.com/Prism.

This year, the CEJ-IBA and ICRC also honored the work of three citizen journalists in the category of Citizen Storyteller, who highlighted the plight of the underserved through video stories. The winner in the category was Naeem Ahmed and Runners-up were Afireen Zehra and Uzair Surhio.

Their entries were selected from a total of 60 submissions received from across the country, by renowned journalists Haroon Rashid and Sana Gulzar.

Nicolas Lambert, Head, ICRC's delegation in Pakistan emphasized the importance of access to timely and accurate information in a humanitarian crisis as it can help save lives.



Lambert stated, "We are proud of our partnership with CEJ for The Humanitarian Reporting Initiative which has enabled the training of journalists from across Pakistan on the importance of ethical, factual, and empathetic reporting on issues of humanitarian concerns."

Savio Pereira, CEO, Dar-ul-Sakoon, emphasized the need to accept, respect, and include persons with disabilities in society. In his keynote speech

renowned journalist Zarrar Khurro shared the purpose of Journalism i.e., to raise the voice for those who are affected by humanitarian issues.

In his welcome note, Taimoor Ahmed, Assistant Program Manager, CEJ-IBA, expressed immense pleasure on the collaboration between the ICRC and the CEJ for its annual humanitarian reporting awards for the seventh year in a row, contributing towards

improved standards in humanitarian reporting.

"Global events over the last few years have underscored the need for balanced and sensitive reporting on escalating conflicts, refugee crises, pandemics and extreme climate events. While hundreds of journalists submitted their work for four categories, I am delighted that for the first time this year, most of our winners are female journalists," he said.

Court Notice

In the Court of Senior Civil Judge/Guardian Judge Buner at Daggar. Application No. 45/5. Institution. 24/10/2023. Date of hearing 24/11/2023. Ismail etc VS General Public. Notice to General Public. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants (General Public) can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore anyone concerned will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 24/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court Tehsil Matta Swat. Case # 192/FC institution Year. 2023. Next Hearing date 07/12/2023. Shakeela VS Naik Zada. Notice to defendant No. 1 Naik Zada s/o Mian Nawab Zada presently Abroad Mob. 00966560088599 (2) Mian Nawab Zada s/o Abdur Rahim Mian 3) Zahid 4) Rohaid 5) Sahil Nabaleghani r/o Itihad Town Karachi Mohalla Muhammad Khan Baldia Town Karachi. 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 07/12/2023 at 8:30 Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.



In brief

Brook pulls out of Big Bash League

LONDON (INP): Hard-hitting England batter Harry Brook on Thursday pulled out of playing in the Big Bash League (BBL) this season with the Melbourne Stars due to workload concerns. Brook signed on for the Twenty20 tournament in September and was set to join the Stars for seven games after England's tour of the West Indies in December. "Naturally we're disappointed that Harry [Brook] has withdrawn from the BBL, but we understand his decision with his increased workload," Stars general manager Blair Crouch said in a statement. "Given Harry was set to miss the opening 3 matches, the club had already signed a replacement player for that period. "Currently the coaching staff and list management team are discussing options for the remainder of the tournament and we look forward to announcing those signings once they have been finalised." "We obviously rate Harry extremely highly and we would have loved to have seen him at the MCG alongside Glenn Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis this summer." Harry Brook's withdrawal comes just three weeks before the 13th BBL season starts, with the Stars facing Brisbane Heat at the Gabba first up.

F1 Las Vegas Grand Prix

LONDON (BBC): Red Bull's Max Verstappen says this weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix is "99% show and 1% sporting event". The triple world champion said he is "not looking forward" to the razzmatazz around the race, the first time Formula 1 cars have raced down the city's famous Strip. Other leading drivers were more equivocal about the hype. Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso said: "With the investment that has been made and the place we are racing, it deserves a little bit [of] different treatment and extra show." The weekend was kick-started on Wednesday evening with a lavish opening ceremony. It featured performances from several music stars, including Kylie Minogue and Journey, and culminated in the drivers being introduced to a sparsely populated crowd in light rain by being lifted into view on hydraulic platforms under a sound-and-light show. Lewis Hamilton said: "It's amazing to be here. It is exciting - such an incredible place, so many lights, a great energy, a great buzz."

Draymond Green banned

NEW YORK (Agencies): Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green has been banned for five games for putting Minnesota Timberwolves' Rudy Gobert in a headlock. Three players were ejected for fighting inside the first two minutes of Minnesota's 104-101 win on Tuesday. Green wrapped his arm around Gobert's neck after Klay Thompson and Jaden McDaniels grabbed each others' jerseys. NBA vice-president Joe Dumars said Green was sanctioned without pay for "escalating an on-court altercation". Green, who will begin his suspension on Thursday when the Warriors host the Oklahoma City Thunder, was suspended for "forcibly grabbing" Gobert around the neck "in an unsportsmanlike and dangerous manner," said Dumars. Green was also ejected in the Warriors' defeat by the Cleveland Cavaliers on Saturday and suspended during the play-offs in April after stamping on the Sacramento Kings' Domantas Sabonis.

Djokovic semi-final fate uncertain despite win over Hubert



LONDON (Agencies): Novak Djokovic's fate in the ATP Finals hangs in the balance despite his win over Hubert Hurkacz on Thursday. Djokovic defeated Poland's Hurkacz, a replacement for the injured Stefanos Tsitsipas, 7-6 (7-1) 4-6 6-1 in Turin.

However, the world number one will not qualify for the semi-finals if Holger Rune beats Jannik Sinner in the final group game later

on Thursday.

Italy's Sinner, who ended Djokovic's 19-match winning streak on Tuesday, is guaranteed a place in the last four.

The 22-year-old home favourite, who will finish at least second in the Green Group, is set to become the first Italian to play in the semi-finals of the season-ending tournament.

Unable to progress regardless of the result,

Hurkacz came into the match against Djokovic with nothing to lose and held firm on his serve throughout the first set.

The world number nine crumbled in the tie-break and Djokovic needed just the second of six set points to secure the opener.

However, in a 14-minute period where the Serb failed to win a single point, Hurkacz broke and consolidated to go 4-2 up before saving two break points and serving out for the set.

Djokovic regained control to secure the third set and the match, but he requires Sinner to beat Rune if he is to continue his bid for a record seventh ATP Finals title.

The ATP Finals features eight of the year's best men's players split into two groups of four, with the top two in each qualifying for the semi-finals.

Six Pakistan international women cricketers to attend Level 1 coaching course

LAHORE (PPI): The involvement and participation of Pakistan women in mainstream cricket continues, as on the initiative of PCB Women's Wing, the NCA will hold a Level 1 Coaching Course from 17 to 20 November for 29 women.

According to a PCB information on Thursday, among the 29 women participants, six international women cricketers – Gull Feroza (two T20Is), Kaynat Hafeez (one ODI), Rameen Shamim (three ODIs, four T20Is), Sidra Nawaz (67 ODIs, 56 T20Is), Sukhan Faiz (two ODIs) and Syeda Aroob Shah (two ODIs, seven T20Is) will take part in the course.

The four-day course will be conducted by National Cricket Academy coaches Imran Abbas, Rahat Abbas, Shahid Mehboob and Umar Rashid, along with Pakistan women's team coaches Mauhtashim Rashid and Mohsin Kamal.

At the end of the course, the participants will be given assignments that need to be completed in three months. Upon the successful completion of the assignments, the candi-

dates will be awarded Level 1 coaching certificates.

In the four-day course, the participants will be taught basics of coaching skills including, communication, coaching philosophy, planning and preparation. Tania Mallick, Head of Women's Cricket: "We are thrilled to announce the commencement of the Level 1 coaching course for women, a significant step towards empowering and nurturing talent in women's cricket. "This coaching course is a testament to our commitment to creating a robust infrastructure for women in cricket, providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in coaching roles.

"We could see that the growth of women's cricket is on the rise, and the PCB Women's Wing, understanding the dynamics of it, encourages women cricketers to come forward, as we want to develop a career path for women in fields other than playing cricket.

"I am very pleased to see our international women cricketers taking part in this four-day course and with their participation, we could

see more women stepping into coaching roles and this course is a stepping stone towards achieving that goal."

Level 1 Women's Coaching Course (in alphabetical order, cities in brackets):

Ambreen Javaid (Lahore), Amna Javed (Islamabad), Arijah Haseeb (Karachi), Arim Barkat (Lahore), Ayesha Bilal (Lahore), Bushra Shahid (Lahore), Gull Feroza (Multan), Hadia Fayyaz (Lahore), Haseena Khushboo (Peshawar), Javeria Khan (Multan), Kaynat Hafeez (Lahore), Khalida Nazir (Rawalpindi), Laiba Fatima (Karachi), Masooma Jaffri (Karachi), Mehwish Fatima (Lahore), Mehwish Irshad (Multan), Muzemil Noor (Bahawalpur), Neha Javed Jutt (Lahore), Qurat Ul Ain (Lahore), Rabia Rafi (Multan), Rameen Shamim (Karachi), Saher Nazir Abbasi (Rawalpindi), Sania Ashraf (Lahore), Shabnam (Multan), Sidra Nawaz (Lahore), Sukhan Faiz (Multan), Syeda Aroob Shah (Karachi), Yusra Ehtesham (Karachi) and Zunaira Shah (Karachi)

Mark Allen believes snooker ‘players hold the power’ over sport's survival

Mark Allen says the "players ultimately hold the power" over the future of snooker following his criticism of the World Snooker Tour. The world number four recently apologised for lambasting the tour and saying the sport was in "disarray". But Allen, who plays John Higgins in the Champion of Champions semi-final on Saturday, believes snooker is a "long way away" from being its best self.

"I believe so," said Allen, when asked if changes should be player led. "I think the players ultimately hold the power. Without the top players, the game doesn't survive, so I think changes are needed.

"I think the sport is a

long way away from being what it can be. I'm happy to sit down with the people that make those decisions in a quiet room and discuss it. "Hopefully we can sit down and amicably come to a good settlement."

The 37-year-old won the Northern Ireland Open title, the UK Championship title and the World Grand Prix title last season.

His success on the table earned him the World Snooker Tour player of the year award for the 2022-23 season. Allen will attempt to defend his UK Championship title in York later this month as he hopes to top off a stellar year. "It's been the best 12 months of my career and it would be nice to finish it

off with a win - Champion of Champions or UK Championships, I'll take any of them," added Allen.

"I want to be world number one. I want to be world champion. It hasn't been the best start to the season but there is a long way to go, a lot of tournaments to go.

"I still believe I can finish [the season as world number one]. If I win the world championship, that takes care of both.

"They are the ultimate goals. When I first lifted a cue at 12 years of age, that's what I wanted to be - world number one and world champion. "They are within my grasp now. They weren't a few years ago but they are now. I keep working hard and I believe I can get there."

‘Something had to give’ after resigning from PGA Tour’s Policy Board’

LONDON (BBC): Rory McIlroy said "something had to give" as he explained his surprise decision to step down from the PGA Tour's Policy Board this week.

McIlroy was arguably golf's most influential player as the game wrestled with the arrival of the breakaway LIV circuit, which has just completed its second season. The Northern Irishman led the PGA Tour's response and, along with Tiger Woods, helped draw up plans that included a string of lucrative tournaments aimed at halting the flow of top stars defecting to the Saudi Arabia-funded LIV project.

After his first round at the season-ending DP World Tour Championship in Dubai, McIlroy admitted his decision to step down had been brewing for some time. "It has," he told BBC Sport.

"Something had to give. There's only so many hours in the day and so many days in the week and I've got a lot going on in my life right now.

"Between trying to be a world-class golfer and trying to be a good husband and a good father, I've got a growing investment portfolio that's taking up more of my time. "I'm involved with TGL (the Tech-infused Golf League with Woods) and so I've got a lot going on. With the Policy Board stuff, it has taken more of my time than ever this year."

McIlroy said the secret talks involving the PGA and DP World Tours with the Saudi Public Investment Fund, and subsequently resulting in a shock announcement of a framework agreement between the parties at the beginning June, altered his attitude towards his role.



SIALKOT: Students are participating in chati race 2nd (HED) higher education sports event at the Govt Allama Iqbal College for Women.

Annual Sports Festival concluded

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: The annual intra-school Sports Festival concluded in which co-curriculum activities like Naat, speech and essay competitions were concluded organized by Elementary and Secondary Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Thursday.

According to detail, the female student of Akora Khattak school secure first position in Urdu speech competition, second by Rashakai and 3rd position is secured by Adamzai area of Akora Khattak. In English competition Noorad school obtained 1st position, 2nd is secured by Abkarpura school and 3rd position achieved by student of Nowshera Kalan No2 school. During higher secondary school's competition Dak Ismail school 1st position in single person badminton, 2nd obtained by Akora Khattak and 3rd position achieved by Manki Sharif school.

Govt Shaheed Abdul Azam School wins Football final

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Government Shaheed Abdul Azam Higher Secondary School Jamrud wins football final in intra-school sports gala organized by Elementary and Secondary Education Department across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Thursday.

According to details, the winning team become campaign in football in Khyber after defeating Government High School Jaffar Shah Bara. The match was draw till conclusion of timeframe but Government Shaheed Abdul Azam Higher Secondary School win the game by penalty kicks.

Government Shaheed Abdul Azam Higher Secondary School principal Shah Jahan Afridi, football coach Rehman Ullah Shinwari and secretary sports Muhammad Asif Afridi congratulated the players while hopeful to secure highest positions in other games.

Mooney 91* helps Perth Scorchers brush aside Sydney Sixers challenge

SYDNEY (INP): Ellyse Perry was left cursing her decision to take a sneaky single as Sydney Sixers crashed to a 61-run WBBL loss to the Perth Scorchers at North Sydney Oval.

Prolific Scorchers opener Beth Mooney scored an unbeaten 91 off 57 balls in Thursday's clash to lift her team to a formidable 189 for 6.

Perry snared 2 for 26 with the ball, took two catches in the field and pulled off a direct-hit run out. She then made a strong start with the bat, cracking five fours and two sixes to get Sixers' run-chase off to a positive start.

But her decision to take

a quick single after playing a shot to mid-off proved disastrous, with Piepa Cleary gathering the ball on the run and throwing down the stumps in the same action to find Perry metres short of her crease.

The result lifted Scorchers (8-3) two points clear on top of the ladder, while Sixers (5-6) are fifth and face a battle to make the finals with just three matches remaining.

Perry sent the dangerous Sophie Devine packing for 12 with a run out as Scorchers stumbled to 24 for 2 early in their innings. But it was the Mooney show from that point on as the 29-year-

old thumped nine fours and four sixes to dismantle the Sixers' attack. Mooney has now scored 509 runs this season to lead the race for the Golden Bat.

"I'm happy with how I'm going, but it only counts if we get to those finals," Mooney told Fox Cricket after the match. "Hopefully we keep on a roll and humming along nicely. It was an all-round Scorchers performance today. I thought our bowlers did an amazing job." Erin Burns provided the highlight of the match when she dived at full length while running at pace to take a spectacular catch to dismiss Amy Jones for 28.

GGDC Bacha Khan wins Inter-College Tchoukball Girls Championship title

PESHAWAR (APP): Govt Girls Degree College Bacha Khan clinched the title of the Inter-College Tchoukball Girls Championship played under the aegis of Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at City Gulbahar Girls College on Thursday.

Principal of the City Girls College Gulbahar Professor Tahira Dar was the chief guest and witnessed the thrilling final played between Govt Girls Degree College Bacha Khan Peshawar and Frontier College for Women. Organizing Secretary of the Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games Miss Najma Qazi, Deputy Director Sports Arshad Hussain, officials and players were also present.

The final match started on a fast tempo and both the teams Govt Girls Degree College Bacha Khan and Frontier College for Women raided each other's territories with some fine moves.

Maria Khan of Frontier College for Women along with Sana, Javeria, Sundas and Afreena played well and made some good outings. Maria guided the teams with some beautiful shootings and thus the first quarter was leading by Frontier College for Women at 9-6 but it was the second quarter when GGDC Bacha Khan took the lead of almost seven goals when it reached to 22-15.

The team of Bacha Khan led by main shooter Zainab along with other players including Sadaf, Farishta, Habiba, Sidra, Shazia, Javeria and Iqra played well and guided the team to increase their lead against strong Frontier College for Women team. Bacha Khan increased their lead to 32-27 in the third quarters and dominated the fourth quarters as well wherein Zainab, Sadaf and Sidra contributed the main goals.

Maria, Javeria, Sana and Sundas also played well for FCW and made some fine shots at the rival goal-post.

It was the fourth and decisive quarters in which Bacha Khan raced up to victory. The score was 49-41. In the third position match City Gulbahar recorded victory against Govt Girls Degree College Nahaqi by 39-32. Both City Gulbahar and Govt Girls Degree College Nahaqi teams played well against each other. Sana was the pick of the pack who played an instrumental role for the success of her team by scoring 13 individual goals, followed by Ambareen and Irum who contributed 8 and 9 goals respectively. For Nahaqi Sidra, Hira, Aliya and Gul Sanga played well and guided the team to give a tough time to the strong City Gulbahar team in the third position match.

Principal of City Girls College Gulbahar also appreciated the two teams for their excellent display. She said now sports are a vital and important part of academics which help the students to be more good at physically and mentally.

All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash from Nov 17

PESHAWAR (APP): All Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash Championship under the aegis of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar will be commencing from November 17 here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex.

This was stated by Deputy Director Sports and Organizing Secretary of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Mariyyah Samin Jan while talking to APP here on Thursday. She said all arrangements in this connection have been completed well in time and the arrival of the teams would be completed by Friday, followed by the All-Pakistan Inter-University Women Squash Championship matches at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex.

She also thanked In-charge Pakistan Sports Board Coaching Center Peshawar Accountant Muhammad Usman and Superintendent Suleman Khan for extending all cooperation by providing accommodation to all the 14 participating teams wherein more than 110 players are coming.

She also appreciated Administration Peshawar Sports

Complex Syed Jaffar Shah and squash coach Tahir Iqbal for providing all courts of the Qamar Zaman Squash Complex. Mariyyah Samin disclosed that former World Championship Qamar Zaman and Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Professor Dr. Safia Ahmad, Sitara-e-Imtiaz, to grace the occasion as guests during the opening and closing ceremonies.

Mariyyah Samin Jan said SBBWU is an active Unit of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and before that the Directorate Sports of the University organized All Pakistan Inter-University Volleyball, Football, Wushu, and Badminton Championships. It would be the third consecutive time that the University is holding All-Pakistan Women Squash Championship here in Peshawar wherein more than 110 players will be taking part.

The Championship, she said, would continue till November 20 and the manager meeting will be held on Friday at 5.00 p.m at the Conference Room of the Peshawar Sports Complex. Mariyyah Samin said that

the All-Pakistan Men Athletic Championship and Women Squash Championships are actually part of the Mini-Sports Gala awarded to both University of Peshawar and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University on the same dates.

"We are very thankful to the Chairman HEC and Director General Sports HEC for reposing confidence in our University for hosting the prestigious Championships for women and men athletes," Mariyyah Samin said. She said head coach Salma Faiz is looking after all teams as far as accommodations and other facilities are concerned.

She said the teams including PMAS Agril Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Punjab University, Lahore College for Women University Lahore, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Islamia University Bahawalpur, LUMS Lahore, Iqra University Peshawar, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, GCU Lahore, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Lahore (UVAS), University of Lahore and SBBWU.



In brief

IRSA releases 93,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 93,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 49,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1509.86 feet and was 109.86 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 24,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.85 feet, which was 138.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,200 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,300, 47,700, 36,000 and 7,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

'Govt vows to resolve tourism related issues'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Tourism, Special Assistant to PM on Youth Affairs Wasi Shah Thursday said that the government was committed to resolve the issues of tourism sector through better cooperation and joint efforts. He expressed these views while giving an interview to the famous media house Warner Brothers at World Travel Market London, said that all possible cooperation for the development of tourism was foremost priority of the government besides taking practical steps to promote tourism, said a news release issued here. He said that there were immense opportunities for tourism in Pakistan which needed to be exploited. The government was not only welcoming the foreign tourists to the beautiful valleys but also providing protection to them, he added.

16 Basic Police ATS course concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 16 basic anti terrorist course (ATS) for personnel of Islamabad Capital Police concluded in police lines headquarters Islamabad. The purpose of the course was to enhance the professional capabilities of the police officials. Police spokesperson said that numerous courses for police officers and officials including ATS, investigation and combat are being organized for police personnel. A total of 23 women and 46 male police personnel were trained in the three months course in which the officials were trained about physical fitness, weapon handling, recovery of hostages, control of armed elements and maintaining law and order situations. The course was supervised by the Senior Superintendent of Police law and order/Deputy Commandant of capital police college, Islamabad.

HEC announces Chinese Scholarships

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chinese Scholarship Council is offering Pakistani students and scholars to study and conduct research at Chinese universities. According to the details, the scholarships were being offered through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the academic year 2024-25. Designated Chinese universities offer a wide variety of academic programs in science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, economics, legal studies, management, education, history, literature, philosophy, fine arts, etc. for scholarship recipients at all levels.



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Countries and Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference.

NCRC, IRC commemorate Universal Children's Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Universal Children's Day is an annual day of action for children, by children, marking the adoption of the convention on the rights of child. Children's rights are human rights. But in too many places today, children's rights are under threat.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), in collaboration with National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), here on Thursday hosted a multi-stakeholder national consultation on how Climate Change is impacting children of Pakistan in commemoration of Universal Children's Day 2023, under the global theme of "For every child, Every Right".

Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC in her opening remarks, noted that the impact of climate change on children was a matter that demands our collective attention and today's consultation provided a platform for us to engage in a meaningful dialogue, share insights, and develop strategies that would resonate beyond this room.

The Guest of Honor Khalil George, Caretaker Minister for Human Rights in his keynote speech, opined that Universal Children's Day holds particular significance for Pakistan as it provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in ensuring the rights and well-being of every child. Our commitment to the rights of unregistered children must go beyond rhetoric. It requires concrete actions, innovative policies, and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders involved, she expressed.

Inousa Kabore, Deputy Representative UNCIEF, in her keynote speech, observed that climate change causes the health and wellbeing of children to be affected, especially those living in high-risk areas of the country. Children are the brunt of climate change, every year the effect has been seen to double. Disrupting education, malnutrition, water borne diseases. Over 3 million children are street vendors in Pakistan and the number of out of school children in Pakistan is estimated at 28 million, she added.

The highlight of the national consultation was a thriving panel discussion on "Inclusion, for every child amidst climate impact in Pakistan." The panel discussion was moderated by prominent child rights expert Arshad Mahmood and featured eminent speakers such as Shabnam Baloch (Country Director-IRC), Gohar Khan (Chief Projects Officer NADRA), Izza Farrakh (Senior Education Specialist World Bank) and Dr Naeem Zafar (Mental Health & Child Rights Expert) said in a Press Release issued here on Thursday.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood, after assuming the charge of office, shared his vision and roadmap for the university's development over the next four years.

During a welcome reception given by the principal officers, he highlighted the need to revise the current curriculum and add new courses to meet the requirements of the modern job market. He also emphasized the importance of establishing new departments to cater to the student's evolving needs.

The Vice-Chancellor said that increasing student facilities and enrollment, faculty development, promotion of research culture, and welfare of employees are priorities.

VC AIOU shares vision, roadmap for next four years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, after assuming the charge of office, shared his vision and roadmap for the university's development over the next four years.

During a welcome reception given by the principal officers, he highlighted the need to revise the current curriculum and add new courses to meet the requirements of the modern job market. He also emphasized the importance of establishing new departments to cater to the student's evolving needs.

Dr. Nasir said that we will work together to strengthen the university financially. He added that the former vice-chancellors rendered valuable services to bring AIOU to its present proud position and we will strive hard to improve them further.

The Vice-Chancellor said that increasing student facilities and enrollment, faculty development, promotion of research culture, and welfare of employees are priorities.

Dire situation in Palestine calls for urgent world action against Israel: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and the Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Thursday said the current situation in Palestine was the world's most pressing issue.

Addressing a press conference, he emphasized that the Pakistani Government's stance was unequivocal - Palestinians must receive their rightful justice.

He highlighted the dire conditions at the Al-Shifa Hospital with Israelis even not sparing new born kids, and asserted that the conflict was not a religious war but a battle between the oppressors and the oppressed.

The Government of Pakistan, Ashrafi said, was actively engaged, with the Army Chief pledging full support to the Palestinian ambassador.

He mentioned that the United Nations had also called for an investigation into the crimes, while the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) demanded an immediate ceasefire, aid provision, a sovereign state, and an inquiry into Israeli actions.

He noted that the OIC summit witnessed unanimous demands for the measures, marking a rare display of unity among Islamic nations as evident from the presence of leaders from Iran, and Turkey, along with Saudi Arabia.

Addressing concerns about the OIC's effectiveness, he cited positive progress but stressed the need for more stringent measures against Israel. He acknowledged that some Islamic countries were maintaining relations with Israel, but noted a growing global shift away from supporting Israeli actions.

Ashrafi, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, commended Pakistan's unique position, being the only Islamic country whose Army Chief had assured complete support for the Palestinian cause.

He concluded by emphasizing the continued commitment of Pakistan to the principles laid out by the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He also welcomed the announcement of the Hajj Policy 2024, urging a focus on worship over politics in Haramain Al-Sharifain and emphasizing the provision of facilities to pilgrims.

ANF recovers 207 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 207 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that ANF was making all-out efforts against drug trafficking at national and international level.

In an operation, 122 grams Ice drug concealed in a parcel of spoons booked for US was recovered at a Courier Office in Rawalpindi. 216 grams heroin was recovered at Allama Iqbal International Airport from a parcel being sent to Kuwait. 200 grams weed was recovered at

GPO Multan from a parcel sent from America. 100 ecstasy tablets were recovered from two accused going on a motorcycle in Bahria Town Rawalpindi.

On the pointation of the arrested accused, ANF raided on a flat in Sector E-11 and recovered over 3,100 ecstasy tablets. Another accused was arrested during the operation. 19.2 kg hashish was recovered from a car intercepted near Northern Bypass Karachi while an accused was also arrested. In a joint operation with Motorway Police near Talibwala Toll Plaza, over 7.7 kg heroin was recovered from a vehicle while two suspects were arrested.

Ismail Tara remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned artist and comedian Ismail Tara was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Thursday. Born on November 16, 1949, in Karachi his real name was Muhammad Ismail Merchant. He joined the performing arts in 1964 when he was in his late teens. Best known for his humorous political drama, Fifty-Fifty, Ismail Tara was one of the few actors who revolutionized the comedy scene.

Fifty-Fifty combined satire, parody and slapstick humour at a time when censorship was at its peak in the late '70s and early '80s. It was a means to make people think critically about the social and political scene. Through Fifty-Fifty, Tara and his fellow artist Majid Jehangir, rose to the top of the comedy world.

Railways likely to open Shahdampur Railway Station platform soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is all set to open Shahdampur Railway Station platform for passengers of the area soon as the upgradation and rehabilitation work has been almost completed.

"The government had allocated around Rs 2 million more funds for completing the renovation of the platform of Shahdampur Railway Station, sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said Shahdampur Railway Station, operating with three platforms, is one of the important stations situated on the mainline where most of the mail and express trains have their stoppages. The sources said the contractor had stopped the construction work due to non-payment of bills and funds but now the funds have been arranged for the remaining rehabilitation work.

They said the platform condition on the downside was dilapidated and therefore it was decided to carry out its repair under the head of improvement and welfare expenditure. To a question, they said Pakistan Railways was a big organization comprising of around 63,000 employees and its network stretched across the country. He said the employees are well-cared under the welfare activities like health facilities through a wide network of hospitals, dispensaries and child healthcare units.

Elaborating, the sources said the provision of government accommodation according to entitlement and priority list, staff benevolent funds, benefits and incentives were provided through the Prime Minister's Family Assistance Package policy

for families of deceased employees. They said the other welfare activities included benefits and incentives provided through policy for disabled employees' families, monthly grants to widows scale-wise, the establishment of primary and high schools, industrial schools to teach handicrafts, sports activities through the constitution of Pakistan and pick and drop facility for schools/offices.

"The installation of water filtration plants, a special provision of five medical seats in Ripha Islamic Universities with a reduction of 50 percent in admission and tuition fees, loans on easy installments, availability of all recreational facilities, payment for burial and ambulance charges, marriage grant, farewell grant, free passes and concession in railways fares," they added.

Edu Ministry partners with NEST, MCB to advance education in nursing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has partnered with the National Endowment Scholarship for Talent (NEST), operating under the Education Ministry, Government of Pakistan, and MCB Islamic Bank, with the primary objective of advancing education in the field of nursing and contributing to poverty eradication through nesting education.

The bedrock of this collaboration is a Letter of Understanding signed yesterday by Secretary of the Federal Education Ministry, Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry, and Muhammad Ibrahim, General Manager, MCB Islamic Bank.

Distinguished participants from the Ministry and NEST included Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry, CEO.

NEST/Federal Secretary Education; Syeda Hajra Suhail, GM-NEST; Hameed Khan Niazi, CFO NEST; Malick Mazahr Awan, AM P&C; Majeed Asif, AM V&D; Zahid Awan, AM Finance; Waleed Bin Mushtaq, Communication Officer; and other esteemed members. Representing MCB Muhammad Ibrahim, General Manager; Malik Tahir, Regional Head; and Salahuddin, Area Manager.

MCB Islamic Bank commits to making annual charitable donations to NEST to support deserving nursing students throughout their degree programs. In return, NEST pledges complete transparency in the allocation of funds, offering detailed insights into beneficiary selection and fund utilization.

This collaboration aspires to empower aspiring nursing professionals, fostering educational growth and socio-economic development across Pakistan. Both NEST and MCB Islamic Bank express their fervor for this noble cause and anticipate that this partnership will significantly contribute to the enhancement of education and the upliftment of deserving students pursuing nursing degrees in Pakistan.

This alliance marks a milestone in the joint efforts of NEST and MCB Islamic Bank to strengthen educational opportunities, exemplifying their commitment to the welfare and progress of the nation.

UK announces AI system for Pakistan designed to detect, track early forest fires: Jane Marriott

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bold move to address environmental challenges in Pakistan, British Commissioner in Pakistan, Jane Marriott OBE, has announced a groundbreaking artificial intelligence (AI) system for Pakistan designed to detect and track early forest fires.

"By spotting early forest fires, we'll be able to help protect communities and save livelihoods," said the High Commissioner in Pakistan in an interview with APP.

The initiative, part of a comprehensive climate financing effort, aimed to safeguard communities and protect livelihoods, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region and around the Margala Hills in Islamabad. The High Commissioner said that the UK would also provide financial assistance to support climate initiatives in Pakistan. "This includes the development of an innovative AI system dedicated to the early detection of forest fires, a technology set to revolutionize the way communities respond to environmental threats," she added.

The High Commissioner highlighted the ongoing collaboration between the UK and Pakistan under the Financial Accelerator program. "The UK is supporting eight different projects, eight innovative Pakistani

enterprises in a climate-friendly way," she explained.

Responding to a question about the financial components of support for the floods, she said two significant aspects including involved immediate humanitarian assistance, with millions of pounds contributed for urgent humanitarian needs. For the longer term, she said a focus on health care and education.

She further said, "We know that three and half million children's schooling was disrupted by those floods and there's a worry that at least a million of those kids won't go back to school." "The work that we've been doing, it's not going to solve everything, but we're in the process by December of getting 85,000 of those children back in school and learning that they wouldn't otherwise ordinarily be doing," she added.

Discussing King Charles III's involvement in COP28, she said that King will make one of the opening speeches at COP28 because as "we have said, it's a matter that's very, very dear to his heart."

She said, the UK will be focusing on three main areas around trying to keep the climate increase at 1.5%. It's a difficult task, but we have to do it she added. "We'll be looking to build resilience with our partners across the

globe, including here in Pakistan. And we'll also be trying to halt and reverse the biodiversity loss. Both the UK and Kenya are members of 30 by 30, trying to protect 30% of our land and our oceans by 2030" she added. To a question she said, "Pakistan has such tremendous economic potential and I think some of the reforms that we're starting to see now are taking us in that direction."

"What I'd really like to see here is space and the right sort of regulations and environment for private sector because I think a private sector led growth for a Pakistan will be incredibly successful" she added.

She highlighted the historical success of export-led growth, suggesting it could bring 7-9 percent per annum growth to the economy. The UK is actively collaborating with the government to support these efforts, benefiting both British businesses and British-Pakistani trade.

Responding to a question about the Pakistani Diaspora in the UK, she acknowledged their integral role in the UK, praising their cultural and economic contributions.

She said that many Diasporas still hold their heritage in their hearts, seeing an opportunity to promote relations between countries through cultural and business exchanges.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George, addressing seminar on "Universal Children's Day 2023" and "Child Rights of Invisible Children in Pakistan".

40 new emerald deposits found

PANJSHIR (Ariana News): Panjshir's Department of Mines and Petroleum says it has discovered 40 new emerald deposits in the province – which is a significant find for the country. Mohammad Qasim Amiri, the head of the Mines and Petroleum Department in Panjshir said the deposits were found in Parian district. Amiri stated that approximately 1,250 emerald deposits have now been identified in the province.

Iran provides education

TEHRAN (Ariana News): Iran's Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali says that Iranian universities are willing to enrol Afghan and Palestinian girls who are deprived of an education. Khazali said on X that some Islamic countries have volunteered to pay for the education of these girls. Earlier this year, a number of Iranian universities announced they would accept Afghan female student.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Women empowerment exhibition opened

KABUL (TOLONews): The first national and international exhibition for women, called Khadijat-ul-Kubra Empowerment Exhibition, was opened in Kabul.

The head of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry said the purpose of holding this exhibition is to encourage women artisans and businesswomen, and said that 850 women have booths.

At the same time, analysts said holding such exhibitions are beneficial for the sake of marketing and the development of women's handicrafts.

Organizers of the International Women's Exhibition said that this exhibition will continue for 7 days and the artisans and business women will exhibit their handicrafts.

The head of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry said holding this exhibition is important for the introduction and marketing of handicrafts and other women's products.

"They should be encouraged more, more work should be done on their licenses and the identities of their products, more attention should be paid to them, and it is necessary to be in this market format," said Salma Yousufzai, head of the women's chamber of commerce and industry.

On the other hand, some economic analysts said that holding this kind of special exhibition for women is beneficial for the development of handicrafts and creating more opportunities to introduce and market products produced by women.

"In order to speed up the business process of some women entrepreneurs, the government can use a series of business ideas, such as reducing the amount of taxes, paying a series of fixed IDs, and reducing the amount of customs tariffs so that they can better export their business goods to foreign countries," said Abdul Zohor Mudaber, an economic analyst.

"Women's access to foreign markets can be effective in improving the further growth of their business," said Mir Shekib Mir, an economic analyst.

The International Exhibition of Khadijat-ul-Kubra, which was launched by the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its partner institutions in the capital, will continue for seven days, during which various products produced by women from all provinces will be displayed in 850 booths.

Suicide attack kills one, injures another



NANGARHAR (Khaama Press): Local officials in Nangarhar province report that as a result of an explosion involving explosive materials in the vicinity of this province, one person has lost their life, and another individual has been injured.

Abdul Basir Zabuli, the spokesperson for the Nangarhar provincial administration, has said in a statement that this incident occurred on Thursday near the Naghark Bridge in the Surkh Rod district of Nangarhar province.

According to Mr. Zabuli, this incident occurred precisely at a moment when explosive materials had been transported within the body of an unidentified individual and detonated.

Based on the available information, this incident took place in the vicinity of Surkh Rod in Nangarhar province during a gathering, resulting in one fatality and another individual sustaining injuries.

As per the press release, the unidentified individual who was carrying the explosive materials within their body lost their life, and a hair-cutting Salon employee also suffered injuries.

Authorities have not provided further details regarding the identity of this unidentified individual who was transporting the explosive materials.

Earlier this month, another incident occurred in Kabul, the capital city, as a minibus exploded in a predominantly Shiite Muslim area. This explosion resulted in the loss of at least seven civilian lives and left another 20 individuals wounded, according to authorities.

The devastating event highlights the ongoing security challenges the city and its residents face.

Authorities in Kabul reported that a minibus explosion in a predominantly Shiite Muslim neighbourhood has claimed the lives of at least seven civilians, with 20 others sustaining injuries.

ISIS claimed responsibility for the incident in Kabul city, highlighting the security challenges that have persisted since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan.

Expelled migrants face uncertainty in Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): Many of the expelled migrants, including women who have returned to the country from Pakistan, describe their future in Afghanistan as uncertain and challenging.

Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has expressed deep concern about the situation of women and girls returned from Pakistan, stating that these women are at risk of serious harm.

According to human rights organizations in Afghanistan, half of the individuals expelled from Pakistan are women, and addressing their needs is becoming increasingly challenging as winter approaches.

Nigar, one of the expelled women from Pakistan who has been relocated to a temporary camp in northern Kabul, says it has been six days since she returned with her family. She is worried about their future in Afghanistan. She adds, "I had heard that poverty and unemployment have increased in Afghanistan in the past two years, and now we have returned to the same country that has been experiencing these problems for years."

Pakistan's unprecedented decision to expel over a million undocumented Afghan migrants starting from November this year has led to more than 327,000 Afghan migrants returning to their country, according to OCHA, the coordinating office for humanitarian assistance.

Shirin Khanum, another woman who is a mother of 10 children, is concerned about finding food and shelter for her family. She is unhappy with the challenges of life in Afghanistan and says that starting a new life for them in the current conditions is a daunting task. She adds, "We have nowhere to stay, and paying rent is also a burden."

These women remain concerned about their children's education and request humanitarian organizations to provide educational opportunities for them.

It's worth noting that the hasty expulsion of undocumented Afghan migrants by Pakistan has faced widespread criticism from international human rights organizations, which have described it as unjust.

Balkh's residents demand hospital

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): Residents of Chahar Kint district of northern Balkh complain about inadequate health-care services in the district and ask the government to address the problem.

They say patients and their family face many problems due to non-availability of standard health centres in their areas and sometimes critical patients lose their lives before reaching hospital in the provincial capital, Mazar-i-Sharif.

Habibullah, a resident of Chahar Kint district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that no well-equipped medical center existed in the district.

He said although several small clinics were available in the district, they lacked necessary medical equipment and specialist doctors.

"We have a small clinic, there are no doctors specializing in surgery, neurology, dentistry and other fields,"

Habibullah urged the government to address the problem as soon as possible.

Mohammad Ali, another resident, said winter compounded the problems of local residents in terms of access to standard health services.

He said the previous government had totally ignored the district and as a result, its residents remained deprived of many facilities.

According to him, despite being populous, the district has no well-equipped medical center that have all facilities and specialist doctors.

He added: "So far, no attention has been paid to our district, we have not a single proper clinic and specialists. We urge the government to address this major problem."

Another resident, Amanullah, made similar complaints and said the road leading to Mazar-i-Sharif remained closed after heavy snowing in winter and people could not take patients to the city.

Amanullah claimed many patients had died on the way to the provincial capital.

Local health officials acknowledge the available health centers in the district lack beds, personnel and specialist doctors.

Mohammad Rasoul Karimi, head of Sharshara Clinic in the district, said the residents were provided some health services, but specialist doctors should be provided and operation theatre and other departments should be established.

He said: "A surgery ward should be built because patients cannot reach the city in an emergency and the problem of shortage of medicine, beds and doctors also need to be resolved."

Sifatullah Khalid, district administrative chief, acknowledged the problems.

He said there were health centers in the district, but they could not cater to the needs of the population.

He added: "We have shared this problem with the center and have requested that a well-equipped hospital with specialist doctors should be built in this district in order to solve people's problems."

Kabul police arrest over 2,000 suspected criminals



KABUL (Ariana News): The Kabul Police Commission says that in the last six months, more than 2,000 criminal cases have been registered, and more than 2,000 people have been arrested in connection with these cases.

narcotics was still in force and that in 545 operations, more than 628 kilograms of heroin and more than 102 kilograms of Shisha and other narcotic substances were seized.

Other officials of the Kabul Police Headquarters also addressed the press conference and shared the achievements of the police in the last six months.

Zadran said: "In the past six months, the Kabul Crime Department has registered more than 2,000 criminal cases and arrested 2,136 people in connection with these cases."

According to Zadran, these cases include murder, theft, arms smuggling, and the use of alcohol.

In addition, the Ministry of Interior announced the creation of a special unit for the security of Qosh Tepa Canal.

According to this ministry, the unit is responsible for protecting dams, national projects, educational institutions, banks and commercial centers in the country.

The Ministry of Interior added that this unit will fall under the National Public Protection Agency for the purpose of protecting the Qosh Tepa Canal.

Taliban agrees to release Iran's Helmand water rights: Official

KABUL (Khaama Press): During the economic delegation's visit of the Taliban to Iran, for the first time, the Taliban agreed to release Iran's water rights from the Helmand River, according to the head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization, as reported by IRNA.

Earlier, an Iranian official disclosed that during a meeting between Iran's Head of the Department of Environment and the Taliban's Deputy Prime Minister, a verbal agreement was reached regarding Iran's water rights from the Helmand River.

Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, the advisor to the Department of Environment, shared that Mullah Baradar, the Taliban's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, committed to granting these water rights once the conditions become favourable. Baradar's visit to Tehran occurred from November 4 to November 9, during which he held discussions with several Iranian officials, including the head of Iran's Department of Environment.

Ali Salajegheh continued the Taliban raised the issue of water scarcity and mentioned that this could happen if there is enough rainfall climatically.

Salajegheh stated, in the meeting with the Taliban, that we raised the issue of humidification considering the necessity of work and the fact that for about 180 days, people in the Zabol region have been facing dust and sand problems. We asked them to release water temporarily so there wouldn't be a source of dust and sand. He added that the Taliban economic delegation also announced that if the situation of water resources in the dams permits, they would do so. Another issue discussed was stabilising dust and sand collection centres in Afghanistan.

The Afghan delegation, especially the environmental officials, promised to come to the Islamic Republic of Iran at the earliest opportunity and discuss these issues comprehensively in a meeting so that we can provide a solution to the source of dust and sand in Afghanistan, especially in areas that affect the Islamic Republic of Iran, Salajegheh said.

However, Iranian officials also pointed out a lingering disagreement between Iran and the Taliban regarding allocating Iran's water rights, specifically the distribution of the designated 820 million cubic meters.

The Iranian official referenced the 1973 Iran-Afghanistan treaty and stressed the necessity of resolving these differences by establishing a joint expert working group, seeking a diplomatic and collaborative approach to address this longstanding issue.

‘327,000 Afghans returned from Pakistan since mid-September’

KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan said that since mid-September, a "staggering 327.4K undocumented Afghans" have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan.

Daniel Endres expressed concerns over the situation of immigrants returning from Pakistan and said that these people are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including water, food, and shelter.

"It's a huge challenge for us to respond to the returnees from Pakistan at this very moment. And huge numbers are coming. And it's very important that we can find, first of all, a temporary solution, give them cash grants, food, and water," the OCHA humanitarian coordinator for Afghanistan said.

Some refugees who have just returned to the country from Pakistan complain about the lack of shelter and basic life facilities.

"We returned here but we don't have money, shelter, the weather is cold, and we also have children," said Abdul Satar, a returned refugee.

"We do not have any shelter and it's a big challenge for us," said Najibullah, a returned refugee.

Earlier, some refugees deported from Pakistan, who have been relocated in temporary camps, asked the current government to speed up the process of registration and distribution of aid.



Football match at Buddha site promotes cultural relics protection in Bamyan

BAMYAN (Xinhua): Inhaling fresh air to take a sigh of relief, Afghan teenager Atiqullah Amiri muttered that playing football at the giant Buddha relics site could inspire onlookers to preserve the cultural heritage and the monuments in central Afghanistan's Bamyan Province.

"We have arranged a football competition on the dusty ground in front of the Buddha to attract the attention of people living around and the people of the world to protect the cultural heritage," football player Amiri told Xinhua.

A group of youngsters backed by a team of Chinese archaeologists and Bamyan University held a football competition at the relics site on Sunday.

Aimed at raising awareness on preserving the cultural heritage, the activity inspires more young people to join.

The picturesque Bamyan province with its beautiful landscape and countless historical monuments has been gradually regaining its popularity as a tourist destination since peace has been gradually returning over the past two years.

The number of tourists including foreigners, according to local officials, has been on a constant rise and many tourists are eager to visit the historic Buddha site in Bamyan and also enjoy the pleasant weather and captivating Band-e-Amir Lake.

"Since the Buddha site is a worldwide popular cultural heritage and registered by UNESCO, it is important for us to hold the football competition in front of one of the statues, and we want to send a message to the world that we will protect our cultural heritage," another player, Sayed Hassan, told Xinhua.

Although it was dynamited more than two decades ago, the site of the giant Buddhas is still popular and attracts hundreds of thousands of domestic and foreign tourists monthly to visit the damaged sculptures and the monks' caves located around.

"Holding a football match as one of the cultural activities in front of the site of a Buddha or the other one is beneficial for us to attract the attention of people around the globe towards cultural heritage preservation," Hasan added.

The cultural heritage situated in Bamyan is among the most valuable monuments of the world, said Mohammad Taqqi Taqadosi, an organizer of the football match, who is a professor at Bamyan University and member of Bamyan Guardians, an entity backing efforts to protect the cultural heritages in Bamyan.

"Our programs are based on giving awareness and education. Like in naan classes (students receive bread in return for attending their class on cultural heritages), we visit schools in villages and discuss with people the importance of cultural heritages and it is an important topic on our agenda," Taqadosi said.



ISLAMABAD: Astronaut Namira Saleem called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

‘May 9 riots took place due to non-implementation of verdict’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has observed that due to the non-implementation of its 2019 Faizabad sit-in judgment by successive governments, the nation suffered consequences in the shape of the May 9 events. The observations came as a three-member bench — headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Athar Minallah — issued a written verdict of the November 15 hearing of the Faizabad sit-in case.

Referring to the days-long sit-in staged by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in 2017, the four-page order authored by CJF Isa noted that the February 2019 Faizabad judgment traced the history of orchestrated violent protests in Pakistan and sounded a warning for the future.

“However, the concerns expressed by us almost 5 years ago were disregarded by successive governments. Review petitions and applications were filed and these were not fixed for hearing, which hindered the Judgment’s implementation,” it added. The verdict further noted that no responsibility was affixed, nor was anyone held accountable for the violence of the past.

“It is not surprising that violence continued to be perceived as a permissible means to attain one’s goals.

Victims of those striving for an independent judiciary, an inclusive and tolerant Pakistan were disregarded without justice; the nation suffered the consequences, as evident from the recent events of 9 May 2023,” the CJP said in the judgment. The May 9 events referred to the violent protests that broke out almost across the country following the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in a corruption case from the premises of Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The violent protesters ransacked and attacked the defence and public installations in various parts of the country, prompting the authorities to take stern action against the rioters. Consequently, dozens of PTI leaders either quit politics or parted ways with the incarcerated party chairman over the ransacking of military installations for what they believed triggered by the confrontational politics of Khan.

The same judgment also mentioned that Attorney-General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the top court that the federal government had constituted an inquiry commission under the Pakistan Commissions of Inquiry Act, 2017. It said the commission was given a two-month time to complete its investigation. “[...] we expect that it will

do so within the allotted time.”

The apex court said every decision of the Supreme Court is binding and must be implemented by all executive authorities as stipulated in Articles 189 and 190 of the Constitution. Implementation, however, the order said may be forestalled when review petitions and other applications are pending.

Those who were in government when the 2019 judgment was given are no longer in government and the composition of the Election Commission has also changed. “Therefore, it would not be appropriate to hold the present incumbents responsible for the actions/inactions of their predecessors, particularly when they have demonstrated that they want to implement the decision of this Court.”

With humility, and setting an example for others to follow, the top court noted that the “manipulation resorted to in the Supreme Court by not fixing the said petitions and applications”. The Supreme Court endeavours to regain the confidence of the people by acknowledging this, and will be demonstrating that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated, the order added. “Truth sets one free and makes institutions strong. The people of Pakistan deserve nothing less.”

Australia beat S Africa to set up WC Cup final

KOLKATA (AFP): Australia will play Virat Kohli and India for the Cricket World Cup trophy after beating South Africa by three wickets in a semi-final thriller. After restricting the South Africans to 212 — despite David Miller’s defiant 101 — Australia eked their way to 215-7 to win with 16 balls to spare in a tense atmosphere inside Eden Gardens, Kolkata, on Thursday.

Travis Head (62) led Australia’s rollicking start before a mid-innings wobble put the five-time champions in a spot of bother. South Africa did not let big partnerships bloom but Australia eventually reached the target with Steve Smith (30) and Jos Inglis (28) providing useful cameos.

Earlier, Temba Bavuma’s decision to bat under an overcast sky backfired and South Africa slumped to 24-4 inside 12 overs before light rain held up play. Miller and Heinrich Klaasen (47) arrested the slide after play resumed with a 95-run partnership but Head’s double strike put Australia back in charge. Miller smashed Cummins for a six to bring up his hundred but fell in the same over trying to clear the rope again.

India beat New Zealand in the first semifinal on Wednesday to book their place in the final in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Australia will be bidding to win the 50-over World Cup for a record-extending sixth time, while host nation India are seeking a third title. South Africa have never won a semifinal match at the World Cup in five attempts.

Govt announces Hajj Policy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government has announced Hajj Policy 2024 under which the Hajj package for each pilgrim has been reduced by one hundred thousand rupees.

Sharing salient features of the new Hajj policy at a news conference in Islamabad today, Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed said the Hajj cost under the government scheme has been reduced to 1075000 rupees for the next Hajj from 1175000 of this year’s Hajj. He assured there will be no compromise on the quality of Hajj arrangements regardless of reduction in expenses. The Minister for Religious Affairs said the Hajj quota for Pakistan is 179210 which will be equally distributed between the government and private hajj schemes.

Aneeq Ahmed said that negotiations are continuing with the airlines to get reduced airfare for the Hajj operation. He said if we succeed in securing relief in the airfare, the amount will be transferred to the accounts of pilgrims. He said the pilgrims will also get back thirty five thousand rupees if they choose to stay four instead of eight days in Madina. Aneeq Ahmed said Hajj 2024 will be digitalized wherein pilgrims will get a mobile application that could be used without internet.

Bilawal vows to double wages, fight inflation, empower youth

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a workers’ convention in Abbottabad said that he is grateful to the Jiyalas of the Party for giving him such a grand and historic welcome on his tour of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He especially thanked the women who were present.

Chairman Bilawal said that the relations between the people and the Pakistan Peoples Party goes back three generations. President Zardari’s accomplishments during the 2008-2013 are before everyone. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa used to be called the ‘NWFP’, it was during the PPP’s tenure and due to the efforts of President Zardari that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was given an identity. We gave the people of KP their rights through the NFC Award. We began the revolutionary Benazir Income Support Programme to support the poor women of the country, empower them and help them combat poverty.

We are proud of these accomplishments of the PPP but our political journey and struggle is still going on. We have to complete the incomplete mission of Quaid-e-Awam, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. When we put collective effort and hard work in the upcoming elections to form a government of the people, we will be able to implement the manifesto of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and ideology of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. We believe that the solution to all the problems of the people is within the manifesto of the PPP.

He said that we will surely empower the farmers, workers and the common people only if we follow the footsteps and ideology of the Quaid-e-Awam. Inflation is at a historic level, and our leaders and bureaucrats do not comprehend the extent to which our people are suffering, be it in the shape of poverty, price-hike or unemployment. The rest of the political parties are still busy engaging in yesteryear’s political activities. If we wish to put an end to our problems, we need a new mindset and leadership that does not engage in the politics of hate and division, rather focuses on serving the people.

Chairman Bilawal said that he has proved that the youth can prove itself when given the opportunity. He said that it is not difficult to serve the people as long as one has an ideology and their intentions are clear. I will never disappoint the people, will serve them day and night, Chairman Bilawal vowed. He said that 70 percent of the country’s population consists of the youth and this is our time to decide whether we are willing to hand the future of the country over to those who are still stuck in the past or the PPP, which always thinks of the future and has served people whenever given the opportunity. It is the PPP that has given the most employment opportunity to the people. It is the PPP that represents the common man and not the elite class. We intend to establish the ‘rule of the people’.



It is the PPP that has combatted poverty in every era, be it that of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto or President Zardari. Even today, the PPP has no political opponent. Our rival is not the PML-N or the PTI, but poverty, unemployment and inflation which have burdened our people.

The day that we have a government that focuses solely on giving employment to the youth, tackling poverty and inflation is not far. This will be the first agenda of every cabinet meeting. The PPP has a plan to give relief to the people. The BISP is a living example of our efforts and priorities but we would have to further expand it to maximise the benefits that are provided to the people. We will bring similar projects that benefit every stratum of the society.

The PPP will bring a ‘Kissan Card’ for the farmers so that they are able to reap the benefits of their hard work and efforts directly. Another desire we have is to bring a ‘Benazir Mazdoor Card’ and provide the benefits of social security of our workers and look after their wellbeing and that of their families through this, covering both health and education as well as their rights. We have to make a five-year plan which allows for us to double the wages. If the government shifts all its focus on this, then the people will prosper. We want businesses to flourish, but the perks to be shared with everyone. The PPP has increased the minimum wage in every era.

It is our desire to see this country, Pakistan become a modern state where its people prosper. In order for this to happen, we would need to let go of the politics of the past, adopt a new attitude and pave the way for the young generation. If the personal vendettas continue, then the problems of the people will not be solved. We need to establish a new political system which allows for us to serve the people. Only the PPP can do this, and we will prove it too. We will not only form the government, but take everyone along so that the country begins its journey towards progress.

Chairman Bilawal said that he is only looking at the people. If one has to be a ‘laadla’, they should be a ‘laadla’ of the people. He will only derive his political strength from the people as it is in the belief system of the PPP that the people are the source of power and it is their prerogative

alone to elect their representatives. No one else has this right. Our quarrel with Imran Khan was over the same issue. The decision should be of the people alone. We do not accept a puppet government or a selected role. We had only wished for them to stop bothering our people, calling and pestering them, instead, leave the decision to the people.

Our demand is the same today. The right to choose has been given to the people by the Quaid-e-Awam. If we are given the opportunity to serve, we will fulfil our duty as we have done before. However, it is only up to the people to decide. With that being said, we believe in our politics and manifesto. My advice to our political counterparts would be the same, Chairman Bilawal said. We will not accept the politics that destroyed Pakistan in 2018. The biggest adversary of the people is the same old manner of doing politics that excludes the people makes their decisions for them behind closed doors.

Chairman Bilawal said that the Party reposes full trust in the people which is why the PPP has handed its destiny over to them. He said that the series of conventions would continue this week and Mardan will be the next destination, followed by Peshawar, Naushera, Dir and Chitral. The PPP will form the next government, and if the PM is a Jiyala, then the CM of KP will be a Jiyala too. No government will be formed in any province without the PPP’s vote and our only demand would be that the CM is a Jiyala, Chairman Bilawal said. The PPP was pushed to the wall in KP, we were not allowed to campaign, were the targets of terrorism and the streets were coloured with our blood. This time, the PPP will win and the arrow will triumph.

The PPP is always ready for elections. We have not shied away from contesting the elections and fully trust the people. Our request for other political parties would be the same, that they too trust the people alone and not play the same game that is being played with the country and its democracy for seven decades. We would have to give the young generation a conducive political environment that allows for us to help the people emerge from this quagmire. The onus to take our manifesto to every doorstep is on our Jiyalas, and we will be victorious, Chairman Bilawal said.

Solution to instability lies in joint efforts: Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said Pakistan can overcome its challenges relating to political stability if its politicians, executive and the establishment make a joint commitment to address the issues.

The president, in an interview with Voice of America (VOA), was responding to a question if the upcoming general polls would bring political stability in the country. President Alvi expressed confidence that the result of the polls as an outcome of the public opinion would lead to an environment ensuring stability and prosperity of the country.

Dismissing doubts about delay of general election, he said the judiciary, executive and politicians held a unanimity on holding general election on the announced date of February 8. He maintained that the provision of level-playing field to all political parties was the mutual responsibility of the government and the Election

Commission of Pakistan. “The government has already given assurance about providing level-playing field to all parties,” he said, adding that the nation had full trust in the government’s commitment in this regard.

President Alvi said that through his letter, he invoked the government’s attention towards the apprehensions of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI). To a query, the president said the Constitution did not allow the President to take a ‘practical’ action to ensure the transparency of an election. “The President has no other way but to bring such issues to the notice of the government,” he said. He said though the office of the President did not have an administrative authority, however the points raised by it held a significant value.

“There could be many expectations [from me to act in a particular way], but I will not take any unconstitutional step,” he said. The president said he was

not the spokesperson of any party, but of all Pakistanis. “However, I will continue to identify and point out whenever see any issue.”

To a question, the president said he never showed negligence with respect to the date of general election. Alvi appreciated the Supreme Court of Pakistan on demonstrating unanimity over the election date. He said the case relating to the contesting of election by PTI Chairman Imran Khan was sub-judice and added that he had full confidence in the judiciary.

To another question, President Alvi explained that he did not believe in politics of violence and therefore condemned the incidents of 9th May. “Also, the governments should not create such a situation which may lead to violence,” he added. He said he would not like to comment on the cases of the civilians involved in 9th May incidents which were pending with the military courts.

Pakistan hails joint declaration

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has welcomed the joint declaration of the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit held in Saudi Arabia that urged the UN Security Council to enforce UN resolutions against Israel; its demand for ceasing export of weapons to the occupying force; and its call for international Criminal Court’s investigation into Israeli crimes.

At her weekly media briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan condemns repeated Israeli attacks on the premises and personnel of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and other humanitarian agencies, including the Headquarters of Qatari Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza.

She said we join the UN in paying homage to the workers of UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies who lost their lives in Gaza and appreciate their steadfast dedication to the people in need. The Spokesperson said Pakistan also condemns Israel’s war on hospitals in Gaza as hospital after hospital is being targeted by the occupation forces in complete disregard of international law.

She said we are appalled by Israeli incursion into Al-Shifa hospital, placing patients, medical staff and civilians at risk. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said we join the international community to hold Israeli occupation accountable for its attacks against hospitals. She said Israel must also be held accountable for deliberately targeting mosques, churches and schools sheltering civilians who have been rendered homeless because of Israel’s destruction of their homes.

Nawaz: Present conditions are self-inflicted wound

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan’s currency, economic and the system has devastated, and prices increased by five-fold, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said on Thursday. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz’s supreme leader was addressing officials of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Thursday.

“It is our responsibility and duty to emancipate the people from price hike and poverty,” Nawaz Sharif, who returned from self-exile in London on October 21, addressing to businessmen said. “People want education, health facilities and develop-

ment,” he said. “It is their right, and it is responsibility of the state to provide these facilities.” PML-N leader said.

Nawaz claimed that Pakistan was became 24th largest global economy between 2013 to 2017. “We kept the US dollar static at Rs 104 rate for four years. The dollar would have dropped to Rs40 to 50 if our policies and development process were not interrupted,” he claimed.

“Today we are desperate for one billion dollars, it is self-inflicted harm we committed to us,” he said. “These miserable conditions are consequence of

our own decisions,” he lamented.

“The policy rate has soared to 22 percent, which was 6.25 during our tenure,” he said. “Who can do business at 22 percent rate,” he questioned. “We have ourselves committed excesses with the Parliament and prime ministers,” Nawaz Sharif said. “See, who was handed over the country. The rupee, economy and all systems suffered devastation”. “Those who were paying Rs 1,000 monthly electricity bill, now paying 15,000 rupees,” he said. “Prices of everything, have soared by five-fold,” he added.