

Naval Chief visits S Arabia  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf who is on official visit to Saudi Arabia called on the top leadership of Royal Saudi Armed Forces on Wednesday. The Naval Chief during his meetings with Saudi Arabia top military officers discussed matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security, said a press issued here.

@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX No. 284 Regd. No. 241 RABI-US-SANNI 17 1445 -- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 02 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

# Rafah border crossing temporary opened

First residents, foreigners leave Gaza; Hamas leader accuses Israel of ‘barbaric massacres’ after refugee camp hit

RAFAH, Palestinian Territories (AFP): Injured residents and foreigners escaped Gaza to Egypt Wednesday, the first evacuations from the war-torn Palestinian territory pounded by Israeli warplanes in retaliation for an unprecedented Hamas attack.

The brief glimmer of hope sparked by the temporary opening of the Rafah border crossing was quickly snuffed out as a fresh strike pulverised buildings in Gaza’s biggest refugee camp for a second consecutive day, killing dozens according to the Palestinian health ministry. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to “continue until victory” over Hamas, whose brutal October 7 attack sparked the latest conflict, the deadliest in decades of unrest between the two sides.

AFP reporters at Gaza’s southern border saw ambulances whisking away the wounded to Egyptian field hospitals, including one young boy with heavy bandaging around his stomach. Whole families, struggling to carry their worldly possessions, rushed through the heavily fortified crossing toward Egypt, which was expected to admit at least 400 foreign passport holders and 90 of the most seriously wounded and sick.

Jordanian citizen Saleh Hussein said she received word in the middle of the night that she was on the list for evacuation. “We’ve faced many problems in Gaza, the least of which were the shortage of water and the power outage,” she told AFP. “There were bigger problems such as the bombardment. We were afraid. Many families were martyred.” A first group of mostly women and children arrived in Egypt, an official told AFP on condition of anonymity, as TV images showed parents with pushchairs and elderly people clambering off a bus.

“It’s enough. We’ve endured enough humiliation,” said Gaza resident Rafik Al-Hilou, accompanying relatives including children aged one and four hoping to cross into Egypt. “We lack the most basic human needs. No Internet, no phones, no means of communication, not even water. For the past four days, we haven’t been able to feed this child a piece of bread. What are



you waiting for?”

The Jabalia camp suffered a second strike in as many days Wednesday, with AFPTV images showing major damage and rescuers clawing through rubble to extract blood-stained casualties. Dozens were killed and wounded, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, which came a day after Israeli jets hit the camp, killing at least 47 people, according to an AFP count.

“This is just the latest atrocity to befall the people of Gaza where the fighting has entered an even more terrifying phase, with increasingly dreadful humanitarian consequences,” said Martin Griffiths, UN humanitarian chief. Israel said Tuesday’s raid was a successful hit on top Hamas commander Ibrahim Biari, but the large death toll drew a chorus of international condemnation in the region and as far afield as Bolivia, which severed diplomatic ties in protest.

Jordan recalled its ambassador to Israel “to condemn the Israeli war that is killing innocent people in Gaza.” Hamas said seven hostages, including three foreign passport holders, had died in Tuesday’s bombing, a claim impossible to verify. The group’s leader Ismail Haniyeh accused Israel of committing

“barbaric massacres against unarmed civilians,” saying it was covering its own “defeats.”

Israel has relentlessly pounded Gaza in retribution for the worst attack in the country’s history, when Hamas gunmen stormed across the border, killing 1,400 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli officials. AFP reporters saw more tanks pour over the border into northern Gaza, as Israel stepped up its ground incursion launched late last week. Its bombing campaign has killed 8,796 people, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Images provided by the military showed Israeli troops picking through bombed-out houses searching for militants or some of the 240 hostages seized by Hamas. Israel said 15 soldiers died in ground fighting in Gaza on Tuesday, taking to 330 the number of troops killed since October 7. AFP images showed tearful Israeli women in uniform hugging each other for comfort at the funeral of one of the troops killed. “Our soldiers have fallen in the most just of wars, the war for our home,” said Netanyahu, steeling the nation for “a difficult war... a long war.”

The situation in Gaza remained desperate, with food, fuel and medicine for the 2.4

million residents all running short, according to aid groups. Palestinian residents told AFP they had evacuated from northern Gaza, as demanded by Israel, but were still under threat. “We’ve been told people are evacuating from Gaza City toward the central area of the Strip beyond the valley, so we headed there,” Amen Al-Aqluk told AFP. “After 20 days, we were bombarded. Three of our kids lost their lives and we all got injured.”

“There is no hope in the Gaza Strip. It is not safe anymore here. When the border opens, everybody will leave and emigrate. We encounter death everyday, 24 hours a day.” With fears mounting the violence could spiral into a regional war, US President Joe Biden called for “urgent mechanisms” to dial down tensions and said top diplomat Antony Blinken would embark on another Middle East tour from Friday.

Turkiye and Iran called for a regional conference to prevent a conflagration, as Israel faces a daily barrage of aerial attacks from Hamas and other Iran-backed groups around the Middle East, including Yemen’s Houthi rebels. In the north, Israel has traded near-daily fire with Lebanon’s Iran-backed Hezbollah movement.

And the families of hostages kidnapped by Hamas have endured an unbearable wait for news of relatives thought to be held in the labyrinth of tunnels deep below Gaza. Ayelet Sella, whose seven cousins were kidnapped from one of the kibbutz communities raided by Hamas gunmen, said she could find “no rest” until her loved ones are returned. “We have no more tears, our eyes are dry, we are empty three weeks on,” said Sella, speaking to AFP at the Great Synagogue in Paris. “I only ask for one thing, that they come back.”

Hamas’s political leader has accused Israel of carrying out “massacres” in the besieged Gaza Strip to conceal its own “defeats” and warned that the hundreds of Israeli and foreign hostages being held captive in Gaza faced the same risk of “death and destruction” from the Israeli assault on the territory as Palestinian residents. Israel is “committing barbaric massacres against unarmed civilians,” Ismail Haniyeh said in an address broadcast on Wednesday.

“Its villainy will not save them from resounding defeat,” he promised. Israel launched an assault on Gaza on October 7 after Hamas carried out a devastating attack on southern Israel, killing at least 1,400 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli officials.

At least 8,796 people have been killed in the continuing Israeli bombardment of Gaza, including 3,648 children, according to Palestinian authorities. Haniyeh said Hamas had warned Israel’s “fascist government” about its “contentious policies” before its attack, pointing to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and attacks on Islamic holy sites, such as the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Hamas leader said regional unrest would continue until “Palestinians obtain their ‘legitimate rights to freedom, independence and return’”. The remarks came after Israeli forces attacked the Jabalia refugee camp in north Gaza for the second straight day, killing dozens, according to Palestinian officials.

More than 50 people were killed in an Israeli air raid on the densely packed neighbourhood

## Iran calls for boycott of Israel

TEHRAN: Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei has called on Muslim states to cease oil and food exports to Israel, demanding an end to the bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

“The bombings on Gaza must stop immediately ... the path of oil and food exports to the Zionist regime should be stopped,” Khamenei said in a speech on Wednesday, according to Iranian state media. He suggested that the “people of Gaza have mobilised the public’s conscience by their patience,” referring to the pro-Palestinian protests around the world.

“Look at what’s happening in the world. In the UK, France, Italy, and the US, many people came out to the street and chanted slogans against Israel and the United States. They have lost their credibility and really, there is no remedy for them as they cannot justify Israel’s attack,” Khamenei said. “The world of Islam shouldn’t forget in the case of Gaza it was the US, France, and the UK that stood against the oppressed people of Gaza, it wasn’t just the Zionist regime.” — Aljazeera

the previous day, Palestinian authorities said. Hamas said seven Israeli hostages, three of whom held foreign passports, were killed in the attack.

Hamas’s military wing has previously said that “almost 50” hostages had been killed in previous Israeli air raids on the besieged territory. Israel’s military confirmed it attacked the Jabalia refugee camp, Gaza’s largest, saying the air raid on Tuesday had killed senior Hamas member Ibrahim Biari, along with many other “terrorists.” Biari was responsible for helping to orchestrate the October 7 attack, Israel said.

The UN’s children’s fund has said that the toll of the Israeli assault was having a devastating impact on children in Gaza. “More than 420 children are being killed or injured in Gaza each day — a number which should shake each of us to our core,” said UNICEF Executive

## Jordan recalls envoy in Israel

AMMAN: Jordan on Wednesday announced it had recalled its ambassador from Israel and told the Israeli ambassador to stay away in protest at the Israeli bombardment of Gaza, saying the attacks had killed innocents and caused a humanitarian catastrophe.

The ambassador would only return to Tel Aviv if Israel halted its war on the enclave and ended “the humanitarian crisis it has caused.” Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said. “This is to express Jordan’s stance that rejects and condemns the Israeli war on Gaza that kills innocents and is causing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe,” Safadi said in a statement carried on state media.

Safadi said the decision was also taken because Israel was depriving Palestinians of food, water and medicines after it imposed a siege on the enclave following a devastating assault by Hamas on Israel on Oct 7. Israel’s ambassador in Jordan, who left two weeks ago amid protests, would only be allowed to return on the same conditions, the minister said. — Aljazeera

Director Catherine Russell.

Hamas leader Haniyeh also said the bloodshed must stop and called on the world to continue rallying in defence of the Palestinian cause to pressure policymakers. He accused Israel and its ally the United States of blocking mediation efforts. On Friday, the US and Israel were among only 14 out of 193 UN member countries to vote “no” on the general assembly resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian truce. However, 120 countries voted “yes” to the resolution, while 45 abstained.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly dismissed calls for a ceasefire, saying it would be tantamount to “surrendering” to Hamas. The main Palestinian armed groups fighting in Gaza, including Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, have not called for a ceasefire.

## Faizabad sit-in: SC rejects govt’s fact-finding committee

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan rejected on Wednesday the government’s fact-finding committee, formed to ensure compliance with the top court’s verdict on the 2017 sit-in by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) at Islamabad’s Faizabad Wednesday.

A three-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Athar Minallah took up a set of review petitions against the apex court’s Feb 6, 2019 judgement in Faizabad sit-in case. The federal government constituted fact-finding committee on Friday to determine those responsible for the Faizabad sit-in. The top court in its detailed four-page written order invited all the concerned parties to clarify their positions in the Faizabad sit-in case.

At the outset of the hearing on Wednesday, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan read out the order of the previous hearing. “The apex court wants to know who was behind the Faizabad sit-in,” Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa

remarked, expressing annoyance over the decision not being implemented since its issuance on February 6, 2019.

He also ordered the Attorney-General for Pakistan, Mansoor Usman Awan, to form a new inquiry commission soon pertaining to the implementation of the apex court verdict in the Faizabad sit-in case. ‘Faiz Hamid pressurized PEMRA during Faizabad sit-in’ Ex-chairman of the media regulatory body said that former ISI chief Faiz Hamid pressurized Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) during Faizabad sit-in.

As per details, former chairman of PEMRA Absar Alam submitted his statement to Supreme Court in Faizabad sit-in case. Absar Alam stated that Ex-ISI chief General retired Faiz Hamid pressurized him to take action against senior journalist Najam Sethi and ban the former US ambassador Husain Haqqani however his demands were not met.

In his statement, the former chairman of the media regulatory body said that a letter was also written to ex-prime minister and Chief

Justice of Pakistan in April 2017 regarding the pressure on the TV channels by Faiz Hamid and officers working under his command. Absar Alam stated that he held a press conference to expose the threatening calls he was receiving and the harassment of PEMRA officials.

He added that one channel was banned for violating the PEMRA rules during the Faizabad sit-in but the ex-ISI chief demanded to ban more channels meanwhile on November 25, 2017 Mariyum Aurangzeb asked the media regulatory body to ban all TV channels. Back in November 08, 2017, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) organized a sit-in at Faizabad interchange against the amendments in the Election Bill 2017, changing the word oath to declaration.

The protesters demanded the resignation of Minister for Law and Justice Zahid Hamid to “protect the identity of the country”. The protestors achieved their objective as the Pakistani law minister Zahid Hamid stepped down from his position on November 27, 2017 culminating in an end to the protests that continued for 20 days without harm.

## Senate expresses solidarity with Palestinians

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Upper House of the Parliament on Wednesday expressed strong support with the oppressed Palestinians, facing the atrocities of Israeli forces by passing a unanimous resolution.

Moved of the leader of House in Senate Ishaq Dar, the resolution said, “Since the Holocaust of the 2nd World War, no State has committed such mass killings, carnage and war crimes with such an unprecedented barbarity and brutality.” Expressing full solidarity and support with the oppressed Palestinians, the resolution denounced the double standards and hypocrisy of those who are supporting Israel, as they are partners in crime since they also oppose an immediate ceasefire in beleaguered Gaza.

“The sentiments of the people of Pakistan and takes pride in Pakistan’s consistent commitment to the just cause of Palestine. Since such a policy which was first enunciated by the Founder of Pakistan Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah,” it further stated. “There can, therefore, be no wavering from Pakistan’s principled policy based on supporting the inalienable right of self-determination of the people of Palestine and their right to an independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its Capital,” the resolution said.

The resolution demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, an end to the Israel blockade of Gaza, and full access of Gaza to all International Humanitarian Organizations so that relief supplies, medicines, food, and water can be supplied to the beleaguered citizens of Gaza.

## PM for mechanism to encourage financial self-reliance in society

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday, while appreciating outcomes of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), directed the relevant authorities to chalk out a mechanism for promoting economic self-sufficiency in the society.

He said that BISP was yielding good results but Pakistan’s durable future was linked with the financially self-reliant citizens. The prime minister chaired a meeting regarding BISP. The meeting was given a briefing over the performance of BISP and the future strategy. The meeting was attended by BISP Chairperson Amjad Saqib, Secretary Ministry of Poverty Alleviation Yusuf Khan and other senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

About 60 million members of 10 million families were being benefitted from BISP whose total annual budget this year was Rs 471 billion, it was told. The prime minister praised the financial assistance extended to the deserving families and observed that with the provision of technical training to the BISP beneficiaries, in accordance with the requirements of the market, would enable them to become financially self-sufficient.

He said that BISP was a good programme whose database could be used for providing targeted subsidies, and urged the big business entities and well-to-do elements in the society to become partners in BISP under corporate social responsibility. Prime Minister Kakar reiterated that the state of Pakistan would provide all possible assistance to the weaker segments of the society so that they could live a life full of hope, and further opined that BISP should enter into partnership with the local welfare and charity organizations. He also asked the authorities to devise a collective mechanism between the government and the local humanitarian organizations.

**Pakistan to continue taking steps for Gilgit-Baltistan’s progress, prosperity:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said the government of Pakistan would continue to play its role in ensuring the progress, peace, and prosperity of Gilgit-Baltistan. In his message on the 76th anniversary of the freedom of Gilgit-Baltistan from the Dogra rule, he said mainstreaming the youth of the GB



was a priority for Pakistan.

Kakar said GB was rich in minerals and natural resources and offered huge potential to become a hub of economic growth and tourism. He stressed the need for unity, religious harmony, and mutual affinity to ensure a prosperous and bright future for Pakistan including Gilgit Baltistan.

He felicitated the people of GB and said the day was significant in history when the brave people of Gilgit Baltistan under the leadership of Captain Mirza Hassan Khan and Subedar Major Babar resisted the Dogra rule. Their courage forced the puppet governor Ghasara Singh to surrender before the will of the local people for their accession with Pakistan on November 1, 1947, he said.

Kakar said Pakistan deeply values the patriotism of the people of GB who proved their unconditional and selfless love for Pakistan. These brave people showed the enemy that GB was part of Pakistan and would remain forever, he added. He said the people of GB were fortunate to be blessed with freedom, while the Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) still suffered the tyranny of Indian authorities.

He mentioned several resolutions were passed by the United Nations for the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, which he said faced the status quo due to the unwillingness of India and the apathy of the international community. PM Kakar reiterated Pakistan’s solidarity with the oppressed people of IIOJK and vowed to continue its political, diplomatic, and moral to Kashmiris till they get their right to self-determination in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Security Council. He said Pakistan wanted a peaceful resolution of both the Palestine conflict and the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and strongly con-

demned Israel’s unabated violence at the land of the first Qibla for Muslims.

**World must act urgently to stop Israel’s war crimes in Gaza:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar strongly condemned the rising Israeli hostilities and aggression against civilians in Gaza.

“Yesterday’s air raid on Jabalia camp, where hundreds of lives were lost, including women and children, was a stark reminder of ongoing Israeli brutalities and war crimes in Gaza,” he posted on social media platform, X. Kakar said such reprehensible acts can never be condoned or forgotten. He called upon the international community to take urgent steps to stop Israel’s violence. “The world must act now to end this carnage,” he said.

**PM invites Rwanda to open diplomatic mission in Islamabad:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, conveying Pakistan’s desire to enhance multi-sphere ties with the African continent, invited Rwanda to establish its diplomatic mission in Islamabad.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the Senate of Rwanda, led by Senate President Dr. Kalinda François-Xavier, reiterated the desire to strengthen Pakistan’s ties with Africa, particularly in trade, investment, IT (information technology), agriculture and people-to-people exchanges. Pakistan has already opened its mission in Kigali in 2021, according to a PM Office news release.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction at the friendly and cordial relations between Pakistan and Rwanda. Emphasizing the significance of parliamentary exchanges, Prime Minister Kakar welcomed and appreciated the first-ever visit by the President of Senate of Rwanda. He also appreciated Rwanda’s remarkable economic growth achieved in recent years.

## COAS, Azerbaijan President discuss ties

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, 1st (M), COAS is on an official visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The visit is aimed at enhancing military to military cooperation and defence collaboration between the two brotherly countries.

During the visit, COAS called on H.E Ilham Aliyev,

President of Republic of Azerbaijan, Defense Minister, 1st Deputy Minister & Chief of General Staff and Commander of Azerbaijan Air Force, During the meetings, COAS emphasized on enhancing cooperation in the fields of defence and training. COAS appreciated the high morale and remarkable standard of operational readiness of Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Political and military leader-

ship of Azerbaijan acknowledged continued support of Pakistan and vowed to enhance mutual cooperation between the two states and their Armed Forces to a new level.

During visit to the General Staff Headquarters, COAS was warmly welcomed and presented with the Guard of Honour. COAS also laid floral wreath at Alley of Martyrs at Baku.



# CM for removal of bottlenecks in Malir Expressway

KARACHI (PPI): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar has said that he would talk to the Pakistan Railways, KE authorities, and the Ministry of Defence to remove all the bottlenecks that emerged in the ongoing Malir Expressway Project, otherwise the banks financing the project would hold their hand back and the cost of the project would escalate manifold.

This he said during his visit to the under-construction Malir Expressway. He was accompanied by caretaker Minister Arshad Wali Mohammad, PSCM to CM Agha Wasif and other concerned officers.

The Project Director Malir Expressway briefing the CM said that the work on the project was started on May 12, 2022, with a completion period of 30 months. The Malir Expressway is 38.661 km starting from the existing Jam Sadiq Bridge to Kathore M-9. The design speed of the expressway is 100 km/HR. the width of the carriageway is 30.9 km and it is a six-lane, (three-into-three) lane with a 100-meter Right of way.

The Expressway has six interchanges, and two Toll plazas and its physical progress on Segment No.1 (from Jam Sadiq interchange to 15 km- Quaidabad) is 59.8 per cent and 14.4 per cent on Segment No.2 (from 15 km Quaidabad to 39 km Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway). The CM was told that the execution of the Jam Sadiq interchange was initially planned to start on 24 May 2022 but due to various impediments such as KE, Yellow line interventions and SPD, the activities could not commence as was planned. Justice Baqar was told that after several meetings with the Yellow Line authorities, the design was finalized and agreed upon by all the concerned. He was told that the removal of KE installations crossing over Jam Sadiq bridge was still pending, due to non-payment from the Sindh government. The SPD, despite NOC from the Ministry of Defence, is not allowing the work, even though the elevated structure is at a safe distance. At this, the CM said that he would personally talk to the SPD authorities to settle the issue. The project Director Niaz Soomro told the chief minister that 40 percent of the work on EBM Interchange, and 45 percent on Shah Faisal Interchange has been achieved.

The CM was told that a NOC from the Railway department for the Quaidabad interchange was awaited. The execution of the Quaidabad interchange was initially planned to commence on 24 May 2022.

# KMC ready to work with World Bank on uplift projects: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Wednesday said the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation was ready to work with the World Bank on the city's development projects, the World Bank's investment and other matters will be approved legal protection by the City Council. To solve the problem of lack of clean water, installation of RO plants is needed in Karachi, by installing a RO plant in every ward of the city, water shortage can be controlled to a large extent.

He said this during a meeting with a three-member delegation of the World Bank in his office. KMC Council Parliamentary Leader Najmi Alam was also present on the occasion. Head of the delegation Practice Manager World Bank Urban and Land for South Asia Abedalrazq Khalil received information regarding the development projects of Karachi on this occasion and expressed interest in investment by the World Bank in these projects.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab briefed the World Bank delegation about the structure of the local government system and the management of civic affairs in Karachi.

He said that the city is divided into 46 towns and thousand wards, each UC chairman represents his area in the KMC council and at the lower level, these UC chairmen and councillors are in direct contact with the people and make efforts to solve their day-to-day problems.

He said that the municipal administration in Karachi is facing major challenges related to water and sewage, RO plant is the best way to solve the problems of water shortage, installing RO plant will provide clean water to the citizens and supply water. It will have the best effects on the system, especially the residents of the slums of Karachi will get a lot of convenience from the installation of the RO plant. There is a significant difference in the revenue and income of different towns of Karachi. Compared to Saddar Town, the income of Lyari Town is very low, so this aspect should also be kept in mind regarding the development works within the boundaries of the towns.

This is also noteworthy that various revenues including property tax are collected by the towns, while the provision of basic infrastructure and other facilities in different areas of the city is the responsibility of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. Every possible effort is made to ensure that all civic institutions adopt a common plan to solve basic local government problems and serve the citizens together. The delegation emphasized the need to be effective and aligned with modern requirements.

# LWMC, PMS organize special event for environmental protection

LAHORE (APP): Pak Mission Society in collaboration with Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) organized a special event to promote environmental conversation to mark the International Climate Action Day.

The event aimed to foster discussions on environment protection and safety, with a focus on a memorandum of understanding signed between the Pak Mission Society and the LWMC.

During the event, panel discussions were held to deliberate on environmental protection and safety.

The panel featured notable figures including EPA Deputy Director Dr Muhammad Younis; EPA Deputy Director Dr Shazia; Secretary Punjab Climate Action Network Dr Saadia Khalid; Head of Media & Communication LWMC Umar Chaudhry; and Community Interface Specialist from LWMC Faizan Elahi Zahoor. Head of Programmes at Pak Mission Society Sunil Gil, Head of Business

Development Kakhkashan Jabran, Area Manager Javeria Nazir, Project Manager Ahmer Shahzad, all representing Pak Mission Society, attended the event.

The event drew a significant number of participants, including officials from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), LWMC, and members of the local community. Over 100 members of Green Clubs from various schools were also present. During the proceedings, students from these schools showcased innovative models related to climate protection and safety. They also presented reports on the role of Pak Mission Society and the LWMC in environmental protection.

LWMC CEO Babar Sahib said that Pak Mission Society and LWMC were committed to working together for environmental safety. He emphasized that LWMC was taking all necessary steps to provide a clean environment through participation and cooperation with various organizations and communities.

The LWMC had initiated an environmental transformation by converting all 17 temporary collection points into Green TSPs (Transfer, Sorting, and Processing Stations). The primary goal of Green TSPs is to reduce environmental pollution and promote a healthy environment for workers. The event concluded with all participants pledging their commitment to play their part in making their surroundings safe and clean.

## Name Change

I want to change my name from Aisha to Aisha Akhtar which is written as Aisha in Kohat Board record. It is requested please make the required change in my educational documents as Aisha Akhtar D/o Akhtar Nawaz Khan R/o Kohat.



# NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting of **Lucky Cement Limited** (the “Company”) will be held on Thursday, November 23, 2023, at 12:00 noon, at the Registered Office of the Company, situated at factory premises i.e. Pezu, District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as through electronic means, to transact the following businesses:

## SPECIAL BUSINESS:

- To consider and, if thought fit, pass, with or without modification, the following resolutions as special resolutions, in terms of Sections 199 and 208 (to the extent applicable) of the Companies Act, 2017, and other applicable laws, for the purposes of authorizing investments in the Company's associated Company i.e. National Resources (Private) Limited (“**NRL**”), including (i) by way of acquisition from Y. B. Pakistan Limited (an associated company / related party of the Company) its equity stake in NRL, comprising up to 34,833,084 (Thirty Four Million Eight Hundred Thirty Three Thousand Eighty Four) ordinary shares of PKR 10/- each, constituting approximately 33.33% of the issued and paid up capital of NRL, at a price of up to PKR 253,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Two Hundred and Fifty Three Million); and (ii) making further investments in NRL from time to time, by way of providing loans / advances to NRL and / or subscribing to shares of NRL (i.e. making equity investments in NRL), of an aggregate amount of up to PKR 747,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Seven Hundred and Forty Seven Million):

(A) “**RESOLVED THAT** the Company be and is hereby authorized, in accordance with Sections 199 and 208 of the Companies Act, 2017, and other applicable laws, to make investments in its associated company i.e. National Resources (Private) Limited (“**NRL**”) by acquiring from Y. B. Pakistan Limited, also an associated company / related party of the Company, its equity stake in NRL, comprising up to 34,833,084 (Thirty Four Million Eight Hundred Thirty Three Thousand Eighty Four) ordinary shares of PKR 10/- each, constituting approximately 33.33% of the issued and paid up capital of NRL, at an aggregate price of up to PKR 253,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Two Hundred and Fifty Three Million).

(B) **FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Company be and is hereby authorized, in accordance with Section 199 of the Companies Act, 2017, to make further investments in NRL from time to time, over a period of 3 (three) years, by way of providing loans / advances to NRL and / or subscribing to shares of NRL (i.e. making equity investments in NRL), as determined by the authorized representatives of the Company, in the aggregate amount of up to PKR 747,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Seven Hundred and Forty Seven Million), broadly as per the terms stipulated in the statement accompanying this Notice and as determined by the authorized representatives of the Company, for funding the operations / business of NRL, including activities pertaining to the direct or indirect exploration of natural resources in the areas allotted in the Province of Balochistan to NRL or a project company in which NRL is a shareholder.

(C) **FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** such investment(s), whether by way of equity injection (including the acquisition or subscription of shares) and / or loans, may be made and / or retained by the Company as the Board of Directors deem appropriate and / or modify the same from time to time in accordance with the instructions of the Board, including based on the feasibility of the arrangement, as a consequence of which the Board is also hereby empowered and authorized to dispose of such investment(s) or any portion thereof as deemed fit by the Board.

(D) **FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, or such person as may be authorized by the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, be and is hereby authorized and empowered to take all necessary steps to effectuate the aforementioned resolutions, make the requisite investments from time to time, do all such acts, deeds and things, and to negotiate, execute and deliver all such deeds, agreements, declarations, undertakings, and instruments, including any ancillary document(s) thereto, or provide any such documentation for and on behalf and in the name of the Company, fulfilling regulatory requirements, in each case, as may be necessary or required or deemed fit, for or in connection with or incidental to the proposed investments in NRL including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the negotiation and finalization of the terms and conditions relating to such investments and entering into arrangements with other shareholders.”

- To consider and, if thought fit, pass, with or without modification, the following resolutions as special resolutions, in terms of Section 199 of the Companies Act, 2017, and other applicable laws, for the purposes of authorizing equity investments in the Company's associated company i.e. Lucky Core Ventures (Private) Limited , in the aggregate amount of up to PKR 3,000,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Three Billion), which has been established to undertake the acquisition of a 75.01% stake in Lotte Chemical Pakistan Limited from Lotte Chemical Corporation (South Korea), along with shares from the public, through a public offer:

(A) “**RESOLVED THAT** the Company be and is hereby authorized, in accordance with Section 199 of the Companies Act, 2017, to make investments in the form of equity in its associated company i.e. Lucky Core Ventures (Private) Limited (“**LCV**”), from time to time, over a period of 12 (twelve) months, of an aggregate amount of up to PKR 3,000,000,000/- (Pak Rupees Three Billion), broadly as per the terms stipulated in the statement accompanying this Notice and as determined by the authorized representatives of the Company.

(B) **FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** such investment(s) may be made and / or retained by the Company as the Board of Directors deem appropriate and / or modify the same from time to time in accordance with the instructions of the Board, as a consequence of which the Board is also hereby empowered and authorized to dispose of such investment(s) or any portion thereof as deemed fit by the Board.

(C) **RESOLVED FURTHER THAT** the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, or such person as may be authorized by the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, be and is hereby authorized and empowered to take all necessary steps to effectuate the aforementioned resolutions, make the requisite investments from time to time, do all such acts, deeds and things, and to negotiate, execute and deliver all such deeds, agreements, declarations, undertakings, and instruments, including any ancillary document(s) thereto, or provide any such documentation for and on behalf and in the name of the Company, fulfilling regulatory requirements, in each case, as may be necessary or required or deemed fit, for or in connection with or incidental to the proposed investment in LCV including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the negotiation and finalization of the terms and conditions relating to such investments and entering into arrangements with other shareholders”.

- To transact any other business with the permission of the chair.

The Statement of material facts, as required under section 134(3) of the Companies Act, 2017, in respect of the special business to be considered at the meeting is being sent to the shareholders with this notice, and also available at Company's website (<http://www.lucky-cement.com>).

By Order of the Board  
**FAISAL MAHMOOD**  
Company Secretary

Karachi: November 2, 2023

## Notes:

### 1. Closure of Shares Transfer Books

The Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Thursday, November 16, 2023 to Thursday, November 23, 2023 (both days inclusive). Share transfers received in order at the office of our Share Registrar / Transfer Agent, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahra-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400, by the close of business on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 shall be treated as being in time for the purpose of attending, and voting at, the EOGM.

### 2. Participation in the EOGM, via physical presence, including through proxy

Members whose names appear in the Register of Members as of November 15, 2023, are entitled to attend and vote at the EOGM. A member entitled to attend and vote at the EOGM is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend, speak and vote for him / her.

An instrument of proxy applicable for the EOGM is being provided with the Notice sent to the members. The Proxy form may also be downloaded from the Company's website: <http://www.lucky-cement.com>. An instrument of proxy and the power of attorney or other authority (if any) under which it is signed, or a certified true copy of such power or authority duly notarized must, to be valid, be deposited by post at the registered address of the Company, not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time of EOGM, excluding public holidays.

Members are requested to submit a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) at the registered address to our Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.M.C.H. Society, Karachi.

If a member appoints more than one proxy and more than one instrument of proxy is deposited by a member, all such instruments of proxy shall be rendered invalid.

### 3. Participation in the EOGM through video conferencing:

- To attend the EOGM through video-conferencing facility, members are requested to register themselves by providing the following information through email at [Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com](mailto:Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com) at least forty-eight (48) hours before the EOGM: (i) the Name of Member; (ii) CNIC / NTN No.; (iii) Folio No. / CDC IAS No.; (iv) Cell No.; and (v) Email Address.

- Members will be registered, after necessary verification as per the above requirement and will be provided a video-link by the Company via email.

- Only those members will be accepted at the EOGM via video-conferencing whose names match the details shared with the Company for registration (as mentioned in point 'a' above).

- The login facility will remain open from 11:30 a.m. till the end of EOGM

### 4. Guidelines for Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (“CDC”) Investor Account Holders:

CDC Investor Account Holders will further have to follow the under-mentioned guidelines as laid down in Circular No. 1 dated January 26, 2000, issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

#### a. For attending the EOGM:

- In case of individuals, the investor account holder or sub-account holder and / or the person whose securities are in group account where registration details are uploaded as per the CDC Regulations, shall authenticate his / her identity by showing his / her original CNIC or valid passport at the time of attending the EOGM.

- In case of a corporate entity, the Board of Directors' resolution / Power of Attorney with specimen signature of the nominee shall be produced at the time of the EOGM.

#### b. For appointing Proxies:

- In case of individuals, the investor account holder or sub-account holder and / or the person whose securities are in group account and their registration details are uploaded as per the CDC Regulations, shall submit the proxy form as per the above requirement.

- The proxy form shall be witnessed by two persons whose names, addresses and CNIC numbers shall be mentioned on the form.

- Copies of CNIC or the valid passport of the beneficial owners and the proxy shall be furnished along with the proxy form.

- The proxy shall produce his original CNIC or original valid passport at the time of the EOGM.

- In case of a corporate entity, the Board of Directors' resolution / Power of Attorney with specimen signature shall be submitted (unless it has been provided earlier) along with proxy form to the Company.

### 5. E-voting and Postal Ballot

It is hereby notified that pursuant to the Companies (Postal Ballot) Regulations, 2018 and its amendments notified vide SRO 2192(1)/2022 dated December 5, 2022, members will be allowed to exercise their right to vote for the special business(es) in the EOGM, in accordance with the conditions mentioned in the aforesaid Regulations. The Company shall provide its members with the following options for voting:

#### i) E-Voting Procedure

- Details of the e-voting facility will be shared through an e-mail with those members of the Company who have their valid CNIC numbers, cell numbers, and e-mail addresses available in the register of members of the Company within due course. Members who intend to exercise their right of vote through E-Voting shall provide their valid cell numbers and e-mail addresses on or before November 15, 2023.

- The web address, login details, will be communicated to members via email.

- Identity of the members intending to cast vote through e-Voting shall be authenticated through authentication through login.

- E-Voting lines will start from November 17, 2023, 9 a.m. and shall close on November 22, 2023 at 5 p.m. Members can cast their votes any time in this period. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by a member, he / she shall not be allowed to change it subsequently.

#### ii) Postal Ballot

- Members may alternatively opt for voting through postal ballot. For convenience of the members, Ballot Paper is annexed to this notice and the same is also available on the Company's website [www.lucky-cement.com](http://www.lucky-cement.com) to download.

- The members shall ensure that duly filled and signed ballot paper, along with copy of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) should reach the Chairman of the meeting through post at 6-A Muhammad Ali Housing Society, Karachi (Attention of the Company Secretary) by Wednesday, November 22, 2023 before 5:00 p.m. The signature on the ballot paper shall match with the signature on CNIC. A postal ballot received after this time / date shall not be considered for voting.



# Governor opens Dept of Seerat-un-Nabi Studies



PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday visited

Former Provincial Ministers, Syed Zahir Ali Shah and Moulana Amanullah Haqqani, Sheikh-ul-Hadees, Moulana Muhammad Idrees, Sheikh-ul-Hadees, Moulana Mufti Ghulam-ur-Rehman, Mufti Shahab-ud-Din Poplazi, Dean Islamic Studies, Dr. Muhammad Salim, faculty members and students were also present on the occasion.

Governor also attended Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) conference as a Chief Guest. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed gratitude to organizers and Ulama for holding the conference.

He said that Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) is best way of life for all of us and we should follow the life of our holy Prophet to achieve success in the world and life thereafter.

He said that the factors that have created rift in our society can be overcome by following the principle preached by our Prophet (Peace be Upon Him).

He said that the inauguration of the department is also a source of pride and pleasure for him.

He said that all the social evils can be controlled by following Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) and we can change mindset of young generation by informing them about the golden principles of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW).

Governor said that all our problems can be solved by living a life that is according to Seerat-un-Nabi. He also advised young generation to abide by the principles shown in Seerat-un-Nab (SAW).

Dean Islamic Studies, Dr. Muhammad Salim also announced free admission for students and said that department would be made fully functional after appointing staff and faculty members.

## FIA arrest four accused in operation

PESHAWAR (APP): Anti-Corruption Circle, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Wednesday conducted an operation under the supervision of Deputy Director Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar Saadullah and arrested four accused for selling counterfeit and unregistered medicines.

The accused were identified as Haider Ali, Hameed, Ali Shah and Yasin, said FIA official adding that the accused Haider Ali was involved in selling and supplying fake and unregistered medicines in different areas of Peshawar.

Cases were registered against the accused and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) started an investigation.

## Bodies of two brothers found

PESHAWAR (INP): Bullet riddled bodies of two brothers were recovered from agricultural fields in Badaber Saifan police station jurisdiction on Wednesday.

According to details, bodies of Kamran and brother Imran s/o Rasheed Khan hailing from Kagawala was found from cropland.

DSP Badaber Circle, Ziaullah Khan along with investigation team reached the scene and shifted the bodies to hospital for post-mortem.

Heirs of the deceased alleged rivals Nadir s/o Bahadur, Hassan Baz, his brother Shehryar s/o Gulzar and Shehzad s/o Nadir Khan for murdering the two brothers.

The police registered a case into the incident and started raids at the expected hideouts of the nominated suspects.

## Power supply to 15 schemes disconnected

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), Dera Ismail Cicile on Wednesday disconnected power supply to 15 water supply schemes of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Kulachi for nonpayment of outstanding dues.

During its operation, initiated on the directive of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Power and Energy against power pilferers and defaulters, SE Pesco Dera Ismail Khan Circle, Sardar Aslam Khan Gandapur and his team disconnected the power connection of 15 water supply schemes of the Public Health Engineering in Kulachi tehsil.

PESCO Spokesman said an amount of Rs 13.8 million was due against these 15 water supply schemes. SE Pesco D I Khan said the Public Health Engineering Department was time and again asked for payment of the dues but no response was received.

He said in all the Public Health Engineering Department, Kulachi has to pay Rs 40 million to the PESCO and if this amount was not paid, power supply to its other schemes will also be disconnected.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan addressing launching ceremony of Government-Business Communication Platform (GoBiz Connect).

# SCCI, WWF agree to launch joint ventures for preservation of water

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Water Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF) have agreed to launch joint ventures for conservation and water and prevention of its wastage.

This was agreed during a meeting between president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fuad Ishaq and World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF) Regional Head Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/Senior Manager Conservation & NBS Muhammad Waseem here at the chamber house on Wednesday.

The chamber's senior member Fazal Muqem and Secretary General Sajjad Aziz also present in the meeting.

On the occasion, officials of the WWF apprised the meeting about various ongoing projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and highlighted key-initiatives and interventions in various sectors, mainly agriculture, forestry, wildlife, climate change and oceans etc.

The officials urged the SCCI to work with WWF for conservation of water and its utilization in an efficient manner on which the president of the chamber fully agreed and identified a number of sectors for launching joint ventures by both institutions.

Fuad Ishaq in his remarks during the meeting stressed the need for adopting an effective strategy for preservation of water, which is draining from industries. The SCCI chief said he had given viable proposals to the government and relevant institutions for prevention of water wastage and conservation.

Fuad Ishaq said if the proposals were implemented then the unlimited/unnecessary consumption of water will be prevented while the environment will become clean by plantation and erecting green belt by using water, besides, environmental challenges/issues would also be addressed and prevent from

serious damages as well. The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) chief gave suggestions jointly initiating plantation, and joint ventures in dates, olive and other key-sectors on which members of the WWF delegation agreed and expressed willingness to hold meetings and collaboration among both institutions on a regular basis.

Fuad Ishaq assured the WWF delegation of holding joint awareness sessions to highlight significance of water, proper utilization and prevention of wastage of water and other key-initiatives and interventions in various important sectors.

# 25 killed during skirmishes between warring tribes

PESHAWAR (APP): At least 25 people were killed during skirmishes between warring tribes over land dispute in Kurram tribal districts so far.

According to an official statement here issued by a spokesman of Home Department KP, the rival tribes now agreed to vacate the bunkers and trenches in affected areas of Kurram district where

the situation started towards improvement due to efforts of Khyber Government and law enforcement agencies.

Several peace jirgas were held during last week attended by the area elders and representatives of the Government and law enforcement agencies that brought significant improvement in the area. The government was

trying to open all roads in one of two days so that delivery of medicines, food and other necessary commodities could be ensured.

The work of the special land commission to settle the land dispute was about to complete and tribal elders of both sides especially Kohat peace jirga's role for maintaining peace was praised worthy.

# EIB foils drug smuggling bid, recovers 18kg hashish

PESHAWAR (INP): In a major crackdown on drug smugglers, the Excise Intelligence Bureau (EIB) Peshawar foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of drugs to Punjab and recovered 18 Kilogram hashish.

According to a spokesperson of the Excise Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday said that acting on a tip-off, a team of Excise Intelligence Bureau Peshawar intercepted a vehicle on Ring Road Peshawar and recovered the hashish concealed in the vehicle's secret compartments.

The accused, Ayub Khan, a resident of Kokikhel Jamrud, Khyber district, was arrested on the spot.

He said, a case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is underway.

The spokesperson lauded the efforts of the Excise Intelligence Bureau Peshawar for their vigilance and timely action in foiling the drug smuggling attempt.

He said that the department was committed to curbing the menace of drug smuggling and will take all necessary measures to bring the culprits to justice.

# Retaining Centre activated

PESHAWAR (APP): As the deadline for volunteer repatriation for illegal and unregistered foreigner ended on October 31, the government has activated Retaining Centres with a capacity to hold 2000 individuals at a time at each centre.

According to official sources, the centre had been activated to expedite the process of repatriation of illegal Afghan refugees. Special security arrangements had also been made in the center including installation of CCTV cameras deployment of police personnel, armored vehicles and mobile NADRA registration van.

The medical staff had also been deputed at the centres along with two ambulances.

The illegal foreigners would be brought to the center and presented before the magistrate after their data registration and after completing the legal requirements the Khyber Police would take them to Torkham border for repatriation.

# ‘Police committed to end terrorism from country’

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General (IG) of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan here Wednesday said that the police committed to end terrorism from country.

Every possible effort to sabotage the peace process would be thwarted, he said. “The restoration of peace and security is the top priority of the police. The police will utilize all available means and capabilities to safeguard the lives and property of the public,” he added.

He expressed these views while addressing a high-level police conference at the Range Office in DI Khan.

He said, “Anti-social

elements that aim to spread terrorism and create instability through insurgency in the country are trying to undermine it, and it is our collective responsibility to defeat these attempts.”

“We will give a terror-free country to the coming generations. To counter elements in society who are enemies of peace, we must awaken public awareness and defeat terrorism”.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) of Dera Naseer Mahmood Satti and other relevant officials briefed the IGP in detail regarding the security situation, security matters, and terrorism.

The IGP took an individual review of terrorist inci-

dents in the region and directed the police authorities to monitor the movement of terrorists and take stringent measures to apprehend and eliminate elements that disrupt peace.

“The restoration of peace and security is the police's top priority, and the public should not give terrorists any opportunity in their areas,” he emphasized.

“All stakeholders to ensure strict vigilance over the miscreants individuals through public cooperation and focus on all security and public safety matters so that the environment of peace is established, and public trust in the police is maintained,” he urged.

# Mainly dry, partly cloudy weather to prevail in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Wednesday predicted that mainly dry and partly cloudy weather is expected over most districts of the province, while cold in hilly areas during morning and night hours.

It said that isolated rain is expected in Chitral, Upper Dir, Upper Swat, Shangla, Battagram, Kohistan and Torgar districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Fog in isolated pockets was also expected over Charsadda, Nowshera,

Mardan, Peshawar and D.I. Khan districts.

While dense fog in isolated packets over Rashakai to Swabi as well as over highway from Swabi to Jahangira in late night and early morning hours was also expected.

During the last 24 hours, mainly dry weather prevailed in most districts of the province. Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was nil.

The maximum and min-

imum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were as Peshawar 30/17, Chitral 26/06, Timergara 28/12, Dir 27/07, Mirkhani 31/10, Kalam 20/02, Drosh 27/11, Saidu Sharif 27/08, Pattan 29/12, Malam Jabba 19/05, Takht Bhai 30/15, Kakul 25/08, Balakot 27/09, Parachinar NA, Bannu 30/17, Cherat 24/12, DI Khan City 31/20.

The lowest temperature recorded in the province was 02°C in Kalam.



PESHAWAR: Vendor displaying and selling decoration frames to attract customers during his roadside setup at Northern bypass.





## In brief

### Tent classes setup in govt college Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A fire incident occurred at the Govt Degree College, Khwazakhela, KPK. Swift and coordinated efforts from the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps North and the Fire Brigade were instrumental in extinguishing the fire and preventing further damage. In response to the incident, the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of the college community. They erected eight tents within the college grounds to facilitate the resumption of classes, particularly for female students and to ensure minimal disruption to their education. The college faculty, students and the people of Khwazakhela extend their heartfelt appreciation for the prompt and effective actions of the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North. Their swift response and unwavering support to the school administration during this challenging time have been commendable. Both the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North remain dedicated to providing essential resources and support to the local communities in KPK to enhance the quality of education.

### DRC Pir Baba meeting held F.P. Report

BUNER: The DRC circle Pir Baba members on Wednesday held meeting in Pir Baba police station. The Chairman Circle Wali Rehman SHO Anwar Saeed the DRC members participated. The meeting discussed the applications were received in the office. The DRC members after that heard two of the applicants and recorded their statements over their disputes of access to a piece of twenty marla land for coming house purposes. The DRC nominated four members committee under Sardar Ali Khan to visit the spot and submit report. The secretary DRC directed to inform all of concerned parties to be present next day of hearing. The other application also discussed by listening the parties who were dispute over a land occupation claim and an access to the other piece of land. The parties claims were quite different when heard. The DRC fixed next date for hearing and asked the parties to be present with documents and witness of the deal positively. The DRC members agreed upon they would decide every application on merit and justice to be done between the parties through mediation so as to solve the disputes in larger interest of the parties so as to save their precious time hard earned money and to resolve the issue on their mutual consent that would shed burden on courts as well.

### 22 faint

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): As many as 22 persons fainted due to leakage of gas from a cylinder that fell from one of the bogies of a goods train heading from Sheikhupura to Lahore near Pind Ferozawala on Wednesday. Police officials said that those fainted had been shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Ferozawala. However, their condition was stable, they informed. Giving further details, they said that Carbon Dioxide cylinders were loaded on two bogies of the train. But due to inadequate arrangements, they added, one of the cylinders fell down from the moving train. There, the officials added, children of the area opened a regulator of the cylinder which resulted in gas leakage.



QUETTA: PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq addressing a press conference.

## Functioning of two industrial units opened

F.P. Report

GHALANI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Dr. Aamer Abdullah on Wednesday, paid a one-day visit to Merged District Mohmand and inaugurated the functioning of two industrial units established there while laid the foundation stone of a new unit as well.

In the industrial zone, established in the district under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC), the caretaker minister formally inaugurated the two new oil units which have been activated within a short period of one month while also laid the foundation stone of the newly established flour unit.

A total investment of 1.2 billion rupees has been invested in the establishment of these units, which will provide employment opportunities to a total of 1,100 people, wherein, better employment opportunities will be provided to the local people in their own area.

During the inauguration the caretaker minister was accompanied by Khyber



Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company Chief Executive Officer Javed Iqbal Khattak and the company's zone manager, along with industrialists and local elders.

Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker minister expressed his determination that the day is not far when these areas will be gain fame by industrialization alongside their wonderful traditions of its inhabitants and their hard work. He directed on the occasion that the waste coming out of the marble industries in the area should be made usefull. He said that a plant should be set up to make tiles from this waste and it can also be used in products made in ball mills. He said that KPEZDMC should provide technical assistance in this

regard. On this occasion, the caretaker minister directed the company authorities to provide assistance for awareness regarding food safety regulation during food processing in cooking oil units while urged the relevant industries to improve the quality of cleanliness as per legal requirements in their units.

Taking notice of the issue of drainage in the zone by some industrialists, the caretaker minister directed to include this scheme in the next development package. On this occasion, he directed the company authorities to establish a fund with the mutual cooperation of the industrialists following the principles of corporate social responsibility, which can be used for the welfare of the local population.

## Law & order top priority of police. KP IGP

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat Khan on Wednesday renewed his pledge that every attempt to sabotage the peace process would be thwarted. He stated this while chairing a high level meeting here at Range Office Dera Ismail Khan which was attended by Additional IG of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Shaukat Abbas, Regional Police Officer Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti, District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qisrani and Superintendents of police.

The IGP said that maintain peace and order was the top priority of the police force, adding, all the available resources would be utilized for protecting the lives and property of the citizens. He said the anti-social elements were trying to spread chaos and instability in the country through terrorism and it was the collective responsibility of all to make them failure.

He said the decisive actions would be taken to root out the menace of terrorism from the country so that a terrorism-free Pakistan could be given to coming generations. He said "the anti-social elements would be defeated by creating awareness among the masses against them." Earlier, RPO Nasir Mehmood Satti briefed the IGP in detail about the law and order situation, security issues and terrorism in the region.

The IGP reviewed the each terrorism incident occurred in Dera region and directed the police authorities concerned to keep a close watch on the movement of terrorists and take concrete steps to root out the elements who undermine the peace process. He said the citizens should also cooperate with the police in eradication of terrorism from the society. He said the people should not allow any terrorist to enter their areas and inform police if they notice any suspects around them. IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan said "the establishment of peace in KP become possible due to unprecedented sacrifices rendered by the police, security forces and the people of the province.

## Expiring deadline for illegal immigrants Verification process begins at holding entry point

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: After expiring deadline for illegal immigrants, verification and data collection process of repatriated Afghan families commenced here in holding center, Hamza Baba Square of Landi Kotal on Wednesday. It is to be mentioned here that till 31 October 2023, approximately 100485 persons (men, women and children) or 5265 Afghan families returned back to Afghanistan via Torkham border.

The government had established desks of National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Federal Investigative Agency (FIA), Custom, Afghan Commissionerate, security forces and other related departments to facilitate the home return Afghans. On Wednesday, 01 November, hundreds of unlawful Afghan families arrived at the holding center, Landi Kotal where the authorities conducted verification of them.

According to the official, following verification and data collection, the immigrants will be transported in fly coaches provided by the government to the zero



point to cross the border to their motherland, Afghanistan. Meanwhile Health department, Rescue 1122, Al-Khidmat Foundation and local traders have also initiated its welfare activities to ease Afghan repatriated families.

Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Abdunasir visited the entry point, observed the verification process of the repatriated Afghan families. He also met with going back Afghans and inquired their miseries. Separately, the FIA officials in Torkham block entry of drivers without legal visa and passport on Wednesday. According to the official

report, as per the government policy, had announced three weeks back pertaining restriction of transporters entry at Torkham border without proper visa, the drivers lacked travelling visa were denied to cross in at the crossing. The transport community flayed the newly travelling scheme, adopted for the drivers and said dozens of vehicles loaded with import commodities, mostly of fruits stuck at the border. It will certainly suffer export and import at Torkham border, they added. The asked the government to implement pro-transporters policy at the border to enhance business activities.

## Traffic Police take steps against encroachments

F.P. Report

MARDAN: On the basis of a public complaint, Mardan Traffic Police is taking action against road encroachments and other traffic violations.

On the orders issued by District Police Officer Mardan Najib ur Rehman, DSP Traffic Saadat Khan along with TMA officials on Canal Road Noshara Road, College Chowk New Bus Stand against the encroachments on the footpath and road by shopkeepers and carriage drivers. Actions were taken in which some shopkeepers voluntarily removed the encroachments while many shopkeepers permanently removed the encroachments and collected the goods in the TMA office.

The footpath was cleared for pedestrians and the road for general traffic. Strict instructions to the shopkeepers not to encroach in the

future. Let it be clear that action against encroachments on the road will continue. Traffic flow in the city of Mardan is our first priority. We appeal to the people of Mardan to cooperate with us in this regard Cooperate

**Parents asled tp take special care of their children:** Additional Deputy Commissioner Samiur Rehman has said that parents should take special care of their children, wherever the child's rights are violated, there is a problem of child labor, if the child is being tortured physically, sexually or psychologically, then they should immediately contact the helpline 1121. District Social Welfare Officer Jamal Shah, Sub-Inspector Bashir Khan, former Nazim Hamayon Khalji, Aqela Sumbal and other representatives of the Education Department and other officials were present in the meeting.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner said that education every The basic right of the child is the Antamiya will strictly implement the laws to remove the obstacles in the way of children's rights. Child abuse can be reported and it will be implemented immediately. Additional Deputy Commissioner Samiur Rehman said that an awareness campaign will be started from next week against children deprived of education and professional prostitutes. Banners and raffinaxel will be displayed in the squares and intersections of the city. Citizens should fulfill their responsibilities in this regard.

**FIA operation:** Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Mardan big operation, two people from Dara Adam Khel were arrested and a case was registered, the action was taken by Inspector Kirpal Singh and Khaqan Ali.



KOHAT: Benazir Nutrition Program and District Health staff holding banner during awareness walk on iodine. — F.P. photo

## ‘Enhancing wheat seed production in Mardan’

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at bolstering Pakistan's agricultural sector, USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity, in collaboration with the KP Agriculture Research Department and local farmers, is pioneering an innovative approach to certified wheat seed production in District Mardan. This project, termed "Enhancing Wheat Seed Production through Seed Cluster Approach," promises to bring about transformative changes in the region's wheat production capabilities.

Pakistan, being the 8th largest wheat producer globally and the 3rd largest in Asia, has a significant stake in agriculture, contributing 7.8 percent of the value added in the sector and 1.8

percent of the country's GDP (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-2022). To address the challenges faced by wheat farmers in procuring good quality high yielding wheat seed in a sustainable manner, the seed cluster approach has been adopted.

Dr. Shakeel Kakakhel, Deputy Chief of Party for USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity, highlighted the activity's significance, stating, "In KP, the yield of wheat has remained low as compared to other provinces. The average yield in Punjab and Sindh is 2.9 tons/hectare, while average yield of wheat in KP is 1.56 tons/hectare. Various factors such as lack of high yielding varieties, water shortages, and uneven pesticide and fertilizer applications cause yield to be relatively lower. Seed determines more than any other element

of what result a crop can achieve."

The annual wheat seed requirement of KP is around 30,000 tons, while only 7 percent (2,100 tons) of certified wheat seed is available to farmers according to Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department. The remaining seed comes from informal sources either farmers' saved seed or seed obtained from fellow farmers, middlemen, or village shops, where information about the source of variety is in most cases unknown.

Under the cluster approach, 250 farmers in Sawal Dher, District Mardan, will receive basic wheat seed for 250 acres of land, blended fertilizer, plant stimulant, and handholding—a move aimed at strengthening the foundation of the wheat farming community in the region.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013

Shukria Ismail

**‘Information belongs to the people and must be returned to them, the government is only custodian of this information, or in other words we can say; whoever is using public money is answerable to public for the duties they perform and decisions they take.’**

Right to Information, as the name suggests, this is the right of citizens to know what's happening around them and who's doing what. People have the right to question about everything where the public money is involved and the important decisions regarding fate of the people take place. Under RTI, citizens can demand information and the government is obliged to share that.

"Right to Information" is not just the combination of three words making an ordinary statement, indeed "Right to Information" is a Law, having its proper position in the different constitutions of different countries, all around the globe. It has different names in the countries having it, as one of their laws in their constitutions. It is called as "Freedom of information law" in

the United States of America, Australia, united kingdom and Norway etc. "Access to Information or Documents law" in Canada, columbia and Denmark. "Right to information law" is a rather more recent name it acquired after the law was passed by India in 2005, and the same name for it in our country "Islamic Republic of Pakistan". However, functions the same, that's: people's ability to access information.

In Pakistan, we have 5 Acts regarding "Right to Information" in practice, four in Provinces and one at federal level. They are more or less similar yet they're separate and applicable in different jurisdictions. We will not skip mentioning the names of all, they are; Federal Right of Access to Information Act 2017, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013, Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013, Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016, and Balochistan Right to Information Act 2021.

As belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, we will emphasize more on our Right to Information, that's: "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to

Information Act 2013", giving the reference of Article 19-A of constitution of Pakistan, Which states that: "Every citizen shall have the right to have access to Information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by the law"

It means that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged districts can demand for information, can ask question regarding what's going on around them and who's doing what, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government institutions and authorities. People can make them accountable because these government institutions and authorities are bound by the article 19-A of the Constitution of Pakistan to share that information and answer the questions of the people.

But there are certain limitations regarding the information people ask for, people can ask confidently for that information which is very closely related to them, that's: they can question that where there money get spend by their Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its institutions, such as budget allocation for health, safety, education, clean drinking water,

clear roads and streets, these are some examples of limitations for the people which they should keep in mind while asking for information. There is prohibition on asking for information related to national security, international affairs and other major informations like these two, because information like this, is not related to people or is not their cup of tea. The rest they can ask anything related to them if they have any issue, confusion, suspicion, either it is personal or related to the performance of the government.

The purpose and advantage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013 is that first of all it is empowering the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged districts by enabling them to ask for their rights and make their Government accountable. Secondly, it is Anti-corruption Tool, which can best fight with corruption and can expose the wrong doings and corrupt practices. Thirdly, this legislation is democratizing the information and not letting the life and fate of the people just in the hands of members of provincial assembly and government officers. Fourthly, it is mak-

ing the government accountable to the people, in order to bring Transparency in the Political system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Further, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013 guarantee the dignity of the people. It is even very crucial and helpful for the journalists and activists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who are always curious to get authentic and accurate information without any barrier.

Point to note necessarily that every citizen of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, either educated or not, working or not, is eligible to apply for information under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013. Now here the main question prompts Which is that; where and how to make an information request? so the citizen/requester of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can make a request for information in writing, to the designated official of the public body, using the application form available both in English and Urdu language, on the official website of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information commission and send it through email to the designated official. However, the

requester can also make request on a plain paper by describing the requested information on it and providing his/her contact details, and can send it through postal address or can handed over to the designated official. Even if one can't write, he/she can verbally ask for information.

The asked question or requested information will be addressed within 10 to 20 working days under the KP-RTI. Keep in mind that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013 also contains punishment in case of misuse of the requested information. Some reputable organizations are providing awareness sessions on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act 2013, which is amazingly an appreciable step of them. One these organizations are "Centre for governance and public accountability" in short can call it as CGPA, is playing its role very actively by awaring the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa about their rights to access to information. CGPA is training the youth from different backgrounds and professionals from different field on RTI laws for so many years.





## Myanmar military's HRs abuses a 'system exercised from the top'

YANGON (Agencies): Early one morning in March, a group of Myanmar soldiers marched into a village in the country's east near the border with Thailand. They had been engaged in days of intense fighting with armed groups opposed to the February 2021 coup - in which the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratically elected leaders and took power - subjecting the area to intense shelling and aerial bombardment.

Many of the people of Nam Neang village had taken refuge in the surrounding jungle but 18 had sought sanctuary with three monks in the temple, according to the Shan Human Rights Foundation. On March 11, the soldiers surrounded the temple and demanded those inside come out.

They "shot them dead ... took photos of the corpses and shared the photos on social media", said the foundation, adding that the soldiers claimed to have killed anti-coup fighters. The incident, a crime under international law, is only one of a number of abuses to have taken place by troops under the command of Lieutenant-General Aung Aung, according to research released on Wednesday by Security Force Monitor (SFM), a project of the Columbia Law Human Rights Institute in the United States. The study, Under Whose Command?, covers a period of 12 years until March 30, 2023 and sheds new light on Myanmar's notoriously secretive military - revealing the links between low-level soldiers accused of human rights abuses against civilians and their commanding officers and beyond.

"In many areas of the country, almost every single person who ever held command had disappearances, killings, rape or instances of torture allegedly committed by units under their command," the report said. "This is particularly true in areas of longstanding conflict and concern for human rights abuses." In Aung Aung's case, the incident in Nam Neang was not the first under his watch. He was in charge of the 33rd Light Infantry Division, which has been linked to the 2017 crackdown on the Rohingya that is now the subject of a genocide investigation at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). After that, he was given command control of the South Western Command before being made a Lieutenant General in October 2022 and promoted to lead the Bureau of Special Operations 2, which covers operations in the country's east and northeast. It is quite shocking to see the scale of this, and the stunning number of violations over time," Tony Wilson, the founder and director of SFM and the lead researcher on the project told Al Jazeera. "You see the same pattern play out over again and the same units commit the same kinds of violations even when the commander has changed."

Trawling through thousands of data sources from March 30, 2011 when Senior General Min Aung Hlaing became Commander-in-Chief,



the research found 64 percent (51 of 79) of all senior army commanders had alleged disappearances, killings, rape or instances of torture committed by units under their command. In addition, 54 percent (28 of 51) of the commanders were promoted in rank after at least one alleged disappearance, killing, rape or instance of torture was committed by the units under their command. Of the others, nine could not be promoted in rank further. "It's about building a picture; that it's a system of control exercised from the top," Wilson said. Other Myanmar experts who were not involved in the research said the work could be useful for accountability and building war crimes and genocide cases against the armed forces.

"It's not a few rogue elements. It's a majority of senior commanders," Thomas Kean, a Myanmar expert with Crisis Group, told Al Jazeera. The February 2021 coup plunged Myanmar into crisis after the generals responded to mass protests against its power grab with brutal force, and opponents joined forces with fighters from long-established ethnic armed groups in a bid to restore civilian rule. Following its strategy of "four cuts" or "clearance operations", the military has sought to cut off their opponents' access to food, funds, intelligence and recruits. First used against the ethnic Karen in the 1960s, it was also deployed in northwestern Rakhine state in August 2017 against the mostly Muslim Rohingya.

Hundreds of thousands fled across the border into Bangladesh as soldiers burned down entire villages, and carried out killings and acts of sexual violence. "[The research] further the case that the top brass of the Tatmadaw [the Myanmar military] must have known what was going to happen when they promoted these people. The outcome had to be genocidal if you put these particular military figures in these roles," Ronan Lee, an expert on Myanmar and the Rohingya at Loughborough University London, told Al Jazeera. "It's like any job - you choose the person who you think will do the job. The Tatmadaw knew it was choosing people with a track record of committing atrocity crimes against civilians." Since the coup, investigators have accused the military of similar tactics

in areas, such as the central Sagaing region, where the anti-coup resistance has been particularly strong.

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), a United Nations body set up in 2018 to collect evidence on suspected atrocity crimes in the Southeast Asian nation of 53 million people, warned in August that war crimes committed by Myanmar's military, including mass executions and sexual violence, had become "increasingly frequent and brazen". It said it had documented "widespread and systematic attacks against civilians" and that it was building case files to be used to hold individual perpetrators responsible". While the ICJ case is the most advanced of the international actions, cases have also been filed under universal jurisdiction from South America to Europe and Southeast Asia. Last week, a group of ethnic Chin people from Myanmar filed a case in Manila against Ming Aung Hlaing and eight of his military commanders over the post-coup crackdown in the northwestern state. Among the other incidents documented in the SFM report is an alleged shelling attack on two Mon civilians by a battalion under the Southeastern Regional Military Command. The study traces the chain of command from the alleged perpetrator up to the regional commander, Myat Thet Oo.

It said the research suggested the killings were "part of a pattern" and that in the past 12 years, five of the six commanders of Southeastern Regional Military Command (where the incident occurred) had had at least one allegation of killing, rape, or torture committed by units under their command. The research also documented the entire chain of command behind the 2015 rape, torture and killing of two Kachin teachers in northeastern Myanmar. At the time, local villagers said the army's 503rd Light Infantry Battalion was stationed near the village when the women were killed. Wilson said he hoped SFM research would help support legal action and ensure justice for those who had lost loved ones as a result of the military's actions. "This is a large number of commanders over a long period of time and all of them have violations," he said.

## 5 dangerous prisoners escape from Tunisian jail

TUNIS (BBC): Five prisoners branded as dangerous Islamists have escaped from a jail in Tunisia. The country's interior ministry released their photos and called on citizens to provide any information they have to prevent "terrorist acts". The inmates escaped from Mornaguia prison, the ministry said on its Facebook page.

Ahmed Malki, imprisoned for killing two politicians in 2013, was among those who escaped, Reuters said. Also known as "the Somali", he had been serving a 24-year sentence for the assassination of secular politicians Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmî, it said. The killings in 2013 plunged Tunisia into political crisis, forcing the eventual resignation of the government. The escaped prisoners also included Rayd Touati, who security sources say has taken part in the most violent attacks that have shaken Tunisia in the past decade, according to Reuters. Tunisia became the birthplace of the Arab Spring when it overthrew its long-serving ruler, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, in 2011. But it is facing increasing political turmoil as President Kais Saied has sought to seize near-total power. One of Tunisia's worst attacks happened in 2015, when a gunman opened fire on tourists staying in a popular resort just north of Sousse, killing thirty-eight people.

## China security minister in Myanmar as fighting rages near border

YANGON (Agencies): A high-ranking official from China has made a visit to military-ruled Myanmar to discuss security along the countries' shared border, Myanmar state media has reported. The visit by Chinese State Council member and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong has come as fighting rages along Myanmar's northeastern frontier, where an alliance of ethnic minority groups recently launched an offensive against the military government.

Wang Xiaohong met Myanmar Home Minister Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae in the capital, Naypyidaw, to discuss "peace and tranquillity in border areas of the two countries" and cooperation on law enforcement and security, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper. Wang's visit came just days after the Arakan Army (AA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), calling themselves the Three Brotherhood Alliance, launched an offensive to seize military targets in the northern part of Shan state. The alliance claims to have seized several military posts and key roads linking Myanmar with China. The three groups - which analysts have said can call on at least 15,000 fighters between them - have fought regularly with the military over autonomy and control of resources. Several groups, including those in the Three Brotherhood Alliance, have collaborated with pro-democracy militias formed after the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

The militias, collectively known as the People's Defence Force, now battle the army across much of the country. Battles have been reported since Friday in the Shan state townships of Kunlong, Hseni, Kyaukse, Kutkai, Lashio, Laukaing, Muse, Namhkan, Chinshwehaw and Nawngkhio. Fighting also spread in some areas in northern Kachin state, the northern part of Sagaing region, and Mogoke township in Mandalay region. The military has responded with bombing and shelling, sending many hundreds of civilians fleeing to safer areas, residents have said. The Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported that towns in Shan state were attacked by the combined forces to affect border trade and transportation.

## Zimbabwe's cholera crisis fuelled by chronic water shortages

HARARE (BBC): For months now, Zimbabwe has been battling to stem the spread of deadly cholera in its cities and villages because the country simply lacks clean water. "If the water comes at all it's often dirty," Regai Chibanda, a 46-year-old father of five from the sprawling township of Chitungwiza, told me.

Cholera, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by consuming food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae, can spread quickly in cramped and dirty conditions. It has become a kind of grim reaper to this southern African nation - back in 2008-2009 more than 4,000 went to their graves when the water-borne disease struck in what was already a frenzied and turbulent time. It reflected the imploding political and economic crisis when hyper-inflation peaked at 80 billion per cent and heralded a historic power-sharing government that eventually got to grips with the situation. Today inflation is again rearing its head and cholera has spread across all of the country's 10 provinces, mainly affecting children, often left unsupervised in the stifling heat as their parents try to work. This outbreak first struck back in February and as October ended official figures from the Health and Childcare Department are listing nearly 6,000 cases and some 123 suspected deaths. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who won disputed polls in August for a second term in office, has promised a nationwide borehole drilling programme. This is to be supported by solar-powered water points, mainly to serve some 35,000 villages which do not have access to clean drinking water.

In the capital, Harare, residents can go for weeks, or even months, without a regular supply of water from the Harare City Council. In Harare's satellite township of Chitungwiza, more than 50 deaths were reported as October ended - all from cholera. Chitungwiza is a city all of its own given its size and population, but the infrastructure of its water works and civil planning have barely caught up with an ever-expanding population and a massive exodus from the villages to the city in the constant search for work. "In Chitungwiza things are not good as far as water is concerned. There have been many people affected by cholera and every year it's the same," said Mr Chibanda, who commutes by car daily to central Harare for his job as a printer. He said he had heard of several deaths in his neighbourhood.

"Our water supply is not good, residents are resorting to buying mineral water from the supermarkets to save their lives but of course it's hitting their pockets." Out in Mutare, the main city in Manicaland's eastern highlands, it is the same story - more infections from cholera and a city struggling to serve their residents with the most basic of needs - clean

water. Social media is full of cholera information alerts, though a comment earlier this month on the health ministry's Facebook page from a resident in the southern city of Bulawayo summed up the predicament for most: "How can we wash our hands? We don't have running water in Bulawayo - for almost two weeks now." Cholera is cheap to treat with rehydration salts - and easy to avoid altogether if people have access to clean water and decent toilet facilities. As recently as last week, Harare pharmacist Panashe Chawana, 26, told me he was seeing between two and three patients in the chemist for cholera medication - ranging from children to adults, all showing the classic symptoms of the runs and a desperate lack of energy "If it wasn't for the public announcements, Harare would have seen much more. It's only because people became aware of the dangers of un-purified water matching their symptoms that's when they sought medical help," says Mr Chawana. "And so we tell them to look out for white substance in their stool and prescribe things like [the antibiotic] Azithromycin. On the whole there're less people coming in now." But aid organisation Mercy Corps, in an appeal for borehole funding, has warned that the situation is far from improving.

"Despite a significant decline in cases from July to August, we now witness a worrying spike of cholera cases, particularly among women and children. In Manicaland, many people have to use crowded water facilities, while others must rely on unsafe wells and rivers for drinking water, putting them at further risk," Mildred Makore, the group's country director, said in a statement. A few days ago the World Health Organization's emergencies director Mike Ryan called cholera "a poster child of poverty, social injustice, climate change and conflict". It is not straightforward to see which of these can be pinned on President Mnangagwa's Zimbabwe, but the reported cholera cases point to a lack of will or ability or both to stem the occurrences by providing fresh water.

In Harare's southern suburbs of Budiriro and Mbare, stretching to informal settlements like Hopley, the search for water is a visual reality. Wheelbarrows are carted across many roads to community centres and churches with boreholes willing to open their taps and share their water. The government's investment in fresh water supplies has been underwhelming, and here critics point to the disparities in wealth between those who can afford to sink boreholes in their backyards and those who cannot. In the towns, city councils - often run by the opposition - blame a desperate lack of investment by the government in providing new kit and cleaning chemicals to purify the water.

## New York, Canadian defendants charged

NEW YORK (Reuters): A Brooklyn man and a Montreal couple were charged in New York with scheming to violate US sanctions by exporting millions of dollars of technology to Russia, including electronics supporting the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine. Salimdzon Nasriddinov, 52; Nikolay Goltsev, 37, and Kristina Puzryeva, 32, were each charged with smuggling, conspiracy to violate sanctions and wire fraud conspiracy.

Prosecutors said Nasriddinov, a Russian-Tajikistan national, was arrested in Brooklyn and that thousands of semiconductors and other electronics were recovered from his home. Goltsev and Puzryeva, who are married Russian-Canadian nationals, were arrested at a Manhattan hotel during a trip to visit Nasriddinov, and about \$20,000 in cash was recovered from them, according to prosecutors.

Authorities said they also seized more than \$1.1 million from domestic bank accounts associated with the scheme. Each defendant was ordered detained following their initial appearances in Brooklyn federal court. None entered a plea. The office of US Attorney Breon Peace in Brooklyn want the defendants jailed pending trial, saying they could face several years in prison, pose a "serious flight risk" and have "significant" foreign ties. Lawyers for the defendants did not immediately respond to requests for comment or could not immediately be located. The case is one of many coordinated through the US Department of Justice's Task Force KleptoCapture, which was created to enforce sanctions, export restrictions and other measures in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

US authorities said the scheme began in January 2022 and involved

Brooklyn-based SH Brothers and SN Electronics arranging shipments of electronic components and integrated circuits after buying the equipment from US companies. Authorities said there were more than 300 illegal shipments valued at about \$10 million, with some of the electronics later recovered from helicopters, missiles, tanks and other Russian equipment that had been seized in Ukraine. According to the complaint, the defendants knew the electronics had military uses. It said Nasriddinov once wrote to Goltsev "Happy Defender of the Fatherland," prompting Goltsev to reply with a smile emoji and writing "we are defending it in the way that we can." Another message quoted Goltsev complaining to Puzryeva about his fingers hurting from typing account activity on his laptop, prompting his wife to respond: "Lot of money? We will get rich."

## Anti-war protesters interrupt Antony Blinken at US Senate hearing

WASHINGTON (BBC): Protesters calling for a ceasefire in Gaza interrupted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a Senate hearing. Numerous people stood in the crowd and repeatedly yelled "Ceasefire now!" Secretary Blinken and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin testified about the White House's \$106bn (£87.4bn) national security funding request.

It includes \$14.3bn to support Israel's military efforts against Hamas. Standing up one by one, protesters waited for Mr Blinken to begin his testimony before shouting over him again. The Secretary of State paused and lawmakers were forced to suspend the hearing several times. Capitol Police quickly escorted the demonstrators from the room. Police said 12 people had been arrested for illegally protesting inside the Dirksen Senate Office Building. Some of

those who interrupted the proceedings were affiliated with the anti-war group CODEPINK, which has also called for the US to stop sending weapons to Ukraine. Many protesters wore pink and held signs reading "No to the siege of Gaza", as they called for the US to stop sending funds to Israel. CODEPINK confirmed that some of its members were arrested. Some had painted their hands red "to symbolise blood", the group said. Mr Blinken acknowledged the protesters and "the passions expressed in this room" at the end of his statement.

"All of us are committed to the protection of civilian life. All of us know the suffering that is taking place as we speak, all of us are determined to see it end," he said. He added, however, that it was imperative that the US stand with its allies. Mr Blinken and Mr Austin are lobbying for lawmakers to

support President Joe Biden's national security package, which also includes: \$61.4bn for Ukraine's defence, \$9.2bn for humanitarian assistance, \$2bn for Indo-Pacific security and \$10.9bn for southern border security and migrant issues. As support for Ukraine has diminished among conservative voters, Congressional Republicans have increasingly said they want to consider Israel as a separate funding request. Mike Johnson, the newly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, has proposed legislation that would send \$14.3bn in emergency funding to Israel. It is not connected to the White House's other national security priorities and would strip the same amount from the budget of the Internal Revenue Service, the agency in charge of collecting federal taxes. The new Speaker

defended his bill on Fox News and said Americans would "say standing with Israel and protecting the innocent over there is in our national interest and is a more immediate need than IRS agents". The White House said Republicans were using the crisis to "help the wealthy and big corporations cheat on their taxes".

"Politicising our national security interests is a non-starter," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement. Rep Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a Democrat with strong ties to Israel, said she was "deeply disturbed" by Mr Johnson's bill and said his "political games are offensive to all pro-Israel Americans". The US has a long history of supporting Israel. It has provided the country with \$158bn since World War Two, largely in military aid, according to the Congressional Research Service.

## UN human rights official is alarmed by sprawling gang violence in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AP): The United Nations expert on human rights in Haiti said that he is alarmed by the rapid spread of gang violence and the bleak future awaiting children in the embattled country. William O'Neill spoke at the end of a weeklong visit to Haiti, his second one this year amid a spike in violence that has displaced more than 200,000 people. "Murders, injuries and kidnappings are the daily lot of the population," he said. "An entire generation is seemingly being sacrificed by violence, and the future of a country is threatened by the dramatic situa-

tion faced by its youth." More than 1,230 killings and 701 kidnappings were reported across Haiti from July 1 to Sept. 30, more than double the figure reported during the same period last year, according to the UN. An estimated 200 gangs operate in Haiti, with the largest groups controlling up to 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince. "A major challenge is the fact that many gang members are children," O'Neill said. "It will be necessary to implement rehabilitation and reintegration programs for the vast majority of them." He also noted that gang violence has spread to previ-

ously peaceful areas in Haiti's central and north-west regions and that more than 500,000 children have no access to education given the spike in violence. O'Neill said gangs also continue to sexually abuse women and girls who have no access to health care.

"The state must assume its responsibilities not only to prevent human rights violations and abuses, but also to protect its population, especially the most vulnerable," he said. Haiti's National Police, which is understaffed and under-resourced, has struggled in its fight against gangs, with only some 4,000 officers on

duty at a time in the country of 11.7 million people. Lack of security is so widespread, that Haitians stay mostly indoors unless they need to buy basic goods, said Garry Lochar, 29, who works at a bus terminal. "It's been a year since people have been saying that troops are coming," he said. "People are dying, and Haiti is not getting any help at all." Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry requested the immediate deployment of a foreign armed force a year ago to battle gangs that have grown more powerful ever since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise.

political office, including the presidency. The bill, which was initially proposed in 2021, has been received by the parliament but not yet tabled for debate. Critics say the bill is a plot to bolster Mr Tshisekedi's second term bid, but the president had said that the draft law should not be used to lock out other contenders. DR Congo's opposition parties have opposed the bill and the Catholic clergy has described it as discrimination.

Mr Katumbi, a wealthy businessman and former governor of the copper-rich Katanga region, left DR Congo in 2016 after he was accused of hiring mercenaries by the government of President Tshisekedi's predecessor Joseph Kabila. He was also sentenced to three years in prison in absentia and barred from returning to the country to take part in the 2018 election. Mr Katumbi, however, returned home in 2019 after his charges were dropped.



The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at  
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,  
Peshawar.

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## CPEC, prospects and strategem

THE Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has termed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a 'once in a century opportunity' and vowed to focus on its second phase to attain rapid economic and industrial growth. During an interview with a Chinese media outlet, Kakar noted that the CPEC initiated under China's Belt and Road Initiative had helped Pakistan witness significant development in diverse sectors. According to him, China's western Urumqi region and Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan have huge prospects for cooperation, particularly in trade and tourism.

The flagship Pak-China joint venture under President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative has completed a decade of successes and achievements. A long bridge-building journey has been covered through bulk investment, teamwork and technical cooperation. The CPEC has entered its second phase and multiple road infrastructure and energy projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have been completed and started yielding their benefits, however, a bulk of work is still left for its completion and realization of 100% potential. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the government of Pakistan are very optimistic regarding the outcome of this magnificent bilateral initiative which has now become a brand symbol of Pak-China friendship, while several other regional states including Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asian Republics intend to join this magnificent regional connectivity project as the connectivity is an indispensable element for modern economies. Pakistan is hopeful of a big economic activity and an influx of tourists between the two countries, which would bring an improvement to the social and economic lives of its people. Historically, it would be a win-win situation for both China and Pakistan because this mechanism not only uplifts the Chinese western region of Urumqi but also provides the shortest possible routes for Chinese exports meant for the Middle East and Europe.

As of now, the Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are fundamental pillars of Pakistan's future economic and social uplift plan. Recently, Beijing and Islamabad have agreed to enhance the capacity of the Gwadar port through the construction of additional births, an increase in cargo tunnels and ceilings along with multiple other initiatives including a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), and a floating Liquified Natural Gas Terminal that will not only boost the country's economic and industrial growth but will act as a force multiplier in operationalization of the CEPC in respect of foreign transit trade through these routes.

The government and people of Pakistan perceive the CEPC and the wider Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a recipe for their economic prosperity, regional connectivity, economic integration and multilateral cooperation in the region and beyond. However, there is a long way to go to realize this dream and Pakistani leadership must continue concerted efforts for the completion of the ongoing projects, operationalization of SEZs along with exploring new avenues of cooperation under the CPEC with Chinese business giants and multinational foreign firms to boost trade and investment opportunities, regional connectivity and people-to-people contacts between Pakistan, China and other regional states. So, the dream for regional connectivity and cooperation could lead to greater economic and social integration in broader South and Central Asia. Whilst, such regional partnership and teamwork, Pakistan will emerge as a regional connectivity hub for trade and Transport Internationaux Routiers (TIR) in the future.

## US's complicity and global peace

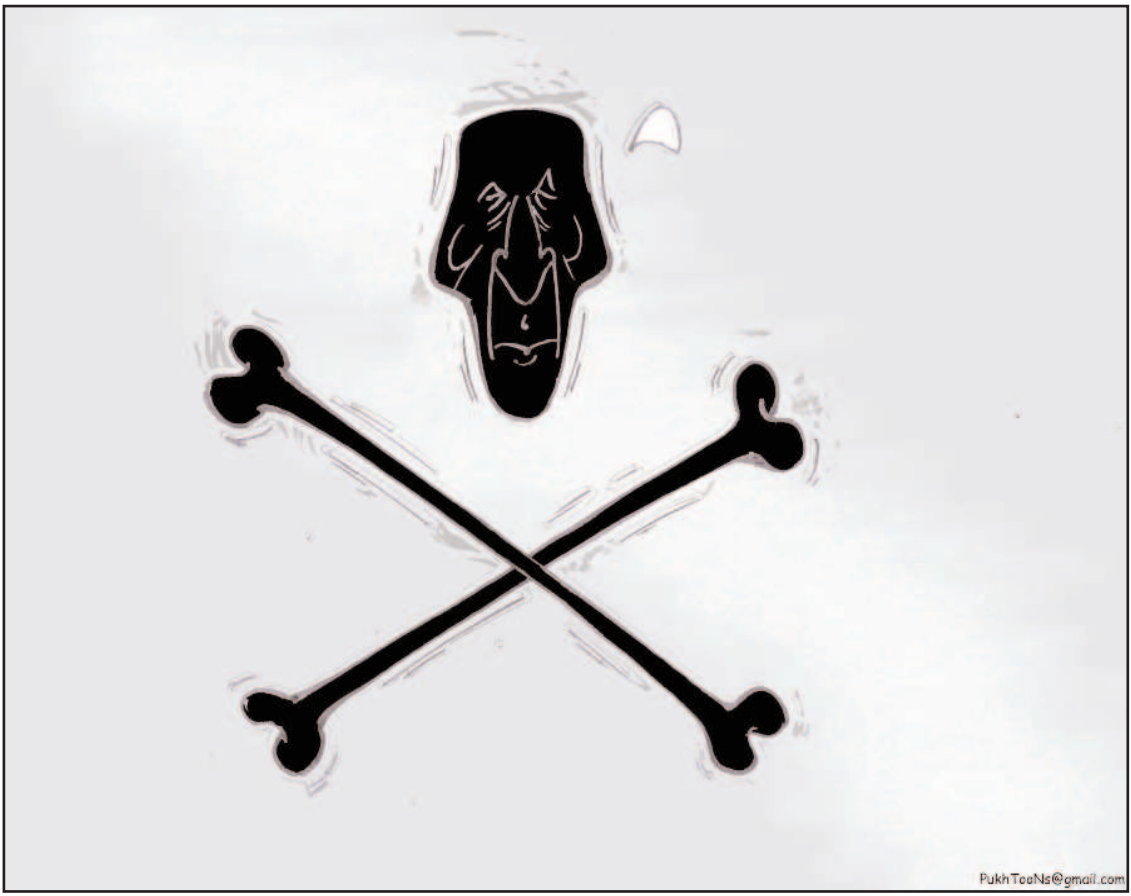
THE US State Department spokesperson, Matthew Miller, sent a wave of shock and utter surprise across the globe by declaring that the United States disagreed with the idea of a ceasefire in Gaza and certainly not working on that agenda. When asked by The Frontier Post news hawk during his news briefing at the State Department about the US's strategy on recent headcount at the United Nations on a resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, the US Spokesperson blatantly replied that the US does not think it's a good idea because Israel has the right, obligation and responsibility to defend itself. According to Matthew Miller, any country if it was attacked and knew that a terrorist organization was sitting across its border to launch new attacks would do the same as Israel is doing.

Realistically, the populace around the globe was skeptical and hoped that the Biden administration was worried about the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East and trying to cool down the hostility. Meanwhile, the world nations and global media were in discussion that the recurrent trip of the top officials of the Biden administration and shuttle diplomacy of the State Department in the Middle East was aimed at blanketing the Middle East conflict, through restoration of peace, provision of relief and release of Israeli hostages etc. Interestingly, the US high-ups themselves removed this delusion by confirming their non-participation in global efforts for a ceasefire and granting wide-ranging impunity to the Jewish state in the garb of self-defence and so-called terrorism.

Historically, the global community and the UN Security Council failed to reach a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel over the past three weeks only due to the opposition from the United States at the UN. If the Biden administration is still fueling the Middle East Conflict by providing limitless economic and military assistance to Tel Aviv and obstructing peace efforts at all levels, then what was the purpose of US shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East in the aftermath of October 7. Whether President Biden and Secretary Blinken visited the Middle East to backup Israel and fuel war. In fact, the Biden led Democrat administration has betrayed its millions of Muslim voters while American leaders also trashed the trust of the global community in this regard. The Palestinians are used to such inhuman atrocities and their struggle will continue until freedom, but the opportunist leaders will meet their fate in due course of time.

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## Reform enhances security of financial system

Wang Hui

FINANCIAL risks, in different forms, are frequently emerging in many countries and regions, posing a threat to the global financial system. The instability of the global financial markets poses a risk to global development and is obstructing economic recovery. The 2008 global financial crisis revealed the inadequacies in the financial regulatory system, which led to economic recession.

As economic globalization faces headwinds, frequent financial risks occur, destabilizing the global financial system. Issues such as the United Kingdom's pension crisis intensifying to cause turbulence in the bond and pound sterling market, ongoing crises in the banking sectors of the European Union and the United States, and recurring concerns over Washington's debt default are eroding the US' credit and increasing financial market uncertainties. In its "Global Financial Stability Report" in April, the International Monetary Fund warned that as the resilience of the global financial system is being tested by higher inflation and fragmentation risks, financial stability risks are rapidly increasing. The global financial system is an interdependent system, with the financial stability of each country interconnected. Therefore, the stability of China's financial system is important for the stability of the global financial system.

The stability of China's financial market is crucial for the smooth operation of global trade. China is the world's second-largest economy, a vital engine for global economic recovery, the largest trading nation, and a key link in global supply chains. So the stability of China's financial system is intertwined with the smooth operation of global trade and supply chains. If issues arise in China's financial markets, it will have an impact on global commodity prices, international payments and the stability of global supply chains. The stability of China's financial environment is a prerequisite for enhancing the quality of foreign investments. While China is promoting the opening-up and internationalization of its financial market, attracting significant foreign investment and capital, it is also advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, and promoting international trade and investment, which have far-reaching effects on

global financial markets. The stability of China's financial environment is critical to deepening global cooperation and coordination. China plays a significant role in international financial cooperation, taking active part in international financial organizations and multilateral financial cooperation mechanisms.

The reform of China's regulatory system is facilitating the high-quality development of China's financial system. The reform, guided by the directives of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, involves optimizing and adjusting the institutional responsibilities in the financial regulatory field. It encompasses a series of measures taken to help establish and enhance a modern financial regulatory and financial stability assurance system. This reform not only underscores the importance of strengthening the centralized and unified leadership of the Party in financial work but also reflects the inherent need for improving the modern financial regulatory system. It is needed to safeguard financial security and contribute to the new pattern of high-quality economic development.

First, the reform is about building a regulatory firewall, strengthening supervision, and protecting financial consumers. Following the recent adjustments, a regulatory framework has been established which uses macro-prudential regulation to maintain financial stability and prevent systemic risks, while market supervision is used to regulate the actions of financial institutions and better protect financial consumers. For instance, the inaugural meeting of the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission focused on the insurance industry's solvency. This involved enhancing the functional oversight and in-depth supervision of insurance companies and promoting the high-quality development of the insurance industry.

Second, the reform has designated the newly established China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission to oversee the protection of financial consumer rights and assume the regulatory responsibilities for financial holding companies and other financial groups. As part of the overall financial reform, the local financial regulatory system

reform will be deepened, allowing financial regulatory agencies established by local governments to play their supervisory roles, ensuring that responsibilities are well-defined and financial regulation is functioning well. Third, the reform involves building a modern central banking system and improving the modern financial regulatory framework, in order to reduce policy conflicts between multiple objectives. After the reform, the central bank will focus on monetary policy and macro-prudential functions, while the CBIRC will oversee micro-prudential regulation and supervision. In addition, the China Securities Regulatory Commission will shoulder more responsibilities as far as regulating the capital market is concerned. By differentiating between macroeconomic control and financial regulation, each entity can perform its respective functions, thus minimizing policy conflicts between multiple objectives.

And fourth, the reform is aimed at streamlining the relationship between central and local authorities in financial regulation, while facilitating the establishment of a local financial regulatory system primarily led by the local branches of the central financial regulatory department, optimizing resource allocation to prevent excessive local government intervention in local financial institutions. As such, it will strengthen the central government's ability to prevent and resolve risks, better combat financial crimes, and reconfigure and bolster regulatory resources to address issues such as the lack of local regulatory tools and a shortage of skilled professionals. China's financial regulatory reform has drawn global attention, but it has also been the subject of Western political posturing. For instance, a US legislator has proposed the China Financial Threat Mitigation Act of 2023, which calls for assessing the impact of China's financial sector reform on the US' and the global financial systems.

Under the pretext of "de-risking", this bill essentially seeks to "de-Sinicize" the global financial system, ignoring the objective economic realities. This approach not only goes against the pressing need of global coordination and cooperation in today's increasingly complex and

interconnected world of financial and economic affairs, including the involvement of China, but also overlooks the fact that a robust Chinese financial regulatory system can serve as a stabilizing force for the global economy. Minimizing conflicts between multiple policy objectives is an effective way of preventing systemic financial risks and aligning with the goals of real economic development. This provides valuable insights for policy arrangements for all countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Federal Reserve's "helicopter money" approach was a major contributor to high inflation. Later, ignoring the reality of the situation, the Fed continued to raise interest rates, causing a liquidity crisis in EU and US banks and exacerbating financial instability. This shows that policy arrangements which lack a systemic perspective can lead to political dysfunction.

Furthermore, it is essential to strengthen investor protection systems and improve the capital market's financing functions to create healthier "safe havens" for investors. The CBIRC, which now oversees financial consumer rights protection, including investor protection, will raise the standards of behavior of market players, reducing market manipulation and misconduct and preventing the emergence of "congressional stock gods". And by widening the scope of direct financing supporting high-quality development, China's capital market will become more robust and stable, contributing to increased efficiency and stability of global financial markets. The improvement of a modern financial regulatory system paves the way for further progress in global cooperation and coordination. The new regulatory framework is better suited to dealing with the evolving financial landscape, and China will establish multi-level and wide-ranging cooperation mechanisms with financial regulatory bodies in other countries to jointly address cross-border financial crimes and prevent financial risks. China has been carrying out continuous reform and improving its financial regulatory model according to its own needs, offering valuable insights to many developing countries striving to improve their own financial regulatory systems.

## Young Americans, Democrats shifting their attitude to Israel-Palestine

Kerry Boyd Anderson

IN response to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack and the subsequent Israeli bombardment of Gaza, US foreign policy has remained resolutely in favor of Israel. On the surface, US public opinion also appears to be heavily pro-Israel, but the latest conflict highlights growing partisan and generational gaps in Americans' attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Overall, Americans tend to support Israel over the Palestinians. Polls conducted after the Hamas attack produced varying results, but all clearly showed that more Americans sympathize with Israelis than with Palestinians. While support for Israel spiked in the wake of the horrific attack, polling before the attack showed that more than half of Americans sympathize more with Israel.

However, US public opinion is far less solidly united behind Israel than it was 20 or even 10 years ago. For decades, Israel received unquestioning support from both Republicans and Democrats. Today, Republican support for Israel remains solid, with a March Gallup poll finding that 78 percent of Republicans sympathized more with Israelis than Palestinians. Among Democrats, however, views have changed significantly. In March, a Gallup poll showed that, for the first time, more Democrats said they sympathized more with Palestinians (49 percent) than Israelis (38 percent).

Recent polling suggests that the Hamas attack drove up Democratic sympathy with Israel and drove down sympathy for the Palestinians, but that is likely to change as more Palestinians are killed and suffer in Gaza. Many Democratic activists have openly criticized President Joe Biden for not doing more to help Palestinian civilians.

There is also a distinct difference between generational attitudes. A Quinnipiac University poll, conducted after the attack, highlighted the generation gap. It clearly showed that younger Americans, while still generally supportive of Israel, are much more likely to take Palestinian concerns into account. For example, among American voters aged 18 to 34, 41 percent said they sympathized more with Israel, while 26 percent sympathized more with the Palestinians. By comparison, among those aged 50 to 64, 73 percent sympathized more with Israel and only 7 percent more with the Palestinians. Fifty-one percent of those aged 18 to 34 opposed sending more US weapons to Israel in response to the Hamas attack.

Several factors are driving both the partisan and generational divides. Historically, most Americans consumed media from a relatively small number of sources, which served as gatekeepers to information on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More recently, news media outlets have become far more diffuse and Americans today - especially younger Americans - have access to a much more diverse set of voices. The lowering of barriers to entry in media, combined with social media and smartphones with cameras, has made it much more

possible for Palestinians to share their voices and experiences. Some factors are particularly relevant for young Democrats. Their growing emphasis on social justice has highlighted the power disparity between Israel and the Palestinians, increasing some Americans' understanding of the challenges that Palestinians face. The shift in Israeli politics toward the far right and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's specific alignment with the Republican Party also led many Democrats to question their country's unconditional alliance with Israel. The decline in religious identity among young Americans, especially in the Democratic Party, has reduced the sense of devotion to the idea of the "Holy Land."

For younger generations in general, there is a willingness to question the assumptions of traditional US foreign policy. Also, younger Americans are further removed in time from the horrors of the Holocaust and from when Israel appeared to be a fledgling state at risk of annihilation. They see Israel today as an established state with a highly capable military that has both the power to defend itself and the responsibility that comes with such power. Importantly, many young Jewish Americans are more willing to question and criticize Israeli policies than in the past and the partisan and generational gap applies to the Jewish American community as well as others. Today, US media coverage is more balanced than it was two decades ago. Some Washington think tanks give a voice to experts who criticize the Israeli government. US public opinion is not as unquestioning as in the past.

At the same time, older generations - including both Republicans and Democrats - who maintain a strong sense of devotion to Israel still control foreign policy and much about the discussion in the US. Biden, at 80 years old, has a view of Israel that is strongly shaped by his generation's views. More than 400 congressional aides, who tend to be much younger than their bosses in Congress, have signed an open letter condemning the Hamas attack while also expressing concern for Palestinian civilians and calling for a ceasefire. The letter represents a notable break from the decades of unquestioning loyalty to Israel in Congress. However, the aides signed the letter anonymously due to very real fears that they would lose their jobs or face violent threats. The letter and its signatories' fears demonstrate both changing attitudes and the reality that leaders with strongly pro-Israel views continue to dominate policy.

Younger Americans and many Democrats are increasingly open to Palestinian voices, concerned about their suffering and aware of the US' role.

However, older generations still dominate foreign policy and Republicans also play a key role. American attitudes are shifting, but it will be years before that is likely to significantly change US policy, which will come far too late for the thousands currently under attack in Gaza.

Arab News

## The West faces a reckoning with realism

Dominic Raab

They are easily distracted. For all the chest-beating by China hawks, there has been scant debate about Taiwan's elections in January. And yet no single development will have more impact on the risk of war in Taiwan over the next four years - with all the global consequences that entails.

The traditional race between the hawkish pro-independence DPP and the pro-unification KMT could be upended if the KMT agrees a deal with the new Taiwan People's Party, which touts a formula it says would enable engagement with China without prejudicing sovereignty. Whatever the wisdom of these positions - and mindful of the need to respect Taiwanese democracy - the Western stake in the outcome could not be greater, but is scarcely articulated.

This short concentration span reflects a changing world. The bipolar certainties and solidarity of the Cold War have been overtaken by a more multipolar, complex, and fragmented world. The rise of the East - led by China and India - has reduced the West's relative power. Polarised domestic politics, from Washington to Bratislava, have reasserted a more hard-headed appraisal of national self-interest. Negotiations stumble on relatively straightforward challenges: the EU and Australia can't even agree a free trade deal. Internationalism in foreign policy is inevitably being eclipsed by sharper realism across national capitals. We have re-entered an era of "balance of power" geopolitics. But it is not the same as Henry Kissinger's much touted pre-First World War paradigm. There are

more international players in 2023 than there were in 1910. Governments have less reaction time in a digital world, while transnational threats, from pandemics to climate change, absorb attention.

Internationalists may balk at the implications, but they are unlikely to halt the tide of more realist foreign policy - on all sides. The US, whether Biden or Trump wins in 2024, is likely to become even less interventionist, and more resentful of European free-riding under America's security umbrella. The EU will hanker for more strategic autonomy, but governments will deny Brussels the means. The supply of arms to Ukraine is unlikely to match demand, leaving an attritional stalemate. While appalling in humanitarian terms, it may blunt Putin's capacity for mischief-making elsewhere. China, too,

will find its international ambitions, from Belt and Road to the reunification of Taiwan, constrained by stalling economic performance and rumbling social discontent.

This changing kaleidoscope also creates opportunities for mid-sized nations. Whether it is peace-making and investment in East Africa, trade and maritime cooperation in South Asia, or the supply chains for critical minerals in South America, the UK can advance its interests if we adapt and align in agile clusters with like-minded countries. An emphasis on pragmatism will eclipse virtue-signalling tweets. Citizens and investors will see through cliché-coated press releases. If rational heads prevail, the world may just find this reckoning with realism leads to a period of greater stability.

The Telegraph



# The British public wants a general election now

Yossi Mekelberg

**UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak this month received the news of two thumping by-election defeats for his Conservative Party while he was on a trip to the Middle East, where he was trying - not very successfully - to defuse the volatile situation there. Considering the huge swings in both constituencies from Conservative to Labour, Sunak would probably rather be anywhere in the world but the UK, where support for his party is in complete meltdown.**

The trend among the British electorate is in one direction only. People are fed up not only with the current Sunak government but with the past 13 years of Conservative rule and, for most, change cannot come soon enough. The magnitude of Labour's victories in these by-elections means that, for the first time since 1997, it is being seen as the governing party in waiting. Although there is no legal obligation to hold the next general election until January 2025, the public is crying out for a change of government and, with it, a change of course for the country.

These by-elections took place following the resignations of two Conservative MPs in undignified circumstances. In one case, former Culture Minister Nadine Dorries finally quit after a prolonged and less than humble tantrum at being denied a peerage by the government. And in the other, Chris Pincher, a former deputy chief whip, resigned his seat in the House of Commons in September after losing an appeal against his suspension from Parliament after he sexually assaulted two men at a private members' club last summer. Neither case covered the Tories with glory and further

by-elections as a result of the party's MPs misbehaving are pending. In both constituencies, the Tories lost a huge majority - 24,000 and 19,000, respectively. Consequently, it is very tempting to prematurely declare the result of the next general election in favor of Labour and Keir Starmer as the next prime minister, as it looks like there is no way Sunak and the Conservatives could win a general election if they cannot defend such "safe" seats.

However, the earliest we can expect the UK to go to the polls is in the spring and this is a rather long time in politics. It means there is plenty of time for Labour to become complacent. Instead, it needs to continue to design credible policies that will enable the party to hit the ground running in the likelihood of it forming the next administration.

Although there is always the danger of reading too much into by-election results - especially as the nature of Dorries and Pincher's departures were scandalous and voters were keen to hand the government a bloody nose - the magnitude of the shift toward Labour suggests a profound change in the country's mood. Many Conservative supporters expressed their frustration with the government by staying away from the polling stations, while others went as far as switching their vote to Labour.

Naturally, fatigue creeps in when a party has been in power for so long, but on this occasion it is more than the public merely becoming tired with the same party. Rather, there is a sense that, in recent years, Conservative Party chaos, incoherence, incompetence and general

mediocrity has taken the country backwards.

The National Health Service is at breaking point, with waiting lists excessive to the point that they are detrimental to the public's health; the soaring cost of living is hitting most those who can afford it the least; the education system is suffering from a chronic shortage of resources; and infrastructure generally is underfunded, with public buildings crumbling due to a lack of maintenance. So, it is not surprising that the public no longer believes the government's promises and expresses its anger in by-elections and opinion polls. One indication that even Conservative MPs no longer expect their party to win the next general election is that about 50 of them have already declared their intention not to seek reelection, including some former senior members of the Cabinet.

The recent party conference season was probably the last before the next general election. Parties look to these gatherings to rally their members, attract donations and give them a boost in the opinion polls, but as far as the Tories are concerned their conference did nothing to change the huge polling gap in favor of Labour. One poll suggests that Labour's lead has been extended and stands at 47 percent to 24 percent. One forecast- ing model suggests that this might be translated into a landslide election win, possibly even greater than Tony Blair's 1997 victory.

More significant is that approval ratings for Labour leader Starmer are becoming ever more favorable. In other words, voting Labour is no longer a protest vote against the mess

that the Conservatives have got us all into, including Brexit, but a positive move demonstrating widespread support for Starmer's leadership and Labour's plans for governing the country. It is Starmer who keeps the party's feet on the ground, warning the entire party machine, including his shadow Cabinet, MPs and activists, that nothing has been won yet and calling on them to contest every seat as if it were the one that ensured a majority in the next parliament.

As such as the country needs a change of direction and Labour is eager to return to power, the Tories are equally in need of some time on the opposition benches to reflect, reassess and regroup. They are divided on almost every issue that matters to the country. The party has been hijacked by an extreme-right faction that is parochial, populist and devoid of ideas for getting the country out of the crises it is mired in. Moreover, the party is led by a prime minister who fails to inspire anyone, especially as he vacillates on almost every issue and makes promises that all polls indicate no one believes will be fulfilled.

Above all, the mortal sin for any Conservative Party in government is to increase the tax burden, which is currently the largest since the Second World War, something its core supporters cannot forgive, while the rest of the country is suffering from failing public services despite paying more for them than ever. Labour and its supporters are right to be cautious and to fight on the doorstep for every vote, but for now it is the government that is doing much of the work for them, as Starmer and his team progress toward a possible landslide.

# How Russian propaganda built an alternate reality in occupied Ukraine

Jade McGlynn

**P R E S I D E N T Vladimir Putin last visited Ukraine in 2013. Going into his full-scale war on Russia's neighbor, Russian propagandists' understanding of the country appeared stuck in that same year. Russian elites simply refused to acknowledge or understand Ukrainian civic and national identity. Nor could they admit how much Russia's authoritarian turn and the transformation of the Donbas into a gangster state under Russian occupation served as a warning against heeding Moscow's siren call of Russian brotherhood.**

Against the post-2014 backdrop of a program of promoting the Ukrainian language and culture alongside efforts to minimize Russia's levers of influence, Ukrainians' understanding of their country's identity and future grew ever more antithetical to how Moscow saw them. This much was apparent from the plethora of sociological research on Ukrainian civic identity, or even to any informed visitor after 2014. But not, apparently, to Russian propagandists. As Russian troops invaded Ukraine in 2022, they initially deployed the same methods and scripts they used eight years earlier.

In 2022, upon seizing a locality in Crimea or the Donbas, the Russian occupying forces first moved to seize the offices and equipment of Ukrainian internet and mobile phone operators. Then they would install their own networks, block access to objective news sites, and rewire all internet traffic through Russian providers via Crimea.

Having isolated the territory and its people and placed them under digital surveillance, the Russians then (re)activated FSB-handled local "public opinion" curators (who would stage pro-Moscow rallies) and collaborator officials, and (re)launched local pro-Russian social media accounts. Ukrainian residents living under occupation could acquaint themselves with the Russian alternate reality version of events through newly installed Russian satellite television packages, or via the roving buses topped with loudspeakers that blared propaganda about Russian benevolence to starving Ukrainians queuing for hours for free bread and water.

During the first six months of the full-scale invasion, the content developed for the occupied regions post-2022 was very similar to that used in the Russian Federation. It simply tried to convince people who were facing the reality of Russia's war to destroy Ukrainian statehood that the Kremlin's fiction of the special military operation was in fact true - a tall order.

In search of legitimacy, the Kremlin appointed largely unknown and unpopular local officials to head the collaboration authorities. They also assigned the job of managing the post-2022 information space to Crimean propagandists and officials who assumed that the same approach that was successful in 2014 would also work in Kherson in 2022. They were wrong. The propaganda failed to resonate and was of embarrassingly low quality. For example, Crimean-managed news channels aired clips supposedly depicting the occupied city of Kherson that were actually filmed in Yeysk, in Russia's Krasnodar region.

In the fall of 2022, after Ukraine liberated Kherson and the Kharkiv region and Russia's sham annexations of four Ukrainian regions, the Kremlin shifted its approach. Russians began to assume increasingly public political positions in these regions, as the pretense that there was organic support from local people was no longer needed.

From then on, these officials mentioned the "special military operation" and events on the front less and less. They began acting as if the occupied territories had not simply been returned to Russia, but had always been Russian. Instead, they called the Ukrainians occupiers and aggressors, with cities like Zaporizhzhia - although never controlled by the Russians - consistently referred to as being "temporarily occupied by

Ukrainian militants."

Rather than a doubling down on propaganda narratives that hadn't worked to date, this shift was an admission of defeat. The Kremlin understood that after 2014, it could not simultaneously produce effective propaganda for both Russians and Ukrainians in the occupied regions. So, it decided to create a new two-tier propaganda system.

The first tier, aimed at Russian audiences, comprises statements from collaborator officials, the output of newly established regional outlets of Russian federal media, and official collaborator Telegram channels. They produce narratives similar to those inside Russia itself: that Russia is fighting a special military operation against Western-backed Nazis to liberate Russian speakers from genocide and defend itself from Western attack. In so doing, it has made life

The local channel Tavriya, which serves occupied Kherson region, focuses on the theme that Ukraine has become totally unliveable and faces a hopeless future. A recent segment in September 2023 asserted that Ukraine was almost entirely depopulated as everyone had fled from persecution from the Nazi authorities and/or saw no point in defending the country. Silently, a question is posed to viewers: why side with a country that nobody else is defending?

The local channels also feature the destruction of the war, though it is always inflicted by Ukraine, for no reason beyond "insane Kyiv Nazis" seeking to hunt and harm ordinary civilians. The fantastic claims of Ukrainian cruelty use fear to coerce residents into associating with the occupiers. For example, Russia has forcibly issued Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens, even threatening to remove children, access to food provi-

***If federally available coverage proclaims Russia's greatness, the local channels instead seek to demoralize and disorient residents by focusing on Russia's invincibility and the impossibility of a Ukrainian victory. The local channel Tavriya, which serves occupied Kherson region, focuses on the theme that Ukraine has become totally unliveable and faces a hopeless future. A recent segment in September 2023 asserted that Ukraine was almost entirely depopulated as everyone had fled from persecution from the Nazi authorities and/or saw no point in defending the country. Silently, a question is posed to viewers: why side with a country that nobody else is defending? The local channels also feature the destruction of the war, though it is always inflicted by Ukraine, for no reason beyond "insane Kyiv Nazis" seeking to hunt and harm ordinary civilians. The fantastic claims of Ukrainian cruelty use fear to coerce residents into associating with the occupiers.***

better and will inevitably win.

As this narrative is primarily aimed at Russians and their proxies, the tendency to ignore residents' continued daily experience of war makes sense. It is better not to remind Russians that it used to be Ukraine. It is far better to ignore the war entirely, as they don't like hearing about it. Explaining that Russia is defending itself makes it easier to mobilize people for what they think is a defensive war. Propaganda narratives are about creating a reality, or story, out of selectively picked facts in a way that avoids dissonance with what is actually happening. Clearly, these narratives are hard for Ukrainians living in occupied regions to believe. But they can still work for Russians watching at home.

The second tier, comprises newspapers, television and Telegram channels specially created for regions under occupation since 2014. The Russian occupation authorities introduced a free satellite package, "Russian World," that is sometimes directly imposed on residents by installation brigades overseen by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko.

As Ukrainian satellite terminals were dismantled by official edict, some families chose to install the Russian package so their children could watch television.

"Russian World" provides access to 20 Russian channels and to 10 local channels across the regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Donetsk, and Crimea. These channels are mostly unavailable outside the occupied territories, with the package encrypted so that others in Russia, Ukraine, or abroad cannot find out what they are telling viewers.

While the main topics of the regional channels and the federal Russian television channels are broadly similar, to minimize dissonance, the framing differs. If federally available coverage proclaims Russia's greatness, the local channels instead seek to demoralize and disorient residents by focusing on Russia's invincibility and the impossibility of a Ukrainian victory.

sions, and healthcare for those who refuse to accept one. Now, propagandists tell the occupied territories that Kyiv will treat anyone who took a passport as a collaborator and punish them. On unofficial pro-Moscow Telegram channels, this narrative is bolstered by the argument that Ukraine has betrayed its people in the occupied territories by leaving them to the Russians. Kyiv did not come back for them, and now everything will be just as Russia planned.

If you believe that your country betrayed you, it becomes much easier to justify betraying your country. Especially if you are starting to think that it is pointless to wait for a liberation that will never come. And even if the Ukrainian army does come back, they may see you as a collaborator because you took a Russian passport. Why not just make life for yourself and your family by integrating into the new Russian order? What other options are there?

For those mentally strong enough to live through the traumas of war and occupation and still resist the power of the arguments above, the Russians have other methods besides propaganda. The occupying forces do not try to hide their brutal torture chambers, kidnappings of Ukrainian children, and summary executions from their new constituents. Everybody knows the cost of resistance. The television channels' intense focus on the exposure and punishment of "Ukrainian terrorists" (who are in fact anti-Russian partisans, including children) means nobody is likely to forget it.

The difference between general Russian propaganda and its localized counterparts in the occupied regions was initially a story of failure: A failure to understand Ukrainians, a failure to sell them the Russian story. But by recognizing that failure, Russian narratives have become more effective. Residents are left with two options. They can deny reality and become the audience of Moscow's fiction. Or they can accept the reality of living under occupation and act out this fiction for everyone else.

The Moscow Times

# Sunak's vanity jamboree on AI safety lays bare the UK's Brexit dilemmas

Rafael Behr

**WHO is the more trustworthy custodian of machines capable of diverting the course of human civilisation: Elon Musk or the Chinese Communist party? Will it be the billionaire megalomaniac tycoon who meddles in international crises as if they were video games loaded on to his personal propaganda console? Or the authoritarian superpower that likes digital technology best when it enables more efficient and ruthless social engineering and political repression?**

Neither is the answer - and thankfully, other options are available. But asking the question in starkly polarised terms illuminates the challenge posed by artificial intelligence that is evolving faster than any effort to bring it under responsible supervision. Everyone can agree that there should be rules because nobody wants awesome computational capability to fall into the wrong hands. But nobody can settle on what the jurisdiction should be, nor agree on how tightly even safe hands should be bound.

Rishi Sunak has a plan to make Britain the global hub of tech regulation guided by a world-leading AI safety institute. To assert the UK's credentials for that role, the prime minister is hosting a two-day international summit at Bletchley Park. Musk will be there. Also, much to Downing Street's gratification, he will take part in a special dialogue with the prime minister to be broadcast on X, formerly Twitter, summing up the conference conclusions. No such honour is afforded to representatives of the Chinese government, who will also be present, despite objections by hawkish Tory MPs who see Beijing as a hostile power to be contained.

Sunak's view is that China is already a global player in AI, so the

dialogue is incomplete without them. Not unreasonably, No 10 will claim the summit as a success if it produces any kind of memorandum that carries Chinese and American signatures. Sunak wanted Joe Biden to come, but has to look grateful that the US vice-president, Kamala Harris, is attending instead. Other notable dignitaries include the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, and UN general secretary, António Guterres. But heads of government are in short supply. Italy's prime minister will be there, but the president of France and the German chancellor had other plans.

There will be enough political muscle and technological expertise in the room to make the event notable as a contribution to global discussion but not, as Sunak had originally hoped, a definitive one. In that respect, the summit reflects Britain's uneasy post-Brexit strategic position. The prime minister's grownup diplomacy earns him constructive engagement from international allies, but they haven't forgotten how his predecessors forfeited their country's reputation for serious government.

Sunak's contributions to the debate about AI safety will be heard respectfully. His assertion of Britain's credentials as an intermediary power in the field - behind China and the US, ahead of other European countries - is not a fantasy. The problem comes with the attempt to parlay that position into regulatory leadership. Here, the banal force of Brexit gravity comes into play. Sunak's instinct is abstinence from hasty, heavy-handed interventions for fear of suffocating enterprise and investment. But even if the UK devises rules that are lighter of touch and smarter than anything conceived in Brussels, the size of the continental single market will still

induce tech companies to conform to European norms.

The US will do its own thing, as it always does, except when there is a compelling economic or political motive to compromise with jurisdictions of equivalent market heft, which Britain is not. On Monday, before Sunak's jamboree had even begun, the White House published a sprawling executive order on AI security covering, among other things, consumer protection, data privacy, mandatory sharing of private companies' safety tests with the federal government and mitigation against discrimination by algorithms. Equivalent European law is in train.

The forum where transatlantic consultation and potential alignment happens is the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, from which Britain is excluded. There is also a G7 process, the Hiroshima framework, which is meant to define parameters for safe AI development among the world's richest democracies. Sunak's anglocentric ambitions aren't incompatible with that agenda, but they risk looking otiose and eccentric. There is a whiff of self-aggrandising Brexit exceptionalism - the vision of sovereign Britain as a nimble, autonomous trade superpower - that nobody outside the fringe cult of Conservative Euroscepticism took seriously before the referendum made it government policy.

That was a cosy delusion in more benign times. It is dangerously inadequate in the context of cascading global crises, when so many of the certainties and institutional norms of international relations passed down from the 20th century feel dangerously obsolete. Russia is committed to a violent restoration of Soviet borders. War in the Middle East threatens to spiral outwards into a vast

regional conflagration. There is a plausible prospect of Donald Trump returning to the White House next year, and even if he fails, a Republican party moulded in his image cannot be trusted to uphold basic principles of constitutional democracy at home, nor favour them in alliances abroad. This is a world in which strategic freelancing is not an option for Britain, and concerted realignment with old European allies looks inevitable.

But that is not a judgment Sunak is equipped to make. His party would never allow it on ideological grounds and, on that score, he represents more continuity with the recent past than is implied by the cultivation of diplomatic pragmatism. While the contrast with Liz Truss and Boris Johnson is undeniable, there is a certain flimsiness about Sunak's style of governing that is not so far removed from the ways of his predecessors. It is the earnest declaration of intent to be substantial in ways that, on closer examination, never contain actual substance.

Besides, in the worlds of business and diplomacy there is mounting confidence that Britain is nearing regime change. As the incumbent leader of a G7 country, Sunak can still draw an international crowd. But when it comes to investment of political capital, he is a wasting asset. It must be hard for the prime minister to accept that the greatest service he can perform for his country now is to facilitate the stable transition to a different government, and that his best hope of a creditable write-up in history is to wear his transience with dignified modesty. Of course, he won't see it that way. He wants to be remembered as a leader with depth and gravitas. And yet he seems unable to cast off the look of a lightweight splashing in the political shallow end.

The Guardian

# China, ROK, Japan need to strengthen trade despite geopolitics

Chi Fulin

**DURING the past decade, the CJK Cooperation Dialogue has been playing an important role in promoting trilateral exchanges among China, the Republic of Korea and Japan. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes in trilateral relations, the CJK Cooperation Dialogue continued to be held every year thanks to the joint efforts of the three sides.**

Since 2017, the China Institute for Reform and Development has taken the lead in organizing the annual dialogue. Next year, the CIRD will host the event again and try its best to make a good start to the next decade of the CJK Cooperation Dialogue. Only through cooperation can China, Japan and the ROK achieve win-win results. This year marks the 24th anniversary of the establishment of trilateral cooperation among China, Japan and the ROK (during this time, the total trade among the three sides grew from about \$130 billion in 1999 to nearly \$800 billion in 2022). In the past 24 years, the trilateral cooperation has not only promoted trade among and the development of the three countries, but also helped boost trade and development in the rest of East Asia and beyond.

It is therefore hoped that in spite of the rapid, radical global changes, China-Japan-ROK economic and trade cooperation will overcome the problems created by geopolitics, and deepen cooperation for the common good. There is still great potential for

China-Japan-ROK cooperation to achieve more mutual benefits. The three economies may have become more competitive with each other in the field of manufacturing in recent years, but they still have strong complementarity when it comes to trade in services (China's service trade with Japan and the ROK grew from \$48 billion in 2012 to about \$63.8 billion in 2021). However, if the three economies want to explore new areas of cooperation, they need to further open up their economies to each other's industries.

Till last year, China had been the largest trading partner of the ROK for 19 consecutive years and Japan for 16 consecutive years. And in the next 10 to 20 years, China's economic structural transformation and upgrading of sectors such as industry, science and technology, consumption, urban and rural areas, and energy is likely to create an even bigger market for both Japan and the ROK. Given the developments over the past few years, however, the three sides should jointly consolidate the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership as the world's largest free trade agreement, not least because the RCEP accounts for at least 30 percent of the global population, global trade and global economy. The three countries have made great efforts to build the world's largest FTA and hopefully they will continue their efforts to build it into an even more formida-

ble and win-win FTA.

For example, Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul should jointly promote high-level opening up of the RCEP region, because they account for the bulk of the RCEP's economic aggregate. In fact, the three sides' GDP, trade volume and added value put together account for more than 80 percent of the RCEP's cumulative economy. No wonder they are the biggest export markets in the region.

To be sure, the three economies are in a position to promote the upgrading of the RCEP, as well as help align and integrate the RCEP's rules with those of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. And as the CPTPP's leading member state, Japan should facilitate the entry of China and the ROK into the agreement and, together, the three countries should promote the RCEP's rules in fields such as trade in services, e-commerce, so they match those of the CPTPP.

To do so, the three sides should start by expanding trilateral trade under the RCEP framework, with the focus on trade in services. In order to adapt to the general trend of industrial transformation driven by the digital economy, the three sides should jointly explore and exploit the large digital economy market in the region, promote cooperation in tourism, education, culture and entertainment and other fields, in order to overcome the problems cre-

ated by a rapidly rising aging population. Besides, the three countries should facilitate market- and rules-based free trade, to jointly promote regional development.

The three countries should also fulfill their market commitments under the RCEP framework by further opening up their respective market to each other. The RCEP has, for the first time, brought China, Japan and the ROK under one institutional framework which requires them to open up their markets to each other, so as to reduce tariffs, and abide by the economic and trade rules set by a regional trade agreement. Since none of the three countries has fulfilled their openingup commitments, they need to negotiate how to shorten the transition period of tariff concessions, and how to help change the RCEP's rules of origin from "partial accumulation" to "full accumulation". It is also important for the three sides to propel their domestic institutional reform by further opening up their markets. China has been trying to join the CPTPP and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (signed by Singapore, New Zealand and Chile), because it sees the two trade agreements creating tremendous opportunities and building a market-oriented, law-based global business environment, deepening reforms for the purpose of increasing market access and promoting institutional reform through institutional opening up.

The China Daily





Secretary Workers Welfare Fund Zulfiqar Ahmad addressing 349th ILO G.B meeting.

## Labor protection: Pakistan applauds ILO's action plan

F.P. Report

GENEVA: In a significant address at the 349th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Zulfiqar Ahmad, Secretary, Workers' Welfare Fund, representing the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, expressed Pakistan's commendation for the Office's proactive approach in developing a comprehensive action plan on labor protection for the period 2023-29.

Commencing his statement by extending heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, Mr. Ahmad con-

veyed Pakistan's confidence in the Chairperson's leadership abilities, anticipating significant advancements in the global cause of labor protection and social security. He emphasized the vital role played by labor protection and social security as interconnected facets of social welfare, echoing the plan's viewpoint on their mutually supportive relationship.

Ahmad highlighted Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the well-being and safety of its workforce, aligning with the national goals and objectives. Acknowledging the evolving nature of employment patterns, he stressed the importance of addressing the needs of workers

engaged in non-traditional work arrangements. In particular, he endorsed the plan's focus on preventing the exclusion of workers in platform work, telework, and temporary employment from essential labor protection measures.

Pakistan stands firmly in support of the ILO's efforts to safeguard workers' rights and social security, promoting a sustainable work environment that encapsulates all forms of employment. The nation looks forward to actively participating in the realization of the action plan's objectives, working collectively towards a future where labor protection is universally accessible and unconditionally assured.

## OGDCL announced results

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) in its meeting held on Wednesday at OGDCL Head Office, Islamabad announced the financial results for the first quarter ended 30th September 2023. The Company registered Sales Revenue and Profit after Taxation of Rs 120,141 billion and Rs 49,038 billion respectively translating into an Earnings per Share of Rs 11.40. The Board of Directors declared first interim cash dividend of Rs 1.60 per share.

During the period under review, the average net crude oil production was 32,835 barrels per day, net saleable gas production was 762 MMcf per day, and net LPG production was 713 tons per day.

The Board of Directors appreciated the management and employees of the Company for their efforts and hard work in taking effective steps especially for production optimization and indigenization aligning with the Company's strategic pursuits and objectives.

## PSX stays bullish, gains 422 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 422.37 points, a positive change of 0.81 percent, closing at 52,342.64 points against 51,920.27 points the previous day.

A total of 526,463,387 shares valuing Rs 16,512 billion were traded during the day as compared to 455,331,569 shares valuing Rs 15,639 billion the previous day.

As many as 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 216 of them recorded gains and 119 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 18 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Cnergyico PK with 75,772,036 shares at Rs 3.88 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 68,332,731 shares at Rs 1.28 per share and Pak Refinery with 55,036,194 shares at Rs 21.57 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 525.00 per share price, closing at Rs 22,750.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber XD with a Rs 69.50 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,103.17.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 399/1. Institution 27/5/2023. Date of hearing 18/11/2023. Umer Farooq etc. Vs Shamen Khan etc. Notice No. 3 Javed son of Said Akbar Shah resident of Anghapur Tehsil Daggar District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 18/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

# Mutual Funds: SBP, CDC launched RAAST payments facility

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Central Depository Company (CDC) has collaborated with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for allowing investors to purchase mutual funds units using SBP's RAAST Payment Gateway. CDC has developed a framework where it acts as an "Aggregator" and issues a Raast Payment ID, enabling investors to digitally transfer funds, using Raast, to the respective Asset Management Company (AMC) for purchase of mutual fund units.

The facility was launched in an event at CDC House with Mr. Saleem Ullah, Deputy Governor SBP as the Chief Guest.

While officiating the event, Deputy Governor SBP, Saleem Ullah expressed his heartfelt appreciation for CDC's unwavering efforts and initiatives for digitalization and customer facilitation. He emphasized that the core objective of all digitalization efforts is to improve customer convenience and satisfaction. He said that the launch of RAAST payments facility for Mutual Funds will provide the much-needed convenience to the mutual fund investors and would be instrumental in increasing the investors' base.

Highlighting the importance of RAAST, the DG SBP said that the RAAST will work as the pivot for digitization of the country's payment system. He said that since its launch in 2021, RAAST is working smoothly, successfully processing over 1 million transactions daily.

To date over 33 million unique RAAST IDs have been created and over 267 million transactions worth Rs.5.4 trillion paid and settled through RAAST. He added that the RAAST Payment-to-Merchant (P2M) feature has been recently launched, which will revolutionize



the digital payment landscape in the country. It allows the merchant and vendors to initiate 'Request-to-Pay' for their customers enabling the customers to make the payment by just accepting the request.

He encouraged the AMCs to provide Raast P2M features to their investors on their mobile applications or portals, enabling them to Pay directly from their registered accounts. He emphasized that this is an untapped area for innovation and designing customer-centric investment products will provide more and better savings opportunities to individual customers.

Commissioner SECP, Murtaza Ahmad Lodhi also honored the event and remarked, "CDC has been consistently working closely with SECP for formulating and refining the Regulatory framework for the mutual fund industry. It is heartening to witness the successful realization of many such pioneering initiatives by CDC, in collaboration with SBP and SECP, and the steady progress

towards market development, greater efficiencies and investor facilitation."

While speaking at the event, CEO CDC, Badiuddin Akber said, "Implementation of this project is part of CDC's strategy of constantly striving for new and novel solutions based on technology and innovation to create ease of doing business for investors and market participants (AMCs in this case). We are thankful to both SBP and SECP for their continued support and patronage allowing us to come up with such new tech-based solutions.

Chairman CDC, Moin Fudda welcomed the audience and thanked SBP for their continued support in market development endeavors by CDC. The event was also attended by CEO MUFAP, Ms. Mashmooma Zehra Majeed, CEOs and senior executives of the mutual fund industry, all of whom lauded CDC's efforts in undertaking this initiative and playing its role for market development.

# Lahore Chamber of Commerce lauds FBR's revenue success

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) has commended the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for surpassing revenue target for the fourth consecutive month, achieving a collection of Rs 2.75 trillion from July to October 2023.

Talking to media here Wednesday, the LCCI President Kashif Anwar said the FBR has collected Rs 68 billion more in taxes between July and October than it had planned.

Kashif Anwar also welcomed the decision of not to increase interest rates, but he emphasized the need for reduced interest rates, suggesting that ideally, the interest rate should be in single digit to facilitate

industrial growth as the lower interest rates typically have a multifaceted impact on economy like cost of borrowing, investment incentives, Consumer Spending, exchange rates, lower interest rates and reducing debt servicing burden.

He calls for parity in exchange rates to curb illegal money transfer methods, saying stable petroleum product prices reflect economic recovery.

Furthermore, President LCCI expressed his appreciation for the reduction in edible oil prices by Rs 60 per liter and noted that the strengthening of the rupee has started to positively impact other commodities as well. He emphasized the

importance of parity between interbank rates and open market rates, highlighting the potential benefits of such parity, including the elimination of illegal methods of money transfer, such as 'hawala' and 'hundi'.

Kashif Anwar voiced strong support from the business community for government policies. However, he called for a significant reduction in petroleum prices, citing that it would relieve financial burdens, reduce transportation costs, and the cost of doing business which will ultimately foster economic growth.

The LCCI President said that these developments in tax collection, interest

rates, and the prices of essential commodities signal significant progress in Pakistan's economic landscape. As the FBR continues its efforts to bring non-filers into the tax net, it aims to boost revenue further. He also called for reduced interest rates and the emphasis on parity between different exchange rates are additional steps in enhancing economic stability and growth in the region.

The President LCCI said that it is the collective responsibility of all citizens to increase the tax base and file the tax returns, he said and added that those who have not filed their tax return must submit even if it is late.

محکمہ یکسٹریکشن اینڈ ٹیکس کنٹرول ڈیپارٹمنٹ موٹور بھرتیو بختخو پشاور کے موٹاں سکواڈ نے درج ذیل گاڑیوں کو ٹکس کی بنیاد پر چوں میں سے رکھوئی دیرپا س پشاور میں بند کی جس اور ان ٹکس کو گاڑیوں کے خلاف انکوائری کی گئی جس کے نتیجے میں درج ذیل گاڑیاں غیر قانونی بنی گئیں۔ موٹور ویگل آرڈیننس 1965 سے حاصل اختیارات، دودھ چینگ اور پریز اینڈ ڈیپول روڈ (موٹور ویگل آرڈیننس 2015) غیر بختخو کے تحت ان گاڑیوں کی تین کارڈنگ کے لئے تمام قانونی قاعدے جو سے کئے گئے ہیں۔ اگر برسرِ بھی درج ذیل گاڑیوں کے متعلق جوہداران کے پاس کسی قسم کی تین ملکیت ہو، اشتیاد بنائی یا شاعت کے چہرہ (14) دان کے اندر رجسٹر کیا جائز یکسٹریکشن آفیسر-1 کے روبرو رجسٹریشن کے لئے پیش ہوں۔ اس صورت دیگر رجسٹر کے بعد رجسٹرڈ گاڑیوں کے درج ذیل گاڑیاں تین کارڈنگ کی جائیں گی۔

Sr. No.	Registration Mark	Make	Chassis No. Before FSL	Chassis No. After FSL
1	NIL	Toyota Vitz 2000	SCP10-3081266	SCP10-308XXXX
2	FB-997	Toyota Prius 2010	ZWP30-1205121	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
3	NIL	Toyota Land Cruiser V8 2010	URJ202-5001352	URJ202-4002789 welded and refitted chassis frame piece
4	MB-721	Toyota Corolla 2007	ZEE122-9306848	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
5	APB-537	Toyota Corolla 2007	NZE-120-4070992	NZE-120-60XXXX
6	UB-407	Toyota Corolla 2011	ZRE141-4503467	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
7	LED-13-8586	Toyota Fielder 2007	NZE141-9014399	NZE141-9046X99
8	WB-571	Corolla Premio 2005	ZZT240-0134353	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
9	LEA-2318	Toyota Prius 2012	ZWP30-155653	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
10	LED-10-5690	Toyota Corolla 2010	NZE140-2072437	NZE140-20XXXX
11	LEB-12-6866	Toyota Corolla 2012	ZRE141-4507290	ZRE141-4XXXXXX
12	ACJ-058	Toyota Corolla 2017	NZE170R-4103123	NZE170R-41XXXX
13	LED-13-6921	Toyota Prado 2002	VZJ121-0001678	welded and refitted chassis frame piece
14	AUB-270	Toyota Corolla 2010	NZE140-2064329	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
15	LEC-10-1130	Toyota Corolla 2010	NZE140-2047467	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
16	UX-992	Toyota Vitz 2009	SC090-507922	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
17	LEC-13-4596	Toyota Corolla 1993	AE100-0083232	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
18	ND-144	Toyota Corolla 2008	NZE120-6089020	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
19	LEB-17A-8979	Toyota Corolla 2017	NZE170R-4115865	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
20	ZK-313	Toyota Prius	ZWP30-5213671	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
21	LED-10-827	Toyota Corolla 2010	NZE140-2052367	welded and refitted full chassis sheet piece
22	UJ-845	Toyota Corolla 2012	NZE140-2125575	NZE140-2109414
23	NK-048	Toyota Premio 2006	ZZT240-0114958	The Original Chassis number has been filled with weld material
24	LEE-15-8792	Toyota Crown 2008	CRS182-0022664	CRS182-1020068
25	LED-7679	Toyota Surf 2000	KZN185-0032463	KZN185-0011603
26	BD-3870	Toyota Prado 2003	VZN120-0006126	welded and refitted chassis frame piece
27	EB-16-1441	Toyota Aqua 2012	NHP10-2075542	NHP10-6114026
28	APL-017	Toyota Corolla 2017	NZE170R-4133452	NZE170R-4133452
29	AGU-914	Toyota Corolla 2004	ZEE121-9010864	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
30	LEE-15-1434	Toyota Prius 2012	ZWP30-1487930	ZWP30-X4XXXX
31	D-1921	Toyota Corolla 2013	NZE140-2176915	Re-Stamped
32	CK-7696	Suzuki Bolan 1999	853331	Re-Stamped
33	LEE-16-5675	Suzuki Van 2016	01055207	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
34	AVE-226	Toyota Corolla 2011	NZE140-2087225	Re-Stamped
35	LEC-3685	Toyota Passo 2005	KGC10-0085341	KGC10-0085341
36	AAZ-504	Suzuki Alto 2012	HA35S-124787	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
37	RLE-06-2447	Toyota Corolla 2006	NZE120-6035737	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
38	LE-13-2533	Toyota Axio 2007	NZE144-6003746	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
39	DT -724	Suzuki Mehran 2009	SB308PK-986739	The Original Chassis number filled with weld material
40	LED-3988	Suzuki Mehran 2012	SB308PK-01035209	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
41	AQS-015	Toyota Corolla 2008	NZE120-6090040	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
42	NIL	Toyota Corolla 2011	NZE140-2055572	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
43	LEO-10-3949	Toyota Corolla 2010	NZE140-2070714	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
44	LEA-07-4586	Toyota Corolla 2007	NZE120-6048407	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
45	BCE-652	Daihatsu Mira 2014	LA300S-1266456	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
46	LED-516	Toyota Corolla 2015	NZE170R-4013313	NZE170R-400XG8
47	AAK-289	Suzuki VXR	RA410PK485803	ZRA410PK485803
48	ADY-993	Toyota Corolla	ZRE171R-6038768	welded and refitted full chassis sheet
49	ACY-306	Honda Civic 2017	NFBFC6665H010458	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
50	AKH-774	Toyota Aqua 2012	NHP10-2160274	NHP10-603791X
51	D-1775	Toyota Prado 2007	VZJ95-0011556	VZJ95-0073255
52	LZP -4547	Toyota Corolla 2005	CE120-0020222	welded and refitted chassis sheet piece
53	EZ-224	Toyota Corolla 2015	NZE170R-4040618	NZE170R-402XXXX
54	UF -312	Toyota Corolla 2012	ZRE141-4505098	ZRE141-4502846
55	BWE-645	Suzuki Alto 2017	HA36S-358886	HA36S-358886
56	LEA-06-6572	Suzuki Alto 2006	RA410PK510555	RA410PK510555
57	LE-14-9418	Toyota Prius 2014	ZWP30-1292355	ZWP30-1292355
58	LEA-18-8232	Toyota Corolla 2018	NZE170R-4140282	NZE170R-4140282

INF(P)#2669/23 EXCISE & TAXATION OFFICER-I, Motor Registration / Confiscating Authority, Peshawar

## Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 152/1 Institution 16/2/2022. Date of hearing 18/11/2023. Khan Bahadur Vs Taj Mohamad etc. Notice to No. 32/1. Abdul Ghafar 32/2. Abdul Hamed sons Zarfarosh Khan. 34/1. Bakhtullah Khan son. 34/2. Shehna d/o Obaidullah Khan. 35/1. Fiaz Ali Khan s/o Abdul Farosh Khan. 37/1. Faramos Khan s/o Amir Jawal Khan residents of Kalakhela Tehsil Gadezai District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 a.m dated 18/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Shadab C.J-IX Kohat, Suit No. 615/1. Date of hearing 07-11-2023 titled Mst Jamshid Begum Vs Sardar Khan (etc), Notice against Lrs Defendant No. 1:-1/4, Abdah Parveen, 1/5, Faiqa Khattak. 1/10, Rifat, Tanveer Daughter of Sardar Khan (Late) R/o Jarwanda Road Tehsil and District Kohat presently R/o (Now in Abroad America) (Lrs/Defendants). Whereas, the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Lrs/Defendants in which date of hearing 07-11-2023 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode, therefore, you Lrs/Defendants are intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 07-11-2023 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law. Order issued on 13-10-2023.

## Public Notice

It is published through this notice that I Naveed Khan son of Noor Badshah R/o. Seni Gumbat Kohat is the owner of House No.17 Sector VII size 11.1 Marla Phase I KDA Kohat has appointed Mr. Shahid Alam Afridi son of Said Wali Khan Afridi R/o Seni Gumbat Kohat. Through (Special) Deed No. 391 Bahi No. 04 Volume No. 280 dated 21/07/2023 which is registered in the office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar. The Attorney holder now wants to transfer the above said house. If any Bank/Institution/Firm/Pers on has any objection about the transfer he should contact the housing officer UADA within 15 days in writing with proofs otherwise house will be transferred and No objection will be accepted. (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).





## In brief

## Pegula beats Sabalenka

CANCUN (Agencies): Jessica Pegula beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets to move into the semi-finals of the WTA Finals in Cancun, Mexico. Pegula, 29, clinched victory on her seventh match point, sealing a 6-4 6-3 victory over the Belarusian, who made 33 unforced errors. Elena Rybakina defeated Maria Sakkari 6-0 6-7 (4-7) 7-6 (7-2). She will now play Sabalenka on Thursday evening to determine the second qualifier from the group. American Pegula, who had defeated Rybakina on Sunday, has now won her past five matches against top-10 players and said she is feeling "more comfortable" against the elite players this year. "I don't think it feels like such a big deal," she said. "Last year when I made top five, I think I psyched myself out a little bit. You have thoughts in your head - do I really belong at that level?" In contrast, Sabalenka rarely looked at ease at the newly constructed Estadio Paradisus, and described the playing surface as being "like leather". The 25-year-old is one of several players who have complained about the condition of the court at this week's tournament. "You never know what's going to happen, whether the bounce is going to help you or work against you," Sabalenka said.

## Pollution forces India to ban fireworks

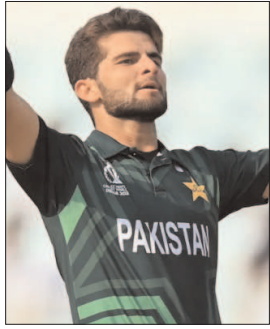
MUMBAI (AFP): India's cricket board on Wednesday said fireworks at Cricket World Cup matches in Mumbai and New Delhi will be banned due to hazardous pollution levels. The hosts will take on Sri Lanka at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on Thursday where a win will extend their unbeaten streak to seven and seal a semi-final spot. But concerns about air quality dominated news in the commercial capital of India, forcing the Board of Control for Cricket in India to take action. "BCCI is sensitive to environmental concerns. I took up the matter formally with the ICC (International Cricket Council) and there won't be any fireworks display in Mumbai, which can add to the pollution level," secretary Jay Shah said in a statement. "The BCCI acknowledges the urgent concern surrounding air quality in both Mumbai and New Delhi. While we strive to host the World Cup in a manner befitting the celebration of cricket, we remain steadfast in our commitment to prioritising the health and safety of all our stakeholders." According to India's National Air Quality Index, air in Mumbai was "poor", a ranking which it warns has the possible health impacts of "breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure", when the team started training at 18.30 local time. The concentration in Mumbai was four times above the recommended limit advised by the World Health Organisation. "I mean, in an ideal world, you don't want a situation like this, but I'm pretty sure the concerned people are taking the necessary steps to avoid these kind of situations," India captain Rohit Sharma said Wednesday. "It's not ideal, everyone knows that. But obviously, looking at our future generation, your kids, my kids, obviously, it's quite important that they get to live without any fear." He added, "So, yeah, every time I get to speak outside of cricket, if we are not discussing cricket, I always talk about this, that you know we have to look after our future generation."

# Shaheen Shah Afridi tops ODI Bowling Rankings for the first time

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's lethal pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi climbed to the top of ICC's ODI Bowling Rankings on Wednesday after impressive performances in the ongoing World Cup tournament in India.

Afridi, 23, is the joint-highest wicket-taker in the ongoing World Cup with Australia's Adam Zampa. The Pakistani pacer impressed with the ball against Bangladesh in Kolkata on Tuesday to return figures of 3-23, helping his team beat their opponents by seven wickets.

Afridi also returned figures of 3/45 against South Africa in their World Cup clash on Oct. 27 while he took a fiver in Pakistan's match against Australia on Oct. 20. Against Bangladesh, Afridi became the fastest bowler to take 100 ODI wickets, achieving the feat in only



his 51st ODI.

"This is the first time Shaheen has topped the bowler's rankings in any of the formats," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement, adding that he jumped nine spots to achieve the ranking.

Afridi's rise to the top reflects Pakistan's dominance in the 50-over format, as skipper Babar Azam currently leads the ODI Batters' Rankings. Azam has been sitting at the top of the ODI batter's

rankings since he climbed to the top in April 2021.

"This the first time since the introduction of the ICC ODI Player Rankings that a Pakistan batter and bowler dominate the rankings at the same time," the PCB said.

Pakistan's win over Bangladesh kept the green shirts' slim chances of qualifying for the semi-final stages of the World Cup alive. Azam's side lost four consecutive matches to India, Australia, Afghanistan and South Africa after winning their opening two games against the Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Pakistan face New Zealand on Nov. 4 at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. They must win their remaining clashes against the Kiwis and England to stand a chance of qualifying for the final four.

# Pakistani players grab 9 gold medals in Asian Open Taekwondo C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani players dominated the Poomsae event of the 5th Asian Open Taekwondo Championship on the opening day and bagged nine gold medals here at the Pakistan Sports Complex.

On the first day of the Championship, Pakistani players won 9 gold medals out of 10 while Nepal grabbed one medal. In Poomsae's U-30 mixed pair event, Pakistan's Flower Zaheer and Anas won gold with 7.48 points, Higher Education Commission's Ammar and Fatima won silver with 6.71 points, and Sindh's Shafi & Ulma won bronze with 6.43 and Zain Hasan and Latif of Nukes University won the fourth bronze medal by scoring 6.39 points.

In the mixed pair of over 30 category, Ali and Shafaqat of Pakistan WAPDA were first with 6.59, Ali and Bashir of Pakistan were second with 6.26, Changaizi and Kausar of Punjab were third while

Farhan and Hajra of Sindh came fourth.

In the men's under-30 team event, Pakistan's Qadeer, Waheed and Hussain won gold with 7.48 points, Pakistan Army's Shehzad, Didar and Ahmed got silver with 7.36 points, While Wapda's Khalid, Abbas and Ayub won the bronze and Army's Tariq, Gul and Jameel won the fourth bronze medal.

In the men's over 30 team category, Pakistan's Hussain, Mumtaz and Ali stood first with 6.98, Army's Haq, Mehmood and Waqas stood second with 6.79, WAPDA's Ali, Saleem and Akhtar stood third and Saudi Arabia Albane, Al-Madali and Al-Abbas took the fourth position.

In the women's under-40 individual event, Mehru-Nisa of Pakistan won gold, Aqsa Shafaqat of Pakistan won silver, Mahdiah Oghbaei of Iran won bronze and Hajira Nawab of Sindh won second bronze.

In the Men's Under-40

Individual Event, Pakistan's Shahbaz Ahmed finished first, Saudi Arabia's Muhammad Ali Al-Abbas took second, Pakistan's Mudassar Hussain third and Saudi Arabia's Salman Ali Al-Albane took fourth position.

In the Men's Under-30 Individual Event, Nepal's Ashmin Raut won gold, Pakistan's Aqdas Ullah won silver, Sindh's Hasan Alam won bronze and Pakistan's Ahmed Shahzad won fourth to bronze.

In the women's under-30 individual event, Naila of Pakistan won first, Kinza Fatima of Pakistan second, Isha Rehman of Pakistan third and Yamna Bint Khalid of Pakistan won the fourth bronze medal.

Asian Taekwondo Union President Prof. Kyu Seok Lee, PTF President Col. (R) Waseem Janjua, Championship Technical Delegate Kook Hyun Jung, Paramjit Shahi and Sara Mir along with others distributed the medals among the athletes.

# Game on! Saudi Arabia set to host football World Cup in 2034

RIYADH (Agencies): Unpack those green scarves and replica shirts the football World Cup, the biggest sports show on Earth, is coming to Saudi Arabia.

The Kingdom is the only remaining bidder for the 2034 tournament after sole rivals Australia pulled out, the sport's world governing body FIFA said on Tuesday. The decision will be ratified officially at a special FIFA congress at the end of next year.

Saudi Arabia had initially been interested in bidding for the 2030 World Cup alongside Egypt and Greece, but that idea was abandoned in June leaving the path open for a tri-continental bid

by Spain, Portugal and Morocco, with three matches in South America. The Kingdom said on Oct. 4 that it would bid for the 2034 event, minutes after the process was launched.

As a result of the tournament's continental rotation, FIFA invited only member countries of the Asian and Oceanian confederations to apply. Indonesia considered a joint bid with Australia, or other countries such as New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, but on Oct. 19 it swung behind Saudi Arabia's bid.

Australia, which hosted the Women's World Cup this year, was also a contender but withdrew its interest

after the Asian Football Confederation's decision to back the Saudi bid.

Football Australia chief executive James Johnson said bidding for the tournament was "not going to be favorable to Australia." He said: "Saudi is a strong bid. They have a lot of resources, and not just for the 2034 World Cup. From the government, top down they are prioritizing investment in football. That is difficult to compete with."

The Kingdom has hosted a raft of major sporting events since 2018, including football, Formula 1, golf and boxing, and will stage football's Club World Cup in December.



MUMBAI: Sachin Tendulkar was presented with a replica of his statue.

# World Cup 2023 South Africa thrash New Zealand to close on semis

PUNE (Agencies): South Africa are on the brink of clinching a World Cup semi-final berth after a 190-run thrashing of New Zealand in Pune.

Rassie van der Dussen made a superb 133 and Quinton de Kock hit his fourth century of the tournament in a 200-run stand as the Proteas posted 357-4.

New Zealand then slumped to 167 all out, with Keshav Maharaj taking 4-46. Victory returns South Africa to the top of the table while New Zealand drop to fourth after a third straight defeat.

Stand-in New Zealand skipper Tom Latham opted to bowl after winning the toss, allowing South Africa to play to their strengths and put a big total on the board. Temba Bavuma's side took the same approach as they have throughout this tournament, starting steadily before accelerating rapidly late in the innings.

After Bavuma fell for 24, De Kock and Van der Dussen laid the foundations, each batting with great control and making the most of New Zealand dropping tough chances to remove them on their way to three figures.

De Kock went past 500 runs for the tournament in the process, becoming the first South Africa batter to reach that milestone at a World Cup, before he fell for 114 off 116 balls. Van der Dussen reached his century off 101 balls then kicked on brilliantly.

New Zealand's task was made harder by a hamstring injury to seamer Matt Henry, who will have a



Rassie van der Dussen brought up his century in 101 balls.

scan on Thursday to assess the damage, allowing David Miller to smash four sixes in his 53 off 30 against a depleted attack.

Marco Jansen, who claimed 3-31, and his fellow fast bowlers did the initial damage to reduce New Zealand to 67-4 in reply, before left-arm spinner Maharaj hammered home South Africa's dominance as the Kiwis collapsed to 110-8.

New Zealand's only real resistance came through

Glenn Phillips' defiant half-century when the game was already lost. South Africa's place in the top for is now all but assured, with the Proteas batting and bowling units both impressing once again.

However, the injury-hit Black Caps find themselves in a battle to progress, with crucial matches against Pakistan and Sri Lanka to come.

Depleted Kiwis losing form at wrong time Coming into a major

tournament with injured players in the squad is always a risk but, for captain Kane Williamson and Tim Southee, New Zealand considered it a risk worth taking.

Fast bowler Southee made his return from a fractured thumb here but looked understandably rusty. Williamson made 78 on his return from a serious knee injury against Bangladesh earlier in the group stage but had to retire hurt after he also suffered a fractured thumb and has not played since.

With Henry joining Williamson, fast bowler Lockie Ferguson and batter Mark Chapman on the injury list, New Zealand could be down to just 11 fit players going into their crucial match against Pakistan, who are two points behind them, on Saturday.

Four wins from four to start the competition helped mask those injury problems but three losses on the spin, albeit to the top three sides, has put the pressure on an increasingly thread-bare group, with their net run-rate also taking a significant hit in this defeat.

Losing Henry, New Zealand's most prolific wicket-taker in one-day internationals this year, would be a big blow, especially with Ferguson, the obvious replacement, nursing an Achilles injury.

The Black Caps have shown their resilience numerous times over the years and, after a bruising defeat, a patched-up side will have to do so again to ensure a campaign that started so brightly isn't over before the knockout stage.

# PM Youth Talent Hunt Men Badminton C'ship begins in Charsadda

PESHAWAR (APP): The Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Men Badminton Championship opened in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Wednesday.

The opening ceremony was held at the Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex and was attended by Vice Chancellor University of Swabi Professor Dr. Nasir Jamal, Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Captain (Retd) Khalid Mahmood, Assistant Commissioner Charsadda Miss Alveena Faiz, Chief Referee Pakistan Badminton Federation Muhammad Amjad Khan, international coaches Nadeem Khan and Hayat Ullah, District Sports Officer Charsadda Muhammad Imran, Organizing Secretary and former international gold medalist of the South Asian Games in Javelin throw Itlaf Hussain, players from all five Regions host Peshawar, Bannu, Swat, Mardan, and Hazara, officials and small number of spectators.

In his opening address, Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Captain (Retd) Khalid Mahmood appreciated the players of badminton, squash, wrestling, boxing, hockey, table tennis, tennis, volleyball, football, swimming, cricket, judo, and taekwondo for their performance at the national and international levels. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has international standard playing facilities but that the players need to work harder to reach the international level.

Vice Chancellor University of Swabi Professor Dr. Nasir Jamal lauded the Higher Education Commission for reposing confidence in University of Swabi and granting them the opportunity to organize the Men Badminton Provincial League.

He said that a team from the Provincial League would be selected to represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National League. On the first day of the tournament, Peshawar defeated Swat 3-2, Mardan defeated Hazara 3-0, and Bannu defeated Hazara 3-0.

# RMI Media Cricket League: Wins for PPC Panthers, Fighters & Cobras

PESHAWAR (APP): PPC Panthers, Fighters and PPC Cobras recorded victories in the ongoing 7th edition of the RMI Media Cricket League being played here at Kamal Sher Khan Army Sports Stadium on Wednesday.

PPC Panthers defeated Tigers, Kings defeated PPC Qalandars while PPC Fighters defeated Dolphins in their respective matches. In the first match, PPC Fighters defeated PPC Dolphins by nine wickets, PPC Dolphins captain Shakeel Farman Ali won the toss and batted first by scoring a good 91 runs target after playing the allotted eight overs. Shakeel Farman Ali, Bureau Chief of Geo TV Peshawar, played a captain knock by adding a quick-fire half-century 50 runs including four towering sixes and five dashing boundaries all around the ground and received thundering applause from the sitting spectators.

He was so impressive in his 23-balls half-century. Waqar, Irfan Khan, and Naem Babar took two wickets for the Fighters.

In reply, Kamran played the best game and scored unbeaten 51 runs with five boundaries and three sixes, Irfan Musazai of Sama TV scored 13 runs and Shah Faisal scored 11 runs. In the second match PPC Panthers beat PPC Tigers by 17 runs.

PPC Panthers captain Asrar won the toss and batted first and scored 122 runs for the loss of two wickets in the allotted eight overs in which Ali Akbar 25 with three boundaries and a six, Zahid 25 with three boundaries and Farid Ullah made 29 with five boundaries and one six.

In reply, PPC Tigers put up an excellent performance and scored 105 runs in pursuit of the desired target and lost the match. Wajid and Shehzad were outstanding with 51 runs and 34 runs. Wajid scored 51 off 27 balls with three sixes and five boundaries, and Shehzad smashed three boundaries and one six.

Shabbir and Farid dismissed two players each from the Panthers side. PPC Panthers won by 17 runs. The third match of the

tournament was played between PPC Cobra and Qalandars, in which King Cobra defeated Qalandars by six wickets.

Qalandars scored 104 runs in the allotted overs while playing first, in which Fayyaz 49 including six boundaries and one six, Arsalan 22 with four boundaries and Zakir 19 with two boundaries were prominent scorers. Haroon dismissed a player from Cobra.

In reply, King Cobra achieved the target of the required run at the loss of one wicket, in which Rafat Ehsan hammered a cracking knock of 43 off 29 balls with, Mahmood smashed an elegant knock of 41 with five boundaries and Kamran was prominent scorer with sixteen runs including three boundaries. Khyber Union of Journalists Senior Vice President Imran Ayaz and General Secretary Imran Yousafzai were the chief guests along with Peshawar Press Club General Secretary Irfan Musazai Sports, Chairman Sports Committee Zafar Iqbal and other senior journalists were present.

# World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan visits Traffic Police HQs

PESHAWAR (APP): Hailing from a village called Nawa Khali World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan visited City Traffic Police Headquarters Gulbahar.

Hamza Khan during his visit met Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan. Soon after his arrival, Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan warmly received the World Junior Squash Champion and congratulated him on his impressive victory in the Junior World Championship. Hamza Khan participated in FM Radio 88.6 and YouTube programs by giving direct answers to citizens' questions.

Pakistan squash is back, exclaimed the commentator at the Melbourne Sports Center as the dashing Muhammad Hamza Khan pulled off one of greatest victories for his country by defeating Egypt's 15-year-old Mohamed Zakaria 3-1 to lift the World Junior Squash title in Melbourne in August this year.

The young sensation from Peshawar came from one set down to win 10-12, 14-12, 11-3, 11-6 and created history as he became the first Pakistani squash player in the last 37 years to win the World Squash trophy after Jansher Khan who bagged the title way back in 1986.

Between 1986 and 2023, Amir Atlas emerged as the only player who came close to repeating Jansher's feat 15 years ago by reaching the final of the event but fell short. Hamza played like a boy possessed as he matched the talented Egyptian opponent stroke for stroke. Despite having lost the first set 10-12 Hamza remained undeterred and overcame Zakaria in 71 minutes to lift the title in style.

"I am very happy, thanks to Allah, thanks to my coach and my parents," said Hamza Khan. Hamza went on to praise his coach and his parents: especially his father and thanked every Pakistani living around the

world for their support and appreciation.

The former British Junior Champion has seen some trying times but is now setting his eyes on a successful professional career from hereon. The 17-year-old Hamza hails from a family of legends that include British Open winner Qamar Zaman and Ex- World No-14 player Shahid Zaman Khan.

He also thanked the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF), who came to Hamza, and received him well. The PSF bore all the expenses of his participation in the World Junior Championship. Hamza Khan, the two-time Asian Junior Championship winner and the former US U-19 champion, grew in confidence with each passing minute, playing superbly and even challenging his strong rivals during the World Junior Championship in Australia.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 109,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 109,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 56,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1523.68 feet and was 125.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 28,100 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1202.60 feet, which was 152.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,600 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 70,400, 39,000, 42,900 and 13,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,060 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### DDWP gave revised approval

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Divisional Development Working Party (DDWP) on Wednesday gave revised approval to the 20 schemes including eleven for highways, six for public health and three schemes of the building department for the annual development program. Presiding over the meeting of DDWP, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Laiqat Ali Chatha said that the work on the schemes should not be stopped due to funding or any other reason. He directed that the concerned Deputy Commissioners should be aware of the updated status of the schemes and before bringing them to this forum, the DCs themselves should be fully aware of the ground realities by visiting these schemes. The Commissioner said that rigid pavement should be considered for the roads being built in remote areas, which helps in the durability of the roads as often the roads break down quickly due to the non-availability of repair funds. On the occasion, one water supply and five drainage schemes were presented by Public Health. According to the details, it included Drainage/Sewerage Schemes in Union Council Thatta Khalil Tehsil Taxila, Ward No. 5 and 7 of Wah Cantt, Lalazar Phase 1 and 2, Wah Cantt, Badho to Garhwal while Union Councils 42, 43, 44, 45, 75, 77, 78 schemes of construction of streets, drainage and PCC streets.

### Rs 269,750 fine imposed

RAWALPINDI (APP): The special magistrates conducted raids on 4,533 shops during the last three days and arrested 38 shopkeepers found involved in price hikes, hoarding and profiteering of essential commodities, on the instructions of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Mujahid Abbasi. A fine of Rs 269,750 was imposed on the shopkeepers in different areas of the city for indulging in profiteering. The ADCG said that the district administration was making all-out efforts to provide maximum relief to the people. He said that the petrol prices had decreased significantly twice during the last month which reduced all the household items but some elements were involved in profiteering. Mujahid said that the district administration does not want to harass anyone by penalty or arrest but to ensure the implementation of fixed prices for essential items.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Syed Jamal Shah addressing media Briefing regarding annual Folk festival "Lok Mela" to be held at Lok Virsa from November 3.

## Wafaqi Mohtasib constitutes inspection team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Taking cognizance of the large number of persistent complaints against the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi constituted an inspection team to visit the Central Directorate of CDA to ascertain the status of its service delivery arrangements and suggest remedial measures. The inspection team is comprised of Senior Advisor Ahmad Farooq, Deputy Advisor Pervez Haleem and Senior Investigation Officer, Adnan Ahmad.

The complaints were mostly about the traffic mess caused by the expansion work being carried out by CDA on the Park Road and Islamabad Expressway, depleted condition of roads and streets, defective sewerage system, delayed payments to contractors, sub-standard construction of infrastructure and delay in payment of pension and retirement benefits to its workers. The Inspection Team met with the Chairman CDA Capt (Rtd) Anwar Ul Haq and other

executives of the civic body to get first-hand knowledge about these complaints and discussed with them various measures for timely resolution of the public complaints. The team went around different sections of the CDA Directorate including One Window Facilitation Desk and interacted with the residents who had come there to get redressal of their complaints. The team observed that the public at large was facing problems due to an inordinate delay in the completion of the construction work. The team advised CDA authorities to come up with a time frame for the completion of its ongoing projects.

The team also advised the concerned authorities to complete the process for issuing completion and transfer letters within 45 days and objections, if any, must be raised and settled within 30 days.

The Team directed the CDA administration not to depute an officer below the rank of BS-19 to represent CDA in the investigation process of the Wafaqi

Mohtasib. Earlier, the CDA Member (IT) briefed the Inspection Team about the CDA Management Information System (MIS) which was fully functional and was providing online services to the customers.

All matters pertaining to sale and purchase of CDA Land have been digitalised and the same is being carried in the attached departments of CDA as well. The team was informed that auto parking facility is being introduced in the limits of CDA to resolve the chronic issue of parking and 160 electric buses are also being included in the fleet of Metro Buses to facilitate commuters.

The Inspection Team was also apprised by the CDA Administration on the status of short- and long-term recommendations for institutional reforms which were made in its previous visit. The Team Members lauded the services of the CDA being extended to customers through One Window Facilitation Desk.

The Team will submit its report to Wafaqi Mohtasib within seven days.

## National folk festival to promote cultural tourism

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Folk Festival (Lok Mela) will promote cultural tourism as a large number of local tourists come from various parts of the country to enjoy amazing and mega event in the capital.

Talking to APP here on Wednesday, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said that the biggest folk festival in the country called Lok Mela scheduled to be held from November 3 to 12. It is being organized by the National Heritage and Culture Division at Lok Virsa, he added. He said the festival would attract tourists massively to serve them with cultural and traditional treats by featuring a variety of activities such as provincial pavilions, food stalls, shopping at traditional stalls and music programmes that would reflect and unveil the rich cultural diversity of the country.

The official said that the exceptional festival would encourage and fascinate the folk lovers to throng the federal capital and enjoy the music, traditional dances, arts and handicraft. The cultural nights being part of the unique folk mela would also enthrall the tourists, he added. It is pertinent to mention here, the festival would be conducted under the theme "Peace and Harmony through Cultural Diversity" offers an immense opportunity to enjoy the rich culture of all the provinces.

## Sindhhi asks FDE to ensure maintenance of sports facilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhhi Wednesday directed the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to ensure proper maintenance of grounds and sports facilities of all federal schools and colleges.

He was speaking at the Annual Sports Day of Islamabad Model College for Girls F-8/1. Madad Ali Sindhhi addressing the event said that physical fitness was just as important as any other part of education.

He said that without physical fitness and health, the full potential of youth could not be reached.

The minister said that he had ordered FDE to ensure that such sports events were organized in every school and college in federal capital on regular basis. He reiterated the importance of physical training (PT) classes.

The minister said that during his visits he observed that PT classes were not being fully utilized. He urged the principals of all educational institutions to ensure that PT classes were regularly held and were

used to ensure fitness of all students.

In her welcome address, Principal of the College, Prof. Aasiya Rafique Malik highlighted the importance of outdoor and physical games along with their studies.

Students of both junior and senior sections enthusiastically took part in various sports events such as March Past, PT display, Rabbit Race and Simple 100m Race.

Madad Ali Sindhhi, as a chief guest, awarded the winners with shields and certificates. The minister, in his address, appreciated participants' energy, stamina and vigor and congratulated the winners of sports events. His words inspired the students to be good patriots and responsible citizens in their life.

He enlightened the students to take up Chand Bibi and Fatima Jinnah as role models and appreciated the efforts of teachers and the Principal in arranging such healthy activities. In the end, College Principal Prof. Aasiya Rafique Malik presented the college crest to the chief guest as a token of gratitude. The ceremony ended gracefully with the national anthem.

## NCHR urges govt to deal with Afghan asylum seekers as per human rights commitments

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Responding to a petition submitted by a delegation of prominent human rights defenders (HRDs), the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has written a letter to the government and other stakeholders urging them to deal with the Afghan asylum seekers according to national and international human rights commitments.

A delegation of prominent human rights defenders (HRDs) submitted a petition in NCHR requesting the Commission to play its role in restraining the government from detaining, forcefully deporting or otherwise harassing Afghan asylum-seekers. The petition also suggested the Commission to direct UNHCR to expeditiously process and decide all the asylum-seeking applications filed by the foreigners presently residing in Pakistan especially Afghan HRD.

Taking cognizance of the plea, the Commission has written letter to government and other stakeholders recommending to restrain the repatriation of those who possess documentation and vulnerable groups, including

asylum seekers.

The letter advised the government that persons holding expired government issued documentation might be allowed review of their documentation and the government must ensure that women, children and families are not separated during cross border movement. The Commission also called for developing guidelines and bringing clarity to the government's Afghan refugee policy through consultations with civil society and international organizations mandated to provide international protection.

The delegation that included Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, Former Senator Farhatullah Babar and Former Senator Afrasiab Khattak and human rights defenders including Saba Gul Khattak, Amina Masood Junjua and Advocate Imran Shafique, held a meeting with Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha. The delegation has presented the petition to the Federal Government, Ministry of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Saffron and to the National Commission for Human Rights. Members of the delegation expressed their concerns over return of Afghan

refugees. The petition noted that Pakistan has remained home to the largest refugee populations in the world, and had signed a Tripartite Agreement with the Government of Afghanistan and UNHCR in which it committed that refugees would only be repatriated on voluntary basis.

The petition referred to different categories of Afghans who had earlier remained in Pakistan as asylum-seekers which included Proof of Registration Cards and Afghan Citizen Cards. As such all those registered with SHARP and UNHCR had been allowed to stay in Pakistan as asylum seekers.

Senator Mushtaq Ahmed referred to earlier policy decision taken by Federal Cabinet on management of Afghan refugees in Pakistan that prohibited harassment of unregistered Afghan refugees and application of Section 14 of the Foreigners Act, 1946. Similarly, former Senator Farhatullah Babar requested the Commission to take cognizance of forced repatriation of Afghan refugees in light of international human rights treaties which prohibit member states to forcibly expel refugees or asylum seekers.

## Saudi embassy recalls historic 1960 visit of President Ayub Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia on Wednesday commemorated the momentous visit of President Muhammad Ayub Khan to the Kingdom, which took place on November 1, 1960.

Taking to his social media account on "X", Saudi Press Attaché, Dr. Naif Al Otaibi, shared insights into the remarkable diplomatic encounter that unfolded during this historic event.

https://twitter.com/dr\_naif777/status/1719688267103432856?s=48&t=ZDe3xmTnmDx\_tvUcALW8g

He revealed that King Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud welcomed President Ayub Khan to Riyadh with a warm reception, underscoring the significance of this diplomatic rendezvous. Their meeting was widely regarded as a pivotal moment in the annals of Saudi Arabia-Pakistan relations, he added.

In an exclusive talk with APP, Dr Naif, conveying the grandeur of President Ayub Khan's arrival, high-

lighted that the Saudi royal family and high-ranking government officials joined forces to greet the visiting dignitary, further emphasizing the importance attached to this visit.

He elaborated on President Ayub Khan's itinerary during his sojourn in Saudi Arabia. In addition to Riyadh, he said the President embarked on an extensive tour that included the revered cities of Makkah and Madina. His pilgrimage to Makkah bore profound significance for both the Pakistani leader and the broader Muslim world, accentuating the deep religious bonds that bind these two nations, he maintained.

Dr. Naif said the discussions between King Saud and President Ayub Khan encompassed a wide array of topics, with a particular emphasis on enhancing bilateral cooperation, fortifying economic ties, and ensuring regional stability. He said both leaders reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to fostering

stronger relations with an eye toward peace and prosperity in the region.

Dr. Naif underscored the transformative impact of the visit on various fronts adding that it facilitated the strengthening of political and diplomatic relations, fostered cultural exchanges, and bolstered trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said as the two nations continue their collaborative journey toward mutual growth and development, this historic meeting stood as a testament to the enduring friendship shared between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Dr. Naif said the warm hospitality and the elaborate reception extended to President Ayub Khan throughout his visit underscored the significance of this diplomatic milestone and the enduring partnership that unites these two brotherly nations. He hoped that the repercussions of this momentous encounter would continue to reverberate throughout the region's geopolitics in the years to come.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik chairing a meeting of All Pakistan Solvent Extractors Association at Ministry of NFS&R.

## DG stresses provinces for long-term action plan to expand scope of 'child nutrition'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General Health Ministry of Health, Baseer Khan Achakzai Wednesday stressed provincial governments for formulating a long-term action plan to expand the scope of nutrition and rural people's access to safe drinking water as every year around 53,000 Pakistani children die of diarrhoea after drinking unsafe water.

Talking to a private news channel, DG Health expressed his serious concern over the unsafe drinking water in far-flung areas of the country and stressed that provinces should increase their investment to support child nutrition programs.

He disclosed that the Ministry of Health with the collaboration of provincial governments would soon launch a campaign to improve maternal nutrition in rural areas by conducting awareness campaigns.

He explained that in 2024, 25 awareness campaigns will be held in 67 selected districts that report poor maternal nutrition indicators. DG Health said that improving the knowledge and capacity of healthcare providers to address maternal nutrition

issues and promote a collective responsibility approach is the need of the hour.

The key objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition and improve the capacities of health workers in public and private sectors, he added. Provinces should support the federal government with frameworks to plan, prioritize, and budget for safe water services, he said, adding, our aim is to improve the quality of water supply and ensure access to safe drinking water to population deprived of it.

Replying to a question, he said that in the advent of a natural disaster, diseases such as diarrhoea and typhoid spread rapidly and became a critical lifesaving humanitarian intervention.

He asked the provincial authorities to take the matter seriously, saying that not everyone could afford mineral water for drinking. Punjab, KPK and Balochistan governments should approve water policy and laws related to improving water quality making it mandatory to check water once a year, he suggested.



Minister meet UN official

KABUL (Agencies): Mohammad Arslan Kharouti, the Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, has called for UNHCR to assist in stopping the forced deportation of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan. He also discussed addressing the challenges faced by Afghans in Iran and Turkey. According to a statement from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Kharouti met with UNHCR Deputy Representative Iain Stuart Hall in Kabul.

Team arrives at border

KABUL (Agencies): A technical team from the Committee for Registration, Verification, and Reception of Afghan Returnees, which is part of the High Commission for Responding to the Challenges of Returnees, has arrived in Torkham. Bilal Karimi, the Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, announced on “X” that this team will soon begin the registration and verification process for Afghan repatriates.

Officials not participating in govt contracts: Ministry

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Economy said that the decree of the leader of the Islamic Emirate prohibiting the participation of current government officials and officials in government contracts and tenders has been fully implemented. Abdul Latif Nazari, the deputy of the ministry, emphasized that the decree was issued with the aim of eliminating corruption and creating transparency in governance. “The political philosophy of this decree is to prevent possible corruption and to maintain transparency in the structure of the system, including the financial aspect. The decree has

been fully implemented and the Islamic Emirate is following this in a transparent manner,” said Abdul Latif Nazari. The Chamber of the Industry and Mines of Afghanistan called the decree of the leader of the Islamic Emirate beneficial and added that the participation of government officials in the past had created serious challenges in tender processes and contracts. “The decree of the Islamic Emirate regarding the non-attendance of government officials in tenders and procurements is an action taken because in the past we had serious problems in this area and this

will cause transparency in the system and work process,” Said Sakhi Ahmad Payman, first deputy of the chamber. Some economists said that appointing committed and expert people in government offices can be beneficial for the economic development of the country. “Appointing committed and expert people in the government, we can experience more productivity in the country, such orders can play a role, but it is not a complete solution,” said Abdul Zahur, Mudabir, an economist. “Prohibiting the participation of Islamic Emirate officials in procurement

contracts has reduced corruption and can improve transparency, and on the other hand, it can provide the basis for healthy competition of the private sector in obtaining contracts and providing services,” said Mer Shikab Mer, an economist. The decree of the leader of the Islamic Emirate, which was issued on the 21st of Hoot month in the year 1401, prohibits the officials and agents of the Islamic Emirate directly and indirectly from procuring goods, providing services, extracting mines, and with companies that the officials or government agents have a share in.

60-year-old dispute resolved

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): A 60-year-old dispute between two tribes in southeastern Khost province has been resolved following efforts by local officials, tribal elders and religious scholars. The feud between Tryzee and Babakarkhel tribes was triggered by the demarcation of a mountain and land ownership about six decades ago. Maulvi Hazrat Jamal, a member of the Land-Grab Prevention and Restitution Commission (LGPRC), told Pajhwok Afghan News that both tribes refused to accept the boundaries identified by the government of the time. He said members of the commission marked the boundaries between the tribes by studying the relevant documents and taking into consideration the GPS measurement of the area. He added: “In order to solve this problem, the government took a decision in the solar year 1343, but it was not accepted by the parties and could not be implemented. “Fortunately, however, the row has been sorted out by mediators,” said Jamal, who called on tribal leaders and people of the province to solve all their problems through dialogue. He promised officials would cooperate with them. He said he would not allow anyone to usurp government land. “So far, we have registered thousands of acres of state land in Khost and efforts are underway in this regard.”

Meanwhile, elders of the tribes expressed happiness over the resolution of the six-decade-old dispute. Mukhtaruddin Jalalzai, a leader of the Tryzee tribe, told Pajhwok the decision made 60 years ago was being implemented with the consent of the parties involved. He also asked other tribes of the province to talk out their problems. “We had this dispute for 60 years, but thank God, officials of the current government have resolved and changed it into brotherhood.”

Haji Mohammad Rahman, a Babakarkhel elder, told Pajhwok oath from both tribes had taken up arms against each other several times. He believed the dispute would have led to horrible consequences if the government had ignored it. Rahman commented: “There are many friendships and kinships between the two tribes. We are very happy that Allah saved us from conflict.”

Acting Minister calls for int’l cooperation — to standardize health system



KABUL (TOLOnews): The acting Minister of Public Health, Qalandar Ebad in his meeting with representatives of various countries in Qatar stressed facilitation and international cooperation to standardize Afghanistan’s health system. In his meeting with the Qatari Public Health Minister Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Ebad discussed the elimination of polio disease in Afghanistan and stressed the need for an increase in the number of workers in this field, according to the MoPH’s spokesman, Sharafat Zaman Amerkhail. The Qatari minister also assured Ebad of launching educational programs for the newly graduated Afghan health sector employees in Qatar. However, doctors said that reliance on the international community cannot help the Afghan health sec-

tor to improve in the long term. “The foreign sources have never been a good provider for the health service for the people of Afghanistan. We don’t have a proper system in hand yet to provide services for the public,” said Sayed Abdullah Ahmadi, a medical doctor. Ebad also emphasized the establishment of standard hospitals in 300 districts across the country.

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Half of all Afghans are living in poverty, says World Bank

KABUL (Agencies): Poverty affects one in every two Afghans, while about 15 million people are food insecure, the World Bank said in its latest report on Afghanistan published. The report said that consumer prices continue to decrease because of persistent economic weakness and reduced demand, prolonging the deflationary trend that began in April 2023. Deflation dynamics reflect the impact of depleted household savings, reduced public spending, and shocks to farmer income from poppy cultivation bans, the report said. On trade, the report said that exports amounted to US\$1.3 billion between January to September, representing a slight decrease of 0.5 percent compared to the same



period in 2022. Imports reached US\$ 5.7 billion, showing a 27 percent growth compared to the same period in 2022. On the value of Afghan currency, the report said that it appreciated by 20.2

percent against the US dollar between January 1 and October 23. The report also said that revenue collection for the first seven months of 2023 reached 105 billion Afghanis, which is 5 per-

cent below the target. However, revenue collection increased 1.2 percent compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Border taxes account for 58 percent of total revenue.

Kabul calls for tolerance from countries hosting Afghan refugees

KABUL (TOLOnews): A statement released by the Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that Afghans have been forced to migrate to various countries due to the wars over the past 45 years in Afghanistan. The statement called on host countries to not forcefully deport Afghan refugees as the migrants do not have any preparation for it yet, and for tolerance based on Islamic and neigh-

borly manners. The statement said that the Afghans have not created problems or destabilization in host countries, and urged the neighboring countries to treat them with proper behavior. This comes as the deadline announced by Pakistan caretaker government for the Afghan refugees to leave the country ends on Wednesday. The deadline calls for nearly 2 million Afghan

refugees to leave Pakistan or they will face forced deportation. The Afghans who are being forcefully deported, their materials, money and other property are their personal property and no one has the right to seize it from them and impose unfair and unjust conditions on them,” the statement reads. The statement called on Afghan traders to cooperate with the commission

established to help the refugees. It also instructed the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and other relevant ministries to provide necessary facilities for the traders and industrial owners who are returning home. The Islamic Emirate meanwhile urged Afghans who are in exile due to political concerns to return, saying that they can live their lives in calmness in Afghanistan.

Gender disparity continues in Afghanistan’s education and employment

KABUL (Khaama Press): Two years after the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, there is a stark contrast in opportunities between boys and girls. Boys can freely go to school, get an education, and look for well-paying jobs. However, girls must hide their schooling, can’t attend universities, and often work in low-income jobs like carpet weaving. Gender inequalities and challenges that existed before have significantly worsened with the emergence of the Taliban. Some of these challenges, including poverty and the unemployment crisis that affects over 90% of Afghanistan’s population, have also had a

profound impact on girls. They must work strenuously to support their families, exacerbating their hardships. Nadia, a mother of four daughters, used to encourage her daughters to pursue education and dream of a better future despite economic challenges. However, with the ban on girls’ education and the closure of girls’ schools under the rule of the Taliban administration, her hopes for her daughter’s future have been shattered. The stories of mothers and daughters in Afghanistan, despite their desires for their daughters to experience different destinies, are becoming increasingly similar with each passing

day. Twenty years ago, Nadia and her family migrated to Pakistan during the Taliban rule. There, like most Afghan refugees, she started working in carpet weaving to make ends meet. She was a teenager but learned carpet weaving to help support her family. Nadia later married in Pakistan and, in recent years, returned to Afghanistan so that her daughters could receive an education, study, and have better income opportunities. However, she never imagined that her daughters would follow a path she had taken out of necessity. Marwa, Nadia’s second daughter, was in ninth

grade when the Taliban took control, and girls’ schools were closed. Marwa says economic difficulties and the lack of educational opportunities have forced her into carpet weaving. She spends her days weaving carpets, a job she’s doing at an age when her mother was doing the same. According to Nadia, “People with good economic conditions can have online businesses and study online, but most people in Afghanistan do not have a good economy and cannot even afford to eat properly, especially when men are also unemployed, let alone online education.” Nilofer, a 16-year-old

girl deprived of education, bears the burden of her family’s economic hardships. She says, “I work nine hours daily and earn five thousand Afghanis. It’s not a lot of money, and my family and I struggle to make ends meet.” When Nilofer goes to the carpet weaving workshop, she doesn’t feel alone because, as she puts it, “Every day, I see other girls in the workshop who face the same problems as me. They are deprived of education, their families are impoverished, and now they are weaving carpets.” She says, “This is the story of all girls in Afghanistan.”

UNDP appeals for \$25m to support recovery

HERAT (Agencies): In the wake of the three devastating earthquakes that struck Herat Province between October 7 and 15, 2023, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on Tuesday issued an urgent appeal for \$25 million to support key parts of the recovery plan. The earthquakes, measuring 6.3 in magnitude, left a trail of destruction affecting 1.6 million people, with over 1,500 deaths, 11,000 injuries, and widespread damage to over 21000 homes and infrastructure – rendering conditions unbearable for communities already grappling with deep poverty and underdevelopment, UNDP said in a statement.

The survivors, mostly women and children, are mainly living in tents, exposed to the cold, and in need of water, health care, food, and proper shelter, the statement said. The UNDP appeal is part of a larger Herat Earthquake Response Plan developed by the UN Humanitarian Country Team, which needs \$93.6 million to assist 114,000 people who are most in need during the winter. UNDP, in collaboration with UN partners and NGOs, has already allocated \$3.15 million from its own resources for immediate relief and recovery. However, this is not enough to meet the huge demand for recovery and rebuilding, UNDP said. “The situation on the ground is desperate and



winter is fast approaching. Our goal is to help these communities restore basic infrastructure, especially shelter, and return to normalcy as quickly as possible. We’ve repurposed some of our existing resources so we can start moving quickly, but these resources are just not enough.” Stephen Rodrigues, UNDP Resident Representative in Afghanistan, said. UNDP’s appeal for an additional US\$25 million aims to provide transitional and permanent shelter (using owner-driven Community Housing approaches), rebuild basic infrastructure, provide renewable energy particularly for households, schools and health facilities; restore and manage water systems and resources, and create temporary (cash-for-work) and

longer-term jobs and livelihood opportunities. “Amidst many other ongoing crisis globally, Afghanistan finds itself relegated to the periphery of international attention. The country does need assistance. This disaster comes on top of many disasters. Afghanistan has been through four decades of conflict. These quakes hit communities already living in profound poverty, and three out of eight people across the country don’t have adequate access to food. Now we have another disaster of enormous magnitude,” said Rodrigues. He emphasized: “we are appealing to the international community not to lose sight of Afghanistan and the needs of its people, and particularly the people in Herat who have just suffered this devastation.”

Women’s rights activists targeted due to gender



KABUL (Khaama Press): In a recent statement, United Nations experts highlighted that women’s rights activists are actively involved in the current administration’s prisons and are being targeted

because of their gender. On Tuesday, United Nations experts expressed their concern in a joint statement about the physical and mental well-being of detained women within the Taliban adminis-

tration’s custody. In this statement, it is mentioned that Neda Parwani, a women’s rights activist, along with her husband, and Julia Parsi, the leader of the Women’s Rights Movement in Afghanistan, have been detained without specific reasons and are currently held in prison. More than a month has passed since the detention of these women’s rights activists, but the current administration of the Taliban has not provided any information regarding their arrest. It should be noted that

the Women’s Rights Movement had reported the detention of another women’s rights activist, Manizha Seddiqi, who was arrested in mid-October. United Nations experts have emphasized that women’s rights activists are increasingly targeted or detained due to their gender. This is happening while, over the past two years, dozens of female activists have been detained by the Taliban authorities. The experts added, “It appears that the Taliban are continuing to intensify their restrictions in civil society,

particularly by silencing the voices of women and girls, resulting in a disturbing impact.” These experts have called on the authorities of the Taliban to respect peaceful protests and release imprisoned women as soon as possible. Furthermore, findings from Richard Bennett, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council, indicate that the current situation in Afghanistan under the control of the current regime may lead to “sexual harassment and abuse,” which is an international crime.





JAMRUD: An Afghan child along with their belongings on truck waving his hand to media persons on way to their country. — F.P. photo by Anjad Ali Afridi

## Lawyers defenders of democracy: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that lawyers were defenders of democracy, human rights and the Constitution.

This he said in a congratulatory message to newly elected office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA). The minister congratulated the newly elected SCBA President Shahzad Shaukat, Secretary Ali Imran Syed and other newly elected office bearers. The minister lauded the historic role of lawyers in promoting the rule of law, the supremacy of the Constitution and democratic traditions.

Murtaza Solangi opined

that lawyers act as the bridge between the bar and the bench and it was not possible to establish a developed society without justice. The minister expressed the hope that newly elected office bearers of SCBA will continue to play their key role for the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law.

He hoped that the winning panel of the Supreme Court Bar would play a positive and effective role in solving the problems of the lawyers' community, including in important judicial matters.

**Solangi takes part in 69th Japan Self-Defence Forces Day celebrations:** Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi took part in the celebrations

of the 69th Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) Day.

The minister attended a reception arranged by the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad to celebrate the 69th anniversary. In the reception, military officials, caretaker ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, and other individuals were also present. On the occasion, the minister felicitated the people and the Government of Japan, and highlighted the growing bilateral ties between Pakistan and Japan in the area of defence.

"I am pleased to see progress in defence exchanges between Japan and Pakistan," he remarked on the occasion. The minister along with Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Mitsuhiro Wada and others also participated in the cake cutting ceremony.

## KP CM launches online 'GoBiz Connect'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important development towards promoting trade & business activities in the province, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has launched an online Government-Business Communication Platform, titled as "GoBiz Connect" with the primary purpose to have better coordination and communication between the provincial government's departments and business community.

This web portal would prove to be an effective platform in order to boost business activities and economic growth by enhancing cooperation and coordination between the private and public sectors; and will also serve as an effective tool to monitor and track government's decisions related to the redressal of business community issues/complaints and taking into consideration the proposals of business community in government's policy decisions regarding business.

The launching ceremony of the web portal was held here at Chief Minister's House on Wednesday with the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan as chief guest. British High Commissioner Jane Marriot, Caretaker Provincial Ministers Dr. Najeebullah and Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Provincial Team Lead, Sub National Governance Program Dr. Raheel Ahmad Siddiqui, representatives of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries and government officials attended the cere-

mony. The web portal "GoBizz Connect" has been launched with the technical assistance of Sub National Governance Program funded by Foreign, Commonwealth Office (FCDO-UKAID).

Addressing the ceremony, Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan appreciated the efforts of KP IT Board and donor agencies on successful launching of the portal and said that the initiative will play pivotal role in promoting business activities in the province by ensuring the direct involvement of business community in policy decisions of the government related to business and investment opportunities.

He said that transforming Public Financial Management System for better economic environment in the province was one of the major goals of the Provincial Government.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province presents an ideal environment for investment in the various sectors including Infrastructure, Mines and Minerals, Energy & Power and Tourism, the need is an integrated approach by the different stakeholders to fully exploit this potential and newly launched Online Web Portal will have key role to this effect.

Azam Khan maintained that better Government and Business Stakeholders Communication will provide an opportunity for the identification of feasible projects to be executed at provincial level as well as presentation to the Special Investment and Facilitation Council (SIFC) which is the highest investment facilitation forum in the country, and continued that all these efforts will ultimately result in the eco-

nomie development of the province as well as the country. He made it clear that the success of the initiative will certainly depend on the sound coordination and better integration of all the provincial government departments involved in regulatory and other functions related to the business adding that the provincial government has already taken multiple steps to facilitate the investors and promote business activities in the province.

He remarked that the Asan Karobar web portal developed by the KP Board of Investment with the technical assistance of the KP IT Board was doing well in facilitating the business community, and added that the only problem is the lack of integration with all the essential departments; and the web portal GoBiz Connect will prove to be a milestone initiative to achieve this purpose. He said that the web portal would also be integrated with the business portal of the federal government to have an easy access to foreign investors.

He further stated that the Economic Development and Investment Promotion Council (EDIPC) needs to work more pro-actively and utilize the current initiative of the online government-business communication platform adding that an entirely research and evidence based investment strategy for the province also need to be chalked out with the input of all the stakeholders. The Chief Minister extended his gratitude to the management of Sub National Governance Program (SNGP) and Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) for their continuous support to the provincial government.

## IMF team to arrive in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will begin negotiations this week for the next tranche of \$700 million, with an IMF review mission visiting Pakistan from November 2 to assess the economic performance of the first quarter.

According to media reports, the preparations made by Pakistan's economic team for the economic review with the IMF have entered the final stages, and that Pakistan has met all the structural targets set by the IMF.

Similarly, circulating loans are within the prescribed limits, the fiscal deficit is also in accordance with the set target, and FBR's tax collections are more than the set target. However, there are some difficulties regarding the external financing required for the budget deficit, but this is expected to be resolved easily due to assurances from China, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

## Six terrorists killed in operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Sambaza, Zhob District on reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, resultantly six terrorists were sent to hell, while a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives has also been recovered.

The killed terrorists remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces and target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. Security Forces of Pakistan, in step with Nation, remain determined to thwart attempts of sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

## GB's 76th Independence Day marked

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan's 76th Independence Day was celebrated on Wednesday with traditional zeal and fervour.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar while felicitating the people of Gilgit-Baltistan on the occasion said, seventy-six years ago, the brave people of the region showed great valiance and courage against the Dogra Raja under the leadership of Captain Mirza Hasan Khan and Subedar Major Babur. He said the independence of Gilgit-Baltistan is our asset and pride and a unique achievement of its kind. Premier Kakar said the people of the region with their unconditional, unparalleled and great level proved that we will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the development and stability of Pakistan.

## Deportation of illegal foreigners PHC directs DAG, FIA to assist court

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Deputy Attorney General and Assistant Director Legal Federal Investigation Agency to obtain departmental narrative for court assistance regarding deportation of illegal foreigners while adjourned further hearing for today (Thursday).

The counsel for Afghan Artists Muntaz Ali advocated argued to stop forced deportation of the applicants because they are facing serious threats in Afghanistan after Taliban takeover of the country as musicians. He added that Islamabad High Court had granted relief to Afghan artist recently in this regard.

However, Justice Arshad Ali remarked that this writ

didn't pleaded the ground upheld before Islamabad High Court because the petitioners aren't registered refugees and inquired regarding entry of applicants to Pakistan.

The counsel informed that petitioners had obtained visas for entry but now it is expired while Justice Arshad Ali observed that how can they demanding refugees as possessing travel documents and entered through proper channel.

The counsel further stated that under 2003 accord no Afghan citizen should not be deported, however, Justice Arshad Ali remarked that in 2003 there was war in Afghanistan and now a settle government is operating the country.

Justice Arshad Ali further remarked that how can applicants demanding stopping their deportation because they aren't registered. The writ pleaded that

influx of illegal immigrants in upcoming days. He said additional three vans were arranged by NADRA for verification. Under Integrated Border Management System (IBMS), the total capacity of FIA staff at Torkham is 2500 while eight additional staff was deployed for smooth repatriation of illegal immigrants.

At Angoor Ada South Waziristan, FIA's staff total capacity 1000 while seven additional staff deployed besides 1000 employees each at Khalachi Kurram and Ghulam Khan in North Waziristan cross points with seven additional staff respectively. He said no foreigner would be allowed to enter Pakistan unless he showed a valid legal document including visa and passport from November 1 and onward.

The interior ministry has issued clear instructions to all provinces to deport illegal foreigners under the Foreigners Act. The identification process of over 52,000 illegal immigrants residing in different districts of KP has already been completed. The operations are being initiated in KP where majority illegal foreigners especially Afghans live and they would be shifted to the above camps for onward deportation to their states.

Their data is being checked by FIA, police and other relevant authorities through scanning and other immigration process. The spokesman said a modern control room set up at Home Department was monitoring the entire process, coordinating with all relevant stakeholders and address complaints.

## Ashiana Ref: Ruling on Shahbaz's, pleas on 7th

LAHORE (INP): An accountability court of Lahore on pleas filed by Shehbaz Sharif and others seeking their exoneration in the Ashiana reference reserved its ruling on Wednesday. The pleas filed by former premier Shehbaz Sharif and others were heard by accountability court judge Ali Zulqarnain during which lawyers of all accused advanced final arguments.

During proceedings of the case, the National Accountability Bureau lawyer argued that the accused were less likely to be proved guilty of charges. He said he agreed with findings of the investigation report. Later, judge Ali Zulqarnain, reserving its ruling, said a decision on pleas filed by former PM Sharif and other accused would be announced on Nov 7.

Meanwhile, an accountability court on Tuesday had issued summons for former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and former Punjab chief minister Hamza Shehbaz. They were directed to appear in connection with the Ramzan Sugar Mills reference on Nov 29. Following a Supreme Court order, the NAB Lahore had again filed the reference.

## Zardari summoned in Thatta water supply case

ISLAMABAD (INP): An accountability court in the federal capital on Wednesday summoned former president Asif Ali Zardari and others in Thatta Water Supply project.

Accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir heard the case and issued notices to the former president and others to appear before the Islamabad bureau on December 18. In January, an accountability court in the federal capital sent back a corruption reference against former president and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Accountability court Judge Rana Nasir Javed announced the verdict reserved after hearing arguments from both sides. The judge said the corruption reference did not fall under the jurisdiction of the accountability court after amendments to the NAB laws. It is pertinent to note here that the anti-graft body nominated Zardari, Ejaz Ahmed Khan, and 12 other suspects in the supplementary filed in connection with Thatta water supply scam.

The bureau had not nominated Zardari in the interim reference and Ashfaq Leghari and Incharge Naudero House Nadeem Bhutto in the interim reference.

Meanwhile, Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari has extended congratulations to the newly elected office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar.