



PML-N always on forefront to create ease of doing business: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had always been on forefront to create ease of doing business which is very critical to achieve economic growth, progress and prosperity in the country.

"Whenever the people of the country gave the chance to the PML-N to run this country, the business community has always benefited greatly", he said while delivering his speech at CEO Summit. Citing an example, he said till 2018 when the PML-N was in power, GDP growth rate stood at 5.8 per cent and it was projected at 6.4 per cent and inflation was merely 4 percent. He said foreign direct investment was pouring in and China had invested nearly \$ 70 billion in China Pakistan Economic Corridor and other projects. All international financial journals and institutions were projecting that Pakistan would join G-20 countries in six to seven years.

In that era, he added, Pakistan had achieved the landmark development through sincerity, dedication and clarity of thought. Without security there cannot be progress and first and foremost attention was focused on creating a safe and secure environment in the country. He recalled that when the PML-N came into the power in 2013, Pakistan was facing challenges of energy crisis and poor law and order situation.

At that time, the national economy was losing approximately Rs 500 billion per annum due to energy shortage, he added. The minister said that security situation of the country was also not good. After coming to power,

the PML-N regime under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif embarked on projects to rid the country of energy crisis and within four years, 20 hours loadshedding was brought to zero.

He said in 2013, Karachi-the hub of business was unsafe, but the government with iron resolve and help of the security forces embarked on National Action Plan and carried out operations to improve security situation. Tarar said during the previous tenure, the government faced threat of default and due to fluctuating currency rates, no businessmen were willing to open LCs.

By pursuing prudent policies, the country was able to avert the default, he said, while lauding the PML-N leadership for sacrificing its political capital for the betterment of the country and the people. "Our priority and slogan now has been that the government has no business being in business," he said while giving credit to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the policy.

"During past few decades we have seen that public sector organisations, public sector corporations and state owned enterprises were not able to deliver," he said, ruling out any blame game in this regard. He said that in this era of 5th generation war, the main job of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was to counter misinformation and fake news.

He said that anyone in any part of the world could damage Pakistan's economy through misinformation and timely countering such news was very important. Tarar said that the government had also launched the initiatives of rightsizing and downsizing for the current bureaucratic set up in order to ensure swift public service

besides saving the tax payers money.

He said that Pak- PWD responsible for leakage of hundreds of billions of rupees annually was shut down through a bold step. Many more corporations, public sector organisations had no role to play in economic development of the country, would be shut down. The minister termed the incumbent government's initiatives of privatization, outsourcing, rightsizing and downsizing "a step in the right direction".

He said the government was moving forward swiftly with its home grown economic reforms agenda which envisaged the digitalization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). "Enough is Enough," he said, adding the government wanted that the tax payers would not have to bear the burden of the non-tax payers.

The minister believed this was the only way forward to achieve the economic growth. He said the digitalization of the FBR would incur no cost as the Melinda Gates Foundation has been funding this project which is headed by the MacKenzie. Tarar said the initiatives would significantly increase the numbers of tax filers in the country, and reduce the leakages of the billions of rupees.

He said the government was committed to ensure safe and secure environment in the country. As per the Azm-e-Istehkam vision , secure and safe business environment was the foremost priority of the government, he said, adding steps were being taken to create ease of doing business by removing the red tapism. "We have good story to tell and with right kind of approach, optimism and hope, the sky is the limit and we will get through these hurdles and Pakistan will prosper," he concluded.



LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari offering fateha over the martyrdom of Captain Muhammad Ali Qureshi Shaheed.

President visits family of martyred Captain

F.P. Report

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari paid a visit on Thursday to the family of Captain Muhammad Ali Qureshi, who was recently martyred in Balochistan.

During his visit, he expressed his profound condolences to the grieving family. He prayed for elevation of ranks of Captain Muhammad Ali in Jannah. He paid tribute to Captain Qureshi's courage and dedication, recognising his invaluable contributions to the nation's fight against terrorism.

President Zardari highlighted the significant sacrifices made by many young individuals in the battle against terrorism and noted that former prime minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was also a martyr in this war against terror. The president reassured the nation of unwavering commitment to eradicating terrorism from the country, emphasising that efforts would continue till the threat was completely removed. He praised Captain Qureshi's family for their patriotism and selflessness and affirmed that the sacrifices of martyrs and their families would always be remembered.

BD's ex-PM should 'keep quiet': Yunus

DHAKA (AFP): Bangladesh's ousted premier Sheikh Hasina should "keep quiet" while exiled in India until she is brought home for trial, interim leader Muhammad Yunus told Indian media on Thursday. Hasina, 76, fled to India by helicopter one month ago as protesters marched on her palace in a dramatic end to her iron-fisted rule of 15 years.

An interim government led by Nobel laureate Yunus has been under public pressure to demand her extradition and trial over the hundreds of demonstrators killed during the weeks of unrest that ultimately toppled her. "If India wants to keep her until the time Bangladesh wants her back, the condition would be that she has to keep quiet," Yunus, 84, told the Press Trust of India news agency.

"Sitting in India, she is speaking and giving instructions. No one likes it. It's not good for us or for India." Hasina has remained in India, her former government's biggest patron and benefactor, since her August 5 overthrow, inflaming tensions between the two South Asian neighbours. She made a public statement the week after her arrival calling for Bangladeshis to gather in Dhaka to mark the 1975 assassination of her father, independence hero Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina's comments were seen as a provocative effort to galvanise members of her Awami League party and undermine law and order in the fragile first days after Yunus took office. The gathering was prevented by a counter-demonstration outside her childhood home in the capital by a mob that beat suspected Awami League supporters with sticks and rods. Yunus did not say whether a formal extradition request had been made to India. His government has avoided committing itself to demanding her return.

Junagadh issue is 'unfinished agenda': FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday reiterated the country's stance on the Junagadh issue, decrying India's illegal occupation of the region.

Speaking during a weekly press briefing, the spokesperson said that Pakistan's policy statement regarding Junagadh — a city in India's Gujarat that was annexed in 1948 — "has always been clear". "Junagadh was annexed to Pakistan. The country sees this matter in historical and legal perspective. Junagadh

was a part of Pakistan and India's illegal occupation of it is a violation of the United Nations Charter and international norms," she stressed.

Mumtaz emphasised that Pakistan "has always been raising the Junagadh issue at political and diplomatic forums and wants a peaceful solution to it." "Pakistan also considers the Junagadh issue as an unfinished agenda like Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK)," she added.

Furthermore, during the press briefing, Mumtaz highlighted Pakistan's willingness to develop "posi-

tive and strong relations" with Bangladesh which, according to her, "will improve further with the cooperation of the government of both countries". "The strong relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh are beneficial for the people of both countries," she told the reporters. Additionally, she revealed that invitations have been sent to the heads of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states. The prime minister of Pakistan is expected to address the UN General Assembly, the spokesperson of the Foreign Office said.

Steps to be taken to eradicate drugs from merged areas: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur held a tribal grand Jirga at Chief Minister's House on Thursday, which was attended by elected public representatives from all political parties of the merged districts, tribal elites, and higher government officials. The Jirga aimed at engaging tribal elites in addressing the challenges faced by the merged districts, devising a comprehensive plan for their development and ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

In his address to the participants, the Chief Minister outlined a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges faced by the people of merged districts, emphasizing the need for sustainable solutions to overcome the decades-long deprivation of the merged areas, adding that his government will go all out to provide basic facilities, employment opportunities, and promote tourism and other potential sectors in the region. The Chief Minister also highlighted the significance of establishing lasting peace and law and order, acknowledging the people as the government's real strength in this regard.

He reiterated the vision of Imran Khan to develop erstwhile tribal districts by including them in national stream and said that incumbent provincial government has prepared a comprehensive development program for the merged districts, allocating ample funds for their speedy development.

The Chief Minister further out-



lined the measures to eradicate drugs, promote employment opportunities, and provide solar energy to industries in the merged districts. He said that unfortunately, promises made to the people of merged areas at the time of merger yet not been fulfilled. However, despite the multiple challenges, his government in the province is committed to taking all possible steps to bring these areas at par with other developed regions. He underlined the importance of consulting tribal people in implementing this strategy and assured that all matters would be taken forward in consultation with them.

In his concluding remarks to the Jirga, the Chief Minister said that the commitment made regarding the NFC share of the tribal districts has not been fulfilled. He said that funds for the war on terror and infrastructure development are being provided. The Chief Minister highlighted the provincial government's significant investment in strengthening policing in the merged areas. He stressed the importance of determining a clear timeframe and policy against terrorism, and emphasized the need to take the people into confidence regarding operations against terrorism.

To this end, the Chief Minister announced that he would soon convene a meeting of the provincial apex committee to finalize matters. Additionally, he declared that separate Jirgas for each merged district would be held after 15 days, where tribal elites should present viable proposals in consultation with their respective communities. The Chief Minister concluded by emphasizing the need for a collective approach and good intentions to address the issues on sustainable basis, stating, "We need to move forward with collective approach and good intentions in order to address the issues once and for all."

The participants on this occasion, thanked the Chief Minister for taking special interest in addressing their issues and inviting elected public representatives from all political parties for this purpose. They hoped that the consultative session would go a long way towards developing the merged districts on a sustainable basis and ensuring their inclusion in the national stream. "The Chief Minister's commitment to sustainable development, peace and consultation sets a positive tone for the future of the merged areas," they remarked.

Gazans rush to vaccinate children

KHAN YUNIS (AFP): Children in Khan Yunis tilted their heads back, mouths open, as they received oral drops during the second phase of a polio vaccination campaign in Gaza, which began on Thursday.

"I have been vaccinated," five children said proudly one by one, their inked fingers proof of their inoculation against polio. Gaza's health ministry reported the first case of polio in 25 years last month, amid the devastating Israel-Hamas war in the Palestinian territory. At tent camps for the displaced, schools-turned-shelters and health centers, parents brought babies, infants and teenagers for vaccines provided by UN agencies.

"I live in a tent next to a sewage pond with significant disease and epidemic issues, and mosquitoes and worms have affected us," said Amani Ashur, 37, who brought his one-year-old son Abdul Rahman to be vaccinated. Like most Gazans, Ashur has been displaced at least once, finding shelter in the Al-Amal neighborhood of Khan Yunis.

Putin pushes towards Ukraine's Pokrovsk

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia's border regions began to form volunteer forces to fight Ukraine's four week-old counter-invasion in Kursk, as Moscow continued to resist any major redeployment of forces from Ukraine to defend its own territory.

Kursk governor Alexei Smirnov said last Friday that he would form a volunteer combat reserve force, and Ukrainian Kharkiv forces spokesman Vitaly Sarantsev said Russia's Bryansk and Belgorod regions were doing the same. All three regions border Ukraine. Sarantsev estimated the strength of the three volunteer forces at just below 5,000 soldiers.

Moscow appeared to have redeployed limited units to Kursk, as Al Jazeera reported last week, but it has mainly relied on a hotch-pot of existing border and internal security forces to defend Russia. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday told NBC that Moscow had diverted 60,000 soldiers from Ukraine to Kursk. A week earlier, his commander-in-chief, Oleksandr Syrskii, put the figure at

30,000. But they have not provided details to back up these assertions, that appear at odds with what open-source intelligence suggests.

Putin downplayed the importance of the incursion during a visit to a secondary school in the Tuva region of Siberia. "We have to deal with these thugs who made it into Russia," he told students in Kyzyl. Putin has studiously avoided launching a general mobilisation during the war. Russian defensive efforts appeared to have slowed the Ukrainian advance. Ukraine was reported to have captured one settlement during the past week, Nizhnyaya Parovaya north of Sudzha, and Russian forces managed to recapture Ulanok, south-east of Sudzha.

Meanwhile Russian forces continued to press on towards Pokrovsk, a city in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region which has been their focus since they seized Avdiivka in February. They have formed a 29km (18 mile) long salient stretching to the west of Avdiivka since then and are within about 8km (5 miles) of the outskirts of Pokrovsk. During the past week,

Russian forces overran Novohrodivka and entered Hrodivka, two towns east of Pokrovsk. They also claimed to be on the outskirts of Myrnohrad, a town immediately to the east of Pokrovsk.

Zelenskyy has referred to the estimated 1,300sq km (502sq miles) it has taken in Kursk as an "exchange fund", presumably intending to swap it for Ukrainian land in a peace settlement. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov quashed any such notion on Saturday during an interview with Russia Today. "Zelenskyy said... that they will need this for future exchanges. That's why they are taking prisoners and want to seize square kilometers," said Lavrov. "It's so simple-minded and naive. We do not discuss our territory with anyone. We do not negotiate about our territory."

Putin took the same line in Tuva, saying the Kursk operation was doomed to failure, and when it did, Ukraine "will have a true desire — not in words, but in deeds — to move to peaceful negotiations".

SHC declares cancellation of IHC Judge degree 'null, void'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday suspended Karachi University's (KU) decision to revoke the law degree of Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, ruling in his favour as the court found that the university's syndicate had taken the action in his absence depriving him of the opportunity to defend himself.

In its written order, the court ruled that the degree of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge was cancelled by KU's Syndicate and Unfair Means Committee during a meeting where the judge was not present, stating that it was a "violation of Article 10-A of the Constitution" (the right to a fair trial). "Unfortunately, no opportunity of hearing was extended to Mr Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri and the manner so adopted appears to be highly objectionable, illegal ... and without lawful authority," the court ruled.

The controversy erupted in July when a letter began circulating on social media purportedly from the KU controller of examinations regarding Justice Jahangiri's law degree. Last week, the issue resurfaced when the KU syndicate cancelled the degree and enrolment of

Jahangiri, who obtained his LLB degree in 1991 under enrolment number 5968.

The decision came a few hours after the detention of academic and syndicate member Dr Riaz Ahmed, who was picked up by police in what appeared to be an attempt to stop him from attending the key meeting. He was released in the evening only after the syndicate decided to cancel the degree. The petition filed with the SHC, argued that Justice Jahangiri was "singularly targeted, with extreme mala fide intention, according to a premeditated and conceived plan to tarnish the reputation and destroy the reputation of the honourable judge of the Islamabad High Court".

It added that Jahangiri "was one out of the six honourable judges of the IHC who in their letter dated 25.03.2024 informed the honourable chief justice of Pakistan about the alleged interference by intelligence operatives in judicial matters". The petition also argued that Jahangiri was absent at the syndicate meeting and not called in person nor provided representation, thus making the decision to cancel the degree illegal.

Jahangiri's counsel argued that KU's Unfair Means Committee was

"formed illegally and not in accordance with the Rules of Respondent No.4, therefore at the very inception the formation was void, illegal and illicit", rendering any of its recommendations void and illegal. The court ruled that the degree was cancelled "without hearing and by violating the basic settled principle of law", adding that the petitioners' claims "carry substantial weight".

As Justice Jahangiri was not present at the syndicate's meeting, he was "condemned unheard" and the decision was "null and void." The court added that under Article 199 (the jurisdiction of the High Court), it has the power to order any institution to "refrain from doing anything that is not permitted by law to do". It ordered KU against taking "any coercive measures based on these decisions" until the date of the next hearing.

The SHC ordered that notices be dispatched to all respondents, including the Sindh attorney general, requesting responses within three weeks. A two-member bench, comprising SHC Justices Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Amjad Ali Sahito, heard the case today. "Whose degree is it?" Justice Panhwar asked. "How many decisions of this nature has the university made?"

IRC delegation calls on CM’s aide, assures welfare schemes in Chagarzai



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of International Rescue Committee (IRC), led by Country Director Shabnam Baloch, called on Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan here at his office in Peshawar.

The International humanitarian organization delegation focussed discussion on the humanitarian projects being undertaken by the IRC in Pakistan, specifically in the Buner District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The other delegates included Deputy Director SSBC Omar, Head of Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Farhat Abbas, Governance Liaison Officer Syed Daya ul Mulk, Project

Manager Imran, and Communication Officer Afaq Ahmad.

The Sports Advisor praised the IRC's efforts in providing clean drinking water, hygiene promotion and other humanitarian initiatives in underserved areas. He highlighted the clean water supply projects in Buner as a significant and beneficial effort for the local poor population.

The Advisor requested the IRC's Country Director to prioritize initiating water supply schemes in the Chagarzai Tehsil due to the urgent need for clean drinking water in the local population. He emphasized that the decreasing ground water table have exacerbated the water supply issue in Chagarzai, and he hoped the IRC would address this critical

need through their humanitarian projects.

He suggested that the IRC establish future water schemes in Chagarzai with solar systems and install water tanks in various areas to store clean drinking water. The Sports Advisor assured the IRC representatives of the government's full support and cooperation.

He added that the IRC could contribute to human development and welfare in Chagarzai across various sectors, and the local community would welcome the organization's efforts.

The IRC Country Director noted that the organization operates in 49 districts across the country, including Buner. She mentioned that 52 clean water and other facilities schemes have been completed in Buner with IRC's assistance, and work is ongoing on approximately 22 more. She agreed with the Advisor's suggestions and assured that Chagarzai would be considered in the IRC's future priority projects.

During the meeting, the IRC Country Director presented a shield from her organization to the Sports Advisor, who in turn presented also a shield to her as a token of appreciation.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah addressing Provincial Ulema Conference.

Ulema Conference organized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In consultation with the Muttahida Ulama Board, the Provincial Department of Auqaf, Hajj, and Religious Affairs, organized the first-ever Ulema Conference in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hosted by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with the support of UNICEF here on Thursday.

The Provincial Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, and the Provincial Minister for Auqaf, Hajj, and Religious Affairs, Sahibzada Muhammad Adnan Qadri, attended the conference as special guests. The event also saw the participation of Special Secretary of Health and EOC Coordinator Abdul Basit, representatives of donor organizations, officials from the Health Department, and many eminent scholars from various religious sects across the province.

Renowned scholars from different sects declared their complete and unwavering support for immunization and polio vaccination to ensure children's better health and protect them from lifelong disabilities. They also pledged to play a role in dispelling myths and misconceptions about polio vaccination at the community level.

The Minister for Religious Affairs, along with religious scholars, administered polio drops to a child, officially launching the anti-polio campaign. The main objective of organizing this conference was to bring prominent religious scholars from across the province together to seek their endorsement in advocating for polio vaccination, emphasizing its alignment with Islamic principles of community well-being and health.

UET signs agreement with PDA

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Centre for Intelligent Systems and Networks Research (CISNR), University of Engineering & Technology, Peshawar has signed an agreement with Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) the other day. The agreement was signed by Capt. Rtd. Khalid Mehmood, Director General PDA and Prof. Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan, Director CISNR at PDA Headquarter, Hayatabad, Peshawar in the presence of senior officials from UET Peshawar and PDA. Under this agreement, CISNR will provide consultancy services for implementation of Digitization and Solarization of PDA Complex Building and 116 Tubewells across Hayatabad Township and Regi Model Town.

Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan, Director CISNR expressing his views said that the main objective of the project is to transform PDA into a just energy transitional, adaptation and sustainability platform. He said, renewable integration and digitization will pave ways for PDA towards a sustainable and climate friendly institution. The agreement was a stepping stone towards a long-standing memorandum of understanding between the both organizations for sustainability development in the fields of digitization, green energy, energy efficiency, climate adaptation and resilience, he added.

Furthermore, he said that CISNR brings its decade long experience of digitization and climate friendly adaptation strategies to ensure the success of the project.

Meeting discusses Lakeshore Tourism Project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high level meeting was held regarding Lakeshore Tourism Project in Khanpure area, district Haripure here at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KPBOIT) Office, in Peshawar, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher in the chair.

During the meeting the forum discussed the development of the Lakeshore Tourism Project in Khanpur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is in execution phase and its master plan has been prepared by the investment group.

The project, which represents a significant private sector investment in the region's tourism sector, aims to transform Khanpure into a premier

tourism destination with a high quality housing facilities.

On this occasion, Manager Tourism, KPBOIT Gul Muhammad, Manager Mine and Minerals KPBOIT Akhtar Ali, representatives from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), KP Culture and Tourism Authority, Archaeology Department, Investors Rauf Raja, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Tourism & Hospitality - RCSTSI and Syed Sadat Hussain Shah, Chairman of Lakeshore City attended the meeting.

The Lakeshore Tourism Project, with a total investment of roundabout 8 billion rupees, is set to span 800 kanal of prime land in Khanpur. This ambitious initiative aims to create a world-class tourism destination, leveraging the natural beauty and strategic

location of Khanpur. Moreover, the project will include various tourism and hospitality components designed to attract both local and international visitors.

During the meeting, focused was on the vision for the Lakeshore Tourism Project, emphasizing sustainable development that aligns with the natural environment of Khanpur. Similarly, the stakeholders discussed the significant investment and the potential economic impact on the region. It was told in the meeting that the project is expected to generate substantial employment opportunities and boost the local economy.

On this occasion it was assured that the investment project will be facilitated through regulatory support from all the relevant quarters for ensuring a smooth execution of the project.

Three Mpox patients recovered

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department has achieved a significant milestone, as three patients affected by Mpox have made a full recovery. Provincial Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, praised the swift efforts of the health department in curbing the spread of the Mpox virus, successfully preventing local transmission within a short period.

In his statement,

Minister Qasim Ali Shah acknowledged the commendable emergency measures taken under the Provincial Outbreak and Response Committee. He also highlighted the improvement in routine immunization within the past two months, crediting the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for guiding the health department toward these successes.

Providing further details on the recovered patients, the Director of Public

Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Irshad Ali, shared that the patients hailed from Peshawar, Orakzai, and Nowshera. All three individuals have fully recovered, with no remaining symptoms, and PCR tests have confirmed virus clearance.

The patients were isolated promptly, preventing the wider spread of the disease within the community. Necessary precautionary measures are being fully enforced to maintain public safety.

‘Skills lead to provision of handsome employment’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Academic degrees are not the true provider of jobs but skills lead to provision of a handsome employment. These views were expressed by Mrs. Usman Gul who was chief guest at the Certificate Award Ceremony of trainees of Vocational Training Centre at PARD on Thursday. Director General NIM/PARD/PPSA Capt. (Retd.) Usman Gul was also present on the occasion. In her address, Mrs. Gul said that a skilled person can never be unemployed anywhere on the earth. Skill Development for women and men is extremely important in today's era. Skill development of women play a crucial role in the development of any nation including Pakistan. Majority of the women population in Pakistan are not financially sovereign and depend on male members. She added that due to untiring efforts and dedication of the Director General PARD, dress making and fashion designing courses, have been successfully conducted at PARD Vocational and Technical Center with the aim to provide an opportunity to the students of the marginalized families of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to become independent and arrange bread and butter at their own.

A tribute to Pakistan’s bravery and resolve

Saqib Nawaz

EVERY year on September 6th, Pakistan comes together to honor its heroes and reflect on the unwavering spirit of its armed forces on Defense Day. This day marks a significant chapter in the nation's history, commemorating the valiant defense of the country during the 1965 war against India. It is a day of national pride, patriotism, and remembrance.

Defense Day is rooted in the events of September 6, 1965, when Indian forces crossed the international border, launching a full-scale attack on Pakistan. The aggression was met with fierce resistance by Pakistan's armed forces, who defended the nation's sovereignty with unparalleled courage. The battle was not just fought on the borders but in the hearts of every Pakistani who stood united in the face of adversity.

The armed forces, including the Pakistan Army, Navy, and Air Force, displayed remarkable coordination and determination. The story of Major Raja Aziz Bhatti, who was awarded the Nishan-e-Haider posthumously for his bravery in the Battle of Burki, sym-

bolizes the courage of Pakistan's soldiers. Despite overwhelming odds, the country's defenders held their ground, safeguarding the freedom and dignity of the nation.

Defense Day is more than a commemoration of a military victory; it is a reminder of the sacrifices made by countless soldiers and civilians. The nation pays homage to those who laid down their lives to protect the country, ensuring that future generations can live in peace. Ceremonies held across the country, from the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi to small towns and villages, reflect the deep respect Pakistanis have for their martyrs and veterans.

This day also serves as a reminder of the importance of unity and resilience. The 1965 war was a time when the entire nation, regardless of ethnicity, language, or creed, stood as one. The unity displayed during that period continues to inspire Pakistanis to work towards a stronger and more prosperous country.

While Defense Day is rooted in the past, its lessons are timeless. In an era of global challenges and regional instability, Pakistan's commitment to peace and security remains steadfast. The day is a call

to remember that the defense of the nation is not just the responsibility of the armed forces, but of every citizen. It emphasizes the need for continued vigilance, strategic preparedness, and a commitment to national solidarity.

Today, Pakistan faces a different set of challenges, from terrorism to economic pressures. However, the spirit of Defense Day - the courage to face adversity, the resolve to stand united, and the dedication to safeguarding the nation - remains as relevant as ever.

As Pakistanis commemorate Defense Day, it is a time to reflect on the values that define the nation: bravery, sacrifice, and unity. It is a day to honor the past, celebrate the present, and pledge to protect the future. The bravery of the 1965 war serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration, guiding the country through every trial it faces.

On this day, as the green and white flag flutters proudly across the land, every Pakistani is reminded of their duty to the nation. Defense Day is not just a tribute to the armed forces, but a celebration of the indomitable spirit of Pakistan.

Writer is Assistant Director, DGIPR

PHC grants bail to husband in honor killing case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) single bench comprising of Justice Fahim Wali has granted bail to a husband accused of killing his wife in the name of honor, on Thursday. The accused Muhammad Shahid was arrested on

27th May 2024, for allegedly shooting his wife in the limits of Kalakot Police Station in Swat.

The accused's lawyer Irfan Ali Yousafzai argued that the police investigation was flawed and that there were contradictions in the statements of the witnesses. He also pointed out that the

medical report did not confirm that the victim was subjected to torture before her death.

The lawyer further argued that the complainant, who is the victim's father, was not present at the scene of the crime, and therefore, his claim that the accused had killed his

daughter was questionable.

On the other hand, the prosecutor argued that the accused should not be granted bail as he was accused of killing his wife, and no one else was nominated in the case. After hearing the arguments, the court granted bail to the accused.

KP Food Authority denies rumors of dog meat seizure

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority has strongly refuted rumors circulating on social media about the alleged discovery of dog meat in hotels in province, dismissing them as baseless and fabricated.

According to a spokesperson for the Food Authority, a post has been making rounds on social media, falsely claiming that during raids on various hotels in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, dog meat was seized. The authority, however, has categorically denied these allegations, calling them a deliberate attempt to mislead the public.

The spokesperson clarified that no such incident of dog meat being found or served at any hotel or restaurant in the province has ever occurred. The authority labeled the claims as a ploy to create fear among the public and to tarnish the reputation of the food industry. Director General of the

KP Food Authority Wasif Saeed appealed to the public not to pay heed to such false reports. He urged citizens to rely only on verified information provided by the authority.

Saeed further assured that the Food Authority's inspection teams conduct regular inspection at hotels and restaurants across the province to ensure the provision of safe and quality food to the public. He also expressed concern that certain ill minded elements intentionally spread such

baseless rumors to instill panic among citizens and harm the food industry.

The DG reiterated the authority's commitment to maintain food safety and standards in the province, emphasizing that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and are taking all necessary measures to safeguard public health.

He urged the public to refrain from sharing or believing such unfounded news and to rely on credible sources for accurate information.

Pakistan Air Force — A bastion of professionalism and integrity



Izmi Herlani

SINCE its inception, Pakistan Air Force has been guided by a steadfast commitment to the ethos of professionalism, unwavering devotion to duty and the cultivation of integrity, dedication and sacrifice. As the guardian of the nation's aerial sovereignty, PAF stands as the sole obstacle in the eyes of Pakistan's adversaries, deterring any aggression through the expertise of its air and ground crews, led by the charismatic leadership of true heroes.

The celebration of 06 September as Pakistan's Defence Day, serves as a significant testament to the Men in Blues' resolute dedication to safeguarding the nation's aerial integrity at all costs. PAF's adherence to the highest standards of character, courage and competence has earned it the trust and respect of the nation and the international community alike.

The 1965 Indo-Pakistan War stands as a defining moment in the history of the Pakistan Air Force, showcasing its unwavering commitment to national defence. On that fateful day, our brave pilots soared into the skies, confronting overwhelming odds with unparalleled bravery and execut-

ing during missions that disrupted enemy operations while providing vital support to ground forces. The legendary dogfights of the PAF's F-86 Sabres and F-104 Starfighters with the IAF's MiG-21s, Gnats, Mystere's, Hunters and Vampires became emblematic of the PAF's credo, reflecting not only tactical brilliance but also an indomitable will to protect the homeland.

Heroes like Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmed Rafiqui Shaheed, who continued to assist his comrades despite his guns being jammed and Air Commodore Muhammad Mahmood Alam, who achieved an astonishing five kills in just under a minute, have become legends, inspiring generations of pilots to uphold PAF's proud tradition of excellence. The war was a testament to the PAF's dedication, with Pakistan Air Force aces dominating the skies. Their bravery, skill and sacrifices continue to resonate in the collective memory of the nation, serving as a source of immense pride and inspiration for the people of Pakistan.

As the nation commemorates Defence Day, Pakistan Air Force reflects on its impressive journey of modernisation and excellence under the astute leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Under his guidance, PAF has made notable advancements in self-reliance, developing indigenous capabilities and enhancing its arsenal by embracing disruptive and niche technologies alongside cutting-edge aircraft. Moreover, PAF has significantly progressed in the realms of space and cyber

warfare, demonstrating its adaptability and forward-thinking approach to contemporary military operations. Pakistan Air Force's Integrated Air Defence System stands as a formidable fortress in the skies, an intricate web of advanced technologies that orchestrates a symphony of aerial dominance. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles navigate the heavens, wielding cutting-edge precision and stealth, redefining the very nature of modern warfare. This seamless fusion of man and machine captivates the imagination, heralding a new era of strategic prowess that not only fortifies national integrity but also delivers a resounding message to any adversary bold enough to challenge the skies.

Training and development are at the core of PAF's spirit. The investment in human capital has ensured that PAF personnel are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in an ever-evolving environment. Rigorous training programmes have instilled a sense of duty and honour, fostering a culture where courage and sacrifice are deeply respected. Similarly, PAF's participation in international exercises and the performance of its air and ground crews on the international arena has further exemplified its dedication to collaboration and peacekeeping, showcasing its capabilities on the global stage. In addition to its military responsibilities, Pakistan Air Force has played a vital role in nation-building efforts, providing disaster relief during floods and earthquakes, extinguishing wildfires and con-

ducting emergency medical evacuations. The establishment of the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park has further underscored PAF's commitment to fostering industry-academia linkages, driving innovation and contributing to the nation's development. National Aerospace Science & Technology Park (NASTP) is being spearheaded by PAF as the project of strategic national importance that is bringing in highly qualified PAF HR as well as talented youth from across the country in design, research, innovation and development centers being established at the national level in Kamra, Rawalpindi, Karachi and Lahore as well as top ranked universities & institutions across the country. The project has led to the development of an ecosystem for aerospace and niche technology domains thus ensuring an enabling environment for home grown technology and tech enterprises.

Under the visionary guidance of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who envisioned the PAF as "an efficient Air Force, Second to None," the service has consistently upheld its founder's ideals. Through its commitment to excellence, PAF has proven itself a force to be reckoned with, maintaining a moral and psychological ascendancy over its adversaries in the face of numerical superiority. As Pakistan continues to face external and internal challenges, PAF remains steadfast in its role as a pillar of deterrence and stability, ready to defend the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity with unwavering dedication and professionalism.



Chinese migrants flock to Mexico in search of jobs

MEXICO CITY (AP): Despite her well-paying tech job, Li Daijing didn't hesitate when her cousin asked for help running a restaurant in Mexico City. She packed up and left China for the Mexican capital last year, with dreams of a new adventure.

The 30-year-old woman from Chengdu, the Sichuan provincial capital, hopes one day to start an online business importing furniture from her home country. "I want more," Li said. "I want to be a strong woman. I want independence."

Li is among a new wave of Chinese migrants who are leaving their country in search of opportunities, more freedom or better financial prospects at a time when China's economy has slowed, youth unemployment rates remain high and its relations with the US and its allies have soured. While the US border patrol arrested tens of thousands of Chinese at the U.S.-Mexico border over the past year, thousands are making the Latin American country their final destination. Many have hopes to start businesses of their own, taking advantage of Mexico's proximity to the US. Last year, Mexico's government issued 5,070 temporary residency visas to Chinese immigrants, twice as many as the previous year - making China third, behind the United States and Colombia, as the source of migrants granted the permits.

A deep-rooted diaspora that has fostered strong family and business networks over decades makes Mexico appealing for new Chinese arrivals; so does a growing presence of Chinese multinationals in Mexico, which have set up

shop to be close to markets in the Americas. "A lot of Chinese started coming here two years ago - and these people need to eat," said Duan Fan, owner of "Nueve y media," a restaurant in Mexico City's stylish Roma Sur neighborhood that serves the spicy food of Sichuan, his home province. "I opened a Chinese restaurant so that people can come here and eat like they do at home," he said.

Duan, 27, arrived in Mexico in 2017 to work with an uncle who owns a wholesale business in Tepito, near the capital's historic center, and was later joined by his parents. Unlike earlier generations of Chinese who came to northern Mexico from the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, the new arrivals are more likely to come from all over China. Data from the latest 2020 census by Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography show that Chinese immigrants are mainly concentrated in Mexico City. A decade ago, the census recorded the largest concentration of Chinese in the northernmost state of Baja California, on the US-Mexico border across from California.

The arrival of Chinese multinationals is leading an influx of "people from eastern China, more educated and with a broader global background," said Andrei Guerrero, academic coordinator of the Center for China-Baja California Studies. In a middle-class Mexico City neighborhood, Viaducto-Piedad, near the city's historic Chinatown, a new Chinese community has been growing since the late 1990s. Chinese immigrants have not only opened businesses, but

have created community spaces for religious events and children's recreation. Viaducto-Piedad is recognized by the Chinese themselves as Mexico City's true "Chinatown," said Monica Cinco, a specialist in Chinese migration and general director of the EDUCA Mexico Foundation.

"When I asked them why, they would tell me because we live here. We have stores for Chinese consumption, beauty shops and restaurants just for Chinese," she said. "They live there, there is a community and several public schools in the area have a significant Chinese population." In downtown Mexico City, Chinese entrepreneurs have not only opened new wholesale stores but have also taken over dozens of buildings. At times, they have become a source of tension with local businesses and residents, who say the expansion of Chinese-owned enterprises is displacing them. At a mini-market in a bustling downtown neighborhood selling Chinese products such as dried wood ear mushrooms and vacuum-packed spicy duck wings, 33-year-old Dong Shengli said he moved to Mexico City from Beijing a few months ago to help manage the shop for some friends.

Dong - who has since found a job with a wholesaler importing knockoff designer sneakers and clothing - said he had worked at China's National Energy Commission, but was persuaded by his friends to come here. He plans to explore business possibilities in Mexico, but China still has a pull for him. "My wife and my parents are in China. My mother is elderly, she needs me," he said.

US expected to send senior official to China

WASHINGTON/BEIJING (Reuters): The United States is set to send Michael Chase, the deputy assistant secretary of defence for China, Taiwan and Mongolia, to China's top annual security forum in mid-September, a US official told Reuters.

The choice of Chase has not been previously reported. He is more senior than the US official who attended the Xiangshan Forum last year, but his rank is in line with historical norms for the Pentagon. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China Chad Sbragia attended the forum in 2019.

There is some hope that this could signal deeper working-level engagement with China amid regional disputes. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Chase's expected attendance was not unprecedented, but sent a message that the United States prioritises engagement at the military level with China even at a time of heightened tensions. More than 90 countries and international organisations plan to send delegations to the Sept. 12-14 forum in Beijing, Chinese state media reported.

Washington sent Xanthi Carras, China country director in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, when the forum resumed last year after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. It was a sign of thawing military ties; however Carras' title is of a lower rank than Chase or Sbragia. Chase co-chaired US-China military talks in Washington in January - the first such working-level talks since 2022, when most bilateral military engagement was suspended after then-US Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

Taiwan and the South China Sea remain contentious flashpoints in the US-China relationship, with both sides unwilling to compromise on "core issues". US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said no new agreements had been reached on the South China Sea during a visit to China last week. China has repeatedly criticised US deployments in the Asia-Pacific region, including the placement of long-range missiles in the Philippines, as well as US arms sales to democratically governed Taiwan, which China considers its own territory, over the strenuous objections of Taipei. Meanwhile the US has raised concerns over China's "aggressive" actions in the South China Sea, its frequent military manoeuvres in the air and waters surrounding Taiwan, and what it says is the opacity of China's nuclear buildup.

Official nuclear talks were halted by Beijing in July in protest over US arms sales to Taiwan. But both sides have agreed that US Indo-Pacific Command leaders would soon speak by phone to their counterparts in China's southern theatre command, which covers its southern seas.

Ukrainian FM resigns

KYIV (AP): Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, one of Ukraine's most recognizable faces on the international stage, resigned ahead of an expected reshuffling of government leaders. Russian strikes, meanwhile, killed seven people in a western city, a day after one of the deadliest missile attacks since the war began.

Kuleba, 43, gave no reason for stepping down. Four other Cabinet ministers tendered their resignations, likely making this reshuffle the biggest since Russia's invasion in February 2022. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy indicated last week that the reshuffling was imminent, with the war poised to enter a critical stage and to mark its 1,000th day in November. He said that Ukraine needs "new energy, and that includes in diplomacy." He said during a Kyiv news conference with visiting Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris that he could not announce any replacements yet because he did not know whether the candidates would accept his invitation to join the government.

In July, Washington and Berlin announced that the "episodic deployments" of long-range US missiles, including Tomahawk cruise missiles, to Germany would begin in 2026.



KYIV: Rescuers work at the site of a residential building damaged in the Russian strike in Lviv.

Cambodia says China gifting two warships

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP): Cambodia's Defense Ministry said that China is giving its navy two warships of the type it has had docked for months at a strategically important base being expanded with Beijing's funding, which has raised concerns of China establishing a permanent naval presence on the Gulf of Thailand.

Ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata told The Associated Press that China would give Cambodia two newly built Type 56 corvettes, smaller vessels typically used for coastal patrols, next year at the earliest. She would not comment on reports that China also planned to hand over to Cambodia newly expanded facilities at Ream Naval Base, including a lengthy new pier capable of accommodating much larger naval vessels than Cambodia has in its own fleet. Maly did say the final phase of construction would soon be completed.

The United States and others have expressed concerns about China's navy establishing a base at Ream, which would give it easy access to the Malacca Strait, a critical shipping route between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Those concerns grew after two Type 56 corvettes docked at the newly built pier in December, and have maintained a presence there on-and-off ever since. Cambodia has said one of the reasons the Chinese corvettes have been there for so long was that it was considering similar warships for its own navy, and for training.

Maly said the two corvettes being given to Cambodia, the Type 56C variant, came after Cambodia requested China's support. "It is in the aim of strengthening the capacity and ability

of Cambodia to protect and maintain peace, stability, security as well as for supporting search and rescue operations and other humanitarian activities," she said. China's Foreign Affairs Ministry would not comment on the ships or the report that Beijing would turn over the newly expanded Ream base facilities to Cambodia, telling the AP in a faxed reply to a query that "we're not aware of the relevant information."

Controversy over the Chinese activity at the Ream base initially arose in 2019 when The Wall Street Journal reported that an early draft of a reputed agreement seen by US officials would allow China 30-year use of the base, where it would be able to post military personnel, store weapons and berth warships. Cambodia's then-Prime Minister Hun Sen denied there was such an agreement, emphasizing that Cambodia's Constitution did not allow foreign military bases to be established on its soil. Chinese work on the base has continued and Hun Sen's successor as prime minister, his son Hun Manet, has insisted the same thing.

If China's People's Liberation Army Navy, or PLAN, were to be granted preferred, or exclusive, access to Ream in exchange for the warships it is giving Cambodia and for its work on the base, it could be a deft way to work around the constitutional issues, said Euan Graham, a senior defense analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "It's quite a smart move, as it allows Cambodia to maintain its line that it hasn't deviated from the constitution by creating a foreign base. And China has no shortage of warships to donate," he said. "I expect

that China may retain a naval complement on board the corvettes, post-transfer. The real question is what level of access the PLAN will have to Ream, and whether that access is exclusive," Graham added.

China currently only operates one acknowledged foreign military base, in the impoverished but strategically important Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, but many believe that its military is busy establishing an overseas network. The US has more foreign military bases than any other country, including multiple facilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus far, only Chinese naval vessels have been given permission to use the new pier. In February, two Japanese destroyers were routed instead to the nearby Sihanoukville commercial port. A Royal Australian Navy frigate was also directed to Sihanoukville for a port call ending.

Maly said Cambodia had the right to promote cooperation with all partners for its benefit, so long as constitutional regulations were followed. "Cooperation has to comply with the goals and the principles of the Cambodian Constitution especially the protection of its sovereignty, integrity and independence," Maly said. Cambodia is China's closest ally in Southeast Asia, while China is Cambodia's most important ally and benefactor, with a strong influence on its economy. Beyond military projects, China funds numerous others in Cambodia - particularly infrastructure, including airports and roads, but also private projects such as hotels, casinos and property development. Some 40% of Cambodia's \$11 billion in foreign debt is owed to China.

EU wants answers from Hungary about work visas for Russia

BRUSSELS (AP): The European Union's top migration official expressed concern about a Hungarian work visa program open to citizens from Russia and Belarus, just as sabotage attacks and spying allegations raise alarm across Europe.

Hungary extended its National Card program to citizens from Russia and Belarus as it took over the EU's rotating presidency in July. It happened as Prime Minister Viktor Orban traveled to Moscow for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a trip slammed by his EU counterparts. The card also allows easier entry into Europe's ID-check free zone for work purposes to citizens from Bosnia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine. All six countries are candidates to join the EU. Russia and Belarus are not.

"It's a bit strange to actually welcome specifically citizens from Russia and Belarus in a situation where we know that these countries are hostile to the European Union," European Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson told EU lawmakers. The Hungarian prime minister, widely seen as having the warmest relations with Putin among EU leaders, has routinely blocked, delayed or watered down EU efforts to assist Kyiv and impose sanctions on Moscow for its actions in Ukraine.

Belarus is Russia's main ally and has served as a rear base for Russian troops. Johansson listed a series of incidents since Russia's full-fledged invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, including sabotage or hacking attacks in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. She also noted possible threats to military bases in

Germany. "This is a time for more vigilance, not less. This is not a time to be soft on security," she said, adding that safe travel within the passport-free zone linking 29 countries, most of them EU nations, could be undermined. "We must keep each other safe." Early last month, Johansson sent a letter to Hungary seeking clarification about its National Card, notably whether the program imposes stricter security checks on Russian and Belarus nationals. She received a reply two weeks ago but wanted to know more.

Johansson asked: "Why does the Hungarian government consider such a scheme necessary or appropriate in the current political situation? The expected national economic gains seem limited (and) disproportionate to the potential security impact." At a news conference in Brussels, Hungarian EU

Affairs Minister Janos Boka played down the commission's concerns. He said that seven countries, including Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain have issued more visas to Russians. "In the past two months, 10 permits were issued for Russian citizens and four permits were issued for Belarus from citizens. This is not an increasing trend, and these numbers are statistically irrelevant," Boka told reporters. Johansson said the number of visas issued to Russians have dropped by almost 90%.

Boka insisted that for Hungary "there is no legal and security issue whatsoever when it comes to the National Card." Hungarian officials complained that he had not been invited to the European Parliament to address Johansson's questions in person. The parliament's press service said Hungary had not expressed a wish to attend.

Lavrov warns US not to mock Russia's 'red lines'

MOSCOW (Reuters): President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been lobbying.

"I won't be surprised by anything - the Americans have already crossed the threshold they set for themselves. They are being egged on, and Zelenskyy of course sees this and takes advantage of it," Lavrov told a Russian TV interviewer. "But they should understand - they are joking about our red lines here. They shouldn't joke about our red lines."

Lavrov said the US was losing sight of the sense of mutual deterrence that had underpinned the balance of security between Moscow and Washington since the Cold War, and that this was dangerous. He was commenting on a Reuters report that the US is close to an agreement to supply Ukraine with long-range JASSM cruise missiles that could reach deep inside Russia - for which Ukrainian

nuclear weapons. But Washington and its allies have increased military aid to Ukraine, including providing tanks, advanced missiles and F-16 fighter jets. That has prompted some Western politicians to suggest Putin's nuclear rhetoric is a bluff and that the US and NATO should go all-out to help Ukraine win the war. Zelenskyy has said Ukraine's incursion into Russia, launched on Aug. 6, makes a mockery of Putin's red lines. Lavrov said Washington knew where these limits lay but was wrong if it believed the consequences of any escalation of the war in Ukraine would be suffered mainly by Europe. "They have a genetic conviction

that no one will touch them," Lavrov said. This, he said, undermined all the principles that had underpinned strategic stability with Washington since Soviet times. "This feeling of mutual deterrence - for some reason they are starting to lose it. This is dangerous," he said. Lavrov alluded to remarks by White House national security adviser John Kirby, who said in June that President Joe Biden had repeatedly said Washington was not looking for "World War Three." Kirby said a major escalation of the Ukraine war could have "disastrous consequences, potentially, across the European continent" and would not be good for US interests.

Serbia is an ally and won't join Western penalties

BELGRADE (AP): Serbia is a Russian ally and will never impose sanctions against Moscow or join NATO, the Balkan nation's deputy prime minister said as he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The remarks by Aleksandar Vulin, a former intelligence chief who is under US sanctions, reflect persistent close relations between Belgrade and Moscow despite Serbia's proclaimed bid to join the European Union.

"It's a great honor for me to have the privilege to talk to you," Vulin told Putin. "Please believe me when I say it is a great encouragement for all Serbs, wherever they may live." Serbia has refused to join Western sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine though it has condemned Moscow's aggression. Populist President Aleksandar Vuic has said that imposing the sanctions wasn't in Serbia's national interest.

"Serbia is not only a strategic partner of Russia, Serbia is also Russia's ally," Vulin said. "This is why pressure on us by the West

is huge." Vulin's meeting with Putin in Russia's far-eastern city of Vladivostok came just days after French President Emmanuel Macron visited Serbia when Belgrade signed an agreement to buy French Rafale fighter jets, a move that was seen as possible a shift away from Moscow. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz earlier also visited Belgrade for the signing of a tentative EU deal with Serbia on raw materials needed in green transition. The two met in Vladivostok on the sidelines of an economic forum designed to attract foreign investment and showcase Russia to them. Greeting Vulin as the two sat down for talks, Putin expressed hope that Serbia's deputy prime minister will be able to "take a close look and evaluate the possibilities of cooperation with such a large and promising region" as Russia's far east.

Vulin told Putin that Serbia's close ties with Russia will continue in the future. "Serbia led by Aleksandar Vuic is a Serbia that will never

become a member of NATO, which will never impose sanctions against the Russian Federation and which will never allow its territory to be used for any anti-Russian actions," he said. "Serbia has not become and will not become part of anti-Russian hysteria," Vulin said. The US imposed sanctions on Vulin last July, accusing him of involvement in illegal arms shipments, drug trafficking and misuse of public office and aiding Russia's influence in the volatile Balkans.

Vulin has received two medals of honor from Russia. The US sanctions against individuals and companies in the Balkans are designed to counter attempts to undermine peace and stability in the volatile region and Russia's "malign" influence. The West has stepped up efforts to lure the troubled region into its fold, fearing that Russia could stir unrest to avert attention from the war in Ukraine. The Balkans went through multiple wars in the 1990s, and tensions still persist.

attack killed at least 51 people in the Ukrainian city of Poltava, one of the single deadliest bombardments of the war.

The Iris-T systems sent to Ukraine feature truck-mounted launchers that fire missiles to intercept aerial threats at a range of up to 40 kilometres (25 miles). Scholz said that "in Ukraine, Iris-T has shot down over 250 rockets, drones and cruise missiles to date and saved countless lives". The German leader said that Europe, aside from defensive systems, would also need more precision missiles of its own "so that there is no dangerous gap with Russia in this strategically important field".

In July, Washington and Berlin announced that the "episodic deployments" of long-range US missiles, including Tomahawk cruise missiles, to Germany would begin in 2026.

German army activates air-defence system

BERLIN (AFP): Germany's military put a first Iris-T air-defence system into service on its own soil having delivered several of them to war-torn Ukraine to intercept Russian rockets, drones and missiles. Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the surface-to-air system was part of a build-up of German and European defences launched after Russian President Vladimir Putin launched the Ukraine invasion in 2022.

"Russia has been massively rearming for many years, especially in the field of rockets and cruise missiles," Scholz said at the inauguration ceremony at a base in Todendorf near the northern city of Hamburg. Putin had broken disarmament treaties and "deployed missiles as far as Kaliningrad", a Russian exclave located some 530 kilometres (330 miles) from Berlin, he added.

"It would be negligent not to respond to this appropriately," the chancellor said. "A failure to act would put peace at risk. I will not allow that." Scholz, who was joined by Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, said the system was part of the European Sky Shield Initiative, which also includes long-range defences against ballistic missiles.

The German military has ordered six of the Iris-T SLM systems at a total cost of 950 million euros (\$1 billion) from manufacturer Diehl Defence, to be delivered by May 2027. Germany, the second-largest contributor of military aid to Ukraine after the United States, has already supplied four Iris-T SLM systems to Ukraine and pledged another eight. Ukraine's Defence Minister Rustem Umerov was visiting Germany, a day after a Russian missile

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‘De-risking’ efforts and exercise in futility

DRIVEN by strategic and economic considerations, in recent years, policymakers in Washington have been encouraging US and other Western multinationals to either "reshore" to the US or relocate their production and supply chains out of China to "friendlier shores".

Pushing ahead with a strategy of "de-risking", to reduce the dependence on Chinese products and supply chains and address purported threats to national security, is aimed at weakening China's position as a manufacturing powerhouse and thus thwarting its development.

As part of these efforts, apart from waging a trade war and continuously cracking down on Chinese high-tech firms, the Joe Biden administration has been working to strengthen the US' relations with India.

By leveraging closer economic ties with India and encouraging greater collaboration between the two sides in areas such as information technology, space exploration and renewable energy, the Biden administration hopes to hold back China's development by reducing its leadership advantages and, by positioning India as an alternative, diminishing its importance as the center of gravity in the global industry and supply chains.

Yet the US strategy seems to be going nowhere. Chinese supplies remain crucial for India's manufacturing sector. Although the US strategy intends for India to reduce its commercial ties with China, the Indian economy has become even more dependent on Chinese imports, according to a recent report by The Washington Post.

India's imports from China have been growing twice as fast as those overall and now make up nearly one-third of Indian imports in industries ranging from electronics and renewable energy to pharmaceuticals, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative, an Indian think tank.

That dynamic is phenomenal, given the restrictive measures India has taken targeting Chinese investment following a deadly clash between the two countries' border troops in 2020. It is only in recent months that New Delhi seems to have softened its attitude toward Chinese investors, with the issuing of new guidelines to expedite visas from China.

"To boost Indian manufacturing and plug India into the global supply chain, it is inevitable that India plugs itself into China's supply chain", was the conclusion of a recent economic survey prepared by the office of the Indian government's chief economic adviser, Venkatramanan Anantha Nageswaran. Even senior officials of the Biden administration have admitted it is not realistic to think that inputs from China can be excluded at this moment from US supply chains, according to the US newspaper report.

Moreover, the US-led de-risking strategy against China will only make the global supply chains unnecessarily longer and more complex, resulting in a significant drag on the growth of the global economy.

The fundamental reason that China has become the top choice for the international business community lies in the strength, resilience, and vitality of its economy, its complete industry chains and the huge Chinese market. Which explains why, despite the calls from Washington for them to reshore, many multinationals still look to China as their key market and manufacturing base.

Thus, although US policymakers view New Delhi as a crucial partner in their efforts to contain China and reduce the US' reliance on Chinese products and supply chains, growing evidence points to the fact that their partnership is making little headway in achieving those objectives.

Policymakers in Washington should consider the wisdom of continuing with their "de-risking" strategy and, putting aside all the ideological baggage they carry, if just for a moment, pause to ponder what is actually best for the US.

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Echoes of 1965: Rekindling National Pride and Unity

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

IN a world where the significance of neighbors is often underestimated, the presence of a good neighbor can truly be considered a blessing. A good neighbor is the first to come to your aid in times of trouble, and the first to share in your joy during happy occasions. The connection with a neighbor, especially one who stands by you in both good times and bad, is invaluable. This relationship forms the backbone of a supportive and harmonious community.

However, the opposite is equally true. If a neighbor turns a cold shoulder during your moments of joy or abandons you during times of distress, life can quickly feel like a never-ending punishment. Unfortunately, Pakistan has been on the receiving end of such an unfortunate relationship from the moment it came into existence. From the very day of its birth, Pakistan's neighbor to the east has refused to acknowledge its sovereignty and has continuously harbored hostility.

The strained relationship between Pakistan and its eastern neighbor, India, has defined much of the region's history. The animosity between the two nations has been a source of tension that has kept the region on edge for decades. It is crucial to note that Pakistan has never initiated these hostilities. From Pakistan's side, efforts have been made to maintain peace and stability, and even in the face of aggression, Pakistan has strived to keep the temperature down.

September holds a significant place in the hearts of many Pakistanis, especially those from the generation that experienced the 1965 war.

This war, fought between Pakistan and India, is remembered with a deep sense of pride and patriotism. It was a time when the entire nation stood united, shoulder to shoulder, ready to defend their homeland against a

much larger adversary.

The generation that lived through the 1965 war remembers September 6 as a day of profound national significance. It was once a public holiday, a day marked by special events in schools and communities across the country. Even though it was a holiday, schools would organize programs where children narrated tales of heroism and bravery from the war, recounting the stories their elders had lived through. These stories were a source of inspiration, fostering a sense of unity and national pride.

Sadly, the importance of these days has gradually faded from public consciousness. The events and lessons from the 1965 war are no longer as prominently featured in the educational curriculum, and the day itself is not celebrated with the same fervor it once was. This gradual erosion of historical memory is concerning, as the lessons of the past are

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The strained relationship between Pakistan and its eastern neighbor, India, has defined much of the region's history. The animosity between the two nations has been a source of tension that has kept the region on edge for decades. It is crucial to note that Pakistan has never initiated these hostilities. From Pakistan's side, efforts have been made to maintain peace and stability, and even in the face of aggression, Pakistan has strived to keep the temperature down. September holds a significant place in the hearts of many Pakistanis, especially those from the generation that experienced the 1965 war.
.....

crucial for understanding the present and preparing for the future.

Wars are not fought by armies alone; they are fought by nations. A united nation, driven by a common purpose and a shared sense of identity, is a force that no opponent can defeat. In 1965, Pakistan

was an ideal example of such a nation. There was an overwhelming sense of unity, a collective will to sacrifice for the greater good, and a readiness to face the enemy in every sphere of life. The spirit of 1965 was one of resilience, courage, and unwavering determination.

The entire nation was mobilized, ready to defend the country from any threat. It was this unity and determination that shattered the dreams of those who sought to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty. The enemy, who had hoped for an easy victory, was met with a wall of resistance, built not just by the military but by the entire nation.

In the years since 1965, Pakistan has had little time to rest or breathe easy. The country has found itself embroiled in one conflict after another, whether it be regional skirmishes, internal strife, or the global war against terrorism. Pakistan has been a front-line state

of the challenges we face today, though different in nature, are no less significant than those faced in 1965. Whether it is the threat of external aggression, internal instability, or the complex challenges posed by the modern world, the need for national unity and a shared sense of purpose is as crucial now as it was then.

In conclusion, finding a good neighbor is indeed a blessing, but when that blessing is absent, it becomes all the more important for a nation to find strength within itself. Pakistan has faced its share of challenges and has often had to stand alone in the face of adversity. However, the lessons of the past teach us that with unity, determination, and a revived spirit of 1965, no challenge is insurmountable. It is time for us to come together, to remember the sacrifices of those who came before us, and to once again be ready to defend our nation with pride and unwavering resolve.

Vladimir Putin trolls US presidential race with ‘endorsement’ of Kamala Harris

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin raised eyebrows Thursday when he expressed his support for US Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential bid, flattering the Democratic nominee with some curiously timed remarks.

"Our 'favorite,' if you can call it that, was the current president, Mr. [Joe] Biden. But he was removed from the race, and he recommended all his supporters to support Ms. Harris. Well, we will do so – we will support her," Putin said Thursday at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. "She laughs so expressively and infectiously that it means that she is doing well."

Putin also criticized former president and current Republican nominee Donald Trump for placing "so many restrictions and sanctions against Russia like no other president has ever introduced before him."

Putin's comments come on the heels of sweeping sanctions announced by the Biden administration to combat a Russian govern-

ment-backed disinformation effort to influence the 2024 elections and boost Trump's candidacy.

So what is Putin trying to accomplish?

If the past is any guide, Putin is simply stirring the pot of US domestic politics. In December 2015, Putin praised Trump, calling him the front-runner months before the businessman secured the Republican nomination.

And despite the Russian leader's vocal support of the Democrats, US Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said on Wednesday that three Russian companies – at Putin's direction – used fake profiles to promote false narratives on social media. Internal documents produced by one of those Russian companies show one of the goals of the propaganda effort was to support Trump's candidacy or whoever emerged as the Republican nominee for president, according to an FBI affidavit.

"He is a bright and talented person without any doubt," Putin said, calling Trump "an outstanding and

talented personality."

Did Putin know something about the 2016 US presidential elections that the pollsters didn't? No, but the Kremlin leader did little to conceal his dislike of Hillary Clinton, then the likely Democratic nominee. And when purloined Democratic National Committee emails were leaked just ahead of the Democratic National Convention, Putin did not hide his glee.

While US officials pointed a firm finger of blame at Russia for the hack, Putin denied the Russian state had anything to do with it. And in remarks at the same forum in September 2016, he praised the leak as a sort of service to the voters, saying, "The important thing is the content that was given to the public."

That content being the embarrassing revelation in the leaked emails that Democratic officials gave preferential treatment to Clinton. In other words, the whole DNC hack episode supported the Kremlin's view that American democracy is a

The spirit that once united the nation in 1965 seems to have waned in the face of relentless challenges. The sentiments of national pride and unity that were so palpable in the past have been overshadowed by fear, uncertainty, and a sense of disillusionment. It is essential to reflect on what has caused this shift and what can be done to reignite the spirit that once burned so brightly in the hearts of Pakistanis.

Reviving the spirit of 1965 is not an impossible task. The blood that runs through our veins is the same as that of those who stood tall in the face of adversity more than five decades ago. The courage, determination, and resilience that defined the nation in 1965 are still within us, waiting to be awakened. It is up to us to rekindle that spirit, to come together as a nation, and to once again be ready to defend our homeland with the same unity and resolve.

We must remember that the challenges we face today, though different in nature, are no less significant than those faced in 1965. Whether it is the threat of external aggression, internal instability, or the complex challenges posed by the modern world, the need for national unity and a shared sense of purpose is as crucial now as it was then.

In conclusion, finding a good neighbor is indeed a blessing, but when that blessing is absent, it becomes all the more important for a nation to find strength within itself. Pakistan has faced its share of challenges and has often had to stand alone in the face of adversity. However, the lessons of the past teach us that with unity, determination, and a revived spirit of 1965, no challenge is insurmountable. It is time for us to come together, to remember the sacrifices of those who came before us, and to once again be ready to defend our nation with pride and unwavering resolve.

Pakistan Navy: The pragmatic first responder

Sohail A. Azmie

ON 9 May 2024, PNS Yarmook, while on a routine maritime security patrol in the North Arabian Sea heard a distress call from a vessel. The ship searched and tracked the boat in crisis and responded promptly. When Yarmook reached the scene of the incident, a boat was found engulfed in flames while the embattled crew was all overboard. It was an Iranian fishing vessel with nine people, who had the unfortunate accident nearly consuming the lives of all hands. Yarmook rescued the crew, extinguished the fire and brought them to safety. In February 2024, in another rescue operation, nine Indian seamen aboard a stranded ocean tug at 167 nautical miles southeast of Karachi, were rescued. There have been, and probably, will be countless such operations necessitating the Pakistan Navy's, what I call the pragmatic first responder capability to bring into action.

The navies, in fact are natural first responders, as these operate in a medium, that inherently is international in character affording maritime operations under the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, 1982. The sea provides reach, flexibility and ability to remain poised to the naval forces, without legal complexities and violation of sovereignty of other states. Air and land may be restricted for the passage of men and material, but the sea remains open even in a contested environment.

This allows the navies to respond to domestic and international crises with speed and effectiveness. When it comes to 'sea-land binary,' we know that the activities at sea are too tightly connected with what happens over land as the situation in Palestine and Yemen signifies to this fact.

This is exactly what Julian Corbett posited in 1910s that at the core of a maritime strategy was to 'influence events at land' by acting at or from the sea.

When it comes to our part of the world, the Arabian Sea is of an immense geostrategic significance. Today it, arguably, has the largest presence of international navies and is surrounded by regions replete with conflicts and crises of diverse nature.

The Arabian Sea has been witnessing an enhanced international footprint post-9/11, where the concerns of terrorism, piracy, narco-smuggling and gun running are feared high. Coupled with these sub-conventional threats and challenges in the Arabian Sea, the non-traditional threats have also become conspicuous, which include but are not limited to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation and ensuring maritime security. Under such an operating environment, the navies have to play roles beyond traditional warfighting and defence of maritime frontiers.

Pakistan Navy, as part of its 'military operations other than war' construct has articulate response mechanics for non-traditional and sub-conventional threats. This requires the Navy's capacity to smoothly perform its roles from benign to constabulary roles.

It is always in a 'ready mode' to transition across the roles, which means the gear, the human resource and the doctrinal clarity are always there empowering it to be the pragmatic first responder, irrespective of the task, the time and the locale at sea. The Navy was one of the first in the region to reach Mersin, Turkiye and Latakia, Syria to assist devastating earthquake victims in March 2023. PN ships Moawin and Nasr were ready to sail carrying massive relief goods within days of issuing instructions from the Government.

In the catastrophic

Tsunami of 2004, PNS Tariq was among the first naval ships to reach the Maldives and assist in rescue operations. Tariq was able to save 377 tourists within a short time. Later on, PN ships Moawin and Khaibar sailed from Karachi with substantial relief goods and field hospital equipment for humanitarian assistance operations in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The Navy remains the frontline responder in domestic crises as well. Its role in Cyclone Yemayin, 2007; Cyclone Phet and Super Floods, 2010; and Floods, 2022, was particularly noteworthy. The Navy rescued thousands of people, provided medical relief and built shelters for the children and the homeless.

In June 2011, PN ships Babur and Zulfikar, in a joint operation rescued MV Suez from the Somali pirates and brought the entire crew back home to safety. Though MV Suez sank because of the number of safety-related incidents human lives were saved. In April 2015, PN ships Zulfikar and Aslat were deployed to rescue civilians from the war-ravaged zones of Yemen. The ships, acting with exceptional professional acumen and operational brilliance, were able to pull hundreds of people of various nationalities including eleven Indians. This had a positive impact on Pakistan-India relations.

From 2019 to 2022, Pakistan Navy undertook three distinct missions to circumvent Africa, with an objective to deliver relief goods to various African nations suffering from famine and natural disasters. PN ships Moawin, Nasr and Alamgir were tasked to sail from the Suez Canal to go around Africa and assist the African people in whatever way possible.

PNS Nasr, in particular carried well over 1000 tons' food items to Benin and Niger in 2020 when these countries have had severe shortage of basic essentials to sustain human life.

This unique feat hasn't been done before and Pakistan Navy can rightly claim the title of being the 'first responder' beyond its traditional operational space, the Arabian Sea.

Apart from rendering humanitarian assistance, Pakistan Navy has the core job of 'preserving freedom of seas,' which is its guiding doctrinal creed.

The Navy believes in working in a 'cooperative continuum,' where on one hand it ensures stable order in its on own, and on the other it works in collaborative constructs so that our seas remain safe and secure for maritime activities. Domestically, Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency work through a joint collaborative mechanism that seeks to keeping the North Arabian Sea crime-free. On several occasions, drug smugglers, human traffickers and poachers have been captured or their attempts thwarted, thereby preserving good order at sea.

Cumulatively, the humanitarian work and maritime security operations indicate that Pakistan Navy is the primary force to arrive at the scene of maritime emergencies or crises, not just in the Arabian Sea but at other locations in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

As a Pragmatic First Responder, Pakistan Navy has provided and will continue to provide swift assistance, rescue and relief operations to protect lives, secure vessels and ensure the safety of life at sea, often before the arrival of other national or international support. This spirit truly makes Pakistan Navy not just a capable player in the Indian Ocean but, as Ken Booth asserts a true torch bearer of Pakistan's foreign policy.

(The writer is an Islamabad-based researcher. His areas of interest include: Maritime Security, Climate Change and astropolitics).

In Gaza, Israel aims to destroy civil order, but it is failing

As the head of Gaza’s ambulance services, Hani al-Jaafarawi had one of the toughest jobs amid Israel’s genocidal war on the strip. Even before October 7, his staff were stretched thin, overworked and under constant threat. After the start of the war, al-Jaafarawi was hands-on in the medical response.

Hospitals, clinics and all health facilities were under extreme threat, and every day al-Jaafarawi’s life hung in the balance. But on June 23, the balance tipped away from him when Israeli forces attacked Daraj Health Clinic in Gaza City, killing him and four other civilians. His only crime was his dedication to the civil defence of Gaza’s beleaguered population.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, he was the 500th health worker killed in Gaza.

The murder of al-Jaafarawi was part of Israel’s systematic campaign to destroy civil services provision in Gaza. It has purposefully targeted and killed medical personnel, Palestinian Civil Defence workers, ambulance drivers, rescue teams, police forces, civil engineers, utility workers, aid convoy drivers and civil society leaders with the aim to create chaos and lawlessness in Gaza and to demoralise the population.

The official justification used by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) for the targeted killings of these professionals is that they are affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) by virtue of working for government institutions in Gaza.

This rationale is spurious. Working under a government does not infer support for its political agenda or membership in the political party that leads it. We cannot assume that every Israeli employed by the Israeli state supports the war crimes of Prime Minister Netanyahu, so why should we assume anything about Palestinian public employees and their political sympathies?

International law makes a clear distinction between combatants and civilians, and the political views of the latter make no difference. That, of course, is yet another aspect of the international legal regime that Israel wilfully ignores.

Two days before al-Jaafarawi’s murder, an Israeli air strike killed four municipal employees and one passer-by in the centre of Gaza City. The workers were preparing to repair water pipes to help restore water supplies. The water infrastructure has been a frequent target of the IOF, as the deprivation of this basic service has led to mass suffering and the spread of disease among Palestinians, which, of course, helps Israel’s

genocidal designs.

Efforts by engineers and communications workers to break the Israeli-imposed internet blackout on Gaza have also repeatedly resulted in deaths. In January, an Israeli tank attacked a team sent to repair a switchboard generator in Khan Younis, killing two of them. This was despite the fact that they had coordinated their movements and the task they were sent to carry out with the IOF.

The Israeli military has also repeatedly targeted health facilities and workers, killing or kid-

naping some of Gaza’s best medical specialists and top hospital administrators. According to the United Nations, by August, 885 medical workers had been killed in Gaza.

Some were targeted in their homes and some in the hospitals where they had stayed behind to take care of patients as Israeli forces carried out raids. Others were tortured to death like Dr Adnan al-Bursh, a senior orthopaedic surgeon at al-Shifa Hospital, and Dr Iyad al-Rantisi, head of obstetrics and gynaecology at Kamal Adwan Hospital. The decimation of Gaza’s health sector and the mass killing of doctors and other medical professionals mean that Palestinians do not have access to proper healthcare whether they are chronically ill, newly infected with a disease or injured by Israel’s incessant bombardments. This again helps Israel’s genocide.

As many videos of the aftermath of air strikes show, the wounded are usually brought to severely underresourced and dysfunctional medical facilities where they are placed on the ground in a pool of blood as the few medical workers available scramble to do emergency care. Many who would normally be saved die.

Israel’s wholesale destruction of every public service that sustains life in Gaza has brought the Palestinian population to the brink. A neighbour from Khan

Younis refugee camp recently wrote to me: “[The Israelis] have not left a sewage pipe, a water pipe, a water desalination unit, bakeries, communication towers, or homes.

They ran over the greenhouses and trees, they bombed the mosques and schools. They bombed anything and everything. Total destruction. We are all targets and no one is safe. No doctor, no university professor, no child, no woman, no lawyer, no journalist and no place or facility – UN or otherwise – is safe. They tell us that we have to leave Gaza if we want to stay alive.”

Israel’s aim in wiping out any semblance of civil order and service provision is, of course, to sow despair among Palestinians and subdue any impulse they may have to resist occupation, subjugation and dispossession.

But this strategy is doomed to fail for two reasons: because it is vio-

lating international law and because it is ineffective.

Israel has long ignored and violated the international legal regime. But what it is doing in Gaza right now even its staunchest supporters are having trouble defending. In January, the International Court of Justice issued a preliminary ruling in which it called Israel’s actions in Gaza “plausibly” genocidal. In May, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan called on the court to issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his

defence minister, Yoav Gallant, for war crimes committed in Gaza.

In June, an independent UN investigation concluded that Israel had committed crimes against humanity during the war. The UN Commission of Inquiry, which conducted the investigation, stated in its report: “The immense numbers of civilian casualties in Gaza and widespread destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure were the inevitable result of a strategy undertaken with intent to cause maximum damage, disregarding the principles of distinction, proportionality, and adequate precautions.”

While Israel is committing war crimes by wiping out Gaza’s civilian infrastructure and services and killing the people who maintain them, these actions will not fulfil the long-term goal: to force Palestinians to capitulate and renounce their claim to their homeland.

For 11 months now,

the strongest army in the region and one of the most advanced in the world has been unable to attain a military victory against an armed resistance group – unless one considers the mass killing of civilians, mostly women and children, and the total destruction of their livelihood as a measure of success.

In a June article in Foreign Affairs magazine, political scientist Robert A Pape argued that Israel in many ways has “made its enemy stronger” than it was before the October 7 attacks because it has made it more popular and in this way more effective in recruiting.

In a subsequent interview, Pape argued that Israel’s strategy of overwhelming airpower is failing just as such approaches failed in Vietnam and Iraq. Overwhelming firepower tends to bring civilian populations together in mutual solidarity against the enemy. This is what is happening in Gaza right now.

Israel has been indiscriminately bombing to make Gaza ultimately unliveable and to force the Palestinians into a mass exodus at the threat of mass death. That has taken an unbelievable toll on the people of Gaza.

But Israel’s attempts to destroy the social fabric of Palestinian society, erase its institutions and crush its spirit are ultimately failing. That is because the people of Gaza, supported by their global allies, are responding to this erasure through collective acts of defiance, striving with every effort to maintain utilities, health and education services, and their community life.

The recent reopening of a small emergency unit at al-Shifa Hospital is emblematic of this enduring resilience. Such efforts not only demonstrate the courage of Palestinian public employees but also the global network of support and the immense mobilisation of the Palestinian diaspora and allies worldwide.

This defiance to policies and acts of erasure is deeply rooted in the history of Palestinian resistance, expressed both in words and actions. When I last spoke with my niece, Amal, shortly after she had turned 18, I asked her what she wished for on her birthday. She responded by reciting an excerpt from the great Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan’s A Call of the Land that reflects the Palestinian spirit: **I ask nothing more than to die in my country, to dissolve and merge with the grass, to give life to a flower that a child of my country will pick. All I ask is to remain in the bosom of my country, as soil, grass, a flower.**

— Aljazeera

FOCAC Summit to bring the next frontier closer

Charles Onunaiju

Free Trade Area.

THE ongoing 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is expected to elevate Sino-African engagement and cooperation to a higher level, as it is likely to suggest ways to overcome the challenges facing the world and outline the measures needed to consolidate the gains already made by the two sides.

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held in July, resolved to comprehensively deepen reform and promote high-level opening-up, thereby creating new opportunities for Africa and the rest of the world to share the fruits of China’s development.

The robust cooperation between China and Africa, especially after the first China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo was held in Hunan province in 2018, has provided African countries greater access to the Chinese market. Trade between the two sides in 2023 reached \$282.1 billion, up 11 percent year-on-year, and Chinese investment in Africa has increased to \$40 billion.

Apart from trade and investment, the summit will also give the African leaders an opportunity to discuss with their Chinese counterparts ways to eradicate poverty, because China achieved the monumental task of eradicating extreme poverty in 2020.

As expected, African countries are upbeat about their engagement with Chinese leaders during the summit in Beijing. Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, while receiving Chinese vice-foreign minister in Nigeria recently, said that he commends what China is doing in Africa as China helps with capital mobilization for projects that positively impact the lives and livelihoods of our people in Africa.

As a veritable mechanism for Africa-China engagement, the FOCAC has been credited with both being a platform for dialogue and consultation, as well as for enabling practical and tangible outcomes for African countries.

From infrastructure construction, trade and investment to vigorous cultural and educational exchanges, the FOCAC has helped meet the needs of African countries, and ameliorate the historical infrastructure and connectivity deficits on the continent. The second and third FOCAC summits held in Johannesburg and Beijing in 2015 and 2018, respectively, were game-changers for China-Africa cooperation. The two summits outlined critical and targeted areas of cooperation, including infrastructure construction, industrialization, agricultural modernization, healthcare, capacity building, and cultural and educational exchanges, and have contributed immensely to the economic recoveries of African countries, and promoted regional trade under the framework of the African Continental

mechanism has become Africa’s most impactful platform for global cooperation through extensive consultations and widening engagements, while consolidating China-Africa cooperation and advancing the construction of a Sino-African community with a shared future.

From Beijing, Africa is likely to get practical inputs, along with promises of more investments, increasing trade and infrastructure construction, which will not only cushion the side effects of economic reform across the continent, but also provide critical support that makes tough economic reform a worthwhile endeavor both in the short and long terms.

China’s spectacular economic rise can be attributed to its immaculate planning, robust

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Thanks to reform and opening-up, China has performed an economic miracle, becoming the second-largest economy in the world, eradicating extreme poverty and building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. China’s economic journey has been fascinating and its development model perhaps the most successful. But by blindly copying China’s development model, African countries cannot achieve much, because the ground realities and the economic and political systems of China and African countries are very different.

Africa-China cooperation has come a long way, but at this historical inflection point, where China needs to strengthen South-South cooperation as a bulwark against the US-led West’s China-containment policy, Africa and China need to recalibrate their cooperation mechanisms to ensure they go beyond the normal exchanges.

The challenges created by the increasing global uncertainties mean traditional partners such as Africa and China have to

be creative, for they need to not only sustain the momentum of their relationship but also inject a new vitality into their partnership, which can turn the existing opportunities into concrete and tangible outcomes.

The FOCAC summits and other meetings have outlined cooperation issues and accompanying funding support, while African countries have to rise above the summit’s glitz to devise a road map for following up the decisions made at the summit. The situation across Africa is too dire for African leaders and officials to be contented with the photo-ops and handshakes that are a part of summits. They have to act, and act now.

China’s spectacular economic rise can be attributed to its immaculate planning, robust

implementation, methodical follow-ups, and mutually beneficial engagement with other countries. Therefore, African countries have to abandon their casual approach to follow-ups, lackadaisical implementation of economic plans and, instead, follow through development projects and turn economic potential into real gains if they want to emulate China in terms of economic development.

Of course, the ongoing summit will provide the answers to the pressing question of how to achieve sustainable development, maintain global peace, and foster mutually beneficial partnerships, but unless the African countries take practical remedial actions, they cannot overcome the challenges and realize prosperity.

And the FOCAC Summit is widely expected to push for the reform of the global governance system to build a fairer and just world order which adheres to the principle that the world as a whole is a community with a shared future.

How to make sense of Netanyahu’s shenanigans

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

A report by the well-connected Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth this week confirmed earlier reports that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has derailed ceasefire deals by introducing unreasonable last-minute demands, designed to be rejected by Hamas so he can continue the war. Many people, including in Israel, have always suspected Netanyahu of deliberately derailing the talks and the document cited by the Israeli paper has confirmed that suspicion. Several news outlets have reported on Netanyahu’s moving of the goal posts, but this is the first time an Israeli document has been obtained to confirm that.

According to the paper, among the new demands was that Israeli forces continue to occupy the Egypt-Gaza border area, known as the Philadelphi Corridor, and maintain a 1.4-km perimeter in Gaza

along the Israeli border, while the original May 27 proposal offered an eventual full withdrawal from Gaza.

Netanyahu’s policies have long puzzled and angered his friends and adversaries alike. He has crossed every red line possible, committed countless war crimes and crimes against humanity, isolating Israel and putting at risk long-time partnerships with the US and Europe. Many Israelis, including the families of those held by Hamas, have been livid at the prime minister’s sacrificing of their sons and daughters for the pursuit of his misguided policies of purposefully prolonging the war and torpedoing deals for his political benefit.

CNN cited an Israeli source familiar with the talks as saying that Netanyahu’s demands were to blame for the recent deaths of six hostages, three of whose names were included for release on the lists

exchanged in the ongoing talks. “Two months ago, when he (Netanyahu) put the obstacles, he said no to the deal. The hostages died because he insisted,” the source told CNN. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum said at the weekend that the finding of the bodies was “a direct result of Netanyahu’s thwarting of the deals.”

This week, in response to these widespread accusations, Netanyahu was back in his element, with a “chest-thumping, bombastic speech,” according to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. He again rejected calls for leaving the Philadelphi Corridor, essentially ending hopes of a deal.

Some have questioned Bibi’s cognitive capabilities, saying that he is acting irrationally after the shock of the Oct. 7 attack knocked him off balance. Israeli politicians have accused him of endangering the country’s future, even its very existence. But while there have been

widespread protests in Israel and calls for his resignation over the past two years, it appears that he still enjoys enough support to stay in power.

Some analysts have suggested that Netanyahu has a Masada complex, meaning that he prefers mass suicide over compromise, or a Samson complex, meaning he is willing to destroy himself along with his adversaries.

However, those who are familiar with Netanyahu’s political career see some consistency in his actions from the beginning. When he was Israel’s UN representative between 1984 and 1988, for example, he charted a new maximalist, u n c o m p r o m i s i n g approach. Previously, Israeli diplomats sought to gloss over the country’s excesses and portray Israel as seeking peace and reconciliation, even when facts on the ground indicated otherwise. I was working at the UN at the

time and watched how he purposely riled UN officials and his adversaries and alienated his friends.

This tendency continued after he left his UN post and returned to Israel. Driven by blind political ambitions, he vociferously opposed peace with the Palestinians, including the Oslo Accords, which included unprecedented concessions by the Palestinian leadership. He incessantly agitated against then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was finally assassinated by an extremist inspired by Netanyahu’s bellicose rhetoric. Rabin’s family has never forgiven Netanyahu for his incitement.

Political scientists would likely view Netanyahu’s approach as “offensive realism,” which means that the motive for a state and its leaders is maximizing power. The German-American scholar Hans Morgenthau argued

that an “animus dominant” (desire for power) motivates humans and states alike. In applying this theory to international relations, American political scientist Kenneth Waltz believed that the international system provides a greater opportunity to maximize power than national politics because there is no ultimate authority in international politics comparable to a domestic government that can adjudicate disputes.

John Mearsheimer, one of the most prominent living political scientists, has long studied Israel’s politics and written extensively on its considerable influence in the US. While he has been critical of Israel and Netanyahu’s policies in Gaza and the West Bank, his theories in fact provide logical explanations for Netanyahu’s pursuit of what appear to be illogical ends. Mearsheimer is credited with coining and developing the theory of offensive realism, according to

which some states and leaders seek to exploit the international system because it lacks central authority to apply the rules of international law, leaving it to great powers to persuade, pressure and coerce smaller states. This fact removes constraints on a leader’s desire to maximize power.

To apply these theories to Netanyahu’s behavior, we see that he is maximizing his power within Israel. He has now served longer than any other prime minister, including the country’s founding father David Ben-Gurion. He has a loyal following, some of whom call him the “king” of Israel, securing him enough support to stay in power. He is defying the country’s security and military establishment and trying to do away with judicial authority and independence.

In the current international system, which is characterized by geopolitical polarization, it is easier for a power-hungry politi-

cal leader to survive and maximize his benefits. The US and other allies of Israel have continued to support Netanyahu despite their criticism of his policies in Gaza. They provide him with the arms he is using to subjugate Gaza and the West Bank in defiance of international law. They also shield him from UN sanctions. Netanyahu is able to pursue his policies only because of that support.

The US is able to disabuse Netanyahu of his notion of entitlement to unlimited support by conditioning that support to implementing America’s own policies and preferences.

It can start by insisting that Netanyahu accepts President Joe Biden’s Gaza plan, which he announced on May 31 and was adopted by UN Security Council Resolution 2735. Free of electoral pressures, the White House could pursue this approach in the remaining months of the Biden administration.

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In brief

Polo tournament kicks off in GB

GILGIT (Monitoring Desk): The largest polo event in the northern regions of Pakistan is set to begin at the scenic location of Gilgit. The "Jashn-e-Pakistan Polo Tournament," organized under the patronage of the Force Commander Northern Areas, will start tomorrow at the Wahab Shaheed Polo Ground in Gilgit. A total of 15 teams are participating in the tournament, and for the first time, teams from Chitral will also compete. Previously, Gilgit-Baltistan's teams faced off on the highest-altitude polo ground in Shandur. Over the ten-day event, all participating teams will take to the field with dreams of victory, and Polo fans can look forward to thrilling matches throughout the tournament. All matches of the Jashn-e-Pakistan Polo Tournament will be played under floodlights, adding to the excitement of the event. President of the Gilgit-Baltistan Polo Association, Kashif Zia, warmly welcomed polo enthusiasts, stating, "I welcome all polo fans to the Jashn-e-Pakistan Polo Tournament." The local community is showing great enthusiasm and excitement for this event.

Pak to participate in Scrabble C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 14-member Pakistan team will feature in the 19th World Youth Scrabble Championship to be played in Sri Lanka from September 6 to 8. The team led by Tariq Pervez, Director Youth Program of Pakistan Scrabble Association, comprises 12 boys and 4 girls. Pervez said the players selected include Affan Salman, Aehzam Ahmed, Bilal Asher, Ahmed Salman, Manaal Asher, Muhammad Yadaan, Muzammil Hassan, Manhamah Mukarram, Syed Maaz, Misbah ur Rehman, Ibrahim Mansoor, Ayesha Naqvi, Shanzay Fazil, Zayan Zaman, Muhammad Usman, Syed Musaab. It may be mentioned that Pakistan was the winner of the 2022 championship but finished second behind by Sri Lanka in the 2023 championship played in Thailand.

Badminton C'ship on Sep 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Mutahir Badminton Academy Rawalpindi is set to host the Defence Day Badminton Championship on September 8 at the Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, Rawalpindi. According to Mutahir Sohail, head coach of Mutahir Badminton Academy Rawalpindi, the preparations for the championship are in full swing. The event will feature boys' singles and doubles, as well as girls' doubles competitions. Prizes will be awarded to the winning players after the event.

Hockey tournament from Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The MH Atif Hockey academy Faisalabad is proud to announce the fifth edition of the Pakistan Martyrs Gold Cup Hockey Tournament, scheduled to take place at the Faisalabad Hockey Stadium from September 6 to 13. The tournament is patronized by Olympian Rao Saleem Nazim, Founder Chairman of the Academy, with Olympian Khalid Bashir serving as the Tournament Director, said a press release.



SAITAMA: Zhu Chenjie of Team China and Ayase Ueda of Team Japan compete for the ball during the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier third round Group C match between China and Japan.

PCB announces match officials for Champions One Day Cup

LAHORE (APP): Former ICC elite panelist Aleem Dar and Asif Yaqoob of the ICC's international panel will umpire the opening match between Wolves and Panthers in the Champions One-Day Cup on 12 September, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced today. Former Test cricketer Ali Naqvi will lead the Playing Control Team (PCB), which will also include Waleed Yaqub and Zulfiqar Jan as third and fourth umpires.

Aleem Dar, Asif Yaqoob, Waleed Yaqub and Zulfiqar Jan are amongst a panel of nine umpires who will be officiating in the tournament between country's best of the best players with stalwarts such as Misbah-ul-Haq, Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shoaib Malik and Waqar Younis involved as mentors. The other five umpires are: Faisal Aafreedi, Imtiaz Iqbal, Imran Jawed, Nasir Hussain and Rashid Riaz.

Apart from Ali Naqvi, match referees' responsibilities will be shared between Bilal Khilji, Iftikhar Ahmed, Iqbal Sheikh, Nadeem Arshad and Kamran Chaudhry. Umpire and match referee appointments for the

three playoffs and the final will be announced closer to time. Umpire and match referee appointments (all matches at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad; 16 Sep match will start at 9.30am, rest of the matches will start at 3pm):

12 Sep – Wolves v Panthers. Aleem Dar and Asif Yaqoob (on-field umpires); Waleed Yaqub (third umpire); Zulfiqar Jan (fourth umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee)

13 Sep – Stallions v Lions. Aleem Dar and Waleed Yaqub (on-field umpires); Asif Yaqoob (third umpire); Zulfiqar Jan (fourth umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee)

14 Sep – Dolphins v Panthers. Asif Yaqoob and Zulfiqar Jan (on-field umpires); Aleem Dar (third umpire); Waleed Yaqub (fourth umpire); Bilal Khilji (match referee)

15 Sep – Wolves v Stallions. Aleem Dar and Rashid Riaz (on-field umpires); Waleed Yaqub (third umpire); Zulfiqar Jan (fourth umpire); Bilal Khilji (match referee)

16 Sep – Lions v Panthers. Waleed Yaqub and Zulfiqar Jan (on-field umpires); Rashid Riaz (third umpire);

Imran Jawed (fourth umpire); Iqbal Sheikh (match referee)

17 Sep – Dolphins v Wolves. Nasir Hussain and Rashid Riaz (on-field umpires); Imran Jawed (third umpire); Waleed Yaqub (fourth umpire); Iqbal Sheikh (match referee)

19 Sep – Stallions v Dolphins. Imran Jawed and Imtiaz Iqbal (on-field umpire); Nasir Hussain (third umpire); Waleed Yaqub (fourth umpire); Iftikhar Ahmed (match referee)

20 Sep – Lions v Wolves. Imran Jawed and Nasir Hussain (on-field umpires); Rashid Riaz (TV umpire); Imtiaz Iqbal (fourth umpire); Iftikhar Ahmed (match referee)

21 Sep – Panthers v Stallions. Imran Jawed and Nasir Hussain (on-field umpires); Faisal Aafreedi (third umpire); Imtiaz Iqbal (fourth umpire); Nadeem Arshad (match referee)

22 Sep – Dolphins v Lions. Faisal Aafreedi and Imtiaz Iqbal (on-field umpires); Nasir Hussain (third umpire); Imran Jawed (fourth umpire); Kamran Chaudhry (match referee)

Appointments for the playoffs and the final will be announced later.

Ushna moves to tennis tournament final

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial National Ranking Tennis Tournament continued with competitive matches keeping the spectators on edge at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad on Thursday.

In the ladies singles semifinals, Ushna Suhail emerged victorious, defeating Soha Ali with a score of 6-4, 6-4 to secure her place in the final.

Meanwhile, in the boys 18 & under final, Ahmad Nael Qureshi overcame a strong challenge from Bilal Asim. After dropping the first set 4-6, Ahmad fought back to take the second set 7-5. The match was tied at 3-3 in the final set when Bilal had to retire, giving Ahmad the victory.

In the Boys 12 & Under Final, Shayan Afridi claimed the title with a convincing 4-2, 4-2 win over Rashid Ali.

Earlier in the semifinals, Rashid Ali had defeated Muhammad Muaz 4-2, 4-1, while Shayan Afridi triumphed over Muhammad Junaid 4-2, 4-0.

The tournament continues on Friday with the ladies singles final scheduled at 3:00 PM, where Ushna Suhail will face the winner of the Sheeza Sajid vs Amna Ali Qayum semifinal. The day will conclude with the highly anticipated men's singles final between Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoaib.

Japan hammer China, Australia stunned in World Cup qualifiers

HONG KONG (AFP): Japan made a rampant start to the decisive third round of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup by hammering China 7-0 but Australia suffered a shock home defeat to Bahrain.

In other action on Thursday, Palestine earned a deserved point with a 0-0 draw away at South Korea as they attempt to reach the World Cup for the first time.

Premier League stars Kaoru Mitoma and Wataru Endo both scored as Japan taught a hapless China a footballing lesson in Saitama.

Brighton winger Mitoma, who has missed a chunk of this year with injury, was making his first appearance for Japan since the Asian Cup in January.

He announced his return in emphatic style in front of more than 50,000 fans, scoring with a first-half header after Liverpool's Endo had given Japan the lead.

Mitoma said he was "relieved" to get on the score-sheet. "The home support was overwhelming and that allowed us to play well from the first whistle," he said.

Takumi Minamino added two more goals after the break to put Japan on cruise control against a China side looking to qualify for their first World Cup

since 2002.

Junya Ito, who was also playing for Japan for the first time since the Asian Cup, scored another before late goals from Daizen Maeda and Takefusa Kubo capped a dominant performance from Hajime Moriyasu's side.

It was a night to forget for China, who squeezed into the third qualifying round thanks only to a superior head-to-head record over Thailand.

Also in Group C, Bahrain stunned Australia 1-0 on the Gold Coast thanks to an 89th-minute Harry Souttar own goal.

With the hosts down to 10 men, the match was headed for a scoreless draw until the defender deflected a shot into his own net.

The Socceroos struggled for fluency against their defensively minded opponents and their hopes nosedived after a red card in the 77th minute to striker Kusini Yengi for a high kick to the neck of defender Sayed Baqer.

"It's a learning curve for the players. It wasn't our night," Australia coach Graham Arnold said. In the same group later Thursday, Roberto Mancini's Saudi Arabia host Indonesia.

The top two from each

of the three Asian groups will be guaranteed a place at the expanded 48-team World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Palestine earn point

At the 66,000-capacity Seoul World Cup Stadium in Group B, Palestine gave South Korea a major scare in an entertaining goalless stalemate. Making their debut in the third stage of Asian qualifying and 96th in FIFA's rankings to South Korea's 23rd, Palestine refused to be overawed for much of an open contest.

Palestine play their home matches abroad, usually in the Middle East, because of the war in Gaza.

The local league has been suspended and many of the players are without a club. Despite those obstacles, they were good value for the draw. Palestine thought they had taken the lead in the 22nd minute, only for the goal to be correctly ruled out for off-side.

Oday Dabbagh went close for the visitors on the break in the second half, before Spurs star Son Heung-min rattled the outside of the visitors' post in the dying minutes.

In the same group later Thursday, Iraq face Oman and Jordan host Kuwait.

Captain Jos Buttler out of Australia T20 series

LONDON (Agencies): England captain Jos Buttler has been ruled out of the three-match Twenty20 series against Australia and is a doubt for the five one-day internationals that follow.

Buttler, 33, has not played since the T20 World Cup in June because of a calf injury. In his absence, Phil Salt will captain England for the first time in the T20s, while Harry Brook is in line to step up if needed in the ODIs.

The T20 series begins on Wednesday in Southampton, with the ODIs starting on 19 September. The visit of Australia is England's first white-ball assignment since they lost in the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup.

Head coach Matthew Mott has since left, but Buttler remained as captain after a review by managing director Rob Key.

Marcus Trescothick is

England's interim white-ball coach for the Australia series and the tour of the West Indies in November.

It was announced this week that Test coach Brendon McCullum will take charge of the limited-overs sides, although his combined role does not begin until January.

Buttler was injured in training before The Hundred and sat out the entire competition, along with Lancashire's defeat by Sussex in the quarter-finals of the T20 Blast on Wednesday. Salt deputised for Buttler as Manchester Originals captain in The Hundred and leads a refreshed T20 squad that includes six uncapped players, including Surrey all-rounder Jamie Overton, who has been called up as cover for Buttler.

Salt has played 31 T20s and 19 ODIs and has established himself at the top of

the order for England in white-ball cricket.

The 28-year-old may have taken the wicketkeeping gloves if Buttler was fit, so he could combine keeping with captaincy. Jordan Cox is another option behind the stumps.

Brook will join the ODI squad after a short period of rest following the conclusion of England's final Test against Sri Lanka, which begins on Friday.

The 25-year-old batter has been serving as vice-captain to stand-in Test skipper Ollie Pope this summer. Brook, a former England Under-19 captain, led Northern Superchargers in The Hundred and would be a candidate as a future skipper of the senior side.

Cox, who has been part of the England Test squad, has been added to the ODI party as cover, to go along with his place in the T20 squad.

Gulbahar Club clinches title in CGCG's Basketball Tournament



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Gulbahar basketball club have won the final match of 3x3 inter-club basketball tournament in connection with the Defense Day.

The tournament was organized by City Girls Gulbahar College(CGCG) Peshawar in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Basketball Association at CGCG ground.

Prof Rabia Sikandar, Principal of the college was chief guest on final match of the tournament while college teachers and a large number of students also participated in the closing ceremony. All matches of the tournament were played on CGCG grounds.

Six teams including Friends Club, Frontier Tigers Club, Nahqi Club, University Club, Gulbahar Club, and Brothers Club took part in the tournament.

Frontier Tigers Club defeated Brothers Club by 10-8 points, Gulbahar Club defeated Nahqi Club 11-3,

Friends Club won against Frontier Tigers Club 10-7, and University Club beat Friends Club 15-12. In the final match, Gulbahar Club smashed University Club with a score of 10-7 points and win the tournament.

The college principal presented the trophy to the captain of the winning team and awarded prizes to the players who performed well in the tournament.

Addressing on the occasion of closing ceremony, Prof Rabia Sikandar said that students participation in educational as well as sports activities are necessary for physical fitness and enhancement of their mental immunity.

She congratulated the winning team's players and encouraged all participants. She also thanked the convener of the Women's Wing Basketball Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Najma Qazi, for organizing successful tournament and expressed hope for similar activities in the future as well.

Peshawar to host marathon race on Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Department will hold the Peshawar Marathon Race on September 6 to mark Defence Day.

According to Secretary General AFP Col. (R) Shah Jahan Mir, the marathon will be a 25km distance set for the race. Athletes from across the country, including departmental teams, are invited to participate in the extravaganza.

The federation has issued guidelines to all relevant institutions, and provincial, and regional associations in this regard. Prizes will be awarded to the winning athletes after the race.





In brief

Three officers transferred in Railways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Railways ministry on Thursday transferred three officers with immediate effect until further orders. According to the notification issued here, Samin Ullah Khan Gandapur, a BS-21 officer of Mechanical Engineering Department of Pakistan Railways presently working as General Manager/W&SI, Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore is transferred and posted as Director General, Pakistan Railway Academy, Walton, Lahore relieving Sufian Sarfraz Dogar, CEO/PRFTC, from the additional charge of the said post. Abdul Malik, a BS-21 officer of Mechanical Engineering Department of Pakistan Railways, presently working as Secretary Railway Board (BS-21), Ministry of Railways, Islamabad is assigned to look after the charge of the post of Managing Director, Pakistan Railways Advisory and Consultancy Services (PRACS) Rawalpindi, in addition to his own duties. Similarly, Waqar Ahmed Shahid, a BS-20 officer of Railways (Commercial & Transportation) Group, presently working as Managing Director, Pakistan Railways Advisory and Consultancy Services (PRACS) Rawalpindi, is transferred and posted as General Manager/W&SI, Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore, in his own pay and scale. The orders were issued with the approval of secretary/ chairman railways.

RCB sapling reaches 4000

RAWALPINDI (APP): The tree plantation drive by Rawalpindi's Cantt Board is under way in which more than 4,000 saplings have been planted so far. According to Rasheed Saqib, RCB's spokesman, the campaign is in full swing in the areas proposed by the horticulture department. The areas include the Mall Road Westridge, Raja Akram Road, Masryal Road, Sher Khan Road and Chakra areas, the median green strip of highways, the banks of drains and other open fields. CEO RCB, Syed Ali Irfan Rizvi said that most of the plants planted include eco-friendly, evergreen, flowering and fruiting plants. "As a result of this plantation campaign, not only the greenery and beauty of the Cantt areas will increase, but it will also be helpful in increasing the oxygen level controlling the environmental pollution", he added. The CEO appealed the residents, especially the youth to actively participate in the monsoon planting campaign.

AIOU fosters skills-based education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) recently held a ceremony organized by its Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) to enhance collaboration between industry and students. During the event, certificates were awarded to 10 students from Pak-Turk Maarif International Schools and Colleges who completed internships in various departments of the university. Professor Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad, former Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, praised the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood for focusing on capacity building and skills-based education for the younger generation. He congratulated the students on their achievements and emphasized that skilled youth are essential for Pakistan's future.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi presenting a souvenir to the Ambassador of Türkiye Dr. Mehmet Pacaci. —APP Photo

Mushaal urges global action against India's rights abuses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Thursday emphasized that the international community must take a stronger stance against India's human rights violations and push for accountability. Talking to a private news channel, she appealed to the international community to acknowledge the plight of the Kashmiri people and take concrete steps to alleviate their suffering. She pointed out that despite international pressure, the Indian government has refused to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

This refusal is a clear indication of India's disregard for human rights and its lack of commitment to addressing the issue of

enforced disappearances in Kashmir, she mentioned.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick highlighted that all Hurriyat leaders, including her husband Mohammad Yasin Malik, who are currently languishing in Indian prisons, have lamented the fact that the international community has failed to take concrete action against India's human rights abuses in Kashmir.

These leaders, who have dedicated their lives to the freedom struggle of Kashmir, are being subjected to inhumane treatment and torture in Indian jails, she said, adding, despite their sacrifices, the international community has remained silent, allowing India to continue its repression with impunity.

The Hurriyat leaders in prison have also expressed their deep concern about

the ongoing human rights violations in Kashmir, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary arrests, she mentioned.

Furthermore, Mushaal Hussein Mullick pointed out that India's discriminatory policies are also targeting minority groups in Kashmir, including Sikhs, Christians, and Pandits. These communities are facing forced conversions, land grabs, and economic marginalization, all of which are aimed at erasing their distinct identities and assimilating them into the dominant Hindu culture.

The ultimate goal of these policies is to reduce Kashmir's Muslim majority population and create a Hindu-dominated territory that can be easily annexed by India, she said.

Humanitarian Foundations reaffirm philanthropic spirit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Humanitarian Foundations in Pakistan on Thursday reaffirmed their dedication to fostering a culture of philanthropy and urged the elite class to draw inspiration from the selfless example of world-renowned saint Mother

Teresa in this regard.

Secretary General Alkhidmat Syed Waqas Jafri talking to a private news channel said that recognizing even small acts of kindness can collectively bring about transformative change in society.

By championing the values of empathy, kindness, and charity, Humanitarian Foundations aspire to create a ripple effect of goodness that resonates throughout Pakistani society, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and just world, he added.

A study conducted by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy has revealed that Pakistanis donate Rs240 billion (over \$2 billion) to charity each year, he mentioned.

This remarkable figure demonstrates the nation's generosity and commitment to the cause of giving. The report highlights that an impressive 98% of Pakistanis engage in charitable activities, whether through monetary donations, in-kind contributions, or volunteering their time for worthy causes, he appreciated.

This exceptional phil-

anthropic spirit sets Pakistan apart from its neighbouring country, India. While India may have a larger economy, Pakistan surpasses it in terms of charitable giving, he highlighted.

This is a testament to the kindness and compassion of the Pakistani people, who prioritize helping those in need despite facing various socio-economic challenges themselves, he said.

Faisal Edhi, head of Edhi Foundation and son of renowned philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi, on the occasion of World Charity Day, added that this philanthropic spirit is a shining example for other countries to follow, and a reminder that even small acts of kindness can collectively bring about significant positive change in society.

He said the contribution of charity was important in the health and education sectors in Pakistan.

Faisal Edhi, who has dedicated his life to serving humanity through the Edhi Foundation, highlighted the significant gap between the rich and the poor in Pakistan.

Police arrest three in acid throwing case

RAWALPINDI (APP): Waris Khan Police here on Thursday arrested three accused in acid throwing case, said a police spokesman.

He informed that City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani taking notice of acid throwing on a woman in the Waris Khan area ordered immediate legal action against the accused.

Waris Khan police conducted raids and managed to net the ex-husband of the victim namely Shakeel, his two brothers, Adeel and Khalil. A case of the incident has been registered in Waris Khan Police Station on the complaint of the victim.

Medical examination of the victim was carried out while the accused were being interrogated in custody, he said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Investigation Saba Sattar is directly supervising the investigation, the spokesman informed.

The CPO said that the incident like acid throwing on women is intolerable and the accused involved in crimes against women and children cannot escape the law.

ANF recovers 4.4 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 4.4 kg drugs worth Rs 1.2 million and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed 1 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a college in Attock.

In second operation, 2 kg hashish was recovered near Sher Shah Toll Plaza and an accused was arrested.

In third operation, 1.2 kg charras was recovered from an accused netted near DG Khan, Tunmi Mor.

260 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for UK at a cargo office at Lahore Airport.

Cases under Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Turkish Ambassador calls on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci on Thursday called on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the Ministry of Interior to discuss Pakistan-Turkey relations and matters of mutual interest.

Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in areas of counter-terrorism, police, and civil armed forces, as well as to increase the number of flights between Pakistan and Turkey.

Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Balochistan, saying that Türkiye had also faced terrorism in the past but had overcome it and now the situation is much

better. He offered Türkiye's full cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

The Interior Minister stated that Pakistan as a nation has made immense sacrifices in the war against terrorism. He said that Pakistan's Army, Police, Rangers, FC, and every segment of the nation has made history by rendering invaluable sacrifices. He said that Pakistan would welcome Türkiye's cooperation in counter-terrorism.

Mohsin Naqvi said that he will visit Türkiye in October at the invitation of the Turkish Government and will propose measures to further strengthen bilateral cooperation during the said visit.

He said that Pakistan wants to further strengthen its brotherly relations with Türkiye. He highlighted that Pakistanis consider Turkey as their second home.

The Interior Minister appreciated Dr. Pacaci's services in strengthening Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral relations. He congratulated him on his appointment as Special Envoy of the OIC for combating Islamophobia and expressed good wishes for his new assignment and future endeavours.

Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci thanked Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for his cooperation during his tenure as ambassador in Pakistan.

Sanaullah appeals for unity to address citizen grievances

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah on Thursday urged for a united effort calling on the government, opposition, and civil society to join forces and address the pressing challenges facing Balochistan and the everyday concerns of ordinary citizens.

Talking to a Private news channel, he stressed that a collective approach would enable the stakeholders to develop effective solutions and implement projects that would bring tangible benefits to the common people.

Rana Sanaullah emphasized that all provinces in Pakistan are equal and deserving of attention but

emphasized that Balochistan holds a special place in the government's priorities.

He acknowledged the historical neglect and deprivation faced by the people of Balochistan and assured that the current government is committed to addressing these injustices.

He pledged that the government would work tirelessly to ensure that the province receives its due share of resources and investments, leading to improved infrastructure, economic opportunities, and living standards.

Rana Sanaullah urged the opposition to actively participate in parliamentary proceedings and fulfill their responsibility of representing the true sentiments of

the common people and the province of Balochistan.

He emphasized that the opposition's role is crucial in holding the government accountable and ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities are heard.

In a significant move, Rana Sanaullah stated that the government is willing to listen to the opposition's issues and work towards finding solutions through dialogue.

By inviting the opposition to table talks, Rana Sanaullah aims to create a conducive environment for constructive discussion and collaboration, paving the way for a unified effort to address citizen concerns and work towards a prosperous future.

First dengue death reported in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): The first death due to dengue fever during the year 2024 has been reported in Rawalpindi. The victim, a four years girl was admitted in a private hospital where she couldn't survive and died. The District Health Authority (DHA) has confirmed the death.

Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Jawad, the In Charge District Response Unit and the spokesman, said that the authority was engaged in multi-directional assignments regarding the eradication of dengue.

Talking to APP here on Thursday, Dr. Jawad said the surveillance campaign has already been accelerated as the dengue favouring weather was approaching.

The updated data released today by the DHA shows 14 more dengue fever cases were reported in the last 24 hours, making a total of 122 in the year to date. However, 96 out of total patients have been discharged after full recovery from the allied hospitals, leaving 25 still under treatment.

The field health workers are also engaged in door-to-door campaigns to check the presence of dengue larvae. The report further highlights several punitive actions taken against the dengue SOPs violations.

To a question on vary-

ing data on dengue updates which is regularly shared by the health authority, Dr. Jawad clarified that the data was strictly being monitored and regularly updated. However, he said, the data by the private hospitals sometimes gets late.

"But we are on it, and regularly sharing it on the central dashboard", he said giving details of Punjab's central monitoring mechanism. He also underlined the need to report verified data on media.

Dr. Jawad further appreciated the role of the media in creating awareness of the prevailing challenge of dengue eradication among the masses.

Every pilgrim likely to get back Rs 100,000: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhary Salik Hussain on Thursday informed the National Assembly that every pilgrim is likely to get back Rs 100,000 as recounting is going on in the ministry.

Replying to various supplementary questions during the Question Hour, the minister said Hajj's expenditure for the current year was already Rs 100,000

less than last year. A relief of around Rs 35,000 was also given to every pilgrim in airfare during the current hajj, he added.

The minister clarified that instead of 1400 Moavineen-e-Hujaj, only 600 Moavineen were selected through NTS test for the Hajj 2024. He said the flow of Sikh pilgrims to Kartarpur Corridor has reduced due to the restrictions imposed by India. He

said there was no impediment from Pakistan's side. Infrastructure for receiving daily 5,000 Sikh pilgrims has already been in place at Kartarpur Corridor, he added.

He said that the ministry made an elaborate arrangement ranging from transportation to security every year to facilitate the Sikh Yatrees on occasion of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary.

National Health Card scheme to be resumed soon: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday informed the National Assembly said that National Health Card Scheme would soon be resumed adding that currently the issue was being examined with State Life Insurance Company (SLIC).

Replying to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the minister said that the incumbent government did not stop any people welfare initiative of past governments.

He said during year 2018 to 2022, increase in prices of medicines was made annually linked with Consumer Price Index (CPI) and under hardship category in accordance with provisions of the Drug Pricing Policy-2018 approved by the Federal Government in May, 2018.

He said that the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) followed a structured and transparent procurement

process for all drugs, medicines, and surgical disposable items, strictly adhering to the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules.

The procurement was component-specific, allocated according to the budgets of various hospital sections, including Islamabad Hospital (IH), Children's Hospital (CH), Mother & Child Hospital (MCH), Cardiac Care Center (CC), and Burn Care Center (BCC), he said.

He said all routine and life-saving medicines were supplied according to the hospital's formulary to all components. If any life-saving drugs or medicines were prescribed outside of the hospital formulary, they were also provided to the Emergency & Accident Center (EAC) and admitted patients through local purchase, he added.

The minister said all medicines and surgical disposable items were managed using a

computerized inventory management system (HMIS), which ensured that these items were received and issued in compliance with the approved tender specifications, enhancing transparency and accountability. However, it was acknowledged that there had been a decrease in the availability of certain medicines in the hospital formulary over time due to budgetary constraints, he said.

He said despite these limitations, PIMS remains committed to ensuring the availability of essential medical supplies to meet the needs of all its patients.

Jam Kamal said that no incidents of theft of essential equipment or irregularities in employee appointments and promotions have been recorded in the recent past at PIMS. However, an irregularity was previously identified concerning the "Establishment of the Unit of Shredding, Sterilization, and Disposal of

Medical Waste, he said and added that "Following the detection of this irregularity, an initial inquiry was conducted and the findings were presented before the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC).

The DAC, however, found the inquiry report unsatisfactory and directed that a fresh inquiry be undertaken to ensure a comprehensive and impartial investigation, he said. He said the new inquiry was currently underway and is expected to be completed within four weeks. There was an oversight mechanism in place to monitor the cafeterias' supply chain and ensure the quality of food provided to the public at PIMS, Islamabad, he added.

He said a Monitoring Committee was constituted on March 11, 2024, specifically to oversee the operations of the cafeteria and food services. The committee's mandate includes regular inspections of food quality,

hygiene practices, and adherence to the approved terms and conditions outlined in the contract with food suppliers, he added.

The minister said the financial audits for the budgets assigned to the PIMS for the fiscal years 2022-23 have been recently completed, and a comprehensive audit report has been issued. The audit was conducted in accordance with standard financial practices to ensure full compliance with governmental regulations, transparency, and accountability in the utilization of allocated funds, he added.

He said the report did not identify any direct evidence or indications of individual involvement in corruption. However, the audit findings would be thoroughly reviewed in upcoming meetings of the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC) and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), he said. To a separate

question, Jam Kamal told that House that the government has taken notice of the shortage of medicines etc. and has allocated additional funds to the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (NIRM) to the tune of Rs. 20 Million on 29-04-2024 in the budget head A03927-Purchase of Drugs/Medicines.

Due to shortage of funds at NIRM during the last financial year 2023-24 the required quantity of drugs medicines essential instruments for use in OT could not be procured which resulted in increase in waiting time for surgeries, he added.

He said total funds allocated for the year 2023-24 in the budget head A03927-Purchase of Drugs/Medicines were Rs. 20.9 Million and it was utilized in 1st & 2nd quarter of FY 2023-24. An additional amount of Rs. 20 Million was granted in this budget head, he added.

Education plan launched for child labourers

PUL-I-KHUMRI (Pajhwok): Local officials have announced the launch of a six-month UNICEF-funded primary education programme for 100 child labourers in northern Baghlan province. Director of Labour and Social Affairs Qari Nasrullah Parsa, said the children, working on the streets of Pul-i-Khumri due to poverty, had started receiving education through the initiative.

Increasing noise pollution perturbs Mazar residents

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): A number of citizens of Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, complain noise pollution has become unbearable in the city due to excessive use of loudspeakers by mobile street vendors. As a result of increased noise pollution, residents, especially shopkeepers, say they have been facing many problems. They urge the local officials to collect loudspeakers from mobile vendors and prevent vehicles from honking.

Kyrgyzstan removes IE of Afghanistan from banned groups list

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan has expressed its approval of Kyrgyzstan's recent decision to remove the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from its banned groups lists.

In a statement released today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country praised the Kyrgyz government's action, which specifical-

ly removed the "Taliban Movement" from its list of banned entities, the statement characterized this decision as a significant step forward, highlighting it as a demonstration of mutual respect and recognition between nations.

The statement underscored that Kyrgyzstan's move aligns with similar actions taken by other countries, reflecting a growing political under-

standing of the Islamic Emirate both regionally and globally.

This development comes amid reports that a proposal to remove the Islamic Emirate from Russia's blacklist has been submitted to President Vladimir Putin. Observers anticipate that Russia may soon follow suit, further signaling a shift in international perspectives regarding the Islamic Emirate.

80% of girls in Afghanistan are deprived of education

KABUL (Khaama Press): The U.S. Embassy for Afghanistan has implicitly criticized the ban on girls' education in the country, stating that 2.5 million Afghan girls have been deprived of education.

On social media platform X, the embassy supported the "Let Girls Learn" campaign and emphasized that no one should be denied their right to education. The U.S. Embassy highlighted that 80% of girls are currently unable to access education without directly referencing the Taliban's decrees, which are the primary reason for the three-year ban on girls' education.

The "Let Girls Learn" campaign was launched on social media about three years ago following the imposition of the ban. In response to the campaign, universities and educational organizations set up online learning platforms to provide some educational opportunities for girls.

In addition to prohibiting education, the Taliban regime has also banned any inquiries about the reopening of schools for girls until further notice. Meanwhile, the current restrictions on education, employment, and free movement for girls and women in Afghanistan are exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis.

The lack of access to education not only limits future opportunities for Afghanistan's girls but also perpetuates the cycle of poverty and disenfranchisement. The forced deportation of refugees further compounds the crisis and humanitarian resources.

The international community must continue to press for the restoration of fundamental rights for Afghanistan's girls and women. Persistent advocacy and support for educational initiatives are essential in overcoming these barriers and ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to contribute to their societies.

Taliban bans female journalists from working

DAIKUNDI (Amu TV): The Taliban's Department of Vice and Virtue has prohibited female journalists in Daikundi province from working in local media outlets, sources told Amu TV.

On Tuesday, Taliban officials visited media organizations in the area and informed female reporters that, under new regulations issued by the department, women are no longer allowed to participate in media activities.

Media managers were also warned that hiring female employees would result in the closure of their outlets, sources said. In addition to restrictions on female journalists, the Taliban reportedly instructed male journalists to grow beards and avoid trimming them. The new directive follows a broader set of oppressive restrictions targeting women in Afghanistan.

Kabir Reaffirms IEA's Anti-Narcotics Stance in meeting with UNAMA Head

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs stated that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has a clear stance against narcotics, prohibiting the cultivation and trade of any type of drug. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir made these remarks during a meeting with Roza Otunbayeva, the Head of UNAMA, and her delegation.

According to a statement from ARG, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Ms. Roza Otunbayeva, who praised the Islamic Emirate's stance and commitment to combatting narcotics.

She mentioned UNAMA's efforts to organize a meeting involving several countries and organizations to discuss alternative crops to poppies, treatment for drug addicts, and support for Afghan farmers. She stated that representatives from the Islamic Emirate would also be invited to participate in this discussion. Ms. Otunbayeva emphasized the need for substan-



stantial efforts to mitigate the impact of decades-long drug production and trade and to provide alternative livelihoods for the people. She also briefed the Deputy PM on her recent visits to the southern provinces of Afghanistan and shared that UNAMA's three-month report on Afghanistan would be presented to the United Nations Security Council.

Meanwhile, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir highlighted that the Islamic Emirate has established a high-level commission for effective counter-narcotics efforts.

He continued that following discussions with relevant Emirate departments, a joint meeting with international organizations, including UNAMA, will be held. He reiterated that the Islamic Emirate maintains a firm position against nar-

cotics and will not permit the cultivation or trade of any narcotic substances.

He further stated that international support and assistance from partner organizations and countries can be beneficial in the fight against drugs. The Deputy PM Mawlawi Abdul Kabir also urged UNAMA to share Afghanistan's recent developments and progress with the Security Council.

ANSA reports 2.2 billion Afs in revenue



KABUL (TOLONews): Officials from The Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA) said on Wednesday during a reporting program that in the past year, this institution has generated over 2.2 billion Afghani in revenue.

According to officials, over the past year, this authority has returned more than 128,000 tons of low-quality petroleum products

from the country's ports.

They also said that they have set 91 standards in 11 sectors, and recently, 24 new standards have been approved by the High Council of Standards. Waheed Ahmad Badri, head of the ANSA office, said during the program: "From the beginning of the year 1403 Hijri until now, a total revenue of 2,282,523,083 Afghani has been collected and

added to the Islamic Emirate's budget."

The deputy head of ANSA, Mohammad Asif Qanat, in this program called on domestic producers and importers of commercial goods to consider standard criteria in production and import.

The deputy head of ANSA added that a regulation has been drafted to address violators in the production and import sectors of low-quality goods, which will be strictly enforced upon its finalization by the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

"As we share standards, criteria, and professional staff with factories, if this law is approved and implemented, we assure the people of Afghanistan that over time, low quality will end, and consumers will be protected," said Qanat. Mohammad Hamed, head of the ANSA's

Planning and Policy, added: "The National Standards Authority currently has active membership with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the Institute for Standards and Metrology of Islamic Countries (SMIIC), the South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO), and the Korea Standards Association (KSA), and it is also working to strengthen relations with these organizations."

According to statistics from ANSA, over the past year, 3,787,415 tons of petroleum products, liquefied gas, and 7.3 million tons of construction materials have been quality-certified through the laboratories of this authority at its central office and country ports, of which 128,811 tons of petroleum products and 152 tons of construction materials were returned due to low quality.

Meeting planned on alternative to poppy farming: UN

KABUL (Pajhwok): Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMA head Roza Otunbayeva has announced that efforts are underway to organize a joint meeting on alternative livelihoods for Afghan farmers and treatment of drug addicts.

She made the announcement at a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Maulvi Abdul Kabir on Wednesday, the Presidential Palace said in a statement.

The statement quoted Otunbayeva as saying: "We are striving to organize a joint meeting of numerous countries and institutions to provide Afghan farmers with alternative livelihoods and rehabilitation of drug addicts." She said Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials would also be invited to the meeting.

She added a lot of work was needed to eliminate the effects of several decades of drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan and to provide farmers with alternatives.

She will present UNAMA's quarterly report on Afghanistan to UN



Security Council (UNSC) members soon, the UNAMA head informed. For his part, the deputy premier said IEA had formed a high commission for an effective campaign against narcotics.

He added the interim government had a clear stance on drugs and banned the cultivation, sale and trafficking in all kind of narcotics soon

after it returned to power in August 2021. Assistance from partner institutions and countries could be effective in combating the scourge of drugs, the deputy premier believed.

Kabir urged the top UN diplomat to highlight the facts and latest developments in Afghanistan in her report to UNSC.

Badri discusses investment opportunities with Turkish envoy



KABUL(BNA): Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan, met with Cenk Unal, the Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan, and his accompanying delegation to discuss potential collaborations and investments.

During the meeting, Ambassador Unal emphasized Turkey's commitment to supporting the Afghan people across various sectors. He also highlighted the interest of Turkish businessmen investing in Afghanistan's

mineral resources.

Furthermore, he announced that 77 Construction Company, a prominent Turkish firm, is set to commence its operations in Afghanistan shortly.

Ambassador Unal also commended the Islamic Emirate for its achievements in the past three years, particularly in establishing nationwide security, which has created a favorable environment for foreign investment.

For his part, Mullah Hidayatullah Badri assured that the Ministry

of Mines and Petroleum welcomes both national and international investors interested in Afghanistan's mining sector.

He further reiterated the Ministry's readiness to facilitate and support foreign investment, especially from Turkish investors, in the country's oil and gas industry.

By fostering a secure and stable environment, the Ministry aims to attract further investments to boost economic development and create job opportunities in Afghanistan.

Women among 300 doctors become specialists

KABUL (Pajhwok): Nearly 300 doctors, including 16 women, received certificates upon completing their specialization programs in Kabul yesterday.

Addressing the graduation ceremony held on Wednesday, Dr. Mohammad Haidar Umar from the Ministry of Public Health, emphasized the integrity of the process, stating that there should be no doubts or issues related to favoritism.

Acting Minister of Public Health Maulvi Noor Jalal Jalali noted that the graduation of these specialists marked a significant step toward alleviating the health

challenges faced by Afghans.

Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Kabir shed light on issues crippling the country's health system for four decades.

He criticized past efforts, pointing out that despite significant financial resources, fundamental improvements in Afghanistan's health system were lacking, leading to problems like poor-quality medicines and weakened government health centers due to corruption.

Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Minister for Administrative Affairs, called for enhanced quality health services, particularly in impoverished

areas lacking adequate health centers.

He urged doctors to fulfill their religious and professional responsibilities by ensuring that prescriptions and treatments genuinely benefit patients.

Speaking on the behalf of the graduating doctors, Dr. Mustafa Rahmani said they were committed to providing high-quality health services to reduce the need for Afghans to seek treatment abroad.

He also requested increased support for the medical sector, including more specialist doctors, better training, higher salaries, and improved medical equipment and supplies.

Afghanistan exports Honey worth \$4,500 to Oman, Germany, and Japan



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce reports that in the first five months of the current solar year, over 400 kilograms of honey were exported from Afghanistan.

Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesperson for the ministry, stated that this quantity of honey, valued at \$4,500, was exported to Oman, Germany, and Japan. The spokesperson

added: "The export of honey from the country, weighing 430 kilograms and valued at \$4,500, was carried out to Oman, Germany, and Japan. Meanwhile, during the same period, more than 175 tons of honey, valued at \$328,000, were imported to Afghanistan from Turkey, Pakistan, China, the United Arab Emirates, and several other countries."

At the same time, some honey sellers, while expressing concern over the declining market for honey sales, are calling for the prevention of the import of low-quality honey into the country.

Wahidullah, a honey seller, said: "The reason for the decline in our sales market is due to the government's negligence. The honey imported from Pakistan and Iran is either artificial or produced artificially and is being sold in the market. Ordinary people are not to blame; they do not know which one is good and which one is not."

Najibullah, another honey seller, added: "Our request to the Islamic Emirate is that any low-quality honey should not be allowed to enter the market, as it diminishes people's trust in high-quality

honey."

Meanwhile, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock say that the ministry is committed to supporting beekeepers.

Misbahuddin Mustaeen, spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, stated: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, plans to establish laboratories in the country for producing quality honey, which will play a major role in domestic production and export to foreign countries."

According to the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, there are currently 3,397 honey farms across the country, producing 2,200 metric tons of honey.

500 kv power project from Baghlan to Kabul 15% completed



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Energy and Water stated that the 500-kilovolt power transmission project from Dasht-e-Khwaja Alwan in Baghlan to Arghandi in Kabul has progressed by 15%.

According to the ministry, once this project is completed, over 1,000 megawatts of electricity will be transferred from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan. Matiullah Abid, spokesman for the Ministry of Energy and Water, said: "The work on the 500-kilovolt power transmission line from

Dasht-e-Khwaja Alwan in Baghlan province to Arghandi in Kabul is ongoing. Fortunately, 15% of it has been completed. Upon completion of this project, 1,000 megawatts of electricity will be imported from Turkmenistan to Kabul."

Several economic experts believe that completing this project could help improve the energy situation in the country and positively impact economic growth.

Mir Shakib Mir, an economic analyst, commented on the matter, saying: "The completion of the Turkmenistan power transmission project from Sheberghan to Dasht-e-Alwan and Arghandi in Kabul can help meet the

energy needs of some citizens and increase economic activities."

Despite the reported progress, residents of the capital complain of persistent power shortages and outages. Zubid, a resident of Kabul, said, "We have electricity for 4 to 5 hours, at night, and we have no power during the day."

Another resident, Mirwais, said: "We request that the authorities ensure a fair and consistent distribution of electricity across all areas."

According to officials, the project has been contracted to a domestic company, with the construction work expected to be completed in two months, and the entire project to be finished within two years.



دفاعِ پاکستان سے استحکامِ پاکستان تک بر لحظہ تیار، بر لمدہ سرگرم عمل

#یوم دفاع شہداء کے نام #یوم دفاع پاکستان۔ یوم شہداء

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Asif Ali Zardari
President of the Islamic
Republic of Pakistan

Message on the occasion of
Defence and Martyrs' Day of
Pakistan, 06 September 2024

On this Defence and Martyrs' Day, we pay homage to our Ghazis and Shuhada, who rendered immense sacrifices and bravely defended the country against external aggression. This day is a reminder of our Nation's unwavering commitment and determination to defend its sovereignty. I pay homage to the brave sons of the soil who shattered the enemy's dreams to harm Pakistan.

Our Armed Forces are vigilant and ever-ready to respond to any challenge to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are provided with adequate defence equipment and possess the desired professional skills and the will to protect the country from all challenges. We seek peace and stability in the region and are committed to peaceful coexistence with all neighbours. However, enduring peace is only possible when the plight of the Kashmiri people is alleviated. They bear illegal subjugation and a continuous reign of terror by the Indian Armed Forces over the unfinished agenda of the partition of the sub-continent. The revocation of the autonomous status of IIOJK has further compounded the problem.

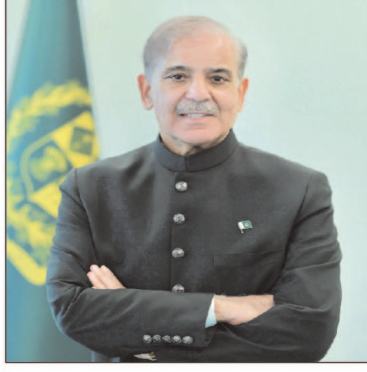
India must adhere to the UN Security Council's resolutions that guarantee the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

Today, Pakistan is facing many threats and security challenges and hostile countries are bent upon harming Pakistan by supporting anti-Pakistan elements to carry out terror activities in the country. In the face of these challenges, our Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies are fully prepared to defeat terrorists. We stand behind our security forces to stamp out the menace of terrorism.

On this day, we commemorate the will, determination, sense of patriotism and spirit of our valiant sons while the nation commits its unwavering support to the Armed Forces in the fulfilment of the sacred task of defending the country. May Allah protect Pakistan and guide us on the path to peace and prosperity

*Afwaj-e-Pakistan Zindabad!
Pakistan Paindabad!*

Our Armed Forces are vigilant and ever-ready to respond to any challenge to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are provided with adequate defence equipment and possess the desired professional skills and the will to protect the country from all challenges. We seek peace and stability in the region and are committed to peaceful coexistence with all neighbours.



Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

Message of Prime
Minister of Pakistan
on Defence and Martyrs
Day, 6 September 2024

The 6 September marks a significant day in the history of Pakistan. Every year on this day, the Pakistani nation observes "Defence & Martyrs Day" in a befitting manner. Together we pay rich tributes to the valiant sons of soil and brave heroes of our Armed Forces who fearlessly fought, and defeated India that attacked our motherland across the international border on 6 September 1965. Despite their numerical advantage, enemy designs were thwarted by the valiant Armed Forces and were handed an unforgettable defeat, on all fronts. Fifty-nine years on, the Armed Forces of Pakistan unceasingly show the same ever-ready state of alertness, professional excellence and war preparedness while up-keeping the 'Spirit of September' that has become a symbol of resistance and resilience. The courage and dedication of our soldiers coupled with preparedness of the Armed Forces ensure that we live in a free and sovereign country. We salute the families of Shuhada, whose immense resilience and strength continues to inspire us to commit to the defence of the country. Our Armed Forces, equipped with modern day combat capability, are constantly enhancing their prowess to defend our territorial integrity and sovereign identity.

The Government of Pakistan believes in dialogue over conflict and in cooperation over confrontation. Our aim is to create an environment where all nations can prosper, and address issues like poverty, health, and education. Unfortunately, non-resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute is hampering the pace of positive development in the region. Kashmir is the unfinished agenda of partition that needs immediate settlement as per the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and according to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions through an impartial plebiscite. At the same time, roots of terrorism stemming from our neighbors need to be curbed in our common interest. I bring to you a message of hope and resolve on this day. Remember, our past is a testament to our ability to overcome adversity. Each time, we have emerged stronger, battle-hardened. On this day, we must draw upon the same spirit of resilience that has always defined us. Azm-e-Istehkam under revised National Action Plan is meant to root out both physical and digital terrorism, once and for all. It is important that we join hands and pave a way to prosperous Pakistan.

Pakistan stands firmly with the people of Palestine. We will continue to raise the issue on all global platforms. The Palestinian people have shown incredible courage in their long struggle against Israeli occupation. We urge the international community to ensure the protection of Palestinian Citizens and stop genocide of innocent Muslims in Gaza. May Allah bless the souls of our martyrs and provide strength and patience to the families. Let's draw inspiration from them to defend and build Pakistan with the same Spirit of September, and touch the heights of glory, God willing.

*Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad!
Pakistan Paindabad*



Khawaja Muhammad Asif

Message of Minister for Defence
& Defence Production on the
occasion of Defence and
Martyrs' Day of Pakistan, 06
September 2024

06 September 1965, remains an eternal testimony of our resolve to defend every inch of our mother land. The day reminds us of the sacrifices rendered by our valiant Shuhada's, Ghazi's and veterans. The indomitable spirit of our nation and its Armed Forces shattered the nefarious designs and aspirations of enemy; inflicting humiliating blows at land, in air and at sea.

This legacy of bravery and intrepidity has lived on. Seeking aspiration from our hero's of 1965, each and every member of our Armed Forces remains unfazed in pursuance of our noble and sacred duty.

Pakistan today faces multiple security challenges both externally and internally. The main repository of both these threats is our traditional adversary. Employing gray zone conflict and with continued unabashed support to terrorist organizations, the integrity and social fame of our nation is being attacked. The enemy just like 1965 is underestimating our national resolve and spirit.

As we commemorate Defence Day of Pakistan, we, as a nation, vow that with unity, faith and discipline we will defeat the enemy at all fronts. The whole nation like a steady rock stand behind its Armed Forces.

At this juncture we also reaffirm our political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. The unilateral Indian action to alter the status of IOJ & K will never be accepted by Pakistan and we will continue to urge international community to play its role in resolution of the issue in accordance with UN resolution.

As Federal Minister for Defence and Defence Production, I reiterate that we are a peace loving nation. However, if aggression is imposed upon us we are ready for a decisive response.

On this occasion of Defence Day, I solemnly pray to Allah Almighty to grant us the courage and fortitude to follow the illuminating path of the hero's of 1965 war.

I bring to you a message of hope and resolve on this day. Remember, our past is a testament to our ability to overcome adversity. Each time, we have emerged stronger, battle-hardened. On this day, we must draw upon the same spirit of resilience that has always defined us.

Azm-e-Istehkam under revised National Action Plan is meant to root out both physical and digital terrorism, once and for all. It is important that we join hands and pave a way to prosperous Pakistan.

*Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif
Prime Minister of Pakistan*



ہم ہمالیہ میں کوہِ گراں
ہم بحرِ تلاطم کے شناور



باوقار، سر بلند
ہم نگہبان، ہم پاسبان



ہم کوہستانوں میں سینہ سپر، ہم صبح دم تازہ اور تاریکیوں میں مستعد
ہم سندھ، ہم بلوچستان، ہم خیبر پختونخوا
ہم گلگت بلتستان، ہم پنجاب، کشمیر بھی ہم

ہم ہیں پاکستان

ہم وفاق کی پہچان

ہم شہیدوں کے وارث



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