

Dr. Zakir Naik arrives
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Eminent religious scholar and preacher Dr. Zakir Naik was warmly received by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Dr. Syed Attaur Rehman on his arrival at Islamabad International Airport on Monday. Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs Shamshir Ali Mazari also present at the airport to welcome Dr. Naik.

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Ground troops could join fight: Israel

Hezbollah says it is ready for any land invasion in Lebanon

JERUSALEM (AFP, Reuters): Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Monday said ground forces could be used against Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, adding military operations will go on despite the killing of the group's leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Gallant made the comments while speaking to Israeli troops deployed to the northern border where cross-border fire with Hezbollah continued for nearly a year but escalated this month. "We will use all the means that may be required — your forces, other forces, from the air, from the sea, and on land," Gallant said. "The elimination of Nasrallah is an important step, but it is not the final one."

Israel killed Nasrallah on Friday in an air strike on the Iran-backed group's southern Beirut stronghold. Israel had intensified air raids against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon from September 23, when Lebanon's health ministry said at least 558 people were killed, in the deadliest day of violence since Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war. Israeli officials have been hinting at a potential ground invasion into Lebanon, following attacks which decimated Hezbollah's leadership and communications this month.

After Hamas Palestinian militants' unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel that triggered war in Gaza, Hezbollah began firing at Israeli military positions and communities along the border, in what it called "support" for Hamas. Fighting had been relatively contained until the current escalation. Tens of thousands of Israeli residents were evacuated from their country's northern border area nearly a year ago.

"Our goal is to ensure the (safe) return of Israel's northern communities to their homes. We are prepared to make every effort necessary to accomplish this mission," said Gallant. Israel said earlier this month that it was shifting its focus from Gaza to securing the northern border with Lebanon. Hezbollah's deputy leader Naim Qassem said Monday the movement was ready to face any Israeli ground operation, and warned that the battle could last a long time.

Hezbollah fighters are primed to

Israeli airstrikes kill 12 in Gaza

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli airstrikes pounded areas across the Gaza Strip on Monday killing 12, including a journalist and her family, medics said, although the intensity of the ground offensive has subsided as Israel steps up its fight with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Palestinian health officials said Wafa Al-Udaini, who wrote articles about the war in English advocating the Palestinian viewpoint, was killed when a missile struck her house in the central city of Deir Al-Balah, also killing her husband and their two children. There has been no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Udaini's death raised the number of Palestinian journalists killed in the Israeli offensive since Oct. 7 to 174, the Hamas-run Gaza government media office said. In another strike, a Palestinian was killed and several were wounded in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, while in the northern town of Beit Hanoun an airstrike killed one man and injured others, medics said. While later on Monday, an Israeli air strike on a house in Nuseirat, one of Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed six people, health officials said.

Some residents said fighting and Israeli military activities in Gaza have declined slightly in the past week as Israel has escalated its military offensive against Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, killing its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in an airstrike on Friday. The group announced Nasrallah's death on Saturday. While the intensity of the ground offensive has been lower, Israel has kept up its airstrikes in the enclave, they added. Hezbollah has been firing rockets into Israel for almost a year, in support of its ally Hamas in Gaza. In the southern Gaza Strip, Israeli authorities released 12 Palestinians, including Khaled Al-Ser, head of the surgery unit at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, medics and Hamas media said. Palestinians freed by Israel have complained of torture and ill-treatment in Israeli jails, charges Israel denies. Israel and Hamas have been fighting since gunmen from the Palestinian militant group stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and capturing about 250 hostages, going by Israeli tallies. Most of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has been displaced by the war, in which more than 41,500 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza health authorities.

confront any Israeli ground invasion of Lebanon, the group's deputy leader Naim Qassem said on Monday in his first public speech since Israeli airstrikes killed its veteran chief Hassan Nasrallah last week. Israel will not achieve its goals, he said.

"We will face any possibility and we are ready if the Israelis decide to enter by land and the resistance forces are ready for a ground engagement," he said in an address from an undisclosed location. He was speaking as Israeli airstrikes on targets in Beirut and elsewhere in Lebanon continued, extending a two-week long wave of attacks that has eliminated several Hezbollah commanders but also killed about 1,000 Lebanese and forced one million to flee their homes, according to the Lebanese

government.

Nasrallah's killing, along with the series of blows against the organization's communications devices and assassination of other senior commanders, constitute the biggest blow to the organization since Iran created it in 1982 to fight Israel. He had built it up into Lebanon's most powerful military and political force, with wide sway across the Middle East. Now Hezbollah faces the challenge of replacing a charismatic, towering leader who was a hero to millions of supporters because he stood up to Israel even though the West branded him a terrorist mastermind. "We will choose a secretary-general for the party at the earliest opportunity...and we will fill the leadership and positions on a permanent basis," Qassem said.

Petrol prices decreased

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday decreased the price of Motor Spirit (MS) Petrol by Rs 2.07 per liter and high speed diesel (HSD) by Rs 3.40 per liter effective from October 1.

The price of MS petrol was fixed at Rs 247.03 per litre as against its existing price of Rs 249.10 per litre, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance. The price of High-Speed Diesel was reduced by Rs 3.40 per litre AND IT would be available at Rs 246.29 per litre as compared to its previous price of Rs 249.69 per litre during the fortnight starting from October 1.

Likewise, the price of Kerosene Oil (SKO) was decreased by Rs 3.57 per liter and it would be available at Rs 154.90 while the price of light Diesel Oil was reduced by Rs1.03 to Rs 140.90 per liter. The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) worked out the consumer prices of petroleum products, based on the price variations in the international market, a news release said.

Re-arrest after bail by CTD KP CM appears before PHC, assures legislation

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim ordered Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur to appear before the court to explain the circumstances surrounding the re-arrest of citizen in front of Peshawar central jail by Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) after bail, on Monday.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Ibrahim questioned the Additional Advocate General regarding the re-arrest, stating, "Once bail is granted, how can someone be arrested again? This is a clear violation of the court's decision", Chief Justice Ishtiaq remarked.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Ajmeer Gul, whose son was re-arrested by Counter-Terrorism Department

(CTD) personnel outside Peshawar Jail despite being granted bail by the court. The court also questioned the SHO concerned if he rearrested the missing man after he secured bail from the court upon which the SHO said he was not responsible for this specific arrest as he was not there at that time.

However, the court said police could not keep itself at distance from such cases and issued summon orders for the Chief Minister before allowing a break in the hearing.

After the break, the Chief Minister KP, Ali Amin Gandapur appeared before the Peshawar High Court (PHC) and said he himself was against such practices. He told the court that the provincial government was going to introduce amendments in the Police Act.

The Chief Justice PHC

Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim also played the video of re-arrest in front of front of Peshawar's jail before Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Chief Minister also assured the court that legislation will be made in the provincial assembly to defy the re-arrest of those securing bail from the courts.

The counsel Muhammad Siraj advocate informed that CTD has re-arrested petitioner's son from the front Peshawar central jail despite honorable court granted bail while argued that the video footage is available of the incident. The Chief Justice PHC Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that everything should be done within the ambit of law. PHC allowed two weeks to the provincial government for legislation in this regard and adjourned further hearing till 21st October.



BEIRUT: Lebanese people, fleeing the Israeli bombardment, at the border crossing in Jdaidet Yabous, Syria.

1.37m viewers watch PM's live address at UNGA

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 1.37 million viewers glued to the UN official YouTube channel to watch Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent address at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 79) which ranked top among the world leaders' speeches streamed live across the globe.

According to the data shared by Center for Public Opinion Research, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address was among the most watched events at the global stage and the number of viewers even surpassed those who watched the speeches of different world leaders.

The prime minister became the most prominent world leader attracting a large number of viewers. The world leaders' addresses were streamed live on the UN official YouTube channel whereas on Al Jazeera's Tiktok account, the prime minister's address was watched live by a total of 1.6 million viewers.

Malaysian PM due tomorrow

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is scheduled to arrive here on Wednesday for a three-day official visit to Pakistan from October 2-4, on the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials, according to a curtain-raiser issued by the Foreign Office. During the visit, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will meet Prime Minister Shehbaz wherein the two sides will discuss a wide-ranging agenda to further strengthen Pakistan-Malaysia ties in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, halal industry, tourism, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

Election tribunals in Punjab SC nullifies LHC's decision

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday nullified the decision of the Lahore High Court (LHC) regarding formation of election tribunals in Punjab.

A five-member bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, announced the reserved verdict. The CJP announced the majority 5-0 verdict in which appeals of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) were accepted. "Not a single judge opposed the verdict, however, Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Aqeel Abbasi wrote additional notes," said the CJP.

He further cautioned against institutional confrontation, adding that the LHC verdict could never be presented as a precedent. It must be noted that the LHC had rejected the ECP's decision of appointing four judges in the election tribunals to which the ECP had approached the apex court. The hearing on the appeal of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the formation of election tribunals in Punjab was held in the

Supreme Court (SC) on Sept 24 last.

A five-member larger bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, heard the case. At the outset of the hearing, petitioner Salman Akram Raja raised objection to CJP Isa's presence on bench. The objection was raised by Raja's lawyer Advocate Hamid Khan. "My lord! we want to submit an application," said Khan. "You are a senior lawyer and I respect you, kindly have a seat, first let the order be read," the CJP replied.

The irate CJP asked Raja to get himself separated from the case if he wanted and asked Attorney General Mansoor Awan to keep reading the order of previous hearing. "We have objections as we don't want you to be part of this bench," Khan objected. "Kindly be seated, we will hear you later," responded CJP.

On this snub from the CJP, Khan left the court room in a huff. During the hearing, ECP's lawyer Sikander Bashir told the court that the Lahore High Court (LHC) chief justice had already established

four tribunals, adding that other four tribunals would be established by the ECP. "It means matter has been settled between the ECP and Chief Justice of the LHC?" asked Justice Aqeel Abbasi.

"Yes, as the law was changed so the new four tribunals would be established by the ECP," replied ECP lawyer Bashir. "The tenure of parliament is five years which cannot be extended. The cases of stay orders also come before the SC. Resolve those matters by yourselves which do not come under the court jurisdiction, I am tired of requesting again and again, look at the constitution what does it say?" remarked CJP Isa.

"The chief justice of the high court is not an ordinary person. Both the ECP and high courts are honourable institutions, the matter of likes and dislikes on the appointment of judges in tribunal should end now," said Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. "I don't know how many cases are pending in Punjab and Balochistan," he added. Later, the apex court reserved the verdict on the ECP's appeal.

PTI founder, Bushra Bibi's bail plea rejected

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A special judge central on Monday rejected the post-arrest bail pleas of former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in Toshakhana-II case.

The pleas were heard by Special Judge Central Shahruck Arjumand at Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi. Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were both present at the special court established inside Adiala Jail. On July 13, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi

were arrested in a fresh National Accountability Bureau (NAB) reference related to Toshakhana, hours after their acquittal in the Iddat case.

The NAB team headed by Deputy Director Mohsin Haroon arrested Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi from the Adiala Jail. The development came after the Islamabad district and sessions court accepted the appeals filed by former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi against their conviction in the Iddat

case. The couple was sentenced to seven years in prison and awarded a fine of Rs500,000 each, in February earlier this year after a trial court found their nikah to be fraudulent.

The verdict clears the last existing legal hurdle keeping the deposed prime minister in jail. His sentences in the two Toshakhana cases were suspended while he was acquitted by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in the cipher case.

Bilawal emphasizes urgent need for judicial reforms

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has emphasized again the urgent need for judicial reforms and the establishment of a constitutional court to ensure swift and impartial justice in the country. He declared that the PPP will not be intimidated by threats from those in black coats or robes when it comes to constitutional amendments.

Addressing the Peoples Lawyers Forum (PLF) in Quetta today, Chairman PPP presented his party's proposed draft for constitutional reforms, which includes the establishment of constitutional courts at the provincial level. He stressed that country's judicial system has failed to deliver justice to the victims of terrorism, with judges unable to secure convictions in 50% of the cases, highlighting the dire need for judicial reforms.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell of Bilawal House, the PPP chairman reiterated his party's clear stance and ideology, which has been carried forward through three generations. "When

something is wrong, we say it's wrong," he said, adding that the country is facing numerous unresolved issues, and while not all of them can be addressed immediately, the PPP will continue to strive for what is achievable based on our principles, manifesto, and the promises made to the people. He added, "Politics is the art of making the impossible possible. Even without holding the office of Prime Minister, I will continue to work for the people."

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also reflected on the political climate in Islamabad, stating that the political battles in the capital often have little to do with Balochistan. Referring to the Charter of Democracy, he recalled that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had promised in 2006 to introduce judicial reforms and establish constitutional courts to ensure swift justice for the people. While landmark achievements such as the 18th Amendment, the NFC Award, and renaming the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were accomplished, judicial reforms remained pending. He stated that the current political environment presents an opportunity to realize this

component of the Charter of Democracy (CoD).

He further mentioned that while the PPP does not have the majority in the National Assembly to pass constitutional amendments on its own, the party will work towards a consensus-based draft that aligns with its manifesto and the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He also expressed confidence that the proposal for establishing constitutional courts was introduced by Shaheed Bibi during the CoD discussions, noting that it was unlikely to have come from Nawaz Sharif.

Chairman PPP called for the reform of the judicial appointment process, stating that the 18th Amendment introduced a procedure whereby the judiciary would make recommendations, but the final decision would be made by a parliamentary committee with equal representation from the government and the opposition. He also emphasized that Pakistan's current judicial system is inadequate in providing justice to the common man, especially in terrorism cases, where the conviction rate is less than 50%.

Chairman PPP expressed optimism that there would be consensus on these reforms, including the proposal to establish constitutional courts not only at the federal level but also at the provincial level, to ensure swift justice. He highlighted that nearly 50% of the cases in high courts pertain to constitutional matters under Article 199, making it essential to have constitutional courts at all levels.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also underscored the importance of revisiting the method for appointing judges, suggesting to return to the approach adopted in the 18th Amendment, where judicial nominations would require the approval of a parliamentary majority. He noted that the PML-N and JUI-F on merging the current judicial committee and parliamentary committee to streamline the process of judicial appointments.

Chairman PPP emphasized the critical role of lawyers in this reform process. He announced plans to engage with bar associations across the country, saying, "We will work within our mandate. It's not just judicial politics now; even judges are

involved in politics, and we must address this together." Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reiterated the need for constitutional courts, reforms at the provincial level, and changes in the judicial appointment process, asserting, "If I am drafting laws and making constitutional amendments, I am doing it based on our party's manifesto and the people's mandate. Only the people have the power to decide whether I am right or wrong." He further said, "It has taken us 50 years to seek justice for Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This time, we will not be intimidated by threats from those in black coats or black robes."

Meanwhile, the Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has emphasized that the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims remain one of his top priorities. He urged the federal and provincial governments to take immediate and concrete steps to address the issues faced by these citizens, who are severely affected by climate change.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP inaugurated the distribution of relief checks to flood vic-

tims at the Chief Minister's House in Quetta. During his address, he reaffirmed his commitment to the welfare and development of the people of Balochistan.

Bilawal highlighted his efforts in 2022 as Foreign Minister to secure international funding for the rehabilitation of flood victims. He stated, "Standing with the Prime Minister, I signed agreements as Foreign Minister before the world. We secured funding for a housing project, which was my initiative that we presented to the World Bank. The aim of this project is to rebuild homes for flood victims in a way that they can withstand the challenges of climate change." Chairman PPP called on both federal and provincial governments to take the issue of climate change and rehabilitation of flood victims seriously. He urged the Chief Minister of Balochistan and his cabinet to monitor the relief and rehabilitation efforts and discuss the matter with the federal government. He further stated that the slow pace of funding for the rehabilitation project is an injustice not only to the flood victims but also to the province.



Child safety centre reunites girl with parents

LAHORE (APP): A 10-year-old abandoned girl was reunited with her parents through the efforts of the Virtual Center for Child Safety. According to details, the girl had come to Lahore to stay with her relatives.

After a disagreement, she left the house and got lost. A citizen found the abandoned girl and immediately called the police helpline at 15.

The Virtual Center for Child Safety, established at Safe City, dispatched police to the location.

The police took the girl into protective custody and started searching for her family. The girl was very distressed and unable to provide her home address. The Virtual Center for Child Safety circulated the girl's pictures and other information to all districts. Police successfully located the girl's parents in the suburban village of Bhakkar.

After verification, the police handed over the girl to her family. In case of missing children or finding abandoned children, call the police helpline at 15 and press 3 to contact the Virtual Center for Child Safety.

LHC penalises 3 judicial officers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday imposed penalties on three judicial officers on various charges, including corruption.

According to a notification, the LHC imposed the major penalty of removal from service on Civil Judge Shazia Parveen after she was found guilty of inefficiency and misconduct.

The LHC also imposed the major penalty of reduction to a lower stage in the pay scale by four stages for a period of three years on Civil Judge Shahbaz Hassan after he was found guilty of misconduct, inefficiency, and corruption.

The major penalty of censure was imposed on Additional District and Sessions Judge Abdullah Usman after he was found guilty of misconduct and inefficiency, it added.

The notification further stated that the action was taken against the officers under the Punjab Civil Servants (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules, 1999, and the penalties were imposed after due process of law.

418 vehicles impounded in crackdown

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza has said that during a crackdown to combat smog, 418 vehicles without fitness certificates were impounded, and fines totaling Rs 3.9 million were imposed on 780 vehicles in September.

In a statement, he said from September 1 to September 30, 2024, Lahore implemented strict measures to prevent smog. Action was also taken against transport owners for overcharging and failing to display fare lists, resulting in a fine of Rs 700,000 and the impounding of 50 vehicles. Permits for 27 vehicles emitting hazardous levels of smoke have been revoked.

In Lahore, fitness checks were conducted on 8,000 vehicles, with 5,000 receiving fitness certificates. Citizens have been urged to report smog and environmental pollution complaints through the Green Punjab App or by calling 1373. A WhatsApp number 0321-0980980 has also been provided for complaints regarding smoke-emitting vehicles.



KARACHI: An overloaded bus with men precariously perched on its roof maneuvers through the busy streets of Korangi, posing a serious risk of a potential mishap in the city. —APP Photo

Mushaal denounces farcical elections in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of jailed senior Hurriyat leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, on Monday strongly rejected the notorious Indian government's stage drama of holding sham elections in the occupied Kashmir and urged the legal fraternity to play their proactive role to expose the Indian fraud at global stage.

Speaking at an event organised by the Islamabad Bar Association titled "Farcical elections in IIOJK and the way forward", she vehemently condemned the sham elections in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and manipulation of demo-

graphic landscapes of the occupied valley by unlawfully issuing a large number of domiciles to settlers.

She denounced that the fascist Indian government deployed additional troops in the occupied valley to terrify and compel people to take part in fake elections.

Mushaal, who is also a Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation, dubbed the farcical elections in IIOJK as a blatant attempt to legitimize India's illegal occupation and suppress the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

Landing the role legal fraternity, the hurriyat leader said that they should fight the Kashmir case at global stage because the Indian brutal troops were

given licence to kill Kashmiri with complete impunity. Mushaal lamented that supermajorist Indian government had already been converted into a garrison city and a killing field but unfortunately, the so-called human rights organizations and UN bodies remained tight-lipped.

She emphasized that the world must recognize the force of these elections and hold India accountable for its human rights abuses and committing war crimes in the valley. Mushaal demanded the release of her husband, Mohammad Yasin Malik, other Kashmiri leaders and youth unjustly imprisoned by Indian authorities.

She called for the United

Nations and international community to intervene and prevent further bloodshed in IIOJK and ensure resolution of Kashmir dispute in accordance with UNSC resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The hurriyat leader reiterated the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, as enshrined in UN Security Council resolutions and vowed that they won't rest until realising their dream of breaking shackles of Indian slavery.

The Chairperson urged that the international community must not turn a blind eye to India's atrocities in IIOJK, adding, "We demand justice, freedom, and self-determination for the Kashmiri people."

3,976 arrested for gambling

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police claimed on Monday to have arrested 3,976 suspects involved in gambling as well as online betting activities besides recovered over Rs 156 million and registered 927 cases against the arrested individuals. A spokesman for the Lahore Police said on Monday that the arrests included 1,305 suspects in the City Division, 859 in the Cantt area, 482 in Civil Lines, 340 in Sadr, 607 in Iqbal Town and 383 in Model Town Division.

CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana emphasized that operations against both physical gambling dens and online betting platforms are ongoing. He instructed police officers to escalate their crackdown, conducting intelligence-based raids on gambling dens. He also called for a tighter net around those involved in the online gambling business and urged the use of information technology to assist in the efforts to eradicate it.

The CCPO highlighted the importance of monitoring social media accounts and applications that promote online gambling, declaring a commitment to bringing those involved in these social evils to justice. He noted that gambling is a societal menace and advised parents to keep a close watch on their children. He encouraged citizens to support police efforts in establishing a crime-free community.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Published Through This Notice That I Haji Sher Muhammad Son of Haji Din Muhammad R/o House no. T-611 Garhi Mawaz Khan Mohallah Khair Abad District Kohat is the owner of Plot no. 148.Sector. D-3. Size.5. Marla Phase(II) KDA Kohat has Appointed has is Mr Faiz Ullah Khan Son of Maaz Ullah Khan R/o House no. 100/C-2. KDA District Kohat through (Special) Deed no. 181 Bahi no. 04 Volume no. 291. Dated 26/04/2024 which is Registered in The Office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar The Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer The Above Siad Plot if any Bank/ Institution/ Firm/Per son has any objection About The Transfer He Should Contact the Housing officer UADA Within 15 Days in Writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will Be Accepted (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

CM Punjab launches 'Honhaar Scholarship Program'

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched the "Honhaar Scholarship Program," fulfilling another commitment to educational advancement.

Registration for this initiative has been officially started. The programme is tailored to address global job market demands, providing scholarships to 30,000 students annually across 68 disciplines.

Eligible candidates include students from 50 public sector universities, 16 medical colleges, and 131 graduate colleges.

Additionally, scholarships will extend to students at prestigious institutions such

as LUMS, FAST, COMSATS, NUST, and the Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute, along with seven other top private universities.

Over the next eight years, the Honhaar Scholarship Program plans to distribute scholarships worth Rs 130 billion, benefiting 120,000 students in the coming four years. Interested students can apply at honhaarscholarship.punjabhec.gov.pk.

The CM said "Thanks to Allah, The Almighty, I have fulfilled another promise made in my first speech." Maryam Nawaz emphasized that this programme will ensure access to quality education for deserving

and talented students. "The Honhaar Scholarship Program will eliminate financial barriers for intelligent students seeking higher education," she said.

The CM highlighted that the initiative aims to fulfill the educational dreams of the youth, enabling them to pursue advanced studies and achieve their aspirations. "We are committed to providing higher education and excellent employment opportunities for young people," she added.

The programme is set to provide substantial financial support, significantly impacting the future of countless students in Punjab.

FIA ordered by LHC to complete Bukhari video probe in 10 days

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday ordered the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) director general to complete the investigation in the Azma Bokhari fake video case within ten days.

LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum passed the orders while hearing a petition filed by Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari, seeking action against those involved in sharing fake pictures and videos of her on social media.

During Monday's proceedings, in response to previous court orders, the FIA DG appeared before the court and stated that an inquiry had been initiated against the investigation officer for submitting inaccurate reports to the court. He assured that the court would be updated upon the conclusion of the inquiry.

The FIA DG further requested additional time to complete the investigation of the fake video case, stat-

ing that two to three weeks would be needed.

However, the court instructed that the investigation must be completed within ten days. The court also asked for a report on the legal status of the social media platform 'X' operating in Pakistan. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing until October 11.

Social media platforms must be regulated: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that social media platforms are making money in Pakistan but are not accountable to anyone. She emphasized that if social media apps cannot be regulated, they should be shut down.

She noted that social media is being regulated in the whole world except Pakistan. Speaking to the media during her appearance at the Lahore High Court,

she said, "Despite my two to three months of struggle, I still have not received any relief. FIA officials come and complain that they cannot question social media apps due to lack of capacity. This highlights the state of social media in Pakistan, where everyone is free and unaccountable."

She remarked that KP House had become a stronghold of terrorists, where people commit crime and live without fear, challenging the writ of the state. "It is unacceptable to defame someone without any accountability," she added.

Azma Bokhari said that PTI's propaganda cell operates from abroad. She mentioned the difficulty of discussing fake videos and expressed her frustration over the inability to remove fake content from social media apps. "I have come here to seek justice. Discussing fake videos is very challenging and painful for me," she concluded.

IGP pins new ranks to 55 promoted inspectors

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar on Monday said that the Punjab Police will never allow terrorists, criminals and those who deviate from the Constitution to succeed.

He shared these thoughts during a ceremony at the Central Police Office, where he addressed officers who were promoted from Sub-Inspector to Inspector.

The IG Punjab vowed that the blood of police martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for the country and the nation, will be avenged. He further stated that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has increased the amount allocated for the purchase of homes for police martyrs to 5 million rupees per

house, and an allowance of Rs. 25,000 has been approved for personnel on duty in the Kacha area.

Dr. Usman Anwar mentioned that all new police stations will be completed within the current financial year, and border check posts have been strengthened with modern infrastructure and logistics.

He announced that Smart Safe Cities will be operational in 18 cities of Punjab by December 31, and across the entire province by June 30 next year. He also mentioned that the scope of the Safe Cities project will be expanded to 140 tehsils in Punjab.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar
Case No: 135/1 of 2024 Date of hearing: 31-10-2024 Suit for the Recovery of Rs.973437/- Zaral Taraqati Bank Ltd Through Manager Kohat branch Vs: Muhammad Umer. **Notice Versus:-** Muhammad Umer son of Abdul Khaliq R/o: Village Talkan, Post Office Naklard, Tehsil and district kohat. Other Address:- Teacher, Middle School Khushal Garh, district kohat. where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.973437/- Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff with costs. Issue on 21-09-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar | Banking Court-1 Peshawar

ADMISSION NOTICE FALL 2024

Applications are invited on prescribed admission form for Post RN BScN (02 Years) and Post Basic Diploma in Nursing Specialties (01 Year) Programs.

Eligibility Criteria for each program are given as under;

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR POST RN BScN (02 YEARS) PROGRAM

01. Matric with science (including biology) as per the HEC requirements from 2016 onwards.
 02. Diploma in General Nursing
 03. Diploma in Midwifery (any Post Basic Specialty for male in lieu of midwifery).
 04. Valid registration with Pakistan Nursing Council.
 05. Age limits 19-50 years at the time of closing date of applications (in case of overage applicants, they will have to provide age relaxation certificate).
 06. Experience: As per PNC criteria
 07. Domicile Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- > Merit will be calculated on:**
50% Marks to internal entry test + 25% to General Nursing Diploma + 25% to midwifery diploma for female (any specialty diploma for male in lieu of midwifery).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR POST BASIC DIPLOMA IN NURSING SPECIALTY (01 YEAR) IN ICU, CCU, PEDIATRIC, MENTAL HEALTH AND OPERATION THEATRE

01. Diploma in General Nursing (Verified from concerned Nursing Examination Board).
 02. Valid registration of General Nursing Diploma with Pakistan Nursing Council.
 03. Age limits 19-45 years at the time of closing date of applications.
 04. Domicile Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- > Merit will be calculated on:**
50% Marks to internal entry test + 50% to General Nursing Diploma (03 Years) registered with PNC.

HOW TO APPLY

01. Admission prescribed form will be available at PGCN Hayatabad or download the application form at PHSA website www.phsa.edu.pk from 30/09/2024.
02. The fee slip (Rs. 1000/-) attached with the admission form shall be deposited at any branch of National Bank of Pakistan. The filled form along with fee deposit slip will be submitted at the office of PGCN Hayatabad Peshawar during official timings (08:00 AM to 02:30 PM).
03. Applicants must provide attested copies of all required documents along with DMCS.
04. In-service applicants shall apply through proper channel and will provide NOC from Director General Health Services; Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/ Incharge/ concerned authority of MTI and private sector. The advance copy of the admission form will be acceptable for admission process only.
05. The last date for submission forms to PGCN office is 31/10/2024.
06. For prospectus, admission detail plan, entry test and interview dates please visit given website of PHSA www.phsa.edu.pk frequently.

PRINCIPAL

POSTGRADUATE COLLEGE OF NURSING (PGCN) HAYATABAD PESHAWAR
Allied Institute of Provincial Health Services Academy (PHSA) Health Department
Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Phase-5, Sector B-2, Hayatabad, Peshawar. Phone: 091-9217370

INF(P) 2555/24

Commissioner reviews traffic situation, encroachments, air quality

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood, during a meeting at his office on Monday, thoroughly assessed the current situation regarding traffic congestion, encroachments, and air quality data in the city.

During the meeting, he discussed various factors contributing to traffic delays and the impact of encroachments on road safety and accessibility. It was reported that pilot proj-

ects have been launched at 13 locations in the city, including Data Darbar, Urdu Bazaar, Sabzi Mandi, Ramgarh, Abid Market, Kotburi, Railway Station, Chutwali, Nawar Kot, Green Town, Kahna Bazaar, and Bhata Chowk.

The commissioner stated that personnel at these camps would work according to specified schedules. He instructed the Lepark company to conduct a survey for parking solutions near the

camp areas and propose alternative parking options. Traffic police officers will be present at each camp as per the designated schedule.

These personnel are tasked with addressing traffic disruptions and removing encroachments from roads and intersections. The Environmental Department will monitor air quality at various times in these locations. The camps are part of a pilot project aimed at analyzing

air quality data to develop a long-term strategy.

A training session has been conducted for the officers assigned to the pilot camps to ensure they understand their responsibilities. The commissioner emphasized that the camps would be regularly checked by relevant Assistant Commissioners and officials, and the performance of the personnel would be monitored through unannounced inspections.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mahsud chairing a meeting on dengue prevention.

Commissioner Peshawar chairs meeting on dengue prevention

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Divisional Oversight Committee on Dengue Prevention was held under Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mahsud's chairmanship. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, District Health Officers, officials from the Water and Sanitation Services (WSSP), municipal officers, and other relevant administrative officials from the five districts of Peshawar Division, including Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, the Tribal District Mohmand, and Khyber District.

During the meeting, Commissioner Riaz Khan Mahsud was briefed in detail about the dengue situation and the preventive measures in all five districts of Peshawar Division. Based on these updates, key decisions were made.

Commissioner Riaz Khan Mahsud announced his involvement in field operations. He directed all Deputy Commissioners and District Health Officers of the division's five districts to immediately implement the Dengue Action Plan 2024.

He issued orders for effective action within 72 hours, instructing that anti-

dengue sprays and other preventive measures be carried out in three shifts daily. Additionally, he directed that hospitals allocate more beds for dengue patients and emphasized the use of community spaces, such as mosques and Hujras for public awareness campaigns.

The Commissioner further announced that field operations would begin under his supervision the following day, and he warned of strict disciplinary actions in case of negligence.

Noting reports of patients being given antibiotics instead of proper dengue treatment, he took

serious notice and ordered the complete elimination of unqualified doctors across all five districts of Peshawar Division.

Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Mahsud instructed that immediately following the session, all Deputy Commissioners should convene meetings in their respective districts to accelerate the implementation of the Dengue Action Plan.

He stressed the importance of strengthening coordination and utilizing all available resources. He also directed that daily reports be submitted to the Peshawar Division Commissioner's Office.

Development, prosperity sans education not possible: Meena Khan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa minister for higher education Meena Khan Afridi has said that the development and prosperity without getting education is mere a dream, adding that education is necessary for a nation to make place in the rank of developed countries.

The provincial minister expressed these views as a chief guest in a certificate and award distribution ceremony held at Beaconhouse School System, Frontier Campus for Boys.

The ceremony was organized to honor the outstanding performance, dedication, and hard work of students during the academic session 2023-2024.

Headmistress, Nargis Iqbal, Saadia Yousaf, students and their parents participated in the ceremony.

The KP higher education minister distributed

awards and certificates among the students recognized across several categories, including top two overall positions in their respective classes.

Subject-wise first positions for exceptional performance. Regularity awards for consistent attendance. Awards for best behavior and notable academic improvement. In addition, students who secured academic scholarships were awarded certificates of honor. To recognize the efforts of the faculty, certificates of recognition were also presented to teachers whose students excelled in the Cambridge International Examinations (CAIE), bringing laureates to the proctor awards two students were awarded the best proctor award in recognition of their leadership and contribution to maintaining discipline and supporting the school community during the session.

The theme for this year's conference, "Research Culture - Bridging the Gap between Classrooms and Clinical Pathways," will highlight the critical connection between academic research and practical healthcare applications.

Election Tribunal adjourns hearing F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Election Tribunal has adjourned hearing on petitions challenging election results till 14th October and ordered submission of response from respondents, on Monday.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders Kamran Bangash, Mahmoud Jan, Arbab Jandad, Malik Shahab, Muhammad Asim, and Sajid Nawaz has challenged election results held on 8th February while Election Tribunal Judge Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard the pleas.

The counsel Ali Gohar Durrani advocate for Kamran Bangash and Mahmood Jan informed the tribunal that they have submitted their response. Arbab Asim, Malik Shahab, and Sajid Nawaz also submitted responses, but files not yet received.

Election Tribunal Judge Justice Shaukat Ahmed directed parties to submit responses and adjourned further hearing till 14th October.

Int'l KMC Research Conference from Oct 2 F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The highly anticipated 3rd International KMC Research Conference (KMCIRC), organized by Khyber Medical College, is set to take place on 2nd and 3rd October 2024 in Peshawar.

This landmark event marks a significant milestone in the research and development of the health sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, drawing experts, researchers, educators, and students from across Pakistan and around the globe.

Preparations for the conference are in full swing under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Mahmood Aurangzeb, Dean of Khyber Medical College, with Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmed serving as the Chairman, and Associate Prof. Dr. Iqbal Haider as the key organizer.

The theme for this year's conference, "Research Culture - Bridging the Gap between Classrooms and Clinical Pathways," will highlight the critical connection between academic research and practical healthcare applications.

The conference will feature a wide range of activities including scientific sessions, workshops, poster presentations, and panel discussions.

SCCI Elections The Frontier Post awarded for best coverage

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Monday conferred an award to *The Frontier Post* newspaper for best coverage of 2024 elections of Chamber of Commerce in Peshawar.

The award was received by Mr. Rizwan Ullah, senior sub-editor, on behalf of *The Frontier Post* newspaper after he was invited to chamber by members of the cabinet. President of SCCI Fuad Ishaq, Vice President Ejaz Khan Afridi and other members of the chamber were also in attendance on the occasion.

President and vice president SCCI applauded *The Frontier Post* newspaper for its excellent role and coverage to elections activities of the chamber and its unbiased reporting on polls. They said the newspaper has long been working for the uplift and prosperity of the people of the province



and hope the efforts in future will remain continue.

Mr. Rizwan Ullah thanked the SCCI for awarding the newspaper

and hoped the newly elected team will work in letter and spirit for the betterment of business community.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan, Prof. Dr. Bashir Alam, Prof. Dr. Amjad take charge as deans UET Peshawar



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In pursuance of the notification issued by the Higher Education Archives and Library Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the approval of Honorable Governor/Chancellor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prof. Dr. Rizwan Mahmood Gul has been appointed as Dean, Faculty of Mechanical, Chemical and Industrial Engineering (MCI), Prof. Dr. Bashir Alam, as Dean, Faculty of Civil Agricultural and Mining Engineering (CAM) and Prof. Dr. Amjad Ali as Dean, Faculty of Architecture, Allied Sciences and

Humanities (AASH), UET Peshawar for a period of three years or till their retirement.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan M. Gul, Dean MCI completed his Master's in Mechanical Engineering in 1994 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA.

He also completed his Ph.D in Mechanical Engineering from MIT, USA in 1997 and became Professor at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, UET Peshawar in 2008. Prof. Dr. Bashir Alam, Dean CAM did his Master's in Civil Engineering in 1996 from UET Peshawar while he completed his Ph.D in Civil Engineering from George Washington, USA

in 2006 and became Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering, UET Peshawar in 2013.

Prof. Dr. Amjad Ali, Dean AASH did his Master's in Mathematics from University of Peshawar in 1990 while he completed his MS/MPhil in 2006 from Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIKI) Swabi in 2006.

Dr. Amjad Ali completed his Ph.D in Mathematics from Faculty of Engineering Sciences, GIKI in 2009 and became Professor at the Department of Basic Sciences and Islamiat, UET Peshawar in 2013.



PESHAWAR: A man crafts traditional Rabab instruments at their workshop in the historic Dabgari area. — APP photo

PHC grants bail to four Afghan minors in alleged gold smuggling Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A single member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ijaz Anwar granted bails to four Afghan minors in alleged gold smuggling case. According to prosecution Frontier Constabulary and Pakistan Customs had recovered 1227 grams gold from four Afghan minors named Aysha, Asima, Faheema and Faheem at Pak-Afghan border.

The counsel Shahid Raza Khan and Muhammad Bilal Daudzai advocates argued that the allegations need further probes as the case is full of doubts as no corroborative or direct evidence could be brought on record by boarder authorities including Customs department against the petitioners named Aysha, Asima, Faheema and Faheem residents of Afghanistan. Furthermore, Shahid Raza Khan advocate argued the court as the relevant enactments extents tremendous concessions to the accused petitioners inter alia sec 82 & 83 of Pakistan Penal Code 1860 is based on "Doli Incapax" incapable of understanding write or wrong, as provided nothing is an offence which is done by a child under ten years of age.

He argued that all the accused are underage. The counsel argued that "Law is not to be stretched in favour of prosecution, nor bail should be denied as a punishment and in case of further inquiry bail is to be granted as a matter of right not by way of any concession.

Green Pakistan initiative turns country land of migratory birds

PESHAWAR (APP): Renowned for its rich biodiversity, Pakistan stands as an important country for conservation of wildlife and migratory birds, particularly its wetlands, which serve as vital breeding and resting grounds to thrive.

The enlargement of forestry cover and wildlife habitats developed under green Pakistan initiative has made the country a home to wildlife and migratory birds especially of covered houbara migrating in large number during winter season.

Known as land of Markhor, Pakistan's wetlands provide complete breeding ground for migratory birds mostly arriving from the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Siberia owing to an enlargement of forestry cover, wildlife habitats and increase of jungles with an abundance of weeds, insects and plants raised in all four provinces under the Green Pakistan Programme.

Lies at the crossroads for birds migration, Pakistan's wetlands, arid and semi arid areas draw influx of migratory birds, including houbara, cranes, geese and ducks mostly from freezing Siberia, the CARs and even Europe during harsh winter season owing to substantial enhancement in their forest and wildlife habitats, said Dr Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, former Wildlife Department's KP Chief.

"These birds mostly arrive through the international migration route known as the Indus Flyway (IF), from Siberia and the CARs by passing through Karakoram, Hindukush, and Suleiman ranges along the Indus River via KP to downwards Sindh coastal areas," said Dr Mumtaz Malik while talking to APP.

He said houbara population mostly arrive Pakistan in October-December due to limited resources of food in the freezing CARs and returns in March-April to their native areas.

Besides wetlands, he said the desert plains of Punjab, Sindh, KP and Balochistan are the houbara, ducks, geese and cranes' wintering habitats where sufficient food is available for their natural breeding.

Houbara's flocks mostly land in Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and DI Khan in KP, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Cholistan in Punjab, Tharparkar Sindh and Balochistan, he said, adding that they eat insects, wild fruits, small reptiles and twigs.

Dr Mumtaz said houbara is very sensitive bird and it does not use the route again if they sense any danger on their way during the first journey, adding the bird move quickly as it takes only few days to reach Pakistan.

"The weather determines the exact timing of travel as the large bird has to avoid harsh weather and snowfall in flights," he added.

"The population travels in groups having a chieftain and once they loses their chieftain, the deputy guides the group to reach its destination."

The wildlife expert said houbara can't stay in severe coldness and Pakistan's climate is ideally suitable for them during winter for breeding, adding in case a houbara loses its mate, the endangered species takes three to five years to find a new one.

Dr Mumtaz pointed out that one of the reasons of houbara decrease is the rivalry between its newborn. "The sibling hatching first usually kills the other," and it lays only two eggs in life.

He said artificial breeding is being carried out in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Morocco under extremely controlled condition, and that it is very expensive.

Since all migratory species are hunted especially ducks every year in the range states including Pakistan, he said, the popu-

lation of some duck species, including white-eyed pochard, marbled teal and garganey has decreased. He said that short preservation videos on digital media can help create awareness among communities towards their preservation.

Cranes, because of his size, beauty, unique calls, and complex behaviour are also hunted and trapped during migration in substantial numbers mostly due to non implementation of laws.

Dr Mumtaz maintained that climate change has endangered about 90 different wildlife species, including Siberian crane, white backed vulture, long-billed vulture, red-headed vulture, saker and peregrine falcons and hawksbill sea turtle.

Kashmir's gray langur, Indus dolphin, finback whale, Balochistan bear, musk deer, hog deer, pangolin, Egyptian vulture, green turtle and narrow-headed turtle were also

endangered by the climate change induced weather patterns, he added.

He further informed that around 786 wildlife species found in Pakistan, including 186 reptiles and 173 mammals, and that about 90 species including 50 mammals, 27 birds and 17 reptiles were placed in categories of endangered, vulnerable and near to extinction.

To a question about the role of NGOs on preservation and protection of endangered species, including houbara, Dr Mumtaz said the enthusiasm of NGOs interested in preservation of the endangered species has been on the decline side with the passage of time.

Any campaign is bound to fail unless it enjoys the support of community, civil society and underscoring the need for community involvement through financial, and other incentives for preservation and protection of all endangered migratory birds.

Gulzar Rehman, former Forest Conservator KP said with enlarging forest cover, the arrival's frequency of migratory birds has increased manifolds in Pakistan, especially in KP.

He said over 10 new jungles, including Ghari Chandan, Peshawar was raised in KP which provided breeding grounds for wildlife and migratory birds.

Under wildlife biodiversity act 2015, about three new national parks, including Nizampur Nowshera, Malakandi and Kamalban Manshera, six conservancies at Mankyal and Kalam Swat, Turchtor Koh Chitral, Kumrat Dir Upper, Dir Kohistan and Kohisulaman DI Khan, six game reserves at Gujar Banar, Mandor Swat, Dilan Hangu, Haryan Kot M a l a k a n d, Kamatmekhaillaki Lakki Marwat and Cheena Gul Hangu, and four sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) at Bar Qalabaish Banar Swat, Mangal Thana

and Malaka e Maha Banar Buner and Minkyal Haripur were established.

As a result, KP's wildlife protected area that was only 10.22 percent prior to 2018, was increased to 15.61 percent in 2022.

A huge amount were collected under trophy hunting program, including regulated hunting of Markhor and Ibex besides partridges hunting and issuance of wildlife licenses for hunting of small animals under the wildlife laws.

Moreover, under the KP zoological gardens and bio safety reserve rules 2021, fee of small arms shooting permit were increased from Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000.

Continuous awareness among communities and public were essential through digital media platforms on constant basis to discourage hunting of migratory birds and wildlife besides protecting the key resources for benefits of future generation.



In brief

Brother kills sister in Swabi F.P. Report

SWABI: A youth shot dead his sister for uploading her video on TikTok in Moza Tor Dher area of Swabi, police informed on Monday. Police said the accused who has been arrested by the Tor Dher police has confessed to killing his sister who uploaded her video on TikTok. The accused told the police that area people were pointing fingers at him after her sister's video went viral. Tor Dher police said a case has been registered against the accused and search for his three other accomplices was underway.

VC annoys over cleanliness F.P. Report

BANNU: Vice Chancellor University of Bannu paid surprise visit to various departments and annoyed lack of cleaning arrangements and the absence of officials, on Monday. According to the details issued by the directive, the vice-chancellor of the University of Benin, Professor Dr. Aurangzeb Khan, along with the officers and heads of the relevant departments, suddenly visited various departments. Rome saw and began cleaning the site with a broom, which the current officers with the vice chancellor were surprised. He directed the university officers to take immediate action wherever there are problems and problems faced by the students. If no action is taken, the most severe action will be taken. They announced curfews in all departments and campuses and took immediate action on any issues He said that providing students with the best facilities for higher education is part of our priorities, and we will not tolerate any shortcoming.

Mother poisons two daughters F.P. Report

TOB TEK SINGH: A woman poisoned his two daughters to death over domestic disputes here on Monday. Police arrested the accused. According to details, Amina Bibi hailing from suburban village of teshil Pir Mahal of district Toba Tek Singh exchanged hot words with husband over domestic issues. The infuriated woman served poisoned milk to her daughters due to which condition of 13-year-old Anam and 8-year-old Misbah deteriorated. The two girls were rushed to hospital in critical condition where they expired during treatment. The police arrested Amina Bibi and after registering a case against started investigations.

3 bandits killed in encounter

RAHIM YAR KHAN (INP): Three bandits killed in an encounter in Bhong area here who were wanted in killing of policemen, District Police Officer said on Monday. DPO Rahim Yar Khan, Rizwan Gondal, has said that no kidnapping reported from the district, four men were taken hostage by bandits with honey-trap in katcha area, police officer said. He said the RYK police devising a joint strategy with Ghotki district police of Sindh. "Bandit gangs have not been in Rahim Yar Khan but all of them have been in Sindh's katcha area," DPO claimed. DPO asked suspected bandit Shahid Lond to surrender if he is innocent. It is to be mentioned here that at least 12 policemen were killed, and seven others were injured in an attack on two police vehicles by dacoits in Rahim Yar Khan's katcha area.

Traders, vendors agree for voluntary end to encroachments

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The anti-encroachment operation in Takhtbhai on Malakand road suspended after successful negotiation of Chairman Tehsil Hafiz Muhammad Saeed efforts with Assistant Commissioner, on Monday.

According to Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, the district administration had announced an operation to remove all encroachments from Jhandai to Shergarh along the Malakand Road, but it was postponed after the negotiation. The traders' community and vendors in Takhtbhai, Jalala and Shergarh markets have agreed to voluntarily determine their boundaries and remove existing encroachments.

Tehsil Chairman emphasized that the administration does not intend to leave anyone jobless or harm businesses, but the encroachments on the road are causing severe difficulties for traffic and pedestrians, which must be addressed. He assured that he will always defend the people of the area and work to find solutions to problems like encroachments through mutual consent.

WSSCM distributed laptops among internees: A ceremony held for distribution of laptops among fresh graduates who are appointed for internships in various departments of Water and Sanitation

Services Company Mardan (WSSCM). The ceremony was held at WSSCM Head office, Chairman Board of Directors (BoD) Engineer Adil Nawaz and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Shahid Khan distributed seven laptops among female interns. The Laptops were distributed under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP).

It is worth mentioning that 'Fresh Graduates Internship Program' has been launched in Mardan with the cooperation of the Asian Development Bank under KPCIP. Encouraging female internees to acquire practical expertise in the field of Water & Sanitation. They added, WSSCM is striving to promote females and to improve their performance in their respective fields. Chief Engineer Cities Implementation Unit Mardan Imran Zaman, Deputy General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Chief Financial Officer Naveed Akhtar and Gender Coordinator Sadia Umar attended the event.

HEC approves BKMC research journal: The Bacha Khan Medical College (BKMC) achieved another feat as the Higher Education Commission (HEC) formally granted recognition to its research journal of Bach Khan Medical College (JBKMC). The recognition to JBKMC was confirmed by the council in a list of National

Research journals issued by the HEC. Prof Dr Muhammad Said, who is now the Medical Director of JMC, congratulated the journal's board and faculty on the achievement.

He termed the recognition of the journal a big achievement. He attributed the development to the efforts of the Editorial Board of JBKMC and college management in general while that of Dean/CEO MTI BKMC/MMC Prof Dr Amjad Ali and Librarian Muhammad Yousuf in particular. He said that Prof Dr Amjad Ali, Librarian Muhammad Yousuf, Hazrat Bilal and Information Technology Center MMC enormous efforts paved the way for the recognition of the journal. He said that by the recognition of the JBKMC, the dream of Exp. principal and Chief Executive BKMC Prof Dr Zia ul Islam has come true.

He said that JBKMC is aimed at communicating medical information to physicians and other health professionals to provide them the necessary guidance and information in treatment of diseases and invent new/method and medicines to serve the ailing humanity. He said that the recognition will not only have far reaching positive impacts on the institution's progress but also enhancing quality of research which will eventually result in improvement of healthcare services in the hospital.

Three die in Kohistan accident F.P. Report

KOHOSTAN: At least three people lost their lives when their car fell into a deep gorge on Karakoram Highway in Lower Kohistan on Monday morning.

According to Rescue 1122, the ill-fated vehicle on the way to Gilgit from Bajaur when reached near Khokiyal Jijal in Lower Kohistan, fell into a deep gorge after its driver lost control over the vehicle due to slippery road conditions.

Soon after receiving information, the team of Rescue 1122 reached the site and started its operation. Local people also joined the rescue activity and after some efforts, the dead bodies of three people were retrieved from the car's wreckage. The bodies were later shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Patan for medico legal procedure. Police said all the three people belonged to Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The dead were identified as Hayat Muhammad, son of Rehman Sayyed, Amanullah, son of Abdul Haq and Qari Abdul Majid, son of Abdur Rehman.

One killed in Takht Bhai F.P. Report

TAKHT BHAI: A youth was shot dead in Takht Bhai tehsil of Mardan district after a petty altercation with the accused on Monday.

Police said the deceased named Yahya, a resident of Ganjai, Takhtbhai argued with the accused, identified as Usama, son of Mumtaz over a petty issue. Following the altercation, Usama Shot Yahya dead. The accused managed to flee the scene after committing the murder. Takht Bhai police on the complaint of the brother of the deceased Abu Huraira, have registered a case under section 302/34 and started investigation to arrest the accused.

Man dies in mishap F.P. Report

MINGORA: A man died while two people were injured when a vehicle plunged into a gorge here on Monday, police said.

According to details, the accident took place on Malam Jabba road of Swat where a vehicle skidded off road and fell into a ravine. The accident resulted in death of a man on the spot besides leaving two others seriously injured. The police and local people through joint efforts pulled out the body, injured from gorge and shifted them to local hospital.

Man shot dead F.P. Report

TANK: Armed men gunned down one personal enemy here on Monday and escaped the scene, police said.

The incident took place near village Gul Imam at Tank Pezu road where culprits sprayed bullets on their rival killing him on the spot.

Clearance agents, disapprove get-in, new policy at Torkham



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Clearance agents, Torkham rejected get-in, new clearing policy of custom on export and demanded of resuming previous clearing procedure at the crossing. However import and transit were exempted from the new policy, clearing agents said. Under the auspices of the All Torkham Custom Clearing Agents Association (ATCCAA), a protest rally of clearing agents, Torkham was held at Michni check post on Monday. The protestors while carrying black flags chanted slogans against the implementation of new clearing rules and declared it anti-trading policy of the

custom department.

Addressing on the occasion Chairman ATCCAA, former President of the Association Aimal Shinwari and others said that the custom directed them to receive gate—in certificate, without prior conducting of scanner and scale of the import loaded vehicle. If a contraband item was detected in the truck, coming from across the border, who would be responsible, they questioned.

They blamed that the concerned authorities on the pretext of declaring Michni checkpoint as the gate-in point of the export terminal deliberately created hurdles to suffer export. They asked the custom department to resume the

last course of action in the best interest of clearing agents as well as to enhance export to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

They threatened that until restoration of the previous procedure, they boycotted the clearing process at Torkham border. According to the custom official, (Enforcement section) in Torkham said that as per fresh policy, the get-in certificate is a must to obtain prior of scanning and scale of the export loaded vehicle. It is to be mentioned here that in 2014-15 Pakistan export volume at Torkham was approximately 1.5 billion dollars that was reduced to 969.04 million dollars in 2023.

Special persons hold protest in Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Swat Disabled Persons Forum arranged protest demonstration at Swat Press Club for implementation of Acts of parliament ensuring their rights in true its spirit to assure community's welfare, on Monday.

Swat Disabled Forum president Ghulam Ahad expressed concerns that provincial and national assembly bills have not been implemented. "Our hopes are dying," he said, citing repeated unheeded pleas. He seeks constitutional and legal rights protection.

The president emphasized the need for monthly stipends for non-working



individuals and business opportunities for capable ones.

Educated special persons should receive jobs matching their qualifications, Ahad added. He also demanded a 10% job quota increase and inclusion in the Benazir Income Support Program.

Pakistan Baitul-Mal Swat's delayed funds, totaling 30,000 rupees annually, remain unpaid. The social welfare department must

address the issue. We've been contacting the government for years, but our pleas have fallen on deaf ears, said a community leader.

It's time for the provincial and federal governments to uphold our constitutional and legal rights. The community demands immediate action, seeking restoration of their fund and fulfillment of guaranteed rights, Swat disable Forum demanded.

Life in Kurram badly disrupts due to roads closure

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: In the wake of armed skirmishes between rival tribes that started over the ownership of a piece of land in Kurram district, the main Parachinar-Thall Road remained closed for the ninth consecutive day, causing severe disruption in daily life routine where a shortage of edibles, petroleum and medicines has further added to the miseries of locals.

The main road closure has aggravated the situation in the area as according to local people, those going abroad or other big cities' hospitals and for interviews of Public Service Commission have been stranded bearing finan-

cial losses and jeopardizing their career.

The locals also decry shortage of edibles, petroleum products and medicines in the district due to the closure of main Thall-Parachinar Road. They said though educational institutions in the district have been reopened however, due to petrol and diesel shortage, the students and teaching staff were unable to reach their destinations. The government employees were also confined in the district as no transport facility was there to take them to their offices in other districts.

The local markets and bazaars were giving a desert-

look as a state of fear still prevailed in the area and people were reluctant to go out of their homes. The area farmers were also faced with a difficult situation, saying that they were facing huge financial losses as their products could not reach the main markets due to the road closure. The local vegetables and fruits were being sold at the lowest price in the district.

Police said armed clashes between the rival tribes in the district caused closure of main Parachinar-Peshawar Road and other link roads adding that to avert recurrence of any clash the road was closed for the ninth consecutive day.

Three family members die in Sanghar road mishap

SANGHAR (INP): Three including a couple and their child died after an over speeding hit a motorcycle here on Monday, police said.

According to details, the incident took place

near Khipro area of district Sanghar where a reckless driven vehicle knocked down a motorcycle carrying three family members.

All motorcycle riders including husband, wife

and a child died on the spot in the mishap and driver responsible for accident fled the scene. Bodies of the deceased hailing from suburban village Warhian were shifted to hospital for postmortem.

GHS Karnal Sher Killi 1974 batch meet after 49 years

F.P. Report

SWABI: It was surprising and emotional on the grounds as around 32 former students of Class 10th from Government High School Nawan Killi, now called as Captain Karnal Sher Khan village have held first ever get together after 49 years. Almost of them not were not only gray-haired but even turned-palmed and grand-pa's. Only a few of them were as they remained during school period 1972-75.

However, it was an occasion of happiness and surprising when no one was able to control their emotions. Credit goes to no other than Engineer Saeed Ul Zaman who belong to village Serai, a small town on main Swabi Mardan Road and connecting two biggest tribes Razar and Omerkhel with each others who with help of Social Media (WhatsApp) made assembled almost 35 students who have completed their 10th grade in 1975. Later he was joined in this successful move by Ilham Ud Din and Fazal Malik of village Rashakai Swabi and Shams Ur Rahman from village Totalai of Buner.

In a period of around one and half a month, the strengthen of Whatsapp group (Session 1973-

75 Government High School raised to over 40). The group is now comprising students of both Sections A and B who remain fellows and mats from 1973 till 1975. On such grounds, majority of them assembled in a brief but most impressive and historical gathering in a Restaurant at Swabi Interchange (also called as Ambar) on Sunday.

All of them went surprising and emotional upon introductions with each other. Besides moderator and convener Saeed Ul Zaman, who had served as Class Monitor of Section B, Ahmad Saeed from village Turlandi was also found same young, smart, health and clean-shaved when he arrived. Engineer Saeed Ul Zaman after spending 25 years of his life in Saudi Arabia, now settled in Islamabad. Ahmad Saeed had served Section A as its monitor. Ahmad Saeed had served Banking sector and couple of years retired at a very prestigious position.

Soft speaking Khan Hussain of village Hamza Dher is now a practicing law in Swabi and Mardan. Most interesting was Faqir Zaman who have gown and maintained beard on face like of late Urdu Teacher Rajab Khan Ustad of village Kalu Khan. Abdul Dayan from village

Asota Sharif had served Police Intelligence Squads in Karachi and now his almost children (over one dozen) are in European world. Subhan Ullah who was made disheartened by tough and worm weather of Dera Ismael Khan, now retired as Post Master from Pakistan Post and now living in home town Nawan Killi. Subhan had got admission in journalism department Gomal University Dera Ismael Khan but made worried by warm and tough weather, thus leaving behind his belongings and didn't returned after spring vacations.

Sardar Ghani returned as Educationist like of Pro. Zubair. Muhammad Iqbal Khan of village Managi had served Pakistan International Air Lines. Poet Fazal Yazdan from village Taraki has served the Education Department. Similar was the status of Sher Ali Khan who belong to same village Rashakai like of Faqir Zaman, Fazal Malik. Shams Ur Rahman from Totalai had served Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Health Engineering department and still eyeing on "earning" as he working with a firm from Saudi Arab on contract basis. Jehan Afzal from village Taraki had served armed forces and got retirement as a Major. Muhammad Shamim



commonly known as Shamim Shahid in Media world, has told mats and fellows that like Advocate Khan Hussain, he is still on job after serving different media organs in different positions in last 40 years.

Irfan Khattak from village Terri of district Karak has earned too much appreciations when he had joined the friends after a long distance of around 250 kilometers (from one side). Khattak's father was employee in Municipal Committee Nawankili, therefore, he along with cousin Javed Khattak got education from Nawan Killi. Khattak now calling as Irfan Ghuryazai had served Local Government as XEN and he is

more attractive for his comedies and friendships.

Sarandaz from village Serai, Siraj Ud Din from Charbagh Bachayee, Mohammad Iqbal from Tarakai and others have also shared old memories and experiences with friends and fellows. The mats and fellows brief but impressive get together was commenced with prayers for the souls of late teachers and fellows. During over four hours sitting, all late teachers like Head Master Muhammad Junaid Khan, Match Teacher Hussain Ahmad, Science Teacher Muhammad Hayat Khan, Urdu Teach Rajab Khan, History Teacher Abdul Baqi, Physiology Hygiene Teacher Muhammad Yaqoob Khan (

father of Prof. Dr Yaseen Iqbal who served Peshawar University in prestigious academic and administrative positions) Fazal Akbar, Noor Jamal and others. Similarly mats have also prayed for the souls of late mats like Faiz Ur Rahman of Totalai, Roshan Khan of Charbagh, Qamar Zaman, Muhammaf Fazil Khan, Rashid Bacha and others.

Coordinator Engineer Saeed Ul Zaman in his concluding remarks thanked all friends and fellows for gracing the occasion and meeting each others. Four members committee announced that next meeting will be held on December 29th next and venue and timing will be announced later on.



Le Pen’s future in balance as French far-right officials go on trial

PARIS (AP): The stakes are high for Marine Le Pen as she and other officials from the French far-right party National Rally go on trial Monday over accusations of embezzling European Union funds. The case has the potential to derail her political ambitions.

The nine-week trial will be closely watched by Le Pen's political rivals as she remains a strong contender in the race to succeed Emmanuel Macron when the next presidential election takes place in 2027. It comes as a new government dominated by centrists and conservatives just came into office in the wake of June-July legislative elections. Some observers expect the trial could prevent National Rally lawmakers, including Le Pen herself, from fully playing their opposition role in Parliament as they would be busy focusing on the party's defense.

Since stepping down as party leader three years ago, Le Pen has sought to position herself as a mainstream candidate capable of appealing to a broader electorate. Her efforts have paid off, with the party making significant gains in recent elections at both the European and national levels. But a guilty verdict could seriously undermine her bid to take the Elysee. The National Rally and 27 of its top officials are accused of having used money destined for EU parliamentary aides to pay staff who instead did political work for the party between 2004 and 2016, in violation of the 27-nation bloc's regulations. The National Rally was called National Front at the time.

Le Pen, whose party has softened its anti-EU stance in recent years, is denying wrongdoing and claims the case is politically driven. "Parliamentary assistants do not work for the



Parliament. They are political assistants to elected officials, political by definition," she argued in her defense. "You ask me if I can define the tasks I assigned to my assistants; it depends on each person's skills. Some wrote speeches for me, and some handled logistics and coordination." If found guilty, Le Pen and her co-defendants could face up to 10 years in prison and fines of up to 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) each. Additional penalties, such as the loss of civil rights or ineligibility to run for office, could also be imposed, a scenario that could hamper, or even destroy, Le Pen's goal to mount another presidential bid after Macron's term ends. Le Pen was runner-up to Macron in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections.

She served as party president from 2011 to 2021 and now heads the group of RN lawmakers at the French National Assembly. Despite her denial, her party has already paid back 1 million to the European Parliament, the Parliament's lawyer Patrick Maisonneuve said. Of that amount, 330,000 euros were directly linked to Marine Le Pen's alleged misuse of funds. The legal proceedings stem from a 2015 alert raised by Martin Schulz, then-president of

the European Parliament, to French authorities about possible fraudulent use of European funds by members of the National Front.

Schulz also referred the case to the European Anti-Fraud Office, which launched a separate probe into the matter. The European Parliament's suspicions were further heightened when a 2015 organizational chart showed that 16 European lawmakers and 20 parliamentary assistants held official positions within the party - roles unrelated to their supposed duties as EU parliamentary staff. A subsequent investigation found that some assistants were contractually linked to different MEPs than the ones they were actually working for, suggesting a scheme to divert European funds to pay party employees in France.

Alexandre Varault, a spokesperson for the National Rally who was elected to the European Parliament in June, told The Associated Press that Le Pen will attend the first day of the trial, adding that he hopes for the acquittal of all the defendants. Investigating judges concluded that Le Pen, as party leader, orchestrated the allocation of parliamentary assistance budgets and instructed MEPs to hire individuals holding party positions.

Death toll from Hurricane John hits 8

MEXICO CITY (AFP): Hurricane John, which made landfall twice on Mexico's Pacific coast, has now left eight people dead, all of them in southern Guerrero state, home to the beachside city of Acapulco, authorities said.

John first slammed into the shore earlier this week as a Category 3 hurricane, churning along the coast for several days and intensifying before striking land again, this time as a tropical storm. "We regret the loss of eight lives due to landslides caused by heavy rains," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on social network X, formerly Twitter.

Local media gave a higher number, but the government did not officially confirm those figures. Guerrero state was the worst affected, especially Acapulco, which was ravaged in October 2023 by Hurricane Otis, which claimed dozens of lives. While the rains have now stopped, the streets of Acapulco were still flooded, as residents waited for emergency aid or wandered around with the few belongings they were able to salvage from their homes.

Norway mulling building a fence on its border

HELSINKI (AP): Norway may put a fence along part or all of the 198-kilometer (123-mile) border it shares with Russia, a minister said, a move inspired by a similar project in its Nordic neighbor Finland.

"A border fence is very interesting, not only because it can act as a deterrent but also because it contains sensors and technology that allow you to detect if people are moving close to the border," Justice Minister Emilie Enger Mehl said in an interview with the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK published. She said the Norwegian government is currently looking at "several measures" to beef up security on the border with Russia in the Arctic north, such as fencing, increasing the number of border staff or stepping up monitoring.

The Storskog border station, which has witnessed only a handful of illegal border crossing attempts in the past few years, is the only official crossing point into Norway from Russia. Should the security situation in the delicate Arctic area worsen, the Norwegian government is ready to close the border on short notice, said Enger Mehl, who visited neighboring Finland this summer to learn about how the entire 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) Finnish-Russian land border was closed.

The Finnish government was prompted to close all crossing points from Russia to Finland in late 2023 after more than 1,300 third-country migrants without proper documentation or visas - an unusually high number - entered the country in three months, just months after the nation became a member of NATO. To prevent Moscow using migrants in what the Finnish government calls Russia's "hybrid warfare," Helsinki is currently building fences with a total length of up to 200 kilometers (124 miles) in separate sections along the border zone that makes up part of NATO's northern flank and serves as the European Union's external border.

Finnish border officials say fences equipped with top-notch surveillance equipment - to be located mostly around crossing points - are needed to better monitor and control any migrants attempting to cross over from Russia and give officials time to react. Inspired by Finland's project, Enger Mehl said that such a fence could also be a good idea for Norway. According to NRK, her statement was supported by police chief Ellen Katrine Hætta in Norway's northern Finnmark county. "It's a measure that may become relevant on all or part of the border" between Norway and Russia, Enger Mehl said. The Storskog border station is currently surrounded by a 200-meter (660-foot) -long and 3.5-meter (12-foot) -high fence erected in 2016 after some 5,000 migrants and asylum-seekers had crossed over from Russia to Norway a year earlier.

Young Lebanese girl left fighting for life after Israeli strikes

BEIRUT (BBC): In the hills of the Bekaa Valley - as in swathes of Lebanon - death can come from the sky these days, at any moment. Israel has been bombing the area through the day, with more 30 air strikes in just an hour. Forty-six people are confirmed dead - and that toll is expected to rise. Others are in critical condition in hospital, after Israeli attacks earlier this week.

Noor Mossawi is among them. The six-year-old is lying unconscious in a paediatric intensive care unit, in Rayak Hospital, with bandages wrapped around her fractured skull. Her mother Rima is sitting by her bedside, holding a copy of the Quran and praying.

She tells us her daughter is very bright and very sociable. "She creates such a fun atmosphere at home. The house feels empty when she's not around. She loves meeting new people," All that changed last Monday, with an Israeli strike.

She shows us another video of her daughter - this time praying, shortly before the attack. "I was soothing her, telling her not to be afraid, that nothing would happen. She was calling on God and the prophets for help," Rima says. As the bombing was getting closer, Rima was hunkering by her front door with Noor and her twin brother Mohammed. "We weren't brave enough to go inside," she says, "because we thought the building would collapse on us if it was hit. "When it got more intense, I picked up Noor and her brother and was about to take them in, but the missile was much faster than I was." That missile left Mohammed lightly wounded, and Noor fighting for her life.

As we speak, suddenly there is danger overhead. We hear a plane,



and then an explosion which rattles the windows and knocks out the power for a few seconds. It's another air strike. Rima barely reacts. Noor's father Abdallah comes to visit, and is burning with rage. "Please film my child," he says. "She doesn't know what weapons are. She doesn't know how to fight. She was playing at home when the bombing started. They [Israel] wanted to terrorise the people and get them to flee." Israel says its strikes are targeting Hezbollah sites, including weapons stores and ammunition dumps. Abdallah begs to differ. "We have nothing to do with weapons. I am not involved with the resistance [Hezbollah]. But now I wish I was so that I could protect my children," he tells us. Minutes later, a few floors down, sirens wail as an ambulance brings in wounded from the latest strike.

Medical staff are rushing back and forward. The emergency department fills with tension. There are angry

shouts, and shocked friends and relatives. We are asked to stop filming. The hospital has admitted 400 casualties of Israeli strikes since Monday - all civilians - according to Dr Basil Abdallah, the medical director. Of those, more than 100 have died, and several families had lost more than one person. Dr Abdallah tells us there is trauma among the staff, as well as the patients. "Seeing children bombed, seeing elderly patients and women bombed, it's difficult," he says. "Most of the nurses and the doctors are depressed. We have emotions. We are human." Most of the staff remain at the hospital around the clock as it is too dangerous to risk the journey home. Israel is striking far and wide in Lebanon. There's no-one to stop it. For now, Hezbollah is putting up a limited fight, firing rockets across the border. Its backer, Iran, is remaining on the sidelines. Dr Abdallah is already worried about running out of drugs and essential supplies. He fears this will be a long war.

Far right in Austria ‘opens new era’ with election victory

AUSTRIA (BBC): Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) has opened the door to a new era, its leader Herbert Kickl has told supporters, as they celebrated an unprecedented election victory. Kickl's party won 29.2% of the vote according to official provisional results - almost three points ahead of the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) on 26.5%, but far short of a majority.

Kickl's victory is only the latest in a string of far-right election successes in Europe and he praised voters for their "optimism, courage and trust" in delivering a "piece of history". The FPÖ has been in coalition before, but the second-placed ÖVP has refused to take part in a government led by him. Kickl's main rival, incumbent Chancellor Karl Nehammer of the ÖVP, has said it's "impossible to form a government with someone who adores conspiracy theories". There was a high turnout of 74.9% as Austrian voters took part in an election dominated by the twin issues of migration and asylum, as well as a flagging economy and the war in Ukraine. As half the map of Austria turned dark blue, FPÖ general secretary Michael Schnedlitz said

"the men and women of Austria have made history today", although he refused to say what kind of coalition his party would try to build. An analysis of voters suggested those aged 35-59 were most likely to vote for the far right, and marginally more women than men. Kickl's party has won 58 seats in the 183-seat parliament, with the conservatives on 52 and the Social Democrats on 41. The Freedom Party's fiery leader had promised Austrians to build "Fortress Austria", to restore their security, prosperity and peace, and he has aligned himself closely with Viktor Orban in neighbouring Hungary. Social Democrat leader Andreas Babler warned that Austria must not go the same way as Hungary. Kickl had also spoken of becoming Volkskanzler (people's chancellor) which for some Austrians carries echoes of the term used to describe Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. The party was founded by former Nazis in the 1950s. Two days before the vote some of its candidates were caught on video singing an SS song at a funeral. As the FPÖ's victory became clear, a small group of protesters appeared outside parlia-

ment carrying anti-Nazi banners. Forming a coalition is likely to prove complicated for Kickl, who is a divisive figure. The Social Democrats, Greens and Neos have all ruled out a partnership with the far right.

The only possible coalition Kickl's party could form is with the conservatives, although the FPÖ would have to find a solution to the ÖVP's refusal to have Kickl as chancellor. When Geert Wilders' Freedom Party won the Netherlands' election last November, he dropped his bid to become prime minister so that three other parties would agree to form a coalition. However, Kickl is keen to lead his country, promising Austrians to act as their "servant and protector".

Political analyst Thomas Hofer told the BBC it was by no means clear that Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, who oversees the formation of government, would give Kickl a "direct mandate to form a coalition". The ÖVP could in theory scrape together a coalition with the Social Democrats if the latest projections are correct, and could attract the liberal Neos party or the Greens. Equally, Karl Nehammer

may come under pressure from within the ÖVP to drop his objection. One leading FPÖ figure said after such a historic defeat he should resign, although that was rejected by the general secretary of Nehammer's party. President Van der Bellen has voiced reservations in the past about the FPÖ because of its criticism of the EU and its failure to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The party opposes EU sanctions on Moscow, citing Austria's neutrality, and many of its MPs walked out of a speech to the parliament in Vienna last year by Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky.

Kickl's victory is the latest in almost a year of vote successes for radical right-wing parties in Europe. Italy's Giorgia Meloni heads a right-wing coalition as leader of the far-right Brothers of Italy party and Germany's AfD topped the polls in the eastern state of Thuringia last month. France's National Rally won the vote in European elections last June. Unlike Kickl, Italy's prime minister has given her full backing to the EU's defence of Ukraine in the face of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Hopes of finding 48 missing people fade

MADRID: Patrol boats and helicopters are searching for 48 refugees and migrants missing after their boat sank near the Spanish island of El Hierro, but officials say hopes of finding survivors are fading.

Nine people, one of them a child, have been confirmed dead after the incident, emergency and rescue services said. Rescuers were able to pick up 27 of 84 people who were trying to reach El Hierro, the westernmost of the Canary Islands. A spokeswoman for the Canary Islands government told Reuters news agency that the search continues "but it seems that the chances of finding someone alive are slim".

Canary Islands regional President Fernando Clavijo had told journalists that the 48 people missing are "presumed dead". More bodies will likely appear "over the next two, three days",

washed up by the current, he added. People on the boat were from Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, Spanish authorities said. They set out from Nouadhibou in Mauritania, some 800km (nearly 500 miles) away. Shortly after midnight, Spanish emergency services received a call from the boat, which was located about four miles (6.5km) east of El Hierro. It sank during the rescue attempt, they said, with wind and poor visibility making the rescue extremely difficult. "After what happened yesterday and if the forecast for the arrival of the migrant boats happens, then it will be the biggest humanitarian crisis to happen to the Canary Islands in 30 years," Canary Islands Minister of Social Welfare Candelaria Delgado told reporters. Three of those rescued suffered from hypothermia

and dehydration, rescue services said. The nine who died will be buried. Among the dead was a child aged between 12 and 15, according to the NGO Walking Borders, which helps refugees and migrants. As hopes of finding more survivors diminished, police installed a morgue on El Hierro, authorities said. Three other boats reached the Canary Islands during the night, carrying 208 people. This disaster follows the deaths of 39 people in early September when their boat sank off Senegal while attempting a similar crossing to the Canaries, from where they apparently hoped to reach mainland Europe. In some 30 years of refugee and migrant crossings to the islands, the deadliest shipwreck recorded to date occurred off the island of Lanzarote in 2009, when 25 people died. - Aljazeera

Nepal closes schools as heavy rains bring

KATHMANDU: Officials in Nepal said schools in flood-hit areas will be shut in the coming days as landslides and flash flooding triggered by heavy rains have killed some 150 people. The order came as authorities said students and their parents faced difficulties while university and school buildings damaged by the rains needed repair.

"We have urged the concerned authorities to close schools in the affected areas for three days," Lakshmi Bhattarai, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, told the Reuters news agency. Entire neighbourhoods in the country's capital, Kathmandu, were inundated over the weekend with flash floods reported in rivers coursing through the region. The floods also damaged the highways connecting the city with the remainder of Nepal. Some parts of Kathmandu reported rain of up to 322.2mm (12.7 inches), pushing the level of its main Bagmati River up 2.2 metres (7 feet) past the danger mark,

experts said. Television images showed police rescuers in knee-high rubber boots using picks and shovels to clear away mud and retrieve 16 bodies of passengers from two buses swept away by a huge landslide, at a site on the key route into Kathmandu. Kumar Tamang, who lives in a slum area by a riverbank, told the AFP news agency he and his family had to flee after midnight as waters rushed into his shack, but, the situation was different. "We couldn't even open the doors to our house, it was jammed with mud," he said. "Yesterday we were afraid that the water would kill us, but today we have no water to clean," the 40-year-old added. Local weather forecaster Govinda Jha said rains had subsided. "There may be some isolated showers, but heavy rains are unlikely," Jha added. Domestic flights also resumed in and out of Kathmandu after having completely stopped, with more than 150 departures cancelled since then. The summer monsoon brings

South Asia 70-80 percent of its annual rainfall. While deadly rain-related floods and landslides are common across the region during this period, weather officials in Nepal have blamed these rainstorms on climate change and a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal extending over parts of neighbouring India.

Haphazard development amplifies climate change risks in Nepal, climate scientists at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development said. In a statement, they urged the government and city planners to "urgently" step up investment in, and plans for, infrastructure, such as underground stormwater and sewage systems, both of the "grey" or engineered kind, and "green" or nature-based type. The effect of the rains was aggravated by poor drainage due to unplanned settlement and urbanisation efforts, construction on floodplains, lack of areas for water retention, and encroachment on the Bagmati River, the statement said. — Aljazeera

After months of waiting, Gaza girls make it to Italy for burns treatment

ROME (BBC): "Higher," the little girl demands, her eyes bright with excitement. "Higher, higher." Zeina's being pushed on a swing in a small playground in the suburbs of the northern Italian city of Padua. A normal scene anywhere in the world. But Zeina, two, can't move her head properly. And the right side of her face, neck and scalp are marked with deep, still angry, scars.

Right now, though, she's safe and fed. And she feels like she's flying. Zeina is one of the 5,000 people who have been allowed to leave Gaza for specialist treatment abroad since the war broke out in the aftermath of the Hamas attacks on 7 October in southern Israel.

The World Health Organization says more than 22,000 Gazans have suffered life-changing injuries as a result of the conflict - but very few have been allowed to leave the strip since the Rafah border crossing with Egypt was closed in May. "It was a day of nightmares," says Zeina's mother, Shaimaa, describing the moments

leading up to her daughter's injury as she was playing in their family's tent in al-Mawasi, southern Gaza, on 17 March.

The family had already fled twice from their home in Khan Younis, first to Rafah and then to the sprawling "humanitarian zone" in al-Mawasi, where they thought they would be safe. Zeina and her four-year-old sister Lana had been playing together, hugging and telling each other "I love you, I love you" - Shaimaa recalls - when there was a huge air strike nearby. Zeina, terrified, ran clutching at her mother, who was holding a pot of boiling soup which spilled all over her daughter. "Her face and skin were melting in front of me," Shaimaa says. "I picked her up and went barefoot into the street."

Medical services were stretched, she says, but Zeina was eventually treated by Red Cross doctors at Gaza's European hospital, where she underwent a skin graft from her father's leg, followed by a more successful graft from the skin on her own leg after

she reached Egypt. Earlier this month she was flown from Egypt to Italy to access more specialised treatment. Zeina was joined by Alaa, a 17-year-old who was severely injured in an air strike on her home in Gaza City late last year. When the two girls met, they formed a bond straight away. "I took to her immediately," Alaa says. "She's endured so much pain for such a small child. I'm older and sometimes the pain was too much for me. So what about her?" Alaa was trapped for 16 hours under rubble and, when she was rescued, she discovered her father, a tailor, was dead. So too were her brothers, Nael, who was a university student, and Wael, a nurse.

Their bodies have never been recovered from the ruins of their four-storey building. "I was awake the whole time under the rubble," she tells me. "I couldn't breathe properly because of the weight on my chest and body. I couldn't move. I was just thinking about the rest of my family and what had hap-

pened to them." As well as her father and brothers, she also lost her grandparents and an aunt. She says they had nothing to do with Hamas.

"I lost the people most precious to my heart," she says. "I'm happy to be in Italy for treatment but inside I'm sad for Gaza and its people." In a statement to the BBC, the Israel Defense Forces has denied targeting civilians and says it takes "feasible precautions to mitigate civilian harm" in its operation to dismantle Hamas military capabilities.

More than 41,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the conflict began nearly a year ago, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. The World Health Organization has repeatedly called for "multiple medical evacuation corridors" for injured Palestinians. It says that only 219 patients have been allowed to leave since May. Zeina and Alaa were evacuated thanks to the persistence of a British-based charity, Save a Child, and the US-based Kinder Relief.

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Just solution needed, not more violence

IN what is regarded as being the most damaging attacks Israel has carried out on the militant group since 2006, the Israel Defense Forces killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday.

The killing of Nasrallah, along with multiple others at the top of the Hezbollah leadership, who Israel says were legitimate targets under international law, is no doubt a heavy blow to a key regional foe of Israel. This along with the debilitating damage Israeli air strikes have done to Hezbollah infrastructure across Lebanon over the past week will certainly serve Tel Aviv's goal of significantly mitigating the security threat on Israel's northern border.

However, just as eliminating the top Hamas leaders doesn't equate to eradicating Hamas, quashing Hezbollah isn't as simple as wiping out its leading commanders. The United States' so-called war on terror and Israel's own history of violent exchanges with its regional foes have proved that, having been less than successful.

The Benjamin Netanyahu government is determined to use overwhelming force against Israel's regional enemies such as Hamas and Hezbollah. But if violence didn't work in the past, there is no reason to think it will work now or in the future.

Israel is trapped in a web of historical hostilities. Facing multiple enemies working in coordination, it is sinking deeper into the mire of violence in the mistaken belief that brute force is the only way it can guarantee its security.

But that is a false proposition. Nasrallah's killing, for instance, has only prompted pledges of resistance, from Hamas to the Houthis.

Hamas said in a statement that "crimes and assassination" by Israel will only increase the determination and the insistence of the resistance in Palestine and Lebanon.

The Houthis said in a statement: "The resistance will not be broken, and the Jihadist spirit of the Mujahideen brothers in Lebanon and on all fronts of support will grow stronger and bigger." In its own statement, Hezbollah vowed to "continue the holy war against the enemy and in support of Palestine".

To Israel, the world may appear to be a "safer place" without Nasrallah. But perhaps not for long. Because such an approach will hardly put an end to the organization.

As Israel exerts its military strength, it may want to look at the issue from a more strategic perspective as Beijing is urging all parties to do.

Expressing serious concern about the potential of the violence to convulse the entire Middle East, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday said that "might cannot replace justice". He called for international efforts to maneuver an all-round cease-fire and then a security framework that takes into account all stakeholders' concerns. Peace will not be achieved until the vicious circle of tit-for-tat violence is broken in the Middle East and the parties concerned accept that violence only begets violence.

Vision to resolve Ukraine crisis

FOREIGN Minister Wang Yi made China's pro-peace stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict unequivocally clear through a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings he held with foreign leaders and officials on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York over the past week.

In the meetings, the foreign leaders and officials of other peace-loving countries not only supported Beijing's stance but also pledged to work together to help resolve the Ukraine crisis through political means. That is conducive to countering the United States' disinformation campaign accusing China of being the "enabler" of Russia in the conflict. In a ministerial meeting of the newly formed "Friends of Peace" platform on the Ukraine crisis he co-hosted with other officials at the UN Headquarters on Friday, Wang rightly pointed out that neither war nor hatred can help resolve the crisis, urging the world to choose peace over war, reconciliation over hatred, and dialogue over confrontation.

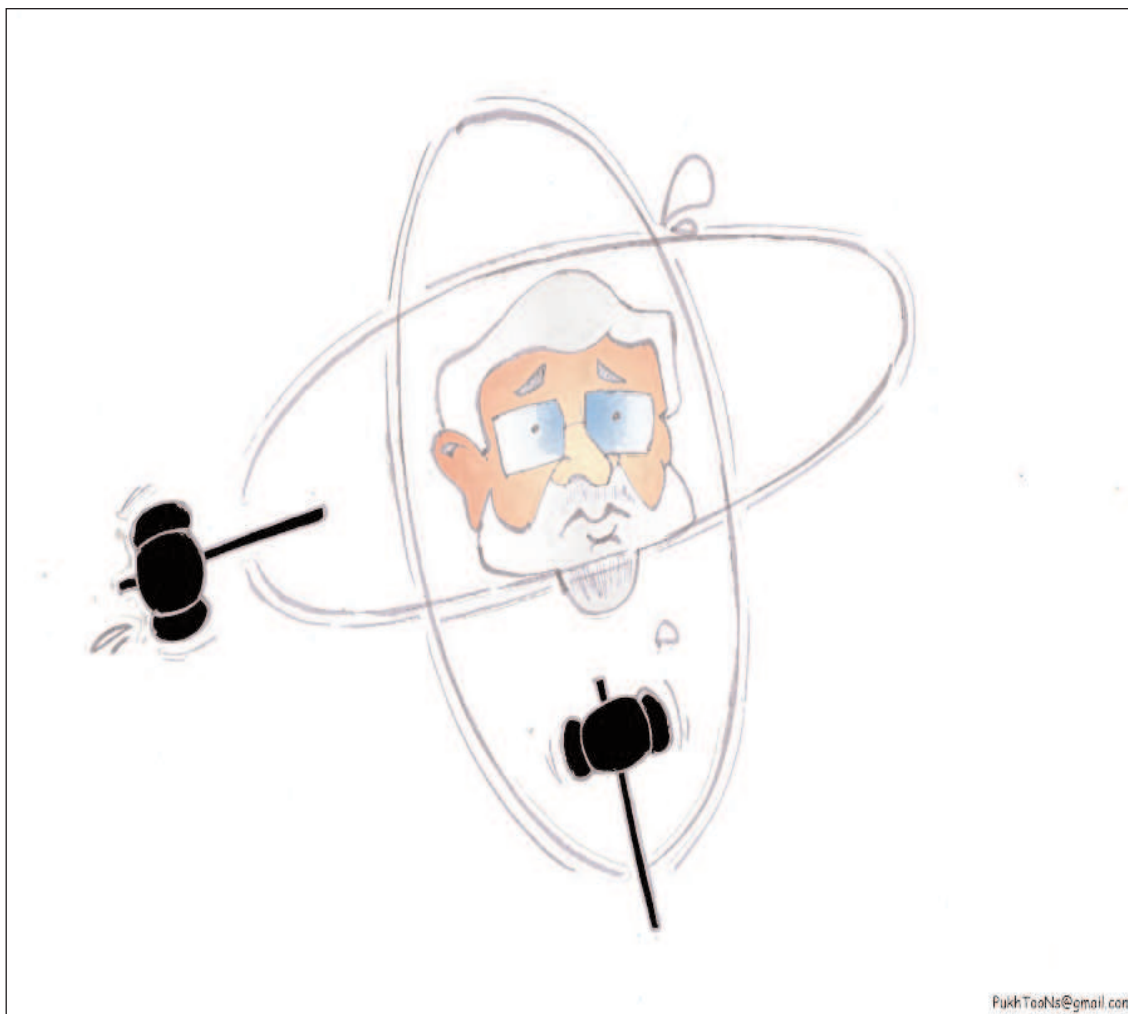
With the Russia-Ukraine conflict showing no signs of ending even after more than two and a half years, Wang urged the two parties to give peace a chance. The "Friends of Peace" platform is not about taking sides in the conflict or promoting bloc confrontation. Instead, it is meant to expose the US, which in the guise of "value diplomacy", has been prolonging the conflict by providing weapons, military equipment and material aid to Ukraine. By doing so, the US aims to kill three birds with one stone — weaken Russia; tighten Washington's grip over Europe; and incriminate China. The US doesn't want peace to be restored in Eurasia or European countries to feel secure, because it is the only party which stands to gain from the conflict commercially and strategically.

As a result, the US has been smearing pro-peace countries, including China, Brazil and other nations that have formed the "Friends of Peace" platform, while pretending to be neutral. That Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said that Kyiv values China's stance on the crisis and its efforts to help restore peace shows that Washington's smear campaign is divorced from reality and actually is a part of the US' overall China-containment strategy.

Just like in the Middle East crisis, the key to resolving the Ukraine crisis lies with the US. If Washington wanted to restore peace, it should not have ignored China's suggestions, especially because China has been, right from the beginning, advocating for peace and has maintained good relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Since the world is divided on the Ukraine crisis, the UN Security Council should take the initiative to resolve the differences and contradictions between Moscow and Kyiv, as Wang said at a UN Security Council high-level meeting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict last week. China did not start the Russia-Ukraine conflict nor is it a party to it. Any attempt to blame, attack or smear it for the conflict, therefore, would be an act of devilishness. As Wang said, the international community should join hands to uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and resist the exploitative attempts of some countries.

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Iran mourns Nasrallah with 'strategic patience' and empty rhetoric

Baria Alamuddin

THERE is nothing to celebrate in the killing of Hassan Nasrallah, nor that of nearly 1,000 Lebanese citizens in two weeks of Israeli violence. Even among many who loathed everything Nasrallah stood for, there has been widespread sadness and disorientation at the sudden disappearance of a charismatic figure who played a pivotal role in national and regional politics for decades.

I have long been a critic of Hezbollah's foremost allegiance being to Ayatollah Khamenei and Iran, at huge cost to Lebanon's national interest. Nasrallah's bold resistance to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, exemplified by the 2006 war, made him an iconic, Che Guevara-like figure — until Hezbollah utterly disgraced itself fighting on behalf of the Assad regime in Syria, and repeatedly showed itself to be the plaything of Tehran.

There is all-pervading trepidation at what comes next: an escalation in violence, a ground invasion of Lebanon by Israel, or other Iranian proxies entering the fray. Iran's first reaction was to rush Khamenei to a safe location, highlighting the regime's fears that it sits directly in the line of fire. After the 2006 war a chastened Nasrallah admitted that he would never have dragged Lebanon into that conflict if he had known what Israel's bloodthirsty response would be: he did not live long enough to admit making the same mistake twice.

Israel's decapitation of Hezbollah represents the death of the myth of Iran's "Axis of Resistance," which had been supposed to be a

deterrent to Israel, protecting southern Lebanon, and a vanguard for liberating Jerusalem and eradicating Israel.

Recent developments demonstrate the vacuous futility of such rhetoric: Hezbollah did nothing to halt the mass killing in Gaza, responding with empty threats as Israel decimated the leadership of both Hamas and Hezbollah. Israel simultaneously knocked out Hezbollah's pager communications network and put hundreds of the organization's operatives in hospital. Then, with almost casual brutality, it took out Nasrallah himself, along with entire blocks of residential housing.

Hezbollah didn't protect Lebanon, it placed the country in the line of fire. Paramilitaries in Syria, Iraq and Yemen played a similarly destabilizing role, making attacks by Israel and its allies far more likely. After Nasrallah's death, Iranians complained that not only had these Arab proxies drained billions from the state purse, but they also risked dragging Iran directly into a regionalized conflict in which they had no stake.

Last week I was in New York, where, as Israel was striking Beirut, Iranian leaders such as President Masoud Pezeshkian were sipping tea at the UN General Assembly, discussing improved ties and renewed nuclear talks — deludedly out of touch with events.

This has all fatally undermined Tehran's regional credibility. The Axis of Resistance proved to be a paper tiger, while the ayatollahs passively abandoned Hezbollah and Hamas to their fates. Many of us

previously mocked these Tehran-worshipping proxies, observing that "Daddy" Khamenei would never come and rescue them if they faced annihilation. After last week, has Hezbollah finally comprehended this lesson?

Khamenei and his generals threatened to make Israel regret Nasrallah's killing, and said his death was a harbinger of Israel's destruction. But when asked why Iran had failed to avenge the 2020 death of Qassem Soleimani, and countless other Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah commanders, the regime waffled on about "strategic patience" and awaiting the appropriate moment. Nasrallah now has eternity in which to await Tehran getting around to avenging him.

Nasrallah was a relative pragmatist who in recent months had fatefully sought to exert pressure on Israel, without provoking full-blown conflict. By eliminating Nasrallah and Hezbollah's veteran leadership, Israel risks the organization falling into the hands of hot-headed hawkish subordinates whose first priority may be vengeance. Nasrallah was a godfather figure to vast armies of transnational paramilitaries, which Hezbollah trained and mobilized, who will also be anxious to exact a bloody price for Nasrallah's death. But after their feared rocket arsenals proved puny and impotent in the face of Israel's superior firepower, will Iran now choose to restrain them, lest at a stroke it loses all its regional cards?

All Iran's current options are bad options: arousing the wrath of Israel and America by

lashing out, or risking ridicule and irrelevance by failing to follow through on fire-breathing rhetoric. The danger is that Tehran learns the wrong lessons from these setbacks: despatching copious new funding and weapons to shore up its proxies, while rushing forward to acquire a nuclear deterrent. The West must vigorously act to prevent this eventuality.

Just as Soleimani's death weakened Iran's ability to control its regional proxies, the killing of Nasrallah and his commanders weakens Hezbollah's ability to politically dominate Lebanon. There is a slender window of opportunity here for the Lebanese government to stave off conflict and radically cut Hezbollah's all-pervading influence down to size, while slamming the door on Iranian hegemony. Hezbollah will appoint new leaders, but they'll never enjoy a fragment of Nasrallah's prestige and clout.

Similarly, in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, Iran-backed mafioso militias have permanently lost their aura of invincibility and legitimacy, while Iran's regional dominance has been shown to be a cowardly mirage that disperses at the first sign of confrontation.

The supposedly almighty Axis of Resistance has for years been wielded as a blunt weapon with which to menace the region, yet at the first sign of trouble it behaved like a balloon pricked by a pin. Before these vengeful paramilitaries embark on further efforts to engulf the region in conflict, let's sweep them aside and for the first time in decades see the Arab world take its destiny in its own hands.

Hezbollah is not finished yet

Ibrahim Al-Marashi

THE assassination of Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut will not diminish the group he once led. The killing demonstrates the counter-intuitive notion that eliminating the head of an organisation does not always destroy it. Hezbollah has a bureaucratic set-up, with a robust ideology and communal support. Any armed organisation that benefits from all three tends to survive the death of its leader.

The October 7 attacks led by Hamas proved to be a conundrum for Hezbollah. Before that, the group had been challenged by Lebanese protesters, including by members of the Shiite community, since 2019, for controlling a corrupt Parliament and allowing Iran to violate Lebanon's sovereignty.

The war in Gaza allowed Hezbollah to deflect attention from its domestic woes, by launching rockets against Israel, in solidarity with Hamas, but not doing enough to risk immediate Israeli retaliation. It forced Israel to keep some military forces in the north and the evacuation of civilians from there.

Nasrallah's death will most likely lead to a significant proportion of the Lebanese public rallying behind Hezbollah. The protests in 2019 were a domestic matter. With the assassination having been carried out by a foreign state, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may end up uniting the Lebanese people in a way that has been elusive since the end of the nation's civil war in 1991. In 1992, the year after the civil war ended, Israeli helicopters killed

Hezbollah's then secretary general, Abbas Al Musawi, as well as his wife and six-year-old son in a motorcade. In Ronen Bergman's book, Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations, he documents how some Israeli military figures had opposed the killing as "Hezbollah was not a one-man show, and [Al] Musawi was not the most extreme man in its leadership". Indeed, they warned, he "would be replaced, perhaps by someone more radical".

Al Musawi was succeeded by Nasrallah, who proved to be more charismatic and eloquent. At the time, Hezbollah was a small militia, employing suicide bombs as its most powerful weapon. When Nasrallah emerged, he put a military commander, Fouad Shukur, who was killed in July in a similar strike, in charge of stepping up sophisticated guerrilla attacks on Israeli forces in the south of Lebanon. These attacks, as well as rocket launches, compelled them to withdraw in 2000, marking a rare and significant Israeli loss to an Arab military force.

In this respect, history is a study of irony, of unintended consequences, as Israel's assassination scored a vendetta, only to witness a replacement who proved to be a more adept leader — a possibility that exists with Nasrallah's successor.

The group has a top-down, military-style bureaucracy, while at the same time maintaining a diffuse and decentralised military command structure to operate at higher-level commanders are killed during battle. Its bureaucracy, with clear chains of command, will

enable it to select a new leader. It has routinised its leadership succession, whereby the secretary general is appointed by a council, so that the legitimacy of the successor derives from the position and not the individual.

Hezbollah adheres to the "Axis of Resistance" ideology, along with Iran, the Houthis of Yemen and Hamas in Palestine, based on resistance to Israel and the US. However, the group also blends Lebanese nationalism, as well as a southern Lebanese identity, invoking how the region has suffered from Israeli actions since its first invasion in 1978. The ideology does not depend on a leader for its articulation or propagation. As a set of ideas, it existed before Nasrallah became the leader in 1992.

Hezbollah earned credit for driving Israeli troops out of Lebanon as 2000. One of the factors behind this success was the willingness of the group's members and followers to sacrifice their lives for their cause. Their propaganda focuses on seeking inspiration from the success of Iran's revolution in 1979, and further back in history they often speak about the example set in 680 AD by Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Imam Hussein bin Ali, who sacrificed himself against who they believe to be his oppressors — a pivotal event that led to the creation of Shiite Islam.

This dynamic contributes to the third factor Hezbollah enjoyed: popular support within certain communities. The group's presence in the south of Lebanon is enabled by a network of sympathetic Arab villages, that goes beyond just its Shiite Muslim base, including some members of the Christian community. There is an argument to be made that, instead of waging war against Hezbollah, Israel could have declared a cease-fire in Gaza as the one-year anniversary of the conflict approaches. This would have done far more damage to Hezbollah by depriving it of the rhetorical oxygen it has often used to justify its rocket attacks, which the group said it would have ceased once the fighting in Gaza ended.

As a tactic, Israeli assassinations do not address the underlying problems of conflict in the region. Strategically they backfire, as assassinations might lead to unpredictable outcomes, like in 1992.

In the long term, Israel's tactical military strikes are no panacea for political violence compared to multilateral peace and development strategies. Both the US and France, permanent members of the UN Security Council, had pushed for implementing the 2006 Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the Lebanese army and UN peacekeepers to monitor the area south of Lebanon on the border with Israel, creating a buffer zone.

A cessation of hostilities in Gaza and Lebanon would have been the best long-term solution, achieving a more sustainable security than continued conflict that only creates a new generation of Lebanese and Palestinians seeking atonement from Israel. As the one-year anniversary of the war in Gaza is upon us, it appears that Mr Netanyahu is seeking another year of conflict to maintain his hold on power.

Why European inertia is not good for the Middle East?

Chris Doyle

THE story of the last year has been one of acute international failure over Gaza. Israel has conducted a genocide unhindered by any international flak that might have forced its belligerent prime minister or his extremist government coalition to think twice.

Only the international legal system threatens to put a brake on Israeli actions. The International Court of Justice has ruled on the plausible danger of genocide in Gaza and the illegality of Israel's occupation. The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants against Israeli and Hamas leaders.

This failure of accountability has energized Israeli actions in Lebanon, as it plays out its Gaza playbook to the north. Uber-confident following the shameful silence of its key allies, Benjamin Netanyahu had little hesitation in opening up the northern front. The assassination of Hassan Nasrallah was just the latest

in a whole batch of moves designed to stoke the fires of conflict.

If anyone was in any doubt about the brazen contempt Netanyahu has for his allies, his routine mockery of the Biden administration is Exhibit 1. Once again last week, the White House claimed Israel was willing to agree to a 21-day ceasefire as called for by the US, the EU, the UK and others. As soon as Netanyahu got off his plane in New York, he wrecked all hopes of any such deal. He has done this on Gaza routinely.

The US has failed to hold its truculent and unruly ally to account. But why are the European states being so timid?

The reaction of most European countries to the escalation over Lebanon has centered on two priorities: evacuating their citizens and expressing concern. Finally, they have largely called for de-escalation, at best a ceasefire.

Even the evacuation of nationals has been a dubi-

ous effort. Many still languish under bombardment in Lebanon.

As for the expressions of concern, this is the same disease that has beset policy toward the obliteration of Gaza. It is utterly irrelevant, designed to fill the gaping policy void. A few states stand out for ducking this trend, with Spain, Ireland and Norway speaking out. Spain condemned Israel's attack on Hezbollah's paging devices.

What is also noticeable is that the latest EU statement on Lebanon made no mention of Gaza. Israel is winning the argument, as it did with the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, on decoupling Gaza from Lebanon. This is naive. A ceasefire in Gaza and one between Israel and Hezbollah would be inextricably linked. A Gaza ceasefire would make one in the north far easier. The reality is that the Israeli leadership does not want one on either front. It

believes that it can deliver a military victory on both fronts, while also cracking down and even annexing the West Bank.

The other feature is that the Europeans make reference to UN Security Council resolutions on Lebanon, notably 1701. The Palestinians, meanwhile, have long since given up hope that any resolutions dealing with their occupation will get referenced, let alone implemented.

One explanation for this European malaise is that the continent's politicians and publics are still fixed on local, internal issues, with isolationism dominant. They are unwilling to devote serious attention to issues outside their immediate geographical interest. The EU system is engulfed in choosing its next 26 commissioners, triggering power plays in Brussels. Sweden is focused on burgeoning gang crime, Italy on immigration. Belgium is

trapped in postelection negotiations. Austria has also just had elections. Baltic and Eastern European states fret about Russia. Poland is handling calamitous floods. The honeymoon for the new British Labour government has ended early.

The one arguable exception to European inertia is France. As ever, its leaders treat Lebanon as if it was of vital French interest. Yet, as was seen after the 2020 Beirut explosion, President Emmanuel Macron has little influence despite grandiose statements. France partnered the US in leading the call for a three-week ceasefire, but Netanyahu just dismissed it.

Are European leaders right to be disengaged? On one level, one wonders what they could do. Unity is lacking. But a coalition of major European powers including Germany, France and the UK could lead the way. Britain today has a less Europhobic government. Many Lebanese and

Syrians are leaving Lebanon and some will make their way to Europe.

Security should also be a major concern. After Israel assassinated Nasrallah's predecessor as Hezbollah leader in 1992, the group's response was to launch attacks against soft Israeli and Jewish targets in Turkey and Argentina. This may be its option again now, with European targets on the agenda.

But it still feels like these leaders are tiptoeing nervously around an erupting volcano, hoping they do not get caught up in the lava flow.

All the talk has been of trying to avoid a war when, for some time, those on the ground have been saying "we are in a war" and the Israeli leader was indicating that he wanted one, including on multiple fronts. Now even the blinkered Europeans cannot ignore this grave reality. They need to step up before Lebanon becomes the next Gaza.

— Arab News

Communist China is celebrating its 75th birthday and its stock market is soaring

FOR much of the past year since China reopened to the world following the Covid-19 pandemic, a pall has hung over large swathes of the country as its economy struggles to regain momentum.

The country's bright young minds are having a hard time landing a job; its white-collar professionals are hit by pay cuts and layoffs; its entrepreneurs struggle to finance their businesses and pay off debts; its middle-class families are seeing their wealth slashed by crumbling housing prices; and its rich race to move money out of the country.

In the months leading up to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic on Tuesday, the mood was encapsulated by a new buzz phrase: "the garbage time of history." Like the final minutes of a basketball game with one team trailing so far behind that all efforts to win seem futile, some Chinese believe their country is trapped in a similarly bleak period with little hope for a turnaround.

The pessimism was a far cry from the buoyant outlook just five years ago, during the last major National Day celebrations in 2019. Back then, economists were rushing to predict when China might overtake the United States to become the world's largest economy. Those conversations aren't happening much anymore. These days, the talk centers on how Beijing can avoid a repeat of Japan's "lost decade" of economic stagnation following bursting of its housing bubble in the 1990s.

Last week, after months of increasingly grim economic data, Chinese leader Xi Jinping finally gave the nod to a much-needed stimulus package in a bid to shore up faith in the world's second largest economy.

On Tuesday, the country's central bank unveiled a raft of measures to counter falling prices, including freeing commercial banks to lend more money and making it cheaper for households and companies to borrow.

Officials kept up the positive drumbeat the next day by announcing rare cash handouts to disadvantaged citizens and pledging subsidies for recent graduates struggling to find a job.

And on Thursday, the ruling Communist Party's 24-member Politburo continued the bullish messaging. In a break with tradition, Xi dedicated the group's September meeting to economic affairs.

The top officials acknowledged that "new situations and problems" have arisen in the economy and demanded urgent action, vowing to boost

fiscal spending, arrest the decline of the property market and improve employment for fresh graduates and migrant workers.

According to Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit, the "rare, simultaneous roll-out of so many measures underscored the urgency for policymakers to prop up the economy."

The policy blitz gave an adrenaline shot to the country's dismal stock market days before the week-long national holiday, which starts on Tuesday. China's blue-chips stocks soared more than 15% last week in its biggest single-week gain in nearly 16 years. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index surged 13%, notching its best week since 1998,

China's decades-long investment-led growth has reached "a dead end," and fundamental overhauls of its fiscal system — including a redistribution of income and greater transfers to households — are needed to rebalance the economy toward a more sustainable consumption-led growth model, Wright said. There has been little in the barrage of measures announced last week to address the underlying structural problems weighing down economic growth. China has long had one of the highest saving rates in the world. While one-off cash handouts and subsidies may boost short-term consumption, robust social welfare and healthcare are needed to make Chinese households feel comfortable to spend more in the long run, especially following the collapse of the property sector, where most Chinese invest their savings. The outlook for the real estate industry, which makes up about a quarter of the Chinese economy and 70% of household wealth, remains dim. "There's not much Beijing can do," Wright said. "In many ways, the adjustment in the property sector is almost complete, and policy hasn't been very effective in stabilizing it." After decades of boom, China's real estate sector is now in its fourth year of contraction since falling into a deep crisis in 2020, when the government cracked down on excessive borrowing by developers to rein in their high debt. Beijing's efforts to rescue the market have struggled to revive demand, with prices of new homes continuing their freefall. In a concerted push to prop up the embattled property market, the southern metropolis of Guangzhou became China's first tier-one city to lift all restrictions on home purchases on Sunday, while Shanghai and Shenzhen also eased rules for home buyers.

according to Reuters.

The frenzy continued on Monday, when the combined turnover on the Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses exceeded 1.8 trillion yuan (\$228 billion), logging a record high, according to the Securities Times, a state-run financial newspaper. That's despite a key measure of factory activity, the official purchasing managers' index (PMI), shrinking for another month in September.

Even some big-name investors are excited by the rally. David Tepper, the billionaire founder of American hedge fund Appaloosa Management, told CNBC in an interview Thursday that he was buying more of "everything" related to China.

The stock market may be in the midst of one of its most remarkable turnarounds, but economists say reversing China's

Nectar Gan

economic downturn will require much more work.

"Stimulating the stock market doesn't really do much for the real economy in China. Very few people invest in the stock market compared to other major markets," said Logan Wright, director of China markets research at Rhodium Group.

Chinese households have suffered a massive loss of wealth from a slump in the housing market, amounting to an estimated \$18 trillion, Barclays economists said in a research note earlier this month. It's as if each three-person household in China has lost around \$60,000, an amount that is almost five times China's per capita gross domestic product.

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Property woes The outlook for the real estate industry, which makes up about a quarter of the Chinese economy and 70% of household wealth, remains dim.

"There's not much Beijing can do," Wright said. "In many ways, the adjustment in the property sector is almost complete, and policy hasn't

make matters worse, the population has been shrinking for two years, a demographic shift that could further hobble future growth.

The Chinese government's efforts to encourage births has also failed. More and more young people are delaying marriage and childbirth, if not foregoing them all together. Many feel jaded or burnt out from "involution" — a catchphrase describing the intense competition that has dominated their lives, from striving for academic excellence to building a successful career. Some are resorting to "lying flat" or "letting it rot," a form of passive resistance against society's pressure by doing just enough to get by.

These buzzwords sum up a growing sense of despair among China's disenchanted youth.

Some are finding the arc of their lives increasingly out of sync with the expected upward trajectory described in Xi's "China dream," a grand vision of "unstoppable" national rejuvenation.

Having grown up in an era of breakneck economic growth and ever-improving living standards, China's Gen-Zs are now reckoning with the possibility that they might not do better than their parents, whose generation accepted limited freedoms in exchange for promised prosperity.

Over the past years, China's youth have watched their personal freedoms shrink under Xi's authoritarian rule and their job prospects dim in a flagging economy.

Xi's crackdown on the private sector, from big tech to private tutoring, has eliminated many jobs once available to China's fresh graduates. The youth unemployment rate soared to 18.8% in August, the highest since authorities changed the methodology last year to exclude students.

That poses a potential problem for the Communist Party, which has for decades staked its legitimacy on the country's unprecedented growth. As the economy slows, Xi has bolstered another pillar of the regime's legitimacy: nationalism, which he is expected to invoke to mark the country's 75th anniversary on Tuesday.

But Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, said Chinese leaders are not "planning on giving up the economic performance argument yet."

"They want to restore confidence in the economy, but the most troublesome headache for the Communist Party is they don't have effective solutions to the economic slowdown."

— CNN

Israel cannot afford to transform Lebanon into another Gaza

Michael Jansen

TEAMS of Israeli military strategists, tacticians and intelligence operatives have long planned their campaign against Lebanon's Hizbollah. Its opening of a second front in Israel's deadly and devastating Gaza war was meant to put pressure on Israel and its US proxy to end the Gaza war. This failed. But the exchanges provided the opportunity and cover for the Israelis to design attacks to eliminate Hizbollah. This will also fail as Hizbollah is deeply rooted in Lebanon.

While Hizbollah and the Israeli army traded cross-border rocket and drone strikes calculated not to escalate into an Israeli war on Lebanon, Israeli planners began their campaign with systematic strikes against Hizbollah commanders with specific expertise and proceeded with 3,000 exploding pagers and walkie-talkies which killed 39 and wounded hundreds of Hizbollah fighters, administrators, and followers. While hits on commanders continued, Hizbollah stuck to the rules of engagement tacitly agreed on October 8th last year when the exchanges of fire began.

Claiming Hizbollah hid its arms and bombs in civilian garages and kitchens Israel struck villages, towns and cities in southern and eastern Lebanon, displacing tens of thousands of residents and creating chaos. Many flocked into the Dahiya stronghold in east Beirut which Israel bombed heavily on Friday night, targeting an alleged Hizbollah headquarters with US-provided Mark 84 2,000-pound (900 kilogramme) bombs, killing Hizbollah Secretary General Sayed Hassan Nasrallah. This strike was a temporary triumph for beleaguered Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu but will not be followed by victories in Lebanon or Gaza, the rescue of 97 Israelis held captive by Hamas in Gaza, or the return of 60,000 Israelis to their homes in northern Israel.

Nasrallah's death does not bring an end to Hizbollah which has replacement leaders and 20,000 active fighters, at least 20,000 trained reservists and an estimated 150,000 ballistic missiles, rockets and armed drones with which to attack Israel. Nasrallah is likely to be succeeded by a clerical cousin, Hashem Safieddine, a senior member of Hizbollah's Shura Council, who could come under local and Iranian pressure to step up attacks on Israel in revenge for Nasrallah's assassination. Born in the Dahya in 1960, Hassan Nasrallah was educated in the Lebanese port city of Tyre where he joined the Shia Amal movement. He taught at a Shia seminary in the eastern city of Baalbek before undertaking religious studies in Iran.

He returned to Lebanon before Israel's 1982 war on Lebanon and shifted to Shia factions which merged into Hizbollah. After Israel assassinated his predecessor Abbas Musawi, Hizbollah's co-founder, Nasrallah, took over and built the armed wing into a formidable fighting force

with effective command-and-control and acquired a large arsenal of short- and long- range rockets, anti-tank missiles, and drones. Nasrallah had an impressive presence and considerable charisma. He was a towering politico-military figure among Lebanon's squabbling politicians. Aware he risked assassination, he delivered his speeches from secret secure locations and did not appear in public for 18 years. His deputy, Naim Qassem, cannot match his expertise, presence and has no charisma.

Israel cannot escape blame for the emergence of Lebanon's Hizbollah. Israel launched its first invasion of southern Lebanon in March 1978 with the aim of driving Palestinian resistance forces north of the Litani river. The Israeli offensive, dubbed "Operation Litani," was mounted in response to a battle with Palestinian (PLO) hijackers of an Israeli bus on the Tel Aviv-Haifa coastal highway. Thirty-eight civilians were killed and 71 wounded.

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During Operation Litani, hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians and 20 Israeli troops were killed and hundreds of thousands of Lebanese were driven from their homes and villages.

The UN Security Council ordered Israel to withdraw its troops and established the UN Interim Emergency Force in Lebanon — UNIFIL. However, Israel's troops remained and counted on local support from the Maronite Christian South Lebanon Army militia created by defected Lebanese Army officer Saad Haddad who operated a notorious prison in the village of Khyam. Undeterred, Palestinian fighters based in the region north of the Litani river conducted strikes on Israeli and Haddad forces.

Despite an August 1991 ceasefire with the PLO, Israel's army invaded Lebanon in June 1982, drove the PLO from Lebanon and engineered the election to Lebanon's presidency of Phalange party leader Bechir Gemayel, who was assassinated in September. Although the perpetrator was not Palestinian, Israeli troops surrounded the

Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila and ushered in Phalangist militiamen who massacred hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese Shias. Meanwhile, Iranian Revolutionary Guards based in eastern Lebanon began training the Lebanese Shia youths who were the vanguard of Hizbollah which has become Iran's major regional asset and Israel's main opponent.

Israel made the mistake of retaining an occupation zone north of the Lebanese border, generating anger and violent opposition from the region's inhabitants and Hizbollah. It built up its forces and attacked Israeli troops and Haddad militiamen, forcing Israeli troops and allied militiamen to pull out in May 2000. Hizbollah was hailed in Lebanon and the region as the first Arab force to end an Israeli occupation.

The euphoria did not last long. An overconfident Hizbollah attacked an Israeli patrol along the border in 2006, precipitating a third Israeli invasion of Lebanon which resulted in a standoff between the two

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sides. This is why Israel has tried to systematically undermine and weaken Hizbollah's armed wing.

But Hizbollah has built a movement with manor social and political importance. Modelled on the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, Shia Hizbollah has rooted itself in disadvantaged Shia communities in the south, the Bekaa, and south Beirut. Hizbollah operates clinics, a major hospital, schools, welfare organisations, and a construction firm. Hizbollah has become a major political party on the Lebanese scene.

After initially competing with the older Shia Amal organisation, Hizbollah has, for many years, collaborated with it and the two have formed the resistance bloc in Lebanon's parliament.

Hizbollah also nominates ministers in Lebanese governments. Like Brotherhood-offshoot Hamas in Gaza, Hizbollah is a major actor on the local level and cannot be expurgated.

While Israel has tried to erase Hamas in Gaza, Israel cannot afford to transform Lebanon into another Gaza, as Netanyahu has threatened to do.

Why South Africa should adopt Namibia's reciprocal visa regime

IN an abrupt move, earlier this year Namibia decided to introduce visa requirements for 31 countries, citing the lack of reciprocity. In June, the government announced the new visa regime will be effective starting April 1, 2025. The countries on the list include 23 European states, six Asian states, and the United States and Canada.

With tourism being a vital sector, critics of this policy argue that it has the potential to deter tourists and stunt the Namibian economy. Eben de Klerk of the Namibian-based Economic Policy Research Association decreed, "There cannot be a win. We just shot ourselves in the foot."

But there are others who also support the move and see in it an opportunity to secure another stream of revenue for the state coffers and to put diplomatic pressure on other countries to lift visas for Namibians.

Namibia's move also provoked a debate in other African countries, where citizens have been increasingly frustrated by absurdly long lists of visa requirements, exhausting queuing at embassies and the overall humiliation of the visa application process.

South Africans, too, have wondered whether they should follow in the footsteps of their Namibian neighbours. In my view, imposing reciprocal visas on foreigners would benefit our country.

South Africa is the third most popular African destination for tourists after Egypt and Morocco. In 2022, tourism brought the country some \$14bn or 3.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employed 2.5 million people. In 2023, the country welcomed 8 million foreign visitors and is expected to achieve pre-COVID levels of 10 million soon.

Tourism is undoubtedly an important enough

sector for South Africa, and some may worry that the imposition of reciprocal visas would be catastrophic for it. Yet the validity of this argument should be scrutinised.

While imposing

South Africans, too, have wondered whether they should follow in the footsteps of their Namibian neighbours. In my view, imposing reciprocal visas on foreigners would benefit our country. South Africa is the third most popular African destination for tourists after Egypt and Morocco. In 2022, tourism brought the country some \$14bn or 3.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employed 2.5 million people. In 2023, the country welcomed 8 million foreign visitors and is expected to achieve pre-COVID levels of 10 million soon. Tourism is undoubtedly an important enough sector for South Africa, and some may worry that the imposition of reciprocal visas would be catastrophic for it. Yet the validity of this argument should be scrutinised.

restrictions on entry by forcing foreigners to apply for visas can significantly affect the number of tourists who visit a country, there is research that suggests that the impact depends on the type of visa.

Lindani Zungu

According to one study of the effect of visas on tourist flows, adopting "more flexible visa policies, such as eVisa (blue), eTA, or

visas-on-arrival" does not have "any significant effect on international tourism flows".

In other words, how a country goes about applying visa restrictions matters. Traditional visas that require a prospective

visitor to collect a myriad of documents, travel to embassies or consulates, fill out applications, wait in long queues and pay exuberant fees are ones

that repel tourists. Visas-on-arrival and e-visas that only require an online application and are cheaper would not necessarily scare off foreigners.

And while certain types of visas may not

affect tourism flows, there is money to be made by introducing them. The fees tourists pay for visas could raise substantial revenue for public administration.

For example, in the first

four years after launching its e-visa programme in 2014, the Indian government earned close to \$210m in revenue from charging between \$25 and \$75 per visa. The fee was determined based on the nationality of the

applicant, keeping in mind visa reciprocity.

The introduction of e-visas based on reciprocity could also help alleviate the bureaucratic burden on the state in processing entry requests. In July, South Africa's new Home Affairs Minister Leon Schreiber decided to extend temporary visa concessions due to a huge backlog in processing. This is clearly a system that needs a major overhaul.

The introduction of an electronic system to process not just tourist but also other types of visas could be part of the solution.

Apart from appreciating the financial and bureaucratic benefits that adopting a reciprocal visa system can have, there is also a moral argument to be made in its favour. Visa regimes around the world overwhelmingly favour citizens of wealthy countries, especially Westerners. This state of affairs is a reflection of the influence the West wields over developing

countries.

Insisting on the principle of reciprocity is one way to address this imbalance of power on the global stage. For a country like South Africa, introducing reciprocal visas can serve as a tool to reaffirm its sovereignty and demonstrate its determination to resist foreign pressures. It is a way to assert its place in the international arena.

As South Africans, we have a choice: to continue to allow our policies to be shaped by others, or take control and insist on fairness and mutual respect in global diplomacy.

The decision to introduce reciprocal visas may be seen by some as a bold move, but in reality, it is a necessary step towards achieving the respect and recognition that South Africa deserves.

It is time to prioritise sovereignty over convenience and ensure that our nation is treated with the same regard that we extend to others.



Newly elected SCCI chief spells out priorities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Newly elected president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Muqem Khan spelt out priorities and major goals set for his next two years tenure during his address at the annual general meeting of the chamber held here on Monday.

SCCI' AGM meeting was attended by Businessman Forum senior leader and former FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, outgoing office bearers of the chamber Fuad Ishaq, Sanaullah Khan, Ejaz Khan Afridi, newly elected Senior Vice President Abdul Jalil Jan, Vice President Shehryar Khan, members of the Election Commission, former presidents and newly

elected executive committee members, traders, industrialists and shopkeepers, especially businessmen from CNG, petroleum sectors in a large number.

Fazal Muqem affirmed commitment to protect rights of the business community, stating that he believed in selfless service of the business community and doors of the chamber will always remain open for them.

The newly elected president strongly opposed the increase in the ratio of taxes and called for reforms to broaden existing tax-base and removal of hurdles in the way of sales and income tax refund.

He demanded a revision in prices of electricity, gas and petroleum products must be made.

Muqem saluted the business community for remaining steadfast despite unfavorable conditions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that relief to the war-affected business community amongst his top-most priority.

He assured the policies would be crafted in consultation with traders and industrialists. He promised to take all chambers on board to stabilize the provincial economy.

Fazal Muqem vowed to initiate efforts to strengthen bilateral trade with neighbouring countries as well as Central Asian republics.

The newly elected president thanked the business community for electing candidates of Businessman Forum with majority in the

SCCI' elections and promised the trust had been laid on them, they will come up with the expectation of leadership and business community.

He reiterated firm resolve that no stone will remain unturned in resolution of the business community issues. He said targets have been set for the next two on his presidentialship will make all out efforts to achieve them.

Ghazanfar Bilour also addressed the event and lauded the services of the outgoing cabinet of the chamber.

He, on the occasion, expressed firm belief that the newly elected SCCI office bearers will work rapidly for betterment, welfare and relief of the business community.



MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani addressing during oath-taking ceremony of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity remained active at the port where four ships namely carrying containers and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile another container terminal MSC Positano also arrived at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 10ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two container ships Kotka and Zhong Gu Bo Hai left the port on Monday morning and Chemicals carrier Victira Kosan is expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo throughput during last 24 hours stood at 152,811 comprising 94,385 tonnes imports cargo and 58,426 tonnes export cargo was handled at the Port, including containerized cargo carried in 3,399 Containers (1,915 TEUs Imports and 1,484 TEUs export).

There are 10ships at outer anchorage of the port, out of them three ships namely MSC Positano, Ashico Victoria and Acadic Park scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice and Chemicals are expected to take berths at QICT, FAP and EVTL respectively on Monday, 30th September-2024, while another container ship Maersk Kinloss is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

Tokyo stocks plunged

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks plunged on Monday as concerns surrounding the economic policies of incoming Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and a stronger yen combined to drive sell-offs. Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average, plummeted 4.8 percent, or 1,910.01 points, to close at 37,919.55.

The uncertainty over Ishiba's economic policy stance, including his openness to increasing taxes on investments and corporations, fueled anxiety in the market.

Additionally, the yen strengthened to 141 per dollar, adding pressure on export-related stocks such as Toyota, Honda and Sony, which saw broad declines.

The broader Topix index also fell on Monday, closing 3.47 percent lower at 2645.94. On the top-tier Prime Market, declining issues outnumbered advancers by 1,505 to 130, with 9 issues remaining unchanged.

Stock Exchange loses 177 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Monday, losing 177.93 points, a negative change of 0.22 percent, closing at 81,114.20 points against 81,292.13 points on the last working day.

A total of 297,994,181 shares were traded during the day as compared to 339,323,128 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs14.103 billion against Rs12.893 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 444 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 132 of them recorded gains and 244 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 68 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were PIA Holding Company with 43,078,126 shares at Rs18.74 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 21,681,706 shares at Rs1.20 per share and Hub Power Company XD with 20,477,310 shares at Rs119.34 per share.

Lucky Core Industries limited witnessed a maxi-

mum increase of Rs30.90 per share price, closing at Rs1,051.03, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Limited with Rs16.71 rise in its per share price to Rs425.54.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs542.49 per share closing at Rs6,804.26 followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs149.94 decline to close at Rs17,075.06.

Rupee sheds 08 paise against dollar: Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 08 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.71 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.63.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278 andRs 279.50 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by Rs1.47 to close at Rs310.66 against the last day's closing of Rs309.19, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.94, whereas an

increase of 88 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs372.12 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs371.24.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise and 01 paise to close at Rs75.60 and Rs74.02 respectively.

Gold prices dip by Rs500 to Rs275,500 per tola: The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs500 and was sold at Rs275,500 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs276,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs428 to Rs236,197 from Rs236,625 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs216,514 from Rs216,907, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs3,050 and Rs2,614.88 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$4 to \$2,653 from \$2,657, the Association reported.

Yousaf takes over as new OICCI president

ISLAMABAD (APP): President and CEO of Faysal Bank Ltd. Yousaf Hussain has been elected as the new president of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI).

In addition to the president, Managing Director and CEO of Nestle Pakistan Ltd, Jason Avancena was elected senior vice president, while Managing Director and CEO of Pakistan Tobacco Company (Pvt) Ltd, Syed Ali Akbar will serve as vice president, said a news release.

The newly elected Managing Committee also included key business leaders from sectors such as banking, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing, further solidifying OICCI's position as a major player in Pakistan's economic landscape.

The new Managing Committee for the 2024-2026 term included Yousaf Hussain, Faysal Bank Ltd, Jason Avancena, Nestle Pakistan Ltd, Syed Ali Akbar, Pakistan Tobacco Company (Pvt) Ltd, Aamir Hafeez Ibrahim, Pakistan Mobile Communications

Ltd. (Jazz), Ahmed Khan Bozai, Citibank NA, Pakistan, Asif Ahmad, IBM Italia SPA, Farheen Salman Amir, Lipton Pakistan Ltd, Fahd K Chinoy, Pakistan Cables Ltd, Hafsa Shamisie, Roche Pakistan Ltd, Javed Ghulam Mohammad, Martin Dow Marker Ltd, M Adil Khattak, Attock Refinery and Muhammad Jawaid Iqbal, United Bank Ltd. leadership team would focus on shaping policies and fostering a more investment-friendly climate in Pakistan.

During his address to members, the president acknowledged the complex economic environment Pakistan faces, pointing to both challenges and opportunities. "Pakistan today stands at a critical crossroads. While inflation is easing and we're seeing a slight recovery in GDP growth, the country still faces structural challenges. However, these challenges also represent opportunities for pushing necessary reforms, driving innovation, and fostering a business environment that promotes sustainable development," he said.

Outgoing president

Rehan Shaikh, who will continue to serve as an ex-officio member of the Managing Committee, highlighted the Chamber's role in engaging with government bodies and offering strategic solutions to pressing economic challenges. "In the 2023-2024 term, OICCI actively showcased Pakistan's investment opportunities to foreign delegations and potential investors, emphasizing the country's potential for growth and positioning it as an attractive destination for FDI.

Their efforts remain focused on unlocking Pakistan's future economic prospects," Shaikh remarked.

With over 25 years of professional experience, Yousaf Hussain has held various leadership roles in multinational organizations and has been actively engaged in strategic initiatives within the banking and financial sectors.

He has worked closely with the State Bank of Pakistan, positioning himself as a key figure in driving policy discussions around economic reform and growth.

Meezan Bank and Hamdard sign an agreement

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, and Hamdard Laboratories (Waqf) Pakistan, a pioneer in Eastern medicine, have marked a significant enhancement in their financial collaboration with the successful integration of advanced transaction banking services.

This milestone was celebrated at a formal signing ceremony held at Hamdard Laboratories' headquarters.

The agreement was signed by Ms. Sadia Rashid, Chairperson & Chief Mutawallia of Hamdard Laboratories, and Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO of Meezan Bank. Key executives from both organizations were

present, including Farrukh Imdad - Director General (Hamdard), Faisal Nadeem - Chief Operating Officer (Hamdard), M. Abdullah Ahmed, Group Head - Transaction & International Banking (Meezan) and Zia Ul Hasan, Group Executive - Banking & Operations (Meezan).

The new agreement introduces a comprehensive collections integration between Meezan Bank's state-of-the-art cash management system and Hamdard Laboratories' SAP S4 HANA system. This digitalized solution aims to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of Hamdard Laboratories' distributor collections and payments, supporting

streamlined financial operations and greater operational effectiveness.

Ms. Sadia Rashid, Chairperson & Chief Mutawallia of Hamdard Laboratories, emphasized the significance of the partnership: "The integration of advanced transaction banking services with Meezan Bank represents a major leap forward for our organization. This collaboration will significantly refine our financial processes and bolster our capacity to serve our community with increased efficiency and precision."

Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO of Meezan Bank, highlighted the impact of the new services: "We are excited to advance our part-

nership with Hamdard Laboratories through this integration. Our cutting-edge digitalized payment and collection solutions are designed to provide seamless and efficient financial services, reinforcing our commitment to being the main banker and a trusted partner for Hamdard Laboratories."

The signing ceremony also celebrated the ongoing relationship between Meezan Bank and Hamdard Laboratories, which has included Payments and Collections services since 2021. The expanded agreement underscores Meezan Bank's role as a key financial partner, driving innovation and efficiency in transaction banking.

Honorary Consul General of Pakistan hosts dinner

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Honorary Consul General of Ghana in Pakistan Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul Umar Shahid Butt hosted a dinner in honor of Honorary Consul Generals of different countries at their residence. Additional Foreign Secretary for Africa and former ambassador to Morocco Hamid Asghar Khan was the chief guest, while the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atta Jan, was the guest of honor.

Among those who participated in the ceremony were Ambassador of Jordan, Dr. Maen KHREASAT, Ambassador of Nepal, Tapas Adhikari, Honorary Consul General of Lithuania, Masood Khan, Honorary Consul General of Iceland Saad Mehmood, Honorary Consul General of Finland Asad Ansari, Honorary Consul General of Mexico Faisal Munir, Honorary Consul General of Turkey and former Federal Minister Salim Saifullah, Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic for KPK Asad Saifullah, Honorary Consul General of Tunisia Imad Rasheed, Bosnia's Consul General for KPK Asad Salim. Former Ambassadors Ghalib Iqbal, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, Khalid Masood, Khalid Mehmood and Deputy Heads of Mission of Japan, Finland and Netherlands also attended the event.

The event was hosted to



discuss the role of Honorary Consuls in diplomacy. Particularly in terms of connectivity and search for new markets for trade and investment. The participants discussed the importance of the economy and emphasized that proposals and activities for increasing trade should be the focus of Honorary Consul General's work.

Additional Foreign Secretary Hamid Asghar Khan shed light on initiatives for economic diplomacy with Africa, as well as the links between the diplomatic community and countries. Honorary Consuls in Pakistan. He said that in an increasingly complex and challenging landscape, the government of Pakistan has started the process of appointing honorary consuls' abroad under a considered policy to enhance the outreach of diplomatic Missions.

The role of honorary consuls is beneficial in this regard. Africa is a very important continent with a population of 1.5 billion and a large part of this pop-

ulation consists of young people who have a growing need for goods and services that Pakistan can provide.

At present, Pakistan's trade with Africa is 5.2 billion dollars, which needs to be increased. Atta Jan, Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan, speaking on this occasion, said that Pakistan is a great country with a huge populationand has immense potential for development. Honorary Consuls' are important for promoting better relations between Pakistan and other countries. Honorary Consul Generals are also key in promoting economic and trade relations between Pakistan and other countries. Mr. Saleem Saifullah said that Honorary Consul Generals should be welcomed as assets and useful tools by the government.

During the broader discussion, it was stated that there are 145 Honorary Consul Generals in Pakistan. Speaking on this occasion, host Umar Shahid Butt said that

Honorary Consul Generals can play a key role in improving bilateral ties.

Their primary mission is to promote economic and trade ties between their home country and the country they represent. A well organized Honorary Consular Corps will strengthen relations with the government and the business community.

Consul General of Lithuania Masoud Khan said that Lithuania is a small country in terms of population but it is a country with a 55 billion euro economy, and is the world's leading provider of nanotechnology, laser technology, and bio-technology.

Lithuania is a knowledge-based country with enormous investment opportunities. Former Ambassador Ghalib Iqbal said that a strong will is needed to make the Honorary Consular Forum a vibrant functioning body. A representative should be appointed to act as a liaison between the Foreign Office and the Honorary Consul Generals.

LCCI new office-bearers take oath at AGM

LAHORE (APP): The newly elected Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Mian Abu Zar Shad, Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry took oath during the LCCI Annual General Meeting and pledged to work for the cause of business community and the economy here on Monday.

Former Presidents and senior group leaders of LCCI Mian Anjum Nisar, Muhammad Ali Mian, outgoing Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, outgoing Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Faheem Rehman Sehgal, Ali Hassam Asghar and Khawaja Shahzaib Akram

addressed the gathering.

In his address, LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad reflected on his 28-year-long journey and lauded the historical victory of securing 32 seats in the chamber's election. He acknowledged the leadership of former Presidents Mian Anjum Nisar and Muhammad Ali Mian whose guidance has always been instrumental in advancing business interests.

The newly elected president also expressed gratitude to Faheem ur Rehman Sehgal, Khawaja Shahzaib Akram, Ali Hassam Asghar, Babar Mahmood and other business leaders for their support.

Mian Abuzar Shad welcomed the recent economic

steps taken by the government particularly the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) viewing it as a significant move towards stabilizing the economy. He highlighted the government's efforts to improve infrastructure, create investment opportunities and revive economic activity, which has put the economy back on track.

The president further stressed the importance of involving the business community in policy-making saying that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recognized the government's positive economic measures, resulting in the release of \$1.03 billion out of the approved

\$7 billion package. He appreciated the efforts of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik in achieving this milestone.

Former Presidents Mian Anjum Nisar and Muhammad Ali Mian extended their gratitude to the business community for their unwavering support and underscored their resolve to continue working for the betterment of industry and trade, as well as the prosperity of the national economy.

Mian Abuzar Shad also shared significant economic improvements, stating that inflation has dropped from 38 percent in January

2023 to 9.6 percent in September 2024, while the policy rate has been reduced from 22 percent to 17.5 percent, with further efforts underway to bring it into single digits. He said that Pakistan's GDP growth has improved from a negative 0.29 percent to 2.4 percent with plans to further boost it to 3.5 percent.

In the realm of large-scale manufacturing, the president said that growth had shifted from -5.4 percent to 2.4 percent, foreign exchange reserves are improving and the value of the Pakistani rupee is stabilizing. He stressed that all national issues must be resolved through dialogue and Parliament, urging that it is the collective responsi-

bility of all to ensure the country's progress.

The LCCI President expressed support for the government's decision to expand the tax net, emphasizing that this would alleviate the burden on existing taxpayers. He encouraged members to submit their tax-related suggestions to LCCI and called on the government to simplify the tax system and documentation process for small traders who are struggling due to inflation and difficult business conditions.

The president also voiced support for the government's decision to digitize the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), which, he said, would eliminate harassment and misuse of

discretionary powers, thereby bringing new taxpayers into the net and boosting tax revenue. He called for urgent measures to control the high cost of doing business, reduce electricity tariffs and promote exports, stressing that political stability is crucial for economic stability.

Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman committed to advocate for the rights of the business community within government corridors and pledged to make his office accessible to all.

He expressed determination to deliver on promises made during the election campaign and ensure exemplary service to the business community.

Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry thanked the leadership for their trust and promised to carry out his duties with integrity and diligence. He pledged to utilize the chamber's resources to promote the prosperity and development of its members.

Outgoing Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt presented their two-year performance, highlighting the chamber's achievements during their tenure.

Earlier, Election Commissioner Nasrullah Mughal announced the final results of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) elections.



In brief

Irfan wins Squash C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's squash veteran, Group Captain (ret'd) Irfan Asghar, claimed victory at the 6th Asian Master Squash Championship 2024, held in Macau, China. Dominating the final, Irfan outplayed his opponent, Korean Ryon Hoe Koo, with an impressive 3-0 win, securing the title for Pakistan. The final scores stood at 11-6, 11-4 and 14-12. This marks Irfan's second triumph in the Asian Master Squash Championship, having previously won the title in 2010. His victory reinforces his status as a leading figure in Pakistan's squash scene. Currently serving as the Director Academies of the PSF, he continues to inspire the next generation of players.

Neymar trains again with Saudi team

RIYADH (AFP): Brazil superstar Neymar announced his return to team training with his Saudi club Al Hilal on Monday after nearly a year out with a left knee injury. The 32-year-old moved from Paris Saint-Germain in a blockbuster deal in August 2023 but played only five matches before rupturing his meniscus and anterior cruciate ligament on international duty in October. "Happy to be back in the group," Neymar posted on Instagram, with pictures of him running and kicking the ball, watched by Al Hilal's Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus. After surgery, Neymar resumed individual training in July. His return to competitive games will depend on "his technical readiness and the coach's decision", a club official who asked to remain anonymous told AFP. Brazil coach Dorival Junior urged patience for Neymar's recovery last week as he left the forward out of his squad for the upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Chile and Peru. Al Hilal, the reigning Saudi champions, have not yet registered Neymar for the current Saudi Pro League season, which began last month. But the former Barcelona player, with a reported salary of about 100 million euros (\$112 million) a year, is listed to play in the AFP Champions League, Asia's biggest club tournament. Despite Neymar's absence, Al Hilal won the Saudi league at a canter last season, going unbeaten with 31 wins and three draws. The Riyadh club also clocked up a record 34 consecutive wins in all competitions before being stopped in the Champions League semi-finals by the UAE's Al Ain.

Courtois suffers abductor injury

MADRID (Reuters): Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has been diagnosed with an injury to the abductor of his left leg, the La Liga club said on Monday. Courtois played the full 90 minutes in Sunday's 1-1 draw at Atletico Madrid, but is now expected to be unavailable for Wednesday's Champions League game against Lille and Saturday's league match with Villarreal. The Belgian, who recently said he will not play for the national team while Domenico Tedesco is in charge, has started all 10 games for Real this season, after missing most of last season with a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in his left knee. Courtois did return to the Real side in May, and was in the team which won the Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund, but was not a part of Belgium's squad at Euro 2024.

Masood: Pakistan aims to break win drought against England



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan captain Shan Masood on Monday backed Babar Azam to find his batting touch as his side look to end their win drought in the three-match Test series against England starting next week. Pakistan have gone winless in 10 home Tests since February 2021, the latest humiliation being swept 2-0 by Bangladesh earlier this month. They also lost 3-0 in Australia earlier this year. "It's not acceptable for Pakistan to not win a home Test for that long and we accept the responsibility for that," said Masood at a press conference in Karachi. "As a cricketing nation

we all are hurt right now." Masood was confident that batting great Azam would soon be back to his best after managing just 64 runs in the two Bangladesh Tests. "We all know Babar is one of the top batters in the world and despite not scoring big runs the good thing is that he is not out of form, we have to back him," said Masood.

Azam has not passed fifty in Tests in 16 innings dating back to December 2022. England arrive in Pakistan on October 2 with the first Test starting in Multan five days later. The second Test is also in Multan from October 15 while the final match is

in Rawalpindi from October 24.

"I assure you that everyone is eager to stage a comeback in this series and take Pakistan cricket in a good direction," said Masood. England swept the series 3-0 when they last visited Pakistan in 2022.

"For me, pressure is a thing of privilege because leading your country is a great honor but with it comes responsibility," said Masood, whose captaincy tenure runs until May 2025.

"If results are good then I will serve, if not then I will be punished. I don't run away from challenges and this coming series is also very challenging."

Jaiswal leads India batting charge in rain-hit BD Test

KANPUR (AFP): Blistering half-centuries by Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul led India's batting onslaught as the hosts tried to force a result in the weather-hit second Test against Bangladesh on Monday, despite two-and-a-half days being lost.

India declared their whirlwind first innings on 285-9 from just 34.4 overs, after Bangladesh were bowled out for 233 on a whirlwind day four in Kanpur. Bangladesh had to face a tricky 11 overs before stumps and reached 26-2, still 26 runs in arrears, after Ravichandran Ashwin trapped Zakir Hasan lbw for 10 and then bowled nightwatchman Hasan Mahmud for four.

Shadman Islam was on seven and Mominul Haque, who made an unbeaten 107 earlier in Bangladesh's first innings, was yet to score. Left-hander Jaiswal smashed 72 off 51 balls including 12 fours and two sixes as India reached 100 off just 61 balls, breaking their own record for the fastest start to a Test innings. It beat the 74 balls they faced to reach the mark against the West Indies last year.

"That was our message this morning, you know,

with losing two days of the match... that positive intent was going to be key," India's bowling coach Morne Morkel told reporters. "I thought the way the boys went up with the ball upfront was incredible to see. To show the intent with the bat was awesome," he added. "Our game plan was to see how can we get the winning result." The former South African fast bowler said the crowds loved the batting show, which had "the T20 feel about it".

Jadeja 300 Test wickets. Jaiswal put on 55 off 24 balls for the first wicket with skipper Rohit Sharma, who was bowled by Mehidy for 23 in the fourth over. Jaiswal kept up the onslaught, reaching his fifty off 31 balls before he was bowled by Hasan Mahmud. But Virat Kohli, who hit 47 off 35 balls, and Rahul, whose 68 came of 43 balls, kept up the momentum.

Bangladesh spinners Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraz took four wickets each.

"They played to a plan and I was surprised," Mehidy said. "But after two to three overs we knew their plan and we played to our strength.

Just tried to do some damage to their innings." Former captain Shakib, 37, announced his international retirement on Thursday and could be playing his last Test if he is unable to return home for a scheduled South Africa series.

Earlier, Ravindra Jadeja, with his left-arm spin, took the final Bangladesh wicket of Khaled Ahmed, caught and bowled, to reach 300 Test wickets. He became the seventh Indian bowler to reach 300 on a list headed by Anil Kumble with 619 Test victims.

"It's special," said Jadeja. "I've been playing Test cricket 10 years and I've finally reached this milestone. Feeling proud of myself." Bangladesh had resumed at 107-3 under clear skies after rain and a soggy outfield had washed out the whole of Saturday and Sunday. Only 35 overs had been possible on Friday's opening day. Left-hander Mominul, who began the day on 40, reached his 13th Test hundred before lunch with a boundary off Ashwin. India led the two-match series 1-0 after they won the opener in Chennai by 280 runs.



KANPUR: Virat Kohli got some boundaries going.

France star Griezmann retires from int'l football

PARIS (AFP): France's 2018 World Cup-winning star Antoine Griezmann on Monday announced his retirement from international football, bringing to an end a 10-year career with his country.

"It is with a heart full of memories that I am closing this chapter of my life," France vice-captain Griezmann, 33, wrote on X. "It is with profound emotion that I am announcing my retirement as a France player, after 10 incredible years," he added in a video accompanying his message.

"It is time for me today to turn a page and hand over to the new generation." The Atletico Madrid forward made his France debut in March 2014 and won 137 caps, a figure beaten only by his former teammate Hugo Lloris (145) and 1998 World Cup winner Lilian Thuram (142).

Griezmann is also fourth in France's list of all-time goal-scorers with 44, behind only record marksman Olivier Giroud, Thierry Henry and current captain Kylian Mbappe.

Griezmann scored in France's 4-2 win over



Croatia in the final of the 2018 World Cup in Moscow, having previously helped his country reach the final of Euro 2016, a tournament he ended as top scorer with six goals.

Griezmann was also outstanding for Les Bleus on their run to the 2022 World Cup final, which they lost on penalties to Argentina in Qatar.

His last major tournament will be remembered less fondly, as neither he nor his team found their best form at Euro 2024 despite making it to the semi-finals. He also played at the 2014 World Cup and at Euro 2020, as well as helping France win

the UEFA Nations League in 2021. Griezmann's final appearance for France came in a Nations League win at home to Belgium in Lyon, not far from his hometown of Macon in Burgundy, earlier this month.

The former Real Sociedad and Barcelona player had insisted recently he had no intention to withdraw from the national team.

'Magnificent career' France coach Didier Deschamps said in a message shared by national team staff that he felt "a lot of emotion" on hearing the news. "After much reflection, Antoine has decided to call time on his magnificent

international career. We had a long discussion about this recently," Deschamps said. "It was often said that Antoine was my favourite. We did have a very strong relationship, and that will remain intact." Griezmann's decision to quit is further confirmation that an era has come to an end for the French side.

Lloris and centre-back Raphael Varane both retired from international duty in the wake of the 2022 World Cup, with the latter quitting football entirely last week at the age of just 31. Giroud stopped playing for his country in the wake of this year's Euros in Germany.

"I am convinced that the future is promising and I can't wait to see the new generation shine," Griezmann added. Deschamps will name his next France squad this Thursday ahead of Nations League matches against Israel in Budapest on October 10 and Belgium in Brussels four days later. Mbappe will not be involved in those games as the Real Madrid superstar is currently sidelined due to a thigh injury.

Iftikhar Ahmed blames journalists for 'ruining cricket'

FAISALABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan all-rounder Iftikhar Ahmed expressed his dissatisfaction with the media after the Champions One-Day Cup final here at Iqbal Stadium on Sunday.

Iftikhar, who led Markhors in the absence of regular captain Mohammad Rizwan, took out his frustration on the media personnel, blaming them for the downfall of cricket.

"Cricket is ruined because of you people," Iftikhar Ahmed said, referring to the Pakistani media.

"Please don't hype players after one good innings. Let them prove their worth through consistent performances," the all-rounder added.

Iftikhar Ahmed then urged the media to stop comparing rising players with greats of the game and also to let them perform in



all three formats.

"You hype someone after one innings, and then when he fails for Pakistan, you start questioning his selection. For God's sake, let a player top in all three formats and then speak about him. You guys start saying that we have found the new Inzamam-ul-Haq and things like that."

Shadab Khan-led

run opening stand between Umar Siddiqi and Abdul Wahid Bangalzai.

For Markhors, Akif Javed and Mohammad Imran claimed two wickets each while Shahnawaz Dahani bagged one wicket.

Markhors' captain Iftikhar Ahmed opted to bat first in the final but his decision backfired as his side was bundled out on a meagre 122.

Experienced opener Fakhar Zaman remained the top-scorer for Markhors with a 49-ball 46, followed by young wicketkeeper batter Haseebullah Khan, who made a scratchy 27.

The rest of the Markhors' batters failed against a ruthless Panthers' bowling attack, jointly led by Mohammad Hsain and Sajid Khan, who took three wickets each.

Sinner defies doping case to join Alcaraz, Medvedev in China Open last four

BEIJING (AFP): Top-ranked Jannik Sinner defied the controversy surrounding his doping case to join Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev on Monday in the China Open semi-finals.

The defending champion will face either Andrey Rublev or Chinese wildcard Bu Yunchaokete after defeating Jiri Lehecka 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) for his 14th win in a row.

The 23-year-old is under the microscope after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said on Saturday it was seeking a ban of up to two years after he twice tested positive for traces of the steroid clostebol in March.

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) cleared the Italian of wrongdoing in August and allowed him to continue playing, and weeks later he won the US Open for his second major title.

The ITIA accepted Sinner's explanation that the drug entered his system when his physiotherapist used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy to the player.

WADA has appealed the case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

On the tennis court, the world number one recovered from a set down to win his first two matches in Beijing but he made a fast start against the 37th-ranked Lehecka from the Czech Republic.

Sinner surged through the first set of their quarter-final but there was little between them in the second as they traded some thunderous groundstrokes.

They went to a tie break, where Sinner saved two set points on the way to victory.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz plays last year's runner-up Medvedev after emerging from a tense first set to defeat Russian seventh seed Karen Khachanov 7-5, 6-2.

Russian third seed Medvedev beat unseeded Italian Flavio Cobolli 6-2, 6-4.

Alcaraz and 2021 US Open champion Medvedev have met seven times before with the Spaniard winning five of their meetings, most recently in the semi-finals at Wimbledon.

"When he's in the zone he's probably the best player in the world," Medvedev said of the second seed.

"I feel like now he's in the zone, so it's a great test for me."

Osaka v Gauff 'battle'

In the women's draw, Naomi Osaka set up a last-16 clash with Coco Gauff while top seed Aryna Sabalenka and Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen both sailed through.

Four-time major champion Osaka defeated American Katie Volynets 6-3, 6-2 and faces American fourth seed Gauff in a showdown of former US Open title-holders.

"It's definitely going to be a battle -- who wants to take control of the point first," said Osaka, a former number one now ranked 73.

"And I think it's going to be me."

Osaka is playing her first tournament under Patrick Mouratoglou, the Frenchman best known for being the long-time former coach of Serena Williams.

The 26-year-old Japanese won four majors from 2018 to 2021 -- the US Open and Australian Open, both twice.

She is also a former winner in Beijing and has said she feels at home on the hard courts of the Chinese capital.

But Osaka has struggled for consistency since returning to tennis in January after the birth of her daughter Shai. Her best results after becoming a parent have been two quarter-final appearances.

World number two Sabalenka will take some stopping after the US Open champion swatted aside Ashlyn Krueger 6-2, 6-2 for her 14th victory in a row. She plays another American next in Madison Keys.

Zheng, the home hero playing in China for the first time since winning gold in Paris, rolled over Nadia Podoroska of Argentina 6-3, 6-2.

Jasmine Paolini became the biggest casualty so far when the third seed was beaten 6-4, 6-0 by 31st-seeded Magda Linette.

PCB announces ticket prices for England Tests

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The tickets for the three-match Test series between Pakistan and England will go on sale online today from 1700 PST at PCB.tcs.com.pk. Also, to facilitate fans, the physical tickets will be available to purchase from different outlets from 4 October after 0900am (details attached here).

The series is part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25, with the first and second Test matches to be played at the Multan Cricket Stadium (MCS) from 7 to 19 October. The third Test match will be played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium (RCS) from 24 to 28 October.

Also, box offices outside match venues (MCS and RCS)

will be operational a day prior to the Test matches.

To encourage fans to come in large numbers, the entrance to the General enclosures (Hanif Muhammad and Mushtaq Ahmed) will be free on opening day of both Test matches in Multan. Additionally, entry to the premium enclosures (Miran Baksh, Shoaib Akhtar, Sohail Tanvir and Yasir Arafat) will be free for the first day of the Rawalpindi Test as well.

For the first Test, from Tuesday to Thursday (Day 2, 3 and 4), General enclosure tickets will be priced at PKR 50, while the fans can buy Hanif Muhammad and Mushtaq Ahmed enclosures tickets for

PKR 100 on the fifth and final day. For First-class enclosures (Wasim Akram and Elahi Brothers), tickets will be available at PKR 100 for four days of the first Test, while the tickets will cost PKR 200 for fans witnessing the action on the fifth day. For Premium enclosures (Javed Miandad and Zaheer Abbas), tickets will be available for PKR 200 each from Monday to Thursday (Day 1, 2, 3 and 4), while fans can witness fifth day's action from the same enclosures for PKR 300.

VIP Enclosures (Fazal Mahmood and Imran Khan) and PCB Gallery (Inzamam ul Haq) tickets will be available for fans for PKR 300 and PKR 2,000,

respectively for first four days of the first Test match. On the fifth day, VIP enclosures tickets will be available at PKR 400 and PCB Gallery (Inzamam ul Haq enclosure) tickets will be available at PKR 2,500. PCB Gallery ticket includes lunch as well.

For the second Test match to be played from 15 to 19 October at the same venue, tickets of general enclosures for Wednesday and Thursday (Day 2 and 3), will be available at PKR 50, while general enclosures tickets for the fourth and fifth day's play will be available at PKR 100.

For first-class and premium enclosures, fans can purchase tickets at PKR 100 and PKR

200, respectively for first three days of the Test match. For fourth and fifth day's action, tickets of first-class and premium enclosures will be accessible to fans at PKR 200 and PKR 300, respectively.

For fans willing to watch action from VIP enclosures and PCB Gallery can get tickets for PKR 300 and PKR 2,000, respectively for the first three days of the Test, while for both places, tickets on Friday and Saturday (Day 4 and 5), will be available at PKR 400 and PKR 2,500, respectively.

For the third Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, entry to premium enclosures (Miran Baksh, Shoaib Akhtar,

Sohail Tanvir and Yasir Arafat) will be free on the opening day. For the second day, the tickets of the premium enclosures will be available at PKR 200, while for the remaining days of the third Test, the premium enclosures tickets will be available to fans at PKR 300. VIP enclosures (Imran Khan and Javed Miandad) tickets will cost PKR 400 for the first two days and PKR 500 for the remaining days.

The seats at the PCB Gallery, which includes lunch as well, will be available at PKR 2,000 for action on Thursday and Friday (Day 1 and 2), while on the remaining days of the Test match, fans can purchase gallery tickets for PKR 2,500.



In brief

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Sihala College, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 AM Tariq Shaheed Feeder, From 08:00 To 12:00 Noon Golra, Ali Market, Bostan Road Feeders and surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 179,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 179,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 155,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1537.70 feet and was 139.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 94,100 cusecs and 85,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1215.90 feet, which was 167.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 11,600 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 93,000, 85,300, 69,300 and 31,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

CPO holds open court

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani held an open court to address citizens complaints here on Monday, informed police spokesman. The senior police officials including SSP investigation, SDPOs, and SHO were present on the occasion. During the open court at Airport police station, CPO Hamdani listened to various complaints and promptly issued orders for the concerned officers to take action. The CPO further directed the concerned officers to take legal action and report on the marked applications within the given time frame. He emphasized the importance of addressing citizens' issues at the police station level, following the guidelines set by Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar. CPO Hamdani reiterated a commitment to excellent service delivery, stating that there would be zero tolerance for any delays in addressing complaints. He highlighted that, in line with the Chief Minister of Punjab's vision, timely and effective resolution of issues raised by citizens remained a top priority.

Robbers gang busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant operation, police have arrested a three-member gang involved in multiple robbery incidents, including a woman, said police spokesman. The gang, led by Danish, also known as Dani, is accused of snatching a motorcycle and cash from a delivery boy two weeks ago. The police seized the stolen motorcycle and cash during the arrests. Danish and his accomplices, Hamid and Sahrish, were also involved in the incident that took place month ago. Danish injured a 7-year-old girl by firing during a robbery. Initial report suggested that the gang carried out their illegal activities after conducting surveillance in the area.

Pakistan, Oman join forces for interfaith harmony: Salik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain has emphasized the need for Pakistan and Oman to work together in promoting religious harmony, peace, and tolerance through interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Speaking during his three-day visit to Oman, he made these remarks during a meeting with his Omani counterpart Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Said bin Khalfan Al Mamari.

Salik said the challenges faced by the Muslim world today require the promotion of unity, tolerance, and religious harmony. He stressed the importance of unity

among Muslim countries, particularly in the current global context, which demands efforts to promote harmony, tolerance, and peace. He highlighted that dialogue between religions and civilizations is essential for global peace, and that respect and tolerance are integral to Islamic teachings.

Salik lauded Oman's security forces for their swift response following the attack on a mosque in Muscat in July, which prevented further escalation. He also proposed initiatives for exchanges between religious scholars and experts, to deepen the understanding of Islamic teachings through joint conferences and seminars on key religious topics. Salik further suggested

establishing student exchange programmes between religious institutions of both countries, focusing on the study of Shariah, Quranic teachings, and Islamic history.

The two officials discussed various proposals to address growing trends of religious intolerance, terrorism, and sectarianism, while also fostering peace and interfaith harmony. During the meeting, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in countering extremism and promoting interfaith harmony.

They agreed on potential cooperation to improve the curriculum of religious schools (madrasas) in line with contemporary Islamic teachings.

Danyal visits hospital to inquire after injured policemen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Monday visited Asfandyar Bukhari District Hospital Attock to inquire after the police personnel injured during the protest of a political party on the weekend.

He personally met all the injured policemen and lauded their sheer discipline and patience during the violent protests of a political party. According to the police, some 32 personnel were injured, with nine in critical condition.

Paying tribute over their bravery and valour, Danyal said: "Despite facing brutal attacks, these officers foiled a conspiracy to spread chaos in the country." An injured constable shared his ordeal with the Parliamentary Secretary that how six protesters had beaten him with sticks for 15 minutes, leaving him with head injuries and a broken leg.

Another officer said that he was also beaten and dragged on the ground, and

briefly abducted by the protesters. District Police Officer (DPO) Attock Sardar Ghias, on the occasion, said 90 percent of the cops had sustained head injuries or broken limbs.

He said that strict legal action would be taken against the culprits for the violence. "Those who take the law into their hands, will be brought to justice". He said the brave cops were the real heroes of Attock. Following the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the injured officers were getting full medical care, he added. The injured officers expressed their gratitude to Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, saying that his visit would definitely boost their morale.

Speaking on the occasion, Danyal Chaudhry condemned the culprits, reportedly affiliated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), for using barbed sticks and weapons to hit and injure the police officers. He acknowledged that a major disaster was averted as the protest could have been escalated

towards Rawalpindi.

"This could have been a bigger disaster than the May 9 arson incidents," he added. Danyal Chaudhry presented bouquets of flowers to all the injured police personnel on behalf of the prime minister. He said that the prime minister had ordered to provide all medical facilities to the injured police personnel. He was accompanied by Members of the National Assembly from Attock district Sheikh Aftab and Malik Suhail.

Hospital Superintendent Dr Jawad said that the injured officers were being given complete medical care, while those with minor injuries had been discharged.

The injured officers included Constable Qasim, Constable Khurram Shah, Commando Zahoor Shah, Muhammad Usman, Aziz, and Shahzad, all of whom suffered severe injuries. Two officers, Shahzad and Tayyab, were abducted and tortured before being rescued from an unknown location.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath visited Federal General Hospital Chak Shahzad. —APP Photo

Building resilience, infrastructure vital for resilient-society: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam said that empowering disaster-vulnerable communities with resources and skills to sustain the impacts of recurring and intensifying natural disasters in the country is crucial for reducing their vulnerability over time.

"Providing necessary training and resources help communities better prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters and this is inevitable for enhancing their climate-resilience. Because, equipping individuals with skills and resources can lead to sustainable livelihoods, helping communities bounce back economically, socially and psychologically after a disaster," She stressed.

Addressing as chief guest at a high-level dialogue 'The Resilient Reflections' here on Monday, the Romina highlighted, "Communities, infrastructure and ecosystems are interconnected. Building resilience in one area positively impacts the others, creating a more sustainable and adaptive environment overall."

Highlighting the significance of community empowerment with resources, knowledge and skills for disaster resilience, Romina Khurshid remarked that when empowered with

necessary resources and skills, the resilient communities are better equipped to withstand and recover from natural disasters.

However, "by fostering local leadership and providing education on disaster preparedness, resources and skills to recover, we can enhance the safety and well-being of our climate-vulnerable communities", she said. The event was organised jointly by Islamic Relief, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and Asian Development Bank in support with Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ministry and attended by senior officials of federal and provincial organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations, academia, researchers and media.

She said further that as Pakistan continues to grapple with the escalating impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, flooding and resource scarcity, the present government is taking all-out coping measures in collaboration with relevant stakeholders for building resilience and adaptive capacity of the communities, their livelihoods, ecosystems and public infrastructures.

Romina Khurshid told the participants that there is

need to understand that building resilience is not just a strategy; it's a necessity for our future, which is at stake because of unfolding climate crisis.

"Achieving resilient future, there is dire need for all stakeholders including federal and provincial government organisations and other national and international civil society organizations to work closely to empower vulnerable communities with skills and resources, strengthen public infrastructure and protect ecosystems to navigate the challenges ahead for sustainable and resilient future," the PM's climate aide remarked.

For this strengthening infrastructure, Romina Khurshid Alam said, is crucial for economic stability and public safety, adding that upgrading roads, bridges, and water management systems ensures that they can endure the impacts of climate change, reducing the risk of catastrophic failures.

Recognizing the multifaceted risks that Pakistan faces, including frequent flooding, droughts, and seismic activity, she said that empowering local communities through a holistic approach that integrates environmental sustainability, disaster risk reduction, and community engagement is crucial.



ISLAMABAD: Flags of Pakistan and Malaysia adorn Zero Point Interchange, welcoming Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for to Pakistan in the first week of October. —APP Photo

ANF seizes 45 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 45 kg drugs worth Rs 4.2 million and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 450 grams hashish and 20 grams intoxicated tablets were recovered near a university located on Raiwind Road Lahore and an accused was arrested.

130 grams ice and 40 grams intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused rounded up near a university located in Johar Town, Lahore.

120 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Kakpul Islamabad. The accused confessed to selling drugs to the students in educational institutions.

4.8 kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle held near M-1 Toll Plaza Islamabad and an accused was arrested during the operation.

400 grams hashish was found near the university in Hyderabad and an accused was arrested.

During another operation in Hyderabad, 350 grams hashish was recovered from a drug dealer near a hospital. The accused confessed to providing drugs in educational institutions.

1.3 kg hashish and 200 grams ice were recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Sector F-10 center, Islamabad.

All the arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of different educational institutions.

Strict legal action was being taken against those who endanger the future of youth, the spokesman said adding, that suspicious persons are being closely monitored around educational institutions.

He further informed that 28.8 kg hashish and 7.2 kg opium were recovered from an accused in an operation conducted at M-1 Toll Plaza Islamabad.

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

Gilani urges UN to take action to end Israeli aggression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday strongly condemned Israeli attacks on Palestine, Yemen, and Lebanon, urging the United Nations to take immediate notice of the atrocities committed against civilians and take action to end its aggression.

Gilani also called on the Islamic nations to break their silence and speak out against Israeli aggression.

The Senate chairman, in a statement, expressed deep sorrow over the brutal violence and the loss of innocent lives. He also conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, expressing his grief over the massacre of innocent people in

Palestine and Lebanon. "The hearts of the people of Pakistan beat with those of the Palestinian and Lebanese people," he added.

The Senate chairman reaffirmed that during the difficult times, the Parliament and the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the people of Palestine and Lebanon. Gilani described Israel's ongoing airstrikes as a manifestation of war-mongering that "threatens not only the region but also global peace".

"Israel's aggressive actions are pushing the region towards a broader conflict, which could escalate into a global war," he warned. Gilani said that Israel's refusal to agree to a ceasefire was an attempt to

plunge the region into further chaos, putting regional peace at risk.

Israel's bloodstained hands, responsible for the deaths of innocent children and elders in Palestine and Lebanon, had further endangered global peace by expanding attacks to Yemen and Lebanon after Palestine, he added.

He stressed, "The Muslim world must unite and raise its voice against Israel's hostile actions," he added. He also appealed to the international community to take collective action to curb Israel's expansionist ambitions. "If Israel's malicious objectives are not stopped, the entire region could be engulfed in conflict."

Evidence-based policy key to solving education crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) Sohail Akhter emphasized the Ministry's critical role in addressing Pakistan's urgent education challenges during his speech at the two-day workshop on "Facilitating and Communicating Research for Policy Planning and Decision-Making" held here on Monday.

The event was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and Oxford Policy Management (OPM) under the Dare-RC project. Akhter highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking in tackling systemic issues, including out-of-school children (OOSC), gender disparity in enrollment, and the rural-urban education divide.

He noted, "Our policies must be informed by thorough analysis, focusing on districts where female enrollment remains low and addressing foundational learning deficits worsened by the pandemic."

Akhter also called for collaboration beyond the education sector, including partnerships with ministries like the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), to introduce green and climate education into national curricula. Dr. M. Shahid Soroya from PIE also addressed the workshop, focusing on the Ministry's leadership in coordinating with provincial governments to ensure the effective implementation of research-driven policies.

"While PIE operates at the federal level, we must work closely with the provinces to ensure that the research we generate is not just theoretical but translated into actionable policies that make a tangible impact on education outcomes," Dr. Soroya stated.

He reiterated the importance of sustained collaboration between federal and provincial bodies to align research efforts with on-the-ground realities.

Adding to the discussion, Harris Khalique from Oxford Policy Management (OPM) underscored the necessity of integrating research into the policymaking process at every stage. He noted that research should not merely inform policy but drive continuous improvements as evidence is gathered.

"We need to foster a culture where decisions are backed by data, and where research doesn't just react to crises but anticipates future challenges and proactively shapes the policy landscape," he said. The closing remarks were delivered by Dr. Zeigham Qadeer, Director of the Research Wing at PIE, who expressed optimism about the workshop's impact on strengthening service delivery in the education sector. He emphasized the Ministry's ongoing commitment to evidence-based policy formulation and stressed the need for enhanced collaboration between research producers, policymakers, and provincial education departments. "We are hopeful that this training will lead to more effective service delivery and a more robust educational system that responds to the real needs of the population," Dr. Qadeer stated.

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NCHR elected to GANHRI Bureau

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) of Pakistan has been elected to the Bureau of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) for a four-year term.

"GANHRI is closely linked to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which supports the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) through technical assistance, capacity-building, and advocacy," an NCHR news release said on Monday.

The GANHRI Bureau serves as the management committee of GANHRI, which is the global body of NHRIs. Tasked with implementing the decisions of the GANHRI General Assembly, the Bureau ensures smooth operational management and strategic direction between General Assembly meetings.

Additionally, it oversees the work of GANHRI's various subcommittees and working groups, which report to the Bureau, and reviews key issues, including statements to United Nations human rights bodies.

"This achievement is a prestigious recognition of NCHR's dedication to human rights, marking a significant milestone for both Pakistan and the broader Asia Pacific region," NCHR Chairperson Rabiya Javeri Agha said.

According to the news release, NCHR Pakistan as part of the Bureau would work closely with other elected representatives from Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region, each of whom were selected from 'A'-status accredited NHRIs.

"These institutions, like NCHR Pakistan, have met the stringent requirements set by the Paris Principles, ensuring their independence, impartiality, and effectiveness in promoting and protecting human rights. Election to this role is only open to NHRIs with A-status accreditation, highlighting the credibility and impact of Pakistan's human rights work on the international stage."

Throughout its four-year term, NCHR Pakistan, with the support of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) Chairperson and Secretariat, would act as a key advocate for the region's NHRIs in discussions at the Bureau.

The NCHR would not only represent the views of APF members but also play a pivotal role in reviewing and making decisions on GANHRI's subsidiary bodies, the news release added. "One of the most important responsibilities will involve providing input on the outcomes of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation, a body critical for ensuring that NHRIs meet

international standards of independence and effectiveness.

"By representing the Asia Pacific region on this global platform, NCHR Pakistan will actively contribute to shaping international human rights policies and dialogues, including its involvement in high-level discussions with UN human rights mechanisms."

"This election solidifies NCHR's position as a leader in human rights advocacy, furthering its mission of promoting justice, equality, and dignity for all." NCHR Pakistan has also been nominated to the Governance Committee of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF). "This dual recognition marks a huge honor for Pakistan, further elevating its role within the global human rights community," the news release said.

Rabiya Javeri Agha, in her comments, said: "Our achievements are not a destination, but simply milestones in our ongoing commitment to human rights. Despite the numerous human rights challenges Pakistan faces, NCHR has been working tirelessly both domestically and internationally to ensure we fulfill our mandate and institute meaningful change within the system. We are dedicated to bringing human rights conversations to the forefront of the global agenda."

UN urged to stop Israeli aggression against neighbors

LONDON: Syria's foreign minister on Monday urged the world to do more to end Israeli aggression towards its neighbors, blaming the US for hindering international peace and security.

Bassam Al-Sabbagh made the comments to the UN General Assembly in a wide-ranging address in which he also defended his government's record during Syria's civil war, hit out at interference in its domestic affairs by foreign states, and demanded the return of Syrian territory occupied by Israel. "For more than a decade, Syria has experienced unparalleled suffering," he said. "It fell victim to a fierce terrorist war, direct attacks on its territories that continue to this day, a multifaceted and stifling economic blockade, and ... unprecedented political and media incitement campaigns."

"Billions of dollars were spent to erode the development progress that Syria has worked over decades to achieve. "Billions more were spent to spread chaos and undermine security and stability, and to force millions of Syrians to leave their homes only to become internally displaced or refugees in other countries. "Despite everything, we've remained faithful to our strong beliefs, our firm positions and to the choices we made as a nation."

"Syria never hesitated to protect and defend its people, and never faltered in its war on terrorism." He said the way his government was treated on the international stage "revealed the true intentions of the collective West, which completely contradict the principles and purposes that form the pillars and foundation and function of (the UN)." Al-Sabbagh was unequivocal in his condemnation of Israel's "expansionist and racist occupation and ongoing aggression," blaming the US for preventing the UN Security Council "from fulfilling its responsibility to confront threats to international peace and security."

He told the UNGA: "The ongoing Israeli occupation of Arab territory since 1967, including the Syrian Arab Golan (Heights) and the genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity it commits, are a glaring example of the failure of this organization." Al-Sabbagh added: "Since Oct. 7, 2023, the Israeli occupation has continued to commit bloody and terrorist crimes, adding another chapter to its seven decade-long criminal record over the past months."

"The occupying forces and settler gangs have been carrying out savage aggression on the Palestinian people and committing a genocide before the eyes of the whole world, which has claimed the lives of more than 42,000 Palestinians, most of whom are children and women. "The Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, and renews its solidarity with a legitimate struggle to liberate their occupied land and establish an independent state on

Yemeni govt condemns Israeli airstrikes on Hodeidah

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's internationally recognized government on Monday condemned Israeli airstrikes on the Houthi-held west-coast city of Hodeidah, and warned Israel and Iran not to use the country as a battleground. It said the attack on Sunday was a violation of Yemen's territorial sovereignty, as well as international norms and charters, and made the already dire humanitarian situation in the country even worse. The Yemeni government "warns the Iranian regime, its agent militias and the Zionist entity that they risk escalating the situation and turning the region into a staging ground for their absurd wars and destructive projects," the official Yemeni state news agency SABA reported.

The strikes caused large explosions and smoke hung over the area in the aftermath. The Houthi Ministry of Health said that four people were killed and 40 wounded, many of whom were in critical condition. The attack came a day after the Israeli military said it shot down a ballistic missile outside Israel's borders that had been launched by the Houthi militia in Yemen. The Houthis said they had targeted Ben Gurion International Airport with the missile as part of their ongoing campaign, in support of the Palestinian people, to put pressure on Israel to end its war in Gaza. This campaign has also included months of attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea and other waters off the coast of Yemen. The attack on Sunday was the second time Israeli forces have targeted Hodeidah. The first was on July 20, when power plants and port facilities, including one with an oil terminal, were hit in response to a Houthi drone attack on Tel Aviv in which 10 Israelis were killed or injured. — Arab News

Iran says will not send forces to confront Israel

TEHRAN: Iran will not deploy forces to Lebanon or Gaza to confront Israel, its foreign ministry said on Monday, as Israeli strikes target its allies in the region. "There is no need to send extra or volunteer forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran," said foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani, adding that Lebanon and fighters in the Palestinian territories "have the capability and strength to defend themselves against the aggression."

Israel has in recent days been mounting heavy air strikes in Lebanon against the so-called "axis of resistance," a network of Iran-aligned militant groups in the region, including in Syria, Yemen and Iraq. An Israeli strike on Beirut Friday killed Hassan Nasrallah, the head of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah that has been armed and financed by the Islamic republic for years. "We have not received any request in this regard from any side, on the contrary, we are informed and are sure that they do not need the help of our forces," Kanani told reporters in Tehran. Kanani nonetheless vowed that Israel "will not remain without reprimand and punishment for the crimes it has committed against the Iranian people, military personnel and the resistance forces." Also on Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian visited Hezbollah's office in Tehran "to pay tribute" to Nasrallah, according to the government's website. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in all matters of the state, has vowed that Nasrallah's death "will not be in vain," and First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said it would bring about Israel's "destruction." Iran has also vowed to avenge the killing of Abbas Nilforoushan, a top commander of the Quds Force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' foreign operations arm, who died alongside the Hezbollah leader. — Arab News

their entire national territory with Jerusalem as its capital, while ensuring the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland in line with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

"The Israeli occupying forces ... have chosen to drag the region into a serious escalation while benefiting from the immunity, impunity and unlimited support provided by certain countries, in particular the US. "In a clear case of hypocrisy and double standards, Israeli forces have scaled up their attacks on countries in the region, including my country, Syria, targeting vital civilian facilities, residential buildings and even diplomatic premises, resulting in the death of

dozens of civilians, significant material damage and hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid to Syrians."

Al-Sabbagh also touched upon developments in Lebanon, saying: "Two weeks ago, the Israeli occupation authorities committed an unprecedented crime against Lebanon by using the means of communication as a tool to kill unarmed civilians in a collective manner. "A few days ago, the Israeli occupation authorities targeted the southern suburb of Beirut with a treacherous and cowardly (act of) aggression, destroying an entire residential block using tons of explosives ... to assassinate Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayed Hassan Nasrallah." — Arab News

‘UN should recommend use of force against Israel’

ANKARA (Reuters): Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that the United Nations General Assembly should recommend the use of force, in line with a resolution it passed in 1950, if the UN Security Council fails to stop Israel's attacks in Gaza and Lebanon.

NATO member Turkey has denounced Israel's devastating attack in Gaza against Palestinian militant group Hamas, and condemned its recent attacks in Lebanon targeting Hezbollah militants. It has halted all trade with Israel and applied to join a genocide case against Israel at the World Court, which

Israel rejects. "The UN General Assembly should rapidly implement the authority to recommend the use of force, as it did with the 1950 Uniting for Peace resolution, if the Security Council can't show the necessary will," Erdogan said after a cabinet meeting in Ankara.

The resolution says the UN General Assembly can step in if disagreements among the Security Council's five permanent veto-wielding powers - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States - mean they fail to maintain international peace. The Security Council is the only UN body that can normally

make legally binding decisions, such as authorising use of force and imposing sanctions. Erdogan also said he was sad to see Muslim countries failing to take a more active stance against Israel, urging them to take economic, diplomatic, and political measures against Israel to pressure it into accepting a ceasefire. "For the peace of everyone in our region, from Muslim to Jew to Christian, we call on the international community and Muslim world to mobilise," Erdogan said, adding Israel's attacks would target Muslim countries too if it is not stopped soon.

Pak Navy, Qatar Emiri Navy conduct exercise

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy and Qatar Emiri Navy conducted a bilateral exercise, Asad Al Bahr-III, in the North Arabian Sea. Qatar Emiri Naval Ship AL KHOR participated in the exercise alongside Pakistan Navy Ships PNS SHAMSHEER and PNS ASLAT.

During the bilateral exercise, operations including Maritime Interdiction Operations, Search and Rescue, and Air Defence exercises were conducted. Aim of the exercise was to work out interoperability while handling various challenges in regional Maritime arena.

Conduct of bilateral exer-



cise like Asad Al Bahr-III will not only help in harnessing interoperability with respect to joint operations between both regional Navies but also mushroom avenues of bilateral defence ties. Conduct of joint exer-

cises with regional Navies is a manifestation of PN's resolve of handling traditional and nontraditional challenges in Maritime domain so as to ensure safety and security of seafarers in the region.

IHC issues notice to FBR

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) had issued notices to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the Attorney General of Pakistan to provide comments on the Federal Excise Duty (FED) imposed on the transfer or allotment of immovable properties by builders and developers.

The Defence Housing Authority

(DHA) Islamabad had contested the legality of Table-III of the First Schedule of the Federal Excise Act 2005. The respondents in this case included the Federation of Pakistan through the Secretary Revenue, the Chairman of the FBR, and the Commissioner of the Large Taxpayer Office in Islamabad.

As a local authority involved in

land transactions and various services for its residents, DHA Islamabad had argued that the recent amendment imposed Excise Duty on property transfers without a corresponding change in the Act's charging section. They claimed that Excise Duty should apply only to goods and services, and that property transfers did not fit this definition.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur talking to media persons.

US approves \$567m in mily support for Taiwan

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden has approved \$567m in new defence support for Taiwan, the White House has said. In a brief statement, the White House said Biden had delegated the secretary of state "to direct the drawdown of up to \$567 million in defense articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training, to provide assistance to Taiwan."

It provided no further details. While the US does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, it is Taipei's most significant international backer and arms supplier. China has repeatedly demanded Washington stop selling weapons to Taipei, which it claims as its territory.

In April, the US approved billions of dollars in military aid for Taiwan as China stepped up military and political pressure on the island. Beijing accuses Washington of meddling in its "internal affairs" with its support for the democratic island. Taipei has complained of delayed US arms deliveries, including for upgraded F-14 fighter jets. China has not renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control, and has also ramped up rhetoric about "unification" being "inevitable". Taiwan rejects China's claims and says the people of the island should be the ones to choose their future. — Aljazeera

PTI raises objections to bench formation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI has raised formal objections regarding the constitution of the Supreme Court bench hearing the review case on the interpretation of Article 63-A. A petition was filed by PTI's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar challenging the bench's formation.

In the petition, Zafar argued that the bench was not constituted in accordance with Section 2 of the Act under the Presidential Ordinance, which requires the Judges' Committee to consist of three members. According to the law, a minimum of three judges is necessary to decide on the composition of the bench.

The petition further stated that the bench can only be constituted through the collective wisdom of three judges. However, the application pointed out that only two judges, instead of the required three, were present at the committee meeting on September 23, as Justice Mansoor did not attend. As a result, the petition contends that the decision made by two judges cannot be considered valid under the law, rendering the formation of the bench improper.

During the proceedings, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa responded to the objections raised by Barrister Ali Zafar, stating, "I do not agree with you. If this happens, then this court will become inactive." He emphasized that not all cases can be left to the discretion of a single person, countering PTI's claims.

Barrister Ali Zafar maintained that the Practice and Procedure Committee can only form a bench when all three members are present. Chief Justice Isa, however, rejected this interpretation, arguing that restricting the court's ability to function due to the absence of one judge would hinder the Supreme Court's operations.

Article 63 A revision case

Justice Munib refuses to join bench

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned the hearing of Article 63 A revision case till Tuesday as Justice Munib Akhtar refused to join the larger bench.

A five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Mazhar Alam and Justice Munib Akhtar, was to hear the review petition filed by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) at 11:30am.

The four members of the bench reached the courtroom for hearing, but Justice Akhtar did not turn up. Instead, Justice Akhtar wrote a letter to the CJP which was handed over to the Supreme Court Registrar who delivered it to the chief justice.

CJP Isa read the letter in which Justice Akhtar wrote: "I cannot be a part of this bench." Justice Akhtar stated that he could not be a

part of the bench which was formed by the committee under the Practice and Procedure Ordinance. Justice Akhtar wrote that he was not refusing to hear the case. "I cannot be part of the bench constituted by the committee. My refusal to join the bench should not be misconstrued."

The judge requested the CJP to make his letter part of the case record. The CJP refused to make the letter a part of the case record as it was not a tradition. It would have been appropriate for Justice Akhtar to come to the bench and give his opinion. "I have always encouraged dissent." CJP Isa said the revision case had been pending for more than two years. It's a very important case. Justice Akhtar should have refused to hear the case in court. "I respect Justice Akhtar's opinion."

Chief Justice Isa said under the law, the same bench should hear the revision appeal who heard the case. But since [former chief justice] Umar Ata

Bandial has retired, he has taken his place. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan has replaced Justice Ijazul Ahsan. "We will request Justice Munib Akhtar to sit on the bench," the CJP said.

He said Justice Akhtar was present in the apex court. He was also present in the tea room. It was his will not to join today's hearing. "We will hear this review case again tomorrow (Tuesday). Hope Justice Akhtar will join the hearing tomorrow." CJP Isa said he would try to convince Justice Akhtar. Otherwise, the bench would be reconstituted. The case would be heard whether Justice Akhtar joined the bench or not.

Earlier, the chief justice called the attorney general to the rostrum and told him that a larger bench was constituted to hear the case. PTI Senator Barrister Ali Zafar came to the rostrum and expressed reservations on the committee saying it could constitute a bench when all three members are present in the meeting.

Karsaz accident accused Natasha granted bail

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday granted bail to Natasha Danish, the driver booked in deadly Karsaz accident case last month, in drug use case. The court directed Natasha to submit Rs1 million surety bonds.

During the proceedings on Monday, Natasha's lawyer Farooq H Naek Advocate informed the court that his client had already been granted bail in the main Karsaz accident case after both the sides reached a settlement. The state prosecutor told the court that Natasha was 'high' when she was driving her car.

Farooq Naek intervened saying there was an ambiguity in the medical report which said there was no methamphetamine in the blood. When the court asked the state's lawyer how much quantity of methamphetamine was

gauged in the blood, he said there was no mention of it the medical report. Farooq Naek said Natasha has been under psychiatric treatment for years. "It's possible she might have been given such a medicine which is mentioned in the medical report," he added.

SHC's Justice KK Agha said the settlement between the two sides was a big development. "The accused is a mother of three children and has been in jail for the last one and a half month," he added. On August 19, a speeding Toyota Land Cruiser, driven by Natasha, hit three motorcycles and another car before overturning on the Karachi's Karsaz Road. Sixty-year-old Imran Arif and his 22-year-old daughter Anna were killed in the accident, while three others were wounded. Subsequently, Natasha was booked and arrested.

Police then formed a spe-

cial investigation team to probe the accident registered against the suspect. During the investigation, the driver's husband, Danish Iqbal, had also been named as a suspect. However, he was later granted a seven-day protective pre-arrest bail by the Sindh High Court. On August 28, Sindh Inspector General (IG) of Police Ghulam Nabi Memon told media that Natasha was under the influence of narcotic methamphetamine (crystal meth) while driving. Consequently, a separated first information report (FIR) was registered by the police against Natasha under Section 11 (drinking liable to tazir) of the Prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order (PEHO) of 1979. Natasha was then granted bail in the accident case by the courts but, she would remain under custody until the conclusion of the narcotics case.

Dr Shahnawaz's case: SHC directs to place names on ECL

MIRPUR KHAS (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday directed to place the names of all accused involved in murder of blasphemy accused Dr. Shahnawaz Kumbhar during a fake police encounter in Umerkot on Exit Control List (ECL).

According to details, the Mir Pur Khas bench of Sindh High Court announced the verdict which was reserved earlier on the civil society's plea. It should be mentioned here that a case was registered after an inquiry report confirmed that the blasphemy accused, Dr. Shahnawaz Kumbhar was killed in a suspected fake police encounter.

As many as 45 individuals including the high-ranking police officials, including DIG Javed Jaskani, SSP Asad Chaudhry, SSP Asif Raza Baloch, SHO Sindhari and CIA team officials, Lodged under charges of murder, terrorism, and the

Torture and Custodial Death Prevention Act 2022, the FIR also include Umar Jan Sindhari who allegedly incited public outrage through social media, leading to violent actions.

The case filed by Advocate Ibrahim, the brother-in-law of Dr. Shahnawaz at Sindhari police station alleged the police of staging the encounter and torturing the victim. DIB in-charge Danish Bhatti, Sub-Inspector Hidayatullah Narejo and other police personnel were also nominated in the case.

The investigation includes both known and unknown suspects linked to the incident. Dr. Shahnawaz was reportedly taken into custody from Karachi and transferred to the police in Umarkot, where his death occurred. Prior to this, following the direction of Sindh Police chief, Ghulam Nabi Memon, the inquiry

committee has completed the investigation of Umerkot incident and exposed the misconduct of Sindhi police.

The inquiry report, issued after intense public pressure, has revealed severe violations of law by police officials from Umerkot and Mirpur Khas. The blasphemy accusations against Dr. Shahnawaz led to widespread protests in Umerkot, forcing police to expedite his arrest. He was tracked down in Karachi and handed over to Mirpur Khas police, who allegedly staged the encounter later that night.

The inquiry committee, tasked with investigating the incident, has confirmed that the police encounter was fabricated to give legal cover to an extrajudicial killing. The report condemns the celebrations and praise that police officers received from the public following Dr. Shahnawaz's death, which went viral on social media.