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Writes letter to CEC

President Alvi proposes November 6 as election date

Says Constitution empowers him to appoint poll dates; Alvi calls for polls to be conducted across country on same date; Election to NA should be held by 89th day since dissolution

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr Arif Alvi Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and proposed November 6 as the date for general elections in the country.

In the letter, the president said he had dissolved the National Assembly on the prime minister's advice on August 9.

The president cited Article 48(5) of the Constitution, which he said "empowers and mandates the president to appoint a date not later than ninety

days from the date of the dissolution, for the holding of a general election to the Assembly."

Hence, "in terms of Article 48(5), the general election to the National Assembly should be held by the 89th day of the date of dissolution of the National Assembly, i.e. Monday, 6th day of November 2023", the letter read.

The president recalled in the letter that "in an endeavour to fulfil the constitutional obligations, the Chief Election Commissioner was invited for a

meeting to devise the modalities of implementing the constitutional intent and mandate."

But in his reply, the CEC "took a contrary view that as per the scheme of the Constitution and framework of electoral laws, it was the domain of the Election Commission, and following the publication of last preceding census on August 7, duly notified delimitation of constituencies was in progress, a mandatory requirement stipulated by Article 51(5) of the Constitution and

section 17 of the Elections Act, 2017", the letter said. Moreover, the Law Ministry also had the same view on the matter, it said, adding that all four provincial governments were of the opinion that the announcement of the election date was the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) mandate. "Further, there is a consensus that to strengthen the federation and to promote unity and harmony amongst provinces and to avoid incurring unnecessary expenses, general elections to the National Assembly and the

provincial assemblies must be held on the same day," it further stated.

"THEREFORE, taking into account all the above, the Election Commission of Pakistan in consultation with Provincial Governments and political parties under the relevant provisions of the Constitution and in view that some of these matters are already subjudice, may seek guidance from the Superior Judiciary for announcement of a single date for general election to the National and Provincial Assemblies," he writes.



Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his official visit to brotherly country



GILGIT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar talks to the media after the inauguration of Cardiac Hospital.

Interim Federal, Provincial Law Ministers vow to ensure transparent elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal and provincial law ministers on Wednesday during a meeting underscored the importance of upholding the principles of democracy and ensuring the smooth conduct of elections.

Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice, Ahmad Irfan Aslam convened a meeting with provincial law ministers including Kanwar Dilshad (Punjab), Muhammad Omer Soomro (Sindh), Arshad Hussain Shah (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Amanullah Kanrani (Balochistan).

The meeting was held to discuss matters pertaining to the upcoming general elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies, said a press release.

During the meeting, all Law Ministers under-

scored the importance of upholding the principles of democracy and ensuring the smooth conduct of elections.

It was unanimously agreed that the Constitution must be read as a whole and no provision of the Constitution be read in isolation from other relevant provisions. As per the Constitution, the conduct of general elections and announcement of election dates is the sole competence of the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The Provincial Law Ministers emphasized that in order to strengthen the Federation, ensure harmony amongst all federating units and avoid unnecessary financial burden on the national exchequer incurred owing to the provision of security arrangements on different election dates, the general elections

to the National and the four Provincial Assemblies must be held on the same day.

The Election Commission of Pakistan is an independent constitutional body. It is the responsibility of all organs of the State to respect the autonomy of the Election Commission and its authority in carrying out the delimitation of constituencies and determining the election schedule.

The discussion highlighted the government's commitment to ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in Pakistan, adhering to the principles of democratic governance, the statement mentioned.

The Federal and Provincial Governments remain dedicated to promoting a democratic and inclusive electoral environment, it added.

Caretaker PM will attend GA meeting: Munir

WASHINGTON (Online): Pakistan Ambassador to US Munir Akram said that Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar is coming to attend General Assembly meeting.

He told that caretaker PM visit to US will be very busy. PM will participate in 5 summit meetings.

In a statement Munir Akram said that how will delegation from Occupied Kashmir come? They have been locked up. The people of Occupied Kashmir will be represented by delegation of Azad Kashmir.

No alliance with PPP likely in next elections: Rana

LAHORE (INP): PML-N Punjab President Rana Sanaulah on Wednesday vehemently denied any possibility of alliance with the People's Party in next elections. "There can be seat adjustment with the PPP on a limited level but there are minimal chances of even such electoral adjustment," Rana Sanaulah said.

"The PPP's criticism on the PML-N suit them and they have right to do so," PML-N leader said Replying a question, Sanaulah said that as a political party, the PTI has right to do politics and they are entitled of it.

No one will ever be allowed to hold society hostage: PM

GILGIT-BALTISTAN

(Online): Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar ul Haq Kakar has said no one will ever be allowed to hold the society hostage. "There is no room for any foreign intelligence agency in Pakistan, our national institutions will take the matters towards improvement. No one should remain under any delusion. Addressing problems of Gilgit-Baltistan is our top priority, he said this while talking to media men after inaugurating OPD services at Cardiac hospital in Gilgit-Baltistan Wednesday.

People of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have welcomed me with great love. GB is bouquet of people of diverse color and race, he added.

He went on to say accepting the rights of each other equal is foundation of society. Respecting each other is must. People don't remain same. The process

One nation, one law to be ensured

of change continues.

"We will remove the misperceptions with wisdom. The responsibility for rights rests with the state. We will discharge it in a befitting manner. I have come with a message for the people of GB that they should respect rights of each other. Man can never resolve the problems alone. We have to live life together. This is peak of humanity.

The Prime Minister said it is the diversity and scenic beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan that attracts tourists not only from within Pakistan but also Europe and Asia.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said negotiations have been held with the Governor, the Chief Minister and other stakeholders about the constitutional matters of the region. He mentioned that they are working towards finding constitutional solutions to questions related to

the region's identity.

He said it will be our effort to help the people of Gilgit-Baltistan stand on their own feet and live a dignified life. He said they are striving to harness the economic potential of the region in various sectors, including tourism, mining and minerals, and power generation, by implementing long-term policies. He said improving road infrastructure in the region is also amongst our priorities.

He remarked improvement in the areas of tourism, energy and others is our top most priority.

The morale of the people of GB is mountains like high, he added.

He said laws will be enforced. Some people are on agenda. We will not allow any one to put jobs on sale.

We have come here to

choke the throat of jobs auction.

COAS lauds Turkish military's efforts to maintain peace in region

Meets President Erdogan, other high-ranking Turkish officials; Turkish leaders acknowledge army, NDMA efforts during quake

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), COAS is on an official visit to the Republic of Turkey.

The visit is part of the high level mutual visits by both the brotherly countries to enhance the historic diplomatic and military ties.

During the visit COAS called on Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Republic of Turkey, Foreign and Defense Ministers, Commander of Turkish General Staff and Commanders of Turkish Land and Air forces.

During the meetings, COAS emphasized on enhancing defence collaboration and training cooperation. COAS appreciated Turkish Military's efforts for maintaining peace and stability in the region and also praised the standards of operational readiness of Turkish Armed Forces.

Turkish leaders acknowledged the efforts extended by Pakistan Army Engineers who worked

along NDMA Teams during the unfortunate earthquake that hit Türkiye in February this year. COAS visited the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Ankara to pay homage to the great leader and laid floral wreath in his honour.

COAS later visited the Turkish Land Forces Headquarters, where on his arrival he was given a warm welcome and was presented with the Guard of Honour. COAS was also conferred with the Legion of Merit by the Minister of Defense and Commander Turkish Land Forces in recognition of his services towards promoting defence relations between two countries. During the ceremony COAS highlighted that, "Pakistan and Türkiye have strong brotherly relations which have always stood the test of times."

Pakistan Army is always willing to extend full support to the Turkish Land Forces in multiple domains.

'Credible, inclusive' elections crucial for Pakistan: British HC

ISLAMABAD (INP): British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott Wednesday stressed free, credible, transparent and inclusive elections in Pakistan in a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja in Islamabad.

The British envoy shared on her account on X, formerly Twitter, about the meeting with the CEC at the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) office in the federal capital.

"Important introductory meeting with Chief Election Commissioner

Sikandar Sultan Raja at ECP today," Marriott wrote in her post. The diplomat added that she and the CEC agreed that it is crucial for Pakistan to witness "free, credible, transparent and inclusive elections in line with the law".

The meeting between the UK envoy and CEC Raja comes at a time when the country is awaiting the announcement for the next general polls which, at the moment, remain in limbo owing to the matter of delimitation of constituencies following the digital census held earlier this year.

Air Chief vows to enhance Pak-Azerbaijan inter-military ties



ISLAMABAD (APP): Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu has reaffirmed his steadfast determination to further enhance the existing inter-military cooperation with Azerbaijan particularly in the fields of training and defence aviation.

He expressed the resolve while talking to Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov in Islamabad on Wednesday.

On this occasion, he offered full cooperation for comprehensive training programs in order to strengthen their technical skills and foster greater interoperability between the two air forces.

In the backdrop of upcoming major air exercise being held at Air Power Centre of Excellence, the Air Chief emphasized the pivotal role of joint aerial drills between the respective air forces to foster mutual learning and effectively address common security challenges.

In his remarks, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan expressed admiration for PAF's notable achievements in nurturing a vibrant and progressive domestic aviation industry.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice, Ahmad Irfan Aslam convened a meeting with Provincial Law Ministers, Mr. Kanwar Dilshad (Punjab), Mr. Muhammad Omer Soomro (Sindh), Mr. Arshad Hussain Shah (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Mr. Amanullah Kanrani (Balochistan), to discuss matters pertaining to the upcoming general elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies.

Judicial remand of Imran Khan extended for 14 days in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judicial remand of PTI chairman Imran Khan has been extended for 14 days in cipher case.

The case came up for hearing before Judge Abul Hasnaat Zulfqarain of special court set up under official secret act in Attock jail.

Judge Abul Hasnaat Zulfqarain heard the case on expiry of 14 days judicial remand of chairman PTI Wednesday.

FIA special team also reached from Islamabad to Attock jail.

Imran Khan was presented in the court on expiry of judicial remand. 9 members of chairman PTI legal team were also present during the hearing.

Law ministry had is-

sued notification on hearing of cipher case.

On the request of judge Abul Hasnaat Zulfqarain the hearing of the cipher case took place in Attock jail.

The court had requested for holding hearing in jail due to security reasons.

The authorities said that law ministry has no objection over hearing of the case in Attock jail.

On the other hand Shah Mehmood Qureshi was presented as handcuffed in special court Islamabad in cipher case on expiry of his judicial remand.

The court extended judicial remand of Shah Mehmood Qureshi till September 26.



RAWALPINDI: H.E. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on Minister for Defence, Lt.Gen Anwar Ali Hyder (Retd) at Ministry of Defence.



MULTAN: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses during public gathering meeting held at Muzaffargarh area in Multan.

PPP to knock down anti-state elements in elections: Bilawal

MULTAN (INP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that his party will knock down the anti-state elements in the upcoming general elections.

While addressing a gathering of party activists and general public at Syedwala Bypass on Wednesday, he said that PPP contested previous general elections despite challenges like martyrdom of Ms Benazir Bhutto and the abduction of Ali Haider Gilani.

Bilawal Bhutto said that timely general elections were mandatory but could be delayed due to some reasons.

Expressing gratitude to Multan for its unwavering support for the PPP, he highlighted

its commitment to democracy.

The PPP Chairman recalled the historic victory of Musa Gilani in the by-elections, which marked a significant achievement for the PPP in Multan and added that Multan had never disappointed him.

He said, "When I visited Multan during the movement against PTI's puppet government, the people of Multan extended complete support towards PPP."

The former foreign minister added that they removed Khan's government in a democratic manner.

Bilawal hoped that the people of Multan would continue to extend support to PPP in the future.

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CJP's legacy

It was "bitter" constitutional litigation, the chief justice believes, that ultimately affected the court's performance. But was it just that? Speaking at a full court reference held to mark the start of a new judicial year, Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial on Monday regretted that the Supreme Court had been pushed into "a trying contest". "We sat back and became its victim and suffered in performance," he reflected. Yet the Supreme Court can hardly be described as having 'sat back' while the country's institutions and political parties were making a mad grab for power.

Over Justice Bandial's tenure, the apex court found itself stumbling from one controversy to another, starting from its overturning of the National Assembly deputy speaker's decision to throw out a no-confidence vote against then PM Imran Khan. At the time, the decision was widely hailed for having put to rest the doctrine of necessity. However, it also set a precedent for the court to go beyond established boundaries as it attempted to do 'justice'. Shortly after, the apex court 'rewrote' the Constitution by nullifying lawmakers' power to defy party lines. Given the political consequences of the court's interventions in these cases, criticism and controversy followed.

It, therefore, surprised no one when, barely a year later, the court's internal differences spilt out into the public domain. The court had overstepped once again by taking up petitions against election delays while the high courts were still hearing the matter. As some of the judges put their foot down to protest their institution's 'transgressions', matters started to unravel quickly. While the PDM government tried to flame the divisions within the court, the chief justice failed to restore unity within his ranks. Progress on key cases quickly stalled, and justice was put on the back-burner as the change of guard loomed closer.

As Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial prepares to hang up his robes, he has started feeling the weight of this legacy he leaves behind. It is difficult not to empathise with him.

Less than two years ago, he was celebrated for being a "soft-spoken man of integrity" and a "competent judge" who was "learned and fair-minded". But the same people who once spoke so highly of Justice Bandial later ruthlessly assailed his capabilities, with some accusing him of "fixing" benches with "like-minded judges" and running a "one-man show". It cannot be easy for anyone to see their reputation — achieved through an entire lifetime's work — be ruthlessly attacked and reduced in such a manner. But such a thing is perhaps unavoidable now, given the judicialisation of our politics. The incoming chief justice should take the experience of the incumbent and those immediately before him as a warning. A ruthless commitment to fair play could help him avoid a similar end next year.

**Zahid Hussain**

It was the most audacious cross-border incursion by the TTP. Reportedly, hundreds of heavily armed militants stormed Pakistani security posts in Chitral last week. The intruders were said to have been beaten back after three days of fierce fighting but the situation in the remote district is far from normal. Tension continues to grip the region.

There were some reports of the militants having infiltrated the border areas of the Kalash valley. The latest attacks in the treacherous mountainous region mark an expansion in the TTP's cross-border operations. The strategically located northwestern part of Pakistan that borders Afghanistan's Kunar and Nuristan provinces has become the TTP's latest battle-

field. The two Afghan provinces house the largest sanctuaries for the outlawed Pakistani militant group.

With reports of the militants amassing on the border and tensions building up in the region for some time, the raid didn't come as a surprise. According to some reports, the attacks were led by TTP head Nour Mehsud. The timing of the attacks seemed well calculated as the country celebrated Defence Day on Sept 6. The clashes left casualties on both sides.

While there has been a significant rise in cross-border raids in the former tribal regions, incidents of terrorist violence have also escalated in recent months, taking a huge toll on Pakistani security forces. The militants have virtually declared a war on the Pakistani state. The TTP is not only active in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but has also extended its operations to the troubled Balochistan province. Meanwhile, the latest incident in Chitral has added to our security concerns.

We are now back to the pre-2016 situation, or even worse, with the resurgence of militant violence. The militants appear more

organised and better equipped with sophisticated weaponry. Scores of Pakistani soldiers reportedly lost their lives in August, the bloodiest month, in clashes between the security forces and the militants, with targeted attacks in various parts of KP and Balochistan.

Such a high number of casualties is alarming. The situation is getting worse with reports of tacit support for the TTP from some Afghan Taliban commanders. A major concern for the Pakistani security forces is the militants acquiring modern weapons left behind by the Nato forces and the former Afghan army.

With the interim Afghan Taliban administration refusing to take action against TTP sanctuaries on its soil, security challenges for Pakistan have exacerbated. What is most alarming are reports of the Afghan Taliban also joining the TTP in some of the terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. There was strong evidence of their involvement in the raid on the security post in Zhob district of Balochistan earlier this year. It was among the most lethal attacks in recent years.

The impunity with which such attacks are being carried out against the security forces also raises questions about our own strategy to deal with the existentialist threat. Growing political and economic instability in the country also seems to have given impetus to the militants. The security forces now seem overstretched, with the expansion of militant operations along the long and porous border with Afghanistan.

Some reports quoting TTP sources maintain that the worsening sectarian tension in the nearby area of Gilgit-Baltistan has also been the reason behind the latest TTP incursion into Chitral. The militants are reportedly regrouping under the TTP banner in the area.

Indeed, the Chitral incident cannot be seen in isolation. Cross-border infiltration and clashes are not a new phenomenon in the region. The neighbouring Afghan provinces of Kunar and Nuristan have long been known as the centre of Al Qaeda-backed, religiously inspired militancy. The area became a safe haven for Pakistani militants fleeing from military operations in this country. The return of

Taliban rule in Afghanistan helped them reorganise.

There have been several incidents of cross-border clashes in the district in the past. But the Sept 6 raid was the most serious, with a large number of militants crossing over. A top TTP commander told The Khorasan Diary, a digital news platform, that several villages have fallen to the militants. The claim has not been verified. The area where the infiltration took place is believed to be more vulnerable because of its inhospitable terrain. The mountainous region is covered with snow for much of the year, making cross-border movement extremely difficult.

Given Chitral's geostrategic location the rise of the militant threat there is a serious security concern for Pakistan. The region not only borders Afghanistan but also Tajikistan and China through the Wakhan Corridor. Because of its sensitivity, there is a large presence of Pakistani security forces in the region. But the tough terrain makes it harder to completely stop the infiltration. The latest cross-border attacks are a

grim reminder of the growing TTP threat to national security.

Indeed, the return of Taliban rule across the border has been a major factor in the resurgence of militant violence in the country but the absence of a clear strategy has also helped the TTP regain some of its lost space. The policy of appeasement has come back to haunt us.

It was a serious mistake on the part of the state to engage in so-called peace negotiations with the outlawed group on the persuasion of the Afghan Taliban administration in 2021. The terms of engagement were set by the militants.

It is that policy of appeasement that the country is now paying for. Indeed, we must put pressure on the Afghan Taliban administration to take action against the militants operating from its soil, but more importantly, we have to set our own counterterrorism policy in order. There still seems to be some confusion over how to deal with the rising TTP threat. The Chitral incident is yet another wake-up call for our policymakers. -- Courtesy Dawn

The TTP's new battleground**Navigating economic corridors****Dr Murad Ali**

We are living in an era of 'corridorization', 'economic corridor' being the new buzzword. The proponents of these 'corridors' claim that they are vital for increasing regional connectivity and trade. The latest addition to this bandwagon is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), announced during the 2023 G20 summit held in New Delhi. The official statement of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) released by the US government says that India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Germany, Italy, the European Union (EU) and the US have announced to build the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

It has been envisioned that the IMEC is expected to stimulate economic devel-

opment through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe. The IMEC comprises two discrete corridors, the east corridor which connects India to the Arabian Gulf via sea and the northern corridor which links the Arabian Gulf to Europe. Like other corridors, the IMEC also includes a railway line via the Middle Eastern countries — the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel — and a seafaring link between India and the Port of Haifa in Israel to European ports. Upon successful fruition, it is expected to provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border 'ship-to-rail transit network' to supplement existing maritime and road transport routes. US President Joe Biden has labelled the initiative "a real big deal" and a "game-changing investment". Critics say this is a direct challenge to Chinese President Xi's signature Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). PM Modi has stated that it will give a new direction to connectivity and sustainable development. "In times to come, the corridor will become an effective medium for economic integration of India, the Middle East and Eu-

rope", a jubilant Indian premier said. He called it an "historic" agreement. The European commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, described it as "much more than just a railway or a cable"... "It is a green and digital bridge across continents and civilisations".

There is unprecedented optimism in Indian media and policy circles. Unnecessarily and as per their habit to bring Pakistan into every discussion, the Hindustan Times came up with the heading: "Melt-down in Pakistan over historic India-Middle East-EU corridor: 'Wake-up call'".

It is a brave initiative indeed, but it is too early to celebrate or dismiss it. As compared with the BRI, several transnational infrastructure-building initiatives have been announced during the last decade or so, but none has dwarfed the Chinese 'project of the century' thus far.

China is a global development actor and particularly in the realm of mega infrastructure, Beijing has done wonders. According to one research study, "in 2017, seven of the ten largest construction firms, by revenue, were Chinese".

Similarly, in infrastructure building, Beijing is a global leader as it has completed numerous mega projects at home and abroad. Owing to this, among the 20 largest construction contractors, 14 are Chinese, while six are from the EU and there is none from the US.

A recent study illustrates that during the last 20 years, Beijing has financed over 13,000 projects worth \$843 billion in 165 countries. According to the China Power Project of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), under the BRI banner, China has been working in 138 countries with a combined GDP of \$29 trillion and some 4.6 billion people or about 61 per cent of the global population.

According to the American Enterprise Institute's China Global Investment Tracker, financing and implementing more than 4,000 large projects in diverse sectors, China's overseas investment and construction since 2005 has reached \$2.27 trillion. Similarly, since the launch of the BRI, China has invested or lent over \$1 trillion to more than 100 countries who are signatory to the initiative.

By any metrics, China has global footprints when it comes to financing and executing infrastructure projects.

In contrast, the response of other bilateral or multilateral actors has remained lacklustre. To counter the rising role of China, the US and its allies in the Group of Seven (G7) came up with their own initiatives. "China has its Belt and Road Initiative, and we think that there's a much more equitable way to provide for the needs of countries around the world", US President Biden stated after the end of the 47th G7 summit held in Cornwall in the UK in 2021, where he came up with the Build Back Better World (B3W) plan.

Similarly, the EU-led Global Gateway project, announced in 2021, aimed at focusing on physical infrastructure such as fibre optic cables, clean transport corridors and clean power transmission lines. The initiative announced that with strong commitment from EU member-states, the Global Gateway would aim at mobilizing investments of up to 300 billion euros between 2021 and 2027. The EU pledged that key principles would be adhered to includ-

ing democratic values and high standards, good governance and transparency, equal partnership, green and clean, resilient infrastructure, and catalyzing private-sector investment.

Japan's Partnership for Quality Infrastructure Investment is another initiative between the World Bank and the government of Japan to support the development of infrastructure that is resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and supports economic growth.

All these economic initiatives must be welcomed as they aim to increase regional trade and connectivity and bring people, services and goods together. They must not be viewed from a zero-sum perspective as economic corridors should not be used for geopolitical competition by major powers.

Hence, how the latest corridor in the form of the IMEC will fare depends on multiple factors. Raising financing is just one element, bringing participating countries to agree to a clear roadmap linking the UAE and Saudi Arabia with Israel via Jordan is also contingent on the political situation of the volatile Middle East. -- Courtesy TheNews

Abused at work**Kishwar Enam**

Children are a country's most precious investment. But in Pakistan, poor children don't fall in this category. Even after 75 years of existence, we as a nation have not given sufficient importance to child rights.

Child domestic labour refers to hiring children under 18 years in households, with or without a salary. Figures from 2016 showed 12 million child labourers in the country. A study in 2003 showed that eight per cent of all child labour was related to domestic work.

It is also estimated that around 40pc of Pakistanis live in poverty, with some 24pc below the poverty line. For families in such situations, survival is the primary goal. Due to lack of family planning, every child born becomes an additional burden on the parents. Instead of sending them to school, they are sent to work. In some households, having more children means more income, leading to a reprehensible scenario where children are birthed solely for financial gain. The conditions under which these children work is often irrelevant, as long as the parents receive a monthly salary.

called to take her home, they discovered she had been brutally abused. The responsibility for this situation lies with the judge and his wife, Rizwana's parents, the trafficker who brought her from her village, and all those who silently watched her work without questioning the circumstances. It seems that our state is blind to these issues.

Children are often preferred over adult domestic workers because they can be paid lower salaries, take up less space, require less food, and are easily controlled and threatened. It is ironic that employers often justify hiring children by claiming that they are helping them live their lives. Employing a child for work is not a favour; it is a crime. It robs them of their precious childhood. It denies them their right to education, trapping not only them but also future generations in a cycle of exploitation.

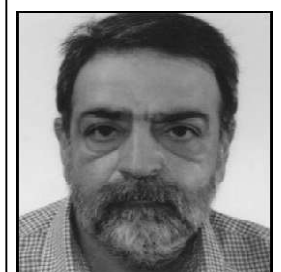
The proportion of girls involved in domestic labour is much higher than boys, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting future opportunities for girls. For these children, the stress from excessive workloads leads to anxiety, and the loneliness of being away from home can result in depression. Constantly comparing their lives to those of their employer's children can cause low self-esteem and a sense of hopelessness. It can lead to feelings of jealousy, aggression, and cause conduct disorders. In some households, making these children work beyond their capabilities is not the end of it, as they are subjected to abuse — physical, sexual and psychological.

Another recent case is that of nine-year-old Fatima, who was sexually abused in the haveli of a pir or spiritual leader. Sadly, she succumbed to her injuries. It was later revealed that many other

girls were living in the house as domestic workers. These girls are given as gifts to these pirs and feudal lords, and parents receive nominal amounts of money in return. Heartbreaking stories of child domestic labourers treated as slaves by their monstrous employers and often losing their lives come to light every now and then.

Pakistan has ratified conventions on child labour and has laws in place to address this issue. Punjab was the first province to pass a law specifically targeting domestic labour in 2019, which banned children below 15 years old from working as domestic labourers. Sindh does not have a specific law for child domestic labour, but when the Sindh Child Protection law was amended in 2021, child labour in domestic and commercial settings was included in the definition of child abuse, making it more than just a labour issue.

In 2020, a domestic labour law was passed in Islamabad Capital Territory as well. Despite having various laws on child rights, there is inconsistency in the definition of the upper age limit for a child in each law. To address this confusion, it is crucial to establish a unified definition of a child as anyone below 18 years old. This will help clarify the age criteria across all laws. Furthermore, child domestic labour should be banned and criminalised, with the offence being added to the Pakistan Penal Code as a non-bailable and non-compoundable offence. We cannot afford to lose more children like Zohra, Tayyaba, Kinza, Rizwana and Fatima. Our society, lawmakers and government must prioritise action on poverty alleviation, population control, free compulsory education and protecting children from exploitation and abuse. -- Courtesy Dawn

Silencing a songbird**Mahir Ali**

Just a few days after the elected president of Chile, his close friend and comrade Salvador Allende, had met a violent death in his workplace, the man described by Gabriel Garcia Márquez as "the greatest poet of the 20th century, in any language" lay on his bed in a Santiago clinic, ailing and distraught.

The poet's wife, Matilde, had left his bedside to return to their home in Isla Negra to collect some books that Pablo Neruda wished to take with him to Mexico, where he had been invited to retreat by the country's president, Luis Echeverría. She received a phone call from Neruda, who sounded unusually agitated. She rushed back, fearing the worst.

On doctors' orders, Matilde had tried to shield her husband from the worst news about the atrocities unfolding in the wake of the Sept 11, 1973, coup. But he could not be denied access to his friends, and when she returned, a highly distressed Neruda informed her: "They're killing people, they're handing their bodies over in pieces. The morgue's full of the dead... Didn't you know what happened to Victor Jara? He was one of those they tore to pieces, they destroyed his hands... Oh my God, that's like killing a nightingale. And they say he kept on singing and singing, and that drove them wild."

His information was reasonably accurate. Victor Jara was arguably the most potent symbol of the cul-

tural revolution that had accompanied — and in some ways facilitated — Popular Unity's ascent to power in 1970. He was an internationally acclaimed theatre director who had, since his deprived childhood, also been deeply immersed in Chilean folk music, and eventually started writing his own songs to supplement the vast repertoire he had imbibed from his mother and his broader milieu.

In 1969, he won joint first prize at the first festival of Nueva Canción Chilena — Chilean New Song — with Plegaria a un Labrador (Prayer to a Worker). It was a genre he had helped to propagate, following in the footsteps of Violeta Parra. The festival was held at Estadio Chile, where Jara returned four years later as a prisoner of the junta that snuffed out with extreme prejudice the very idea of a more equitable and humane nation.

On the morning of Sept 11, Jara bid farewell to his family and drove off to his workplace, the State Technical University, despite knowing that a military coup had been launched. Curfew prevented him from returning home, and the following day Jara and hundreds of fellow teachers and students were marched to the nearby stadium, which was serving as a concentration camp for political prisoners. He was recognised and singled out at the gate, abused in the vilest terms, and brutally assaulted. That was just the preamble to at least three days of extreme torture before an officer blew out his brains, and then encouraged his underlings to fire their machine-guns into the assassinated avatar of an aborted dream.

When his widow located his body among the hundreds of unidentified corpses in the city morgue two days later, guided by a yo-ung communist who

risked his life to in-form her, it was riddled with 44 bullet holes. Thanks mainly to Joan Jara and her associates in Chile and abroad, eight former military officers were sentenced five years ago, among them possibly the beast who had battered the hands that gently strummed the guitar. The alleged chief perpetrator, however, remains at liberty in Florida.

Goaded to sing after his initial torture, Victor had defiantly burst into a verse of Venceremos, the Popular Unity theme song. And before he was plucked away from fellow detainees for his final order, he scribbled an anti-fascist poem that, miraculously, was smuggled out of the stadium and soon enough rang out in various parts of the world.

Unaware of all this, Neruda died on the eve of his scheduled departure for Mexico. Some evidence has lately emerged to suggest that he was poisoned, but it remains inconclusive and the whole truth may never be ascertained. It's fairly obvious that an outraged and outspoken Neruda would have been an unpleasant prospect for the Pinochet junta. But whether or not it played any role in silencing the poet, the recent Nobel laureate — unlike Allende or Jara — could not be denied a proper funeral. As armed soldiers and police looked on, deterred from action by dozens of foreign correspondents, the hundreds of funeral marchers recited Neruda's verses, then burst into the Internationale, before raising slogans that invoked (and immortalised) not just Neruda but also Allende and Victor Jara. Half a century later, the outstanding poet's last journey still reflects both the final emblem of Popular Unity and the first sparks of the relentless resistance that eventually thwarted the neoliberal aspirations of the US-backed military clique. -- Courtesy Dawn

Governor KP says: Quality education, research studies imperative for sustainable economic progress, development

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday said that the quality higher education and research studies in universities were vital for sustainable economic progress and development of the country.

Briefing newsmen about the fiscal analysis of KP universities 2021-2024 report prepared by the Governor's Secretariat KP here, the Governor said that no country could achieve goals of economic prosperity and development unless it equipped its people with an ornament of quality higher education and

concentrated on excellent research work. He said the research based education generates employment opportunities and alleviates poverty in society. The Governor said that a total of 34 public sector universities were providing quality higher education to students in KP despite financial constraints.

Haji Ghulam Ali said that the revenue of most of the public sectors universities was decreasing and expenditures were increasing due to poor planning and wrong selection of sites for the establishment of new universities by the past governments.

He said that only one percent was being spent on research work which was very low compared to international standards. The Governor said that in last four to five months, eight public sector universities in KP were functioning without a vice chancellor while VCs of additional seven universities are going to retire shortly. He said that the former PTI government has done great injustice with the universities after passing an act that complicated the appointment of vice chancellors and KP's domiciled human resource for induction in public sector universities.



GILGIT: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar interacts with the doctors and para-medical staff of Cardiac Hospital.

Equipping youth with IT education is the need of hour: Baligh

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended the ceremony of distribution of certificates of appreciation to IT trainers under the aegis of Akhuwat Foundation here at Governor House Lahore today as a special guest.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that information technology has become an integral part of modern life and equipping the young generation with information technology education is the need of the hour. He said the target of economic development can

be achieved by increasing IT software exports. Governor Punjab said that Akhuwat Foundation is doing a good job by giving free IT training to the youth.

He said that such people and institutions which are working for the welfare of the people are the bright face of the society which needs to be shown to the world. Governor Punjab said that in our society, deficiencies, flaws, and negative things are highlighted, while there are many good things in our society that also need to be highlighted. Governor Punjab added that he was happy to know that

Akhuwat Foundation was offering free courses to students in graphic designing, digital marketing, web and mobile applications development.

He said that these courses will provide entrepreneurship opportunities to the youth, adding that they can earn a handsome amount of money by working on line. Governor Punjab further said that former Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributed laptops among students on merit in 2013, so that our youth can progress in the field of information technology and compete with the world.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with IT trainers under the aegis of Akhuwat Foundation at Governor House.

P&D directed to take land acquisition into account in foreign funded projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to KP Caretaker CM on Planning & Development (P&D), Communications & Works, and Public Health Engineering (PHE), Dr. Syed Sarfaraz Ali Shan has directed the authorities of the P&D Department to take into account the procedure of land purchase, expenditures, and other required processes in the feasibility reports of development schemes particularly of foreign-funded projects.

He issued these directives during a briefing regarding foreign-funded projects here on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Chief P&D Akhtar Rahman and other planning officers.

He said that besides,

the imposition of Section IV, a strategy should also be evolved for land acquisition in the land scarcity districts of the province.

He further directed that the expenditure in all the ongoing provincial, federal, and foreign-funded development projects should be as per the schedule utmost efforts should be made for timely spending of the released funds for the purpose.

He directed the authorities to send the deadline for all the ongoing projects and the proposal of the plan next week so that the projects that are near should be given full attention while separate strategies should be adopted for the long-term projects.

EIB recovers 156 Kg hashish, 96 Kg opium

PESHAWAR (APP): Excise Intelligence Bureau (EIB) here Wednesday foiled a bid of narcotics smuggling and recovered hashish and opium from a car near Motorway Toll Plaza.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of EIB started checking vehicles near the toll plaza. During checking 96 kilograms of opium and 156 kilogram hashish were recovered from a private V-8 vehicle.

Smugglers also resorted to firing at EIB team and escaped from the scene after abandoning the car. A vehicle of EIB was also damaged by the collision of smugglers' car and six persons sustained minor injuries in the incident.

The case has been registered in Excise Station Peshawar Region and an investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, Director General Excise and Narcotics Control, Akmal Khattak appreciated the performance of EIB team in foiling the smuggling bid.

Major Arms Haul: Police arrest arms dealer

DG KHAN (APP): Dera Ghazi Khan police claimed to have apprehended an inter-provincial arms dealer and seized a substantial cache of illegal weapons.

According to police sources, Muhammad Shafiq son of Muhammad Ishaq and a resident of district Haripur, was apprehended during an operation.

During the search of Shafiq's vehicle with registration number AXQ/687, law enforcement officers uncovered a staggering array of weaponry.

The team confiscated items including 3 Kalashnikovs, 17 30-bore pistols, 6 Kalashnikov magazines, 34 pistol magazines, 410 rounds of Kalashnikov ammunition, and a staggering 3900 rounds of pistols.

Caretaker home minister for speeding up operations against criminals

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Home and Prisons Brig. @ Harris Nawaz while presiding over a high-level meeting on law and order has directed law enforcement agencies to speed up intelligence-based operations against street criminals, drug dealers, land grabbers and comb out illegal immigrants from the city, through mutual coordinated action.

The Home Minister ordered to evolve a joint strategy for commencing a grand operation against the dacoits and their facilitators

in the Katcha (riverine) areas of the province, according to a news release on Wednesday.

He vowed to take the operation against the lawbreakers to its logical conclusion. The meeting was held here at the office of the Home Minister and attended by Sindh Home Secretary, Muhammad Iqbal Memon, IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar, Addl. IGP Karachi Khadim Hussain Rind, Deputy Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh, and senior officers of other law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Two bodies found

FAISALABAD (APP): Bodies of two persons were found from different parts of the area of Thikriwala police station.

Police spokesman said here on Wednesday that some passersby witnessed corpse of a 35-year-old man lying near Lunda Bridge on Ring Road Chak No.64-JB and informed the police.

Meanwhile, body of a 30-year-old youth Mehboob Elahi was found from the Dera of his friend Ahmad Raza in Chak No.64-JB.

The police took both bodies into custody and shifted them to mortuary for postmortem while further investigation was under progress, he added.



GILGIT: Provincial Ministers Gilgit-Baltistan addressing a press conference regarding the Prime Minister visits to GB at CM Secretariat.

Meeting decides to establish two base camps, 19 check posts in Katcha area

MULTAN (APP): Important decisions have been taken to maintain law and order on permanent basis in Katcha Area of South Punjab as two base camps and 19 check posts will be constructed for the police in Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur districts.

As many as three armored vehicles will also be purchased for the police and Planning & Development department Punjab has approved Rs 1.94 billion in this regard.

An important meeting was held in South Punjab Secretariat on Wednesday regarding infrastructure development in Katcha

area. Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt. @ Saqib Zafar, Additional IG Police South Punjab Maqsood-ul-Hasan participated in the meeting while Chairman P&D Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahu joined the meeting through video link. RPO DG Khan, RPO Bahawalpur, DPO Rahim Yar Khan and DPO Rajanpur participated in the meeting virtually.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) South Punjab Capt. @ Saqib Zafar told the meeting that under the directions of caretaker Punjab Chief Minister, a plan had been finalized for the development.

LHC moved against not announcing date for election

LAHORE (Online): Petition has been filed in Lahore High Court (LHC) against not announcing the date for general election.

The petition has been filed by Azhar Siddique chairman Judicial Activism Panel making federal government and others respondents.

The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that President of Pakistan has to announce the date for election as per constitution.

The tenure of the assembly has expired since several days but the date for general election has not been announced.

Decision to ensure execution of daily trial of accused on May 9

LAHORE (Online): Caretaker government of Punjab has decided to ensure implementation of decision of daily trial in jail in respect of accused of May 9 tragedy.

Meeting was held under caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore.

The progress on issues related to events of May 9 and Jaranwala was reviewed.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed a team consisting of 3 ministers and senior officers to visit Jaranwala and submit report.

It was also decided in the meeting to ensure implementation of decision of daily trial of perpetrators of May 9 mayhem in jail.

He has also ordered to submit all the challans of Lahore within 3 days on incident of May 9.

It was told in the briefing given in the meeting that construction and renovation of 9 churches in Jaranwala has been completed.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed to complete the construction and renovation of 13 more churches in 2 weeks.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a Press conference regarding financial situation of Universities. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Education Dr. Qasim Jan is also present.

China-Pak Belt and Road Joint Laboratory to be established in KP varsities

PESHAWAR (APP): The Southeast University (SEU) Naniyang, China's delegation and Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar discussed the possibility of establishing the "China-Pak Belt and Road Joint Laboratory for Smart Disaster Prevention of major Infrastructure" here on Wednesday.

The laboratory will be established in five designated universities of Pakistan including UET Peshawar, UET Lahore, NED Karachi, NUST and BUITEM Quetta.

The delegation met with Secretary Relief and Rehabilitation KP Abdul Basit, Deputy Scientific Advisor, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) Islamabad, Raja

Shehreyar, VC University of Science and Technology, Bannu, Prof. Dr. Khair-uz-Zaman, VC University of Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht. The senior officials from PDMA KP, Center for Disaster Preparedness and Management, UoP, China Study Center UoP and Civil Engineering Department UET Peshawar gave their presentations.

Prof. Zhou Dong from SEU said, the Civil Engineering Department SEU is ranked "A++" as a first class discipline, declared by Ministry of Education, China.

He said that the cooperation between SEU and Pakistani universities are part of the "Belt and Road" initiative based on talent cultivation.

UNDP, KP Judicial Academy train women lawyers in legal aid

PESHAWAR (APP): The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy, has organized a two-day pilot training for women lawyers on representing legal aid clients from 13 to 14 September.

This initiative brings together young 20-female lawyers from Peshawar.

Caitlin Chittenden, Senior Rule of Law and Justice Reform Specialist at UNDP welcomed the participants and highlighted the objectives of the sessions. In his opening remarks,

Muhammad Shoaib, Director General (Acting) laid emphasis on legal aid.

He underscored the significance of legal aid in international and domestic legal frameworks where it is acknowledged as a fundamental human right and a guarantee of a fair trial, equality before the law, protection against discrimination, and access to effective remedies. The Inaugural Session was attended by the faculty members and directors of the Academy. The two-day training program aims to provide participants with an orientation of District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLECs).



PESHAWAR: Youngsters' enjoying bathing on Kohat Road.

Mayor Karachi directs KMC's Land dept to conduct survey of land

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday directed the land department to conduct an immediate survey of their land at Sharea Faisal, I.I Chandrigar Road, University Road, and Sindh Muslim Society.

He expressed these views while presiding over an important meeting of KMC departments related to revenue collection.

He said that to ensure revenue from KMC assets, recovery departments must ensure implementation of instructions within 30 days. Mayor Karachi's

spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, Municipal Commissioner KMC Syed Afzal Zaidi, Finance Advisor Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto, Head of Revenue departments, and other officers were also present.

He said that PD Orangi should get possession of 2600 yards of KMC's land within 30 days and the challans of the Land Department, Katchi Abadi, PD Orangi, and State Department regarding land must based on the QR code. The Mayor Karachi said that the State Department within 30 days.

ICRC, Hilal Ahmar conducts workshop for students at WUS

PESHAWAR (APP): International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Hilal Ahmar (Red Crescent), in collaboration with the Department of Journalism, conducted an informative training workshop for students at Women's University Swabi (WUS). The workshop was aimed at equipping students of the Journalism, Management Science, Urdu, Pak Studies, and Psychology departments

with skills to create effective humanitarian content during times of crises and disasters.

The event featured distinguished speakers who shared their expertise and insights on the crucial role of media and communication during disasters. Aezaz Ur Rehman, ICRC Communication Lead, emphasised the importance of accurate and timely communication in crisis.



LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore, Bilal Saddique Kamyana presides over a high level meeting at his office in Lahore.

Neither any investigation nor any identification parade is carried out in rape cases: SHC

KARACHI (Online): Justice Amjid Ali Sahito of Sindh High Court (SHC) has remarked neither any investigation is carried out nor any identification parade is conducted in rape cases. The bail plea of one Nazim accused in rape case came up for hearing before SHC Wednesday.

IG Sindh Riffat Mukhtar appeared on court's orders.

Justice Amjid Ali Sahito remarked "IG Sahb what devastation has taken place in Sindh in 15 years

has not occurred any where. It is not known you will be where after 6 months. But you should do good thing with people of Sindh while leaving.

He further observed cheque is given to investigation officer through one hand and is withdrawn from him through other hand. Investigation officers say funds are not provided to them. Therefore, why should we spend money on investigation out of our own pocket.

Justice Amjid Ali Sahito while moving to IG Sindh remarked why the funds for the investigation are not provided directly to police station instead of providing them to every district. When fund is provided to the police station then they will be held accountable for investigation. People of Sindh are setting their eyes on you. IG Sindh Riffat Mukhtar told the court things will be changing in Sindh within two to four months.



LANDIKOTAL: Customs clearing agents, leaders, political leaders, businesspersons and people are holding protest demonstration against the closure of Pak-Afghan border, held at Khyber Bazar in Landikotal.

President for implementation of job quota for persons with disabilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Wednesday underscored the need for implementation of job quota for persons with disabilities (PWDs) by the public and private sectors.

The president, during a follow-up meeting on the framework for the classification of disabilities, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that 10 to 12 percent population of the country was facing various forms of disabilities.

He said that it was the responsibility of the government and private sector to employ PWDs, as per

their skills and qualifications to empower them financially.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Human Rights, Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), NADRA, NAVTTC, representatives from the four provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK and a representative from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Ministry of Human Rights briefed the meeting on the progress made so far with regard to the implementation of dis-

ability employment quota. It was informed that the ministry was actively pursuing with the government organizations to implement job quota for persons with disabilities in letter and spirit.

The ministry highlighted that 98 differently-abled persons (DAPs) had been provided jobs by the government organizations since March 2023.

The ministry further informed that a master list of potential employers was being prepared to seek their support in providing jobs to PWDs.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the framework for the classification of disabilities, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Sajjad's book 'Rawal Raj' reflects cultural history of Potohar says NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly and Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf attended the launching ceremony of journalist Sajjad Azhar's book 'Rawal Raj' as chief guest in Islamabad press club today.

Former Federal Minister Pervez Rasheed, prominent Urdu poet Iftikhar Arif and large number of senior journalists also participated in the event.

While congratulating Sajjad Azhar for writing a book on the rich historical aspects of Potohar region, he said, "Potohar is a historical region and peculiarity of this region is that it has historical importance across the world."

The speaker further said that traditionally and culturally enriched people

live in Potohar region. He also said that Sajjad Azhar has enlightened the young generation about cultural aspect of the history through his book. He also said that writing a book is a very difficult task, one has to read hundreds of books to write one book. He said that Sajjad Azhar has highlighted the centuries-old civilization of Rawalpindi in his book.

Later on while responding to question of journalists regarding return of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the holding of General elections, the speaker said, "It is appreciable and good omen that Nawaz Sharif is returning Pakistan."

He also said that the politics and democracy are interlinked with Elections and whoever wins elections should form government

CNS highlights importance of maritime security under prevailing threats

Pakistan Navy's offshore patrol vessel launching ceremony held in Romania

ROMANIA (INP): Launching Ceremony of state-of-the-art Offshore Patrol Vessel, PNS HUNAIN (Desig) being built for Pakistan Navy was held in Romania.

bat capability of Pakistan Navy Fleet in safeguarding maritime frontiers.

APP adds: The launching ceremony of the most modern offshore patrol vessel, Pakistan Navy Ship

threats to energy and trade highways passing through the Indian Ocean Region.

In this context, he underscored that the Pakistan Navy had tremendous contribution in success-



On the occasion as the chief guest, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi highlighted the importance of maritime security under the prevailing conventional and non-conventional maritime threats to energy and trade highways passing through Indian Ocean Region.

He expressed his confidence that induction of these multipurpose and highly adaptive platforms will further strengthen com-

fully providing a secure sea environment for maritime trade since 2004.

Admiral Niazi expressed his confidence that the induction of multipurpose and highly adaptive platforms, equipped with the latest weapons and sensors suite, would further strengthen combat capability of the Pakistan Navy fleet in safeguarding maritime frontiers while ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean region, especially in the Arabian Sea.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi was the chief guest at the ceremony, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

Speaking on the occasion, the Naval Chief highlighted the importance of maritime security under the prevailing conventional and non-conventional maritime



ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Danila Ganich posing for a group photo with the participants after conference entitled "Pakistan-Russia Relations, and Way Ahead" at Islamabad Policy Research Institute in Federal Capital.

Ganich for independent mode of payment between Pakistan, Russia to bolster trade activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Russian Federation, Danila Ganich on Wednesday wished for an independent mode of payment between Pakistan and Russia in an attempt to bolster trade activities, which presently was around \$700 million.

Addressing a seminar titled 'Pakistan-Russia Relations and the Way Ahead' organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) at the forum titled, "Diplomatic Reflections", the Russian Ambassador shed light on different topics pertaining to Ukraine-Russia War, Pak-Russia bi-

lateral ties and regional issues.

About bilateral relations with Pakistan, the Ambassador said that there were excellent contacts at all levels and the understandings on the political, military and commerce sides were growing. The Ambassador said that Pakistanis as a whole was supportive of Russia and even during the war in Afghanistan by the erstwhile Soviet Union, there were pockets of support inside Pakistan.

He particularly mentioned the Russian largesse in supporting Pakistan's

stance against Islamophobia and observed that all religions should be respected. He castigated the West for irrationally advocating freedom of speech and that too when it entails to polarizing the society.

Ganich said, "We support counter-terrorism measures along with Pakistan, as we understand that your country has paid a great price in the form of 80,000 casualties during the war on terrorism." He said military drills between the two countries, known as 'Friendship', will continue, and an episode has been planned for next year.

Pakistan, Iran explore cultural collaborations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jamal Shah, the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Division, and Ehsan Khazaei, the Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, discussed the cultural ties between Pakistan and Iran, as well as recent developments like cultural agreements between the two nations.

In their meeting, the two parties explored the cultural connections between Pakistan and Iran, along with recent advancements in these relations, which encom-



ISLAMABAD: Ehsan Khazaei, Cultural Counsellor Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran called on Jamal Shah, Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture at his office.

passed cultural agreements between the two friendly nations. Additionally, they deliberated on collaborating to arrange diverse cultural events, such as an Iranian film week and other cultural exchanges.

The minister expressed Pakistan's desire to enhance cultural connections with Iran, encompassing areas such as arts, cinema, handicrafts, literature, heritage, and culture. Ehsan Khazaei, the Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, noted the numerous cultural and historical similarities shared by Pakistan and Iran.

They also conversed about a collaborative film production between the two nations and agreed to convene a delegation-level meeting to delve deeper into this matter.

212 gas connections disconnected, Rs. 1.95mln booked against gas theft

ISLAMABAD (INP): SNGPL's regional teams continue raids in different cities of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad against gas pilferers.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 30 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections while one FIR was lodged.

SNGPL's team in Mardan disconnected one gas connection for using domestic connection for commercial purposes. A

sum of Rs. 108,100 was also booked against gas theft.

In Sialkot, the company disconnected 38 connections on illegal use of gas and for using compressor.

Two gas connections were disconnected in Sargodha on meter tampering while another 3 connections were disconnected on account of illegal use of gas in Sargodha.

The regional team also lodged one FIR at the local police station.

Journalist shot dead

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Armed motorcyclists gunned down a journalist and injured three others in Madina Market of Muridke district Sheikhupura on Wednesday. Police said that two armed motorcyclists sprayed bullets at journalist Amanat Ali Chouhan killed him on the spot and injuring three others. Heavy contingent of police headed by District Police Officers (DPO) reached the scene and collected evidences from the crime scene. The body and injured were moved to hospital for medico-legal formalities where the injured were referred to Lahore.

CDA demolishes over 7k illegal structures in markets, roads, green belts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Directorate of Enforcement, Capital Development Authority (CDA) has demolished over 7,000 illegal structures in the markets, roads, green belts, and sidewalk tracks in the federal capital during the last year.

"During the operation, around 12,137 items of encroachers have also been confiscated, subsequently these articles are auctioned. Besides, fines worth Rs. 4.876 million has also been recovered from trespassers as penalty," sources in the CDA told APP.

They said, "Directorate of Enforcement has launched as many as 1,363 anti-encroachment operations carried out across the

board in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) during the last year."

The sources said, "Directorate was vigorously undertaking anti-encroachment operations on a regular basis throughout Islamabad in order to curb the illegal constructions in the ICT."

They said the continuous operations were being carried out on a day-to-day basis 24/7 for retrieval of state land from land grabbers and encroachers.

The matter was being dealt with by the Directorate of Municipal Administration working under the administrative control of the Municipal Corporation, Islamabad (MCI).

Religious scholar shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A religious scholar has been assassinated in the Gulistan Johar area of Karachi, on Wednesday.

According to police, some unknown armed persons riding a motorcycle opened fire on Maulana Ziaur Rehman who was taking a stroll in the park near the FBR building in Gulistan Johar. He died instantly as a result of the indiscriminate fire.

He was the principal of Jama'at Abu Bakar Islamai, Gulshan Iqbal.

The CTD and Crime Scene Unit recovered 11 shells from the crime scene, out of which four shells were of 9 mm and seven of 30 bore. The shells have been sent for forensic analysis.

KSrelief distributes 12,000 food packages in Chitral, Dir districts

ISLAMABAD (APP): King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), has distributed 12,000 food packages to assist individuals affected by the floods in the Lower and Upper Chitral, as well as Dir districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to details, this package is a part of the second phase of the Food Security Support Project in Pakistan for the year 2023-24, according to

a Saudi Embassy's statement on Wednesday.

During this second phase, KSrelief is also distributing 4,400 food packages to flood victims in Punjab's Muzaffargarh and Bahawalnagar districts, 5,000 food packages in Sajawal and Dadu districts of Sindh, and 11,000 food packages in Kharan, Sahabatpur, and Washuk in Balochistan. In total, this initiative aims to benefit 226,800 people through the distribution of 32,400 food packages across Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran, called on Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, & Privatization Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at Finance Division.

26 drug peddlers held, narcotics recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have apprehended 26 drug peddlers from different areas of the city including those involved in supplying drugs at educational institutions and recovered 8,550 gram hashish and 4,983 gram heroin from their possession during the last 48 hours.

Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, a police spokesperson said that Islamabad Police have intensified the crackdown against the drug peddlers involved in supplying drugs at educational institutions to eliminate this menace from the city.

During this crackdown, the Margalla police team arrested two accused namely Hanook Tanveer and Asif Khan and recovered a total of 980 gram heroin from their possession. Karachi Company police team arrested an ac-

cused namely Nabeel Masih and recovered 637 gram heroin from him.

Shalimar police team arrested two accused namely Azhar and Shan and recovered 560 gram hashish and 215 gram heroin from their possession respectively. Likewise, the Ramna police team arrested Sajjad and recovered 510 gram heroin from his possession. Golra police team arrested two accused namely Asif Khan and Afzal and recovered a total of 1021 gram heroin from their possession. Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Shafi and recovered 1246 gram hashish from his possession. The Industrial Area police team arrested 1 Salamati Masih and recovered 550 gram heroin from him.

Tarnol police arrested Ameer and recovered 225 gram hashish from his possession. Sangiani police arrested Kashmir Khan and recovered 680 gram hashish from his possession.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Sri Lanka Convention Bureau Thisum Jayasuriya talking with media persons during press conference regarding the "Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow" at local hotel in Federal Capital.

PTCL achieves seamless go-live of SAP S/4HANA for enhanced efficiency, growth

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) has successfully implemented SAP RISE with SAP S/4HANA, marking an innovative digital transformation within the telecom sector.

This strategic move is poised to modernize PTCL Group's corporate operations, fostering efficiency, effectiveness, and a culture of digitization said a news release.

The official go-live ceremony took place at PTCL HQ in Islamabad, graced by the presence of senior management from PTCL & Ufone 4G, as well as distinguished figures from SAP, IBM, and

Amazon Web Services (AWS). The ceremony also included appreciation certificates for team members involved in this transformation.

PTCL & Ufone 4G, pioneers in Pakistan's telecom sector, became the first to leverage a blend of top-notch SAP ERP solutions, facilitated by the SAP S/4HANA Private Cloud. This collaboration is a monumental transformation that will optimize resource allocation, real-time data insights, streamlining business processes, and bridging organizational information silos.

This is so far the largest customer go-live on SAP Rise with SAP S/4HANA in Pakistan, with

IBM as their implementation partner and AWS as their hosting partner. While appreciating teams successfully implementing the transformation process, Jafar Khalid, Group Chief Technology Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "We are immensely proud to have guided PTCL Group on its operational journey, leading the way in this initiative within the region.

This journey is set to establish a new standard and drive Pakistan's telecommunications sector towards improved operations and advancement. All our partners have played a significant role in successfully executing this monumental task.



ISLAMABAD: PTCL and Ufone 4G Group Chief Technology Officer, Jafar Khalid, Managing Director SAP Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan, Saquib Ahmad and senior officials in group photo during ceremony to mark the successful implementation of SAP Rise with SAP S/4HANA to enhance the efficiency and growth of PTCL, held at the PTCL Headquarter in Islamabad