

PTI rally to be held on 22nd
F.P. Report

LAHORE: The PTI has changed date for its rally in Lahore due to Eid Miladun Nabi and the rally will now be held on September 22, reported on Saturday. According to a PTI announcement, the party will hold a historic public gathering in Islamabad on September 8. PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan on Saturday notified Ijaz Minhas as the acting president of the party's Lahore chapter.



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PM meets Guinness world record holder



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday met with five-year-old Sufiyan Mehsood from Dera Ismail Khan who recently set a Guinness world record.

Sufiyan has made Pakistan and his parents proud by achieving this feat at a very young age, the prime minister said. He praised Sufiyan's achievement and emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for youth to engage in sports and positive activities.

He directed the Chairman of the Youth Program, Rana Mashhood, and relevant authorities to provide more sports facilities for young people. The prime minister said that talented youth like Sufiyan were a guarantee of a bright future for Pakistan.

He added that Pakistani youth were making the country proud in various fields, including sports. Sufiyan told the prime minister that he wanted to make Pakistan's name brighter by becoming a scientist in the future. The prime minister also spoke with Sufiyan in his native Pashto language. He also spoke to Sufiyan

Nawaz for cut in govt spending to boost relief

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has stressed for a unified approach among all political parties, governments and institutions to provide relief to people.

Chairing an important consultative meeting of PML-N in Lahore today, Nawaz Sharif urged Federal and provincial governments to reduce their expenses to provide more relief to people. During the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took the party president into confidence regarding ongoing talks with leaders of other political parties.

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz informed Nawaz Sharif about measures taken to reduce electricity bills in the province. Nawaz Sharif praised the federal government's fifty billion rupees relief package and Punjab government's forty-six billion rupees package for electricity consumers.

Mehsood's father, Irfan Mehsood, who holds more than 100 Guinness Book of World Records, specializes in martial arts and runs a training academy in Dera Ismail Khan.

Irfan Mehsood informed the prime minister about his sports and physical training academy in Dera Ismail Khan and the achievements of its trained athletes. The prime minister directed the PM Youth Program to collaborate with the sports academy of Sufyan Mehsood's

father in Dera Ismail Khan.

He also instructed the Youth Program to take steps to promote various sports across the country. The meeting was also attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman PM Youth Program Rana Mashhood and PM Coordinator for Climate Change Rumina Khursheed Alam.

Govt slashes petrol price by Rs1.86 per litre

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Saturday slashed the price of petrol by Rs1.86 per litre for the next fortnight in line with downward trend in the international market.

The new fuel prices will be effective from September 1, according to an official statement. The statement said the petrol price has been reduced from Rs260.96 per litre to Rs259.10 per litre. The government also reduced price of high-speed diesel (HSD) from Rs266.07 per litre to Rs262.75 after a cut of Rs3.32.

The relief in petroleum products prices is the third in a row, with the government reducing petrol price by Rs16.5 since July 30. In the previous fortnightly review, the government reduced prices of petrol and diesel by Rs8.47 per litre and Rs6.70 per litre, respectively.

Petrol, also called mogas, is mainly used in private transportation, small vehicles, rickshaws, and two-wheelers. Higher fuel prices significantly impact the budgets of the members of the middle and lower-middle classes, who primarily consume petrol for commuting. On the other hand, a significant portion of the transport sector relies on high-speed diesel. Its price is considered inflationary since it is predominantly used in heavy goods transport vehicles, trucks, buses, trains, and agricultural machinery such as tractors, tube wells, and threshers. The consumption of high-speed diesel particularly contributes to the increased prices of vegetables and other food items.

Helicopter goes missing in far Russia

MOSCOW: A helicopter with 22 people on board, most of them tourists, has gone missing in Russia's Kamchatka peninsula in the far east, authorities say. Kamchatka Governor Vladimir Solodov said they lost communication with an Mi-8 helicopter at 04:15 GMT "which had 22 people on board - 19 passengers and three crew members", in a video posted on Telegram on Saturday.

Rescue teams in helicopters were searching into the night for the missing aircraft, focusing on a river valley that the helicopter was due to fly along, Russian authorities said. The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. It is widely used in Russia, where crashes have been frequent, as well as in neighbouring countries and many other nations.

The helicopter had picked up passengers near the Vachkajec ancient volcano in a scenic area of the peninsula known for its wild landscapes and active volcanoes. From there it was travelling to the village of Nikolayevka further east - a distance of about 25km (about 15.5 miles), authorities said.

A source in emergency services told state news agency TASS that the helicopter disappeared from radar almost immediately after taking off and the crew did not report any problems. The local weather service said that there was poor visibility in the area of the airport.

Accidents involving planes and helicopters are frequent in Russia's far eastern region, which is sparsely populated and where there is often harsh weather.

In August 2021, an Mi-8 helicopter with 16 people on board, including 13 tourists, crashed into a lake in Kamchatka due to poor visibility, killing eight. In July that year, a plane crashed as it came in to land on the peninsula, with 22 passengers and six crew on board, all of whom were killed. — Aljazeera

The Frontier Post

JI leader Mushtaq arrested
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police on Saturday arrested former senator Mushtaq Ahmed of Jamaat-e-Islami during a march organized by the party to express solidarity with the people of Gaza. The authorities have imposed section 144 in Islamabad according to which gatherings without prior permission from the district administration were prohibited.

Karachi steers clear of cyclone 'Asna'

— heavy rain, wind not far behind

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Saturday issued the seventh alert as cyclone 'Asna' was estimated to be 300 kilometres away from Karachi.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued an alert about cyclonic storm 'Asna' which is located about 300 kilometres southwest of Karachi and 300km southeast of Gwadar. The cyclone is heading towards west and southwestward while rain is also expected in Karachi.

The system will result in windspeed of 60-80 km per hour along Pakistan's coast and Hyderabad, Jamshoro and Dadu districts. Under this influence of the system, Karachi division, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Alla Yar, Matiari, Jamshoro, and Dadu are likely to get showers with heavy downpours.

Hub, Lasbella, Awaran, Keach, and Gwadar districts of Balochistan are also likely to experience strong winds and heavy showers by Sunday night. Fishermen of Sindh and Balochistan are advised not to venture into sea for the next few days.

Severe rainfall led to difficulties with landings at the Karachi airport, causing delays and diversions of several flights. According to aviation sources, a foreign flight from Doha was unable to land in Karachi and was diverted to Muscat.

Similarly, a flight from Addis Ababa circled for an hour before returning without landing. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight PK-300 from Karachi to Islamabad has been delayed by over eight hours, with its new departure time moved from 7am to 4pm. Delays also affected flights arriving in Karachi from Istanbul and Bahrain. PIA flights from Multan to Muscat and Al-Qassim were also experiencing delays.

Aviation sources indicated that flights from Lahore to Karachi were delayed by eight hours, Islamabad to Karachi by four hours, and PIA's Islamabad to Karachi flight by two hours. A potential cyclone, which developed over the Rann of Kutch in

Rains, floods kill at least 88 people in KP since July

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The ongoing rains and floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have claimed the lives of at least 88 people from July 1 till date, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Saturday.

According to the authority, the persistent monsoon season has so far claimed the lives of at least 43 children, 26 men and 19 women. On the other hand, at least 129 people have been injured owing to the devastations in the wake of the torrential rains since last month. Those injured include 61 children, 39 men and 29 women, said PDMA. "A total of 958 houses were damaged by rains," added the authority. The destruction, triggered by the rain, has completely destroyed 260 houses and partially damaged 698. The numbers have been estimated a day after at least 12 members of the same family, including nine children, were killed when a massive landslide hit a house in the Upper Dir district. According to the police, the tragic incident took place in the Maidan area of Upper Dir in the wee hours of Friday.

India a few days ago, emerged along the Sindh coast late on Friday, according to the Met officials.

The system was likely to move west/southwestwards and emerge into northeast Arabian Sea along Sindh coast. The authorities on Friday evening issued the fourth alert and sought necessary precautions to be taken by people to stay out of harm's way. Amid the alarming situation, the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued an alert of a tropical storm in Sindh as more heavy to very heavy rain, wind and thunderstorms were expected on Saturday.

"A deep depression over Rann of Kutch, India is approaching west-southwest of Pakistan about 170km southeast of Karachi. The system is likely to move west and southwest and convert into a tropical storm. Wind speeds are expected to reach 30-40 knots, gusting higher. The estimated central pressure is 990 hPa, with further changes expected over the next 24 hours," the NDMA news release said.

Under the influence of this weather system, widespread rains, wind and thunderstorms with very heavy to isolated heavy falls are likely in Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan,

Tando Allah Yar, Matiari, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Dadu and Shaheed Benazirabad districts and Karachi division till Aug 31 with occasional gaps. The storm is likely to result in urban flooding in the urban centres. Heavy rainfall is likely to trigger flash floods in drains and hill torrents of Balochistan in the coming days.

The NDMA has advised the relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of the weather system. It issued instructions to the departments concerned to stay alert and mobilise resources to ensure a swift response to any situation. It warned fishermen and sailors against venturing into open seas during these days.

"Residents of these areas are advised to remain vigilant and follow guidelines issued by local authorities. Stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts." "The public is advised to remain vigilant and follow instructions from local authorities. The NDMA advises the public to stay informed and download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely alerts and closely monitor weather reports," it said. On Friday, educational institutes in Karachi remained closed amid the developing situation.

No talks with PTI until Imran apologises: Ahsan

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said on Saturday there would be no talks with the PTI until its founder Imran Khan apologised for the events of May 9.

The minister rebuked the PTI, claiming they had caused more damage than terrorists had done and questioned how any dialogue could take place with such people. He also condemned the former ruling party's approach, particularly its insistence on demanding 'receipts' from opponents.

The minister also highlighted that the country is currently facing an undeclared war, with enemies attempting to destabilise the nation through terrorism and internal conflicts. Also, according to Ahsan Iqbal, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman. "The prime minister also plans to engage with other political leaders as well," he said.

Discussing the PML-N meeting, Iqbal revealed that rising electricity prices was a key topic of discussion. The party leadership stressed the importance of resolving the energy crisis to provide relief to the public, he added. He also noted that the local government system was part of the party's manifesto.

Federal Defence Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

Tarar decries journals failed attempt to damage Pakistan's ties with China

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said that "The Diplomat" magazine in its article had tried unsuccessfully to spoil Pakistan's relations with long-time friend China.

In his reaction to the article published in the journal through his account on X, Tarar maintained: "This is yet another failed attempt to damage Pakistan's relations with its time-tested friend China. These attacks on our foreign policy will never succeed." He said that the impression given in the article was based on false opinions which did not reflect the sentiments of the people of Pakistan.

senior leader Khawaja Asif on Saturday opposed holding talks with the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The PML-N leader these remarks while speaking to reporters outside after attending the party huddle at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Model Town secretariat. When asked whether he was in committee for dialogue with PTI through Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) and head of opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Aeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Khawaja Asif categorically denied, saying that he was not part of any such committee. Responding to a question about the future of PTI founder Imran Khan, Asif said that he was not a soothsayer who could predict the future of anyone.

Meanwhile, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah has said that the anti-state forces are directly involved in Balochistan violence and they will be dealt with iron hands.

The SAPM on Saturday along with Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar visited Rana Farm House Muridke to condole the death of Rana Afzal Hussain, elder brother of Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain and father of MNA Rana Ahmed Ateeq Anwar.

Talking to media on the occasion, Rana Sanaullah said that those involved in creating anarchy and lawlessness in Balochistan would have to face the consequences. He said that no directions have been given for afflicting the founder Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in jail.

Pak pilgrims stranded in Iraq

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As many as 654 Pakistani zaireen (pilgrims) are currently stranded at Baghdad Airport on Saturdays as two aircraft of Iraq Airways which were scheduled to fly them back home have developed a technical fault.

According to a statement released by the Foreign Office in Islamabad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Aviation and Pakistan's Embassy in Iraq are in contact with Iraqi authorities and Iraq Airways for early repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has directed the ambassador of Pakistan in Baghdad to look after the stranded Pakistanis and to facilitate their early return. The embassy has provided meals and facilitated their temporary stay in Baghdad. The return of these zaireen is expected to start tonight. The first of the two flights is expected to take off from Baghdad at 2200 hrs (Iraq local time) 1200 am PST. "We expect all stranded passengers to return by 31 August 2024," the Foreign Office statement added.

Earlier, three hundred and Fifty-eight Pakistani pilgrims who were earlier stranded in Iraq due to flight issues returned to the country on Saturday with more to follow, according to a spokesperson for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Law and order KP govt's top priority: CM

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, during his visit to native District Dera Ismail Khan on Saturday, performed ground breaking of a number of projects under Rural Accessibility Program worth billions of rupees to be completed with the assistance of World Bank.

These projects include rehabilitation and improvement of a number of local access roads and bridges affected during floods. Various access roads with a total length of 120 kilometers in addition to six number of bridges would be rehabilitated with a total cost of Rs. 9.00 billion. These roads include 15 KM Draban- Chodwan Road, 18 KM Attal Sharif Road, 06 KM Kulachi- Rori Road, 12 KM Naivala-Garha Rasheed Road, 09KM Kokar-Sharki Road and others whereas the bridges include Rangpur Adda Bridge, Loni Nallah Bridge, Indus Distributory Bridge etc.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony as chief guest, the Chief Minister said that his government was utilizing all the available resources to facilitate the general public with all the basic needs of life.

He termed law and order as the top priority of his government and said that huge resources were being spent to strengthen police to the desired level. He remarked that provision of quality healthcare facilities was one of the top priorities of the provincial government and added that the district level hospitals were being strengthened and equipped with all the required medical facilities with the aim to facilitate the masses at local level whereas the scope of Sihat Card Scheme is being expanded to cover maximum free treat-

ment facilities in the scheme.

Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur stated that as Chief Minister, the entire province was his constituency and as such, developmental projects would be launched in all the districts of the province without any discrimination. He made it clear that there will be no compromise on the quality of work in developmental schemes, and anyone involved in any kind of malpractice in developmental projects would be dealt with iron hands.

He urged upon the public to have a close watch on the quality of work of developmental projects in their respective areas, and indicates any kind of substandard work to the government so that necessary action could be initiated against those involved, and public money could be utilized effectively to larger public interest.

"The incumbent provincial government is taking result oriented steps under a well devised strategy to enhance its own revenue, and to this end, special attention is given to the potential sectors including Mines and Minerals, Hydel power generation, Tourism, Agriculture and Livestock".

Ali Amin Gandapur stated adding that revenue thus generated would be spent on the development of the province and welfare of its people. The Chief Minister maintained that Awami Agenda of the incumbent provincial government is being implemented with a fast pace, and people of the province would soon feel a visible change in their lives as the agenda directly related to the common man. He further said that reforms were being introduced in various sectors of public service delivery to improve public service delivery up to the expectations and needs of the public.

Plane makes emergency landing

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A plane carrying 187 passengers made an emergency landing at Karachi airport on Saturday, sources said. One of the plane's engines, which was traveling from Doha to the Philippines, failed, prompting the pilot to declare a Mayday and request an emergency landing. The plane was flying at an altitude of 39,000 feet when the malfunction occurred.

The airport sources, said that the pilot's swift action ensured the safety

of all onboard, and the plane landed safely at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport. All 187 passengers were evacuated to the lounge, and an investigation into the incident is underway.

Earlier, an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 737 cargo plane en route from Addis Ababa city to Ahmedabad, India, made an emergency landing at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport. The plane landed in Karachi after it failing to land at Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.

According to aviation sources, the plane attempted to land in Ahmedabad but was unable to do so due to unknown reasons. The ATC instructed the pilot to perform a go-around at 1,500 feet. Unable to land, the pilot diverted the flight, ET 3644, to Karachi. After a one-and-a-half-hour flight, the cargo aircraft safely landed at Karachi Airport. Following a brief stay, the plane continued its journey to Ahmedabad. However, the cause of the failed landing attempt in Ahmedabad remains unclear.



Sindh Chief Minister approves Rs500 mln for IT certificate programs

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has approved PKR 500 million to launch certificate programs in nine IT fields as part of the Poverty Alleviation Program. The initiative aims to provide industry-relevant training to students and professionals across the province.

During a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signing ceremony, Chief Secretary Asif Haider Shah, IT Secretary Noor Ahmed Samoo, Chairman of Higher Education Commission (HEC) Professor Tariq Rafi, and other senior officials were present. The IT Secretary briefed the Chief Minister that NED University will

conduct IT courses for Karachi and Tharparkar divisions, Mehran University for Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, and Shaheed Benazirabad divisions, while IBA Sukkur will offer courses for Sukkur and Larkana divisions.

Initially, the program will train 10,000 young people, with the Sindh IT Department releasing PKR 500 million for this purpose. The courses will cover various fields, including Java, Python, Database Administration, Graphic Design, E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Web Development, Mobile Application Development, and Data Science.

According to IT Secretary Noor

Ahmed Samoo, the courses will last two months, with classes held five days a week, from Monday to Friday. Each group will consist of 30 to 35 participants. The program will be conducted in two phases: the first phase will focus on IT certification, and the second phase will offer incentives to the most talented students. All participants will receive their certificates in person at designated centers.

At the end of the meeting, an MoU was signed between the Sindh IT Department, NED University Karachi, IBA Sukkur, and Mehran University Jamshoro to facilitate the training program.

PA speaker meets CM, discusses political matters

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan met Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, here on Saturday and congratulated her and Pakistan Muslim League-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif on provision of mega relief in electricity bills.

The CM said, "The provincial cabinet, by granting approval to the public-friendly programme, has undertaken a historic step. The public money, contrary to the past traditions, will now be spent

only on provision of relief to the public."

Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan said, "Provision of Rs 14 per unit relief in the electricity bills is a whiff of cool breeze for the public." He termed provision of Rs 46 billion mega relief in the electricity bills a historic step.

Matters pertaining to political situation and Provincial Assembly affairs were discussed in the meeting. Development projects of the province were comprehensively discussed.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb was also present.

CM grieved at murder of 3 women: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the murder of three women in Pakpattan.

She sought a report from the Inspector General of Police in this regard.

The CM said, "Enforcement of law is welcoming and the culprits should be brought to justice under any circumstance."

KPT chairman calls on Governor Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Syed Raza Zaidi called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House on Saturday.

The importance of the port in economic activities, problems faced in the functioning of Karachi port and other issues were discussed during the meeting.

Governor Kamran Tessori said that Karachi Port was playing a prominent role in the prosperity of the national economy.

He said the state-of-the-art Karachi Port can play an active role in economic activities. The governor said that solving the issues of the Karachi Port on a priority basis was the need of the hour. The KPT Chairman praised the vision of Governor Sindh regarding the importance of Karachi Port and its functioning.

Man held for harassing female guard on duty

LAHORE (APP): Action was taken against a man for harassing a female guard on duty. The female guard reported to the Virtual Women Police Station that she had been harassed by a man for several days.

She alleged that the suspect insisted on taking her out and threatened to harm her when she refused. The Virtual Women Police Station provided immediate support to the distressed guard and promptly dispatched the police to the location.

Minister Qaiser leads Maritime Affairs briefing with key players



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Minister of Maritime Affairs, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, attended a media briefing session at the Karachi Press Club today.

The meeting was also attended by representatives Syed Syedain Raza Zaidi, Chairman Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Syed Hasan Nasir Shah, Chairman Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Mr. Jarrar Haider Shah Kazmi,

Executive Director (Finance), Mr. Khuram Mirza, Executive Director (SP&PL), Mr. Mustafa Kizibash, Executive Director (Commercial) from Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC). During the session, the Minister shared updates on the latest developments in the maritime sector, including initiatives to promote Pakistan's maritime economy, enhance trade and commerce, and improve

the country's shipping and ports infrastructure.

Further, The Minister of Maritime Affairs, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, unveiled the upcoming International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition & Conference (IMSEC). IMSEC, scheduled to take place on 12th, 13th, & 14th of September 2024.

IMSEC is a premier gathering designed to propel the Pakistan's maritime economy forward by fostering global and regional

partnerships and facilitating investments.

Organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, IMSEC serves as a platform for the Pakistani and international maritime community to address critical industry issues and share insights to advance the sector.

Featuring an investor conference and an international exhibition, IMSEC aims to foster interaction and collaboration among Pakistani and international maritime companies, policymakers, investors, and various stakeholders.

Additionally, the event includes session to encourage dialogue and cooperation among key industry leaders. In response to questions from the media, the Minister provided insights into the government's vision for the maritime sector and its plans to address the challenges facing the industry.

The representatives from leading media outlets appreciated the Minister's openness and willingness to engage with the media.

Unity in the face of adversity

Kinza Sualih

IN a city as vast and diverse as Karachi, it's easy to assume that privilege dictates the quality of life. Many believe that the government's attention is disproportionately allocated, with some areas basking in the glow of infrastructure and others left in the shadows.

But after last week's torrential rains, I took a journey across the city—from the affluent neighborhoods to the less privileged—and what I found was a testament to the resilience and unity of Karachi's people.

In both the posh areas and the less privileged ones, I saw communities rising to the challenge, not waiting for the government to step in. There were neighborhoods where residents, committed to their surroundings, had arranged for water-sucking machines to



combat the relentless flooding. They had secured electrical wires to prevent accidents and taken steps to keep their streets safe. Even in areas where resources were scarce, people had banded together to ensure the well-being of their neighbors.



The rains had wreaked havoc across the city, breaking roads and leaving behind a trail of destruction that spared neither the wealthy nor the poor. Yet, in

every corner, there was a spirit of self-reliance and mutual aid. The health risks posed by the stagnant water were met with swift, community-driven action. People organized themselves to clean the streets, distribute essential supplies, and protect one another from the dangers that the monsoon had brought.

One of the gravest challenges Karachi faces is the issue of drainage. Poor infrastructure has left large

swathes of the city unable to cope with the deluge, with water having nowhere to go but into homes and businesses. It is a problem that has plagued Karachi for years, and last week's rains only exacerbated it. Yet, amidst this crisis, the people of Karachi didn't falter. They didn't wait for help to arrive—they became the help.

This story isn't just about the rain. It's about a city that refuses to be divided by privilege. It's about Karachi, where the true wealth lies in its people, in their ability to come together in times of need. Whether in the well-heeled neighborhoods or the less privileged ones, Karachiites have shown that unity and determination can transcend the barriers of wealth and privilege. They have proven that, even in the face of adversity, they are stronger together.



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
NATIONAL DATABASE & REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Walk-In Test


Residents of respective Tehsils are invited for Walk-in-Test as per details mentioned below.

Post & Age	Qualification & Experience	Tehsil	Job Location	Number of Positions	Test Date, Day & Registration Time	Venue for Test
Junior Executive Age (Maximum): 25 Years	Intermediate or Equivalent + Preferably 1x Year Experience of Data Entry	Bahrain	NRC Kalam	3	19-Sep-2024 Thursday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	NADRA RHO Peshawar, Main Boulevard Near BRT PDA Stop, Phase-V Hayatabad, Peshawar
		Khwarzakhela	NRC Bagh Dheri	7		
		Sharingal	NRC Patrak	7		
		Kandar	NRC Kandar	7		
		Larjam	NRC Larjam	7		

Terms and Conditions:

- Resident from respective Tehsil as per CNIC/Domicile will be allowed for test against one location only.
- Interested candidates must bring original documents i.e. Personal, Educational & Professional for test as per specified time. Requests for consideration after lapse of time will not be entertained.
- Only shortlisted candidates after qualifying test shall be called for interview.**
- Employees serving in Government/Semi-Government departments must provide No Objection Certificate (NOC) at the time of interview.
- Attested degrees/certificates from Higher Education Commission (HEC)/respective educational boards must be provided at the time of interview.
- Selected candidate will be hired on contract for a period 5x years including 6x months' probation period.
- Selected candidate shall provide Medical Fitness and Character Certificates.
- Appointment is being made against a specific NADRA Registration Centre (NRC); therefore, no request for transfer shall be entertained.
- 05 years age relaxation is already included in above age limit.
- Electronic gadgets such as mobile phone, smart watch etc. will not be allowed during test /interview.
- No TA/DA will be admissible for Test & Interview.
- Females, Minority, Transgenders and Differently-abled candidates are encouraged to apply.
- Sample test is available at <https://careers.nadra.gov.pk/> which can be viewed for guidance.

Note:- Selected candidates shall neither confer any entitlement of permanent appointment nor be regularized.



Human Resource Section,
NADRA Regional Head Office Peshawar
NADRA RHO Peshawar, Main Boulevard near BRT PDA Stop,
Phase-V Hayatabad, Peshawar KPK

PID (I) No. 1547/24



Shaukat Khanum
Memorial Cancer Hospital
and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

Medical Consultants:

- Consultant Anaesthetist
- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist
- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist

Senior Instructors:

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology

Hospital Based Fellowships:

- Fellow in Anesthesia
- Fellow in Clinical & Radiation Oncology

MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION & TECHNICAL:

- Assistant Manager Human Resources
- Executive Chef
- Inventory Officer
- Manager Food & Dietary Services
- Manager Pharmacy

Note: All Senior Instructor positions for Karachi & Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk

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Third case of Mpox infection confirmed

— patient detected during screening at Bacha Khan Airport

PESHAWAR (APP): The Rapid Response teams at Police Lines Hospital collected blood samples and sent them to Public Health Reference Laboratory at Khyber Medical University (KMU) which confirmed Mpox infection in the patient, Dr. Roghani added.

The patient is stable and is admitted to the Isolation Ward of Police Line Hospital for proper treatment of infection, he added.

It is to be mentioned here that this is the third confirmed case of mpox infection in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported in a period of a fortnight.

The first case of mpox in KP during the current year was reported on August 15, 2024, soon after the declaration of a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on August 14 in the wake of the growing outbreak in Africa and emergency of a new variant of virus in some countries.

All the infected patients in KP are travelers who arrived in their homeland from abroad during the last couple of weeks.

The first case was reported in a person belonging to the Mardan district, the second in Nowshera and the third one among a resident of Orakzai district.

The genetic sequencing of earlier two cases of mpox in KP revealed that the patients are infected with Clade 2B strain.

Soon after the detection of the first case, screening of passengers started at airport and border points and so far around 20,901 individuals have been screened at Peshawar Airport, while 21,040 individuals have undergone screening at the Torkham border.

Meanwhile, Director Public Health KP, Dr. Irshad Roghani has said that the provincial Health department is fully vigilant and taking all possible measures to detect and prevent the spread of the virus in the region.



PESHAWAR: An old man push cart loaded with stuff at Gurh Mandi.

Muzzammil congrats KPRA

PESHAWAR (APP): The Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Finance Muzzammil Aslam has congratulated KP Revenue Authority (KPRA) for surpassing its first two months target and said that overall collection is increased by 44% to 7.1 billion rupees as compared to 4.92 billion rupees last year.

He said this while receiving the performance report of first two months of current financial year from KPRA Director General, Fauzia Iqbal.

He termed the achievement a milestone and congratulated KPRA team for surpassing target in the month of August.

CM aide said that KP government is taking several steps to increase its revenue so as to further improve the financial condition of the province.

Papers submitted F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The process for election of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry formally began here on Saturday. A large number of intending candidates submitted nomination papers in the office of Secretary General for 23 vacant seats of executive committee of the chamber.

The polling on 23 vacant seats of the executive committee of the SCCI will be held in the chamber on September 25, 2024.

As per schedule, following the scrutiny of nomination papers, a preliminary list of intending candidates for executive committee will be displayed on September 2 while polling on vacant seats of the executive committee will be held on September 25 in the chamber.

PACCI concern over imposition of 2% Cess on export

Admission Document (TAD), which has severely disrupted the seamless movement of goods across the border.

The introduction of this 2% Cess on bilateral trade further adds financial strain on traders and businesses at a time when they are already passing through a complex and difficult trade environment.

The timing of this tax is particularly troubling as it risks exacerbating the economic difficulties faced by traders, potentially slowing down crucial trade activities that are vital to Pakistan's economy.

Meanwhile, Coordinator PAJCCI KP, Zia Sarhadi while supporting the views of Qazi Zahid, said that new levy by KP government has halted export from the province and will compel traders to opt for sending their consignments from other provinces.

Zia said the 2% Cess has implemented a levy of around rupees three to four hundred thousand on every truck, making it impossible for businessmen to compete in rates.

Both Qazi Zahid Hussain and Zia-u-Haq Sarhadi urged the Chief Minister of KPK to act swiftly to reconsider and eliminate the CESS, at least during this challenging period.

This action is essential to provide relief to the trading community and to ensure the continued viability of trade with Afghanistan and CIS countries, they added.

Agriculture varsity organizes seminar

PESHAWAR (APP): The University of Agriculture Peshawar in partnership with Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan), Ambassador (R) Farukh Amil.

Addressing the inaugural session as Chief Guest, Secretary Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, appreciated the efforts of the University and the Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) to bring stakeholders from different public and private sector organizations to discuss and promote national economic security through modernizing agriculture.

He highlighted some of the projects initiated by provincial agriculture department to enhance farm productivity.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht welcomed the guests and participants and said that importance of intellectual property is paramount in the contemporary world from trademarks to patents, to copyrights, to geographic indications and to genetic resources.

The seminar was attended by a large number of participants both from the public and private sector including senior faculty, research community and students.

Whom to blame?

Waleed Khan

The internet services were disrupted in Pakistan for many days. It caused huge frustration among online business community, students and as well as all internet users. Many social media apps like What'sapp, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook were not properly working without a VPN. Certain rumours were also spread about Fiver (the online source for earning) that it has reservations about the malfunction of internet in Pakistan.

Recently Business operations have been affected badly due to slow internet. According to Minister Aleem Khan that slow internet has impacted freelancer, who generates over one Billion dollars in revenue for Pakistan's economy each year. But unfortunately, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has successfully blamed PTCL for internet disruption. The point is that blaming each other is easy in Pakistan. In the end IT Minister Shaza Fatima says, "Web management system is being updated for increased cyber security in Pakistan". There are certain threats of cyber-attacks which can damage social security as well.

Despite this, the myth of installation of firewall technology has also rejected by the IT minister. Although, firewall technology was supposed to be used by the government to censor social media apps and activities. Further, she has added that government is not responsible for slow internet. It seems like the government is also hiding the truth because no one is ready to take responsibility for such negligence.

In a nutshell, whatever it was and whatever it is, such disruption in the world of the internet may lead to harm Pakistan's economy. The Pakistan Software House association (PSHA) says, "There is a chance of \$300 million economic loss due to internet disruption".

The Supreme Court of Pakistan should take immediate notice against setting government to avoid such negligence because no one will tolerate internet disruption in future. Otherwise, it will damage the image of Pakistan on both national and international levels.

(The writer is student of NUML University)



PESHAWAR: A boy making names on a pen at for selling purpose.

PTI KP govt removes competent, best performing CEO KP-EZDMC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has removed the competent and best performing Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) from his post without clear reasons or charges in violation of rules and procedures.

According to reliable sources, the provincial cabinet of the KP government which met at Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad has approved the termination of the services of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal Khattak.

The issue was even not on the formal agenda of the provincial cabinet and even on additional agenda and taken as soft agenda from the computer during the last moments of the meeting. The abrupt decision of the cabinet particularly of the chief minister has sent waves of shocks not only among the business community rather also among the members of the Board of Directors (BoD), a competent forum for taking such decisions.

Javed Iqbal Khattak had have taken charge as CEO KP-EZDMC on March 20, 2020 and during the period of over the last four years the company has made remarkable progress in establishing a robust industrial infrastructure through the strategic development of Economic Zones (EZs) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

These zones have created a conducive environment for businesses, attracting substantial investment and generating employment opportunities, thereby playing a pivotal role in driving economic growth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the period, the company has established a comprehensive network of 09 new economic zones including two Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and seven Economic Zones (EZs) in the province.

Currently, 1,736 industries are operating within the existing EZs and SEZs. This represents a substantial contribution to the province's industrial output, enhancing productivity and supporting local and national economies while the revival of 160 industrial units and the allocation of 419 new industrial plots in both existing and new zones are testaments to the management's proactive efforts to stimulate industrial growth.

These initiatives have created new opportunities for entrepreneurs and businesses, contributing to the province's economic dynamism and have also created 110,233 direct jobs in the province leaving a positive impact on the local economy, reducing unemployment rates and improving livelihoods across KP.

A total investment of PKR 355 billion has also been secured for both existing and new EZs and SEZs through the dedicated efforts of KP-EZDMC. This significant investment highlights the company's success in attracting investors and fostering industrial growth, positioning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a prime destination for industrial development.

The Export Processing Zone (EPZ) have successfully attracted USD 163 million in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This influx of international investment highlights KP's potential as a hub for global businesses, further enhancing the province's economic stature.

This scribe contacted the Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Khan Tordher to seek his comments on the development, but he was not ready to speak on the record.

Talking to this scribe, a member of the BoD on condition of anonymity expressed full satisfaction over the performance of the CEO Javed Iqbal Khattak and termed his termination as violation of the rules of the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) for the companies established under Rule 42 of the commission.

He said that competent forum for taking such decisions is the Board of Directors (BoD) of the company. He alleged that the provincial government has bypassed the competent forum, which is illegal and unlawful.

Two M.Phil scholars defended their thesis



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Two Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) scholars Zubaida and Nafeesa Mirzaman have defended their thesis successfully. According to details, both scholars have completed their research work under the supervision of Dr. Amjad Reba.

The title of scholar Zubaida thesis as the contributions of non-profit organizations addressing the educational problems of transgender in district Peshawar.

However, Nafeesa thesis titled as Intergenerational mobility of parents regarding female education at secondary level in district Muzafarabad.

Moreover, Dr. Niaz Muhammad Ajiz of Islamia University Peshawar and Dr. Shahzadi Seema of Benazir Women University Peshawar were the external examiners.

KP Assembly's session put off for fourth time

PEHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly's session was postponed on Saturday for the fourth time without giving any reason.

The session, which was due to be held on September 2, will now be held on September 23.

It merits mention here that the former provincial minister for C&W Shakeel Khan had announced that he would make a speech during the session in which he would give proof of corruption in the province.

On the other hand, sources told that efforts were being made by the provincial government to woo the estranged ex-minister.

200 tourists from Kumrat rescued, says spokesman

PESHAWAR (APP): The spokesman of Tourism and Culture Authority Govt of KP has said that 200 tourists stranded in Kumrat Valley in Dir Upper district has been safely rescued on Saturday.

He said the tourists rescued from Dojangla, Kala Chesma and Abshar were assembled at Grand Palace hotel from where they would be shifted to Kalam.

Talking to APP, he said that food and other services were being provided to all the rescued tourists.

The spokesman said that police and district administration are providing full support in the rescue operation. These tourists were stranded after blockage of roads due to heavy rainfalls at Kumrat Dir Upper.



In brief

200 tourists from Kumrat rescued F.P. Report

DIR: The spokesman of Tourism and Culture Authority Govt of KP has said that 200 tourists stranded in Kumrat Valley has been safely rescued on Saturday. He said the tourists rescued from Dojangla, Kala Chesma and Abshar were assembled at Grand Palce hotel from where they would be shifted through Kalam. Talking to media, he said that food and other services were being provided to all the rescued tourists. The spokesman said that police and district administration are providing full support in the rescue operation. These tourists were stranded after blockage of roads due to heavy rainfalls at Kumrat Dir Upper.

Sports programs organized F.P. Report

LARKANA : Sports competitions were held between the students of New Generation School System and Jinnah Model School of Faisal Colony in Larkana. Shows of strength and strength were shown. There were excellent and separate competitions between girls and boys. On this occasion, the director of New Generation School, where school teachers Wajid Hussain Kalhoro, Akram Kalhoro, Manzoor Kalhoro, Mudassar, who were attended the program, were among the journalists Barkat Ali Jiskani and others. Games programs organizer has thanked the guests and said that the heart is very happy after watching the program today. There is good talent in the children of Larkana. Such games should be played in schools. We are grateful to Khudhar, who works hard day and night to prepare the children. Inshallah, a good sports program will be held soon with other schools. Muskan, Khushboo, Uroq, Bisma Mirjat, Nagma Gopang, Rubab, Taha Abro, Amina Kalhoro, Naina Kalhoro, Raheela Gopang, Fatima Khoso Sindhu, Maria Leghari, Kiran Jatoi and Boys Mudasir Khokar, Muhammad Younis, Hasnain Ali, Naveed, Akash Ali Gopang, Ali Abbas Dhamrah, Zaman Ali Gopang, Farhan, Ali Hasan, Basit, Muzamil, Ali Raza, Ghulam Hussain, Mir Muhammad, Siraj, Ghulam Mustafa Soomro, Azan Haider Soomro were included.

One killed, two hurt in mishap

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A man was killed and two others suffered critical wounds when a trailer hit another trailer in Noorpur Noranga area of the district. The police and rescue sources said that they received information about a road accident that caused death of a man and injuring of two other persons. The police and rescue teams rushed to the scene and provided emergency medical aid to the injured. They said that a speeding trailer hit another trailer that was parked on roadside, leaving one man dead and injuring two other persons. The dead and injured were shifted to Bahawal Victoria Hospita (BVH). The police have registered a case and started investigation.

Woman dies in road mishap

LODHARAN (APP): A woman was killed while another sustained injuries after a tractor-trolley, loaded with bricks, ran over a motorcycle near Bahawalpur Road here on Saturday. According to Rescue officials, a man and a woman were going somewhere on a motorcycle when a tractor-trolley hit them near Bahawalpur Road.

Aides to KP CM inaugurate private luxury hotel at Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Advisor to KP CM on Information & Public Relations, Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif and Special Assistant on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher inaugurated a private IYI Luxury Hotel at Bagh Dheri, District Swat.

Local member of the provincial assembly (MPA) Mohammad Naeem and MNA Sohail Sultan welcomed the guests. On this occasion, the management of the hotel gave detailed briefing to advisor and special assistant and told that the facility comprising tents and concrete has cost Rs.700 million. Besides, Director (Business Facilitation) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) Iqbal Sarwar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the hotel, Ab, Abdul Mateen, government officials, investors and a large number of local notables also attended the inaugural ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to KP CM on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif said that every kind of such steps towards progress and development is their national and religious responsibility. He congratulated both the investors and

KP-BoIT for construction of the unique IYI in Swat.

He said that investors like Abdul Mateen are their heroes as when there is a brain-drain of shifting of mind and wealth they still trust in the future of their country and the establishment of the millions of rupees investment of IYI is an ample proof of it. Barrister Saif that from Waziristan to Swat our province is facing hard time. However, he said Almighty Allah has taught the skill of how to come out of the darkness. He assured the people of Swat of the provincial government support and not only attracting domestic tourists from across the country rather foreign tourists from all parts of the world.

He said, the promotion of tourism is the priority of the government and vision of the PTI founder Imran Khan. He said that the promotion of tourism could not only promote the soft image of the country rather play vital role in the strengthening of the national economy.

In his address, Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher appreciated the efforts of the KP-BoIT for making possible the huge investment of Rs.700 million in the hotel industry of the province.

He said that the board

has extended full cooperation to the investors' groups during all phases of the project and expressed his hope that it would prove a modern and high standard facility for the arrival and stay of tourists in Swat. He also termed a big success towards the promotion of tourism and hotel industry in the region.

The Special Assistant said that the provincial government is extending all possible cooperation and facilitation to investors and KP-BoIT is extending support to investors in all phases of their businesses. He said that the promotion of own resources for economic development is the vision of the provincial government.

He said that they are fully focused on the uplift of all sectors of the economy and tourism and hotel industry are big economic potentials of the province. Abdul Karim Khan said that Swat is the electricity corridor which in future will generate 600 megawatt hydel power and invited investors to invest in the green investment. Speaking on the potentials of economic development of Swat, he said that small scale industrial units would be established in the area, which is also suitable for tea cultivation to meet a big share of the national requirements.

He said that the board

KPRA inaugurates sub office in Kohat

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: To facilitate taxpayers, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority opened a Sub-Office of its South Region in Kohat.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali formally inaugurated the Sub-Office along with KPRA team. The office is located in KDA Complex B-Block. The Sub-Office was opened on the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur and Minister Finance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aftab Alam Afridi for the facilitation of taxpayers of Kohat and its

adjacent areas.

Director General KPRA Fouzia Iqbal in her statement said that the aim of opening the Sub-Office in Kohat is to facilitate taxpayers of Kohat and its nearby areas. Our staff, including an Assistant Collector along with a facilitation officer will be present in the Sub-Office to address the issues of taxpayers on-the-spot for which they had to travel to KPRA regional office located in Bannu," she said. The taxpayers are our stakeholders and we would do our best to facilitate them as much as possible to make tax payments and monthly returns filing easier for them," she added the Sub-Office will also help KPRA in improving tax compliance in Kohat, Hangu and Karak and the nearby areas and will also result an increase in the tax base in the region. She thanked DC Kohat for his support in establishing the office.

DC Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali said at inaugural ceremony that KPRA's Sub-Office in Kohat is like a blessing for the people Kohat who had to visit Bannu for their sales tax on services related issues which will now be resolved in their own city. He extended his support to the team of KPRA in Kohat.



MINGORA: KP CM Adviser on Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Dr. Saif talking to media persons.

Victims of different mishaps held protest

F.P. Report

LARKANAR: The victims of different crimes and discrimination held protest in front of Larkana Press Club in favor of their demands. Carrying placards and protesting against the influential people, 80 years old Ali Murad solangi resident of taluka shah bader said that in 1990, Gul Hasan Narani, a respected person of the village, gave me 75 acres Agri land to feed his calves, and after a few days of that time, the influential people of the area deprived me on the land by force of arms.

I gave such complaints to the elected members of the area and the police, but unfortunately, even after 34 years passed, I have not been able to get justice. He also sought justice from

the Chief Justice of Sindh High Court and Sindh Chief Minister. While on the other hand, Nazir Ahmed Odhano along with his family members, a resident worker of Luhar Bye pass area of Larkana city, protested in front of the press club along with his family members has said that actually I am a resident of Mayani village taluka Ratodero and currently live in Larkana city to do vegetable business.

He said that on May 23, the influential Ashiq Vessar and Aamir Jagirani of Jogi Muhala Ratodero had shot and killed my 13-year-old son Siraj Ahmed odhano. Even though the case was registered at the police station, only one suspect, Ashiq Ali Vessar was arrested while the other accused was not been arrested by the police

because of his influence.

Moreover, Zahid Hussain Chandio, a resident of village Tharo Wadha of Taluk Mirokhan, protested the seizure of the land in front of the Press Club and said that I was given 1 acre of land which was registered in the name as which land was given my grandfather Lal Bakhsh Chandio, the documents of which are also available to me. While the influential Muhammad Essa Chandio and the police official Khadim Hussain Chandio have bribed the money to Tapedar and have allegedly occupied my land, he demanded from the DIG Police Larkana and the SSP saying that justice should be done to me otherwise no one will be punished. I will be forced to take extreme measures.



D I KHAN: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur inaugurating various development projects.

Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting held F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A meeting of the District Agriculture Advisory Committee held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, in which the farmer package announced by Chief Minister Punjab was discussed in detail.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the provincial government is spending a huge amount of 64 billion rupees on the development of agriculture. He said that the issuance of Kissan Card will enable small farmers to get loans. He said that farmers to increase agricultural production.

The provision of facilities is of fundamental importance. In this context, the agriculture department should ensure the availability of quality seeds and fertilizers to the farmers. He directed that more and more small farmers should be registered for Kissan Card.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Toba Tek Singh, Dr. Naushir Khan said that the target of providing Kissan Card to 20681 farmers across the district and 15850 applications for Kissan Card from across the division so far received, which is the highest in the entire division. He said that 4 Kissan Sahulat Centers have also been established for the availability of quality agricultural medicines to the farmers.

Village committees have been formed to prevent smog and emergency centers have also been identified. Warning letters have also been issued to the landowners who set fire to paddy crops last year. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu emphasized that the Department of Agriculture should maintain constant contact with the farmers to achieve higher production of cotton and Farmers' Day should be organized continuously in remote areas. Discount will also be given on every tractor in the Green Tractor Scheme 15 lakh subsidy will be given.

2 mercilessly slaughtered in Haripur F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Two people were killed while two including a woman were seriously injured as a family was slaughtered by unknown attackers with a sharp-edged instrument at their house in Haripur on Saturday.

According to police among the four slaughtered persons are a woman Jamila, Sagheer Ahmed, Safir Ahmed and Adeel Ahmed. Police said the injured Jamila and her son Adeel Ahmad are fighting for life while two people, Safir Ahmed and Sagheer Ahmed have died.

Police Station Makhanyal police reached the spot on receiving the information and shifted the dead bodies to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Khanpur while seriously injured have been referred to Haripur Trauma Center. The police and circle DSP of Makhnyal police station are collecting the evidence on the spot.

Traders resent blockade of Pak-Afghan highway

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: People from different walks of life disapproved of blockade of Pak-Afghan highway that suspended trade and other economic activities besides multiplied miseries of the locals.

Large number of local traders, transporters, councillors, political workers and members of civic society hold a protest demonstration at Bacha Khan Square, main Landi Kotal Bazaar on Saturday against closing of Pak-Afghan road at Bogyari check post by Koki Khel tribe in connection of repatriation of Internal Displaced Persons of Rajgal, Tirah Valley.

Addressing on the occasion

sion speakers including elder Masel Khan Shinwari, Chairman Clearing Agent Association, Torkham Mirajuddin Shinwari, Azad Qabail Transport Union Chief Muhammad Iqbal, Landi Kotal Welfare Organization President head Akhtar Ali Shinwari, Qari Nazeem Gul and others said although Koki Khel IDPs had valid demand to let them to return to their villages however blocking Pak-Afghan highway for long time was more solution of the issue.

Initiating protest sit-in on main road only added problems of transporters, traders and locals could not resolve repatriation issue of the Koki Khel IDPs, they

added and stressed to shift the protest sit-in to other site so that to recommence general traffic at the main highway.

They urged the concerned authorities to address the genuine matter of the Koki Khel tribe and sort out an acceptable solution. The protestors threatened that if the Pak-Afghan highway was not resumed for general traffic then they would initiate a protest sit-in in front of forces cantonment in Landi Kotal. It is to be stated here that the Koki Khel tribesmen being protested in favor of their demands, closing the Pak-Afghan road at Bogyari Checkpoint for the last eleven days for all kinds of traffic.

Terrorism to be eliminated from Balochistan soon

F.P. Report

QUETTA: There will be no compromise on the integrity of Pakistan and the motives behind the ongoing terrorism in Balochistan will soon be brought in front of the nation and many faces will be exposed in this. Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari and Provincial Advisor on Industries and Trade Mir Ali Hassan Zehri expressed these views in a statement.

He said that behind the incidents of terrorism in recent days in Balochistan, the evil intentions behind the scenes have been destroyed and the brave soldiers of the Pakistan Army and other security forces have sacrificed their lives to protect the country and the cowardly enemy and the heinous ambitions of their instrumentalists were crushed.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that at present some people in Balochistan are playing both sides to shine their failed politics. He said that Dr. Malik is also seen as opposed to the incidents of terrorism and on the other hand, he supports such people in private gatherings and has a soft spot in his heart for them, which shows his double standard politics. He said that why Dr. Malik did not solve this problem during his two and a half years in power.

Why did they not solve

the burning problems of Balochistan? It is amazing that now sympathy has come in his heart on this issue. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that those who were killed in Rara Sham were not Pakistanis belonging to Punjab? Why did not raise an effective and strong voice from Balochistan against the oppression done on them? Why did the leadership of the nationalist party not raise a strong voice on the incidents of terrorism? Were the martyred innocent people and forces personnel not Pakistanis or did they come from another country or planet?

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further said in his statement that we talk about Pakistan and salute the sacrifices of the army whose soldiers always sacrificed their lives for the security of the country and protected the Pakistani homeland. The entire Pakistani nation applauds the firm determination of the Pakistan Army and other security forces against terrorists and their nefarious intentions and assures that the cowardly terrorist elements against the country's security will be eradicated.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said in harsh words that now the time for talks has passed, now only these terrorists will be brought to their logical end. Advisor for Industry and Crafts Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that

innocent citizens are killed in terrorist incidents. At the same time, every single drop of the soldiers of Pakistan Army and other security forces, who were martyred while protecting the homeland, will be taken into account, and whoever looks at Pakistan with an evil eye has no right to be pardoned. Terrorists have abused the patriotic Balochistan by using the name of Baloch. Baloch is a country-loving nation. Baloch can never be terrorists. Those who have committed terrorism are not Baloch but only terrorists and do not deserve any concession.

He further said that everyone has seen that those who were called missing persons were found involved in terrorist incidents and their faces were exposed in front of everyone. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri emphasized that the cowardly supporters of terrorists should be aware that terrorists do not belong to any one; they are not sincere to anyone. The enemy is using these people to achieve their nefarious purposes. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the entire nation is with the Pakistan Army and other security agencies and will not compromise on the security of the homeland. Belonging to the security, whole nation and brave Pakistan Army will play its full role in this war of terrorism.

Rain inundates coastal region, village submerged

F.P. Report

SUJAWAL/THATTA: Districts Sujawal and Thatta have been experiencing heavy rainfall for the past four days, bringing civic life in the coastal district to a standstill. Union councils Kothi, Karmalak, Gul Muhammad Baran, and Mugerbeen of Taluka Jati in Sujawal district have been severely affected by the persistent downpours.

Credible sources within the affected areas revealed that remote areas of Taluka Jati and Shahbunder in Sujawal district have lost road connectivity with the rest of the district due to heavy rainfall. Affected villagers reported that the

clearance of outfall drains was not carried out by the concerned authorities in time, causing the drains to overflow and resulting in reverse flow after the rainfall.

Village Ibrahim Mendaro was submerged underwater after the Bhattai outfall drain overflowed, forcing affected villagers to move to safer areas without assistance from the district administration. Meanwhile, areas of Jati, Mirpur Bathoro, Sujawal, and Darro town remained underwater, with the town administration struggling to drain out the water due to faulty machinery.

Coastal villages of Taluka Ketu Bunder and

Shahbunder remained submerged for the fourth consecutive day. According to credible sources, villages Muhammad Hassan Mirbahar, Laloo Khushik, and Piyaro Pakhiyaro were completely inundated with rainwater, prompting villagers to move to upper areas of the district.

Besides coastal villages, riverine areas of districts Thatta and Sujawal have also been inundated, causing considerable damage to paddy and other standing crops. According to statements issued by the district administration, Sujawal district received 756 mm of rain during the last four days.



In war-fatigued Ukraine, Zelensky loses his shine

KYIV (AFP): Olena Semykina, the owner of a village shop in east Ukraine, voted for President Volodymyr Zelensky five and a half years ago, hoping the fresh-faced political newcomer would end the fighting unleashed by Russian proxy forces in 2014.

The screech of an artillery shell over her leafy village in the war-battered Donetsk region and the plumes of dark smoke billowing on the horizon suggested that her hopes for his first term had fallen short. "We expected the war to end, like he promised. But the war hasn't ended. There's even more fighting. It seems to me that it's become even more intense," the 43-year-old told AFP in the village of Kleban-Byk, where invading Russian forces are fast approaching.

Across the industrial Donetsk region some war-fatigued residents, like Olena who voted for Zelensky in 2019, have lost faith in the 46-year-old leader as Russia's invasion grinds through its third year. The former comedian won respect internationally and drew comparisons with Winston Churchill when he stayed in Kyiv in February 2022 to lead his country in a David-versus-Goliath battle against Russian forces. But in interviews with AFP, Donetsk residents blamed him for failing to prevent the full-scale invasion in the first place, for daily speeches that felt empty or for being out of touch with Ukrainians living near the front lines.

Donetsk has been partially controlled by Russian proxy forces since they wrested control over swathes of the industrial territory in 2014. Zelensky swept to victory five years later, promising to end the bitter fighting and stamp out systemic corruption among Soviet-style political elites. Polling in September 2019 -- just months after his inauguration -- showed the former TV star was riding high with around 80 percent approval

ratings. Those figures plummeted before Russia invaded in 2022, but skyrocketed to around 90 percent as Russian missiles began raining down on Ukrainians. Now his ratings are falling precipitously again, standing at 55 percent, according to polling by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS).

"To be honest, I don't listen to him at all anymore. It's pointless. I don't believe in anything he says. He talks a lot but does little," said Vadim, a miner in Selydove, another Donetsk-region town in Russia's sights. "You have to be here to understand what's going on here and how people live," added the 42-year-old, who earlier sent his family to Kyiv for safety from Russian bombardments. Zelensky's first five-year term officially ended earlier this year. Under martial law, Kyiv cannot host elections, which would anyway face myriad obstacles with millions of Ukrainians abroad, living under Russian occupation or near active hostilities.

KIIS polling suggested that least 70 percent of Ukrainians oppose holding any ballot with the war raging -- but there is still a clear appetite for change, said the institute's Executive Director Anton Grushetsky. "It is obvious that the request from ordinary Ukrainians is for more and more competent, decent people to hold the most important government positions," he wrote in an analytical note alongside the poll findings.

Some in Donetsk were more sympathetic to Zelensky and his bid to unite Ukrainians and Kyiv's allies abroad to end the largest war in Europe since World War II. Zelensky has persuaded sceptical Western leaders to send advanced battle tanks and F-16 fighter jets for his military, put Ukraine on the path to European Union membership and rallied dozens of countries behind his vision

for ending the war.

At a military field hospital near Pokrovsk, an army doctor who identified himself as Lyubystok praised Zelensky for having remained at the helm as Russian forces were gunning for the capital in February 2022. "This is very strong, very right and deserves respect," the 26-year-old told AFP before rushing to aid bloodied servicemen brought from the nearby front. In Novohrodivka, a mining town that is falling under Russian control, businesswoman Iryna Cherednychenko, said Zelensky was a "good man" and admired him for making several visits to her frontline region.

The 62-year-old also voted for Zelensky but said she was disappointed that corruption remained a problem and that the cabinet and parliament should step up to strengthen the rule of law. "We expected him to have a very professional team but our expectations were not met," Cherednychenko said, the sounds of distant shelling echoing out.

"Corruption, the irresponsibility of the authorities and weak laws are finishing us off. People lost faith," she told AFP, adding that officials in Kyiv were out of touch with soldiers and civilians impacted by fighting. Political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko told AFP that Ukrainian presidents generally lose support in their first year and Ukrainians as a whole tend to distrust state and political institutions. He said that while Zelensky's rating would likely never rebound, there was more the president could do on some domestic issues, particularly corruption.

"Zelensky now needs to think not about ratings, but about how to save the country and get it out of the war with the least losses," Fesenko added. "In any case, he will remain in Ukrainian history as one of the most striking and unusual political figures."



GAZA STRIP: A Palestinian woman reacting at the sight of the devastation as she returns with others to eastern Deir el-Balah, after Israeli troops pulled out from some blocks.

Ethiopia worried over Egypt and Somalia deal

MOGADISHU (AP): Ethiopia is increasingly concerned over a recent defense deal between Egypt and Somalia, two countries that Addis Ababa is embroiled in disputes with amid rising tensions in the Horn of Africa region.

Cairo and Mogadishu earlier this month signed a security agreement during a visit to the Egyptian capital by Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who held talks with his Egyptian host, President Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi. Details of the deal have not been made public but Ali Abdi Aware, the Somali ambassador to Cairo, told a radio station in Mogadishu that the arrival of military equipment from Egypt to Somalia this week was "the first practical step to implementing" that deal.

Speaking by phone from Cairo to Arlaadi Media radio, he also asserted that under the agreement, Egyptian troops would be deployed to Somalia after Dec. 31, when an African Union's peacekeeping mission to Somalia ends. There was no confirmation of such plans from Egypt, which has been seeking to strengthen its influence in the Horn of Africa. Cairo has also not confirmed sending military equipment to Somalia.

The prospect of having Egyptian troops next door has raised concerns in Ethiopia. The foreign ministry in Addis Ababa issued a statement saying the country "cannot stand idle while other actors are taking measures to destabilize the region." There are two key disputes involving the three African countries.

The first dispute — between Ethiopia and Egypt — is over Ethiopia's construction of a \$4 billion dam on the Blue Nile, a key tributary to the Nile River. Egypt fears it will have a devastating effect on its water and irrigation supply downstream unless Ethiopia takes its needs into account. Ethiopia is using the dam to generate badly needed electricity.

The second dispute — between Ethiopia and Somalia — is over Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland.

Russian fighters to leave Burkina Faso for Ukraine

MOSCOW (BBC): Russia is withdrawing 100 of its paramilitary officers from Burkina Faso to help in the war in Ukraine. They are part of about 300 soldiers from the Bear Brigade - a Russian private military company - who arrived in the West African nation in May to support the country's military junta.

On its Telegram channel, the group said its forces would return home to support Russia's defence against Ukraine's recent offensive in the Kursk region. There are fears the pull-out could embolden Islamist insurgents in Burkina Faso, who recently killed up to 300 people in one of the biggest attacks in years. Burkina Faso has since 2015 suffered regular jihadist attacks, with more than two million people displaced in what aid groups call the world's "most neglected" crisis.

The junta under interim President Capt Ibrahim Traoré, who came to power in a coup in September 2022, promised to end the attacks but has struggled, even after seeking new security partnerships with Russia. With nearly half the country outside government control, jihadist groups are increasingly targeting civilians and military units.

Survivors say up to 300 people were killed on Saturday in the northern town of Barsalogho, in an

attack which was claimed by an al-Qaeda-linked armed group, Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). They were reportedly both civilians and military personnel helping to dig trenches to help protect the town against jihadist attacks. The authorities have not said how many people were killed but Communication Minister Rimtamba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo called the attack "barbaric".

The Bear Brigade is said to be responsible for guarding senior Burkinabè officials, including Capt Traoré, whose leadership has been threatened before. They arrived in the same month when gunshots were fired in the Burkinabè capital near the presidential palace, heightening speculation about growing opposition to the junta leader, who claimed to have thwarted a coup attempt last year. Videos which circulated on social media and reportedly confirmed by the group showed the Burkinabè military leader being guarded by men in uniforms featuring Russian flags.

The group says it is guarding the Russian ambassador in Ouagadougou, the Burkina Faso capital. About 100 members of this specialised unit are set to leave the West African country, only three months after arriving. Their sudden departure is

linked to the recent Ukrainian offensive in Russia's Kursk region.

"When the enemy arrives on our Russian territory, all Russian soldiers forget about internal problems and unite against a common enemy," Bears Brigade commander Viktor Yermolaev told France's Le Monde newspaper (in French). The group posted on its Telegram channel that the unit was returning to its base in Russian-occupied Crimea "in connection with recent events." It is not clear how the Burkina Faso junta plans to compensate for the loss of military support after the partial withdrawal of the Bear Brigade.

Burkina's Faso, like its neighbours, Mali and Niger, is battling various Islamist groups, which operate in the semi-arid Sahel region, south of the Sahara Desert. The military has seized power in all three countries, and formed the Alliance of Sahel States. They have cut ties with former colonial power France and befriended Russia instead, buying weapons and deploying fighters with the mercenary Wagner Group, now known as the Africa Corps. However, armed groups have stepped up their attacks, particularly in Burkina Faso, despite massive recruitment by the paramilitary Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland, a self-defence militia.

Spain's leader in Senegal concludes West Africa tour

DAKAR (AP): Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez met with Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye to conclude his trip through three West African nations aimed at tackling irregular migration to Spain's Canary Islands.

The two leaders signed agreements to promote temporary work opportunities in Spain for Senegalese nationals and vocational training in the West African country. Irregular migration is a term for illegal or unauthorized immigration commonly used in the region and by some international organizations.

"Regulated migration benefits us all," Sánchez said. "It vaccinates us against those who make a business out of irregularity, like the mafias, and against those who use it as an excuse to spread hatred and xenophobia in our societies."

He was referring to people-smuggling networks and far-right parties who have pushed for tougher immigration policies. Sánchez began his tour in Mauritania where he announced that Spain will provide temporary work opportunities in Spain to Mauritians and renew

cooperation between the two nations' security forces to combat people smuggling networks. The Spanish prime minister continued his tour going south to Gambia. He arrived in Senegal the same day before meeting with Senegal's president.

Mauritania, Gambia and Senegal have become the main departure points of migrants trying to reach the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago located close to the African coast and used as a stepping stone for migrants and refugees trying to reach continental Europe.

Digging riverbeds in Zimbabwe in desperate search for water

HARARE (BBC): One of the worst droughts in living memory is sweeping across southern Africa, leaving close to 70 million people without enough food and water. In Mudzi district in northern Zimbabwe, a community and their livestock are gathered on a bone-dry riverbed. The Vombozi normally flows throughout the year but right now, it is just beige sand as far as the eye can see.

Armed with shovels and buckets, the men are digging into the river floor, desperately trying to extract the last drops of water from it. Rivers and dams have dried up in other parts of the district and as a result more and more people are descending on this specific riverbed in Kurima village, putting pressure on the water source. Along the riverbed are several holes, large enough to fit a single bucket.

Children are bathing, women are doing laundry and giving their belowing cattle drinks of water. Gracious Phiri, a mother of five, stands among these women. The 43-year-old tells the BBC she now has to walk further than usual, spending three hours every day travelling to fetch water. Ms Phiri lowers her bucket into the half-metre (19in) wide hole and draws brown-coloured water. She worries about her family getting sick. "As you can see, the cattle are drinking from the same pit as us. Their urine is right there... it is not very healthy," she says. "I have never seen anything like this."

Food is also in short supply in Zimbabwe where 7.7 million people face hunger. In Mudzi the number of families who have access to a sufficient amount of affordable, nutritious food has dropped by more than half compared to previous years, the local health authority says. Children have been particularly impacted - since June hospital admissions for youngsters with moderate to severe malnutrition have doubled. A village feeding programme is trying to tackle the problem. Once a week women in the community gather, bringing whatever produce they have in order to contribute to a porridge for under fives. Ground baobab fruit, peanut butter, milk and leafy green vegetables are

stirred into the porridge to add extra nutrients.

But the list of ingredients shrinks every week - cow-peas and beans recently became unavailable because of the poor harvests. The government, with the support of partners like the UN children's agency, Unicef, devised the village feeding scheme and it used to run at least three times a week. "But because of the El Niño drought we are now only giving it once a week," explains Kudzai Madamombe, Mudzi district's medical officer. "Because the rains didn't come, we suffered a 100% loss in terms of all the crop," he adds, saying the programme might be forced to stop altogether in the next month as food stocks dwindle.

Clinics providing Zimbabweans in Mudzi with vital healthcare have also been affected - boreholes that supply a quarter of clinics in the district with water have run dry, Mr Madamombe says. And the major dam in the district has only a month's supply of water left. As a result vegetable irrigation schemes, including one which supported 200 local farmers, have been suspended. The misery is everywhere. Tambudzai Mahachi, 36, says she planted acres of maize, cow-peas and peanuts on her plot.

For all her hard work, she got nothing at all, not even a plate of food. Even her hardy baobab tree produced hardly any fruit. In a good year Ms Mahachi says she would normally supply markets in the capital, Harare, but she is now among the millions of Zimbabweans relying on handouts. While the village feeding scheme provides food one day of the week, her children need to eat every day. Seated in a thatched hut, she boils wheat so she can provide her two children with breakfast. The wheat was supplied by a charitable neighbour.

"We have gone from eating what we want and when we want to limiting meals," Ms Mahachi says. "The older girl understands that we sometimes can only have porridge. But at times I can see that my youngest is hungry." The rains failed in most of southern Africa this year, on a conti-

nent where most of the agriculture relies on rainfall, rather than irrigation, for water. The drought has prompted about a third of the countries in southern African to declare a state of disaster. A massive 68 million people across the region need food aid. The Southern African Development Community (Sadc) - a grouping of countries in the region - appealed for \$5.5bn (£4bn) in aid to combat the effects of drought in May. So far, only a tiny fraction has been received.

Lion rescued from Ukraine takes first steps outside

KYIV (BBC): A lioness rescued from war-torn Ukraine has taken her first steps outside at a sanctuary in Kent. Three-year-old Yuna, who has shell shock, arrived at The Big Cat Sanctuary in Smarden on 17 August and stayed inside her enclosure for a week.

But the sanctuary, which said she had previously been confined to a small space on a concrete floor, said she had "begun to reveal a playful and curious nature". This involved venturing to the outside of her enclosure, feeling grass beneath her paws for the first time and scratching trees and logs. Yuna was traumatised when debris from a missile attack landed 300m (984ft) from the small enclosure.

She was discovered and taken to Wild Animal Rescue near Kyiv, a facility supported by the International Fund for Animal Welfare. The sanctuary said before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, she had been kept at a private home. Rori, a male lion, is currently in Belgium and will join the sanctuary when a specially built enclosure is completed in November.

Cam Whitnall, from The Big Cat Sanctuary, said staff had been "chatting" to Yuna to help her feel comfortable at her new home. "She comes out for a few hours each day now, but we're monitoring her because she's still very wobbly," he said.

Far right eyes political earthquake as Germans head to the polls

BERLIN (BBC): The far right is on the cusp of winning the most votes in German state elections for the first time since the Nazis. For some in Germany, the rise of Alternative for Germany (AfD) is a literal nightmare. But others, particularly in the east, say the AfD is a chance for change.

All year, the temperature has been rising in German politics and Sunday's vote in Thuringia and Saxony may be the boiling point. "Liar!" shouted a small group of people in Thuringia this week, as Chancellor Olaf Scholz took the stage in the city of Jena. Chants of "Volksverräter" also punctured through the wider applause; a phrase that means "traitor of the people" and is seen by many as having Nazi connotations.

Chancellor Scholz's Social Democratic Party, along with his Green and Liberal coalition partners, are doing so badly in Thuringia they may not even get a single seat in the state parliament - while the AfD is polling top. In neighbouring Saxony,

the AfD is running neck and neck with the conservative CDU. Last week's knife attack, in which a Syrian asylum seeker and suspected Islamist is accused of killing three people, has fuelled fierce criticism of how successive governments have handled migration.

A hasty - you could even say panicked - response has seen ministers announce tougher asylum and knife crime laws. But it's unlikely to overturn a broader discontent that - for many AfD supporters - isn't just based on anger about "mass" immigration. People also talk of wanting to fight what they see as over-zealous green policies, state interference and ill-advised military support for Ukraine. In the east that all combines with a despondency and frustration that's been brewing for years, even decades - about the results of German reunification.

"You can constantly see where the east begins and where the west begins," says 16-year-old Constantin, who rides into the town of Meiningen

on his East German Simson S50 moped. "The east and the west, it's true it's connected now. It's one Germany. But we see, in the difference, it's big." The trainee car mechanic's view is one that echoes through the streets of towns, cities and villages that once made up the communist GDR. A feeling of being "looked down on" has combined with resentment at the west's stronger industrial base, higher wages and historic pension inequalities.

"We are getting forgotten," says Constantin who is firm in his support for the AfD - as are many young people, according to polls. He, like every AfD supporter I've ever spoken to, is dismissive about allegations of extremism that have increasingly dogged the party. A BBC investigation, earlier this year, found clear links between party figures and networks deemed extremist by state authorities.

In Thuringia, the party is officially classed as right-wing extremist while its highly controversial leader in the state, Björn Höcke, was recently fined

for using a Nazi slogan - though he denies doing so knowingly.

But party backers often say that they believe both domestic intelligence and the mainstream media are actively seeking to smear their movement. Some will judge this as being either a dishonest or deluded defence but there is - in the east - an ingrained suspicion of the state amongst communities that once endured the activities of the Stasi, the loathed secret police in communist East Germany. "The people who live here have already experienced what it is like when the government starts to interfere too much," says Vivien Rottstedt, a 31-year-old lawyer and AfD candidate in Thuringia. Restrictions during the Covid pandemic and a perception that people are being forced to adhere to "politically correct" viewpoints seems to have boosted public distrust.

"People from eastern Germany know exactly what it's like when you're no longer allowed to express your own opinion," she tells me as she shelters under a campaign umbrella in

30C-plus heat in Meiningen. Meanwhile another insurgent party - the Sähra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) - has catapulted itself in the polls up to third place in this state. Ms Wagenknecht, a former communist and long one of the most prominent politicians in eastern Germany, has had success in blending cultural conservatism with economically left-wing policies.

But it's the AfD which appears to have the best chance of winning the most votes here, while it's also set to perform strongly in Saxony and in elections in another eastern state, Brandenburg later this month. While such an outcome would send shockwaves through Germany, it doesn't mean the AfD will take power as other parties are likely to band together as part of an ongoing "firewall" against the far right. Nevertheless, it all spells trouble for the struggling Chancellor Scholz and his constantly bickering coalition.

"It's new to Germany that we have that three-party coalition and it hurts a

lot when you have a lot of disputes," says SPD activist Levi Schlegtendal. He's manning a stall in Jena and recalls how things seemed different when Olaf Scholz entered the chancellery three years ago. "It was said at that time, 2021, we need someone like [ex-Chancellor Angela] Merkel and that was him," says Levi - as he recalls the desire for a "calm" and anti-populist candidate. "Now the times have changed with coronavirus, the Ukraine crisis and he appears to be out of time."

The results of these elections aren't just crucial for the people of Thuringia, Saxony and Brandenburg. They will be judged as a litmus test of public opinion, a year out from federal elections where few are predicting that this traffic light coalition experiment can - or will - be repeated. The CDU appears most likely to take the chancellery under the leadership of Friedrich Merz but he has notably been striking a more right-wing tone as establishment parties desperately seek to reverse the rise of the AfD.

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Labour redoubling on Tories' mistakes

SIR Keir Starmer has removed the portrait of Margaret Thatcher from its pride of place in her former study in 10 Downing Street. His biographer says the Prime Minister finds it "unsettling". It will be interesting to see what replacement our new Prime Minister chooses, or has chosen (at present, Downing Street is not saying). What you hang, and what you take down, often says a lot. When New Labour won its landslide victory in 1997, the new foreign secretary, Robin Cook, disliked the beautiful portrait of a Nepalese prince which had hung for many years in the office he now occupied. He saw it as too closely connected with the British Empire.

In an early skirmish in the culture war over what today is called "decolonisation", he ordered its removal. Instead of the portrait, he chose a mirror. This allowed Mr Cook, while composing his new "ethical foreign policy", to contemplate the politician he most admired – Robin Cook. The change was a fitting emblem of Blair-era narcissism. I doubt that Sir Keir will follow suit. He has less vanity. One does, however, wonder what he is thinking. In the run-up to the general election, he went out of his way to praise Lady Thatcher – though he said he did not agree with her – for "her sense of mission, a sense of driving purpose".

Does he want her out of the room because those piercing blue eyes make him realise he has not got one? It was the last Labour prime minister, Gordon Brown, who commissioned the Thatcher portrait and gave it its place of honour. Contrary to the expectation of many, it turned out that Mr Brown had no sense of driving purpose and so lost the 2010 election. The Thatcher juju did not work for him. Perhaps that thought discomfets Sir Keir.

Since Labour's capitulation to the doctors' and the train drivers' pay strikes, the view has been growing that the new Government wants to take us back to the 1970s. Since Sir Keir's odd manoeuvre this week of entering the Downing Street rose garden only to say, as the song puts it, "I beg your pardon: I never promised you a rose garden", critics have warned that Labour now intends to crush British wealth creation in the October Budget and then get the state to take over the commanding heights (if any are left) of the British economy.

These forebodings may well prove justified. This paper's feature on Tuesday of Britain's eight most powerful trade union bosses – Mick, Sharon, Fran, Matt, Dave, Christina, Gary and another Mick – did re-create for people of my generation the stale smell of nearly 50 years ago – when it was Jack, Moss, Joe, Len, Ray, Fred, Clive and, yes, Mick (McGahey, the drunken Scottish Communist miner). Today, the line-up contains women as well as men but, politically, there would appear to be no progress at all. It is at least possible, however, that what we are seeing is little more than the paying of political debts and some careful manipulation of expectations. It is now forgotten that when Mrs Thatcher came into office in 1979, she had reluctantly committed to honour the findings of the Pay Comparability Commission, an extraordinary public body whose purpose was, in effect, to guarantee above-inflation increases to trade union members. It took her 15 months to get rid of it. These pay rises could be Sir Keir's equivalent: he is overpaying the unions now to keep them at bay while he gets started and means to be tough next time.

It could also be that Labour's current dire warnings about the public finances are a device to create space for some clever Treasury wheeze (about, let us say, how public debt is calculated) to come to the rescue on Budget day. Perhaps we are being offered pre-gloom, not gloom itself. My own tentative sense about this Government is not that it wants to jettison Blairism and bring back the old Clause 4 ("the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange"). It is more that it does not have that "sense of driving purpose" which Sir Keir said he admired in Mrs T.

We are a quarter of the way through the 21st century and yet Labour has devoted remarkably little time to answering this century's challenges, such as debt, immigration, assertive tyrannies, cultural identity crises and population decline. As with the Tories in recent years, Labour's internal problems have produced self-absorption. Because the Corbyn era was such a disaster for the party, Sir Keir came to the leadership with only one immediate task – the repudiation of Corbynism. He had little time to think about governing the country and less expectation that he would foreseeably do so.

His lowest point – when the Conservatives gained Hartlepool from Labour in a by-election – was only a little over three years ago. Sir Keir's position at that time looked desperate. He was extraordinarily lucky that the chaos of Covid changed everything. From 2022, all he has really had to do is persuade enough people that Labour would be less awful than the Conservatives. In July, he did that very successfully, yet with a very weak vote for such a landslide, the lowest winning percentage (33.7 per cent) and the second-lowest vote since the Second World War. It is well known that Sir Keir reveals little about what he really thinks. One reason for this could be that he has not thought very much. If so, it is in his interest to remain a closed book rather than letting people see the blank pages. He seems to have a strong moral sense – particularly about the wickedness of his opponents – and a strong belief that lawyers should dovetail with like-minded politicians to create rights and enforce righteousness. And that's about it. The remainder seems to be things that appear to accord with conventional wisdom but are self-contradictory. He calls for growth but does not see why that might be incompatible with heavy taxes on capital or with forcing the banning of new petrol or diesel cars by 2030 or by ending new oil and gas exploration licences in the North Sea or granting worker rights which employers cannot afford.

It is still early days, so there is time for this Government to cohere. Sir Keir himself said, when praising Mrs Thatcher, that people like her, with "a sense of the hard yards of five or 10 years in government, leaving something better after it" are completely different from "those who drift". You cannot really be accused of drifting after seven weeks. Nevertheless, I do not sense, as one did with early Blair, a formidably well-organised project, nor, as we would have had with Corbyn, a programmatic Leftist putsch aspiring to the condition of Venezuela. I sense something closer to a vacuum, filled, from time to time, by measures which give even more power to the bureaucratic state or gestures, such as ending the badger cull, which indulge Labour-supporting pressure groups. The six candidates for the Conservative leadership are campaigning, almost unnoticed by the wider world. Perhaps some of them could find a way of saying that this Labour Government seems set to replicate all the errors of overspending, state overreach, false promises on immigration, cronyism, green unrealism, high taxation and public-service failure displayed by the recent government of their own party, but with knobs on. With such a critique, they can kill two birds with one stone.

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If Starmer and Reeves think they have a foolproof strategy

Aditya Chakrabortty

WHEN writing profiles on Rachel Reeves, eight out of 10 journalists like to record her past as a chess champion, largely as a pretext for chuckling through metaphors about gambits and defensive positions. Never in danger of prodigy status, these days I skulk on a chess app, slugging it out with other amateur thugs. But as Reeves and Keir Starmer settle into Downing Street, one of the game's sayings returns to my mind. It's from the Polish grandmaster and wit Savielly Tartakower, who observed: "The blunders are all on the board, waiting to be made."

The blunder is a huge, match-losing error, which only becomes obvious in hindsight. Tartakower is saying that however good either player is, the board will confer a defeat. You can take his point further: loss may not come from that rash exchange, but the foolproof strategy you swore would win. That lesson is one that Labour's leaders should bear in mind.

Starmer and Reeves don't do surprises. Deliberative as any club player, they make a plan and stick to it for as long as is tenable. That way, they present the tiniest of targets for opponents and the press. Over the previous five years, No 10 served sketch writers and columnists a sumptuous feast: a malfunctioning droid (Theresa May), the blond Nero (Boris Johnson) and ChatGPT Thatcher (you know). Now the pack tails this prime minister from Westminster to Berlin to Paris, eager for slips and scandals. Pickings are so thin that not one, but two of the Mail's star writers grouse that their man is an "undertaker".

Yet the blunders are all on the board. One theory about the general election is that it was a verdict on the party of wine-time Fridays and gold wallpaper. Britons were sick of being led by donkeys in blue rosettes, runs the story, so they shoed them out. Some around Starmer believe this, and by making this week's speech in the Downing Street rose garden, the prime minister reminded us that it was the setting for Johnson's lockdown-busting bacchanalia

– of which he was the sober opposite.

But election polling reliably showed that the public's biggest worry was the economy. As I wrote at the campaign's launch, Rishi Sunak's humiliation was already as good as sealed by two factors. First, the last parliament was, as the Institute for Fiscal Studies judged, the worst for living

of their chance to snipe about a "debt bombshell" and the like. A great election strategy, a dire platform for government. The blunders are all on the board.

The most important political moment for this winter did not come from Starmer. It wasn't in a speech, or a treaty. It was the announcement from the

No Tory cost of living payments to people on benefits, worth £900 a year. A much-reduced winter fuel allowance for pensioners. Reeves may well resurrect the household support fund of small handouts for the worst hit, but that is a cocktail umbrella in a gale. Cast your mind forward to this winter. The bills are hitting the mat, and taxes are going up. This week, Starmer called these "the big asks ... short-term pain for long-term good". But there have been years of supposedly short-term pain. Over 4m low-income households are already in arrears on at least one bill or debt, while the number of poor households going without food, heating or toiletries hasn't dipped below 7m in two years.

standards for which there are comparable records. Rocketing fuel bills, soaring food prices, medicine shortages – voters don't forget such things, and in July they did not forgive. Second, with hospitals and schools at breaking point, the tax burden hit a 70-year high. The electorate is paying more for less.

Game over. These are the 10-ton facts of British government after the pandemic, after the banking crash, now the era of free money and cheap energy is over – and on those, Starmer is barely different from Sunak. Labour committed itself to plans that imply spending cuts of about £20bn every year – beyond the £22bn of savings for which Reeves has spent this summer scratching around.

This was no oversight, no unforced error: it was core to Starmer's plan for winning, by robbing critics

energy regulator that gas and electricity prices will go up by 10% from the start of October, taking the average annual bill to more than £1,700. While fuel bills are nowhere near the peak they hit in the winter of 2022-23, they remain far above the levels that we were used to. As Katie Schmucker of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation says, for lower income households, this is "an unrelenting cost of living crisis".

As the country learned last time, higher energy prices blow out nearly everything else, from grocery bills to school budgets. The big difference is that today, there is far less state support. No Tory cost of living payments to people on benefits, worth £900 a year. A much-reduced winter fuel allowance for pensioners. Reeves may well resurrect the household support fund of small handouts for the worst hit, but

that is a cocktail umbrella in a gale.

Cast your mind forward to this winter. The bills are hitting the mat, and taxes are going up. This week, Starmer called these "the big asks ... short-term pain for long-term good". But there have been years of supposedly short-term pain. Over 4m low-income households are already in arrears on at least one bill or debt, while the number of poor households going without food, heating or toiletries hasn't dipped below 7m in two years.

The NHS in England needs an extra £38bn a year to cut backlogs. Seven years after Grenfell prompted all manner of promises about ending the scandal of dodgy cladding, a tower block on the other side of London erupted in flames. After Covid, after double-digit inflation, after austerity, millions of families and whole swaths of our public services are exhausted.

This picture is clear in the statistics and from wandering down the dilapidated high streets of much of Britain, including those towns that saw racist pogroms earlier this month. Yet it barely registers in Westminster discourse. Instead, the newspapers tuffle out tasty morsels about Morgan McSweeney v Sue Gray – office politics instead of actual politics, debates about desks rather than social housing.

Commentators ask for Starmer's vision, without interrogating his actual promises. Take Labour's pledge to achieve "the highest sustained growth" of all the G7 richest countries – a feat not in any government's gift. How would Starmer do that, by locking up Kamala Harris and Emmanuel Macron?

The great fight of this parliament won't be over blueprints or programmes. It will simply be about the degree to which a Labour government is able to show that it can protect its society from a new era of economic instability, while repairing the vast damage done by years of spending cuts and pushing teachers, nurses and other public servants to the very limit. On all this, the very compromises Starmer made to get into power will limit his ability to do much with that power. The blunders are all on the board, waiting to be made.

Kamala Harris can't hide her true intentions forever

Jake Wallis Simons

SOMETHING weird is happening in America. Not long ago, the Democrats were doing their darndest to prop up Joe Biden, as they didn't rate Kamala Harris's chances against Donald Trump. What a difference a few months – and a disastrous presidential debate, and a Democratic machine – can make. Now, everybody is kidding themselves that Harris is a substantial, centrist politician. The post-truth message discipline is nothing short of awesome. Kamala, we are told, it is all about the "vibes". Forget the record, the policies, the history of failing upwards. Right now, it's all about the backstory. It's about the joy.

So we arrive at Harris's

Ideas on a postcard, please. Gone were her previously troubling Lefty persuasions. Sure, they are still there in the small print, with policy ideas including rent and price controls, but these are being ushered below the radar. On the big-ticket items like the war in Gaza, she stood firm.

Her analysis of the geopolitical threat facing America may have been pretty superficial but she has trodden the right side of the line, blaming Hamas for the war and resisting pressure to accuse the Jewish state of "genocide" or pledge to stop weapons shipments.

In her first interview since her nomination, with Dana Bash of CNN, she pushed once again for the centre, pledging to tighten migration with new border legislation and enforce

Harris churned out the familiar line about Trump moving the country backwards rather than forwards; waxed lyrical about affordable childcare and healthcare; and talked cryptically of "building intergenerational wealth" by way of an "opportunity economy". Ideas on a postcard, please. Gone were her previously troubling Lefty persuasions. Sure, they are still there in the small print, with policy ideas including rent and price controls, but these are being ushered below the radar. On the big-ticket items like the war in Gaza, she stood firm.

speech this week at a rally in Savannah, Georgia, which formed part of her efforts to capitalise on the bounce she enjoyed at the Democratic National Convention last week. It came – more weirdness – as the data unexpectedly surged in her favour, with a Reuters/Ipsos poll showing her leading Donald Trump by 45 per cent to 41 per cent. The results arrived after Harris had declared to her 9,500-strong audience in Georgia: "Don't pay attention to polls – we are underdogs," adding that they had "work to do" in order to secure victory. "We don't mind hard work," she said. "Hard work is for workers." Right now, the work is on Trump.

The Republican cult leader has failed to land a blow on his new opponent, lamenting his own failure to come up with an insult that works. This is game on and the Harris followers can feel it. Thousands had waited outside the venue in Georgia for hours as the rain went from drizzle to downpour in the humid heat. When the speech came, the faithful were rewarded with 20 minutes of, well, the usual.

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existing laws. Then, when asked if she would stop arms sales to Jerusalem, she brushed the question off. "We must get a deal done," she said, avoiding the electoral bear-trap. Some 80 per cent of Americans are squarely behind Israel; to come across in any way anti-Semitic would be electoral suicide.

Next she shimmied away from her role in the Biden administration's border failings. Her U-turn on fracking was dismissed with an assertion that her "values had not changed". But it was hard not to feel that her true meaning was the precise opposite. After all, if her values genuinely have not changed since her disastrous, Left-pandering 2020 primary run, this would likely push a significant proportion of Independents to stay home on voting day.

One 27-minute interview with a friendly media organisation is not "scrutiny". The Democratic nominee is too comfortable speaking to her sycophantic base, who will let ludicrous assertions – like Biden-era inflation being solely the fault of price gouging – pass. This formerly second-rate politician seems to have been transmuted to appear as a serious candidate, purely by way of love, prayers and the large-scale denial of reality. In November, it will be this weirdness or Trump. Weirdly enough.

The Telegraph

US withdrawal from Iraq isn't as simple as it looks

Luke Coffey

While the American military presence in Iraq is primarily focused on counterterrorism, it would be naive to think that Iran's increasingly aggressive role in the region isn't also a factor. In recent months, Iran and its proxies have stepped up their attacks. This will undoubtedly influence US policymakers. Although Baghdad may never admit it publicly, it will be a consideration for them too. Also, the US military presence in Iraq cannot be viewed in isolation. If the US wants to continue its military presence in northern Syria to fight Daesh then it must maintain a military footprint in Iraq for logistical reasons.

Third, the Iraqi army's capabilities must be evaluated. After its calamitous breakdown in 2014 in the face of Daesh's onslaught on Mosul, a lot of progress has been made. With the help of international forces, the army played an instrumental role in

the liberation of northern Iraq from Daesh. However, it is still largely reliant on US assistance to carry out counterterrorism operations. For example, last year the army conducted only five independent counterterrorism operations against Daesh without coalition assistance.

Considering the increase in Daesh activity in Iraq, the army still has a long way to go before it can fully take over the counterterrorism mission. Finally, Washington and Baghdad will want to coordinate with NATO. Many may not realize that NATO conducts a training mission in Iraq, and relations between Iraq and NATO have been deepening in recent years.

Gen. Michael Kurilla, head of US Central Command, told Congress this year that any decision to withdraw US forces from Iraq would be taken in close coordination with NATO. Iraq's national security adviser, Qasim Al-

Araji, visited NATO last week to discuss improving relations with Baghdad and the ongoing and future NATO training mission in the country.

With all these factors in mind, it's clear that a US withdrawal from Iraq in a realistic timeframe will not occur soon. There was some talk of aiming for the end of this year, but the geopolitical circumstances and logistical challenges make this unlikely, if not irresponsible. While there is no formal agreement between Washington and Baghdad, discussions will continue. However, like the rest of the world, Iraq's government will be closely watching what happens in the US at the presidential election in November. Regardless of the outcome, Joe Biden will be presiding over a lame-duck administration, making it unlikely that Baghdad would want to finalize talks with the White House on such an important matter knowing there will be

a new president by January 2025. There is no doubt that both Americans and Iraqis would prefer to see most US troops withdrawn from Iraq. However, it must be done in a responsible and realistic way. The last thing that Iraq or the broader region needs is a repeat of Barack Obama's withdrawal in 2011. Despite experts calling for the US to leave behind a small residual force to help the Iraqi army, Obama was determined to remove all troops to fulfill a campaign promise. Within three years, Daesh had captured a huge chunk of northern Iraq, and the Iraqi military had largely disintegrated. Before long, US troops were back in Iraq fighting Daesh, where they remain.

It is in the interest of both sides that the US-Iraq military relationship evolves into a more traditional security partnership. But the timeframe for this must be determined by the realities on the ground, not by wishful thinking.

France’s voters have rejected Macron

Rokhaya Diallo

AFTER the electoral turbulence of June and July, few in France imagined that we would be heading into September without a new prime minister appointed to reflect the results of last month's parliamentary elections.

When Emmanuel Macron unexpectedly called snap elections in June, the prevailing wisdom was that the far right would win. Many of us even suspected that Macron favoured such an outcome so that Marine Le Pen would be tainted by her party's exercise of power and therefore less likely to win the presidency in 2027. Whether that was his plan or not, calling the vote was a dangerous gamble that took an unexpected turn, putting an ad hoc leftwing coalition in first place with the largest number of votes, but without the numbers to build a working majority in parliament.

The French constitution entrusts the president with the authority to appoint the prime minister. Under the unwritten conventions of the Fifth Republic, the prime minister is chosen from the majority grouping in the national assembly. The defeated prime minister, Gabriel Attal, resigned after the elections: voters had relegated the centrist administration he headed to second place. But the president refused to accept Attal's resignation and retained the outgoing government in a caretaker role, claiming that stability required it. Since then, we have been governed by ministers who have in effect resigned, a situation that is completely unprecedented in France.

Many current members of parliament won their seats in July thanks to the “republican front”, a tactical voting strategy under which candidates opposed to Marine Le Pen’s party agreed to

withdraw in three-way constituency races to keep the far right out of power. That strategy, adhered to mostly by the left, was of most benefit to Macron’s party – although it did not stop it, once safely elected, from ruling out working with the France Unbowed party (LFI), the major force on the

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True, it took the leftwing coalition, the New Popular Front (NFP), some time to agree on a prime ministerial candidate. Eventually, the group selected Lucie Castets, a 37-year-old civil servant, unknown to the general public but with a strong record on defending public services.

Macron reacted by giving an interview in which he brushed off the proposal from the left, adding that “nobody won” the election and that “it would be incorrect to say that the New Popular Front has any kind of majority”. He then unilaterally

announced an “Olympics truce”, implying that France should wait until after the Olympic Games (but strangely not the Paralympic Games) to form a government.

Macron finally started consultations with leaders of the main political groupings six weeks after the election results. Aware of its radi-

cal image, LFI even agreed to withdraw from a potential government in order not to be a liability to the coalition.

Yet when talks concluded, the president released a statement announcing that he was not appointing a prime minister from the left, claiming that without a majority in the national assembly, they would face a no-confidence vote. In the name of “institutional stability”, he suggested that the possibility of a centrist coalition should be explored instead.

This was a shocking and dangerous statement, breathtaking in its

arrogance and disregard for our democratic processes. No wonder so many voices from the NFP condemned it as a “disgrace” and an “unacceptable power grab”. Even the former president François Hollande, now an NFP member of parliament, not known for being a radical, criticised it as an “institutional mistake”.

The president is not only supposed to be above party politics, but the separation of powers should not allow him to intervene in the formation of majorities. Earlier in the summer, Macron's entourage revealed that the president was even refusing any substantial policy changes. France turned out to vote in the unexpected elections (many resorted to proxies) in numbers not seen for decades. The outcome was explicit: voters rejected Macron, they voted for a change. Given the parliamentary arithmetic, none of the three main elected blocs can build a governing majority alone. But it is not up to the president to decide which of them is worthy of governing.

We are living in an unprecedented time, with an outgoing government still taking major decisions. Macron, who once sold himself to French voters as a political disruptor who would shake up the system that was failing them, acts now like a republican monarch using the pretext of “stability” to deny the very functioning of our democracy.

He should be a leader – instead, he is becoming an authoritarian president whose popularity continues to plummet. We cannot accept such behaviour in a democracy: the French electorate were clear when they expressed their opposition to his policies. Now he must start respecting them.

The Guardian

Why US-led Gaza truce talks are doomed to fail

Daoud Kuttab

THE powerful US and Israeli media machines keep claiming that Hamas is the party that consistently rejects Gaza ceasefire proposals. However, a careful reading of the group's official statement shows that it has accepted US President Joe Biden's earlier proposal, which the UN Security Council also approved.

The problem that has been dogging any breakthrough is a lack of trust. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been constantly moving the goalposts and always blaming Hamas for rejecting ceasefire proposals. US and Arab mediators largely begin with the proposed Israeli text and then offer it to Hamas in an effort to get the group to take the blame for its rejection. A well-known Palestinian analyst, Nasser Laham, wrote this week that, over the last 40 years, the US has failed every time it has tried to mediate between the parties in the Middle East. This is largely because America cannot be a strong ally with Israel and at the same time an honest broker.

The major sticking point at this juncture is important. Hamas, as well as all Palestinians and actually the entire world, wants this war to end. Any proposal that leaves out an end to the war and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will ultimately be rejected.

Wars end with a ceasefire that is well observed, an exchange of prisoners and a sincere effort aimed at tackling the root causes of the violence. Netanyahu, who is hobbled by a corruption case and a mandatory, neutral investigation into Oct. 7, does not want to end

the war without his version of a victory, which includes the annihilation of a deep-rooted Palestinian resistance movement and the unilateral release of Israeli soldiers and civilians. The Americans and many well-respected Israeli experts and retired military officials keep telling him that this will not happen.

Unable or unwilling to force Netanyahu to accept this reality, the US has partially adopted the Israeli PM's obstinance by offering proposals that delay a decision to end the war. The American proposal says, “trust us.” But how can Palestinians trust a country that is physically supplying the weapons that are being used against them? No wonder protesters outside the Democratic National Convention zeroed in on the need to put a stop to America's supply of weapons to Israel if Washington wants to be accepted as an honest broker. Palestinian Hamas leaders cannot and will not trust the US because it has repeatedly failed to deliver on what it has publicly stated about wanting to end the war, while it has still signed a \$20 billion military deal and continues to supply the weapons and ammunition that are being used to kill Palestinian civilians.

The US and its weak Arab negotiators have a clear path they can follow, but they have resisted it. The UNSC is the world's top body for peace and security. It has ordered a ceasefire, but Israel refused to even pay attention to its decision. The UN Charter's Chapter VII deals with what to do with parties that refuse to implement bind-

ing resolutions agreed by the UNSC.

If the members of the UNSC are serious about wanting an end to the war, they can simply pass a resolution that details steps to this end and that does not include any vague wording about allowing the Israeli army to stay in Gaza. Such a resolution, which would include a prisoner exchange, an observation mechanism for its implementation and a path to the globally accepted two-state solution, should also include a mention of Chapter VII sanctions on any party that refuses to implement its provisions. The US, whose president began the current process with a proposal that both Israel and Hamas accepted, should want to make sure that both parties mean what they say by agreeing on a text that the global community can support and which will end this carnage.

At present, the negotiation process that Washington participates in has little chance of success, so long as the US alone is calling all the shots and is regularly only doing so after getting Israel's approval on what is offered. The time has come for a global ceasefire offer that is fair and that clearly includes an immediate end to the war and an Israeli military withdrawal from Gaza. Continuing the current process is playing into the hands of the Israeli prime minister, whose interests are focused on his own political survival. Allowing Israel to continue with its unending revenge war is a formula for disaster and an invitation for the widening of a conflict that everyone wants to end immediately.

Arab News

Why is Africa so close to China?

Vox South

CHINA and Africa used to seem so far away from each other. As the British poet W. H. Auden once wrote, "I'll love you, dear, I'll love you till China and Africa meet." However, Africa and China have established an exceptionally close and friendly relationship a long time ago. This September, the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) will be once again held in Beijing. According to announcements from Beijing and Africa, dozens of African leaders are expected to travel thousands of miles against all odds for the gathering, which will undoubtedly underpin Beijing's recent statement that the China-Africa relationship is "in its prime in history".

Why are China and Africa so close, though geographically far apart? It baffles the Western world, which always views Africa as its own sphere of influence. Many have attributed it to China's generous investment in Africa. Well, economic ties do matter. China has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is warmly welcomed by Africa. It has also invested in major infrastructure projects across the continent. Up to now, China's non-financial direct investment stock in Africa has exceeded \$40 billion, roughly on par with the United States. China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 years in a row, with the trade volume reaching \$282.1 billion in 2023, four times that of the US-Africa trade in the same year.

The West has indeed tried to catch up. Since the Obama era, US administrations have launched global initiatives similar to the

BRI, with an aim to channel more investment to African infrastructure. They include Power Africa during Obama's tenure, Prosper Africa proposed by Donald Trump, and the Build Back Better World (B3W) and Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) initiated by the G7 during the Biden administration. Unfortunately, all these initiatives have become empty promises. They not only faded into obscurity along with the switch of Presidents in the US, but also often came with tough political and economic conditions. In contrast, China has always treated Africa as an equal partner and never slackened any efforts before its projects were finally completed. That's why China-aided projects are visible everywhere in Africa today, such as the African Union headquarters, the new ECOWAS headquarters, and Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, not to mention railways and bridges funded by China. China also shares technology and management expertise with Africa in line with principles of equality and respect, helping African countries build capacity for self-generated development.

Equality and respect, they are the secrets behind Africa's trust in and closeness to China. As victims of colonialism, the two sides empathize with each other, and always render mutual sympathy, respect, and support to one another. In the 1950s, the newly founded People's Republic of China spared no efforts to support African countries' national independence movements, and treated them as equals regardless of their size. African

countries reciprocated with their support to China in the international arena including the United Nations. Such mutual respect and support, built up over decades, has become an incredibly strong bond connecting Africa and Beijing. This bond has brought about more exchanges in education, art, sports, and tourism, and the two peoples have begun to experience and appreciate each other's culture. Such amity between the people has reinforced the China-Africa friendly ties.

On the contrary, the colonial record of the West still casts a long shadow over the African continent. Western countries still cling to the legacy of the colonial times - arrogance and contempt. How would African countries possibly let down their guard? It has been most obviously shown in the US-Africa Leaders Summit 2022, where representatives from 49 African countries and the African Union were invited to Washington for a meeting with the US President. Many African leaders later expressed their feeling of "humiliation". President William Ruto of Kenya once said indignantly in public that, "It is not intelligent for 54 of us to go and sit before one gentleman from another place. And sometimes we are mistreated. We are loaded into buses like school kids. It's not right." The reference to some African countries as "shit-hole" nations by some former American leader has also offended the entire continent. The Sudanese-born British IT entrepreneur Mo Ibrahim has put it bluntly during an interview with the CNN that "We are not a shithole. We are decent people like everybody

else."

Such insults have made African countries more eager to pursue independent and self-sustained development. The rapid growth and modernization of China, a fellow member of the developing world, has brought confidence and hope to African countries, which also explains their closeness to China. African countries have come to realize that, with years of trials and tribulations, following the footsteps of the West will never allow them to catch up, and Westernization is by no means the only way towards modernization. With its own success, China has shown Africa another path to modernization. China's unreserved sharing of its modernization experience will also help Africa accelerate progress and avoid detours.

Furthermore, China, the largest developing country in the world and Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries, share more common interests and topics when it comes to inequality and injustice in the international political and economic order created by Western hegemony. The two sides have stood up against Western neo-colonialism, rendered each other support in the international arena, worked together to gain rights and advance interests for other developing countries, and strived to increase the representation and voice of the Global South in global governance.

In conclusion, with common experiences, interests, and aspirations, China and Africa will never cease their efforts to reach out to each other. How could such friendship between the two, with strong intrinsic dynamism, be easily undermined?

The China Daily

Summit to add new chapter to China-Africa ties

Shen Xiaolei

THE Ninth Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, to be held in Beijing from Sept 4 to 6, will be based on the theme "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future", reflecting the shared aspirations and vision of China and Africa, and contributing to the growth of the China-Africa partnership.

China is the world's largest developing country and Africa the continent with the highest number of developing countries. Their relations can be traced back to the period when Zheng He sailed to the eastern coast of Africa during the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Unlike many European countries' expeditions to Africa, however, Zheng He's voyage fostered peaceful exchanges between China and Africa, instead of facilitating the establishment of Chinese colonies on the continent.

China-Africa ties have developed based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which include equality, mutual benefit and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This mutually beneficial relationship has yielded rich dividends for both sides and deepened their friendship.

In 2000, China and Africa jointly established the FOCAC, which helped raise China-Africa ties from a simple partnership to a strategic partnership in 2006, and then to a comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership in 2015. In

2018, the two sides vowed to build a China-Africa community with a shared future, starting a new historical period, marked by the joint pursuit of modernization.

But both China and Africa face challenges on their path to modernization. Since the Opium Wars (1839-42; 1856-60), China has followed its own distinct path to attain self-reliance and realize modernization. But it was only under the leadership of the Communist Party of China that this path truly took shape. The goal of Chinese modernization is to realize common prosperity, build a modern socialist society, establish a harmonious relationship between humankind and nature, and pursue high-quality development.

Chinese modernization has unique Chinese characteristics, and is different from other countries' modernization models. By advancing Chinese modernization, the country has broken the myth that modernization equals Westernization, and set an example for other developing countries, especially African countries, to learn from.

Since its establishment, the FOCAC has adhered to the principles of "extensive consultation and making joint contribution for shared benefit" to strengthen Sino-African relations. And, as the theme of this year's FOCAC Summit indicates, China is willing to share its modernization experience with African countries and jointly generate mutual benefit. But, more importantly, China has

no intention of exporting its model of modernization to Africa.

Thanks to the experience it has gained in the process of its modernization, China believes that every country has the right to choose its own path to modernization based on its national conditions, and any attempt to copy or impose external models will end in failure.

China has always respected African countries' right to explore their respective development path. As President Xi Jinping said in his keynote speech at the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue in Johannesburg in August 2023, "The African people have the most say on which path suits Africa best. Advancing modernization through integration is the independent choice made by African countries and people. On this path to modernization, China has all along been a firm supporter, and walking side by side with Africa."

That's why, in accordance with an African proverb, "If you want to go fast, walk alone; and if you want to go far, walk together", China is willing to accompany African countries on their road to modernization. African nations, too, are ready to join hands with China to explore their respective modernization path based on the premise that they enjoy strategic autonomy and exercise the right to choose their own development partners.

In fact, African states have long viewed China as a true friend on their journey to modernization and,

as proof, they have been taking active part in advancing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative. For example, 52 African countries as well as the African Union Commission have signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with China.

But with the deepening of China-Africa cooperation in recent years, some Western countries have likened China's engagement with Africa to "neo-colonialism", and accused China of "exporting its development model" to and setting "debt traps" for African countries, in order to discredit China-Africa relations.

But the African people can clearly see that cooperation with China, through platforms such as the FOCAC, the Belt and Road Initiative and the GDI, has yielded fruitful results in political, economic, security, social and cultural fields. In particular, it has helped improve the living standards of the African people and created more opportunities for them.

The continuous upgrading of China-Africa cooperation and their joint efforts to realize common development reflect their shared aspirations. As a matter of fact, their cooperation has helped strengthen the Global South's demand for global governance reform. China and Africa have the potential to turn their partnership into a model of joint development, contributing to the building of a global community with a shared future for mankind. And the FOCAC Summit will help them do so, adding a new chapter to China-Africa cooperation.

done detailed criticisms or insults of the man, whose preserved body is visited by millions every year, and still forces students to take classes on “Mao Zedong Thought.” Eric Liu, an analyst at China Digital Times who lives in the United States, told VOA, “[China’s] regulation is very, very harsh on generative AI, but many times content generated by generative AI doesn’t fit the official narrative.”

Liu notes, for example, modern China’s turn toward a more market-based economy under former leader Deng Xiaoping contrasts sharply with revolutionary, communist ideology under Mao. “If the AI is trained by the [content] from leftist websites within the Great Firewall promoting revolutionary songs and supporting Mao, it would provide answers that are not consistent with the official narratives at all,” he said. “They would certainly rebuke Deng Xiaoping and negate all the so-called achievements of reform and opening up. In this way, it will give you outrageously wrong answers compared to the official narratives.”

Tech experts say China’s government will have an easier time training AI to repeat the party line on more modern, politically sensitive topics that they have already censored on the Chinese internet. Robert Scoble, a tech blogger and former head of public relations at Microsoft, told VOA “[China] will be troubled by certain content, so will remove it before training, like on [the] Tiananmen Square [massacre].” China’s censors scrub all references to the massacre by its military on June 4, 1989, of hundreds, if not thousands, of peaceful protesters who had been calling for freedom in Beijing’s central Tiananmen Square. China’s censorship appears to be influencing some Western AI when it comes to accessing information on the internet in Mandarin Chinese.

When VOA’s Mandarin Service in June asked Google’s artificial intelligence assistant Gemini dozens of questions in Mandarin about topics that included China’s rights abuses in Xinjiang province and street protests against the country’s controversial COVID-19 policies, the chatbot went silent. Gemini’s responses to questions about problems in the United States and Taiwan, on the other hand, parroted Beijing’s official positions.

VOA



Pakistan's e-commerce market ascends to global prominence, ranked 46th

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's e-commerce sector is rapidly making its mark on the global stage, now ranked as the 46th largest market in the world, according to the International Trade Administration.

This growth trajectory is underpinned by a burgeoning middle class, widespread smartphone and internet usage, improved e-commerce infrastructure, and robust government support.

Recent projections by Statista, a leading global data and business intelligence platform, underscore the impressive progress of Pakistan's e-commerce sector. In 2023, the market generated \$5.2 billion in revenue, positioning Pakistan ahead of many other developing nations. The sector is expected to maintain its momentum, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.92% from 2024 to 2029. By the end of this period, revenue is anticipated to reach \$6.711 billion, as reported by China Economic Net (CEN).

Pakistan's distinction as a

mobile-first nation is evident, with over 80% of internet users accessing the web via smartphones. This mobile dominance is also reflected in e-commerce, where 58% of users made purchases through mobile devices in 2023—a figure that is expected to rise further.

Data from DataSparkle highlights the growing engagement with mobile shopping applications. As of July 2024, the number of monthly active users of these apps in Pakistan surpassed 16.6 million, showcasing rapid growth in mobile e-commerce and increasing consumer acceptance of app-based shopping.

The lucrative potential of Pakistan's e-commerce market has attracted both international and local platforms. Global giants such as Alibaba's AliExpress and Amazon are making inroads into the Pakistani market, while homegrown platforms like Daraz, DealCart, and Saviour are also thriving. Daraz, a leading South Asian e-commerce platform acquired by Alibaba Group in 2018,

continues to dominate the Pakistani market, boasting over 7 million monthly active users as of July 2024, according to DataSparkle.

The expanding market has also piqued the interest of various international players, with platforms like SHEIN and Temu entering the top 15 shopping apps in Pakistan by mid-2024.

Despite its current scale, Pakistan's e-commerce market holds immense potential. The sector is entering a phase of rapid expansion, driven by favorable government policies that include tax incentives and financing options for e-commerce businesses. With ongoing infrastructure investments, Pakistan is poised to catch up with regional counterparts like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

However, the market's growth is accompanied by increasing competition. To capture consumer interest, e-commerce platforms are making substantial investments to expand their market share, focusing on key

factors such as price, quality, logistics, service, and payment options. Among these, price remains the most critical consideration for Pakistani consumers.

Another emerging trend is the rise of social commerce. As of January 2024, Pakistan had 71.7 million active social media users, providing a strong foundation for this new e-commerce avenue. Statista predicts that social commerce revenue will reach \$14.74 million by the end of 2024, marking a significant 30% year-on-year growth and solidifying its role in the e-commerce landscape.

With its vast potential and rapid growth, Pakistan's e-commerce market is drawing global attention. As consumer behavior evolves, mobile device usage increases, social media influence expands, and government support strengthens, Pakistan's e-commerce sector is poised to achieve even greater milestones, establishing itself as a formidable player in the global digital economy.



ISLAMABAD: Local vendors purchasing fruits at Fruit and Vegetable Market in Federal Capital.

Rupee makes paltry gains against dollar

ISLAMABAD (INP): The rupee appreciated by 11 paisa against the dollar in the interbank market on Friday and closed at Rs278.53 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.64.

The buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.65 and Rs279.75 respectively, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan.

The Euro price decreased by 79 paisa to close at Rs308.80 against the last day's closing of Rs309.59, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.92, whereas a decrease of 73 paisa was seen in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs367.34 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs368.07.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by three paisa each to close at Rs75.83 and Rs74.22 respectively.

Customer engagement session held

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Key Customer engagement session was held in Karachi by Motul which was the first of the sequence of events planned in Pakistan over the next few days. Similar gatherings will follow across the country including Lahore and Islamabad. Motul is a reputable European Company with an international footprint specialized in the formulation, production and distribution of high-performance lubricants.

Motul in Pakistan is headed by Country Manager Mr. Saad Swati who drives the business through the Authorized Distributors House of Lubricants, in the region. Global team from Motul including Mr. Hassan Ali Khwaja – Business Development Manager and Mr. Hesham – Technical Manager, Middle East attended the session and shared their valuable insights and the Company's expansion plans in Pakistan. Mr. Hafiz Zeeshan Alam, GM House of Lubricants briefed the audience about the group and its association with Motul.

The event was attended by motor sports enthusiasts including Mr. Nadir Magsi, influencers and key accounts and distributors from the city.

He said that the development of important sectors and investment prospects was hampered by inadequate revenue collection, structural problems, and governance issues.

He said that due to the low tax-to-GDP ratio, borrowing and outside help are heavily relied upon to close the fiscal imbalance. There is a recurring budget deficit because the government spends more than it takes in. The national debt burden has risen, as a result, needing substantial financial resources for debt repayment. Both internal and external debt in Pakistan has been constantly rising.

Chines company to invest in renewable energy in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Saturday was assured by Hexing Electrical, Chinese Group to put heavy investment by establishing new industry especially in renewable energy sector.

Chairman of China's business group Hexing Electrical, Liangzhang Zhou along with the delegation called on Minister for Investment and informed him that it would be first industry of its own kind in Pakistan to manufacture inverters & batteries with big investment.

Abdul Aleem Khan welcomed the decision of the Chinese company and said that there are vast opportunities for investment in Pakistan, substantial results can be derived out of it in the current circumstances with the best business environment.

He said that investors from other countries, including China will be ensured by the provision of extraordinary facilities for investment in Pakistan. Abdul Aleem Khan added that establishment of new factories will increase the

rate of employment and once again boost the economy as well.

Aleem Khan said that the transfer of industries from China to Pakistan and the establishment of new factories on a large scale would be very welcome step. Assuring full cooperation to the Chinese business delegation, the Federal Minister said that Pakistan values the investment from China and will take the relevant Ministries on board to make this step possible for which stakeholders will also be consulted.

The minister said that after the recent visit of the Prime Minister to China, many business enterprises are engaging through Joint Ventures with the business community of Pakistan, which is an expression of the full confidence of Chinese investors and the business community in Pakistan.

In the meeting, the head of the Chinese group, Liangzhang Zhuo was assured by Federal Minister for Privatization and Investment Board, Abdul Aleem Khan about his commitment to act as a goodwill Ambassador for China's investors.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that the establishment of factories in the electrical sector with foreign investment will be a precursor to the country's development because there is immense potential in Pakistan, our institutions will also participate fully in the investment from China and bilaterally cooperation and business activities will strengthen the eternal relationship of friendship between both countries.

He said that projects like power plants in the industrial sector are the most important need of the hour for national development. In the meeting, CEO of Hexing Group Mr. Xu Guoneng and Director of Sales Ma Zuoeng also briefed the Federal Minister on their investment plan in Pakistan.

Director HR Europe of Hexing Group Junaid Husain threw light on the proposed projects and activities of his group. Chairman Hexing Electrical Group said that his organization is serving 90 countries with a workforce of 7000 while Hexing Group has established factories in 20 countries while on the same pattern will set up in Pakistan, as well.

FBR faces Rs113 billion shortfall in August tax collection

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is grappling with a significant shortfall in tax collection for the month of August, falling Rs113 billion short of its monthly target.

According to sources within the FBR, the tax authority managed to collect Rs785 billion in the 30 days of August, against a set target of Rs898 billion.

The FBR is hopeful that revenue collection will increase on the final day of August, which could help reduce the overall shortfall for the month. However, the final data for August's revenue collection will not be available until Monday.

In contrast, the FBR exceeded its revenue target for the first month of the current financial year in July, collecting Rs659.2 billion against a target of

Rs656 billion in July. Combined, the total tax collection for July and August stands at Rs1,445 billion.

The government's overall tax collection target for the current financial year is a record Rs12,970 billion. However, the government has reportedly assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that it will introduce a mini-budget if there is a significant shortfall in revenue collection during the first quarter.

As the FBR works to meet its ambitious targets, all eyes are on the final revenue figures for August, which will play a crucial role in shaping the government's fiscal strategy for the coming months.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance released its latest monthly economic update, revealing a significant improvement in

Pakistan's economic landscape.

The report highlights a gradual decrease in the country's inflation rate, which reached its lowest level in 32 months in July 2024, marking a positive shift in the economy.

In July 2024, the inflation rate dropped to 11.1%, a sharp decline from the 28.3% recorded in the same month of the previous fiscal year. This drop in inflation is seen as a significant achievement for the government's economic policies, aimed at stabilizing the economy and easing the burden on consumers.

Alongside the decrease in inflation, the report also sheds light on other crucial economic indicators. Remittances saw a remarkable increase of 47% in July, reaching a volume of \$3 billion. This influx of

foreign currency is a positive sign for the country's balance of payments and overall economic stability.

Exports also showed a healthy growth of 12.9%, recording \$2.4 billion in July, while foreign imports rose by 16.3% to \$4.8 billion. These figures indicate a robust trade activity that is likely to support economic growth in the coming months.

The Ministry of Finance reported a 22.7% increase in tax revenue, amounting to Rs660 billion in July. Additionally, non-tax revenue saw an impressive surge of 78.3%, reaching Rs3,050 billion on an annual basis. These improvements in revenue collection are expected to contribute to the government's fiscal discipline and reduce reliance on external borrowing.

Stocks waver as investors weigh inflation data

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): European stock markets wobbled but Wall Street rallied as investors digested inflation figures that raised the prospect of interest rate cuts in the two major economies next month.

Paris closed 0.1 percent lower while Frankfurt and London were marginally in the red after the indexes were in the green for most of the day.

In New York, the Dow closed at a new record while the broad-based S&P 500 index and the tech-heavy Nasdaq also rose.

Official data showed the US Federal Reserve's favored measure of inflation -- the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index -- held steady on an annual basis in July at 2.5 percent.

It edged up on a monthly basis from 0.1 percent in June to 0.2 percent in July.

The figures were in line with market forecasts, raising expectations that the Fed will cut rates when it meets on September 17-18.

"It's another reassuring inflation report for a Fed that's looking to lower interest rates at its mid-September meeting," said Bret Kenwell, US investment analyst at eToro trading platform.

"It would have taken a scorching hot inflation report for the Fed to reverse course on a rate cut now," Kenwell said.

The only doubt now is the size of the reduction.

Analysts expect a cut of 0.25 percentage points, but some say it could be bigger if jobs data next week shows weakness in the labor market.

"There are still concerns about the jobs market. Another big miss could increase speculation of a 50 basis point cut," Kenwell said.

In Europe, official figures showed that inflation slowed to 2.2 percent in August in the 20 countries that share the euro.

The figures raised hopes that the European Central Bank, which cut rates

already once in June but paused in July, will lower borrowing costs again in September.

French central bank governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau said in an interview with the magazine Le Point published Friday that it would be "fair and wise" for the ECB to cut rates at its September 12 meeting.

"If we waited until we were actually at two percent to lower rates, we would be acting too late," said Villeroy de Galhau, a member of the ECB governing council that decides on rates.

GianLuigi Mandruzzato, senior economist at EFG Asset Management, said that while a rate cut is expected next month, an increase in services prices raised the likelihood that the ECB will not reduce them again before December.

ECB board member Isabel Schnabel cautioned on Friday that the Frankfurt-based institution should "proceed gradually and cautiously" on rates.

investment at the moment is alarmingly low which has sent a negative signal to the potential foreign investors and now is the time that the federal government should give some patient hearing to the private sector calling. He said if the government was seriously desirous of having economic turnaround in the coming years it would have to do two things that are: an immediate freeze on domestic and foreign borrowing and secondly put in place a well-tailored strategy to show-case Pakistan's potentials to the outer world.

The FRIA SVC said that even though Pakistan's economic crisis is a recurring factor in the country's polit-

ical unrest, it has a history of ignoring the nation's true issues, which include poor governance, a broken judicial system, outdated laws, complicated tax system, lack of transparency, duplication in the government system, ineffective bureaucracy, improper use of our human, natural and water resources, lack of efficient local government, inadequate data for country's planning, and the consistent flaws in policies in execution by the government departments.

Shahbaz Aslam said that Pakistan's GDP growth rate has always remained below its potential despite efforts to boost economic growth.

FRIA calls upon govt to announce strategies

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has called upon the government to announce clear and robust economic strategies, as the country has stuck in low economic growth situation, where double-digit policy rate for the last few years has diminished capacity to increase domestic production, and exports, negatively impacting domestic resource mobilization.

FRIA senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that the government will have its work sharply cut out as far as the economic challenges are concerned.

Coming at the back of fast-unfolding climate change crisis that pushed millions into poverty with little fiscal capacity of government to provide anywhere near close to what was needed in stimulus spending. Then there is acute debt distress, and seriously high inflation at the back of global aggregate supply shock, and accentuated by a world of rising conflicts, mainly in Ukraine, and the Middle East.

FRIA senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam emphasized that such transparency from the government is crucial, as the country has had trouble raising enough money to cover its expenses. He said that the domestic

Gold rates up by Rs1,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs.262,500 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs.261,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.857 to Rs. 225,051 from Rs. 226,080 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.206,297 from Rs.205,511, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,950 and Rs.2,529.14, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$13 to \$2,503 from \$2,516, the Association reported.



In brief

Tennis tournament kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial National Ranking Tennis Tournament began at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex in Islamabad on Saturday. With over 250 entries across seven categories, the tournament has drawn participants from all over Pakistan. The categories include Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies' Singles, Boys' 18 & Under Singles, Boys' 14 & Under Singles, Boys' 12 & Under Singles, and Senior Doubles 50 & Above. In the Men's Singles Final Qualifying Round, eight players emerged victorious, securing their spots in the main draw. Kamran Khan defeated M. Talha Khan 6-1, Mohammad Ali won against Kashan Tariq 6-0, M. Haziq Aasim triumphed over Kamran Nisar 6-2, and Syed Murtaza Hussain dominated Ubaida Ilyas 6-0. Other winners included Shehryar Anees, who beat Abdullah Azhar 6-2, Shahid Afridi, who overpowered Zain Saeed 6-0, Haider Ali Rizwan, who defeated Saifullah 6-0, and Rayan Khan, who edged out Syed Hamza Hussain 6-4. The main draw matches are scheduled to begin on Sunday at 9:00 am.

Bravo to retire from CPL

JAMAICA (Agencies): Dwayne Bravo, the highest wicket-taker in T20 cricket, has announced that he will retire from the CPL after the ongoing season. Bravo, 40, made the announcement public hours before Trinidad Knight Riders' opening game of CPL 2024, against St Kitts & Nevis Patriots in Basseterre. "It's been a great journey and I'm looking forward to playing my final professional tournament in front of my Caribbean people," Bravo posted on Instagram. "TKR is the place where everything started for me and will end with my team." Bravo is also the highest wicket-taker in the CPL currently, with 128 strikes in 103 games at an average of 22.40 and economy rate of 8.69. Bravo's CPL retirement comes almost three years after he ended his T20I career following West Indies' early exit at the 2021 T20 World Cup in the UAE. Then in 2023, Bravo retired from the IPL, and has served as Chennai Super Kings' bowling coach since in the league. At the CPL, Bravo is the most decorated player, having won five titles in all, including three with TKR alone. Bravo is hoping to end his CPL career with his fourth title with them. He had led TKR to back-to-back titles in 2017 and 2018 before captaining Patriots to their first title in 2021. In 2020, Bravo was part of the TKR title-winning side as a player. During that season, he became the first player to 500 T20 wickets as TKR enjoyed an unbeaten run to the title amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Ahead of CPL 2021, Bravo moved to Patriots for a new challenge and ended up winning his first - and only - CPL title for a non-Trinidad based franchise. It was a comprehensive turnaround from 2020, when Patriots had finished right at the bottom. In a number of T20 leagues around the world, especially the CPL, Bravo has been harnessing his experience to nurture youngsters, settling into a role like MS Dhoni has been fulfilling for Chennai Super Kings for a while. During CPL 2021, for example, he took all-rounder Dominic Drakes under his wing and transformed him into a match-winner. Drakes came away with the Player-of-the-Match award in the CPL 2021 final and continued to work with Bravo at other leagues, including IPL (Chennai Super Kings) and T10 (Delhi Bulls).



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan batter Shah Masood in action during the second day of the last cricket Test match playing between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Pindi Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

Djokovic falls to Aussie Popyrin in latest US Open shocker

NEW YORK (AFP): Novak Djokovic's latest bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title crashed to a halt on Friday as 28th-ranked Alexei Popyrin knocked the defending champion out of the US Open third round.

One day after third seed Carlos Alcaraz slumped to a shock defeat against 74th-ranked Botic van de Zandschulp, 25-year-old Popyrin robbed the tournament of another superstar with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 victory.

Popyrin handed Djokovic his earliest US Open exit in 18 years and his earliest Grand Slam exit since he fell in the second round of the Australian Open in 2017 — which was also the last year the Serbian great failed to claim a single

Grand Slam title. Although he won the Olympic gold he had long coveted at the Paris Games, an uneven season that included knee surgery saw Djokovic come up empty in the majors.

He had beaten Popyrin in three prior encounters, including at the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year. But a career-high 14 double faults — 49 unforced errors total — were too much for Djokovic to overcome.

"It was just an awful match for me," Djokovic said. "I mean, I tried so many things, and sometimes that's an issue ... you move away from the basics that work. You lose the foundation. You lose the movement, the timing, the rhythm, the tempo, everything, whether it's a serve or any other shot."

Popyrin, coming off the biggest title of his career at the Montreal Masters, saved five break points in the sixth game of the match, swinging fearlessly to seize the first two sets. Djokovic gave himself some breathing room with an early break in the third. Popyrin clawed back only for Djokovic to break him twice more, the Serbian taking full advantage of Popyrin's mounting errors.

But the Aussie responded in a tense fourth set, saving break points in the second game before breaking again for a 3-2 lead. He stayed patient as Djokovic saved three break points and when the Serbian double faulted to gift him another Popyrin capitalized with a blistering forehand winner and let out a massive roar.

Norris on Italian GP pole with Verstappen seventh

MONZA (Agencies): Lando Norris led Oscar Piastri to a McLaren one-two in Italian Grand Prix qualifying, with title rival Max Verstappen's Red Bull in seventh. Norris' second pole in a row - and fifth of his career - combined with Verstappen's difficult session, was exactly what the Briton needed as he seeks to close the 70-point gap to the Dutchman in the championship.

George Russell took third for Mercedes, ahead of the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz and teammate Lewis Hamilton. Red Bull had Sergio Perez sacrifice his final lap to give Verstappen a tow on the run down to Parabolica on his final lap, in a vain attempt to vault up the grid.

But it succeeded only in getting Verstappen ahead of Perez, with the McLarens, Ferraris and Mercedes out of reach on another week-end of struggle for the world champions, who appear to have lost their way with their once-dominant car and are at risk of being overtaken in the constructors' title race.

Perez, who had been faster than Verstappen on his first lap in final qualifying, ran wide at the second Lesmo corner, ruining his own lap before helping Verstappen. Norris beat Piastri by just 0.035secs on his first lap in the top-10 shootout, and managed to improve his time on his second attempt despite not being happy with his lap, while Piastri did not. Norris ended up on pole by 0.109secs.

"To have a first and second when the field is as tight as it has been all weekend is a little bit of a surprise, but a nice one," Norris said. "My lap, it hurts me to say it, was not a great lap. My first one was. But still good enough for pole and still very happy."

"There are a lot of quick drivers behind in quick cars, so I am not expecting an easy race. Plenty of question marks but a lot of excitement, I'm sure."

Mehidy's five wickets give Bangladesh second Test edge over Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (AFP): Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz grabbed five wickets to help Bangladesh skittle Pakistan for 274 on the second day of the second Test in Rawalpindi on Saturday.

The 26-year-old recorded his 10th five-wicket haul in Tests to cap a good day for the tourists, who are looking to win only their third away series. Bangladesh finished the day on 10-0 despite opener Shadman Islam being dropped by Saud Shakeel off Mir Hamza on the first ball of the innings. But it was Bangladesh's bowlers who steered them to a strong position.

Mehidy dismissed Pakistan captain Shan Masood for 57 and opener Saim Ayub for 58 after the home team had been well-placed on 99-1 at lunch. He produced match-turning figures of 4-21 in Bangladesh's 10-wicket win in the first Test a week ago, and snared Khurram Shahzad for 12 and then Mohammad Ali and Abrar Ahmed to end the innings with 5-61.

Mehidy was ably assisted by fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who took 3-57.

Agha Salman, dropped on nought by Zakir Hasan off Shakib Al Hasan, was Taskin's third wicket after scoring 54 with three boundaries and two sixes. Taskin said he was happy to be back in the longer format of Test cricket. "It's a good sporting pitch and we need to bat the full day and get a good lead," Taskin said. "It's great to be back in red ball (cricket) after one-and-a-half years. I enjoyed that and adapted well." Salman said the pitch was better than the first Test track and should provide help for the spin bowlers. "Unlike the first

Test, this wicket has lively grass and I believe we have enough runs," he said.

Desperate for a win to level the two-match series, Pakistan started well but lost wickets at regular intervals to slump from a relatively strong 107-1 on a greenish but slow Rawalpindi pitch. Taskin bowled first Test centurion Saud Shakeel for 16, the left-hander having already survived a dropped catch by Mehidy off Nahid Rana on one.

Babar Azam, Pakistan's best batter, fell leg-before to spinner Shakib Al Hasan for 31, having now gone 15 Test innings without a half-century. The first day's play on Friday was washed out due to rain but Pakistan shone with solid batting in the first session. Masood, under pressure after scores of six and 14 in the first Test, hit two boundaries before he fell leg-before to Mehidy in the third over after the lunch break.

Fellow left-hander Ayub was more aggressive, hitting two sixes and four boundaries before he was stumped by wicketkeeper Liton Das off Mehidy.

Taskin, brought in for the unfit Shoriful Islam as Bangladesh's only change, bowled Abdullah Shafique for nought off the sixth ball of the match. Bangladesh's 10-wicket win in the first Test, also in Rawalpindi, was their first over Pakistan in 14 attempts. Pakistan made two changes from the first Test, resting spearheads Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah to bring in pace bowler Hamza and spinner Abrar Ahmed.

The two-match series is part of the World Test Championship, with Pakistan now ranked eighth and Bangladesh seventh in the nine-team table.

Villa survive Leicester fightback to edge narrow win



LONDON (Agencies): Aston Villa survived a second-half Leicester fightback as Unai Emery's side held on for a narrow victory at King Power Stadium.

The visitors dominated the opening and took a deserved lead shortly before the half-hour mark when Amadou Onana finished off a well-rehearsed free-kick routine involving Youri Tielemans and Jacob Ramsey.

Leicester improved after the break, but Villa doubled their advantage against the run of play when Jhon Duran — who had only just come on for Ollie Watkins — sent a looping header over Mads Hermansen for his second goal of the season.

Brighton loanee Facundo Buonanotte then thumped home his first Leicester goal to give the Foxes hope, but Steve

Cooper's side failed to complete the turnaround.

The hosts thought they had been awarded a penalty deep into added time when Jamie Vardy went down under Ezri Konsa's challenge, but the veteran striker was flagged offside from Bilal El Khannouss's through-ball.

Villa have now won their opening two away matches in a Premier League season on four occasions, having also done so in 2009-10, 2014-15 and 2020-21.

Leicester, meanwhile, are still searching for their first top-flight win of the new campaign.

Duran strikes again — but Watkins' wait goes on

The victory was Villa's 16th away in the Premier League under Emery — only Arsenal and Manchester City have won more games on the

road since the Spaniard's appointment — and the ideal response to last weekend's defeat by the Gunners.

Though not at their free-flowing best, Villa should have been further ahead at the interval after Watkins twice failed to get the better of Hermansen when one-on-one with the Leicester goalkeeper.

The England international was played through by Tielemans after just three minutes but Hermansen managed to claw the ball away at the feet of the striker, who was denied by another sprawling save midway through the first half.

Watkins has now gone seven top-flight appearances without a goal, his longest barren run since an eight-game run between August and October 2022 just prior to Emery's arrival.

Root hits record 34th century as England near win



LORD'S (Agencies): Joe Root further cemented his status as England's greatest batter with a record-breaking 34th Test century in the march towards victory over Sri Lanka at Lord's.

Root's second century of the second Test took him past Sir Alastair Cook for the most tons by an England batter.

His 103, made across the third morning and afternoon, was both effortless and inevitable. Made from 111 deliveries, it was also Root's quickest in Test cricket.

When Root became the last

wicket to fall, England were 251 all out and Sri Lanka left an improbable record 483 to level the series.

In dark and difficult conditions in the evening session, Gus Atkinson accounted for Nishan Madushka and Olly Stone had Pathum Nissanka, both caught by Root at first slip, taking him to 200 Test catches.

The gloom closed in. England were forced to bowl the spin of Shoaib Bashir and Root. As the umpires fiddled with their lightmeters, an interruption was so predictable that

Sri Lanka promoted Prabath Jayasuriya to number four to see them to the delay.

When it came, Sri Lanka had reached 53-2, 430 adrift, with Dimuth Karunaratne on 23 and Jayasuriya on three. Play was finally called off for the day at 18:00 BST.

England will return on Sunday knowing they have two full days to take the eight wickets they need for an unassailable 2-0 series lead.

Record provides Lord's theatre Realistically, this contest was ended by England's romp

through the Sri Lanka batting line-up on Friday, yet the prospect of a moment of history ensured an electric atmosphere on a murky Saturday.

When England resumed on 25-1, 256 ahead, the most pressing issue surrounding their batters was the opportunity for Ollie Pope to make his first significant score as a stand-in captain. He looked to have come through some early jitters, only to fall for 17, cutting the first delivery of Asitha Fernando's short-ball plan to deep point.

There was no such uncertainty for Root, who was in complete control to register two hundreds in a match for the first time in his 145-Test career. Just three other players have made twin centuries in a Test at Lord's.

Sri Lanka slowed Root's process through the 90s, growing the tension as Root had number 10 Stone for company.

When Root stepped back to slap Fernando for four and reach his magnificent milestone, everyone inside a jam-packed Lord's rose in a spine-tingling ovation.

At that moment it felt as if there would not be enough time left for England to force victory, and the Sri Lanka batting and bad light proved as much. It mattered not. This day belonged to Root.

Root, runs and records

England's strong position and desire to push the game on led to a number of cameos and wickets as a result of attacking shots. Pope, Ben Duckett for 24, Harry Brook for 37 and Jamie Smith for 26 all fell into that category.

Root's super strength is his ability to score steadily without inviting danger. This was an exhibition of risk-free run-making, done in less time than most of the country waited in line for an Oasis ticket.

An edge between slip and gully when he had two was the closest Root came to an error. He regularly fetched the spin of Jayasuriya to the on-side boundary and swatted away baseball-style when the seamers tried leg theory. He attempted, and missed, a reverse scoop on 69.

As England batters came and went, the main danger to Root was running out of partners. As Stone arrived Root farmed the strike, but was made to wait for his ton by Sri Lanka's deep-set field.

Eventually, when he carved Fernando into the vacant off side, Root leapt for joy. He was dropped off the next ball, then hooked Lahiru Kumara to deep square leg and departed to another standing ovation.

In among the records, Root joined Brian Lara and Sachin Tendulkar as batters to have 5,000 Test runs in two different

decades. More importantly, he is 95 behind Cook's all-time England total of 12,472, which seems primed to go in next week's final Test at The Oval.

Lightwatchman holds up England

This has been a draining experience for Sri Lanka, who chose to bowl on winning the toss and have since spent the majority of the three days in the field.

Rolled over in 55.3 overs in the first innings, the 40 overs under lights in the final session felt like a time of huge peril for the tourists.

In the third over, left-hander Karunaratne was given lbw to Chris Woakes for one, only for the decision to be overturned on review.

Umpires Joe Wilson and Paul Reiffel had a first conference about the light, then decided to play on. From the next ball, Madushka poked Atkinson to Root.

Pope was ordered to employ the spinners, but a brighter spell allowed the introduction of Stone. He immediately took the edge of Nissanka for Root's 200th Test catch, another England first.

Jayasuriya emerged as a lightwatchman, rather than a nightwatchman. It got dark again to necessitate more spin and darker still to send the players from the field.



In brief

IRSA releases 322,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 322,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 386,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1550.00 feet (maximum conservation level) and was 152.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 220,000 cusecs and 219,500 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1220.80 feet, which was 172.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 71,100 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 227,900, 202,400, 188,000 and 173,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 31,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 34,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU announces admissions for Autumn 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the second phase of admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester. According to the AIOU, the programs offered in this phase include Associate Degree in Arts (B.A. General), Associate Degree in Commerce (B.Com), BBA, Associate Degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, 1.5, 2.5, and 4-year B.Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs, and Certificate courses. Admission forms and prospectuses for all programs are available on the university's website. According to Syed Zia-ul-Hasnain, Director Admissions, forms for Associate Degrees (B.A/B.Com) and B.Ed programs are also available at the university's regional offices and designated sale points across the country. For more information on admissions, candidates can contact the university's regional offices or call the university's helpline at 051-111-112-468. Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has directed the heads of all regional offices across the country to guide and support prospective students. He has also instructed that those without access to computers and the internet be provided with free access to these facilities at the offices to easily apply for admissions.

Police conducted search operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted search operations in various areas on Saturday to maintain law and order, according to a police spokesman. The operations, which took place in Westridge, Kalar Syedan, Chuntra, and Mandra, were carried out on the special direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani. Senior police officers, along with police personnel, including women officers, participated in the operations. During the searches, the police checked 55 houses, 59 shops, 17 tenants, and 126 individuals. The police spokesman stated that the force is fully prepared to protect the lives and property of the public. The ongoing combing and search operations aim to identify and apprehend suspects and hardcore criminals. He emphasized that the police are vigilant and committed to maintaining law and order in Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing the meeting of Special Committee for INGOs. —APP Photo

FIA arrests IESCO audit officials, recovers Rs 14.75 mln bribe money

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in a major operation arrested the officials of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on accepting bribe from the field officers and recovered Rs 14.75 million from them.

The arrested persons included Audit Office Zeeshan Ali, Assistant Audit Officer Nazir Hussain, Ishtiaq Ahmed,

Jahangir Ahmed and Saqib Sagheer, said a press release issued here.

The officials were deputized by the Deputy Director Procurement and Coordination Lahore Office to carry out the audit of IESCO Operation Jhelum Circle and Regional Manager Transformer Workshop Islamabad.

The FIA team arrested the accused from GT

Road, Gujar Khan and recovered the bribe money from them.

According to initial investigation, the accused received the said amount from the officials posted in the field.

The Anti-corruption Circle Islamabad has registered a case against the accused and more arrests are expected on identification of the arrested persons.

ANF recovers 90 kg drugs in different operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine different operations across the country managed to recover 90 kg drugs worth Rs 10 million and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 1.9 kg hashish was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Lahore Airport.

400 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to England at the courier office in Peshawar.

48 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested near GT Road Sheikhupura while 25 kg hashish was recovered from Panjgur area.

8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused net in Okara and 2 kg heroin and 2 kg opium were recovered from Hub area.

In 7th operation, 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects nabbed on GT Road Islamabad.

In 8th operation, 1.5 kg hashish was recovered from 3 suspects arrested near Sohrab Goth Karachi.

100 grams ice and 200 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two suspects held near a university in Peshawar.

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

8 injured as passenger bus overturned near Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least eight passengers, including women, were injured when a passenger bus overturned Bhartiya stop Kahuta Tehsil of Rawalpindi on Saturday.

As per detail, rescue sources said that a passenger bus was carrying passengers when it overturned near; as a result, several people got serious injuries, private news channels reported.

The rescue officials, police, and local people gathered at the spot of the accident and injured people trapped in the vehicle were removed from and transferred to the hospital.

The driver lost control of the bus, which skidded down and overturned, the rescue officials added.

Naqvi chairs meeting of special committee for INGOs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting of the Special Committee for INGOs at the Ministry of Interior.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Secretary Ministry of Interior, Additional Secretary Economic Affairs Division, DG Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, Consultant Ministry of Law, and other relevant officers.

During the meeting applications regarding the rejection of INGOs registration and renewal of MOUs were reviewed.

The minister said that a detailed review of each application will be conducted, and all relevant

documents of the INGOs will be examined.

He further stated that INGOs should also cooperate with the Ministry of Interior and provide relevant documents on time.

He said that the scrutiny process will be completed within 15 days, and all applicants will be informed accordingly.

Renovation of Jinnah Convention Center nears completion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is racing against time to complete the renovation work at the Jinnah Convention Center, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting just around the corner.

Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the centre on Saturday to review the progress of the ongoing work.

Accompanied by Dr. Hafiz Khalid, Member Engineering, and other

officers, Randhawa was briefed on the swift completion of the renovation work, which is being carried out in multiple shifts, 24/7.

The renovation work includes the upgrade of the main hall, committee rooms, flooring, repairs, painting, glasswork, furniture, and carpets. Additionally, landscaping, tree plantation, horticulture work, and lighting are being done to enhance the visual appeal of the centre. Randhawa emphasized that the purpose of the

renovation is to provide an excellent hosting venue for the SCO meeting and other international events. With the SCO meeting scheduled to take place soon, the CDA is working tirelessly to meet international standards and ensure a successful event.

The completion of the renovation work at the Jinnah Convention Center will not only showcase Pakistan's capabilities as a host nation but also provide a state-of-the-art venue for future international events.

RPO inspects security arrangements for Pak-Bangladesh match

RAWALPINDI (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Babar Sarfraz Alpa visited to review security arrangements for the Pakistan-Bangladesh second test cricket match being played at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

RPO was briefed by SSP Operations Flight Lt (Retd) Hafiz Kamran Asghar on the security measures put in place. SP Rawal Faisal Saleem, SP Saddar Mohammad Nabil Khokhar, and other senior officers were also present.

On the occasion, RPO Babar Sarfraz Alpa inspected the security checkpoints and gave instructions to ensure foolproof security. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of vigilance.

A total of 4,000 officers and jawan from the Rawalpindi Police are on duty, with over 367 traffic police officers deployed to manage traffic around the stadium. "CCTV cameras are monitoring the route of the cricket teams, and snipers have been positioned on

rooftops along the route and around the stadium," he said.

"Special teams from the elite force, dolphin force, and district police are patrolling the stadium and surrounding areas", he said, adding, "Senior police officers are conducting regular checks and briefings at duty points to ensure that all security arrangements are being strictly followed."

"All available resources are being utilized to ensure a safe and secure environment for the cricket matches," he concluded.

Collective efforts to shield young minds from social media risks

ISLAMABAD (APP): A prominent psychiatrist Saturday asserts that the prevalent influence of smartphones and social media on young people's lives is exacting a devastating impact on their mental health, prompting an urgent call for collective action from parents, policymakers, and youth themselves to mitigate the damage.

Associate Professor Dr. Nargis Asad, Department of Psychiatry, The Aga Khan University, Karachi, in an exclusive interview with a private news channel, stressed that the alarming rise in mental health issues among young people is directly linked to excessive smartphone use and social media addiction.

"The consequences of unchecked smartphone use and social media addiction are devastating," Dr

warned. "We are seeing a surge in anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and sleep disorders among youth. We must take collective responsibility to mitigate these risks."

Dr. Asad urged parents, educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals to join forces in promoting healthy digital habits among young people.

"We need to educate youth about responsible smartphone use, set boundaries, and encourage offline activities," she said.

"We must also advocate for policies that regulate social media companies and protect young users from harmful content."

By working together, Dr. believes we can create a safer digital environment that supports the mental well-being of our youth. "The time for action is

now," she emphasized.

Responding to a query, he said that parents and teachers should educate children about online safety, including the importance of protecting personal information, avoiding sharing inappropriate content and understanding the potential consequences of their digital actions.

"Encourage open and ongoing communication with children about their digital experiences", addressing concerns, and fostering healthy online habits", she added.

"Excessive screen time has been linked to a decrease in children's attention spans, she said, adding, preschoolers exposed to more than two hours of screen time daily had shorter attention spans compared to those with less screen time", she said.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers installing Horse Cart replica at Rawal Chowk during beautification of the city. —APP Photo

Commitment to help Afghans

KABUL (Ariana News): US special envoy for Afghan women, Rina Amiri has met with UAE's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs Lana Zaki Nusseibeh. During the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to support the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, the UAE Foreign Ministry said in a statement. They stressed that women and girls' rights are vital to Afghanistan's economic stability.

Refugees investing up to \$15m

KABUL (Khaama Press): Iranian media, citing Cyrus Talaari, a member of the Joint Investment Association of Iran and Foreign Countries, reported that Afghan migrants in the country are investing between \$200,000 to \$15 million. This Iranian official pointed out that Afghanistan's migrants invest due to receiving residency permits in Iran and emphasized Iran's need to attract foreign capital, especially for infrastructure development.

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

Muttaqi urges Islamic states to help release Afghan assets

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi has called on Islamic countries to help release the assets of Afghanistan's central bank and lift the travel ban on the leaders of the Islamic Emirate. Speaking at the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Cameroon, Muttaqi said that the freezing of the funds had slowed economic growth and reduced regional trade. "We hope that wartime behavior will not be carried over to peacetime," he said. "Is it reasonable for a host country to have to get permission from the United Nations to invite a country's foreign minister? Doesn't this kind of coercive behavior call into question the fairness of the prevailing international order?" He also called on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states to enter into economic and trade partnership with Afghanistan within the framework of legitimate common interests. Muttaqi stressed that Afghanistan, with its strategic location, abundant natural resources, cheap and hardworking human resources and security, offers a unique opportunity for regional connectivity and investment. The acting foreign minister stressed that Afghanistan's territory will not be used against any country and this has been proven in the past three years. He called on countries to enter into positive engagement with the Islamic Emirate. In his speech, Muttaqi also called for an immediate, just and permanent solution to the issue of Palestine. "If we, the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, do not resolve this issue, neither God nor the people will forgive us," he warned.

Baradar, Uzbek PM plans to enhance bilateral trade



KABUL (BNA): During the inauguration of the Termez International Trade Center, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, held a meeting with Uzbekistan's Prime Minister, Abdulla Aripov, to discuss enhancing bilateral trade and transit cooperation, particularly the facilitation of Afghan fresh fruit exports to Central Asian countries. According to the press office of the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs, Prime Minister Aripov emphasized that Afghanistan holds a significant position in Uzbekistan's foreign policy. He affirmed that Tashkent is ready to expand its commercial and transit relations with Kabul by facilitating the transit of Afghan fresh fruits to Central Asian countries through Uzbekistan's territory. He added that Uzbekistan has deployed technical teams for extending the railway network from Hairatan to Herat and is prepared to initiate the project and gas extraction operations in Afghanistan by September. Aripov also expressed readiness to collaborate with the Islamic Emirate in constructing a retaining wall along the Amu River's banks. Furthermore, Prime Minister Aripov assured the Islamic Emirate that all matters discussed during his recent visit to Kabul would be promptly implemented, with joint teams from both countries closely coordinating on these initiatives. In response, Deputy PM, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund stated that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is prepared to commence all activities that will play a constructive role in strengthening and deepening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Installation of CCTV cameras in Parwan to enhance security

CHARIKAR CITY (TOLONews): The Ministry of Interior has announced the installation of nearly one thousand CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) cameras in Charikar city, the center of Parwan province. Officials from the ministry have said that they intend to expand this initiative to other districts of the province as well. According to the officials, the installation of CCTV cameras will help reduce crimes and disorder in the city. Mohammad Ibrahim Naseri, the General Director of Telecommunications and Technology at the Ministry of Interior, said: "Based on the directive of the Ministry's leadership and the five-year strategic plan, we have been able to install security cameras in Parwan province so that security forces can use them for better security control." Karimullah Sajed, Head of Security at Parwan Police Command, said: "One thousand cameras have been installed in different areas, including mobile cameras and 80 cameras that have a wide field of view." Some residents of Parwan consider the installation of these cameras a positive step and urge the authorities to pay serious attention to maintaining and keeping them operational in the city, as well as in commercial and residential areas. Abdul Rahim, a resident of Parwan, said: "The installation of security cameras ensures security for all citizens and those engaged in work and trade." Mohammad Akbar, another resident of Parwan, says: "Our request is to extend these cameras to the alleys as well." The Ministry of Interior emphasized that the installation of CCTV cameras is of great importance in improving the security situation and that this process is expected to be implemented nationwide.

Chashma-i-Sayyad: A popular tourist destination with natural attractions in Samangan province



SAMANGAN (TOLONews): Chashma-i-Sayyad, also known as Chashma-i-Shifa, in the Khulm district of Samangan province, has recently become a popular spot for tourists. With its natural attractions, this spring draws dozens of tourists daily from various provinces across the country. Habibullah, a resident of Khulm, Samangan, said:

Flour, sugar prices down in markets

KABUL (Pajhwok): The prices of Kazakh flour, Indian sugar, petrol and liquefied gas decreased during the outgoing week in Kabul, but the rates of gold and cooking oil surged, market sources said Saturday.

Fuel prices

A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok said the price of petrol decreased from 65afs to 63afs a liter, but diesel remained unchanged at 66afs.

Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta neighborhood, said the price of a kilogram of the commodity went down from 52afs to 50afs.

Food items

Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders' Association, said the prices of a 49-kilogram sack of Indian sugar decreased from 2,650afs to 2,550afs and 49-kilogram sack of Kazakhstani flour from 1,600afs to 1,580afs.

And the rate of a 16 liters tin of Malaysian cooking oil went up from 1,400afs to 1,450afs.

But the rate of a 24-kilogram bag of Pakistani rice remained unchanged at 2,600afs, and a kilogram of African black tea at 400afs and the same amount of Indonesian green tea at 350afs.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dehna-i-Bagh Market, put the retail price of a 49-kilogram bag of Kazakh flour at 1,630afs, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afs and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar at 2,600afs.

A 16-litre bottle of cooking oil accounted for 1,500afs, one kilogram of black tea for 400afs and the same quantity of green tea for 405afs, he added.

Gold prices up

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweler in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold increased from 4,600afs to 4,650afs and the same amount of the Russian variety surged from 3,600afs to 3,650afs.

Afghani, dollar parity

Haji Hussain, owner of Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said one US dollar was traded at 70.30afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees consumed 248afs.

Last week, one US dollar was accounted for 70.80afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 250afs.

Badri discuss various issues with Turkmenistan FM



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, along with his accompanying delegation, recently met separately with several senior officials of Turkmenistan during his visit to the country.

The meetings included discussions with the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Oil and Gas, Industry and Urban Development, and heads of the TAPI project and the Turkmenistan Railway Authority. According to a statement released by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Mullah Badri discussed various issues, including the TAPI and TAP projects, railway expansion, fiber optic networks, and oil and gas trade, during his meeting with the Turkmenistan Foreign Minister. Additionally, in his meeting with the Minister of Oil and Gas and the head of the TAPI project, Mullah Badri focused on discussions related to the TAPI project as well as matters concerning oil and gas cooperation. The Turkmenistan Minister of Industry and Urban Development also expressed his interest in Afghanistan's iron ore mines. Meanwhile, Acting Minister praised the Turkmenistan official's interest in investing in Afghanistan's iron ore sector and assured him of all possible cooperation. Furthermore, during his meeting with the head of the Turkmenistan Railway Authority, Mullah Badri highlighted the importance of expanding the railway network and emphasized the need to extend the railway to the cities of Herat and Mazar.

Nangarhar farmers receive support for citrus orchard cultivation

JALALABAD CITY (TOLONews): The Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Nangarhar has announced the establishment of citrus orchards for nearly 200 farmers on more than 400 jeribs of land. Mohammad Wali Mohsin, the head of this department, said that to encourage farmers to cultivate alternative crops, gardening tools worth 100,000 Afghani have been distributed to each farmer. According to him, farmers in the districts of Rodat, Surkh Rod, Khogyani, and Sherzad, who previously cultivated poppy, have benefited from this aid. He added: "These packages have been distributed to 195 farmers. These areas were previously dedicated to cannabis cultivation, and we are trying to change this trend." Farmers who have benefited from this aid have expressed satisfaction and called for the continuation of such support. They said that if there is cooperation in water storage, agricultural lands will expand. Aseerullah, one of the farmers, said: "If there is cooperation in the area of water storage, we can prevent the land from drying up and continue our farming." Abdul Basir, another farmer, added: "There is no water in the Rodat district, but there is plenty of land for cultivation, and the only alternative to poppy cultivation is to start gardening." According to the Department of Agriculture of Nangarhar, in the last two years, and with the cooperation of some international organizations, around twelve thousand jeribs of land have been allocated to citrus, apple, guava, and plum orchards in several districts of this province.

Jalal meets with representatives Bill Gates Foundation

KABUL (BNA): In an online meeting, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, the Acting Minister of Public Health, engaged with representatives from the Bill Gates Foundation to discuss strategic cooperation aimed at improving health sector initiatives in Afghanistan. The discussions, which centered on financial support, disease prevention, and enhancing healthcare access in remote regions, highlighted critical priorities for the Ministry of Public Health. According to a statement from the ministry, key topics included financial backing for the health sector, the prevention of infectious diseases, the eradication of polio, and the establishment of health centers in underserved areas. Acting Minister Jalali emphasized the urgent need to provide healthcare services to remote populations and to control the spread of infectious diseases. He called for coordinated and transparent support from international organizations to bolster these initiatives, underscoring their health and well-being of the vital importance for the Afghan population. IE to appoint commercial attaché in Kazakhstan

IE to appoint commercial attaché in Kazakhstan

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced the appointment of a new commercial attaché in Kazakhstan in the near future. Mohammad Yaqoob Jawed, head of the Coordination of Commercial Attachés of the Ministry, told TOLONews that the ministry also plans to appoint commercial attachés in India, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Jawed said: "We will soon introduce our attaché in Kazakhstan, and nearly all of our commercial attachés abroad will carry out activities such as marketing and attracting investments, which will encourage investors from these countries to Afghanistan." Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment sees the role of commercial attachés as effective in improving and developing economic and trade relations with other countries. This chamber considers the commercial attachés as special representatives of Afghanistan's sectors and stresses that they should communicate the current economic situation of Afghanistan with the host countries. Mohammad Younus Momand, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "The commercial attachés are special representatives of Afghanistan's private sector and the administration of Afghanistan's private trade sector. Their responsibility is to explain all trade meetings between the private sectors and the current economic and trade situation in Afghanistan. If they do so, we can say we have an active commercial attaché." "If the commercial attachés know their duties better, they can play a relatively influential role in improving trade and economic relations between countries, provided that they perform the necessary responsibilities correctly. In this case, they can play a significant role in attracting investments and establishing some major trade interactions between countries," said Shakir Yaqubi, an economic expert.



KYIV: A view shows a burning apartment building hit by a Russian air strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine.

Russia says five killed, 46 hurt in Ukraine strike on Belgorod

MOSCOW (Reuters): Five people were killed and 46 injured in a Ukrainian attack on the southwestern Russian city of Belgorod, the local governor said, the latest in a series of strikes by Ukraine on the city in recent months.

Vyacheslav Gladkov said 37 of the injured, including seven children, were taken to hospitals in the city, which lies 40 km (25 miles) north of the border with Ukraine. Video filmed from inside a vehicle, posted on social media and purporting to show the attack, showed a car being blown up while moving along a road. Seconds later another explosion is seen metres away. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the video.

Russia's Foreign Ministry condemned the attack. "Once again we call on all responsible governments and relevant international structures to strongly condemn this brutal terrorist attack and publicly distance themselves from the Kyiv regime and its Western curators who commit such crimes," it said on Saturday.

The ministry added that Russia's "special military operation" will continue until it reaches all the goals including Ukraine's "demilitarisation and de-nazification". Russia's Investigation Committee said on its Telegram channel that it had initiated a criminal case into the attack.

Authorities also reported that a woman was injured on Saturday during Ukrainian shelling of the border town of Shebekino in the Belgorod region. Ukraine has staged frequent attacks on Belgorod and other Russian border regions in recent months, with the city the focal point of the attacks. A Russian guided bomb attack on Ukraine's northeastern city of Kharkiv hit a residential building and a playground, killing seven people and injuring at least 77 more, local authorities said.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr

Zelenskiy said a 14-year-old girl was among the dead. Ihor Terekhov, the city's mayor, had earlier said on Telegram that one child was killed in the playground. The 12-storey apartment block caught fire as a result of the strike, the mayor said. The death toll from the attack climbed to seven when a woman's body was recovered from the rubble, he added in a later statement.

About 20 of the injured were in severe condition, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said. One end of the block was engulfed in black smoke, with many of the upper floors in flames. Several cars parked outside were gutted by fire. Emergency services and rescue volunteers rushed to carry survivors out of the building. The body of one of the victims lay under a carpet on the ground outside, surrounded by police. Residents of all ages, some of them covered in blood, sat stunned on benches and walls outside as medics attended to their injuries.

Kharkiv has been the focus of heavy Russian bombing throughout the war, although there had been a drop in intensity in recent weeks, possibly related to a shock incursion launched by Ukrainian forces into Russia's Kursk region. Ukrainian authorities said that Friday's attack involved five aerial guided bombs launched from planes in Russia's Belgorod region, also known as "glide bombs" which are fitted with a navigation system taking them to their targets.

The weapons are hard to intercept and they have become a fearsome tool in the war in eastern Ukraine in recent months that can cause huge devastation. Russia denies deliberately targeting civilians. Thousands have been killed and wounded during the full-scale invasion Moscow launched in Ukraine in 2022.

In the wake of the Kharkiv strike, Zelenskiy renewed a call on Western

allies to allow Ukraine to use long-range Western weapons to attack Russian military air bases. "A strike ... would not have happened if our defence forces had the ability to destroy Russian military aircraft where they are based," Zelenskiy said on Telegram. "There is no rational reason to restrict Ukraine's defences." Kyiv says that the most effective way to counter such strikes is to target Russian planes, not the bombs themselves.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy dismissed Ukraine's Air Force Commander Mykola Oleschchuk, according to a presidential decree. The dismissal was announced just a day after the Ukrainian military reported that an F-16 jet crashed and its pilot died while repelling a major Russian strike on Monday.

"I have decided to replace the commander of the Air Forces... I am eternally grateful to all our military pilots," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in his evening address. He did not give a reason for dismissal but mentioned that personnel must be protected, and that there was a need to strengthen the command level. Ukraine's General Staff said that General Lieutenant Anatoliy Kryvonozhka would temporarily perform the duties of commander.

The Ukrainian military did not provide a reason for Monday's crash but said the jet came down while it was approaching a Russian target. Oleschchuk said on Monday partners from the U.S. were helping to investigate the incident. A U.S. defense official told Reuters that the crash did not appear to be the result of Russian fire, and possible causes from pilot error to mechanical failure were still being investigated. The arrival of the first F-16 jets was a milestone for Ukraine in the fight against the full-scale invasion Russia launched 2-1/2 years ago.

Trump says he will vote against Florida amendment

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said he would vote against an amendment in his home state of Florida that would enshrine abortion rights in the state's constitution and overturn a current six-week abortion ban.

Trump made the comments to Fox News, a day after he caused confusion when he seemed to suggest in an interview with NBC News that he would vote in favor of the amendment. The amendment is strongly opposed by the anti-abortion groups that have backed his campaign in the Nov. 5 election against Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris. "I think six weeks, you need more time than six weeks," Trump said, adding he also believed the proposed amendment was too permissive.

"So I'll be voting no for that reason," said Trump, who has also indicated the matter should be decided by individual states. Harris said the former president brags about his role in overturning the constitutional protection for abortion, adding he will vote to uphold a ban "so extreme it applies before many women even know they are pregnant."

"When I'm president and Congress passes a bill to restore reproductive freedom, I will proudly sign it into law. The choice in this election is clear," she said in a statement. Abortion has become a key issue ahead of the election with pro-abortion rights contributions increasing in the two years since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

IVF fertility treatments have also been pushed into the spotlight since an Alabama court ruled earlier this year that frozen embryos were people. The state's governor later signed a law aimed at protecting the treatment. Trump, who Democrats have painted as a threat to women's rights, said on Thursday that, if elected, he would require government or insurance companies to pay for IVF fertility treatments.

However, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, the Democratic vice presidential candidate, on Friday dismissed that offer as unbelievable. Walz told guests at a campaign fundraiser in the Washington suburb of Bethesda that he and his wife, Gwen, briefly contemplated changing their talking points on the issue, given Trump's comments, but changed their minds.

"Look, women don't trust them. They don't trust women, so why the hell would women trust them? No one's believing that," Walz told about 150 campaign contributors. Gwen Walz did not mention Trump's latest comments in her introduction of her husband, but said the overall issue of fertility treatments was very personal for her family, having used them to conceive their two children, Hope and Gus.

"If Trump had his way, I would never have become a mom," Gwen Walz said. "That's a decision that he was trying to make for me and for other women, and if Vance had his way, well, that would make me a second class." The comment on Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance appeared to reference his 2021 comment about Democrats without biological children as "childless cat women."

Opinion polls show Trump has lost ground with women voters since Harris became the Democratic candidate in the Nov. 5 election. Harris led Trump by 49% to 36%, or 13 percentage points, among women voters in a Reuters/Ipsos poll published on Thursday, compared to her 9-point lead in polls conducted in July.

Israel's deadly West Bank raid enters fourth day

JENIN (AFP): Israel pressed on with a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank for a fourth day on Saturday, as fierce fighting raged in the nearly 11-month Gaza war. As clashes and explosions persisted in the northern city of Jenin, the Israeli military said two Palestinians were killed while preparing to carry out bombings overnight in the south of the West Bank.

Palestinian militant group Hamas, whose October 7 attack on Israel sparked the Gaza war, hailed a "heroic operation" at what it called a "sensitive time" during the Israeli operations in the north. Hamas ally Islamic Jihad, which has a strong presence in the northern West Bank, similarly said it "congratulates" the perpetrators of what it called a "coordinated attack."

The Israeli army described a vehicle explosion at a petrol station in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc as "an attempted car bombing by a terrorist" who was later killed. An army officer "was moderately injured, and a reservist officer responsible for the security in a nearby community sustained minor injuries," it said in a statement.

In the second incident, the head of security in the Israeli settlement of Karnei Zur engaged in a car chase with a "terrorist" who had infiltrated the settlement compound, leading to a collision and "the terrorist being neutralized shortly after," the statement said. "During the confrontation, an explosive device in the terrorist's car detonated," it added.

At least 20 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli army since Wednesday, most of them militants, in simultaneous raids in several cities in the northern West Bank. Since Friday, soldiers have concentrated their operations on the city of Jenin and its refugee camps, long a bastion of Palestinian armed groups fighting against Israel.

On Saturday morning, an AFP photographer in Jenin heard ongoing clashes in the city, where the streets were mostly empty save for armored vehicles, including one that blocked access to the government hospital. "I think it's the worst day since the start of the raid... We hear from time to time clashes and sometimes there is big bombing," said the hospital's director, Wisam Bakr.

Water and electricity were cut off from the hospital during the raid, forcing it to rely on a generator and water tank, he told AFP. Rising violence has surged in the West Bank since Hamas's October 7 attack.

The United Nations said on Wednesday that at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the territory by Israeli troops or settlers since the Gaza war began. Nineteen Israelis, including soldiers, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during army operations over the same period, according to Israeli official figures. Of the 20 Palestinians reported dead since Wednesday, Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad have said at least 13 were members of their armed wings.

The dead included an 82-year-old man, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa, and two teenagers, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent, which said another 55 had been wounded since the launch of the Israeli operation. In Gaza, Israel pushed forward with its deadly offensive in response to Hamas's October 7 attack.

Gaza's civil defense agency said its rescuers pulled 29 bodies from the rubble since dawn and transported dozens of

wounded to hospitals across the devastated Palestinian territory. On Friday, a medical source at the southern Nasser Hospital said an Israeli strike killed three people near the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis.

Israeli shelling in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza killed two people on the same day, the civil defense agency said. Britain, France and Spain expressed concerns Friday about the Israeli operation in the West Bank, with the latter denouncing "an outbreak of violence which is clearly unacceptable." The World Health Organization said Israel had agreed to at least three days of "humanitarian pauses" in parts of Gaza, starting Sunday, to facilitate a vaccination drive after the territory recorded its first case of polio in a quarter of a century.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the measures were "not a ceasefire."

Hamas's October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,199 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Palestinian militants also seized 251 hostages, 103 of whom are still captive in Gaza including 33 the Israeli military says are dead. Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 40,602 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children. The war has devastated Gaza, repeatedly displaced most of its 2.4 million people and triggered a humanitarian crisis. "In August, the number of humanitarian missions and movements within Gaza that have been denied access by Israeli authorities has almost doubled, compared with July," the UN humanitarian office said on Friday.

Gaza's civil defense agency said its rescuers pulled 29 bodies from the rubble since dawn and transported dozens of



GAZA STRIP: A Palestinian man holding a child, as the child is vaccinated against polio, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, at Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis.

Karsaz accident: Crystal meth confirmed in suspect's blood sample

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Another case has been lodged against the suspect involved in the Karsaz road accident after Methamphetamine, aka crystal meth, was found in her blood and urine samples, police told media on Saturday.

Soon after the deadly incident, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) obtained the blood and urine samples of the woman, police said. They added that a case was also filed on the state's behalf against the suspect on grounds of a fresh report of the medico-legal officer (MLO).

Police said a section per-

taining to use of prohibited item has been incorporated in the case. The traces of banned substance were confirmed in the blood sample obtained from the arrested suspect, they said.

Without elaborating details, Karachi Additional Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho on Wednesday said that new details emerged from the ongoing investigation into the Karsaz road accident, which suggested that the suspect shouldn't have been driving the vehicle. Speaking to journalists, Odho had said he doesn't want to divulge the details as investigation into the incident was still underway.

"A final opinion could

only be made after holding consultation with medical authorities," he had said, adding that the police will also take medical experts on board in this regard. A young woman and an elderly man were killed when the suspect's luxury vehicle crashed into multiple vehicles near the Pakistan Maritime Museum on August 19.

The deceased and injured were brought to the JPMC for medico-legal formalities and treatment, respectively. Those killed in the accident were identified as daughter and father, 26-year-old Aamna Arif and 60-year-old Imran Arif, while one of the injured was reportedly in critical condition.

Brazil moves to block access to Musk's X amid disinformation row

BRASILIA: Telecommunications regulators in Brazil have begun the process of blocking X after the Supreme Court ordered the suspension of the social media platform for failing to meet a deadline to appoint a legal representative in the country.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered the "immediate, complete and total suspension of X's operations" in the country "until all court orders ... are complied with, fines are duly paid, and a new legal representative for the company is appointed". Three of the country's top telecommunications carriers said they would begin blocking access from midnight (03:00 GMT on Saturday), according to a report by local news

outlet UOL.

The judge has been locked in a months-long feud with billionaire investor Elon Musk over disinformation and free speech. At the core of the dispute, de Moraes argues that Musk refused earlier this year to block accounts responsible for the spread of fake news, hate speech and attacks on the rule of law.

At the time, Musk denounced the order as censorship and responded by closing the company's offices in Brazil while ensuring the platform was still available in the country. In his order on Friday, the judge called Musk an "outlaw" who intended to "allow the massive spread of disinformation, hate speech and attacks on the democratic

rule of law, violating the free choice of the electorate, by keeping voters away from real and accurate information".

Some 40 million Brazilians who use the platform will now lose access to it and face hefty fines of up to 50,000 reais (\$9,000) per day if caught using an encrypted connection. Musk snapped back at the court's order. On Friday, he called de Moraes "an evil dictator" for shutting down the "#1 source of truth in Brazil".

The judge's ruling could cause X to lose one of its largest and most coveted markets at a time when Musk has struggled with advertising revenue for the platform. While X remained accessible in Brazil late on Friday, some Brazilians posted on other platforms

that their access to X was already being blocked.

Left-leaning President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who retook the presidency in 2022, defended the court order to suspend X. "A lot of money does not allow you to disrespect Brazilian laws," Lula said in a radio interview on Friday. "Elon Musk is an American citizen, he is not a citizen of the world. He can't offend presidents, congressmen, the Senate, or the Supreme Court. Who does he think he is?" he added.

Musk has been commended by conservative supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who say Lula's government has silenced them. Bolsonaro lost the 2022

presidential election to Lula after peddling unsubstantiated claims that Brazil's electronic voting machines are prone to fraud.

Media experts say Musk has become a polarising figure, often siding with right-wing governments. In India, he agreed with an order imposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take down accounts and posts related to a farmers' protest that swept through the country in February, their demands including guaranteed prices for their produce and debt waivers.

"Those that lead towards conservatives and the far-right will criticise judge Alexandre de Moraes and praise Musk, as you know, the hero of free speech," David Nemer, an associate

professor in the department of media studies at Virginia University, told Al Jazeera. Musk's satellite internet company Starlink has also been caught up in a dispute with Brazil's Supreme Court which froze the firm's bank accounts because of X's unpaid fines.

Starlink on Friday asked the court to suspend its decision to freeze its local bank accounts, arguing it has complied with all judicial orders. That request was dismissed. Al Jazeera's Heidi Zhou-Castro said it was unclear how long X's suspension in Brazil will last, but some experts predict Musk will eventually agree to the government restrictions "while claiming himself as the victim". — Aljazeera