

Atta Tarar grieved
ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday expressed profound grief and sorrow over demise of Senior Director of Pakistani film industry Altaf Hussain. The minister, in a condolence message, sympathized with the bereaved family, while highlighting the deceased's contribution for the Pakistani film industry.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Asian Development Bank Mr. Masatsugu Asakawa witness signing of loan agreements with regard to Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development projects

Bilawal, Fazl discuss political situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with his delegation met Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence on Monday evening.

The political situation of the country was discussed in detail between the delegation of PPP and JUI. The PPP delegation included members of the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and Chairman Bilawal's Political Secretary Jameel Soomro while Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari, Maulana Abdul Wasay, Maulana Misbahuddin, Senator Kamran Murtaza, Maulana Asad Mahmood and Engineer Ziaur

Rehman assisted Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

After this meeting, Syed Khurshid Ahmad Shah and Syed Naveed Qamar gave a briefing to the journalists and said that PPP and JUI consulted on the Article of the bills on which they agree. Our effort is make laws according to the wishes of the peoples, country, the nation, the constitution and the law and according to the supremacy of the parliament. Parliament has every right to legislate and nobody can stop us from legislating because it is our right. We want to make Parliament powerful. There is no question of persuading or arguing with anyone, when we and Maulana agree together, we will talk to other parties as well.

Syed Naveed Qamar said that Maulana Sahib also participated in the

Special Committee's meeting yesterday and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was also present there. It was agreed that both the parties would work together to sort out all the clauses that anyone has objections to and finally bring it out through a consensus draft according to the parliamentary procedure. Both agreed on this. We wanted time to be given to the constitutional amendments and all parties, including the government and the opposition, should be included in it. Today's meeting was to take this matter forward. Positive things have happened and we hope that we will sit down and come to a consensus. Both the PPP and the JUI want to form a constitutional court, now we will discuss the details together.

PM grieves over death of Balochistan Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed his deep grief over the death of Balochistan Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Sardar Sarfaraz Chakar Domki.

"By the death of Sardar Sarfaraz Domki, Balochistan's politics has become bereft of an intellectual and a seasoned politician. We share the grief of his family," the prime minister remarked.

He prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss.

US Under Secretary of State calls on DPM

ISLAMABAD (APP): US Under Secretary of State John Bass and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Elizabeth Horst Monday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar in his office.

In the meeting, they discussed Pakistan-US bilateral relations and ongoing collaboration projects, a Foreign Office statement said.

The Deputy PM underlined the importance of positive and productive engagement between Pakistan and the United States.

Meanwhile, according to a press release issued on Monday by the US Embassy, U.S. Acting Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs John Bass met with DPM Ishaq Dar and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir.

They discussed approaches to expanding bilateral cooperation on economic and security issues, including countering terrorism and violent extremism, and the importance of fostering regional stability and prosperity.

ADB President lauds Pakistan's economic reform agenda

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Mr. Masatsugu Asakawa along with a delegation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday.

While appreciating ADB's long-standing and steadfast support to Pakistan, the Prime Minister informed the visiting President on a series of reforms introduced by the Government.

The key reforms include enhancing tax revenues, improving financial sustainability of the energy sector, enhancing climate resilience, reduction in untargeted subsidies and scaling up social protection.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that he is personally overseeing the progress of these reforms to ensure their successful implementation and long-term impact, underscoring the Government's commitment to sustainable economic growth and stability.

The Prime Minister appreciated ADB's generous support of over US\$ 1.5 billion in response to the devastating floods of 2022.

He showed Pakistan's keen desire to work with the development partners in climate resilience projects including agriculture.

President ADB Mr. Masatsugu Asakawa in his remarks appreciated Pakistan's long association with ADB as one of its founding members.

He lauded the Government for undertaking comprehensive reforms and reaffirmed ADB's continued support to Pakistan.

He renewed support in Pakistan in infrastructure development, climate and resilience enhancement, and institutional reforms.

Federal Ministers for Planning & Development, Investment and Privatization, Economic Affairs, Finance and Revenue and other senior government officials also attended the meeting.

and President of ADB also witnessed the loan signing of the Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project amounting to US\$400 million and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development Project worth US\$320 million. Both these projects are part of the ADB's flood commitments.

Gunvor Group Chairman, Total Energies VP meet PM to discuss investment in petroleum sector

Gunvor Group Chairman Torbjorn Tornqvist and Vice President Oceania & Southeast Asia Total Energies Mehmet Celepoglu Monday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed potential investment in Pakistan's energy sector.

During the meeting, the prime minister highlighted that after attaining stability, the country's economy was now moving on the path of growth and development.

He said rapid reforms were underway to increase the investment

and business activities, and economic policies were yielding positive results.

He emphasized that the government was removing all the barriers for foreign investment in Pakistan.

Chairman Torbjorn Tornqvist expressed the Gunvor Group's keen interest in investment in the petroleum sector of Pakistan.

The prime minister was told that the Gunvor Group had already signed an agreement to acquire 50% shares of Total Parco.

The Gunvor Group chairman lauded that positive steps were being taken under the prime minister's leadership for promoting investment in the country.

The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to provide all possible facilities to the Gunvor Group.

The meeting was also attended by federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Dr Musadik Malik, PM's Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi and other relevant high officials.

Senate passes resolution demanding Sept 7 as Finality of Prophethood Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Upper House of the Parliament on Monday unanimously passed the resolution demanding the government to declare official celebration of the Finality of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) Day on September 7th as a national holiday in connection with the day of declaration of Qadianis as non-Muslims.

The 12th meeting of the 342nd Senate Session started almost 11 minutes late with the recitation of the Holy Quran under Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar in chair.

Senator Atta-ur-Rehman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) moved the resolution stating: "Commemorating the historical day of September 7, 1974; the day when the Parliament of Pakistan unanimously declared Qadianis as a non-Muslims minority; Noting that indeed that day was historical not just for Pakistan but for the entire Muslim world as the long sustained struggle of the Muslims ultimately became successful; Realizing that it is imperative to highlight and remember the historical moments, the Senate of Pakistan, therefore, recommends to the Government that the day may be celebrated officially and be declared as a national holiday."

Speaking on the motion, he said the Day was historic as the Parliament put a bulwark against the invaders on the sanctity of the Finality of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

The occasion demanded the government to create awareness among the young generation, by declaring it a national holiday, on the matter of critical religious importance, he added.

Maulana Atta underlined that the Parliament session continued for 13 consecutive days to declare these rebel Qadianis as non-Muslims.

"The government should announce medals for those Parliamentarians who played crucial role in ensuring protection of the Finality of Prophethood (Peace Be Upon Him) to remember their meritorious contributions for Islam," the JUI-F Senator said. The Senate session was prorogued without taking up the remaining agenda of two amendment bills.

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Shehbaz, Bilawal discuss constitutional amendments

PM govt's economic steps boost investor confidence

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday met with PPP delegation led by its Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The delegation included Members of the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar, and Mayor of Karachi, Murtaza Wahab.

During the discussion the prime minister said that for the first time in many years, the inflation rate has dropped to single digits last month.

"The State Bank has reduced the policy rate by

2%, which has further boosted investor confidence in the Pakistani economy," added the Prime Minister.

"Today, the prices of petroleum products have been further reduced, which is another effort by the government to provide relief to the public," remarked the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile there was an exchange of views on broadening consultations regarding the proposed constitutional amendment.

"Amending the Constitution and making legislation is the prerogative of Parliament, and

Parliament is the supreme institution," the Prime Minister stated during the conversation with the delegation.

"The 240 million people have given Parliament the mandate to legislate," said the Prime Minister.

"The purpose of the proposed constitutional amendment is to provide prompt and effective justice to the public," he added.

Consultations on the constitutional amendment with all political parties will continue, the Prime Minister assured.

It was agreed in the meeting that Pakistan People's Party Chairman

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other senior PPP leaders will also play their role in the consultation process.

Efforts will be made to reach a conclusion in the coming days through further discussions and consultations with political parties. The overall political situation of the country was also discussed during the meeting.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Iqbal, and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar were also present at the meeting.

Israeli airstrikes kill 16 in Gaza, including 4 children, Palestinians say

GAZA (AP): Palestinian officials say Israeli airstrikes killed 16 people in the Gaza Strip on Monday, including five women and four children.

A strike flattened a home in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing at least 10 people there, including four women and two children. The Awda Hospital, which received the bodies, confirmed the toll and also said 13 people were wounded. Hospital records show that the dead included a mother, her child and her five siblings.

Another strike on a home in Gaza City killed six people, including a woman and two children, according to the Civil Defense, first responders

who operate under the Hamas-run government.

Israel says it only targets militants and accuses Hamas and other armed groups of endangering civilians by operating in residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

Gaza's Health Ministry says more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in the territory since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the Israel-Hamas war nearly a year ago. The ministry does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count but says a little over half of those killed were women and children. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 mili-

itants, without providing evidence.

Meanwhile, a key White House Mideast envoy is meeting with Israeli leaders in hopes of lowering tensions between Israel and Lebanon.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah began striking Israel shortly after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack ignited the war. Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging blows daily while avoiding an all-out war. The fighting has displaced tens of thousands of civilians on both sides of the border.

During his meeting with U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein, Israel Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned that time is running out for a political settle-

ment and that Israel is moving toward taking tougher action against Hezbollah.

Gallant warned "the only way left to ensure the return of Israel's northern communities to their homes will be via military action," his office said.

Hochstein in 2022 brokered a maritime border deal between Lebanon and Israel. The two countries have formally been at war since Israel's independent in 1948.

Hamas leader says Yemen rebels' missile attack sent a message

The leader of Hamas Yahya Sinwar has told Yemen's Houthi rebels that the back-up fronts by Iran-backed groups are becoming more effective.

Yahya Sinwar's letter to Abdul-Malek al-Houthi was published by the Houthis' al-Masirah news channel Monday, a day after a missile fired by the Iran-backed rebels landed in an open area in central Israel and triggered air raid sirens at its international airport.

"I congratulate you for succeeding in making your missile reach the depth of the enemy's entity after surpassing all defense systems," Sinwar's letter read, according to al-Masirah.

Sinwar added that the Yemeni missile attack sent a message that that attempts to "contain" Hamas have failed and that the back-up fronts by Iran-backed groups are becoming more effective.

Sinwar said that Hamas carried out the Oct. 7, attack on southern Israel and has since been fighting "a defensive war that has exhausted the enemy." He added that Hamas had prepared for "a long war of attrition that will break" Israel's political will.

Shortly after the Israel-Hamas war started, Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq have claimed responsibility for scores of attacks against Israel saying they are backing their allies in Hamas.

Israeli settlers storm a West Bank school and beat staffers, Palestinians say. Israeli troops later arrest school's principal and 2 others

Palestinians say Israeli settlers wielding sticks

stormed a Palestinian school in the occupied West Bank, beating staff members and tying up the principal.

The Israeli military said Palestinians had attacked an Israeli nearby, inflicting a head injury, before fleeing to the school on Monday. It said a group of Israelis followed the attackers and a confrontation ensued in which a number of Palestinians were hurt.

Hassan Malihat, a Palestinian lawyer who at the time was visiting the school near the city of Jericho, said the settlers entered at around 8 a.m. He says the Israeli army arrived about two hours later and arrested three staff members, including

the principal.

The military said soldiers and police were dispatched to the school, ended the confrontation and arrested a number of suspects.

The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service says seven Palestinians were wounded in the confrontation.

Settler violence has surged across the West Bank since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack ignited the war in Gaza. In some cases, Israeli settlers have stormed Palestinian villages setting cars and properties ablaze.

There has also been a rise in car-ramping, stabbing and shooting attacks carried out against Israelis by Palestinian militant groups and lone attackers.



KARACHI: A view of an illuminated street for the celebrations of Milad-un-Nabi, the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad, in Karachi.

Sindh PA adopts resolution for declaring Sept 7 as Youm-e Khatme Nabuwwat

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Assembly (PA) of Sindh on Monday unanimously passed a resolution urging the Sindh Government to announce celebration of September 7 as 'Youm-e-Khatme Nabuwwat (SAWW)' across the province every year.

Mohammed Farooq of the Jamaat-e-Islami, mov-

ing the resolution in House, said every Muslim has a firm belief in Khatme Nabuwwat (SAWW).

He said that on September 7, 1974, the National Assembly had made the historical decision to declare the Qadiyanis non-Muslims.

He said that it was the responsibility of everyone

to highlight such historic decisions, and asked the Sindh Government to officially declare Sept 7 as 'Youm-e-Khatme Nabuwwat (SAWW)'. Sindh Home Minister Zia Hasan Lanjar, and many MPAs from treasury and opposition benches also spoke on the occasion and fully supported the

resolution.

Earlier, the assembly session commenced with recitation of the verses from the Holy Quran and Naat Sharif with Speaker Syed Awaiz Qadir Shah in the chair. Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani answered questions regarding his department raised by the lawmakers.

Police starts campaign to eliminate smog

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Traffic Police on Monday started a public communication campaign to eliminate smog in the Provincial Metropolis.

According to the details, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is determined to eliminate smog in view of healthy weather. Therefore, Lahore Traffic Police has started a public communication campaign to eliminate smog.

In this connection the Traffic Police has introduced the official WhatsApp number 03042222089. The traffic police has appealed to people to WhatsApp videos and photos of vehicles emitting smog, adding, appreciation certificates will be issued to citizens who would contribute to smog elimination.

PHC to organize awareness seminar

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) will organise an awareness seminar for the dengue treating medicines this coming Thursday. The seminar will be jointly chaired by Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir. Chief Executive Officer PHC Dr Muhammad Saqib Aziz will highlight the Commission's pivotal role in advancing patient safety and elevating the quality of healthcare services for dengue patients and future strategies aimed at managing the dengue fever.

Minister chairs meeting of cabinet committee on law, order

LAHORE (APP): A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order was held under the chairmanship of Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, here on Monday.

Finance Minister Mujtaba Shujaat Rehman and Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan participated in the meeting.

The security and arrangements for Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) were reviewed in detail. Punjab Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal and IG Punjab Dr. Usman

Anwar gave a briefing on peace and order.

Chairman Cabinet Committee and Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique said that full security arrangements have been made for Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH). The Punjab government will provide drinks and sweets to the participants in all districts. The Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) will be celebrated with full devotion and respect.

Khawaja Salman Rafique said that arrangements have been completed with the consultation of

peace committees across the province. He said that the routes of all the main processions and the best security arrangements for the Milad gatherings are complete.

Additional IG Special Branch, Additional IG CTD, Commissioner Lahore, RPO Sheikhpura, DC Lahore and DIG Operations participated in the meeting. Lahore and Gujranwala division commissioners, deputy commissioners, RPOs and DPOs participated in the meeting through video link.

Attendance monitoring system for teachers launched

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab government has launched a new attendance monitoring system designed to enhance accountability among teachers and improve the overall quality of education. This innovative initiative utilizes digital technology to track teacher attendance in real-time, providing administrators with instant access to attendance records. The system is part of the government's comprehensive strategy to address concerns over teacher absenteeism and ensure educators are actively engaged in their roles.

The initiative is set to be rolled out across various districts in Punjab, with further enhancements planned based on initial feedback and performance. According to officials, the digital attendance monitoring system will help identify and address issues related to teacher absenteeism, ensuring that educators are held accountable for their attendance and performance.

Overseas business delegation calls on governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of investors from Portugal led by Overseas Pakistani Dr. Mohammad Sohail met Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House, here on Monday.

Investment in health and renewable energy sectors was discussed in the meeting.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Pakistan is a safe country in terms of investment and the government is providing special investment facilities to foreign

investors through the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

He said that development in the country depends on development in industry and trade and international investment. The Governor Punjab said that the government is committed to increase investment by introducing investor-friendly policies.

He said that the investment from friendly countries in various sectors including agriculture and energy is welcomed. He said that all

sectors of the economy are open for investment with attractive incentives and liberal policies to provide favorable business environment to investors. He further said that overseas Pakistanis are the pride of Pakistan who are playing an important role in the country's economy through foreign exchange.

The delegation comprised Dr. Sohail, Tiago Silva Falcao, Sueny Dliveira, Jose Paul Maroues, Manuel Antonio Sousa and Chaudhry Aurangzeb.

4000 policemen to perform duties on 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi Police ha formulated comprehensive security plan for 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal, involving a total of 4,332 police officers and personnel to ensure the safety and smooth supervision of the main procession and its routes.

The Karachi Police spokesperson stated on Monday the deployment includes 706 non-gazetted officers, 87 senior officers, and 3,374 head constables, constables, and commandos from the Special Security Unit (SSU), along with person-

nel from the security division.

Specialist SSU snipers will be stationed along the procession routes for added security.

Additionally, 449 officers and personnel are assigned to maintain security at Nishtar Park.

Biometric verification, transfer made mandatory

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Excise Department has taken a significant step by making biometric verification mandatory for vehicle registrations and transfers.

Sindh Senior Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has said that all new and old vehicles will now be subject to biometric verification during the registration or transfer process.

He elaborated that under the new policy, the change will be implemented in three phases. In the first phase, starting from July 1, biometric verification will be mandatory for the registration of new vehicles. In the second phase, beginning on November 1, biometric verification will be required for vehicle buyers. In the third phase, biometric verification of both the

vehicle seller and buyer will be enforced.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that they are working to make all processes more transparent in the Excise Department, and this is just the beginning. The Government of Sindh is committed to ensuring that Sindh leads the way in digitizing public services.

He emphasized that Biometric authentication in vehicle registration and transfers is a significant milestone in promoting transparency. It will enable the accurate identification of buyers and sellers, thereby helping to protect citizens from illegal vehicle transfers and fraud. Memon said that vehicle owners can visit any NADRA e-Facilitation Center or district excise office to complete the biometric verification process.



LAHORE: A gypsy woman preparing bread for her family at Makka Colony. —APP Photo

ارشاد باری تعالی ہے
”بیشک اللہ اور اس کے فرشتے نبی ﷺ پر درود بھیجتے رہتے ہیں
اے ایمان والو، تم بھی ان ﷺ پر درود بھیجا کرو اور خوب سلام بھیجا کرو“
سورۃ الاحزاب آیت نمبر 56

مصطفیٰ جانِ رحمت پہ لاکھوں سلام
شمعِ بزمِ ہدایت پہ لاکھوں سلام

جشنِ عیدِ میلادِ النبی ﷺ

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حکومت پاکستان
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DC holds revenue darbar in New Peshawar Valley project directorate office



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In light of the swift progress on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's new mega residential project, New Peshawar Valley, and to address the grievances of landowners, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Sarmad Saleem Akram, organized a Revenue Darbar at the project directorate of New Peshawar Valley. The event aimed to ensure transparency in the acquisition of land and resolve landowners' complaints. The Revenue Darbar, held at the New Peshawar Valley project on GT Road, was attended by Project Director Syed Abdul Wadood Shah, Assistant Commissioner Dr. Sara Zainab,

Additional Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Ilyas, Land Collector Peshawar Tanveer Shahzad, revenue staff, and landowners from the Patwar Circles of Garhi Faizullah, Urmarh Mera, and Shamshtu in Peshawar district, who provided land for the New Peshawar Valley project. During the briefing, Project Director Syed Abdul Wadood Shah stated that this project, spanning 108,000 kanals and located at the confluence of Peshawar and Nowshera districts, is the largest and most modern residential project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He highlighted that the project is being completed under a public-private partnership without government

investment. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar attentively listened to the concerns of the landowners who contributed their land for the New Peshawar Valley project. He issued immediate orders to the Revenue Department staff present to resolve their issues and complaints. He directed the Assistant Commissioner to investigate complaints regarding the transfer of entries in the current revenue records and ensure that missing mutations are transferred to the computerized record either through Fard-e-Badar or by the SDC via Missal Band. DC Sarmad Saleem Akram emphasized that the New Peshawar Valley project is a modern initiative aimed at meeting

future residential needs and reflects the government's commitment to providing the best housing facilities to the public. He assured that transparency would be ensured at every stage, from land acquisition to project completion. Additionally, he promised that follow-up meetings would be regularly held to maintain the project's pace. Landowners participating in the event appreciated DC Sarmad Saleem Akram's efforts and pledged their full cooperation with the New Peshawar Valley project. They expressed hope that other officials would also hold open forums to resolve public grievances, similar to the initiative taken by the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: A vendor displaying decoration stuff to attract customers on the eve of Eid Milad un Nabi (SAW). — INP photo

Minister thanks Chief Minister F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Auqaf, Hajj and Religious Affairs Sahibzada Adnan Qadri thanked Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Auqaf, Hajj and Religious Affairs department and participants of the event for organizing the first Mahfil Shabina gathering of its kind in the province.

While congratulating the position holders of the both categories, he said that the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a blessing and mercy for humanity. Till doomsday his life will be a torch for humanity because the success of this world and the hereafter lies in loving the Holy Prophet and following his good life. Naat-e-Khawan and Qari who won the Hasan Qaraat and Naat-Khwaani competition at the divisional level from across the province participated in Mahfil Shabina and participated in the province-level competition.

JI announces Grand Peace Tribal Jirga on Sept 25

PESHAWAR (APP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) stalwarts Shah Faisal Afridi, Malik Naveed Ali, Malik Saeed Khan, and Saifur Rehman, announced the upcoming Grand Peace Tribal Jirga, set to take place on September 25 at the Redon Shadi Hall in Peshawar.

The event will be graced by Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, the central Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, and will see participation from various political, social, and religious figures, addressing the press conference at Peshawar Press Club on Monday. The purpose of the Grand Peace Tribal Jirga is to address the issues of peace and development in the tribal areas. Participants from diverse schools of thought will contribute to discussions aimed at finding long-term solutions for the region's stability and progress.

Jamaat-e-Islami plans to incorporate the recommendations of the Jirga into its official manifesto, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to the rights and welfare of the tribal people. The JI leadership, from the era of Qazi Hussain Ahmed (late) to the present, has consistently advocated for the rights of the tribal people, including the abolition of the outdated Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) and the push for legislative reforms to empower the region. The party strongly condemned the ongoing instability in the tribal areas, which it believes is hampering economic development and causing further hardships.

They expressed their concern over the aftermath of the 25th Constitutional Amendment, stating that the tribal people have been denied the rights they were promised. They criticized the exploitation of the region's mineral resources and the forced displacement of residents, emphasizing that the tribal people are not ready for any form of relocation.

PHC grants transit bail to PTI leader Panjulah

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted bail to spokesperson of legal team of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founding chairman Naeem Panjulah till 7th October and directed to appear in the relevant court, on Monday.

PHC's single member bench comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard the bail plea while the counsel Muzzamil Khan advocate informed the court that the petitioner is a lawyer who has been booked in a case in Islamabad, which was registered after the PTI rally.

He wants to appear in the relevant court but fears arrest, so he has applied for protective bail to appear in court.

Later, while talking to the media in Peshawar High Court, Naeem Panjulah said that the federal government's constitutional amendments are an attack on democracy. They want to take away the right to go to court through constitutional amendments. PTI will take the legal route against these wrong amendments. Whatever amendments are being made today will haunt them tomorrow.

He said that on 8th August, after returning from the PTI rally in Islamabad, he found out that a case had been registered against him as well. A case was registered against all leaders, and another case was registered against him, falsely accusing him of attacking the police. He said that a case of terrorism, robbery, and attempted murder was registered against him. He said that the rally was their constitutional right. MNAs were abducted from parliament, and they have the right to a legal fight, which they will exercise.

No one be allowed to spread hatred, anarchy: Bacha

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial president PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that no one should be allowed to issue anti-state statements and spread hatred and anarchy in the country.

In a statement issued here on Monday, the PPP leader said that there is a need to make extra-ordinary decisions in the larger interest of the country. He said that those politicians, who provoke their workers against the state for securing their personal agenda, could never prove sincere with the nation and the country.

He said that their first priority is national progress, development and welfare of the people. However, he termed harmony amongst political leadership and heads of institutions essential for it.

Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said that PPP is waging struggle for standing Pakistan amongst the ranks of the developed nations. He said that President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other leaders of the party have also always thought good of the country.

12 Prison officers shuffled in major shakeup

PESHAWAR (APP): Mr. Muhammad Hamid, Superintendent District Jail Abbottabad has been transferred and posted as Superintendent Central Prison Haripur (BS-19) in OPS has been transferred and posted as DIG (BS-19) Regional Prison Office Abbottabad at Haripur in OPS. Muhammad Arif, Superintendent Jail (BS-18) Inspector General Prisons KP has been transferred and posted as DIG (BS-19), Regional Prison Office Mardan in OPS against the vacant post. Mr. Amin Shoaib (Superintendent Jail BS-18) Commandant PSTA Haripur (BS-19) in OPS has been transferred and posted as DIG (BS-19) Regional Prison Office Swat in OPS against the vacant post whereas Mst. Fozia Taj (BS-18) AIG (BS-18) at Regional Prison Office Abbottabad at Haripur has also been transferred and posted as Commandant PSTA Haripur (BS-19) in OPS replacing Amin Shoaib. Furthermore, Mst. Nagina Mehsud (Deputy Superintendent Jail BS-17) Superintendent District Jail Lakki Marwat (BS-18) in OPS has been transferred and posted as Superintendent District Jail Hangu (BS-18) in OPS replacing Mr. Riaz Muhammad (Deputy Superintendent Jail BS-17) who has been transferred and posted as Superintendent District Jail Lakki Marwat (BS-18) in OPS. Similarly, Syed Muhammad Junaid (Superintendent Jail BS-18) Superintendent District Jail Buner at Daggar (BS-18) has been transferred and posted as Superintendent Central Prison Bannu (BS-19) in OPS while Mr. Manzoor Elahi (Deputy Superintendent Jail BS-17) Sub Jail Besham has been transferred and posted as Superintendent District Jail Buner at Daggar (BS-18) in OPS with immediate effect.

ATC grants bail to alleged culprit in grenade attack case

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Iqbal has granted bail to alleged culprit involved in hand grenade attack on house while issued orders for his release, on Monday.

According to prosecution, the accused Mashoor Khan is allegedly involved in carried out a grenade attack on the

house of a person named Siddique in the limits of Hayatabad Police Station in 2022. No loss of life occurred in the attack, but the house was partially damaged.

The counsel Aimen Javed, told the court that the allegations against his client were false, as the police had initially registered a case against unknown individuals and later nominated the

accused in the FIR. The accused did not commit any crime, nor was anything recovered from him. The police also alleged that the accused had links with a banned organization. The lawyer requested the court to accept the bail application of the accused. After completing the arguments, the court issued orders for the release of the accused, Mashoor Khan, on bail.

Ahtisham directs acceleration of anti-dengue operations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Upon assuming charge of the Health Department, Advisor to Health Ahtisham Ali immediately issued directives to intensify anti-dengue operations. He instructed the relevant authorities to ensure the spraying of anti-dengue medicines in hotspot areas without delay. Ahtisham Ali emphasized that controlling the spread of dengue is one of his top priorities. "The dengue season is at its peak, and we must limit its spread through public cooperation," he stated. Providing details on dengue cases, the Health Advisor mentioned

that there are currently 18 active dengue cases in the province, with 119 individuals having recovered.

So far, 137 cases of dengue have been confirmed across the province. He praised the health department for its efforts in containing the outbreak, noting that no deaths have been reported this year due to dengue, nor has there been a significant rise in cases as anticipated.

"This is a clear testament to the efficiency and proactive approach of the health department," he added. Ahtisham Ali also gave special instructions to the Director of Public Health, Dr. Irshad Ali, to focus on curbing the

dengue outbreak in five key districts, including Abbottabad and Peshawar. All hospitals to be upgraded: Advisor health claimed

Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Ikhsham Khan advocate said that steps are being taken for of basic health facilities and the upgradation of hospitals of different categories in the Mardan district. He expressed these views during a meeting with District Health Officer Mardan, Ikramullah Khan Safi, and MS District Headquarters Hospital, Dr. Javed Iqbal, on Monday.

On this occasion, both officials congratulated the

Advisor for Health on assuming his responsibilities and expressed hope that he would play his role in providing health facilities.

The Advisor said that currently, people are being benefited from the Health Card facility, but there is still room for improvement, and soon, steps will be taken to provide health facilities to people at the local level.

He thanked the people of Mardan for trusting him and also expressed gratitude to the founding chairman of PTI and the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for trusting him. He said that he would try his best to live up to their expectations.



PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami leader Shah Faisal Afridi addressing a press conference.

Business Incubation Center hosts successful operational launch event

PESHAWAR (APP): The Business Incubation Center (BIC) at the University of Peshawar (UoP) on Monday hosted a successful operational launch event, marking a significant milestone in its journey towards fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

The event, held at the Business Incubation Center at the University of Peshawar, brought together esteemed guests, academia, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs to celebrate the inauguration of this transformative initiative.

The event commenced with a welcome session led by Dr. Shakeel, the focal person of the Business Incubation Center, who warmly welcomed the attendees and set the tone for the day's proceedings.

Following the opening remarks, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qazi, Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar, delivered an insightful

speech highlighting the importance of the Business Incubation Center. He emphasized the immense potential it holds for nurturing future entrepreneurs and fostering innovation. Prof. Qazi also congratulated the entire BIC team for their dedication and hard work in successfully launching the center.

Dr. Shakeel followed with a detailed presentation outlining the vision, mission, and future plans of BIC, emphasizing its role in empowering young entrepreneurs and promoting business growth in the region. The launch also featured a keynote address by Dr. Hashim, who provided valuable insights on the integration of industry and academia and the benefits this collaboration can bring to both sectors.

The event was further enriched by contributions from Shafiq Ur Rehman of the Entrepreneurs' Organization, who shed light on the Global Student

Entrepreneur Awards (GSEA), a prestigious initiative supporting young entrepreneurs. A Partners Agreement was signed between BIC and the Entrepreneurs' Organization, solidifying future collaborations.

The agenda included keynote speeches from various industry leaders. Ibrahim Yar from the UNDP discussed the interlinkage between the business ecosystem and development programs, highlighting the importance of sustainable development through business and innovation. Tafsheen Haider from the Culture and Tourism Authority spoke on the synergies between culture, tourism, and business, exploring how these sectors can collaborate for economic growth.

Atif Shahzad from the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce elaborated on potential collaboration opportunities between BIC and the Chamber, while

Karishma Zakaulah, founder of Unidesk, provided an inspiring talk on the success of BIC and its potential to drive entrepreneurship in the region.

Mr. Shahab, CEO of PEDO, gave a comprehensive presentation on the critical role business plays in community empowerment and inclusive development.

The event concluded with Mr. Mohsin Jameel, Assistant Manager at SMEDA, discussing how BIC can support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and boost local economic growth, followed by Mr. Ilyas Hassan from KPEC, who expressed his enthusiasm for BIC's future and shared possibilities for further collaboration.

The event closed with a networking session over tea, offering participants the opportunity to engage with each other and explore potential partnerships.



In brief

Bad blood claims four lives

GUJARANWALA (INP): Two brothers and their two cousins were shot dead by their rivals when they were sleeping at their home in Iqbal Town located in Cantonment area in Gujranwala on Monday. Sources in the police said that the deceased brothers and their cousins were involved in a property dispute and also had had an enmity with the attackers. After committing the crime, the accused fled away from the crime scene. Soon after the murders, a heavy contingent of local police reached the area immediately and took all the dead bodies into their custody. Police team also collected all available evidence from the crime scene. Later the cops shifted the dead bodies to a local hospital for postmortem and further necessary action. The police personnel also registered a murder case against the accused and started investigation.

One alleged dacoit killed

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A dacoit allegedly killed in police encounter in Pindi Bhattian area. According to police spokesman, three armed persons were engaged in looting to passerby at bridge Karim Dad near Pindi Bhattian. Receiving information, police rushed to the spot. Seeing to police party, armed people opened fire upon police party. When police retaliated, an accused Fazal was injured while his two accomplices fled away. Police shifted the injured accused to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Pindi Bhattian. Where accused lost his breath. Accused was involved in different cases, police spokesman said. Meanwhile, police also held three culprits allegedly involved in murder cum dacoity from Murre House to use latest technology. According to police, five days ago, three accused was looted Rs. 150000/= from a old man when he put resistance, the accused shot to killed him on Gujranwala Road in broad day light. After the incident, DPO Hafizabad Faisal Gulzar constituted special team and police traced out accused to use latest technology and arrested accused from Murree House. Police said that master mind of the incident was school teacher Rai Shoaib resident of Nawab Colony Hafizabad who provided pistol to accused in Rs.23000/= and also received Rs. 250000/= for giving shelter to accused.

Minor killed in traffic accident

JARANWALA (INP): A traffic accident near Jaranwala motorway claimed life of a 5-year-old child on Monday. According to a private news channel, the kid was identified as Muhammad Yasin, who died on the spot, while 8-year-old Muhammad Usman was seriously injured. According to the details, family was traveling to Khanewal from Lahore. The rescue team reached the spot immediately after the incident was reported and shifted the dead body and injured to the hospital.

Accused injured

LODHARAN (INP): An accused in police custody was injured during an encounter near Jamrani Wah in limits of Dhanot police station. The team took the accused Nouman alias Nomi for recovery last night when three unknown armed outlaws started firing on police party to get release their accomplice.



HYDERABAD: Children participating in rally in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations.

Daily wagers disapprove prolonged road blockade

F.P. Report

KHYBER: Prolonged suspension of Pak-Afghan highway at Bugyari area have left hundreds of daily wagers jobless as construction works have come to halt due to lack of building materials, laborers said.

Large number of daily wagers and manual workers who earned their three times meal by working in various government and private constructions said that since the blockade day, they had been compelled to starve as no labor works were available in Landi Kotal because of shortage of building materials.

Imdadullah, a daily wager, said that the road blockade by the Koki Khel tribesmen had suffered them a lot. On time food was unavailable in his house to feed his children, he lamented. He maintained that it was not a civilized way to block the road for his own interests and added miseries of others.



One of the contractors, Sarfaraz said that he had hired services of 60 to 70 laborers and daily wagers in different construction projects however because of road blockade supply of construction materials was totally stopped that suspended all construction works in the entire tehsil.

Hayat Khan, a dealer of construction materials (bricks, sand, cement etc) regretted that stalk of the substance had been eliminated and for the last twenty three days' supply of the commodities was completely disconnected because of the Koki Khel agitation. On a query he

maintained that the construction materials cost more if transported via alternate hilly and mountainous road of Mulagori-Shelman road.

The laborers urged the Koki Khel tribal and the concerned authorities to have mercy on them and sort out a durable and acceptable solution of the issue. It is to be stated here internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) of Koki Khel, Jamrud have suspended the Pak-Afghan highway for the last three weeks for all kinds of movements in protest for repatriation to their area, Rajgal, Tirah Valley.

Laborer killed as wall collapses

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: A laborer was killed while another sustained critical wounds when an under-construction wall fell on them in Pabbi tehsil of Nowshera district on Monday.

Rescue 1122 officials said laborers were busy in construction of a wall in Dag Ismailkhel area of Pubbi when the wall fell on them. As a result a laborer identified as Shah Mir (45), a resident of Khyber district was killed on the scene while another laborer named Ishaq (33), resident of Bajaur was critically injured. The rescue workers shifted the body and injured to Nowshera hospital.

Admn monitoring govt schools

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration is continuously monitoring government schools to improve the quality of education in government schools.

In this regard, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih made a detailed visit to Government Boys and Girls High School Chak No. 293 GB. The Additional Deputy Commissioner General made a detailed review of the school arrangements, attendance of teachers and staff, classrooms, building and available facilities, and met the school management, teachers and students.

Discussed overall educational environment including availability of facilities, other administrative issues. He taught the students in the class and later listened to them, and evaluated the academic performance of the students. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih also guided the students regarding cleanliness, instilling passion for education, setting goals, dealing with adverse situations and respecting human rights. Later of the school council also meet the members. On this occasion, along with CO Education Tahir Mehmood, he also planted a sapling under the plantation campaign.

Sardar Domki passes away

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan Minister for Local Governments Sardar Mir Chakkar Khan Domki passed away in Karachi on Monday after a prolonged illness.

According to media reports, Sardar Sarfaraz Domki had been unwell for some time and was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Karachi. The late Sardar Sarfaraz Domki will be laid to rest in Sibi. He was a member of the Balochistan Assembly, elected from provincial constituency PB-8 (Lehri) from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the February 2024 general elections.

He was born on 12 August 1969 in Lehri District. He has a degree in Bachelor of Arts. He served as assistant commissioner and additional deputy commissioner in the Government of Balochistan between 1988 and 2010.

IGP inaugurates residential quarters in Mardan

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Inspector General Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Gandapur inaugurated two major projects for welfare of police personnel and promoting public safety, on Monday. The visit commenced at the Regional Police Office Mardan, where he was warmly received by senior police officials.

According to details, IGP inaugurated new residential quarters for lower subordinates at Police Lines, Mardan. Previously, these quarters were in a state of disrepair, posing numerous challenges for the officers. The newly constructed quarters mark a significant step toward the welfare of lower-ranked officers, providing them with improved living conditions and reflecting the KP Police's commitment to the well-being of its personnel.

Speaking on the occasion, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur emphasized, "The welfare of our lower subordinates remains a top priority. This initiative is part of our broader vision to provide more relief and support to those serving on the front lines." The IGP reaffirmed that improving the housing and living conditions for police personnel would remain a continuous effort under his leadership.

The IGP also inaugurated the first-ever Road Safety and Education Unit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, launched in Mardan as a model for the entire province. This unit, designed to promote awareness of road safety and traffic regulations, is expected to play a vital role in reducing road accidents and educating the public on safe driving practices.

"This unit will not only educate the public about traffic rules but also encourage safer driving habits, ultimately reducing accidents across the region



said Akhtar Hayat Gandapur during the ceremony. He stressed that the Road Safety and Education Unit represents the KP Police's commitment to public safety, with Mardan leading the way as the pioneering district. IGP inaugurated the refurbished officer's mess at RPO Office marking a further improvement in the accommodations provided to police personnel. During the visit, IGP highlighted the government's continuous efforts to improve facilities for police officers, ensuring their well-being and creating an environment conducive to carrying out their duties effectively.

Real estate sector: President Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and provincial general secretary of Tajran Zahir Shah, said that the real estate sector is the biggest recovery for the government and due to the recent increase in taxes, this sector is suffering from many problems along with this, the government is also suffering.

He said this while speaking as a special guest at the opening of the property office on University Road. On this occasion, Zahir Shah formally inaugurated the office by cutting the ribbon. Shakir Khan, Shoaib Alam, Iqtidar Khan, Noor Rahman, Ayaz Khan and others were present with him. Addressing the ceremony, Zahir Shah said that the construction industry related to real estate and many sectors related to it will also suffer, including cement, steel, Electronics, hardware, wood, etc, so keeping all these issues in mind, the government

should review its decision and reduce the property taxes substantially so that this sector avoids destruction and is on the path of development, which not only benefits the general public but also the government will also benefit.

WSSCM CEO assumes charge: Chief Executive Officer Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) Shahid Khan assumes charge and chaired a meeting with the company's management officers, emphasizing the need to enhance and improve the service delivery and maintaining cleanliness in the city and provision of clean drinking water.

He stated that no effort will be spared in ensuring the supply of safe drinking water to the citizens. He also emphasized that sanitation workers deserve more respect and acknowledgement. Shahid Khan directed the water supply staff to take immediate action for water quality test.

Furthermore, he urged every member of society to take responsibility for cleanliness, water conservation, and environmental protection, avoiding water wastage and littering in undesignated areas, as a clean and healthy environment is essential for all citizens.

He concluded that promoting civic education, raising social awareness and creating a sense of ownership among the citizens is the ultimate goal of the company and all available resources will be utilized to fulfill this mission.

SWCCI commits to develop tribal areas

F.P. Report

he said.

He noted that the Chamber's leadership has submitted numerous formal requests through community elders, political figures, religious leaders, and the press, urging the government to ensure the border gate remains operational. According to Rehman, these efforts are well-documented and reflect the Chamber's sole focus: the promotion of trade and business in the region.

"The world is witness to our tireless efforts in expanding trade activities in South Waziristan, and our resolve to have the government acknowledge the demands of the tribes living along the Pak-Afghan border," Rehman stated.

In his remarks, Rehman also addressed challenges posed by detractors within Lower Waziristan. He accused certain groups of

engaging in propaganda against the Chamber's leadership, suggesting that these individuals are acting at the behest of external influences. According to him, their actions are part of a wider conspiracy to hinder local trade development and prevent the community from realizing the full benefits of cross-border commerce.

"We have extensive experience in boosting trade, and we are committed to using this expertise for the welfare of our region. Any attempts to undermine these efforts will not succeed," Rehman asserted. The South Waziristan Chamber of Commerce and Industry remains resolute in its mission to safeguard the interests of local traders and the community at large, while fostering economic growth through continued cross-border engagement.

WSSC CEO commits for delivery of services

F.P. Report

BANNU: Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) Bannu Chief Executive assumes the charge of the office and held meeting while placed a proposal for the improvement of the services delivery. Operations Manager Jawad Kundi, Deputy Operations Shazib Khan, Bakht Niaz Khan, Shah Niaz Khan, Pir Aurangzeb Khan and other officers were also present.

The newly appointed Chief Executive Muhammad Imran Khan from the meeting Speaking to the media, he said that hundreds of employees, staff and officers will work together in the field because we have accepted the challenge of the chief executive. They will use all the means to build the city and in this regard they will use all their energy to clean up the city and eliminate years of dirt.

Leaders and elected

municipal representatives cooperate with the WSSC because the provision of the best possible facilities is included in our first priorities. He said that the district administration and the WSSC will work together so that the problems of the people can be solved at their doorsteps. And the city will also look clean, he said that during the rains in the majority of areas, water enters the houses due to the failure of the drainage system, but homework has been set for the officials and soon the public will be handed over to the WSSC Positive changes will be felt within the city.

UET Controller Exams hold meeting: University of Science and Technology in Bannu organized a high-level meeting in the chairmanship of Controller of Examinations Hussain Shah for the holding of BS second semester, ADA and ADS exam More than 30

exam centers have been established for five thousand students, for which all the arrangements have been completed.

The exam will continue from September 24 to October 2. The meeting was held in which Additional Controller Yar Muhammad Janbaz, Superintendent Jamshed Khan, Office Assistant Hussain Allah Khan and other officers participated. Centers were established for which the University's Code of Conduct was officially issued.

At this point, the Controller of Examinations Hussain Shah told the meeting that in the light of the clear orders of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Aurangzeb Khan, arrangements were made to hold a transparent examination, in which hundreds of staff have also been deployed. Special teams have also been formed for raids during the exam.

Commissioner visits Dara Adamkhel coal mines

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat, under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", made a detailed visit to various Coal Mines situated at an altitude of several thousand feet in Tehsil Dara Adam Khel, District Kohat, where he met the hundreds of Labours working in the mines.

The Labours on this occasion well come the Commissioner Kohat and delighted to find him in the Cool Mines. They on this



occasion openly discussed their problems and highlighted other issues also. Commissioner Kohat, on the demand of Coal Mines Labours, decided the immediate set up of a Free Medical Camp in the area on health related issues, which will include Specialists in Skin, Chest, ENT ect.

Motasim Billah Shah

assured the Labours to talk to the high ups of the Labours Department on their key problems and issues. He called upon the Mines Owners to take the Labours' problems seriously and try to provide them maximum facilities. He on this occasion also assured full support on behalf of the district and divisional administration.

PPP arranges Shaheed Khatem-e-Nabuwat ZAB moot

F.P. Report

RISALPUR: Pakistan People's Party arranged Shaheed Khatam-e-Nabuwat Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Conference at Nowshera, on Monday. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, by declaring Qadianis as non-Muslims on September 7, 1974, secured the faith of Muslims around the world and earned a brave position in history. The people of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah pay tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's greatness, bravery, and courageous decisions

in strong words, the speakers added.

According to details, PPP Nowshera organized the Shaheed Khatam-e-Nabuwat Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Conference in Rasalpur Bazaar. The conference was presided over by PPP Nowshera president Muhammad Saleem Khan Khokhar. Professor Zeeshan Khan recited the Holy Quran, and Mian Sohail Shah Sarhad presented a Naat Sharif. Haider Nawaz Khan Khattak Advocate performed the duties of stage secretary.

PPP's leaders including

district president Muhammad Saleem Khan Khokhar, Senior Vice President Saeedullah Khan, Vice President Mumtaz, Religious Scholar Maulana Usman Ali Shah, Information Secretary Muhammad Farooq Khan, former Information Secretary Noor-ul-Bashir, Pabbi president Muhammad Ilyas, Nowshera president Malik Hidayat Khan, former Nazim Khushgi, Jehangira president Naem Jan, PPP's senior lawyer Syed Abid Ali Shah advocate and others addressed the participants.

JUI-F Karak elects new cabinet

F.P. Report

KARAK: Jammat-e-Ulema Islam Fazal (JUI-F) elected Hafiz ibn Amin as Emir Ameer and Maulana Zahoor Ahmed General Secretary with a huge majority, on Monday.

In this regard, secret voting was conducted in Darul Uloom Kirk under the supervision of Manzar Javed Advocate. Party elections were held through which 603 general members cast their votes and former District Ameer Hafiz Amin

was again elected as District Ameer and former General Secretary Maulana Zahoor Ahmed as General Secretary.

He also reiterated his determination that Kirk, which has been a stronghold of the Jamiat in the past, will work beyond its limits to prove itself as a stronghold again soon, God willing.

DIG visits Karak: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Kohat held Police Durbar in Karak District. Urgent orders issued to solve the problems faced by the

police. The police department is a disciplinary force and every police officer and official must respect the discipline of the department.

According to details, on arrival DIG was saluted by well-armed force of Kirk Police. District Police Officer Karak Khan Khel along with Circle SDPOs, DSP CTD, SHOs and other officers assigned in various police stations and checkpoints, Special Branch, Anti-Corruption, Traffic Wardens, DSB staff and women in Darbar.



SHANGHAI: Pedestrians struggle with their umbrellas in strong winds and rain as Typhoon Bebinca approaches in China.

NK military aid to Russia presents major battlefield problem: Ukraine

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine's spy chief said that Russia's increased production of guided bombs as well as artillery ammunition deliveries from North Korea present major problems for Ukrainian forces on the battlefield.

The head of Ukraine's military intelligence agency GUR, Kyrylo Budanov, said North Korean military aid to Russia presented the biggest concern compared to support provided by Moscow's other allies. "They supply huge amounts of artillery ammunition, which is critical for Russia," he said, pointing to the ramp up in the battlefield hostilities following such deliveries.

Ukraine and the United States, among other countries and independent analysts, say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is helping Russia in the war against Ukraine by supplying missiles and ammunition in return for economic and other military assistance from Moscow. Russia's boost in the production of guided bombs also presented a "huge problem for the frontline", Budanov said at the Yalta European Strategy conference organised by the Victor Pinchuk Foundation in Kyiv.

Ukraine's forces are stretched thin more than 30 months into the full-scale invasion, working to stave off Russian advance toward key towns in the country's east. Ukrainian forces

have also made an incursion into the western Russian region of Kursk. A ramp up in the production of the Iskander-type missiles has resulted in Russia's "massive use" of weapons to attack Ukraine, Budanov said.

This year's strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure have caused significant damage to the country's power grid, leading to power cuts. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed pleas for air defence support from Ukraine's allies. Budanov said Russian internal planning showed that Moscow will face a recruitment crunch in the middle of next year.

"During this period (summer 2025) they will face a dilemma: either to declare mobilisation or to somehow reduce the intensity of hostilities, which may ultimately be critical for them," Budanov said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine would have a good military reason to strike deeper into Russia using Western weapons, a senior NATO military official said. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met US President Joe Biden at the White House as Ukraine's allies discuss whether to give a go-ahead for Kyiv to use long-range missiles against targets in Russia.

President Vladimir Putin has said the West would be directly fighting Russia if it allowed Ukraine to strike with Western-made long-range mis-

siles. At a meeting in Prague of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Military Committee - the alliance's highest military authority - its chairman Admiral Rob Bauer said the law on armed conflict gave a nation the right to defend itself and that did not stop at its border. At the same time, he said, nations providing weapons also had a right to place limitations on their use.

He said: "In military terms, you do (those attacks) because you want to weaken the enemy that attacks you in order to not only fight the arrows that come your way, but also attack the archer. "So, militarily, there is a good reason to do that; to weaken the enemy, to weaken its logistics lines, fuel, ammunition that comes to the front." The other side of the discussion was political, he said, as nations supplying weapons may feel responsible for them, and those political tasks continue.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been asking allies to allow Ukraine to use Western missiles, including long-range US ATACMS and British Storm Shadows, deep into Russian territory to limit Moscow's ability to launch attacks. Putin said the actual programming of the missiles' flight paths would have to be done by NATO military personnel, because Kyiv did not have the capabilities itself.

How Kamala Harris got ready for her big debate moment

WASHINGTON (AP): It was almost time for the presidential debate, but Kamala Harris' staff thought there was one more thing she needed to know. So less than an hour before the vice president left her Philadelphia hotel, two communications aides got her on the phone for one of the strangest briefings of her political career.

They told her that Donald Trump had been posting on social media about a false and racist rumor that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, were eating people's pets. The former president might mention it during the debate, they said. The warning, described by two people with knowledge of the conversation, proved spot on.

While answering a question about immigration policy, Trump said migrants in Springfield were "eating the dogs" and "they're eating the cats." Harris laughed, shook her head and stared at her Republican opponent in amazement. "Talk about extreme," she said, and then moved on. It was easily the most bizarre moment from last week's debate, spawning an explosion of online memes and parody videos. Now, Harris is trying to use her performance as an ongoing source of momen-

tum, hoping to rekindle the kind of energy that she generated when he replaced President Joe Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket.

It is unclear whether the debate will affect the outcome of the Nov. 5 election. In a flash poll of viewers conducted by CNN afterward, opinions of Trump were unchanged and Harris received only a slight bump in the share of people who view her favorably. But her team is making the most of it, turning key points into television advertisements and flooding the internet with clips. No equivalent effort is apparent from Trump's side, despite his repeated insistence that he came out on top. There almost certainly will not be another debate; Trump has said he will not do one. That means the debate at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia may be the only chance that voters will have to see the candidates side by side. This story is based on interviews with five people close to Harris, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations and reveal new details about how she prepared for and handled the debate. It was her first time meeting Trump in person.

Harris spent five days getting ready at a hotel in downtown Pittsburgh after a breakneck few weeks of campaigning. Her team recreated the set where she would debate Trump on the night of Sept. 10. It was a far more professional setup than Harris had used eight years earlier as she was running for Senate in California, when campaign staff taped together cardboard boxes to serve as makeshift lecterns.

Two communications aides - one man, one woman - stood in for David Muir and Linsey Davis, the ABC News debate moderators. Philippe Reines, a longtime aide to Hillary Clinton, reprised his role as Trump, which he played when the former secretary of state ran for president. Reines wore a dark suit, a long red tie and orange bronzer to embody Trump.

One challenge would be the microphones. When Biden was running, his team agreed that the debate microphones should be muted when it was not a candidate's turn to speak. But Harris' staff wanted the microphones hot at all times, which would allow her to jump in and create more opportunities for Trump to make outbursts.

But their campaign could not reach an agreement to

change the rules, and the original plan remained in place. Harris decided to make the most of the split screen format, where each candidate would be on camera at all times. Biden had flubbed the visual test when he debated Trump in June, often looking aimless with his mouth slightly agape. Harris provided silent commentary through her expressiveness - laughing, raising her eyebrows, bringing her hand to her chin with a quizzical look.

At one point during preparations, staff members suggested practicing mannerisms that Harris could use. The vice president waved them off, saying she would be fine without that kind of rehearsal.

Harris rarely left the hotel during preparations. On Sept. 7, she took a field trip to Penzeys Spices, where she picked up some seasoning mixes. One woman in the store wept as Harris hugged her. On Sept. 8, Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, went to a military airbase and took a walk for about a half hour. Because of security considerations, the tarmac was the only place where they could stretch their legs. Asked if she was ready for the debate, Harris gave reporters a thumb's up and said "ready."

Trump's VP pick JD Vance defends spreading false story about migrants

WASHINGTON: Former President Donald Trump's running mate in the US election, Republican Senator JD Vance, has defended amplifying false stories about migrants stealing and eating pets in the United States, saying in an interview that the political ends justify the means.

During several television appearances, Vance was questioned about the unfounded claims he and Trump have made about Haitian migrants in the city of Springfield, Ohio, as part of a wider attack on the immigration policies

of the Democratic presidential candidate, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump had touted the false story during his first - and likely only debate - with Harris last week, with 67 million viewers tuning in. Local officials have repeatedly said they have received no evidence to support the rumours. But Vance remained defiant, saying in an interview with CBS News that he had received "verifiable and confirmable" accounts from residents of the Ohio community, without providing further evidence of the alleged incidents.

"Everybody who has dealt with a large influx of migration knows that sometimes there are cultural practices that seem very far out there to a lot of Americans," he said. "Are we not allowed to talk about this in the United States of America?" In another exchange on CNN, Vance was asked to "affirmatively say" that there is no evidence to support the stories about Haitian migrants eating pets. Vance again replied he was only responding to constituents' concerns. "If I have to create stories

so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that's what I'm going to do ... because you guys are completely letting Kamala Harris coast," Vance replied, before backpedaling. "I say that we're creating a story, meaning we're creating the American media focusing on it," Vance said. For his part, Trump again referenced Springfield, Ohio, during a speech near Los Angeles, vowing to deport Haitian immigrants from the community if elected in the November 5 vote. — Aljazeera

Mexico's violent Sinaloa state logs 19 homicides

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexican authorities logged seven homicides in the western state of Sinaloa, the latest violence to plague an area where increasingly frequent shootouts are fueling fears of the possible start of an intra-cartel war.

The deaths bring the number of killings within the week to 19, after 12 killings were registered. The Sinaloa prosecutor's office in a statement said the latest victims were found in four separate locations.

Two people were killed in the capital of Culiacan, and five in the municipality of Concordia, both of which the statement described as places "where violent events have occurred between criminal groups." Sinaloa, on the Pacific Coast, is the home base of the powerful Sinaloa Cartel, a drug gang once led by kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, who is now serving a life sentence in the US. The July arrest of another veteran gang leader, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, has stoked fears of infighting and turf battles.

The prosecutor's office also said it received eight reports in Culiacan of men who had been kidnapped. In Culiacan, businesses have closed, public transportation has been cut back and Independence Day festivities have been canceled due to the worsening violence.

N Korea's FM leaves for Russia

MOSCOW (Reuters): North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui has flown to Russia to attend the fourth Eurasian Women's Forum and the BRICS Women's Forum in Saint Petersburg. Russia's embassy in North Korea said on Monday.

"Russian Ambassador (Alexander Ivanovich) Matsegora saw off North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui at the Pyongyang International Airport," the embassy said in a post on its Vkontakte social network. The embassy said that the minister's speeches and participation in discussions are planned at the forum, which will take place Sept. 18 to 20.

Valentina Matviyenko, speaker of the Federation Council, Russia's upper house of parliament, said in June that delegations from almost a hundred countries were expected at the forum. "We will strive to ensure a record foreign representation in the entire history of the Forum," Matviyenko said in June, according to a transcript provided on the Council's website. Russian President Vladimir Putin has attended previous meetings of the forum, but the Kremlin is yet to announce his participation in this year's forum.

Warming ties between the countries reached a new high this year when Putin signed a deal with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that included a mutual defence pledge during a visit to Pyongyang. The United States and its allies have accused North Korea of helping Russia by supplying weapons for its war in Ukraine in return for economic and other military assistance. Moscow and Pyongyang have denied this.

Iran says it is open to talks

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran's foreign minister said that Tehran was open to diplomacy to solve disputes but not "threats and pressure", state media reported, after the US and three European powers imposed sanctions against the country's aviation sector.

Abbas Araqchi's comments come a day after The European Union's chief diplomat said the bloc is considering new sanctions targeting Iran's aviation sector, in reaction to reports Tehran supplied Russia with ballistic missiles in its war against Ukraine. "Iran continues on its own path with strength, although we have always been open to talks to resolve disputes ... but dialogue should be based on mutual respect, not on threats and pressure," Araqchi said, according to the official news agency IRNA.

America faces a new normal in political violence

WASHINGTON (BBC): After decades without political violence directed at a presidential candidate from one of the major parties, the US has now experienced this twice in the space of two months - with former president Donald Trump the target on both occasions.

In mid-July, he narrowly avoided being shot in the head by a gunman at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. The 20-year-old attacker was shot dead by a sniper. During a round of golf, he was the apparent target of another would-be assassin, according to the FBI, with a suspect now in custody.

Investigators said a man armed with an AK-47 style rifle was waiting in the bushes while Trump played on his West Palm Beach golf course before the alleged assailant was spotted by Secret Service agents, who opened fire. Americans have had to adjust to "new normals" in politics - large and small - on a seemingly regular basis in the past few years. The national discourse has coarsened, partisan divisions have sharpened and become more entrenched, and the standards for candidate behaviour have eroded. Given the national epidemic of gun violence, these kind of attacks are perhaps another, inevitable

new normal. But for now, it is still shocking.

"Violence has no place in America," Vice-President Kamala Harris - who is also Trump's Democratic opponent this election - said in a statement after the incident in Florida. Details of the apparent assassination attempt - the identity and motivation of the assailant in particular - will ultimately determine the impact this has on American politics. But, for the moment, it seems like - the vice-president's comments notwithstanding - this kind of violence is increasingly part of today's America. Donald Trump, in his first statement following the apparent attempt on his life, promised that nothing would slow him down or make him surrender.

The response fits into a campaign that has often argued the former president has become a target of persecution and attack because he speaks out for the "forgotten" Americans. His words after his first near-assassination in July - "fight, fight, fight" - became a rallying cry for his supporters. "They're not coming after me, they're coming after you," Trump likes to say. "I'm just standing in the way." Now the former president has another dramatic

example he can use to illustrate his point. This latest incident may not pack the emotional heft as the shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, however.

That attack happened at a public rally, in full view of television cameras, with the former president bloodied and defiant. One supporter was killed and two others wounded. This time around, the incident occurred on a golf course Trump owns, with the former president more removed from immediate danger. Without graphic images to replay for days, it may affect how much of an impact this has on the public's conscience. At the very least, however, the apparent assassination attempt will generate new headlines that at least temporarily break from what has been a challenging past few days for the former president's campaign.

Trump's defensive, uneven performance during last week's debate against Ms Harris, criticism of his association with the conspiracy-minded Laura Loomer and social media diatribe against singer Taylor Swift will be pushed to the side. Drama may be shocking, but with just over seven weeks remaining in this presidential campaign, there seem certain to be more twists to come.

US-China military leaders hold routine talks

BANGKOK (AP): Military leaders from the US and China met in Beijing for routine talks that only resumed in January after being suspended for two years as ties between the two countries soured. The meetings ended and officials discussed ongoing issues such as Taiwan, the Russia-Ukraine war and clashes in the South China Sea.

Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defense for China, Taiwan and Mongolia led a delegation to engage in the bilateral Defense Policy Coordination Talks, which were last held in January. While the talks weren't expected to resolve longstanding differences in stances over issues ranging from South China Sea claims to Taiwan, the US has continued to push for the discussions as a way to avoid conflict.

The meetings were held after Chase attended the Xiangshan forum in Beijing, a defense forum that is China's answer to the Shangri-La Dialogue. Communication between the two militaries broke off in 2021, as US-China tensions ratcheted up over

widening differences on issues such as Taiwan's sovereignty, the origin of COVID-19 and economic issues.

Beijing has ignored US requests to engage in the past, especially over intercepts between US and Chinese aircraft and ships. While communications resumed after US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in San Francisco last November, it is unclear whether the talks could continue as the US is poised for a presidential election. In the bilateral talks, the two sides discussed China's support for Russia during the ongoing Ukraine war, as well as China's actions in the South China Sea, said a US senior defense official briefing reporters on the meetings. The Philippine ship at a disputed shoal, BRP Teresa Magbanua, had left in order to resupply and provide medical care to its crew members. The defense official said that they were "watching further developments there very closely." China's claims over the South China Sea have become increasingly assertive, with increasing clashes with the Philippine

coast guard. In August, both sides accused each other over a collision between their ships which left gaping holes in the Philippine ships.

The maritime claims have meant clashes at sea, such as at the Sabina Shoal, which both China and the Philippines claim. China had blocked attempts to resupply the BRP Teresa Magbanua, in August, with a force of 40 ships. The Philippines said it would replace the ship immediately, but the departure of the ship raises questions of whether China would seize the shoal. Filipino scientists had previously found submerged piles of crushed corals in its shallows, leading to concern that China may be preparing to build a structure to stake its claim. China confirmed the departure of the ship, which it said "infringed on China's territorial sovereignty."

"During this period, China had taken control measures against the ship in accordance with the law and multiple attempts by the Philippine side to forcibly resupply the ship had failed," China Coast Guard spokesperson Liu Dejun said in a statement.

UK foreign minister plays down Putin threats

LONDON (AFP): UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of "bluster" over his warning that letting Ukraine use long-range weapons to strike inside Russia would put NATO "at war" with Moscow.

Tensions between Russia and the West over the conflict reached dire levels this week as US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met at the White House to discuss whether to ease rules on Kyiv's use of western-supplied weaponry. "I think that what Putin's doing is throwing dust up into the air," Lammy told the BBC.

"There's a lot of bluster. That's his modus operandi. He threatens about tanks, he threatens about missiles, he threatens about nuclear weapons." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been asking for permission to use British Storm Shadow missiles and US-made ATACMS missiles to hit targets deeper inside Russia for months. Biden and Starmer delayed a decision on the move during their meeting.

It came after Putin warned that green-lighting use of the weapons "would mean that NATO countries, the US, European countries, are at war with Russia". "If that's the case, then taking into account the change of nature of the

conflict, we will take the appropriate decisions based on the threats that we will face," he added. The Russian leader has long warned western countries that they risk provoking a nuclear war over their support for Ukraine.

"We cannot be blown off course by an imperialist fascist, effectively, that wants to move into countries willy nilly," said Lammy. "If we let him with Ukraine, believe me, he will not stop there." Lammy said that talks between Starmer, Biden and Zelenskyy over the use of the missiles would continue at the United Nations General Assembly gathering in New York later this month.

Japan's elderly population rises to record 36.25 million

TOKYO: Japan's elderly population has hit a record high of 36.25 million people, with those aged 65 or older now accounting for almost one-third of Japanese, according to government data.

Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said that

the elderly make up an estimated 29.3 percent of the population, a higher proportion than in any other country or region with more than 100,000 people. Roughly 20.53 million of those aged 65 or older are women, while 15.72 million are men, the ministry said. The data also showed that

a record 9.14 million elderly people were employed last year, accounting for one in seven employees. Japan is grappling with a worsening demographic crisis as a dwindling number of working-age people face being saddled with mounting healthcare and welfare costs for the elderly. — Aljazeera

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Two-state call is a reality check for Israel's elites

YESTERDAY morning, Israeli air strikes on refugee camps in northern and central Gaza killed four people, according to local authorities. Such deaths are an almost daily occurrence; more than 41,200 Palestinians have been killed across a ruined Gaza and hundreds more in the occupied West Bank since the war began last October. In this gruesome context, talk of a Palestinian state can seem speculative but it cuts to the heart of the conflict.

When Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated on Saturday that the UAE will not support post-war efforts in Gaza without the establishment of a Palestinian state, he was emphasising and championing the growing global momentum for Palestinian self-determination as the only realistic and comprehensive way of breaking the cycle of conflict. It was also a reality check for those in Israel's elites who may be labouring under the delusion that other countries will resolve the Palestinian question for them.

There is no shortage of goodwill and practical solidarity for the Palestinian people among Arab countries, and the UAE has been in the vanguard of those nations that have sent lifesaving aid and treated the sick and injured, all while championing calls for an immediate ceasefire at the highest levels. The Emirates has also indicated a willingness to support a temporary international mission in Gaza after the war – but only at the request of the Palestinian government.

The Palestinians are a people who have had too many decisions made over their heads already, and their agency will be vital to the task of eventually rebuilding Gaza – work that will take a generation. The UAE is making it clear that the Palestinians themselves will be instrumental not only in the days after the war but in building their own future. It is not a job that can be outsourced. However, good governance and leadership from the Palestinians are instrumental for that to happen.

In fact, it is Israel's sidelining of the Palestinian people that has, arguably, helped create this current catastrophe. Continuing occupation and settlement building in the West Bank, with a stranglehold on the futures of two million Gazans was always an unsustainable status quo. Sadly, the consequences arising from years of such occupation appear not to have been heeded by Israeli decision makers, some of whom have doubled down on their rejection of Palestinian statehood.

A July vote by Israeli MPs to reject Palestinian statehood in principle took place days before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – another high-profile opponent of Palestinian sovereignty – travelled to Washington to address the US Congress. Other Israeli Cabinet ministers are on record as explicitly opposing Palestinian self-determination.

Far from ensuring Israeli security, such intransigence further isolates the country politically and diplomatically. If anything, support for Palestinian statehood through a two-state solution is more common than before, including among many and allies of Israel.

Already this year, several countries have unilaterally recognised Palestine and in May the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of Palestinian membership; last week, delegates queued to greet Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian Authority's UN ambassador, as he took his place at the General Assembly.

On Friday, ministers from the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation and four European nations reiterated their position that a two-state solution is the "only way to establish lasting peace and security" for Israel and Palestine.

That peace and security will have to be built with political and practical support from outside Israel and Palestine, but it cannot be done if Palestinians are denied a path to building their own state, and without Palestinian unity and good governance. Resolving these core issues is key to stopping the current war and further conflict in the future.

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NATO obligations cannot override international law

Shahd Hammouri

ON September 2, the British government announced the suspension of 30 of 350 arms export licences to Israel. It said these weapons exports could be used to "commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law".

While this announcement was hailed by some as a positive development that reflects growing international pressure on Israel to stop its genocidal war in Gaza, it in no way fulfils the United Kingdom's obligations under international law. In fact, it reflects NATO members' insistence on overriding international law in order to fulfil alliance commitments.

In the context of the ongoing genocidal Israeli war in Gaza and the West Bank, all states have the duty to impose a full arms embargo on Israel. This duty derives from decisions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from January and July that concluded Israel is plausibly carrying out genocidal actions in Gaza in violation of the Genocide Convention and is illegally occupying Palestine.

This duty has also been asserted by the UN Human Rights Council and various UN experts. Stopping the flow of arms, energy and other key exports to Israel is meant to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people.

In its legal note on the suspension of some arms sales, the British government names violations of Israel's duty to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and the mistreatment of prisoners as probable violations of international humanitarian law. The UK Foreign Office lawyers who drafted the note seem to accept that Israel's engagement in Gaza and its conduct of hostilities are lawful.

This rationale finds little basis in international law because it has been clearly established that

Israel does not have the right of self-defence in territories it occupies and its current offensive conduct is well outside the permitted parameters of self-defence. Some have even argued that its declared military goal of annihilating Hamas is in itself evidence of genocidal intent.

The British government's interpretation fits within the highly questionable anti-terrorism framework inaugurated by the United States "war on terror" in the 2000s and widely accepted by its NATO allies. This framework is not considered a part of customary international law and represents a flagrant attempt to create an exceptional space for powerful states to continue the proliferation of war in the Global South.

The British government refuses to assert that Israel is committing violations in its conduct of hostilities, such as disproportionate targeting of civilians or destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. It justifies its position by saying available information is not enough to make such assertions. Furthermore, it engages with Israel's claim that Hamas is using Palestinian civilians as human shields.

These statements have fragile legal and factual premises. The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is treating evidence presented by Israel as more credible than evidence presented by Palestinians despite Israel's rich history of pathological lying. Furthermore, as repeatedly asserted, the human shields argument has been historically used in bad faith to justify mass civilian casualties in settler colonial contexts.

The British government has made clear that it will continue to supply parts for the F-35 fighter jet to Israel under a NATO programme

despite the fact that this aircraft has been used against civilians in Gaza. In his statement to the House of Commons, Foreign Minister David Lammy justified this exemption by stating that the UK's participation in the programme is "crucial to wider peace and security".

This choice of words is ironic given that Israel's conduct in Gaza and generally in the Middle East threatens international peace and security. The notion of "peace and security" is also a cornerstone of the UN Charter, and UN member states have the obligation to preserve them.

Lammy, of course, does not refer to the UN Charter but to NATO's securitised language. According to the military alliance's logic, "peace and security" is whatever serves the current world order spearheaded by the US.

The North Atlantic Treaty, which established NATO, states that the security obligations of the members do not override international law. In practice, however, as the current situation illustrates, state members prioritise NATO obligations over international law. They mask this lack of adherence through fragile interpretations of the relevant law and facts.

NATO states are in defiance of the ICJ's July decision on the illegality of the Israeli occupation, which clearly established that security concerns cannot override international law. In his separate declaration on the issue, ICJ Judge Dire Tladi wrote:

"As a first general point, when addressing security concerns, it should be recalled that all States, and not just Israel, have security interests. This includes Palestine. Often, when the 'security concerns' claim is made, it is as if only Israel has security concerns or that somehow, Israel's securi-

ty concerns override those of Palestine's. The second general point to make is that security interests as such, no matter how serious or legitimate, cannot override rules of international law, a point made by the Court."

Similar to the UK, the Netherlands has also refused to disengage from the F-35 combat aircraft programme despite a court decision ordering a suspension of exports to Israel. The Dutch government has been accused of selling parts meant for the Israeli army to the US, which then re-exports them to Israel. In July, a Dutch court refused to prevent the government from doing so and allowed the programme to continue. Again, this decision is not consistent with international law.

Other NATO members, including France and Germany, have also disregarded their international legal obligations and continued exports of weapons to Israel. Canada suspended new arms licences but has kept existing licences, meaning that the arms flow will not stop. By far the biggest exporter of arms to Israel – the US – has not stopped sending billions of dollars of arms and ammunition despite human rights organisations repeatedly finding evidence that its weapons and bombs have been used in attacks on civilian targets, causing massive death tolls.

The power of the US asserted through NATO casts a long shadow of normalised illegality. Arms-exporting states are maintaining the flow of weapons in service of geopolitical and economic interests, thus becoming directly complicit in the genocide of the Palestinian people.

But international law is clear: The supply of weapons to a state engaged in war crimes, crimes against humanity and a plausible genocide is itself a crime.

Netanyahu's Israel is more dangerous

Ghassan Charbel

ON Sunday, Israeli planes dropped leaflets over Wazzani in southern Lebanon, demanding residents leave immediately under the pretext that Hezbollah was firing from the area. The most alarming part of the message was a phrase warning the population not to return "until the end of the war."

The Israeli army's quick claim that the leaflets were distributed on the orders of an officer acting on his own initiative does not diminish the seriousness of what is going on in the minds of Israeli security officials. Chief among their concerns is the view that Hezbollah's Iranian arsenal poses an existential threat. This is not the first time Israel has resorted to dropping threatening flyers over Lebanon. The Lebanese have long, bitter experiences with this. In the summer of 1982, the Israeli army surrounded Beirut and its planes dropped leaflets designating "safe routes" for residents to leave the capital. They did the same in south Lebanon as Israeli tanks advanced rapidly toward the capital.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the current situation is far more dangerous than it was during the Israeli invasion that summer. At that time, Israeli pressure aimed to force Palestine Liberation Organization fighters to leave Lebanon, which was achieved after a ceasefire. Back then, Israel saw the threat as coming from Yasser Arafat's forces and his keffiyeh-wrapped appearances from a Lebanese balcony. At that time, Lebanon did not host any force that Israel considered an existential threat — one that needed to be eliminated. From that summer of invasion and flyers, Hezbollah would be born, after Iran viewed Lebanon as an opportunity to implement its constitutional mandate of "exporting the revolution." The dropping of leaflets over Lebanon today is quite different from what occurred in the early 1980s. Israel is very different from what it was even a year ago. The region today does not resemble what it was four decades ago. Lebanon has changed and so have Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

We can also talk about a different Iran, with its arsenal, regional presence, nuclear ambitions and the imprints left by Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in four Arab countries, not to mention his involvement in Gaza's armament, training programs and war tunnel creation. Israel's defense minister and some of its generals do not hide their desire to repeat Gaza's scenes on Lebanese soil. They see war with Hezbollah as an alternative to war with Iran itself. They view it as a war with Iran, but on Lebanese soil. Within this context lie dreams of restoring deterrence, imposing a long-term ceasefire and making Lebanon pay a heavy price for Hezbollah's "war of attrition" strategy, which the group chose to wage at a calculated pace following the outbreak of the war on Oct. 7. In previous calculations, observers would dismiss the likelihood of Israel waging a full-scale war against Lebanon. Hezbollah is not encircled like Hamas is in Gaza. Its arsenal is advanced and its supply routes remain open through Syria, with

connections to Iran via Iraq. Moreover, Iran, which can afford to provide limited support to Hamas in its confrontation with Israel's military machine, could not exercise such restraint if Hezbollah were to face a crippling blow. In the 2006 war, Soleimani was present in Beirut, actively participating. Today's calculations appear to be different.

In assessing the imminent danger facing Lebanon, attention must be paid to the changes occurring in Israel. In recent months, Israel's most dangerous prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has succeeded in turning the conflict in Gaza into an existential war, not merely a war of discipline or revenge. It is likely that even Yahya Sinwar did not anticipate this. The prevailing view was that Israel could not endure the deaths of hundreds of its soldiers and the strain of a prolonged war that would exhaust its population and economy.

This issue is not just about Netanyahu's personal concerns and his fear of the "day after" the war, with investigative committees and courts awaiting. It also involves the military and security establishment's reading of the scale of the threats, the priorities and the required costs to confront them. The Israeli public's belief that the current war is an existential one leads them to tolerate the burdens of a costly conflict in terms of human lives and the economy. Netanyahu has also succeeded in prolonging the war until America enters its election season coma, particularly after confirming that its fleets have no choice but to support him in the event of a regionwide confrontation. In recent months, Netanyahu has shown an ability to defy American advice and warnings, as if he is attempting to turn the current war into a decisive one that would spare Israel from renewed fighting in the coming decades. Recent Western accusations against Iran — of providing missiles and drones to Russia and concealing its nuclear ambitions — could further push him toward a major war on Lebanese soil. The combat would not be easy, of course, and the destruction would not be limited to the Lebanese side, but the prolonged war in Gaza reveals that a shift has occurred in Israel regarding its capacity to wage a lengthy battle.

Hamas' leadership likely did not expect the war to last long enough to nearly mark its first anniversary. Similarly, Hezbollah's leadership probably did not expect the war of attrition to continue to this extent or at its current cost. Hezbollah ties the halt of its war of attrition to the cessation of hostilities in Gaza, but what if Israel decides that the second phase of its "existential war" should unfold on Lebanese territory and it unleashes its advanced killing machine on an already fractured country?

It is clear that Lebanon is slipping further into the danger zone. The country is exhausted and the majority of its people oppose involvement in a full-scale, open-ended war, but it lacks the means to stave off the threat of conflict. Only the US can avert the looming danger, but Lebanon is not prepared to pay the price for America's role. Netanyahu's Israel is more dangerous than Ariel Sharon's Israel.

UK, GCC are far more than mere trading partners

Jonathan Reynolds

THE new UK government's top priority is economic growth, and this is central to what I want to achieve as business and trade secretary. My department sits at the heart of our new approach to growth and is responsible for championing UK business, inward investment, trade policy and export finance toward the UK's prosperity.

We cannot do this alone. Nor do we want to.

As an outward-facing nation, the UK's international partnerships endure thanks to the strength of our political, commercial and people-to-people ties. These ties are particularly close in Saudi Arabia and throughout the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Our two kingdoms share a commitment to economic prosperity, delivered through increased investment and trade, and underpinned by priority sectors including education, healthcare, clean energy, technology and infrastructure. Our bilateral trade figures are testament to this,

reaching an all-time high of £17.3 billion (\$22.7 billion) in 2023.

Behind the statistics are real companies that are finding success in the Kingdom, from the largest multinationals to the smallest enterprises. Companies like Benoy, which was responsible for designing the iconic Bujairi Terrace, adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of At-Turaif. Or Downe House Riyadh, the Kingdom's first premium British all-girls school. And Prior + Partners, which is supporting the Royal Commission for AlUla to create a living museum at this ancient site. These companies and many more are contributing to the success of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

In support of this vision, UK Export Finance, the UK's export credit agency, guaranteed an Islamic Murabaha financing facility for \$700 million to finance the construction of Six Flags Qiddiya. This deal means that UK supply chain companies will be instrumental in delivering the theme park, which will feature the world's tallest, longest

and fastest roller coaster.

I am here to take the UK-Saudi trade and investment partnership to the next level. Everyone I have spoken to in Riyadh — from ministers to businesspeople — has told me about the strength of the relationship. Indeed, our support for mutual economic growth includes significant investment in each other's markets, with tens of billions of dollars invested in each other's economies in recent years.

It is an exciting time to visit Saudi Arabia and I have seen for myself the Kingdom's energy and ambition in the drive toward its Vision 2030.

Next month, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Chancellor Rachel Reeves and I will host an international investment summit to outline the UK's long-term plans and to hear from global industry leaders about their priorities and invite them to share in our vision. I look forward to meeting with business leaders and investors from Saudi Arabia and across the GCC. Our mes-

sage to the world is that the UK is not only open to business, it is the place to do business.

The UK's trade program will deliver deals that will benefit the UK economy and those of our partners by boosting trade with some of the most dynamic economies in the world. This is why I announced in July our intention to restart trade talks with the GCC toward a free trade agreement.

The UK's bilateral trade with the GCC stood at £57.4 billion last year, with plenty of headroom to grow into.

A trade agreement with the GCC would unlock new investment both in the UK and here in the Gulf. It would simplify procedures, making it easier for our companies to do business with each other. Because our economies have strengths that complement each other, an agreement would remove barriers to trade and, in doing so, create mutual economic growth.

While the UK and the GCC are trading partners, we are much more than that. To more than 150,000 British people, the GCC

is also home. Tourism figures in both directions remain very strong. The global introduction of the UK's electronic travel authorization began with a rollout in the GCC for good reason. More than a million UK visitors travel to the GCC's vibrant cities and tourist spots each year. Similarly, in 2023, the UK welcomed more than a million visitors from the GCC, including a record 286,000 visitors from Saudi Arabia.

All of this is possible thanks to the deep and enduring foundation of friendship built over generations between the UK and Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

As long-term strategic partners, we appreciate what the other has to offer. We prioritize the policies, programs and strategies that benefit our home economies, while recognizing the importance of mutual economic growth. I am confident that an ambitious and modern free trade deal would further strengthen our bonds, supporting our businesses to create lasting economic stability and prosperity for all our people.

Project 2025 will go on, even if Kamala wins

“WHAT you’re going to hear tonight is a detailed and dangerous plan called Project 2025, that the former president intends on implementing if he were elected again.” Vice President Kamala Harris warned the audience at the beginning of the first and possibly last debate with her opponent, former President Donald Trump.

Trump responded that he had “nothing to do” with it – a claim journalists and pundits have repeatedly refuted.

Conservative think tank the Heritage Foundation published Project 2025 in 2023 as a policy framework document for the Republican presidential candidate. Although Trump distanced himself from Project 2025 in July, he endorsed the Heritage Foundation’s work on it while it was still being drafted. “This is a great group, and they’re going to lay the groundwork and detail plans for exactly what our movement will do and what your movement will do,” Trump said at a dinner hosted by the foundation in 2022.

From the far-right perspective, Project 2025 stands as a metaphorical Hoover Dam against “the long march of cultural Marxism through our institutions”. The introduction of the 900-page document claims: “The federal government is a behemoth, weaponized against American citizens and conservative values, with freedom and liberty under siege as never before.” The goal of the project is outlined as restoring “[the American] Republic to its original moorings”.

One can be forgiven for thinking that more than 50 conservative think tanks and NGOs getting together to formulate policy for a future president is unprecedented. Yet, Project 2025 is hardly the first time a bunch of far-right Beltway policy wonks have colluded to help set an agenda for a would-be conservative presidency.

If the political class was truly being transparent, they would call this playbook Project 1965, because that is at least how far back the American right started working on resetting progressive policies.

There is certainly much to be outraged about even with a cursory read of Project 2025. Conservative policymakers want to privatise the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Food Insurance Program, the federal housing loan giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and all federal subsidised student loans.

The Project 2025 gurus also long for the elimination of the US Department of Education (DOE) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The DOE’s crime is they

are “a convenient one-stop shop for the woke education cartel, which – as the COVID era showed – is not particularly concerned with children’s education. Schools should be responsive to parents, rather than to leftist advocates intent on indoctrination.”

As for NOAA, they are “a colossal operation that has become one of the main drivers of the climate change alarm industry and” are “harmful” because of their “fatal conceit of planning for the unplannable”.

If these far-right recommendations are not enough to spark consternation, there is plenty more. Project 2025’s authors also

Donald Earl Collins

write in multiple places about eliminating “social engineering ... climate change [mitigation], critical race theory, manufactured extremism, and other polarizing policies”. They refuse to believe that “systemic racism” is a thing.

Yet, as shocking as Project 2025’s prescriptions are, many of them are not new. A great number of them have appeared in the Heritage Foundation-led publication Mandate for Leadership, which has been a mostly quadrennial manual for conservatives since 1981.

Initially, the Heritage Foundation and its collab-

even further, to the resistance to the fight for racial justice and civil rights in the 1950s and 60s. The backlash against the Civil Rights Movement helped spark the conservative movement’s rise.

In 1962, as Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater geared up for his eventual run as the Republican nominee for president, he declared, “I don’t like segregation. But I don’t like the Constitution kicked around either.” When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did make its way through Congress, South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond appeared on TV to say he was leaving the Democratic Party for the

One can be forgiven for thinking that more than 50 conservative think tanks and NGOs getting together to formulate policy for a future president is unprecedented. Yet, Project 2025 is hardly the first time a bunch of far-right Beltway policy wonks have colluded to help set an agenda for a would-be conservative presidency. If the political class was truly being transparent, they would call this playbook Project 1965, because that is at least how far back the American right started working on resetting progressive policies. There is certainly much to be outraged about even with a cursory read of Project 2025. Conservative policymakers want to privatise the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Food Insurance Program, the federal housing loan giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and all federal subsidised student loans. The Project 2025 gurus also long for the elimination of the US Department of Education (DOE) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The DOE’s crime is they are “a convenient one-stop shop for the woke education cartel, which – as the COVID era showed – is not particularly concerned with children’s education. Schools should be responsive to parents, rather than to leftist advocates intent on indoctrination.” As for NOAA, they are “a colossal operation that has become one of the main drivers of the climate change alarm industry and” are “harmful” because of their “fatal conceit of planning for the unplannable”.

want the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to require states to track all abortions within their borders or threaten those states with “the cutting of funds”.

The CDC’s “abortion surveillance and maternity mortality reporting systems are woefully inadequate”, one Project 2025 author writes, as “liberal states have now become sanctuaries for abortion tourism”. At the same time, he recommends the CDC “immediately end its collection of data on gender identity”, a scientific reality they labelled an “unscientific notion”.

On diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programmes, critical race theory, and gender identity, Project 2025’s authors

orators made this playbook available to both the Democratic and Republican parties. With the rise of the conservatives to power, however, the Mandate for Leadership became fully-tuned to centre-right and far-right rule.

There have been nine Mandate for Leadership publications in all for every presidential election cycle since 1980, except for 1992, 2008, and 2012. Even in 1981, conservative policy wonks wanted to “revitalize our economy” through deregulation and massive tax cuts to “strengthen our national security” with beefed-up defence budgets and to “halt the centralization of power in the federal government” by privatising goods.

The roots of Mandate for Leadership go back

Republicans. “The Democratic Party has forsaken the people to become the party of minority groups,” Thurmond angrily said.

The stage was set for a merger between the embryonic conservative movement, the Republican Party, and former members of the Democratic Party’s southern wing over their shared opposition to civil rights and other social justice issues. That coalition culminated in Richard Nixon’s successful “Southern Strategy” and appeals to the “silent majority” that won him the presidency in 1968.

Since then, conservative operators have been hard at work infusing their right-wing ideas into many areas of American life. The partial privatisation of the US Postal Service, for example, has been under

Growth stimulator

Yaseen Anwar

manage such assets.

To address this, the Bank for International Settlements and central banks should create a supportive regulatory environment for systemically important financial institutions and developmental financial institutions. This could be done by adjusting capital requirements, specifically by reducing the capital needed for infrastructure financing, especially when multilateral organizations are involved in co-financing. This would encourage financial institutions to invest more in infrastructure projects.

Additionally, banks should realign their lending priorities to focus on long-term shareholder value. This means creating a more balanced bal-

and resources.

The evidence is compelling that the BRI spurs the economic growth of participating economies. Numerous countries have already felt the benefits of new employment opportunities and improved productivity thanks to the BRI. In 2017, the Greek port of Piraeus handled more than 4 million containers for onward distribution to Europe.

Germany’s Duisburg Inner Harbor has become one of the world’s largest inland ports. And companies are now operating across Africa through an expanding transportation network of railways and roads.

Tens of billions of dollars of new business has been generated across a range of operations, including increased

A significant challenge in financing infrastructure in emerging market economies is their limited access to financial resources, primarily due to insufficient credit ratings that most financial institutions require for lending. This situation creates a bottleneck, as many emerging market economies do not meet the necessary ratings to attract conventional financing. One potential solution to this financing impediment is the Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI is positioned to leverage substantial resources to address part of the financing gap without the stringent credit rating requirements imposed by traditional financial institutions. In November 2014, a \$40 billion Silk Road Fund was established to support infrastructure development and industrial cooperation in BRI countries. Also, the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank have provided significant loan support, offering \$32 billion and \$30 billion in credit, respectively. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China itself has already financed BRI-related projects in excess of \$100 billion. In addition, the collective resources of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-America Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Bank, Sovereign Wealth Funds, private equity, infrastructure funds, among others, will adequately fulfill the needs of the financing gap.

ance sheet, with greater emphasis on infrastructure financing, especially through co-financing with multilateral organizations.

Global trade historically was the key instrument for economic development. However, with protectionist policies, decades of integration and interdependence are now in jeopardy. With the benefit of hindsight, the lessons of history can be heeded. The United States’ Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act introduced in 1930s led to a 64 percent reduction in world trade. Using sanctions as an economic weapon is also detrimental to economic development and global trade, as it creates supply chain disruptions that are particularly painful for emerging market economies reliant on exports of raw materials

investment and tourism into Africa, new housing in Indonesia, power projects in Bangladesh, roads in Pakistan and Kazakhstan, and rising global and intra-regional trade in Southeast Asia.

The Asia-Pacific and Central Asia regions represent potential success stories toward elevating growth rates and per capita income. Intra-regional trade and the integration of regional economies will also cushion them from future exogenous shocks.

The desirable attributes of the BRI will also help restore faith and confidence in the international monetary system and as such it behooves the international community to collectively expand the opportunities it offers and to use them wisely.

— China Daily

Baghdad plays unwilling host to Iran’s axis of evil

Baria Alamuddin

IN a further move toward making Iraq a front-line state in Iran’s “axis of resistance,” Baghdad’s militia-dominated administration recently gave permission for both Hamas and the Houthis to set up permanent offices in the capital. Even Iraqi officials horrified by the development have been unable to speak out, such is the mafia-like stranglehold of Al-Hashd Al-Sha’abi militias on the country — particularly as Hamas’ office is located in a region of Baghdad controlled by Kata’ib Hezbollah, which also provides security for office personnel.

With the entirety of Lebanon threatened by destruction in regionalized war and daily escalations across the Lebanon-Israel border, Tehran has increasingly been looking to develop Baghdad into the beating heart of its region-wide “resistance” franchise; raising fears that this places Iraq in the direct line of fire next time Israel and America stage retaliatory strikes. Although Iraq’s government has denied their presence, meetings between

Mohammed Al-Hafi and the Houthis’ Abu Idris Al-Sharafi and paramilitary leaders like Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq’s Qais Al-Khazali have been conspicuously circulated on social media.

This paramilitary supremacy in Baghdad has spawned incessant scandals, armed rivalries and a pervasive stench of corruption. No less than the head of the country’s anti-corruption body, Judge Haider Hanoun, was recently apparently caught on tape boasting of receiving large sums of money. Meanwhile, arrest warrants have been issued over the theft of \$2.5 billion in public funds. Senior personnel from the office of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani have been arrested for the Watergate-style wiretapping of the entire political and judicial class, including Supreme Judicial Council chief judge Faiq Zaidan and former prime ministers Haider Abadi and Nouri Al-Maliki.

The wiretapping scandal is symptomatic of the bitter factional power struggles within Al-Hashd al-Sha’abi. While figures like Al-Maliki and Badr commander Hadi Al-Amiri seem to have been victims,

allies of the prime minister like Al-Khazali were notably absent from the list of those spied upon, fueling speculation that this espionage was a case of rival

Baria Alamuddin

vice’s counterintelligence director, Faisal Al-Lami, is a nephew of Hashd chairman Faleh Al-Fayyad. Top

This paramilitary supremacy in Baghdad has spawned incessant scandals, armed rivalries and a pervasive stench of corruption. No less than the head of the country’s anti-corruption body, Judge Haider Hanoun, was recently apparently caught on tape boasting of receiving large sums of money. Meanwhile, arrest warrants have been issued over the theft of \$2.5 billion in public funds. Senior personnel from the office of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani have been arrested for the Watergate-style wiretapping of the entire political and judicial class, including Supreme Judicial Council chief judge Faiq Zaidan and former prime ministers Haider Abadi and Nouri Al-Maliki. The wiretapping scandal is symptomatic of the bitter factional power struggles within Al-Hashd al-Sha’abi. While figures like Al-Maliki and Badr commander Hadi Al-Amiri seem to have been victims, allies of the prime minister like Al-Khazali were notably absent from the list of those spied upon, fueling speculation that this espionage was a case of rival militia factions spying on and attempting to discredit one another.

The scandal highlights how Iraq’s intelligence and security agencies have been politicized and thoroughly infiltrated by Tehran-backed, gangster-like militias. As an investigation by the Washington Institute highlighted this month, Iraq’s National Intelligence Service had been seen as relatively professional and independent. But since 2022, Al-Sudani’s government has purged the department, filling key posts with Hashd appointees. The ser-

posts in the National Security Service were in 2023 likewise handed to senior figures from Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq.

Paramilitary patron Al-Maliki has been capitalizing on the wiretapping scandal to demand the ousting of Prime Minister Al-Sudani, who himself heads a Hashd-dominated administration.

This illustrates how today’s struggles for political supremacy are not Sunni-Shiite in nature, or even between rival Shiite ideological camps, but are rather rivalries between

power-hungry politicians and factions beholden to the pro-Iran Hashd agenda. A large proportion of the

shotgun marriages of convenience with nakedly sectarian Shiite factions. Symbolic of this is the long-standing failure to select a parliament speaker

— the preeminent political role for the Sunni sect. In one symptom of how retrogressive factional and sectarian dynamics are dragging Iraq backwards, a law is currently in process through parliament that could allow girls to be married from age nine. Iraq already has one of the highest rates of underage marriage in the world, with 28 percent of girls married below the current legal age of 18. The proposed law would make this far worse, excluding women from education, careers and meaningful

Sunni forces, meanwhile, remain divided and marginalized. Any influence they can occasionally wield is usually rooted in

social roles.

While paramilitary warlords cream off Iraq’s vast oil wealth, Shiite, Sunni and Kurd citizens exist in a state of harsh impoverishment, living with chronic power cuts, unemployment, nonexistent public services and the crippling impact of the Hashd’s gangster-like extortion of all manifestations of economic activity. Iraq’s paramilitary warlords and kleptocratic politicians are a parasitic caste weighing intolerably on the backs of ordinary Iraqis, who only expect next year’s elections to bring new permutations of servitude, insatiable greed and periodic violence.

Post-election clashes between armed Shiite rivals and a resurgent Daesh resulting from the premature withdrawal of US forces are both terrifying scenarios. Indeed, 2024 has seen a net increase in Daesh activity, notably in eastern Syria, which shares a highly permeable border with Iraq.

I first started researching my book, “Militia State,” in 2017, examining how predatory paramilitaries were becoming dominant across Iraq. In the years since, these militias have

only become more of a fundamental threat, while the Gaza conflict has encouraged these forces to flex their muscles across the regional stage.

Many of us have been arguing for years that the Hashd not only poses an existential threat to Iraq, but that Tehran sees these fighters as a transnational force to be deployed at will against its many enemies — rival Arab states, Sunni demographics, Israel or the West. As its force size and military budget relentlessly expanded and militias monopolized the entire governing system, the world steadfastly looked the other way.

Now, with hundreds of thousands of militia fighters in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Palestine and Yemen increasingly acting as a seamless whole, while loudly boasting of the threat they pose to the regional and global order, it is well past time for the world to start paying attention. The international community must properly get its head around the complex and multipronged threat that the Hashd and Iran’s wider axis of evil poses.

— Arab News



FCAA vows to support BF in SCCI' elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Office bearers of Frontier Customs Agents Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (FCAA-KP) reaffirmed commitment to allegiance with senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour-led Businessman Forum and said they will remain part of the BF and support the group in SCCI' elections.

The FCAA KP hosted an event in honour of Businessman Forum leaders in a local hotel.

BF leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, SVP Sanaullah Khan, VP Ejaz Khan Afridi, former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, Anjuman e Tajran Lifetime president Haji Muhammad Afzal, former presidents Zahidullah Shinwari, Riaz Arshad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former SVPs Shahid

Hussain, Muhammad Naeem Butt, former VPs Abdul Jalil Jan, Junaid Altaf, member of executive committee Pervez Khan Khattak and Fazal Muqeem, Nadeem Rauf, Ghazanfar Ali Sawal, Mushtaq Ahmad, Khalid Sultan Khawaja, Javed Khan, Imranul Haq, Kamran Shah, Mujeeb Rehman, Sabir Ahmad Bangash, Ihsanullah, Saddam Gul, Fazl e Wahid, Aftab Iqbal, Ishtiaq Paracha, Naeemul Haq, Fahad Amin, Junaid Altaf, Gul Zaman, Abbas Fuad Azeem, Saifullah, Hassan Zahideen, along with members of FCAA KP and other were attendance during the program.

Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, president of FCAA KP, Imtiaz Ahmad Ali, Khalid Shahzad, Mansoor Ahmad and others warmly wel-

comed BF leaders on arrival at the main venue.

Office bearers of FCAA KP counted the number of achievements of the Businessman Forum and lauded its selfless services for the business community.

They claimed BF will sweep SCCI elections, which is scheduled to be held on September 25 next. Ziaul Haq Sarhadi assured the leadership of Businessman Forum that the FCAA KP will fully support in the SCCI election.

He also appreciated BF leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and SCCI president Fuad Ishaq for establishment of Azakhel Dryport and also played an important role in removing difficulties related to dryport.

Sarhadi also lauded the BF and SCCI for raising voice against enforcement

of 2 percent cess on export. He said export, business and trade had been halted from KP after implementation cess by the provincial government.

Fuad Ishaq on the occasion said that under leadership of Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, the SCCI presidents had played a pivotal role in resolution of business community problems and provided them relief to every extent.

He said BF has gained support of the business community owing to rendering services without any discrimination.

Ghazanfar Bilour, Haji Muhammad Afzal and others also addressed the event and highlighted BF agenda and program for betterment of the business community.

The leaders asked for a vote for BF candidates to continue the process of selfless services.



PESHAWAR: Senior leader of Businessman Forum Ghazanfar Bilour, president FCAA KP Ziaul Haq Sarhadi and Anjuman-e-Tajran Lifetime president Haji Muhammad Afzal addressing a traders gathering. SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

CCP issues show cause notices

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued show cause notices to ten steel suppliers for collusive bidding.

The CCP has issued show cause notices to ten steel structure suppliers involved in procurement tenders floated by various Distribution Companies (DISCOs) for the alleged collusive bidding, a prima facie, violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The ten undertakings include M/s. AM Associates (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Ajmer Engineering Electric Works (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Khalifa Sons (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Siddique Sons Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Vision Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AW Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. FN Power (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Gujranwala Cable (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. AH Associates (Pvt) Ltd, and M/s. Process Dynamics (Pvt) Ltd.

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) took suo motu notice and initiated an enquiry under Section 37(1) of the Competition Act, 2010. During the enquiry, search and inspections were also conducted at the premises of three Lahore-based companies, where critical documents and records were impounded for further examination. During the enquiry, bidding data from 2015 to 2022, obtained from all DISCOs, particularly regarding the procurement of transmission towers, was analysed. Economic evidence revealed a consistent pattern of bidding where these companies appeared to have submitted identical or near-identical rates, with differences as small as 0.001 to 1%.

Out of 357 tenders evaluated, 135 showed signs of collusion, including identical rates, division of quantities, sole participation, and bid rotation.

Notably, M/s. AM Associates, M/s. Ajmer Engineering, and M/s. Khalifa Sons were found to have engaged in collective decision-making regarding the rates and quantities quoted, with the apparent aim of manipulating tender outcomes for mutual benefit.

The enquiry report found that this collusive behavior included mutual agreements on the number of firms participating in tenders, predetermined price-fixing, and strategic non-participation to ensure that the preselected firm would win. Such practices constitute a prima facie, violation of Section 4(2)(a)(b)(c)(e) of the Competition Act, 2010.

The CCP's enquiry further concluded that the anti-competitive behavior of these ten companies extends beyond provincial boundaries, affecting market dynamics across Pakistan.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 158 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 158.08 more points, a positive change of 0.20 percent, closing at 79,491.14 points against 79,333.06 points on the last working day.

A total of 536,187,271 shares were traded during the day as compared to 916,053,875 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs8.911 billion against Rs21.236 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 443 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 139 of them recorded gains and 253 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 51 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pace (Pak) Limited with 56,890,305 shares at Rs6.96 per share, Cnergyico PK with 48,934,827 shares at Rs4.16 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 40,218,735 shares at Rs1.39 per share.

Hoehchst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs128.60 per share price, closing at Rs2,079.60, whereas the runner-up was Reliance Cotton Spinning Mills Limited with a Rs53.86 rise in its per share price to Rs592.43.

Sapphire Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs58.71 per share closing at Rs1,090.89 followed by Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs47.76 decline to close at Rs484.85.

Rupee gains 04 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Monday appreciated by 04 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.16.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.90 and Rs280.75 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 77 paise to close at Rs309.29 against

the last day's closing of Rs308.52, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen increased by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.98, whereas an increase of 81 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs366.58 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs365.77.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 paise each to close at Rs75.72 and Rs74.10 respectively.

Gold rates up by Rs1,700 per tola to Rs268,000

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,700 and was sold at Rs268,000 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs266,300 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,458 to Rs229,767 from Rs228,309 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs210,620 from Rs209,283, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,950 and Rs2,529.14, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$10 to \$2,587 from \$2,577, the Association reported.

Pakistan Railways freight division Karachi exceeds targets

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Railways has reported impressive performance in freight operations for the month of August 2024, surpassing its allocated targets and achieving substantial growth. In a remarkable achievement, 460,109 tons of cargo were transported to various upcountry destinations through 15,393 railway wagons, resulting in a revenue of PKR 2,393 million being deposited into the government exchequer.

This achievement has not only exceeded expectations but also demonstrated Pakistan Railways' commitment to enhancing freight operations. The cargo transported in August 2024 comprised diverse commodities, including 205,920 tons of coal, 136,290 tons of container cargo, and 43,560 tons of raw phosphate,

along with other miscellaneous loose cargo. This diverse mix of goods reflects the expanding role of Pakistan Railways in supporting the country's logistics and supply chain requirements.

Significantly, the allocated freight budget for August 2024 was PKR 1,749 million. However, the actual revenue generated from freight operations exceeded this target by PKR 643 million, representing a 37% increase over the budgeted amount.

This surplus revenue highlights the growing efficiency and demand for Pakistan Railways' freight services.

In the first two months of the fiscal year 2024-2025, Pakistan Railways Karachi Division has demonstrated even more significant growth.

Against the allocated freight target of PKR 2,840

million, the division has generated PKR 4,298 million, marking a remarkable increase of PKR 1,458 million - a 51% rise over the target.

For the fiscal year 2023-2024, the Karachi Division had an allocated freight revenue target of PKR 18,813 million. However, the division surpassed this target, earning PKR 23,296 million, which is an impressive PKR 4,483 million above the initial target.

Divisional Superintendent of Pakistan Railways, Karachi, Mr. Nasir Khalily, expressed his satisfaction with the performance of the freight team.

He commended their efforts and reiterated that in the coming months, additional resources will be focused on increasing the number of freight trains originating from Karachi.

These expansions will be carefully managed through

meticulous analysis of demand and supply dynamics, and by increasing the turnaround of the rolling stock, thereby enhancing operational efficiency.

Nasir Khalily emphasized that the Karachi Division's success is a testament to the dedication of the freight team and the strategic focus on improving turnaround times, optimizing resources, and expanding services to meet the increasing demand.

With these milestones, Pakistan Railways is not only reinforcing its role in the country's economic development but also demonstrating its potential to be a significant contributor to the national exchequer.

The continued efforts to optimize freight services, increase efficiency, and exceed targets signal a positive trajectory for the organization's future.

Mobilink Bank bags 'Best Digital Banking Services' Award

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has secured the prestigious title of 'Best Digital Banking Services' (Microfinance Category) at the 21st Annual Excellence Awards hosted by CFA Society Pakistan. This marks the Bank's second consecutive win, claiming the same honor last year, solidifying its position as a leader in digital banking innovation.

In 2024, Mobilink Bank witnessed a 56% growth across its digital channels. Monthly transactions via its digital platforms now exceed PKR 20 billion, representing a 50% increase.

Additionally, PKR 4.5 billion has been booked through the Dost app in loans, reflecting an impressive 422% growth.

The bank also takes pride in being the only microfinance bank offering real-time AI-based account opening through its Dost App.

Boasting a customer base of 44 million, including 30% women, Pakistan's leading fintech JazzCash achieved an 83% YoY service revenue surge driven by a Gross Transaction Value of PKR 7.4 trillion in Q2 2024.



JazzCash's extensive network, comprising 252,000 registered agents and over 357,000 merchants, facilitated considerable digitalization of society and payment/loan services, effectively transforming Pakistan's financial landscape.

Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank, highlighted, "Our innovative digital offerings embody our vision of a future-ready bank, tailored to meet the evolving needs of our customers. Our consumer app - Dost, not only addresses market gaps but also paves the way for the future of financial services. Introducing the 'Inheritance Calculator,' an industry-first tool within the app,

further strengthens our commitment to empowering individuals, particularly women, through technology. This recognition by CFA Society Pakistan boosts our confidence further to steer closer to our mission of digital and financial inclusion for all."

The Bank also demonstrated its strong commitment to gender equality and financial inclusion by topping the State Bank of Pakistan's Women Friendliness Grid scorecard.

The score highlights Mobilink Bank's dedicated efforts to advance gender equity and support women, especially within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.

Looking ahead, the Bank is committed to transforming the microfinance sector with its advanced digital solutions.

By offering premium financial services, Mobilink Bank strives to reach remote and underserved areas where formal banking is inaccessible. This approach improves financial access, particularly for women who are frequently excluded from traditional systems.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population.

Markets fluctuate ahead of Fed as China woes dent sentiment

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Equity investors took cautiously Monday as they struggled to build on recent equity gains, with debate swirling around how big an expected US interest rate cut will be this week, while sentiment was being dragged by worries about the Chinese economy.

The yen strengthened to less than 140 to the dollar for the first time since mid-2023 ahead of the Federal Reserve decision on Wednesday -- and a policy meeting at the Bank of Japan two days later -- while gold ticked up to a new record.

Data showing US infla-

tion slowed more than expected last month to its weakest pace since February 2021 has sparked fresh talk that Fed officials will announce a bumper 50-basis-point cut and continue easing into the new year.

However, while bets on such a move have risen, some analysts warned that it could send a signal that decision-makers are worried about the economy, particularly after two readings showing the labour market was softening.

While bank officials have played their cards close to their chest, they have hinted that they are willing to discuss a bigger

cut, while former New York Fed chief Bill Dudley said he thought "there's a strong case for 50".

Michael Krautzberger at AllianzGI said: "The Fed, like other central bankers, are now focused on economic growth rather than inflation risks and becoming increasingly worried about being behind the curve on policy -- cutting rates too late to avert a recession or sharper growth slowdown."

"Therefore, in our view, the risks of larger rate cuts at subsequent meetings this year cannot be discounted, especially if labour market activity deteriorates faster than

currently expected and inflation continues to head towards target."

All three main indexes on Wall Street pushed higher Friday, with the Dow and S&P 500 within a whisker of their record highs.

But Asian markets fluctuated, with Hong Kong, Sydney, Taipei, Mumbai, Bangkok and Manila edging up but Singapore and Wellington slipping along with London, Paris and Frankfurt.

Trade was muted in Asia with holidays in Tokyo, Shanghai, Jakarta and Seoul.

On currency markets the yen briefly hit 139.58 per

dollar -- its strongest level since July last year -- while gold struck a fresh record high of \$2,589.70.

Traders are keeping tabs on developments in China after more weak data on credit, retail sales, industrial production and house prices stoked concerns about the state of the world's number two economy.

The figures "collectively add to concerns that policy measures announced in recent weeks and months have so far failed to have any measurable impact in lifting economic growth thus far in the third quarter after the weak second quarter performance", said

National Australia Bank's Ray Attrill.

He added that investors will be keenly watching the government's upcoming Politburo meeting -- the date of which has yet to be set.

In light of the latest batch of disappointing figures, the central bank outlined plans to support the economy, saying it will "make maintaining price stability and pushing for the mild rebound in prices an important consideration for monetary policy and meet reasonable financing demand for consumption in a more targeted way".

The Fed's decision is set to be followed by the BoJ

on Friday, with most analysts expecting it to hold rates after a surprise hike at the end of July sparked turmoil on markets.

"A consecutive hike would likely be seen as too aggressive, especially given criticism that the BoJ's hawkish stance contributed to global market turbulence in early August," said IG analyst Tony Sycamore.

"That said, stronger-than-expected inflation and wage growth in Japan over the past month have given the BoJ confidence in a wage-price cycle that could keep inflation above two percent, paving the way for more policy tightening."

Name Correction

I Muhammad Qaiser Javed s/o Jaffar Ali Khan resident of Allipur Islamabad, announcing through newspaper that I have passed Annual Examination 2004, Roll No.714296 under registration No.0342010098 from Federal Board Islamabad in which my name is Qaiser Ali s/o Jaffar Ali which I have changed. The decision to change it to Muhammad Qaiser Javed s/o Jaffar Ali Khan in the permanent consciousness has been made so that the record can be correct. The above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I have not concealed anything thereof.



In brief

Pakistani cueists qualify for knockouts

MONGOLIA (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani snooker players Awais Munir and Asjad Iqbal have qualified for Round 16 in the Snooker World Cup in Mongolia after giving exceptional performances in the group stages. Both players remained undefeated, securing top positions in their respective groups. Awais Munir showed remarkable resilience in his match against Iran's Siyavosh Mozayani. Despite losing the first frame by 9-63, he made a strong comeback and won the next three frames with scores of 78-34, 59-50, and 73-13. He defeated Mongolia's Kash Uchjir and Oman's Hussain Al-Wati in straight frames. Asjad Iqbal defeated Qatar's Ali Alohaiddi by 3-1 followed by two dominant 3-0 victories against Mongolia's Batarckhuu Naranhuu and Japan's Junji Miyazawa. With their undefeated streaks, Awais and Asjad are now poised for strong performances in the pre-quarterfinals, aiming to secure further success on the global stage.

New football central studio launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalization Committee has launched its new Football Central Studio, a cutting-edge facility designed to connect the football community in a creative, engaging and professional environment. Located at the Football House, the studio will serve as a hub for fans, national team players, media and influencers, said a press release. The studio will provide a space for media and influencers to produce high-quality videos, interviews and other digital media content. Speaking at the launch, Haroon Malik, Chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation Normalization Committee (NC), said, "The Football Content Studio represents our vision to make football more accessible and engaging for everyone. We are providing a space where anyone passionate about the game whether they're a fan, player, or reporter can showcase their love for football in a professional environment."

Pak to feature in SAFF U17 C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The national football team will leave from Islamabad to Bhutan on Monday to feature in the SAFF U17 Championship 2024. The government has issued NOC to the national team to participate in the championship, said a statement issued here. The SAFF Under-17 Championship will be played from September 20 to 30 in Thimphu. The national team will begin their campaign against Nepal on September 21.

PNF Netball Cup from Sep 18

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Netball Federation (PNF) Netball Cup under the auspices of Pakistan Netball Federation will start from September 18 at PSB Coaching Centre, Karachi. According to Chairman, Pakistan Netball Federation, Mudassir Arain the preparations for the event were underway. About 40 teams are participating in the tournament. One boys and five girls categories competitions will be held in the tournament, including girls under 13, girls under 15, girls under 17, girls under 19, girls open and boys open category. The tournament will continue till September 21, and prizes will be distributed among the winning players at the end of the tournament.

South Africa Women beat Pakistan Women by 10 runs

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): South Africa beat Pakistan by 10 runs in the first T20I to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20I series here at the Multan Cricket Stadium in Multan on Monday evening.

Chasing 133 to win, Pakistan struggled from the outset, losing half of their side in the 13th over with 47 runs on the board. At that time, captain Fatima Sana joined Aliya Riaz and the pair knitted an unbroken 75-run partnership for the sixth wicket, but fell 10 runs short of the target.

Right-handed batter Fatima, scored an unbeaten 37 off 24 balls, which included five fours. Aliya, brought up her second T20I half-century and returned undefeated on 52 off 39 balls, smashing five

fours and a six.

For South Africa, Marizanne Kapp and Tumi Sekhukhune took two wickets each.

Earlier, after being put into bat, South Africa managed to score 132 for four in their allotted 20 overs. Left-arm spinner Sadia Iqbal was the pick of the bowlers for the hosts, bagging three wickets for 34 in four overs. Sadia's third scalp in the 18th over of the innings marked her 50th T20I wicket in 41 matches. Former captain Nida Dar, playing her 154th T20I, bowled economically and gave away only 11 runs in her four overs and took the prized scalp of Kapp.

For South Africa, opening batter Tazmin Brits returned undefeated on 56 off 63, hitting five fours.

She knitted a 63-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Sune Luus (27, 27b, 4x4s) and an unbroken 28-run partnership with Chloe Tryon (15 not out, seven balls, 2x6s).

Both sides will now feature in the second T20I at the same venue on Wednesday evening. The first ball of the match will be bowled at 1900 PST.

Scores in brief
South Africa beat Pakistan by 10 runs

South Africa 132-4, 20 overs (Tazmin Brits 56 not out, Sune Luus 27; Sadia Iqbal 3-34)

Pakistan 122-5, 20 overs (Aliya Riaz 52 not out, Fatima Sana 37 not out; Tumi Sekhukhune 2-15,

Marizanne Kapp 2-22)
Player of the match – Tazmin Brits (South Africa).

Anderson a target for USA's Major League Cricket

LONDON (Agencies): England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker James Anderson is a surprise target for Major League Cricket.

BBC Sport understands senior figures with at least one MLC team have had their interest pricked by Anderson's comments last month about a return to white-ball cricket.

The unnamed franchise are now set to explore whether the 42-year-old would be interested in participating in the third edition of the T20 tournament in the United States next year. Anderson could earn about £135,000 from a short stint in MLC, which lured some stellar names from the game for the 2024 edition. The most high profile of those was Australia captain Pat Cummins, who has a lucrative contract with the San Francisco Unicorns until 2027.

Fellow Australians Steve Smith, Glenn Maxwell and Travis Head were all part of the star-studded Washington Freedom team, coached by Ricky Ponting, which won this year's tournament. Anderson, who finished with 704 Test wickets, retired from international cricket following the



first Test against West Indies at Lord's in July.

He immediately joined the England backroom team and remains on a central contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) until the end of September. Anderson said last week he would continue in his role as a fast-bowling mentor for England's Test series against Pakistan in October and was planning to join the side for their tour of New Zealand in December.

Anderson's last competitive T20 match was in 2014, when he played in the Blast for Lancashire.

His decision to dedicate the last 10 years of his career to red-ball cricket means he has never played franchise cricket overseas

but he believes he is "fit enough" and "good enough" to play the format.

The league, which has influential backers including Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella, has expressed a desire to lure some of England's top players to the competition. England World Cup winners Liam Plunkett and Jason Roy have both taken part in the past two versions of MLC. In May 2023, Roy gave up his ECB white-ball contract worth up to £70,000 to sign a two-year deal with the Los Angeles Knight Riders worth £300,000. MLC launched in 2023 with a 19-game season but will expand to 34 games in 2025. The tournament was granted official List A status in May.

Coe among seven candidates to be new IOC president

LAUSANNE (Agencies): World Athletics president Lord Coe has been named as one of seven confirmed candidates to succeed Thomas Bach as International Olympic Committee (IOC) president.

Bach announced at the Paris Olympics last month that he intends to stand down after the end of his second term next year.

Britain's two-time Olympic 1500m champion Coe faces competition from Spaniard Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr, France's David Lappartient, Zimbabwean Kirsty Coventry, Japan's Morinari Watanabe, Swede Johan Eliasch and Prince Feisal al

Hussein of Jordan.

Coventry, a seven-time Olympic swimming medalist, is bidding to become the first woman and African to head the IOC.

German lawyer Bach has been in charge since 2013.

The new IOC president will be elected at a session in ancient Olympia from 18-21 March 2025 and will take over in June of that year.

Candidates will make presentations to the full IOC membership at a private meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, in January.

All IOC presidents have been men, with eight of the nine from Europe and one from the United States.

Coe said Olympic sport

was "fundamental to my DNA" on social media.

"The Covid years saw many people struggle through inactivity and many sports organisations suffer through lack of funds. We need to invest more in both over the next decade," he added.

"A laser-like focus on sport must be the priority for the IOC. I believe I can help achieve this and more."

Under current IOC rules Coe would not be able to serve the full eight-year first term of office as he reaches the IOC age limit of 70 in 2026, but he abolished similar restrictions on becoming president of World Athletics.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan U-17 football team group photo on the occasion of departure to Bhutan to participate in the SAFF U17 Championship.

I haven't done justice to my talent: Faheem

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan all-rounder Faheem Ashraf recently stated that he is considering the ongoing Champions One-Day Cup as a platform that will pave the way for his comeback to the national team.

Faheem is representing Saud Shakeel-led Dolphins in the Champions One-Day Cup. He scored 35-ball 41 and took one wicket in Dolphins' season opener against Panthers.

During an interview with a local news channel, the 30-year-old all-rounder expressed his dissatisfaction with his performances, highlighting the need for improvement. But he also acknowledged that at times his good performances were overlooked.

"A career has its ups and downs, but a good performance can open many doors. What's destined will come, and if it's not in your destiny, it won't happen," said Faheem.

"Perhaps I haven't done justice to my talent. At times, it's disappointing when, despite performing, opportunities don't come your way. But I try to stay positive and avoid negative thoughts," he added.

Faheem also commented on the importance of the Champions One-Day Cup for him and other players, who are eyeing a comeback to the Pakistan team for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

"Some will be trying to make a comeback, while others will be looking to cement their places. It's an important opportunity for young players to perform and get noticed by selectors and franchise teams," he stated.

"I'm aiming to perform well here and make a comeback for the Champions Trophy," he further added.

He also shared that he will continue to serve the game of cricket until his fitness allows.

"As long as I have the energy, I will keep playing cricket. Once I no longer have that, I'll step away from the game," he concluded.

Notably, Faheem Ashraf last played for Pakistan in the Perth Test against Australia, while his last white-ball match was the Asia Cup 2023 clash against India.

China beat Pakistan in Asian Champions Trophy semi-final

HULUNBUIR CITY (Agencies): China defeated Pakistan 2-0 in the penalty shoot-out during the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2024 semi-final clash here at the Moqi Hockey Training Base on Monday.

Pakistan and China both managed one goal each in the regular time after an intense battle, however, the Green Shirts failed to score a single penalty, leading to their ouster from the tournament. The home side scored two goals in the penalty shoot-out to secure their place in the final.

For the unversed, Pakistan lost only one game in the group stages with arch-rivals India defeating them 2-1 in the final group match. Pakistan started the blockbuster clash on a high as they took the lead just 10 minutes into the first quarter, courtesy of a precise

assist from Hannan Shahid, who fed the ball inside the circle to Nadeem.

Nadeem effortlessly smashed the ball into the net to give Pakistan a head start. Pakistan's lead, however, was short-lived as India earned a penalty corner.

India's skipper Harmanpreet Singh took the penalty corner for India and successfully sent his drag-flick into the bottom-right corner, helping India equalise just a few minutes later.

The defending champions took the lead in the second quarter when Abhishek fed the ball to Harmanpreet near the circle, who similarly converted it into a goal.

The remaining two quarters of the blockbuster Asian Hockey Champions Trophy clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India remained goalless despite

both sides making ferocious attacks on each other's goalposts.

The 2-1 victory over Pakistan, meant India won all of their group-stage fixtures and topped the standings with 15 points. Whereas, Pakistan had two victories and as many draws before their defeat against India.

Remember, Pakistan have already qualified for the semi-final of the ongoing Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2024 after thumping China 5-1 on Thursday.

Abdul Rehman opened the scoring for Pakistan before Nadeem Ahmed and Hannan Shahid scored two goals each to secure a dominant 5-1 victory for the Green Shirts. This is Pakistan's second consecutive victory in the tournament as they defeated Japan 2-1 in their third game.

Wellalage, Samarawickrama crowned ICC Players of the Month for August

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced Sri Lanka players Dunith Wellalage and Harshitha Samarawickrama as the ICC Players of the Month for August 2024.

The rare double for Sri Lanka comes after Wellalage excelled in a home ODI series against India and Samarawickrama hit a purple patch on a tour of Ireland, said a press release.

The only previous instance of players from the same country winning the awards the same month was when Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana were named the Players of the Month in June this year.

Wellalage won the coveted monthly award ahead of South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj and West Indies fast bowler Jayden Seales, who were the others shortlisted.

Wellalage won the award after a Player of the Series performance that helped his side to a 2-0 series win over India. The 31-year-old left-hander had scores of 67 not out, 39 and two, while also picking up seven wickets in the series including a haul of five for 27 in the third

match.

This is the fifth time that a Sri Lanka player has won the men's award, the previous winners being Angelo Mathews (May 2022), Prabath Jayasuriya (July 2022), Wanindu Hasaranga (June 2023) and Kamindu Mendis (March 2024).

Wellalage was elated at winning the award and said that the award comes as a great encouragement. "This is great news for me and brings immense satisfaction, as this recognition gives me further strength to continue doing the good work I do as a player and contribute to my team to reach excellence in the field."

"Recognition such as this, coming from the International Cricket Council, is great news for young players like us and will certainly encourage young players in the game."

Samarawickrama, who edged out the Ireland duo of Orla Prendergast and Gaby Lewis, had a fine run on a tour of Ireland that saw her become only the third woman cricketer from Sri Lanka to notch a century in ODIs.

The 26-year-old left-hander aggregated 151 runs in

the two T20Is played in Dublin at a strike rate of 169.66, which included a match-winning 86 not out off 45 balls in the first match. She scored 172 in three ODIs in Belfast at a strike rate of 82.69 including a knock of 105 in the second match.

Samarawickrama is only the second Sri Lanka player to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month award. Captain Chamari Athapaththu has won the award three times – in September 2024, May 2024 and July 2024.

Samarawickrama said this recognition was very important since it came less than three weeks before the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024.

"I am extremely happy with this recognition, which I consider a new high in my career. It certainly gives me a lot of confidence ahead of the big competition, the Women's T20 World Cup."

"This achievement would not have been possible without the incredible support network around me—my teammates, coaches, parents, my sister, brother, friends, and mentors. I take this opportunity to thank them all."

Champions One-Day Cup: Panthers beat Lions by 84 runs with Shadab's heroics



FAISLABAD (Monitoring Desk): Half-centuries by Mubasir Khan and Haider Ali, backed-up by player of the match performance by Shadab Khan helped Lake City Panthers

to beat Nurpur Lions by 84 runs for their second victory in three matches in the Bahria Town Champions One-Day Cup at the Iqbal Stadium here on Monday.

In a day match in front of the

PCB cameras, Mubasir scored 90 and Haider contributed 84 as the two batters switched a 144-run fifth-wicket partnership to lift Panthers from 51 for four to 283 all-out in 46.5 overs. Shadab

Khan then followed by his 29-ball 37 with three for 42 to skittle out Lions for 199 in 35.2 overs, leaving the side winless after two matches.

After Tuesday's rest day, action will resume on Wednesday with a day match between Dolphins and UMT Markhors. Markhors have won both their previous matches, while Dolphins will aim to win their first match after losing the previous match to Panthers by 50 runs.

Mubasir hit 10 fours and three sixes in a 97-ball innings, while Haider's 99-ball knock included five fours and three sixes. Haider is now the leading run-getter in the tournament with 149 runs. The two had joined hands after Saim Ayub (10), Azan Awais (1), Umar Siddiq (0) and Usman Khan (11) were back in the hut to leave Panthers tottering.

After Mubasir missed out on

a well-deserved century, Haider put on 67 runs for the sixth wicket with Shadab, whose 29-ball knock was laced with five fours. After the partnership ended at the score of 262 with the fall of Haider, Panthers lost their way and were bowled out for 283 in 46.5 overs.

For Lions, Ahmed Daniyal and Shaheen Shah Afridi took three wickets apiece, conceding 47 and 57 runs, while Aamer Yamin and Sirajuddin took two wickets each at 33 and 49 runs, respectively.

In turn, Lions slipped to 44 for three before Imam-ul-Haq (60, 62b, 5x4, 2x6) and Muhammad Irfan Khan (35)

repaired the damage by adding 83 runs for the fourth wicket. But when Shadab Khan broke the stand by dismissing Imam at the score of 127, Lions were sent spinning out for 199 in 35.2 overs.

Besides Shadab Khan's three

for 42, Usama Mir also snapped up three for 55. Fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain took two wickets for 28 runs, to surge to the top of the bowlers table with nine wickets.

Scores in brief
Match 5 – Lake City Panthers beat Nurpur Lions by 84 runs

Lake City Panthers 283 all out, 46.5 overs (Mubasir Khan 90, Haider Ali 84, Shadab Khan 37; Ahmed Daniyal 3-47, Shaheen Shah Afridi 3-57, Aamer Yamin 2-33, Sirajuddin 2-49)

Nurpur Lions 199 all out, 35.2 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 60, Muhammad Irfan Khan 35, Khushdil Shah 22, Omair Bin Yousuf 20; Shadab Khan 3-42, Usama Mir 3-55, Mohammad Hasnain 2-28)

Player of the match: Shadab Khan (Lake City Panthers)

Next fixture (18 September): Dolphins vs UMT Markhors, Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad at 9.30am (local time).



In brief

Operation conducted to end encroachment

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police along with the City District Government Rawalpindi conducted major operation to end encroachments in bid to maintain traffic flow. According to police spokesman, the operation was launched, on the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, which was carried out in Bara Bazaar, Namak Mandi, Sabzi Mandi, and surrounding areas to purge the city from encroachments. DSP City, SHO City, and other officers, alongside the district administration were present on the occasion. During the operation, several illegal structures were also demolished, and encroachments that were impeding pedestrian and vehicular movement were removed. DSP City said that efforts were underway to prevent future encroachments and ensure compliance with the instructions set forth by CPO. DSP City emphasized that the crackdown will continue in collaboration with the district administration to completely eradicate illegal encroachments from the city.

IRSA releases 226,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 226,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 168,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1545.16 feet and was 147.16 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 91,900 cusecs and 130,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1227.50 feet, which was 179.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded each 19,600 cusecs. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 156,300, 114,200, 106,000 and 61,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 28,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Mehfil-e-Milad held at PAC

RAWALPINDI (APP): A Mehfil-e-Milad Mustafa (S.A.W) was organised at Punjab Arts Council, Rawalpindi here on Monday. The students belonging to different schools presented beautiful Naats, and received tribute from the audience. The event was organised in collaboration with the All Pakistan Schools Management Association (APPSMA), Director PAC, Sajjad Hussain and President APPSMA (North Punjab) Abrar Ahmed Khan were the honorary guests at the event. Director PAC Sajjad Hussain said in his address that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is the reason for the creation of the universe. Allah Almighty sent him as a mercy for all the worlds. He said that we all can achieve worldly and hereafter success by following his teachings. He said that APPSMA was among main stakeholders of PAC and it has played an important role in organizing all national and religious level programs. President APPSMA (North), Abrar Ahmad Khan on the occasion underlined the need for an active role and responsibility of parents and teachers to educate the youth on Ishaq-e-Mustafa (S.A.W). "You can make your life beautiful by following the Prophet's (PBUH) life and Sunnah", he said while addressing students.



RAWALPINDI: Children viewing model of Masjid Nabi and Kaaba at Kacha road Pirwadhi on the eve of jashane Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAWW).

DC review arrangements of Milad un Nabi procession route

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema along with City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani here on Monday visited the main procession route of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (PBUH) and reviewed all the arrangements including security and administrative matters. Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Hasan Tariq, SP Rawal Town, officers of the departments concerned and members of Milad Committees were also present on this occasion. Hasan Tariq and SP Rawal gave a detailed briefing on the security of Milad-ul-Nabi proces-

sions and other administrative matters.

Like Muharram, special measures have been taken to ensure peace on Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (PUBH), the DC said. All the encroachments from the routes of the processions should be removed immediately, he directed the authorities.

The cleanliness work of the routes of the processions should also be completed by eve of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, he ordered.

The organizers of Milad Committees should follow Standard Operating Procedures and the processions should be culminated as per given time, he said adding, new routes

would not be allowed other than the prescribed routes of the processions.

Strict implementation of the code of conduct issued by the Punjab government regarding Eid Milad-ul-Nabi should be ensured, he directed the officers.

More than 5,000 police personnel would perform their duties for the security of 108 processions of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi in Rawalpindi, the CPO said. 450 officers would also be present for the security of the processions, he said and informed that fool-proof security arrangements would be made in Rawalpindi for the security of the processions of Eid Milad-ul-Nabi.

ICT admin exceeds polio vaccination target

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has successfully wrapped up a seven-day anti-polio vaccination campaign, surpassing its initial goal and ensuring wider coverage across the Federal Capital.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon chaired a review meeting to assess the outcomes of the campaign. He was informed that the set target was to vaccinate 461,125 children.

However, the drive exceeded expectations, with 497,925 children vaccinated by the end of the week. This amounted to a coverage rate of 108%. The campaign reached various segments of the population. A total of 56,493 children were vaccinated in schools, 21,252 visiting families, and 23,242 children in door to door campaign.

Alongside vaccinations, awareness efforts were made to inform people about the importance of polio prevention. Announcements were made in 207 mosques, and 409 families participated in awareness sessions.

course marks a vital step toward inclusive education in Pakistan. By equipping educators with the tools for inclusive teaching, we are fostering an environment where all learners, regardless of ability, can thrive. We remain committed to refining the course and expanding its reach through collaboration."

The experts from academic and development sectors attended the event and shared their insights on the practical applications and future impact of inclusive education in Pakistan. Dr. Shamsa Aziz, Chairperson, Department of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad and Dr. Zahid Majeed, Assistant Professor at Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad were among the experts who shared valuable knowledge and information with the participants. The launch of this course aligns with SDGs and Pakistan's national education goals and reflects a broader commitment to meeting the needs of children and youth with disabilities.

It is a key step in ensuring that no one is left behind, empowering teachers and educators with the tools and knowledge to foster inclusive learning environment.

Course on inclusive education launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant step towards promoting inclusive education in Pakistan, Sightsavers, an international organisation working to prevent avoidable blindness and to promote inclusive education, and the Federal College of Education hosted an event to launch a new course on Inclusive Education.

The event, featured key stakeholders from the education and development sectors. This launch represents the culmination of extensive planning and dedicated efforts aimed at enhancing inclusive learning opportunities for children and youth with disabilities across Pakistan.

The course is designed by experts and has been approved by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Punjab University (PU). The Federal College of Education has already started offering the course, further strengthening efforts to foster inclusive education.

Prof. Dr. Samia Rehman Dogar, Director of Federal College of Education, delivered the welcome remarks, sharing her vision for an inclusive future in education. She highlighted the course's development journey, from its inception to approval, and emphasized its pivotal role in promoting equitable learning for all students. In addition to outlining the course implementation plan, she underscored key elements such as inclusive pedagogy, accessibility, equity, and real-world applications, which are designed to drive societal transformation.

On the occasion of World Ozone Day 2024 being marked today globally under the theme "Ozone for Life: Solutions for a

Ms. Munazza Gillani, Director for Pakistan and the Middle East at Sightsavers, offered insights into Sightsavers' mission and commitment to social inclusion, highlighting the importance of this course in their work to integrate inclusive practices in education and health across the region. While expressing her vision for the course, Ms. Gillani emphasized that this initiative should not be limited to the Federal College of Education alone.

"We aim to expand this course to other educational institutions across the country so that more educators and students can benefit from its inclusive approach," she stated. She further added, "We are committed to continuously updating the course to ensure it remains relevant and impactful, keeping pace with evolving educational needs and inclusive practices."

Prof. Dr. Tariq Mehmood Chauhdary, Director, Institute of Education and Research, Punjab University, remarked, "This

Warming Planet", she reaffirmed the present government's dedication to preserving the ozone layer and combating climate change.

Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted that this year's theme emphasises the critical role of the ozone layer in protecting life on Earth and highlights the interconnectedness of ozone layer protection and climate action. It reflects the ongoing efforts to address both ozone depletion and global warming, reinforcing the importance of continued international cooperation and innovative solutions to tackle these environmental challenges.

The United Nations' annual Ozone Day is observed every year on September 16, aiming to celebrate the adoption of the Montreal Protocol and raises awareness about the importance of the ozone layer. It also serves as a reminder of the global commitment to protecting this vital component of Earth's atmosphere and addressing the broad-

er challenges of environmental sustainability.

The PM's coordinator said that there is pressing need to engage all stakeholders' including educational institutions and media practitioners and raise their understanding about the importance of the ozone layer, a critical component of Earth's atmosphere, which protects life by blocking harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. "Not protecting ozone layer is a grave risk for human health and environmental sustainability. Because, its depletion poses various risks including increased incidences of skin cancer, cataracts, and adverse impacts on ecosystems," Romina Khurshid Alam warned. "However, Pakistan recognises the importance of this protective shield and has committed to adhering to the Montreal Protocol's goals for the protection of the ozone layer," she informed the participants.

Highlighting Pakistan's

efforts for phase-out of ozone-depleting gases, she said that the country contained use of first generation of ozone depleting substances by 2009 and achieved a 50% reduction in hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by January 2020.

Pakistan is also on track to meet our 67.5% reduction target by 2025, having transitioned many industries to ozone-friendly technologies, Ms Alam emphasised.

"Our collective determination towards human and environmental sustainability continues as we prepare for the forthcoming hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) phase-down under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, an international agreement to gradually reduce the consumption and production of HFCs.

Secretary climate change & environmental coordination ministry Aisha Humera Ch. said that World Ozone Day 2024 is a testament to the col-

Constitutional amendment to be made with consensus: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly of Pakistan Muslim League-N, Bilal Azhar Kiyani on Monday said that constitutional amendment would be made with consensus of the political parties.

Amendment in the constitution is need of the hour,

he said while talking to a private television channel.

Increasing number of judges would help resolve large number of cases pending in the courts, he said. Commenting on appointment of judges in the courts, he said, there is a mechanism for appointing judges in the courts.

In reply to a question about support of the coalition partners for completing task of the constitutional amendment, he said, we will have required numbers before presenting the document in the house. He further said that legal reforms would help provide speedy justice to the people.

ANF recovers 437 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 437 kg drugs worth Rs 80 million and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He said that 6 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near M-1 Toll Plaza Islamabad and an accused was arrested.

3.6 kg hashish was recovered from an accused netted in Kalabat, Town Bypass, Haripur.

The arrested accused confessed to supplying drugs to students of educational institutions.

The spokesman informed that in other oper-

ation, 141.6 kg hashish and 16.8 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle checked on Ring Road Lahore and an accused was arrested.

126 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in North Bypass Gadap Town Karachi and an accused was arrested during the operation.

64 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from Ontario at the IMO office in Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi.

58.8 kg hashish was recovered from a truck stopped near Ring Road Peshawar and an accused was arrested.

30 kg opium was recovered from an accused in 'Phalanwala Chowk

Shahdara', Lahore. 27.6 kg hashish was recovered near Faizpur Interchange Lahore and a drug dealer was arrested during the operation.

In 9th operation, 21.5 kg ice absorbed in clothes was recovered from two cartons booked for Saudi Arabia at a cargo complex at Lahore Airport.

In 10th operation, 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Karachi Airport.

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

CDA Chairman for timely completion of Jail

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Monday directed the authorities concerned to expedite construction work on Islamabad Model Jail to ensuring its timely completion.

The CDA chairman in that regard chaired a meeting which was attended by the Project Director of the Public Works Department (PWD) along with other relevant officers of CDA and PWD. The meeting discussed the modalities of smooth transition of the construction work on the Islamabad Model Jail from PWD to CDA.

Discussions were held to ensure that the transition process takes place

efficiently and promptly for making CDA an executing agency for the project in consultation with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Planning, Development and Initiatives. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that till the complete transition, PWD should work in full coordination with CDA to ensure seamless progress of the project.

A briefing was also given on the current status of the completed and ongoing work at the Islamabad Model Jail. Chairman Randhawa stressed the importance of completing the Phase-I of construction work by the assigned deadline. This phase includes the completion of critical infrastructure

such as the boundary wall, barracks, the administrative block, roads and watchtowers (sentry posts).

According to the briefing, approximately 70-80% of the boundary wall and administrative block have already been completed, while work on the barracks and watchtowers (sentry posts) is still underway.

Following the successful completion of Phase I of the Islamabad Model Prison, the work on Phase II will soon commence under the supervision of CDA. This project, once completed, will mark a significant advancement in Islamabad's infrastructure, providing a state-of-the-art facility for the prisoners that meets modern standards of safety and security.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing at the World Ozone Day 2024 event in Islamabad. —APP Photo

Pakistan committed to global ozone layer protection for human, environmental sustainability: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam said that Pakistan has demonstrated a strong commitment and played its role as a part of global efforts to protect the ozone layer through its participation in international agreements, implementation of national policies, and collaboration with global partners.

The country's efforts in phase-out initiatives under the Montreal protocol to restore and preserve the ozone layer for future generations has been globally recognised and presented as a case study, the PM's climate aide highlighted while addressing as a chief guest at the national experts' dialogue regarding the World Ozone Day 2024 held here on Monday in the climate change & environmental coordination ministry.

On the occasion of World Ozone Day 2024 being marked today globally under the theme

"Ozone for Life: Solutions for a

Warming Planet", she reaffirmed the present government's dedication to preserving the ozone layer and combating climate change.

Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted that this year's theme emphasises the critical role of the ozone layer in protecting life on Earth and highlights the interconnectedness of ozone layer protection and climate action. It reflects the ongoing efforts to address both ozone depletion and global warming, reinforcing the importance of continued international cooperation and innovative solutions to tackle these environmental challenges.

The United Nations' annual Ozone Day is observed every year on September 16, aiming to celebrate the adoption of the Montreal Protocol and raises awareness about the importance of the ozone layer. It also serves as a reminder of the global commitment to protecting this vital component of Earth's atmosphere and addressing the broad-

er challenges of environmental sustainability.

The PM's coordinator said that there is pressing need to engage all stakeholders' including educational institutions and media practitioners and raise their understanding about the importance of the ozone layer, a critical component of Earth's atmosphere, which protects life by blocking harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. "Not protecting ozone layer is a grave risk for human health and environmental sustainability. Because, its depletion poses various risks including increased incidences of skin cancer, cataracts, and adverse impacts on ecosystems," Romina Khurshid Alam warned. "However, Pakistan recognises the importance of this protective shield and has committed to adhering to the Montreal Protocol's goals for the protection of the ozone layer," she informed the participants.

Highlighting Pakistan's

efforts for phase-out of ozone-depleting gases, she said that the country contained use of first generation of ozone depleting substances by 2009 and achieved a 50% reduction in hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by January 2020.

Pakistan is also on track to meet our 67.5% reduction target by 2025, having transitioned many industries to ozone-friendly technologies, Ms Alam emphasised.

"Our collective determination towards human and environmental sustainability continues as we prepare for the forthcoming hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) phase-down under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, an international agreement to gradually reduce the consumption and production of HFCs.

Secretary climate change & environmental coordination ministry Aisha Humera Ch. said that World Ozone Day 2024 is a testament to the col-

lective efforts of nations in addressing one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. Pakistan is proud of the progress we have made and remains resolute in our commitment to protecting the ozone layer and combating climate change.

"World Ozone Day serves as a powerful reminder of the collective effort required to protect our planet's delicate balance," the climate change ministry secretary remarked.

She said Pakistan is proud to be a part of the global movement to preserve the ozone layer, and we will continue to work diligently to ensure a healthier environment for current and future generations.

She said further that the protection of the ozone layer is integral to ensuring a stable climate and a healthy environment. Our ongoing initiatives and international collaborations reflect Pakistan's dedication to these goals.

"As we move forward, our focus will remain on implementing effective solutions and fostering public awareness," the climate change ministry secretary stressed.

Spelling out future actions for contributing to ozone layer protection efforts at global level, protecting ozone layer, Parliamentary Secretary of the climate change & environmental coordination Rana Ahmed Ateeq Sarwar said that looking ahead, Pakistan would remain committed to achieving the phase-out targets for remaining ozone-depleting substances (ODS) and addressing any emerging challenges that pose risks to ozone layer.

"More efforts would be taken to strengthen the country's regulatory framework regarding protection of ozone layer, enhance invest in research and development, raise public awareness and promote sustainable practices across all sectors," he emphasised.

Five projects completed

SAMANGAN (BNA): Public Health Directorate of Samangan has completed five development projects worth more than 38 million Afghanis, enhancing healthcare services in the region. During the inauguration ceremony, Mawlawi Mohibullah Bahari, Head of Public Health Directorate in Samangan, stated that these projects include the construction of 20 healthcare rooms across 10 health centers, boundary walls, parking facilities, green areas and installation of solar power systems.

Flash floods cause losses

CHARIKAR (Pajhwok): Flash floods destroyed about 40 residential houses, crops on 328 acres of land and washed away five water heads and a kilometer road in central Parwan province, an official said on Monday. Maulvi Abdul Alim Afzali, director of natural disasters preparedness department, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Initial figures suggest that recent flash floods destroyed 40 residential houses, two shops, five water heads, a 1km road in the province."

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

IEA announces new appointments

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has announced significant new appointments within key Islamic Emirate's departments following a decree issued by his Excellency, the Supreme Leader.

Mawlawi Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, stated on his X page that based on the decree of the Supreme Leader, Haji Abdul Qahir Idris, the former Deputy Minister of Revenues and Customs at the Ministry of Finance, has been appointed as the Director General of the NSIA. Meanwhile, Dr.

Faqir Muhammad Ziar, who previously held this position, has been assigned the role of Chairman of the Medical Council at the Ministry of Public Health.

Additionally, Mawlawi Sharifullah, the former Director of Economic Affairs for Helmand Province, has been appointed as the Police Chief of Farah Province.

The decree also details the appointment of Mawlawi Muhammad Gul Sayyad, who previously served as the Head of the Appellate Court in Farah Province, to the role of Head of the Military Court for the Kandahar Zone.

Mawlawi Ghulam Rahman Kazim, formerly the Head of Nangarhar Valley Agricultural Company, has been assigned as the Head of the Emirate Water and Wastewater Company. Furthermore, Mawlawi Ghulam Rasul Ehsani, the former Head of the Military Court for the Kandahar Zone, has been appointed as the Head of the Appellate Court in Farah Province.

These new appointments are part of the Islamic Emirate's commitment to enhancing governance and ensuring efficient administration across key sectors in the country.

250 families granted access to clean drinking water

QALAT (TOLONews): Access to clean drinking water has been provided to 250 families in Qalat, the capital of Zabol province.

The head of the Zabol River Basin Authority said that this drinking water network was built with financial assistance from a relief organization at a cost of \$45,000.

Abdul Karim Zulfiqar, Head of the Zabol River Basin Authority, said: "A total of 45,000 USD has been invested in this network, built by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), to provide clean drinking water to 250 families. We are working to create a large water network in Qalat in cooperation with relief organizations to solve the drinking water problem."

Khaliq Dad, a 45-year-old resident of Qalat, used to travel a kilometer every day to get clean drinking water, but now, with the establishment of a water supply network near his home, this challenge has been resolved.

Khaliq Dad said, "Previously, I brought clean drinking water from distant areas, and no one gave me water because they did not have enough themselves. Now, I am happy that a water network has been established here."

Some residents of Zabol are asking the interim government officials to address their other problems in addition to clean drinking water.

Samiullah, a resident of Zabol, said: "There is a shortage of water here, and the Islamic Emirate should pay special attention to this issue."

Another resident, Abdullah, said: "Our sewage system needs repair, roads should be built for us, and clean drinking water reservoirs should be created."

Recent droughts, in addition to Zabol, have caused drinking water shortages for residents in Kandahar, Helmand, and Uruzgan provinces, and groundwater levels in these provinces are also declining.

Many children attend school hungry: WFP

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Food Programme (WFP), which addresses hunger and food security, reported that many children in Afghanistan attend school hungry.

In a report released on Monday, the WFP emphasized that school meals are crucial for learning.

WFP stated, "In #Afghanistan, many children go to school hungry."

The program stated that fortified biscuits are distributed to more than 700,000 boys and girls in Afghanistan's primary schools every morning.

The initiative encourages families to send their children to school by providing these meals.

According to the WFP, for many children, these biscuits are the only food they have for the entire day.

In a video shared by the WFP on their X page, Madina said, "When I come to school, I don't eat breakfast at home, and if I don't get the biscuit, I stay hungry."

"We remind the world that school meals are essential for learning. For children like Madina, WFP biscuits might be all they eat all day," the program said.

Previously, the WFP reported that nearly three million children in Afghanistan are suffering from malnutrition.

The dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, especially among children, highlights the critical role of food assistance programs like the WFP's school meals. These efforts are vital for both education and survival.

As malnutrition rates continue to rise, more urgent international support is needed to prevent a worsening crisis. Without adequate intervention, Afghanistan's future generations will continue to suffer from hunger and lack of access to education.

Board meeting focuses on safety and quality



KABUL (BNA): The National Food and Medicine Board convened on Sunday under the chairmanship of Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs of the Islamic

Emirate of Afghanistan. The meeting brought together board members to address critical issues concerning food and medicine safety in the country.

Key topics discussed included food safety proto-

cols, import controls, and the establishment of a list of approved medicines. The board emphasized the importance of preventing smuggling and the distribution of sub-quality food and medicines.

In addition, measures to increase public awareness about the dangers of using inferior products were highlighted. The board also discussed the installation of standard testing devices to ensure quality control.

Ghazni varsity students want work on hostel completed

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): University students in southern Ghanzni province say they live in private hostels and pay heavy charges due to lack of a dormitory on the campus.

Construction work on a hostel for students at Ghazni University was launched under the previous government, but it is yet to be completed.

Samsoor, a student, told Pajhwok Afghan News the absence of a dormitory inside the university forced them to live outside in private places against high rents.

He said: "Ghazni University is situated in a desert

and private room are also located far away".

He said many students could not afford to pay rents and other expenses. He urged officials to complete the rest of work on the dormitory building as soon as possible and allot rooms to needy students.

He said: "Numerous students here do not have enough money. Some of them have even given up their education due to financial woes. Their problems will be resolved with the completion of the hostel building."

Similarly, another student, Mohammad Mukhtar, grumbled about inordinate-

ly high rents for rooms outside the university and encountering a host of problems.

He added: "Many students are facing economic problems — a big obstacle to our education. We urge the government to open the hostel as soon as possible."

Some other students held similar views and urged the government to address the issue with a sense of urgency. On the other hand, local officials also acknowledged the problem.

Ghazni University director Maulvi Abdul Wasi Mansoor told Pajhwok that the dormitory and some other buildings remained

incomplete on the campus.

He added some time ago, the Acting Minister of Higher Education visited these buildings during his visit and promised to start work on them.

He said: "About 96 percent work has been completed on the dormitory by previous government. A committee from the ministry came to investigate the dormitory and other buildings inside the university. We hope the project will be completed soon."

According to officials, about 4,000 students are currently studying in seven faculties at the Ghazni University.

Indonesia donates ambulances and vehicles to ARCS

KABUL (BNA): The Government of Indonesia has officially handed over three ambulances and 30 Land Cruisers to the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in a ceremony that highlighted Indonesia's ongoing commitment to supporting Afghanistan.

Hafiz Azizur Rahman, the Deputy of ARCS, extended his profound gratitude for Indonesia's consistent and timely aid, emphasizing the crucial role these vehicles will play in addressing the urgent needs of vulnerable and disaster-stricken citizens.

The donated vehicles will soon be dispatched to Herat province to enhance humanitarian operations.

Indonesian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Budi Rachmat Suryasaputra, reaffirmed the strong diplomatic ties between the two



nations and assured the continuation of Indonesia's support to the Afghan people. He underscored Indonesia's dedication to helping Afghanistan during these critical times.

Nisfiyur Magandi, the representative of the

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Afghanistan, commended Indonesia's generous contributions.

He noted that, in addition to this donation, Indonesia has provided a total of

\$300,000 in aid to Afghanistan since the start of the year, including support in various sectors.

Magandi further expressed optimism for further cooperation to strengthen ARCS's humanitarian initiatives across the country.

Copper craft industry thrives in Badakhshan province

BADAKHSHAN (TOLONews): Coppersmiths in Badakhshan report that their business has seen more growth in recent months compared to the past.

The decline in raw copper prices and the export of copper handicrafts abroad are cited as key reasons for the renewed interest in this industry in Badakhshan.

Abdul Jabbar, a 45-year-old coppersmith, has been engaged in this craft for over three decades in a corner of Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan province. He said that while this industry had faded in recent years, it has recently experienced a strong revival.

Abdul Jabbar attributes the revival to the reduction in raw copper prices and the export of copper crafts abroad.

He said, "We export a lot to other provinces and even sell our crafts in foreign countries." Another coppersmith, Omid, added, "Our request of the government is to support the coppersmiths and reduce the prices of materials."

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Industry and Commerce of Badakhshan said that they have prevented the stagnation of the copper-



smith industry in the province by organizing exhibitions and supporting artisans.

Samaruddin Rahmani, Director of Enterprise Affairs of the Department of Industry and Commerce in Badakhshan, told TOLONews, "After the arrival of the Islamic Emirate, our craftsmen, especially coppersmiths, have become more interested in their work and perform well in exhibi-

tions. We support them."

The coppersmith industry, alongside blacksmithing and carpentry, has a long history in Afghanistan. In the past, citizens of the country used to obtain most of their household items from these local craftsmen.

However, with the influx of foreign goods in recent years, many artisans have expressed concern about the decline of this traditional industry.

Reconstruction begins on Shahi Canal project



LAGHMAN (TOLONews): The reconstruction work for the first phase of the Shahi Canal project in Alingar district of Laghman province has begun.

Officials said that the first phase of this canal will be built with a length of 6.6 kilometers, which can irrigate five thousand hectares of land and meet the needs of thousands of families.

Abdul Latif Mansoor, acting Minister of Energy and Water, said: "I do not divide this project into different phases, such as the first or second phase. We have inaugurated the entire canal, and we will complete it. The first part of it costs eight million dollars, which has been allocated from the Islamic Emirate's development budget. With the first phase, five thousand

hectares of land will be irrigated, and in total, twenty thousand hectares of land will be irrigated."

Farooq Azam, Advisor to the Ministry of Energy and Water, said: "This project starts from this dam, and its first part will be built with a length of 6.6 kilometers and will deliver water regularly to lands that currently receive it irregularly. This is a major project, and once all its phases are completed, one hundred thousand acres of land will be irrigated."

Residents of Laghman are happy with the start of this project and urge the Islamic Emirate to take up work on other parts of this project as soon as possible.

Mujib Rahman, a resident of Laghman, said: "Work should also start on the remaining three parts.

This work will create job opportunities for the people, make barren lands fertile, irrigate lands, help in the creation of forests, and prevent water wastage."

Rohanullah, a resident of Laghman, said: "Previously, this dam did not exist, and the waters were wasted. With the construction of this dam, we will be happy; these dry lands will become fertile and green, and our Alingar and Laghman will become very beautiful."

According to information from officials, the Shahi Canal in Laghman will be approximately 70 kilometers long and will be constructed in two phases. Upon completion, it will irrigate around twenty thousand hectares of land and control a portion of Laghman's flowing water.

UN reports completion of 2nd midwifery training



BAMYAN (Khaama Press): The United Nations Refugee Agency has announced that a group of women in Bamiyan have completed midwifery training.

The United Nations Refugee Agency posted on its X page that the newly graduated midwives in Bamiyan have committed to tackling the province's high infant and maternal mortality rates.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees emphasized that the midwifery training program was implemented with financial support from partner organizations and the European Union.

The agency did not provide specific details or statistics about the number of

participants in this training program.

Earlier, in mid-March 2023, 40 midwives graduated from the first round of training in Bamiyan after completing the initial program.

Meanwhile, on September 1, the United Nations Population Fund announced that Afghanistan urgently needs 18,000 skilled midwives. The fund warned that if this demand is not met, many women's lives will be at risk.

According to health organizations, Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

The United Nations Population Fund stated that midwives could meet

around 90% of the urgent reproductive health needs of mothers, infants, and adolescent girls.

Additionally, there is a global shortage of around 900,000 trained midwives.

The ongoing midwifery training programs in Bamiyan offer a glimmer of hope in addressing Afghanistan's dire maternal health crisis.

However, much more needs to be done to meet the country's urgent healthcare demands. With a critical shortage of midwives both in Afghanistan and globally, significant investments in training and healthcare infrastructure are essential to save lives and improve maternal and infant health outcomes.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur addressing the launching ceremony of launched the extension of Universal Number Plates System.

Constitutional amendments to be tabled after consensus: Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, informed the National Assembly on Monday that a Constitutional amendment package would be tabled in the house after achieving complete consensus.

Speaking on the floor of the house, he said, "A draft has been prepared to address constitutional imbalances, especially those related to the parliament. This also aims to undo the 19th Amendment. There is no political motivation behind this action."

"We want and desire complete consensus within the house. The process will continue, and we believe that no one will oppose the proposals. We are determined to shape the constitution in line with the agreement in the Charter of Democracy (CoD)," he added.

Asif said that, as repre-

sentatives, members have the right to propose legislation that strengthens parliamentary supremacy and democracy. "Representing 250 million people, we have every right to work for the strengthening of parliament as defined in the Constitution," he said.

He further said that representatives have the right to undo any intrusions into parliamentary powers and the Constitution.

Khawaja Asif said that the Charter of Democracy (CoD), signed in 2006 by Pakistan Peoples Party leader Benazir Bhutto and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, advocates for the strengthening of democracy, the supremacy of the parliament, and the discouragement of person- or party-specific legislation. The minister said that other political parties had also joined this historic document letter.

He reiterated that the proposed constitutional

package has no political motivation. He mentioned that in the proposed draft, Article 63-A, which previously stated that a vote cast would not be counted, has been reversed.

Asif added that the establishment of constitutional courts, as proposed in the draft, aligns with the CoD and is a practice followed globally.

The purpose, he said, is to ensure speedy justice. He cited an example of an individual who received justice after 25 years, having spent most of that time on death cell.

"We aim to reduce the burden on the judiciary and make life easier for plaintiffs and the common man. Currently, around 2.7 million cases are pending in courts. Steps for speedy justice and the counting of votes are not politically motivated," he said.

Referring to the appointment of judges, he recalled that after the restoration of the judiciary

movement, a process for judicial appointments was agreed upon. "We want to assert the powers of parliament and avoid having it serve as a rubber stamp in the appointment of judges," he said.

He also said that the draft includes a proposal to merge the parliamentary committee and the Judicial Commission, enhancing the role of parliament in judicial appointments. "We are trying to reclaim the rights that belong to us," he said.

Asif questioned whether the proposed amendments serve the interests of the government. "We seek to ensure and enforce the respect and dignity of parliament as written in the Constitution," he added.

He said that the amendments in the proposed draft are not intended to strengthen any individual, government, or political party, but solely to fortify the parliament.

CM launches extension of Universal Number Plates System

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important step towards E-Governance and Digital Transformation, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has launched the extension of Universal Number Plates System of vehicles (Online Motor Vehicles Registration System) to the entire province, and Public Facilitation Module for online payment of Urban Immoveable

Property Taxes under excise taxation and narcotics control department. A ceremony in this regard was held here on Monday at Chief Minister's House with Ali Amin Khan Gandapur as chief guest. Besides Provincial Minister for Excise Mian Khaliq Ur Rehman, Acting Chief Secretary Muhammad Abid Majeed, Secretary Excise Fayyaz Ali Shah and other high ups of Excise department attended the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremo-

ny, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said that digitization is imperative to ensure good governance in the province adding that the provincial government is working to digitize all government departments under its e-governance policy which will not only ensure transparency, will also improve service delivery to the general public.

He said that the launch of online tax system and motor vehicle registration system is an important milestone in this regard. The online tax payment system will increase the confidence of the public and also promote the tax culture in the province. Apart from this, the online system will reduce paper work and the administrative costs of the department.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister appreciated the entire team of the Excise Department and hoped that the Excise Department will also complete other ongoing initiatives of digitization in

stipulated timeframes.

He said that the incumbent provincial government is investing substantially in potential sectors aiming at building their capacity to make the province financially self-sufficient.

He said that the government is taking concrete steps under a comprehensive strategy according to the vision of Imran Khan to make the province financially self-sufficient.

In his address, the Chief Minister said that eradication of drugs from the province is among the priorities of the provincial government, the Excise and Narcotics Control Department should effectively use the modern technology for controlling the drugs adding that the provincial government would provide all required resources for the purchase of hi tech equipment.

Briefing the participants on newly launched initiatives, it was told that public facilitation module consist of both android and web module through

which the citizens would conveniently access their property tax records online, online access to challan and payment history.

The other features of the online tax payment system include prompt resolution of online queries related to property tax, availability of standardized tax calculator. It was also told that the initially public facilitation module was started for three districts which would be extended to the rest of the districts in next phases adding that with the introduction of public facilitation module an increase of Rs five billion annually was expected from taxes.

Touching upon the Universal Number Plate System, it was informed that citizens can use mobile app and web for vehicle registration, renewal and payments. Under this system, the entire process of vehicle registration in the entire province will be digitized and centralized.

Pakistan reports sixth Mpox case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Monday confirmed that a sixth case of Monkeypox has been reported in the country.

According to spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, Border Health Services staff detected the patient, a 44-year-old individual, has a travel history to the Gulf countries at Islamabad Airport during screening.

He said that the patient was admitted to the isolation ward of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and was healthy.

PM Coordinator on Health, Dr. Mukhtar Bharath said Border Health Services staff at Islamabad Airport were ensuring an effective screening system. The government had screened 630,000 passengers at airports so far.

He said that the Ministry of Health was ensuring the monitoring mechanism of the situation. Effective measures are being taken to protect the people from Mpox, he added.

Dr. Bharath said that the federal and provincial governments were taking all measures to deal with Mpox.

MOSCOW (Reuters): President Vladimir Putin on Monday ordered the regular size of the Russian army to be increased by 180,000 troops to 1.5 million active servicemen in a move that would make it the second largest in the world after China's.

In a decree published on the Kremlin's website, Putin ordered the overall size of the armed forces to be increased to 2.38 million people, of which he said 1.5 million should be active servicemen.

According to data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a leading military think tank, such an increase would see Russia leapfrog the United States and India in terms of the number of active combat soldiers it has at its disposal and be second only to China in size. The IISS said Beijing has just over 2 million active duty service personnel.

The move, the third time Putin has expanded the army's ranks since sending his military into Ukraine in February 2022, comes as Russian forces push forward in

eastern Ukraine on parts of a vast 1,000 km (627-mile) frontline and try to eject Ukrainian forces from Russia's Kursk region.

Although Russia has a population more than three times larger than Ukraine's and has been successfully recruiting volunteers on lucrative contracts to fight in Ukraine, it has - like Kyiv's forces - been sustaining heavy battlefield losses, and there is no sign of the war ending anytime soon.

Both sides say the exact size of their losses is a military secret.

Andrei Kartapolov, chairman of Russia's lower house of parliament's defence committee, said the increase in active troop numbers was part of a plan to overhaul the armed forces and gradually increase their size to match what he described as the current international situation and the behaviour of "our former foreign partners."

"For example, we now need to form new structures and military units to ensure security in the north-west (of Russia)

since Finland, with which we border, has joined the NATO bloc," Kartapolov told Parlamentskaya Gazeta, the Russian parliament's in-house newspaper.

"And in order to carry out this process, we need to increase the number of troops."

THIRD INCREASE SINCE 2022

Putin since 2022 had previously ordered two official increases in the number of combat troops - by 137,000 and 170,000 respectively.

In addition, Russia mobilised over 300,000 soldiers in September and October 2022 in an exercise which prompted tens of thousands of draft-age men to flee the country.

The Kremlin has said that no new mobilisation is planned for now, however, and that the idea is to continue to rely on volunteers signing up to fight in Ukraine. Dara Massicot, an expert in the Russian military at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank, questioned whether Moscow was ready to foot the bill for the increase in active servicemen.

Israel will become a 'pariah' over Gaza 'genocide': UN rights experts

WASHINGTON (Aljazeera): United Nations human rights experts have warned that Israel risks becoming an international "pariah" over its "genocide" in Gaza, suggesting that the country's UN membership could be called into question.

On Monday, several independent UN experts decried what they said was Israel's escalating violence and rights violations in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, its disregard for international court rulings and its verbal attacks on the UN itself.

The rapporteurs, who are

appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but who do not speak on behalf of the UN, also slammed Western countries' "double standards" in the devastating war and said Israel needed to face consequences for its actions.

"I think it is unavoidable for Israel to become a pariah in the face of its continuous, relentless, vilifying assault of the United Nations, on top of millions of Palestinians," said Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, citing verbal and military attacks on UN facilities in Gaza.

"Should there be a consideration of its membership as part of this organisation, which Israel seems to have zero respect for?"

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza after more than 11 months of conflict has also prompted questions about Western states' long-standing political and military support for Israel, including from the United States and the United Kingdom, which both provide arms.

"Shockingly, in the face of the abyss reached in [occupied Palestinian terri-

tory] ... most member states remained inactive at best, or actively aiding and assisting Israel's criminal conduct," Albanese told a news conference in Geneva on Monday, repeating allegations of genocide.

Albanese, an Italian lawyer, said she was referring to Western states as well as some Gulf nations and others.

Israel denies allegations of genocide and says that it takes steps to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and that at least a third of the 41,118 Palestinians killed in Gaza were fighters.

Masoud says direct talks with US possible if it abandons its hostility



DUBAI (Reuters): Iran could hold direct talks with the United States if Washington demonstrates "in practice" that it is not hostile to the Islamic Republic, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday.

Pezeshkian was responding to a question

at a news conference in Tehran on whether Tehran would be open to direct talks with the US to revive a 2015 nuclear deal.

Former US president Donald Trump reneged on that deal in 2018, arguing it was too generous to Tehran, and restored harsh US sanctions on Iran,

prompting Tehran to gradually violate the agreement's nuclear limits.

"We are not hostile toward the US, they should end their hostility toward us by showing their goodwill in practice," said Pezeshkian, adding: "We are brothers with the Americans as well."

After taking office in January 2021, US President Joe Biden tried to negotiate a revival of the nuclear pact under which Iran had restricted its nuclear program in return for relief from US, European Union and UN sanctions.

However, Tehran refused to directly negotiate with Washington and worked mainly through European or Arab intermediaries.

He also said Tehran has not sent hypersonic mis-

siles to Yemen's Houthis, a day after the Iran-backed group said a missile it fired at Israel was a hypersonic one.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would inflict a "heavy price" on the Houthis who control northern Yemen, after they reached central Israel with a missile on Sunday for the first time.

"It takes a person a week to travel to Yemen (from Iran), how could this missile have gotten there? We don't have such missiles to provide to Yemen," Pezeshkian said.

However, last year Iran presented what it described as Tehran's first domestically made hypersonic ballistic missile, with state media publishing pictures of the missile named "Fattah" at a ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (left) in a meeting with JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Monday.